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## **Park adopts biobased products with no problems**

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park—Michigan's largest natural area—is paving the way for the state Department of Natural Resources's greening of its park system. Porcupine park employees have used all biobased lubricants for the last two years to maintain their entire cadre of equipment.

Located in the Upper Peninsula and designated as the sole designated wilderness in Michigan, the park is commonly called the Porkies and covers 60,000 acres. Established by the state legislature in 1945, the Porkies is one of the few remaining large wilderness areas in the Midwest.

Parks Supervisor Bill Doan said his staff has reported no problems with the products. Maintenance workers like biobased lubricants because the products, made from agricultural oils such as soy, are environmentally friendly and safer to use, he added.

The Porkies' conversion to biobased lubricants was the result of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' move in 2005 to have its 60 parks experiment with environmentally preferred practices and products. The Department adopted five green initiatives to further its mission to conserve and develop natural resources and to protect and enhance environmental quality.

The initiatives are intended to reduce the amount of mowing, increase recycling within the park, decrease the amount of cleaning products, and spur the switch to environmentally preferred cleaning products and biodiesel gasoline.

Porkies park staff chose biobased lubricants manufactured by Renewable Lubricants Inc. ([www.renewablelube.com](http://www.renewablelube.com)). These products include hydraulic fluids, trans hydraulic fluid, bar and chain oil, two cycle oil, motor oil, penetrating oil, parts cleaning solution, air compressor fluid, bearing grease, degreaser, and summer and winter fuel conditioners. The staff uses them to upkeep tractors, mowers, garbage packers, chain saws, weed eaters, boat motors, and other equipment.

In addition to being biodegradable and non-toxic and performing the same as the conventional petroleum-based brands, the biobased lubricants have cost benefits as well. They possess superior lubricity—the ability to reduce friction; reduce clean-up costs because they rapidly biodegrade; and require less respiratory protection.

Plus the actual cost isn't any greater in the long run, according to Doan. "Even though the cost up front for purchasing them may be more," he noted, "the long-term cost benefits of using biobased products far outweigh the petroleum products."

Park maintenance now need fewer cleaning products on hand because the biobased cleaner can do different jobs at varying concentrations. Product metering devices protect

workers by ensuring that only the recommended concentration of chemicals is stored in smaller, individual-use containers such as sprayers and mop buckets.

“The biobased cleaning products have worked so well that we have been able to reduce the number of products bought per year and that saves us even more money,” Doan said.

For additional information, contact Doan at [doanw@michigan.gov](mailto:doanw@michigan.gov).



***These are examples of biobased products in use at Porcupine Mountains.***

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