



## **BUSINESS PLAN**

# 1. Executive Summary

Operation Freedom Outdoors (OFO) is a collaborative partnership effort to provide outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities to our wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges. The partners in this effort include the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Camp Liberty, Brain Injury Association, Zero-Day, the Passing Along The Heritage (PATH) Foundation, the Eisenhower Center, Safari Club International (SCI) Foundation, Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), American Legion, and others.

It is the mission of OFO to provide improved outdoor recreation opportunities for wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges; and, to coordinate a support network that facilitates their recovery through connecting with nature. The OFO partners envision an unparalleled concentration of outdoor recreation opportunities combined with assistive resources and infrastructure that break down barriers to enjoyment by our wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges. The primary goal of OFO is to increase the quantity of opportunities and quality of outdoor experiences for this user group. The secondary goal is to expand Michigan programs supporting our veterans; as Michigan is currently 53<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for per capita spending per veteran.

In order to achieve the primary goal, the partnership will work to minimize barriers to wildlife-related recreation on public hunting areas. These barriers to recreation are divided into two categories; physical and logistical.

Physical barriers to wildlife-related outdoor recreation on state game areas include those factors that physically prohibit use of the game area by wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges. For example, parking lots need to be able to accommodate vehicles that allow loading and unloading of people with various mobility devices; hunting/viewing blinds need to be designed and available for people with various mobility equipment needs; habitat components must be intensely managed in a way that increases the quality of the wildlife-related recreation experience, making the use of the infrastructure enjoyable, memorable, and worthwhile.

Logistical barriers to wildlife-related outdoor recreation on state game areas include those factors that deter wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges from participating in outdoor recreation opportunities from a feasibility standpoint. For example, OFO partners will need to coordinate programs that encourage participation through events, connect people to recreation guides and mentors, provide transportation solutions, and outfit people with specialized equipment when/where available. Helping people with the logistics of getting to the game area with appropriate adaptive equipment to use the accessible infrastructure is essential.

In order to achieve the secondary goal, OFO partners must develop a programmatic approach to connecting wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges to support resources they need to improve their healing process and better enjoy the outdoors.

Initially, OFO will focus on the Sharonville State Game Area (SGA) and neighboring property, Camp Liberty. The Wildlife Division-managed Sharonville SGA and the neighboring Camp Liberty property are perfectly located for the launch of OFO. The properties are close to population centers (approx. 30 miles from Ann Arbor and Jackson and approx. 60 miles from Lansing and Detroit) allowing us to provide this service to more citizens while minimizing the burdens of travel. Some of the State's best rehabilitation centers are less than an hour's drive away from the site. The availability of an unequalled, publicly accessible, center for barrier-free outdoor experiences is expected to draw numerous outdoorspeople to the area, certainly providing an economic boost to nearby businesses and facilities.

Sharonville SGA is 4,500 acres of state land managed with the intended purpose of conserving wildlife and habitat and providing public access to wildlife-related recreation opportunities (i.e. hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing). The OFO mission fits well with the intended purpose of the game area because it aims to provide access to a larger portion of our public to enjoy an experience that revitalizes their feeling of independence and connects them with nature. The type of recreation this game area is intended to provide coincides beautifully with this goal of providing accessibility while maintaining a feeling of wilderness.

The neighboring Camp Liberty property is managed as part of a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation, and currently consists of 135 acres. Camp Liberty will provide programs designed to aid in the rehabilitation and reintegration of U.S. Military Service Members, Veterans, their families, and charities engaged in helping individuals that are facing health challenges. There will be a variety of accessible outdoor recreation opportunities available on the property, as

well as a program center, lodging, and additional infrastructure to support a program of healing. This property is not open to the general public.

Over a period of three to five years, modifications of physical and organizational structure in accessibility will take place at Sharonville SGA; relying on veteran vocational programs, local rehabilitation and therapeutic organizations, wildlife focused organizations (statewide and national) and public state departments to complete projects. Monies will be requested for materials for resurfacing parking lots and trails, installing hunting/observation structures, improving gates, designing and installing signage, building equipment storage, employing labor for projects as needed, purchasing accessible equipment, etc. Partners will play a role in connecting wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges to wildlife-related recreation opportunities, work opportunities, and assistive resources. Partners will also participate in maintaining infrastructure and habitat improvements developed as part of the OFO effort on state land. Partners will develop and administer a process to evaluate success of the OFO program; we feel it is essential to have non-government partners take the lead in the evaluation. If this initiative is successful, we will use what we have learned to develop similar projects on other state-owned lands in Michigan.

## 1.1 Mission

The mission of OFO is "To provide improved outdoor recreation opportunities for wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges; and, to coordinate a support network that facilitates their recovery through connecting with nature."

## 1.2 Keys to Success

- Clearly identify partners' roles and contributions to the OFO effort.
  - Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that clarifies roles and commitments among partners and establishes a form of governance for the group.
- Focus OFO efforts on the preliminary project area at Sharonville SGA to develop, evaluate, and perfect project implementation and services.
- Coordinate seamlessly between partners offering services that help persons with disabilities overcome the physical and logistical barriers to participating in and enjoying wildlife recreation.

## 1.3 Objectives

- 1) Minimize physical barriers to access and enjoyment of SGAs and wildlife-related recreation.
  - a) Increase size and accessibility to parking lots for vehicles and mobility aides to enter the areas.
  - b) Offer high quality mobility devices (Track Chair) available at special sites. These mobility aides can be housed on site or at a central area for use on demand.
  - c) Paths in the wildlife areas will have phases of construction; from heavy materials to light materials, to give options of terrain.
  - d) Habitat projects constructed to increase successful hunting and wildlife viewing.
  - e) Trails and waterways can be maintained year round to provide wildlife viewing opportunities between game seasons.
  - f) Hunting/ observational pads will be constructed in several forms to offer increasingly natural wildlife experience.
  - g) Accessible docking stations for canoeing and kayaking for fishing and wildlife observations.
- 2) Remove logistical barriers to access and enjoyment of SGAs and wildlife-related recreation.
  - a) Establish a partnership coalition (veteran, recreation, and healthcare organizations)
    - i) Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clarifies roles and commitments of partners
  - b) Have programs hosted by partners to increase knowledge of areas and increase successful experience.
  - c) Hunting/ fishing guides, trail guides, wildlife observation, and military support events.
  - d) Promote opportunities for wildlife experiences with 'courses' for the disabled prior to accessing State land.
  - e) Modified hunters safety courses to included adaptability assessments for equipment, trials for mobility devices, etc.
  - f) Increase sustainability with organizational position to coordinate events and monitor State Land for responsibilities of partnership groups and update media outlets (website and informational pamphlets).
  - g) Headquarter all updates and information through coordinator position for public distribution of progress.

- 3) Monitor and evaluate the success of the OFO effort at the preliminary project area (Sharonville SGA).
  - a) Create "veterans quality of life" and "recreation guide" activity surveys.
- 4) At the end of five years, use what we've learned to establish similar projects on public lands in other parts of the state.

## 2. Organization Summary

The Michigan DNR Wildlife Division will lead the OFO effort to implement strategies on public lands, focusing on wildlife-related recreation in alignment with game area goals. The Wildlife Division will plan and implement projects to remove the physical barriers to wildlife recreation on public lands by wounded veterans and people with health challenges.

The OFO partners will help to inform project design in removing those physical barriers; and, will also focus efforts on removing the logistical barriers to outdoor enjoyment by wounded veterans and people with health challenges. In addition, partners will connect veterans and volunteers with opportunities to participate in constructing and maintaining habitat and infrastructure projects at Sharonville and Camp Liberty.

Eisenhower Center will serve as an active partner to advise and coordinate efforts to remove physical and logistical barriers on Sharonville SGA and Camp Liberty and promote strategies for healing through outdoor therapies.

Camp Liberty is a not for profit organization that manages over 100 acres of land next to the Sharonville SGA and provides therapeutic outdoor recreation opportunities and programs to aid in the rehabilitation and reintegration of U.S. Military service members, veterans, and their families. A physical connection between Sharonville SGA and the Camp Liberty property will facilitate the use of both the Camp Liberty facilities and public resources by Camp Liberty guests. Camp Liberty will house a Program Center that will be the center for coordination of OFO events and connecting veterans and people with disabilities with support networks and outdoor recreation assistive services. The Camp Liberty Five-Year Plan is available in Appendix A.

Zero-Day will work with the DNR Wildlife Division to set up veteran apprenticeships in which veterans will provide the labor to install and construct the necessary infrastructure and habitat projects on public lands that will support accessible wildlife recreation opportunities while gaining marketable skills.

The PATH Foundation will provide training/certification for hunting guides to better serve and communicate with wounded veterans and people with health challenges, organize hunting trips and events, and connect people with health challenges to adaptive resources and equipment.

The SCI Foundation, Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, MUCC, DAV, and American Legion will provide input for development of projects and programs, participate in planning events, and will help to connect veterans with support services, resources, and opportunities for rehabilitation in the outdoors.

These initial partners will form the OFO Partnership whose representation will sign off on the Memorandum of Understanding with the DNR.

Additional partners in OFO will participate in the effort by contributing funds, volunteer labor, materials, and/or equipment to complete habitat projects, provide services, and contribute to events.

### 2.1 Start-up Summary

In the next five years, OFO would like to complete the following projects, as part of this partnership endeavor to provide excellent opportunities for accessible wildlife-related recreation on public land. These projects will focus on infrastructure development, habitat improvements, and event and assistance opportunities. Projects will have different levels of difficulty and accessibility. The OFO partnership plans to track and evaluate the success of these projects. Extent of project implementation will be dependent on availability of funds. A general budget that outlines expected costs and funding needs will be developed.

## 2014

- Develop a general outline of expected costs and financial needs.
- Identify administrative and legal barriers to implementing OFO strategies.
  - Begin resolving all identified barriers immediately.
- Begin development of the North Field Trial Area at Sharonville SGA.
  - Habitat Projects: food plots, herbaceous plantings, brush piles
  - Infrastructure: parking lots, trail development, construct hunting pads/blinds
- Begin development of the Norvell Road West Tract at Sharonville SGA.
  - Infrastructure: parking lots, accessible gates, trail development, construct hunting pads/blinds
    - Complete any necessary permit and engineering requests
    - Assess physical features and identify necessary infrastructure components
  - Habitat: implement habitat improvement plans
    - Assess vegetation and develop plan for any habitat improvements
- Continue and increase project completions in the Pheasant Restoration Initiative (PRI) River Raisin Complex at Sharonville SGA.
  - Habitat Projects: food plots, herbaceous plantings, brush removal
  - Infrastructure: parking lots, trail development
- Begin planning projects for construction in 2015 at Sharonville SGA.
  - Tamarack Lake Pier and Canoe Launch
    - Assess fisheries resource while the lake is iced over
    - Assess physical features and identify necessary infrastructure components
    - Complete any necessary permit and engineering requests
- Begin designing signage for installation at OFO project areas.
- Complete parcel purchases to physically connect the Sharonville SGA and Camp Liberty property.
- Staff with an OFO coordinator.
- Register/train partnership coalition (veteran, recreation, and healthcare organizations).
- Implement "quality of life" veteran and "recreation guide" activity surveys.

## 2015

- Install appropriate signage at OFO project areas.
- Continue and complete development of the Norvell Road West Tract at Sharonville SGA.
- Continue and increase project completions in the Pheasant Restoration Initiative (PRI) River Raisin Complex and Norvell Road Complex at Sharonville SGA.
- Begin development of the Tamarack Lake Pier and Canoe Launch at Sharonville SGA.
  - Infrastructure: parking lots, accessible gates, trail development, construct pier and launch
- Begin using completed infrastructure and equipment acquired through Camp Liberty to provide hunting and wildlife recreation opportunities to veterans and people with disabilities.
- Begin planning projects for construction in 2016.
  - River Raisin Launch (launch at Camp Liberty should be complete or constructed at same time)
    - Assess physical features and identify necessary infrastructure components
    - Complete any necessary permit and engineering requests
  - Liberty-Sharonville Rustic Trail (land purchases must be complete)
    - Assess physical features and identify necessary infrastructure components
    - Assess vegetation and develop plan for any habitat improvements
    - Complete any necessary permit and engineering requests
- Continue maintenance and improvement of infrastructure and habitat established at OFO projects.
- Expand/train partnership coalition (veteran, recreation, and healthcare organizations).
- Track/analyze "quality of life" veteran and "recreation guide" activity surveys.
- Develop Hunter's Safety course for individuals with physical and mental health impairments.

## 2016

- Continue and complete development of the Tamarack Lake Pier and Canoe Launch at Sharonville SGA.

- Begin using completed infrastructure and equipment acquired through Camp Liberty to provide hunting and wildlife recreation opportunities to veterans and people with disabilities.
- Begin development of the River Raisin Launch at Sharonville SGA.
  - Infrastructure: parking lot and launch
- Begin development of the Liberty-Sharonville Rustic Trail.
  - Infrastructure: parking lot, gates, trail, potential foot bridges
  - Habitat: implement habitat improvement plans
- Continue maintenance and improvement of infrastructure and habitat established at OFO projects.
- Begin plans for additional potential projects at Sharonville SGA.
- Modify Sharonville-Camp Liberty and OFO per survey feedback.

## 2017

- Continue and complete development of the River Raisin Launch at Sharonville SGA.
- Continue and complete development of the Liberty-Sharonville Rustic Trail at Sharonville SGA.
- Begin construction of any new projects.
- Continue maintenance and improvement of infrastructure and habitat established at OFO projects.
- Continue to recruit and groom OFO partnerships.
- Expand the OFO effort to other facilities as appropriate.

## 2.2 Program Location

The Wildlife Division-managed Sharonville State Game Area (SGA) and the neighboring Camp Liberty property are perfectly located for the first OFO project (Appendix A, Map 1). The properties are close to population centers (approx. 30 miles from Ann Arbor and Jackson and approx. 60 miles from Lansing and Detroit) allowing us to provide this service to more citizens while minimizing the burdens of travel. Some of the State's best rehabilitation centers are less than an hour's drive away from the site. The availability of an unequalled, publicly accessible, center for barrier-free outdoor experiences is expected to draw numerous outdoorspeople to the area, certainly providing an economic boost to nearby businesses and facilities.

## 3. Services

Through OFO, we would like to provide wounded veterans and people with health challenges with the following services:

### Public Hunting and Wildlife-Related Recreation Opportunities

An unprecedented concentration of wildlife habitat projects coupled with accessible infrastructure and/or equipment will be developed on the Sharonville SGA, offering world class wildlife-related outdoor recreation opportunities at a central location. Partners and volunteers will help to maintain habitat and infrastructure throughout the future of the game area; to ensure these opportunities are never lost. The Sharonville SGA will provide exceptional deer, turkey, pheasant, rabbit, squirrel, and potentially grouse and woodcock hunting, birding, wildlife viewing, and fishing opportunities on publically accessible land.

### Hunting and Outdoor Mentorship and Guide Opportunities and Events

OFO partners will work to connect wounded veterans and people with health challenges with outdoor mentors, guides, and events in order to facilitate and sponsor healing through outdoor recreation and wildlife involvement. Mentors and guides will be trained on how to be sensitive to and meet the needs of veterans and people with health challenges. Events will be organized and held on the Sharonville SGA, Camp Liberty property, or both. Hunter Safety Education classes specifically designed for people with health challenges will also be offered.

### Adaptive Tools and Equipment for Outdoor Recreation

Through OFO, we will work to provide wounded veterans and people with health challenges the tools and equipment to best enjoy the outdoors and wildlife-related recreation. We intend to offer a more primitive experience through providing equipment that will enable these outdoorspeople to enjoy natural terrain as much as possible. Our partners will work to provide available equipment to the people who need it. We would also like to provide a check-out

system; allowing people with physical disabilities to come and go freely, as most public visitors do, picking up equipment on a first come-first serve basis.

#### Informational and Educational Materials

It is the intention of OFO to better the lives of veterans and people with disabilities through this program effort. We will not only create and provide information about OFO efforts; we will also provide information and educational materials to veterans, people with disabilities, and their families regarding available programs, assistance, tools, and other resources to improve the healing process.

## 4. Market Analysis Summary

With over 660,000 registered veterans in the state of Michigan (2012) and a growing number of returning veterans from current conflict, support systems are necessary in all areas of adjustment and recovery. Participation in extended outdoor recreation assists veterans to cope with physical and mental health issues relating to military service and quality of life. Utilizing Michigan SGAs for therapeutic outlets such as traditional hunts and natural resources exploration will allow military members to assist each other in dealing with challenges on their transition to civilian life.

With involvement in programs with OFO, targeted populations will be supported by the organization's partners to provide assistance in educating and coordinating participation in planned programs and spontaneous uses for those individuals. Individual MOU's between OFO and partners will start marketing contributions in their specific areas of expertise.

OFO's efforts provide improved outdoor recreational opportunities for wounded veterans. Several populations will be the initial focus of marketing efforts, disabilities including amputees, spinal cord injuries, TBI, and PTSD. These have been set secondary to the initial partnership groups at the inception of OFO (i.e. PVA, DAV, Eisenhower Center and, the Brain Injury Association of Michigan). Additional populations will be added to the marketing project such as visually disabled, chronic health issues, developmental and mental health diagnosis.

Marketing strategies will include pamphlets, flyers, radio ads, magazine ads, press releases, and vending opportunities at veteran and sportsman oriented events. Social media will be developed and maintained by OFO Coordinator (Website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). A talking points handout has already been developed for distribution at events and meetings (Appendix C).

Feedback from individuals after utilizing SGAs will be encouraged and tracked by partnering organizations and collected to establish future logistical and structural changes required to maintain accessibility to Sharonville's SGA. OFO's Coordinator will educate targeted populations through educational sessions and materials on the benefits found in nature based recreational programs.

## 5. Strategy and Implementation Summary

The DNR Wildlife Division will ensure that habitat projects and infrastructure is installed at the Sharonville SGA to meet the goals of OFO. The OFO partners will provide input and expertise to help design these projects so that they maximize the benefit to veterans with visible and invisible wounds and people with disabilities. As part of OFO, we will use partner connections, whenever possible, to complete work in a way that engages and benefits veterans (e.g. use Zero-Day veteran apprentices to complete OFO construction projects).

There will likely be some cases where we need to remove administrative barriers to implementing this OFO strategy on state land (e.g. land use rules may need to be changed for a portion of the game area or we may need to change the bid process to allow Zero-Day veterans the opportunity to complete construction projects). The OFO partners will need to identify these barriers and work to resolve them in the first years of this program effort.

The OFO partners will also provide much of the customer service in this effort. Camp Liberty will house OFO programs and coordinate the effort to get veterans and people with disabilities in touch with these newly established resources. Once the first OFO project is completed at Sharonville SGA, and equipment is made available for public use, we will implement a strategy to market the availability of the new resources, connect veterans and people with

disabilities to the new available resources, and evaluate the visitors' experiences. To do this well, we will need to hire an OFO program coordinator.

As projects are developed on the Sharonville SGA and Camp Liberty property, a strategy will be developed to reach out to veterans and people with disabilities and communicate the availability of these new resources.

## 5.1 Fundraising Strategy

Funding for OFO projects will come from multiple sources, including grant funding (e.g. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant), donations in the form of funds or materials (e.g. seed for habitat plantings from Pheasants Forever), and government funding (e.g. DNR operational budget). Since we have a goal of improving Michigan's status from currently 53<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for per capita spending per veteran, we do anticipate some funding support at the state level. We intend to track and monitor spending related OFO projects.

## 5.2 Milestones

OFO milestones for the Sharonville-Camp Liberty project are as follows:

1. Acquisition of connector properties between Camp Liberty and Sharonville SGA.
2. Establishment of the Program Center.
3. Placement of a full-time OFO program coordinator.
4. Establishment of first on-the-ground accessible project at Sharonville SGA.
5. First OFO event at Sharonville SGA.
6. Completion of the first "quality of life" veteran and "recreation guide" activity surveys.

## 6. Management Summary

The Waterloo Wildlife Biologist and land manager for the Sharonville SGA will lead the OFO effort at Sharonville SGA. The biologist's focus will be to ensure that OFO habitat and infrastructure projects are completed on the game area, work on land use issues to allow for and promote OFO events/activities on the game area, and coordinate the OFO partnership on behalf of the DNR Wildlife Division, under the direction of her direct supervisor and the Division Chief.

Camp Liberty has a mission of its own; however, it is tied to that of OFO and its property in Jackson County is tied to Sharonville SGA. Camp Liberty will hire a caretaker family to house on their property. Although the focus of these employees will be to provide necessary maintenance to the facilities, equipment, and habitat at Camp Liberty, their success will be linked to that of OFO, as visitors to Camp Liberty will also seek recreation opportunities on Sharonville (e.g. the condition of the proposed canoe/kayak launch at Camp Liberty will influence the value of the proposed launch downstream at the game area).

Zero-Day will lead the effort to arrange to have veterans to work as apprentices establishing OFO projects on state land. These veterans will be paid and gain valuable work experience.

The OFO program will require a full-time coordinator in order to achieve full potential as an effort that results in significant benefits to veterans and people with disabilities. This person should be housed in the Sharonville area would be responsible for coordinating access to OFO projects on Sharonville SGA, coordinate special maintenance of infrastructure and equipment (e.g. gate combinations, trail care, adaptive equipment charging and repair, etc.), assist in developing volunteer work days, and connecting people with information regarding available resources.

### 6.1 Personnel Plan

To address long-term programmatic maintenance of the OFO project at Sharonville SGA and Camp Liberty, we will need to establish a coordinator position (funding structure and organizational housing not yet clear). The coordinator will communicate with the SGA Wildlife Biologist, the Camp Liberty Board, and the OFO Partnership to achieve OFO goals.

## **APPENDICIES**

## Camp Liberty 5 Year Project Projection Plan | 2013 - 2017

---

### **2013 Goals**

- Acquire funds or resources for:
  - Building Phase 1 of Program Center
  - Main bridge maintenance
  - 6 wildlife observation/hunting blinds (3 of which will be handicap accessible)
  - Trail development on Camp Liberty property
  - Pond, CRP, food plots, and wildlife habitat program
- Build/install/complete the following:
  - 6 wildlife observation/hunting blinds (3 of which will be handicap accessible)
  - Main trail system on Camp Liberty property
  - Main bridge maintenance
  - Food plots
  - Appropriate signage around property lines
- Develop plan for Caretaker Family needs (Combat OIF/OEF Veteran)
- Acquire 2 Action Track Chairs (Adaptive Equipment)
- Develop 5 year plan for SVSGA-Camp Liberty and Operation Freedom Outdoors
  - Establish a partnership coalition (Veteran, Recreation, & Healthcare Organizations)
  - Create "Quality of Life" Veterans and "Recreation Guide" activity surveys

### **2014 Goals**

- Acquire funds or resources for:
  - Purchasing land for Caretaker Home & Veteran Home #1
  - Handicap accessible canoe/kayak launch
  - Purchasing land to complete the trail system to Sharonville State Game Area
  - Tree House, Rope Bridge and Zip Line
  - Recreation equipment
  - Phase 2 of Program Center
  - Trail, vehicle, equipment, building, and land maintenance
- Build/install/complete the following:
  - Phase 1 of Program Center
  - Pond, CRP, and wildlife habitat program
  - Tree House, Rope Bridge and Zip Line
  - Main entrance sign and gate
- Acquire 2 additional Action Track Chairs (Adaptive Equipment) bringing the total to 4
- Develop and hold major annual fundraiser event – Camp Liberty Gala
- Implement plan for SVSGA-Camp Liberty and begin Operation Freedom Outdoors
  - Register/train partnership coalition (Veteran, Rec, & Healthcare Organizations)
  - Develop and implement "Quality of Life" Vet and "Recreation Guide" Activity Surveys

### **2015 Goals**

- Acquire funds or resources for:
  - Purchasing land for Veteran Home #2 and Chapel Annex
  - Building Phase 2 of Program Center, Caretaker Home, Chapel Annex and Veteran Home #1
  - Hiring Office Manager/Advocate
  - Trail, vehicle, equipment, building, and land maintenance
- Build/install/complete the following:
  - Caretaker Home
  - Security systems as appropriate
  - Handicap accessible canoe/kayak launch
  - Appropriate signage at launch site
  - Complete connection of trail system to Sharonville State Game Area
  - Install appropriate signage along connecting trail system
- Improve and conduct Camp Liberty Gala fundraiser event
- Further Implement SVSGA-Camp Liberty and Operation Freedom Outdoors Expansion Plans
  - Expand/train partnership coalition (Veteran, Recreation, & Healthcare Organizations)
  - Track/analyze "Quality of Life" Veterans and "Recreation Guide" Activity Surveys

### **2016 Goals**

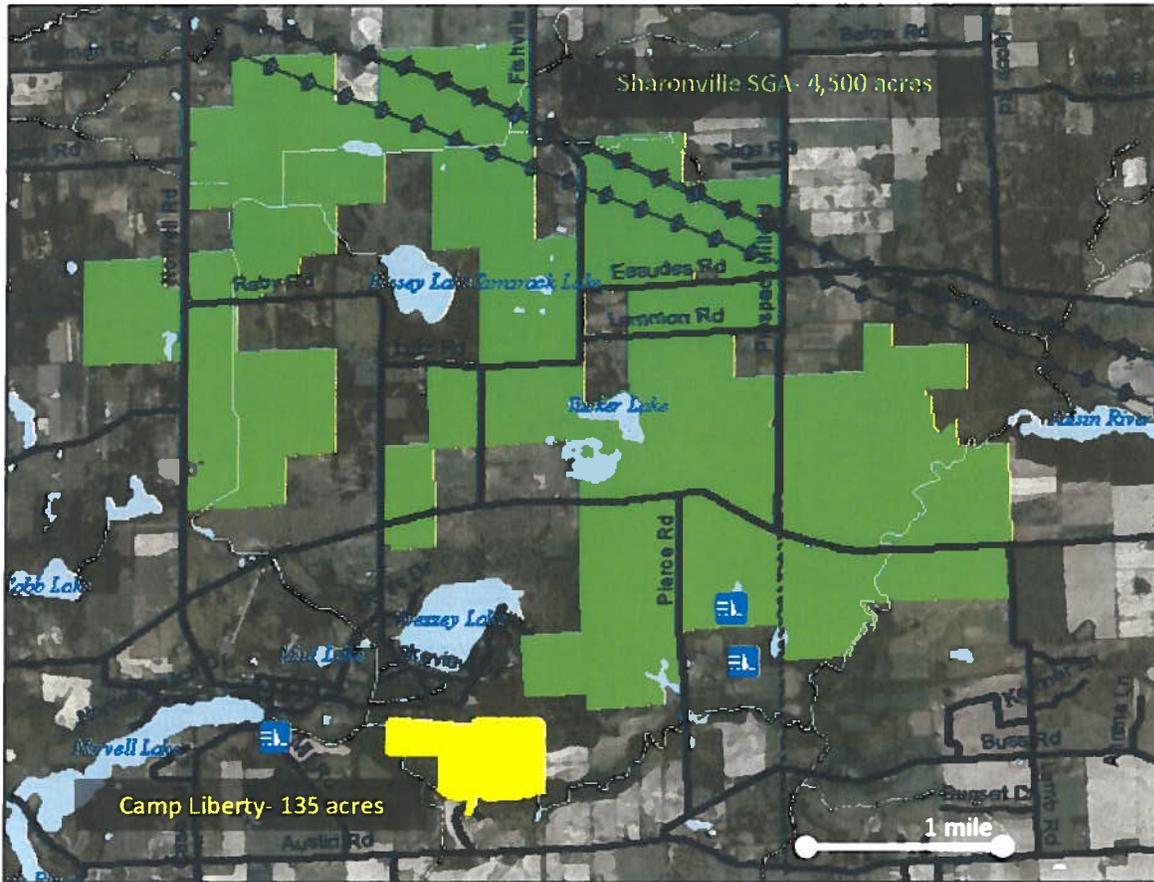
- Acquire funds or resources for:
  - Purchasing land for Veteran Homes #3 and #4
  - Building Phase 3 of Program Center and Veteran Home #2
  - Acquiring additional land to expand program
  - Trail, vehicle, equipment, building, and land maintenance
- Build/install/complete the following:
  - Phase 2 of Program Center and Veteran Homes #1 and #2
- Conduct Camp Liberty Gala fundraiser event
- Begin looking for potential expansion sites within the state
- Modify SVSGA-Camp Liberty and Operation Freedom Outdoors per Survey Feedback

### **2017 Goals**

- Build/install/complete the following:
  - Phase 3 of Program Center and Veteran Homes #3 and #4
- Conduct Camp Liberty Gala fundraiser event for continued operations
- Continue to recruit and groom OFO partnerships

Expand the Camp Liberty and OFO vision to other facilities and states

## Appendix A. Maps



**Map 1.** Map of the Operation Freedom Outdoors project area, which includes Sharonville State Game Area and the Camp Liberty property within Jackson and Washtenaw Counties, Michigan.

## Appendix C. Operation Freedom Outdoors Talking Points Handout



- OFO is a cooperative partnership between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Camp Liberty, Zero-Day, Eisenhower Center, the Brain Injury Association of Michigan, Passing Along The Heritage Foundation, Safari Club International Foundation, Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and more.
- The mission of OFO is to provide improved outdoor recreation opportunities for wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges; and, to coordinate a support network that facilitates their recovery through connecting with nature.
- OFO efforts will focus on initial efforts on DNR-managed Sharonville State Game Area and the neighboring Camp Liberty property. The properties are near several population centers: Ann Arbor, Jackson, Lansing, and Detroit.
- Veterans, partners, and volunteers will assist with habitat development projects to give a sense of accomplishment, pride, and ownership for the area.
- Several projects are planned at Sharonville State Game Area including: a facilitated hunting area with accessible trails and spurs for hunting pads and blinds, rustic trails for use with field grade mobility devices, an accessible canoe launch on River Raisin, and several habitat projects to provide food and cover for wildlife and enhanced outdoor experiences for visitors.
- Sharonville State Game area and Camp Liberty support diverse habitats that include River Raisin frontage, small lakes, wetlands, wooded areas and open fields.
- Featured game species at the Sharonville State Game area include wild turkey, pheasant, cottontail rabbit, ruffed grouse, woodcock, fox squirrel and white-tailed deer. Rare non-game species include the Indiana bat, dickcissel, grasshopper sparrow, Henslow's sparrow, eastern box turtle, tamarack tree cricket and more.
- The availability of this unequalled, publically accessible center for barrier-free outdoor experiences is expected to draw numerous outdoorspeople to the area, providing an economic boost to nearby businesses and facilities.



