



Ottawa County
Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan
2016



**2016 Ottawa County
Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan
February X, 2016**



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Plan Adoption Documents

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Years of research by social and behavioral professionals have demonstrated that recreating in the out-of-doors can improve one's mental and physical health and general quality of life. Exposure to nature in parks and natural areas can improve psychological and social health.

Because counties, like all municipalities, are interested in providing for the health, safety and welfare of their residents, it is important that Ottawa County direct time and effort to provide quality opportunities for its residents and visitors to participate in outdoor recreation activities. To direct this effort, proper planning is essential to take advantage of opportunities, maximize positive impacts, and efficiently use available resources. While this may be true for all counties, it has particular relevance to Ottawa County today for several reasons.



Natural Resources

Ottawa County is blessed with a natural resource base as extensive as any other county in the state. The Lake Michigan shoreline, sand dune formations, waterways, wetlands, bayous, and woodlands all contribute to make Ottawa County a very special environment. These resources have potential to support many healthy outdoor recreation activities. The fact that counties typically focus on natural resource-based activities, as opposed to neighborhood parks and sports fields, further highlights the tremendous opportunity for Ottawa County to positively impact its residents and visitors through the county park system.

Population Growth

The population of Ottawa County has increased significantly in recent decades and, following a pause due to a dip in the economy, appears poised for continued growth in the future. The Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department reported the 2014 county population estimate as 276,292, an increase of 4.7% from 2010 - the fastest growth in the State during that period of time. With this fast growth, planning and maintaining recreational facilities and services to meet the needs of a growing population is a very real and pressing concern.

Quality of Life

Providing a high quality of life for residents is a key component in maintaining a healthy and growing local economy. Quality outdoor recreation lands and facilities are vital to retaining and attracting young, highly educated, and productive residents to sustain a thriving economy in Ottawa County into the future. Businesses that require this type of workforce will, in turn, more seriously consider Ottawa County if they can be assured that talented and desirable employees will want to stay in the area on a permanent basis.

Tourism

A final related reason to provide quality recreation services and facilities is the county's large and growing tourist trade and its economic implications. The shoreline of Lake Michigan acts like a magnet during the warmer months, attracting not only county residents but also visitors from around the State and beyond. Without proper planning, this migration of tourists into Ottawa County during the summer months can place a strain on recreation facilities. Planned properly, this tourism can serve as a strong foundation for the economic well-being of the county. Providing adequate capacity of attractive recreation opportunities for visitors will continue to facilitate this particular segment of the local economy.

The 2016 Ottawa County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is the latest of a series of plans prepared for the County to address these needs. In 1970, a preliminary recreation plan for Ottawa County was prepared and followed by a 1975 update. To continue the planning process initiated in 1970, a second parks and recreation plan update was prepared in 1983 while administration of the parks was still under the authority of the Ottawa County Road Commission.

In 1989, the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) completed its first plan since it was formed and took over management of the park system in 1987. This plan established an aggressive approach to upgrading the park system and expanding access to Lake Michigan. The 1989 plan was followed by the 1995 Parks and Open Space Plan which provided solid direction for improving and expanding the park system and laid the groundwork for the County Parks millage, which was first approved by voters in 1996. The next plan, the 2000 Ottawa County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, recognized the significant progress made toward implementing recommendations from the 1995 plan, and provided more details for establishment of the basic framework of the system of river based greenways.

The 2006 plan continued the strong emphasis on open space protection begun in the 1995 plan while providing a clearer vision for the trails and facilities which could be developed on the park lands. This plan also laid the groundwork for



a ten-year renewal of the county parks millage and included a long-range budget projection demonstrating what could be accomplished with a diversified funding strategy using millage funds in combination with fee revenues, grant funds, donations and other funding sources. The 2011 plan provided further direction for expanding and improving the park system with a continued focus on expanding greenways in Ottawa County.



This plan continues to build on the work of the previous plans and seeks to lay the groundwork for renewal of the parks millage again in 2016. The 2016 plan reflects a maturing county park program. Goals for land acquisition are gradually being met allowing more emphasis on targeted projects to improve and link existing park lands. As always, a major focus on high quality park maintenance and operations remains a fundamental focus of the OCPRC and staff.

In conclusion, an up-to-date parks and recreation plan is needed to best use available resources to meet the growing needs of county residents. The plan seeks to do this in a manner that recognizes the unique circumstances that currently exist in Ottawa County and are likely to extend into the foreseeable future. It is the intent of this plan to meet this goal in a comprehensive and objectively defensible manner that can be relied upon to guide the multitude of decisions required of the OCPRC and its staff.

SECTION ONE: PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS



The development of the 2016 Ottawa County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is the summation of many ongoing initiatives established since the OCPRC was established in 1987. It also continues to build on previous formal planning efforts of plans prepared in 2000, 2006, and 2011 while clarifying and refocusing efforts on current conditions and needs. The various components of the plan were performed by a range of participants including the Parks and Recreation Commission, parks staff, numerous consultants, and the general public.

The development of the plan followed a three-phase process (Figure 1.1). The first phase involved the gathering of base data pertaining to Ottawa County. This inventory of current conditions encompassed several areas of interest including Ottawa County's natural and cultural features as well as demographic information about its current residents. The current administrative structure of the parks department as well as its current and projected financial capacity was also identified. Finally a detailed inventory of recreation facilities throughout the County was prepared. This data includes elements of federal, state, county, city, and township recreation facilities as well as private and commercial recreation providers. The results of this data collection are presented in chapters 2 through 7.

The second phase of planning involved the analysis of the gathered data, and in particular, the identification of opportunities, constraints, and current recreation needs. Current and potential park and open space resources were evaluated, and additional attention was directed at specific recreation activities as well as broader issues including quality of services and accessibility.

This assessment of needs was aided through a variety of methods including a park user survey, a survey of county residents, public meetings, comment cards located in the parks, and other methods. Many of these tools were directed to solicit and encourage input from the general public for both specific projects or activities included in the plan as well as the overall direction of parks efforts. A complete description of these tools along with general analysis of their results is found in chapter 8; further results of analysis presented in chapters 9 through 11.

In the third phase, the Parks Commission reached an understanding of the potentials and limitations of existing park resources, as well as the recreation needs and desires residents, visitors, and park users. The multitude of ideas, suggestions, and plans were prioritized and synthesized into a comprehensive plan to direct the efforts of OCPRC. As a culmination of this effort, the OCPRC reviewed its mission statement and updated its goals, objectives, and strategies to guide its efforts. Finally, based on this groundwork, a detailed list of recommended actions aimed at addressing the plan goals and objectives was prepared. OCPRC also created a capital improvement schedule, which assigns costs and relative priorities to the actions based on current budget and time parameters.

As a final note, it should be recognized that the Plan is not an end in itself, but a decision-making tool in a continuing process of study as the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission strives to serve the present and future needs of Ottawa County residents.

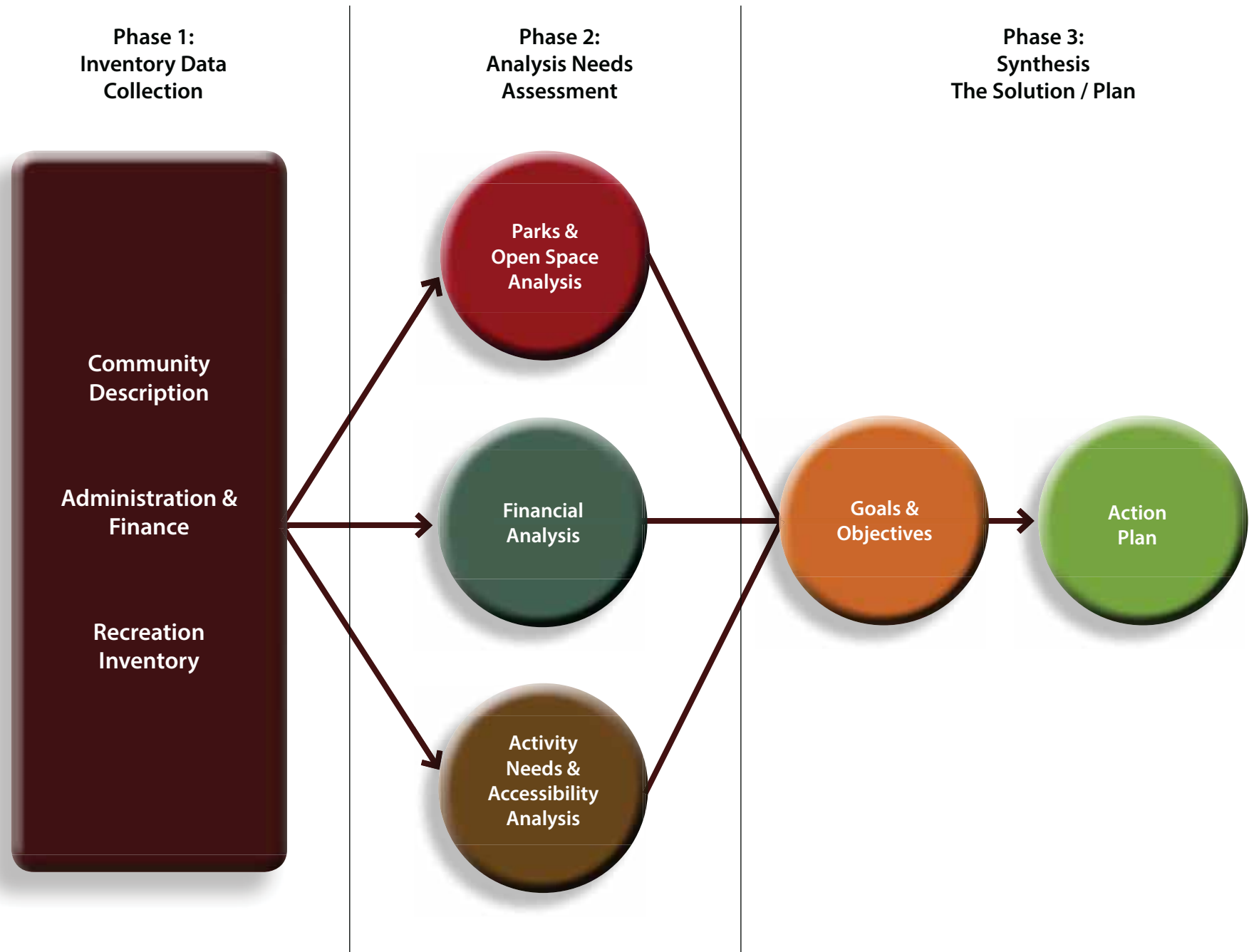


Figure 1.1 - The Planning Process

SECTION TWO: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



CHAPTER 2 | NATURAL FEATURES

CHAPTER 3 | CULTURAL FEATURES

CHAPTER 4 | COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS





GENERAL LOCATION & NATURAL CONTEXT

Ottawa County consists of 565 square miles located on the western edge of the lower peninsula of Michigan along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan, the second largest of the Great Lakes. The County's sandy shoreline is 24 miles long, while its eastern boundary runs 30 miles from north to south. Traveling straight across the County from the eastern boundary to the Lake Michigan shoreline involves a 22-mile trip. Michigan's largest river, the Grand, traverses the entire width of the county and enters Lake Michigan at Grand Haven. In terms of natural communities, Ottawa County occupies a somewhat unique location in what has been referred to as the transition zone (Figure 2.1), an area where northern and southern forest types overlap. This results in a relatively greater diversity of plants and animals than in either the northern or southern zones.

The environmental resources of Ottawa County have enticed fur trappers, lumbermen, early settlers, farmers, and today's residents and tourists. Outdoor recreation in Ottawa County has been enhanced by the existence of these environmental amenities – by the sandy beaches of Lake Michigan, by the slowly winding Grand River and its associated wetlands, by its popular inland lakes including Spring Lake and Lake Macatawa, and by the pleasant mixture of forests and grasslands that support a variety of wildlife.

As attractive as they are, the environmental resources that exist today are far different than those that greeted the earliest settlers to Ottawa County. In the past, communities developed their land with little regard for existing natural systems. Natural features were often viewed as a liability, needing to be controlled or destroyed.

Attitudes toward land have changed dramatically in recent decades as people began to recognize the negative effects of human activity on the environment. A new realization has emerged that development activities which destroy natural features carry greater costs – the most basic of which is a reduction in overall quality of life.

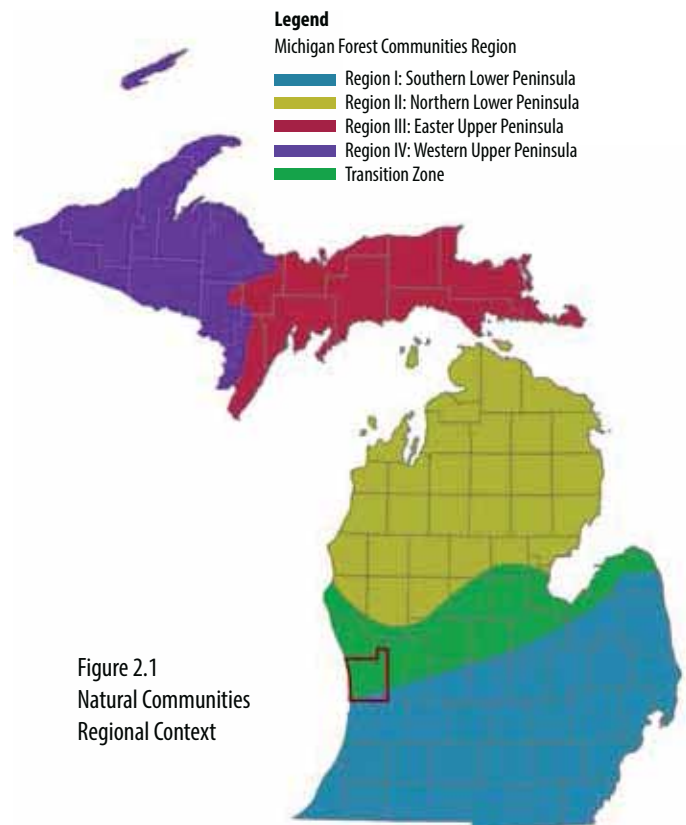


Figure 2.1
Natural Communities
Regional Context

The natural features of Ottawa County – lakes, dunes, rivers and streams, rolling hillsides, wetlands, forests and open space – give it a unique and special character. Previous studies have found that the citizens of Ottawa County are increasingly aware of the benefits which natural features provide and noted a growing willingness to support strong policies to protect these environmental assets. A basic goal of this section is to better identify key natural conditions, features and environmental resources so that they can be addressed in the planning process and protected as appropriate.

CLIMATE

Lake Michigan influences the climate in Ottawa County significantly. Prevailing westerly winds blowing across the lake effectively moderate extreme winter and summer temperatures. In comparison to areas across the lake or further inland, temperatures above 90°F in the summer and below zero in the winter occur infrequently, rarely more than three or four times per season. Prolonged periods of extremely hot or cold weather seldom prevail during the summer or winter.

Rainfall averages over 31 inches per year. June and September are typically the wettest months while February remains the driest. The average annual snowfall measures 65 inches and increases to nearly 80 inches in a snow belt extending along the lake shore. Annual snowfall can range from accumulations exceeding 100 inches to amounts well less than 20 inches per year. Measurable amounts of snow usually fall each month from October through April.

Climate influences not only the extent of outdoor recreation but also the types of activities pursued. The ever-changing diversity of the climate in Ottawa County allows for seasonal variety in outdoor recreational opportunities. Abundant snowfall and extended periods of temperatures consistently below freezing encourage participation in outdoor winter activities, such as sledding, ice skating, snowmobiling and skiing. When the weather turns warmer, many travel to the County’s popular shoreline seeking the cooling comfort of Lake Michigan. During or immediately after a

Figure 2.2
Ottawa County
Bedrock Geology

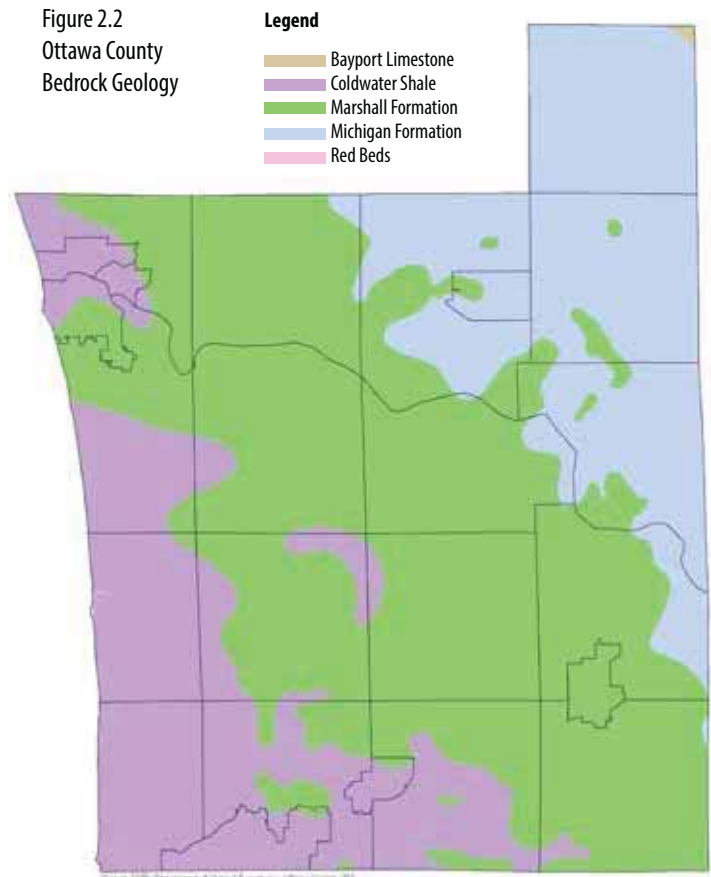
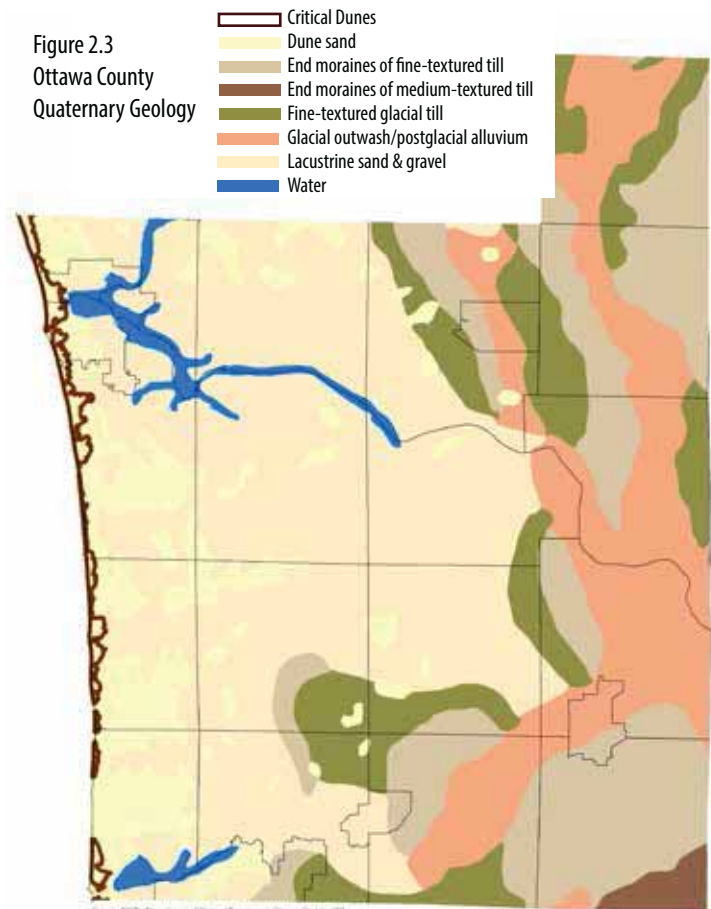


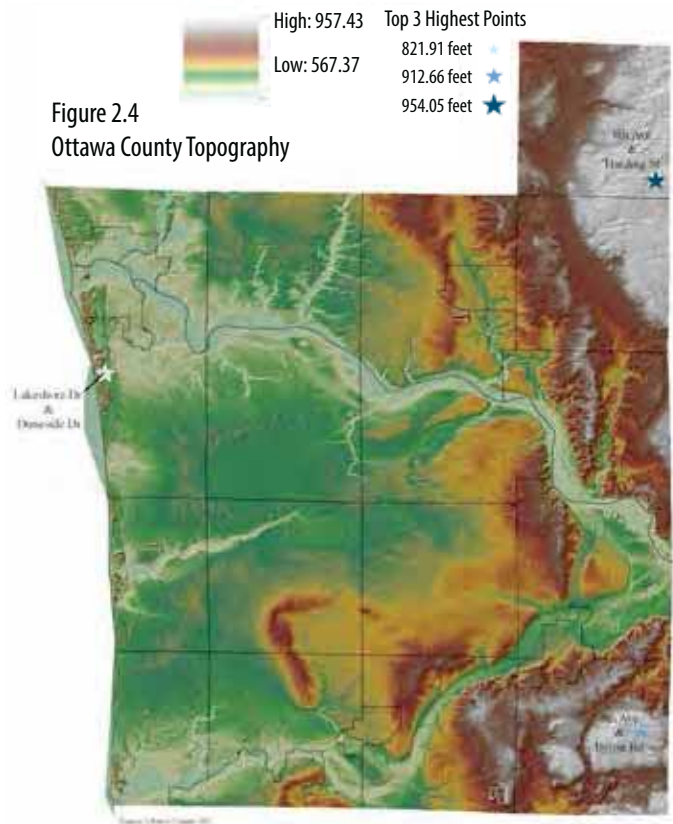
Figure 2.3
Ottawa County
Quaternary Geology



prolonged spell of warm, humid weather, the public beaches along the County's shoreline attract large crowds, especially on summer weekends. In spite of variations in the weather from year to year, the County's climate remains an important feature that has enhanced the pursuit of outdoor recreation.

GEOLOGY

Literally underlying the visible landscape of Ottawa County are materials and formations that are part of the region's prehistoric past. Layers of rock including shale and limestone deposits produced during times when the region was covered with saltwater seas form the area's bedrock layers (Figure 2.2). These features are essentially unobservable to the public except through sampling from well drilling or engineering soil borings. More recent and much more visible evidence of geologic activity is found in the area's Quaternary Geology (Figure 2.3). These formations date from the time of the last ice age of 10,000-12,000 years ago, as well as more recent activity such as river and stream erosion and deposits. The most significant and grandiose of the more recent geologic features in Ottawa County are the sand dune formations along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The size and extent of the freshwater sand dunes which characterize the eastern Lake Michigan shoreline are found nowhere else in the United States or the world. Their visual impact and significance as a natural resource cannot be overstated. Accordingly, the dunes have been the focus of protective legislation, which attempts to regulate development in areas identified as "critical dune areas" by the MDEQ. Critical dunes in Ottawa County extend almost the entire Lake Michigan shoreline. The widest areas are north of Lake Macatawa, in or near the Holland State Park, and around Port Sheldon. Another significant area of dunes begins north of Lake Michigan Drive extending north to the County line. There are approximately 3,750 acres of critical dunes in Ottawa County.



TOPOGRAPHY

Directly overlying these ancient bedrock formations are glacially deposited sands, gravels, and clays of varying concentrations and thicknesses. These glacial deposits are responsible for today's visible surface features or landforms, defining a landscape of generally flat to gently rolling terrain. Abrupt changes in topography are uncommon in Ottawa County, except for dune areas along Lake Michigan, where some sand dunes reach 200 feet, and steep clay ravines located along portions of river corridors. While at the Lake Michigan shoreline the elevation measures 580 feet above sea level, the highest elevation in the county is slightly more than 950 feet above sea level (Figure 2.4).

WATER RESOURCES AND HYDROLOGY

The water resources in Ottawa County are an extraordinary recreational asset. Many parks in the County have been located on or near water, with that particular water body serving as the focal point for recreation. Because of an ever-increasing demand for water-based recreation, the emphasis of many future parks will likely continue to be on the presence of an attractive body of water.



Lake Michigan dominates the western edge of the County. It has attracted County residents and non-residents alike to its sandy beaches for years and continues to grow in popularity. Without dispute, the lake is the County's greatest recreational feature. Lake Michigan inspires outdoor activities during both summer and winter. During the summer however, activities intensify with swimming, boating, fishing, and other water sports as popular shoreline pursuits.

The primary watercourse in the County is the Grand River. Before entering Ottawa County, it has already traveled through numerous other Michigan communities on its way west from its origin near Jackson. Ottawa County is the last stretch of the river's journey, entering the County from the southeast and meandering northwesterly towards Grand Haven where it finally flows into Lake Michigan. The river drains the entire northern portion of the County and much of the eastern half through several small tributaries including Sand, Rush, Deer, and Crockery Creeks. The remaining portions of the County are drained by the Macatawa (Black) River, which empties into Lake Macatawa, and by the Pigeon River, which flows into Pigeon Lake (Figure 2.5).

The Grand River's potential for recreation is additionally enhanced by the river's bayous, wetlands and tributaries. Most of the bayous, such as Stearns, Pottawattomie, Lloyd, Milhouse and Bruce, are located along the northwestern reaches of the river and are popular fishing and boating locations.

Most wetlands in the County are associated with the Grand River and its tributaries. Other wetland areas can be found along the Macatawa and Pigeon Rivers, inland from the shoreline area, and sparsely scattered areas in the northeast. Wetlands are vitally important natural features for their fish, wildlife and plant habitat; for their ability to filter pollutants; for their groundwater recharge value and for their



Figure 2.5
Ottawa County Hydrology

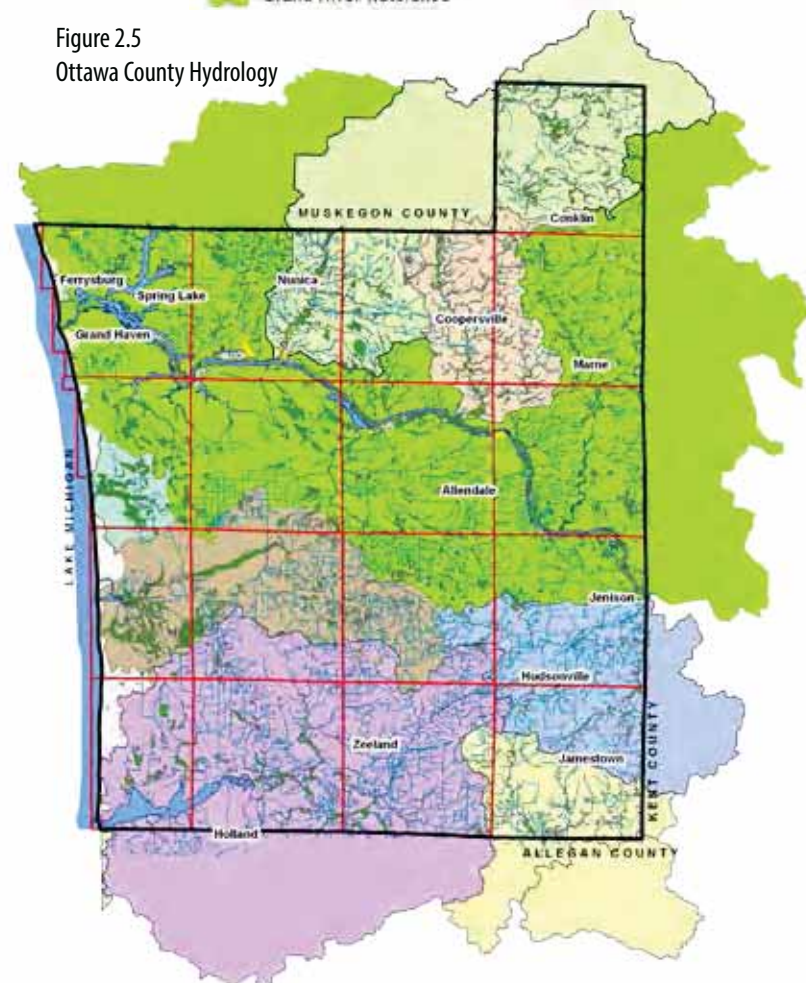
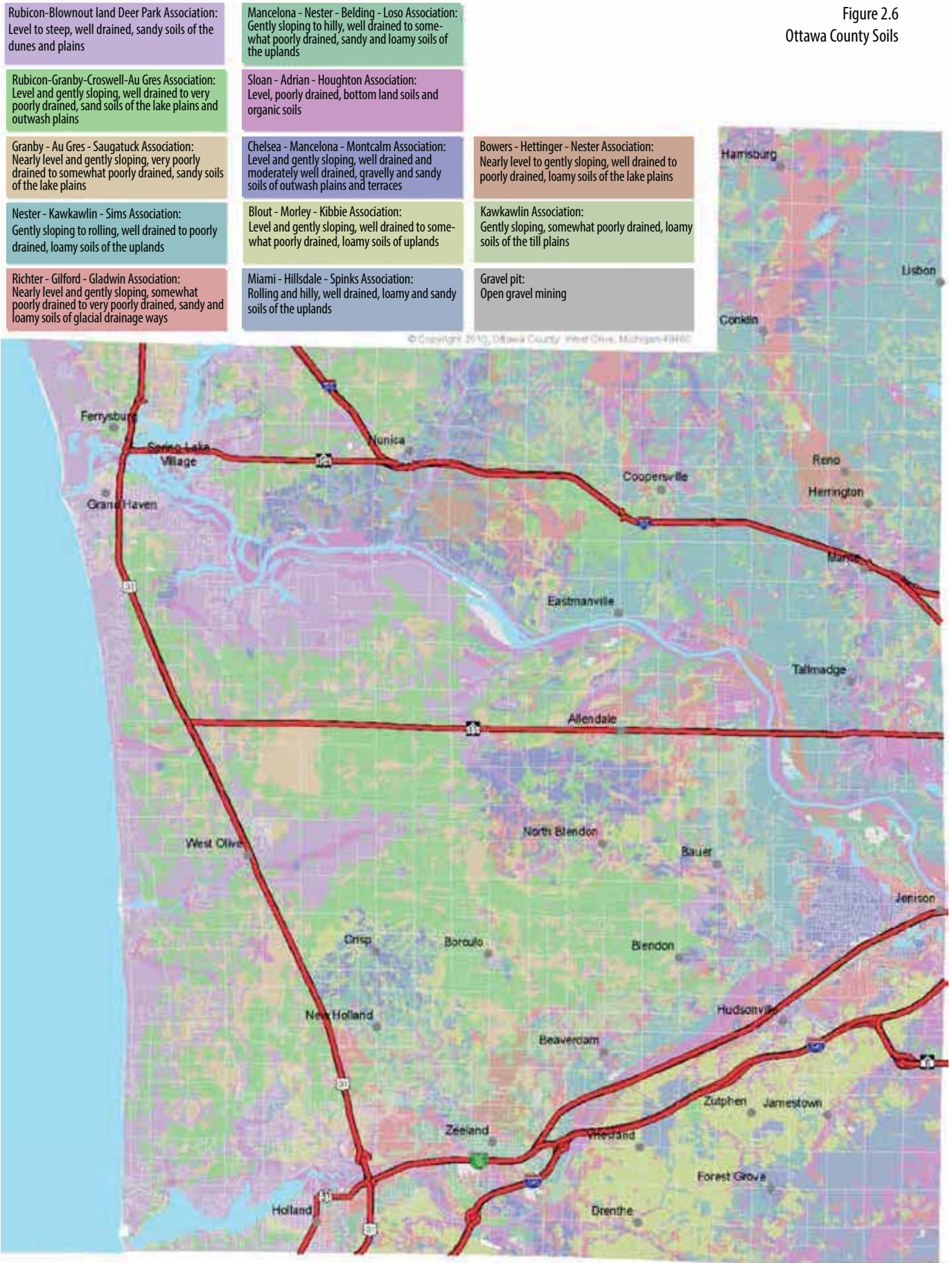


Figure 2.6
Ottawa County Soils



importance in reducing flooding.

Anchoring the County's Lake Michigan shoreline is Spring Lake in the north and Lake Macatawa in the south. The recreational importance of these two large inland lakes is clearly evident by the concentration of much of the County's population in the communities located on these lakes. Because of these population concentrations, both Lake Macatawa and Spring Lake receive a large amount of recreational use.

There are several other inland lakes scattered throughout the County, ranging in size from 225 acres to less than five acres. Pigeon Lake (225 acres), adjacent to Lake Michigan, and Crockery Lake (108 acres), located in the northeast, are the largest of these inland lakes and are popular recreational lakes.

Water quality is a concern in many of Ottawa County's lakes and streams. Non-point source pollution is believed to be a major cause of water pollution. Non-point source pollution includes runoff from urban areas, farms, residential septic fields and many other difficult-to-define sources. Recent efforts associated with land protection in the river greenways have directly addressed this concern.

Figure 2.7
Ottawa County Prime
Farmland

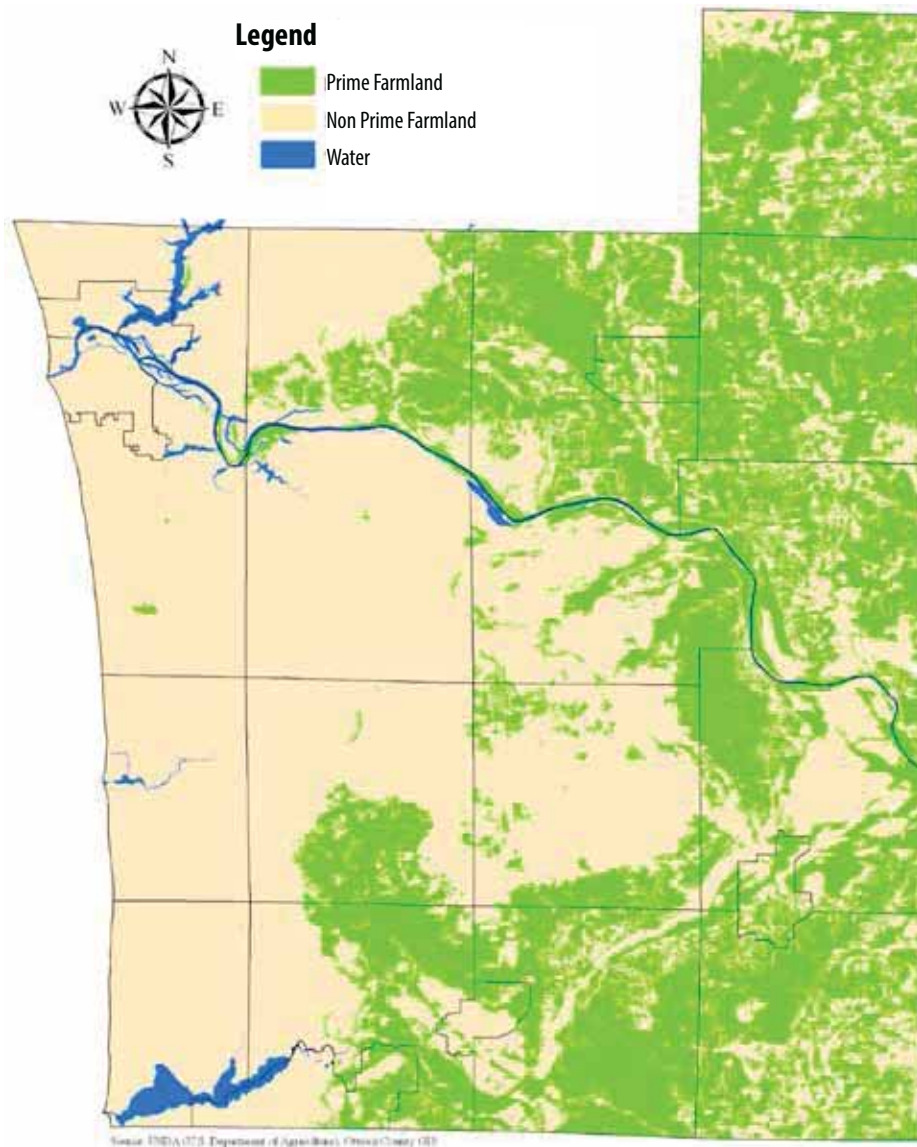
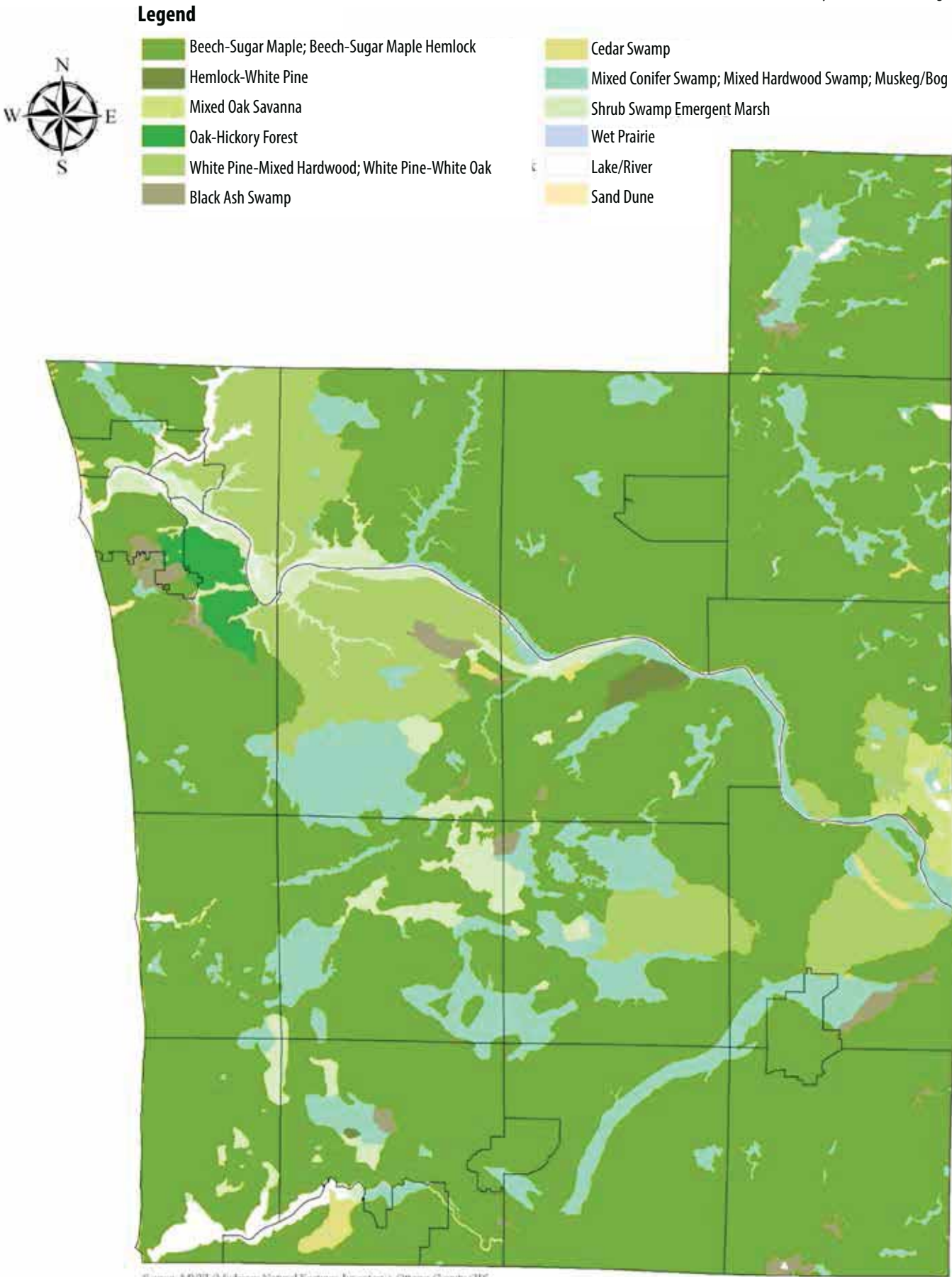


Figure 2.8
Ottawa County Pre-settlement Vegetation



Source: MNFI (Michigan Natural Features Inventory), Ottawa County GIS

SOILS

Most soils in the County are the result of glaciation, except the wind-blown sand along the lake, the alluvial soils on the floodplain, and the organic soils produced from decaying vegetation. The soils range from the light sandy soils associated with the lake plain to the heavier silt and clay loams occurring in the morainal uplands of the east (Figure 2.6). Excluding the dune sands and waterlogged marsh soils, most soils have been successfully utilized for many developmental activities. Many acres are considered prime farmland and are used for agricultural production (Figure 2.7). A few soil types in the County do possess some limitations, such as erodibility, compaction, drainage, etc., for certain uses and activities. Recreational development requires a site-specific evaluation of soil characteristics in order to identify potential problems.

PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

Prior to European settlement, extensive white pine and hardwood forests nearly covered the entire County (Figure 2.8). These forests initially attracted trappers and traders, but by the early 1800s, the lumbering industry was also motivated to utilize the vast forest resources. As these forests were logged out, the remaining cleared land was eventually farmed. Today, scattered patches of forest are found interspersed with fields of cultivated crops. Many of these smaller forests are located along wetlands, streams and rivers, on stabilized sand dunes along the lake, and on soils or lands not suitable for farming. In the 1930s, many acres of cleared land with sandy soils were planted in pine in order to combat wind erosion. These maturing pine plantations dot the western half of the County.

A beech-maple forest represents the climax forest characteristic of this climate. Many examples of this forest type can be found throughout the County, especially in the back dunes along the shoreline. In wetter bottom lands, along rivers and streams, those plant species more tolerant of wet soils have dominated, such as ash, cottonwood, sycamore, and silver maple. Oaks and pines can be found in the drier upland areas of the County. A variety of native herbaceous plants can be found in fields, along roadsides, stream banks, marshes or other undisturbed areas.

In 1988, an inventory of natural features was prepared for Ottawa County by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, a joint effort of The Nature Conservancy and the Michigan



Department of Natural Resources. There were 37 natural areas of special interest which were rated as to their environmental quality and significance. Of the 37 areas, 11 were categorized as “notably significant,” four were categorized as having “exceptional significance,” and the remaining were categorized as “non-qualifying.” Of the areas classified as “notably significant,” almost half serve as habitats for State-Threatened plant species. The vast majority of the significant areas identified are located along the Grand River corridor. Appendix A shows the locations of the significant areas and provides a description of each site.

The species of wildlife to be found in any area is dependent on the available habitat –



that combination of associated plant species which provides wildlife with food and cover. Unfortunately, many of Ottawa County's original wildlife populations have disappeared due to the loss of habitat. The habitat that does remain supports a variety of local wildlife. Pheasant, field sparrow, red foxes, rabbits, skunks, woodchucks, and hawks are examples of mammals and birds that normally frequent croplands, pastures, meadows, and other open areas. Woodland areas support such wildlife species as squirrels, raccoons, coyotes, ruffed grouse, woodcock, wild turkey, woodpeckers, opossum, warblers, deer and owls. In ponds, swamps, marshes and other wetland areas, muskrats, beaver, ducks, geese, herons, mink and shorebirds can be found. A variety of fish species, including steelhead, northern pike,



brown trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and salmon can be found in the Grand River as well as in many other lakes and streams in the County.

Many recreational pursuits depend on the existence of a diverse plant and wildlife community. They tend to define an area's character and ambiance, making that area more attractive and interesting. As people become involved in outdoor recreation, they become more knowledgeable about the natural world around them, including its plants and wildlife.

Additional studies are needed to identify lands within Ottawa County which contain locally significant plant and wildlife populations. Priority should be placed on protecting these areas to ensure that remaining plant and wildlife populations survive as development continues.





SCENIC RESOURCES

One of the less tangible natural resources found in the County is its scenic beauty. The spectacular views of Lake Michigan, the majestic contours of the Grand River, and the panoramic display of farmland and grasslands are all part of what makes Ottawa County a special place to live.

Scenic resources cannot be defined by firm characteristics like sand dunes, woodlands, and other physical assets. Because scenic resources are determined by the “eye of the beholder,” defining a scenic resource thereby becomes more difficult. Most people see scenic views as including the roadway right-of-way area and adjacent roadside; but it is much more. The features found within these areas may include lakes, streams, and wetlands, striking stands of forest, and pastoral views.

They also include notable urban scenes and historic and cultural resources. In areas of flat terrain or on high ground, the view may extend for miles in horizon-to-horizon vistas. Efforts should be made to quantify scenic views so that prime views can be identified. Following their identification, methods of protecting high-priority views should be explored.

CHAPTER 3 | CULTURAL FEATURES

It is not simply the environmental resources that make Ottawa County unique. Local history, land uses, and other cultural characteristics and activities also define the County's particular recreational identity. Consequently, as these cultural characteristics change, their implications for recreation also change.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Ottawa County is located in the center of western lower Michigan and also in the center of the three metropolitan areas of Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Holland. Although two of these areas are not in Ottawa County, their populations and the highways that connect them form a strong geographic, economic, and cultural influence on the rest of the county. Ottawa County adjoins Muskegon County on the north, Kent County on the east, and Allegan County on the south. It is located approximately 100 miles from Lansing, 175 miles from Detroit, and 165 miles from Chicago (Figure 3.1).

HISTORY

Ottawa County was once a wilderness. Timber wolves, black bears, and other vanished species stalked the thick pine and hardwood forests that blanketed the County. During the late seventeenth century, Jesuit missionaries and French fur traders were possibly the first non-native people to venture into this wilderness. Because of the availability of many fur-bearing creatures, several trading posts were established in the County. When the demand for their products diminished, the fur trade ceased. When the traders left, lumbermen replaced them.

In 1836, the first sawmill was located at the mouth of the Grand River, the site for the future settlement of Grand Haven. With a seemingly endless supply of virgin timber in the County and a growing shipping industry on the lake, the lumber industry unhesitatingly expanded. As the supply of timber dwindled, all the large sawmills closed down by 1890 and the few remaining smaller mills were producing only a fraction of the wood output of the earlier lumbering days.

Farming and settlements followed closely behind lumbering. With the land cleared of the County's original dense forests, new homes and farms were established. In 1847, a group of immigrants from the Netherlands arrived in Ottawa County and founded the community of Holland. Before long, the few remaining tribes of Native Americans were either relocated outside

Figure 3.1 Regional Context



of Ottawa County or gradually assimilated into a new and rapidly changing culture. One such tribe was the Ottawa from whom the County received its name.

As farming took hold, other communities spreading out from the lakeshore or following the Grand River were soon established. Even during this period, many took advantage of the County’s recreational attractions. Excursions on riverboats plying the Grand River were quite popular, with picnics along the river’s bank often the objective of such trips. The County’s lakeshore was also a center of recreational pursuits. Resorts sprang up in Holland and Grand Haven as well as a few places in between during the late nineteenth century. These tourist-oriented businesses catered to vacationers from Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis and other out-of-county communities.

One interesting and visible evidence of early settlement is the square-mile grid system of roads. This pattern resulted from the system used by early surveyors to prepare the land for division and future ownership. This grid system is used throughout the county, breaking down only when significant or unusual physical barriers to its implementation were encountered such as along river corridors. This system also clearly identifies Ottawa County as part of the Midwest landscape similar to the states of Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

LAND USE

Figure 3.2 shows land use cover for Ottawa County as of 2006. This graphic clearly shows the four urbanized areas previously mentioned of Holland, Grandville (extending from Grand Rapids), and Grand Haven (extending from Muskegon). For undeveloped portions of the county, agriculture dominates in the central, northwest and southeast sections with large areas of forests and wetlands predominant in the western portions.

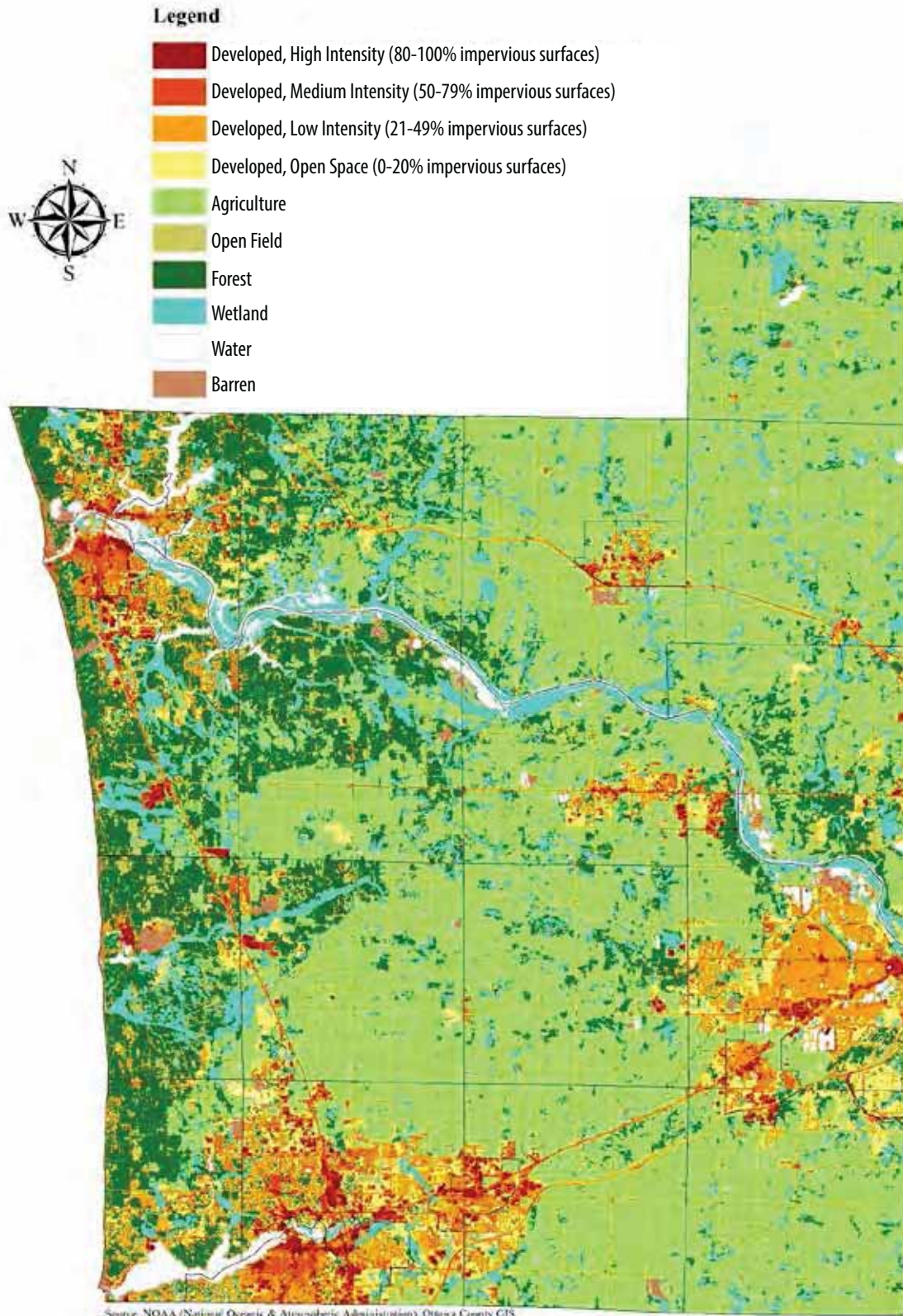
Of more interest for planning purposes is the change in land use over the last three decades. Table 3.1 compares land use cover for three time periods of 1978, 1992, 2006 and 2010. Although the measuring methods used changed for the open field and wetland categories in 2006, overall trends are readily apparent.

Table 3.1 - Summary of Land Use & Cover Change 1978 to 2010

	1978 Acres	1992 Acres	2006 Acres	2010 Acres	Percent of County	Difference 1978-2010	Percent Change
Urban	43,792.5	56,522.5	72,635	72,849.1	19.7%	29,056.6	66.4%
Agriculture	201,757.5	173,810	177,614.5	174,124.7	47.2%	-27,632.8	-13.7%
Open Field	23,505	40,745	5,965.3	6,624.9	1.8%	-16,880.1	-71.8%
Wooded	66,475	64,922.5	66,782.8	58,892.1	16.0%	-7,582.9	-11.4%
Wetland	5,770	5,772.5	33,197.5	42,605.4	11.5%	36,835.4	638.4%
Water	8,072.5	8,465	9,263	9,753.3	2.6%	1,680.8	20.8%
Barren	605	547.5	3,425.4	4,144.4	1.1%	3,539.4	585.0%
Totals	369,097.5	369,097.5	368,883.5	368,993.9	100.0%	NA	NA

Source: Grand Valley State University Water Resources Institute (2006)
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Ottawa County GIS (2010)

Figure 3.2
2010 Land Use



As would be expected given the large increase in population over this time frame, urban land uses have increased significantly primarily at the expense of agricultural uses, including what was categorized as open field. However, agriculture remains the county's largest land use with almost half of the total land area devoted to that purpose. Interestingly, loss of land for this use appears to have stabilized to a significant extent during more recent years.

Forest and wetland area loss also appears to have stabilized to a degree, although anecdotal information would suggest that these more natural areas continue to be disturbed and broken into smaller, less ecologically significant units as they continue to be most desired for home sites.

Many of these trends continue to support the need to preserve, protect, and restore significant natural lands especially if this can be done ahead of land use change in the areas surrounding current development, after which this effort becomes much more difficult.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

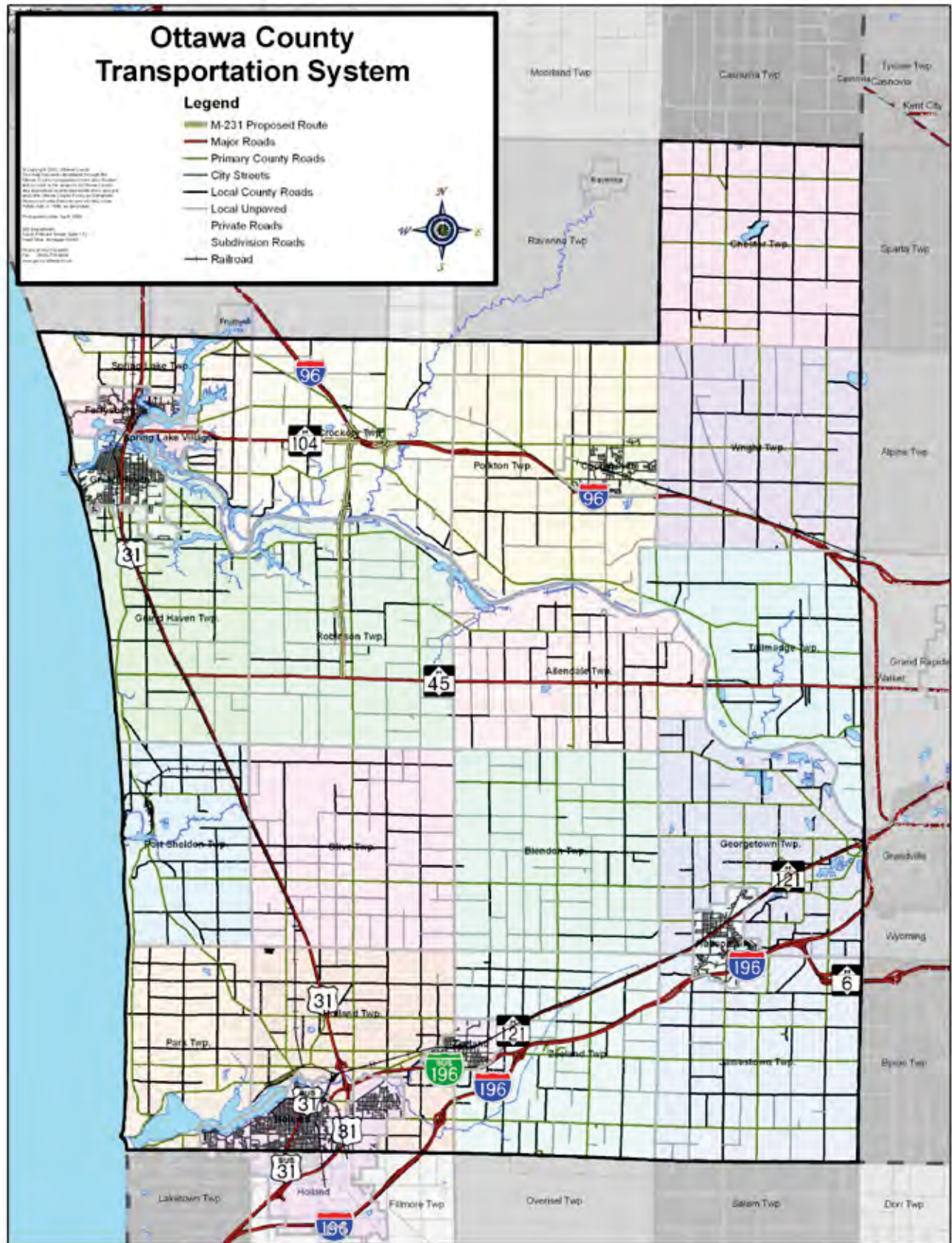
The transportation network represents the physical and operational structure that provides people with mobility and access to economic, social, educational and recreational activities within and outside of the County. It also affects recreation in other more subtle ways. The costs to travel, the time it takes to get there, and the travel experience itself (whether the selected route was convenient, scenic, uncongested, and in good repair) all influence the willingness of an individual to leave home in order to participate in a recreation activity. At the same time the transportation network influences the location of recreation facilities and is also impacted by the traffic these facilities may generate.

The automobile, as the primary means for personal transportation, has defined much of today's transportation network. Previously distant recreation areas are much closer and more accessible to population centers today as a result of the automobile and a highway system that allows higher speeds, fewer interruptions, greater access, and, consequently, more distance in less time. Conversely, the current transportation network dictates the use of the automobile in order to travel and reach most destination points.

Ottawa County is served by an efficient system of highway connections (Figure 3.3). Much of this highway system was designed to primarily carry traffic to and from major population centers located within and outside the County. Within Ottawa County, the three major population centers are connected by a triangular network of highways. US-31, running along the shoreline between Holland and Grand Haven, carries traffic north to the Mackinaw Bridge and south to the Indiana border. I-96 enters the County near Marne after its connections in Grand Rapids, Detroit and Lansing, and turns northwest just past Nunica on its way to Muskegon. Originating from Grand Rapids, I-196 continues southeasterly to Holland and then turns south towards the state line. Bisecting this triangle is M-45, which terminates near Lake Michigan at US-31. Re-alignment of M-45 was completed in 2003 and a new bridge was constructed over the Grand River as part of the project. The new bridge and road improvements increase the ease of travel to the west side of Ottawa County and will likely impact the amount of use at the popular lakeshore parks in Ottawa County. They will also affect growth patterns in the County, potentially expanding the rate of growth in the eastern portion of the county.

In the fall of 2004, the M-6, Paul B. Henry Freeway, also referred to as the "South Beltline," was completed. It connects I-196 in Georgetown Township to I-96 in Kent County. This new highway has increased the amount and ease of traffic between the south side of Grand Rapids and the Hudsonville and Jenison areas. Due to the ease of travel, Ottawa County Parks and Recreation

Figure 3.3
 Transportation Network



facilities may also get an increased amount of use from non-residents. Existing parks that likely are being affected by this new highway include Spring Grove and Hager Parks on the southeastern side of the County and Tunnel Park in Holland. Several County primary roads efficiently support these major regional transportation facilities. Because of the attraction of the Lake Michigan shoreline, the County does experience some difficult seasonal variations in the traffic load due to greater levels of recreational and tourist activities.

The US-31 bypass highway study was completed in 1999 for the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the Michigan Department of Transportation as a means to evaluate the potential of providing an alternative route of traffic around the greater Grand Haven area. The project purpose and need identified for the US-31 study area was to develop alternatives to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety for the traveling public. The chosen alternative proposed to construct a new highway that connects with US-196 near Zeeland and runs north along 120th Avenue, crosses the Grand River, and connects to I-96 near Nunica. A lack of current funding reduced the scope of the project to build a two lane highway between M-45 and M-104 in Nunica including a new bridge over the Grand River. This section of highway and bridge was completed and opened to the public in the fall of 2015. As discussed in relation to the Grand River Greenway in Chapter 9, the new bridge included a non-motorized crossing which will be soon be connected to area trails.

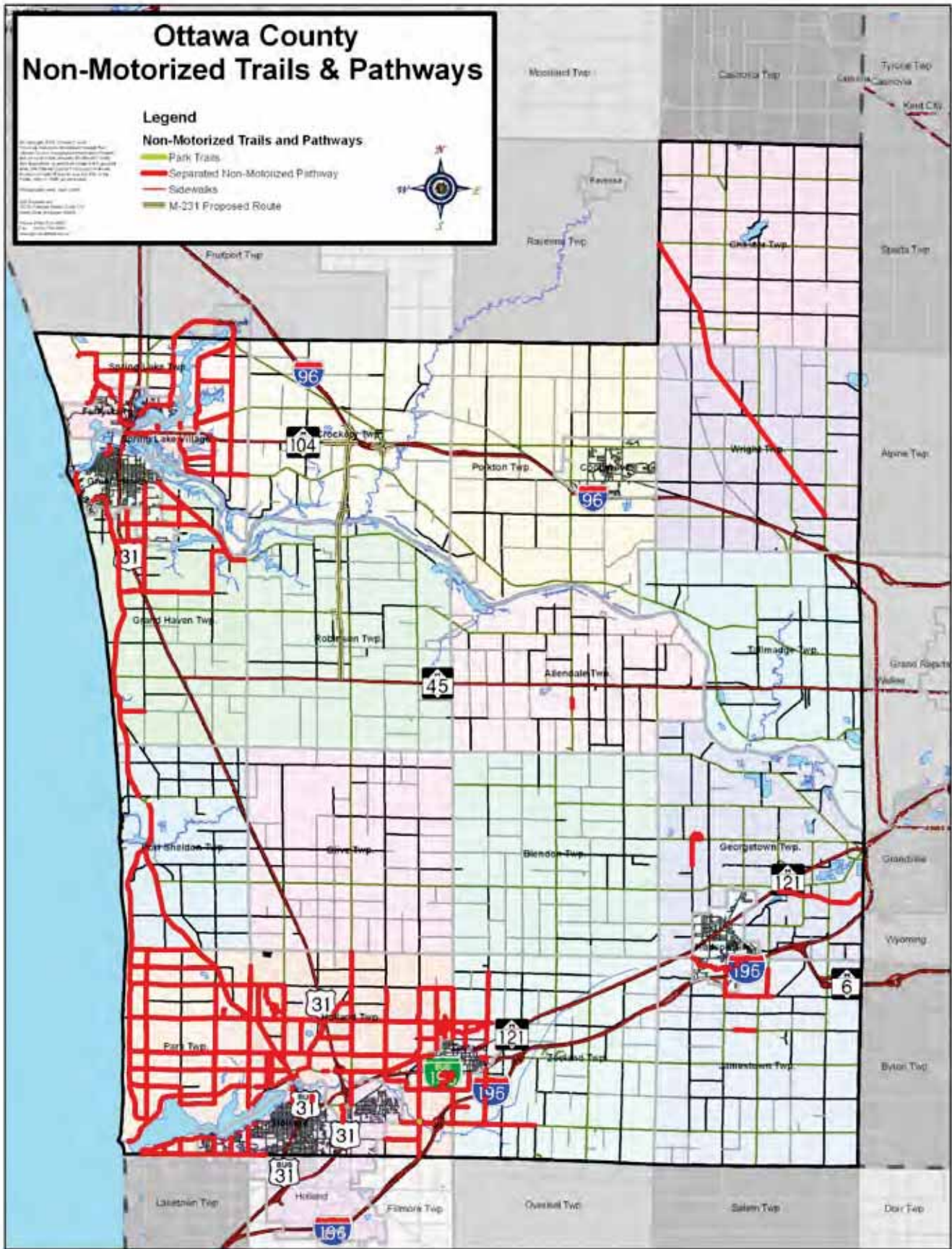
The study indicated that the major long-term impact on recreation along the new corridor will be noise. The study also indicated that there would be temporary impacts on recreation lands during construction. Although the study indicates there will be only temporary impacts on recreation in Ottawa County, there will be other impacts as well. The construction of a new highway creates a linear physical barrier with limited access under or over it. This could significantly impact the time of travel to get to a park or natural area. More importantly, the change in the transportation system will affect growth and land use, which will impact future needs for parks and open space. Disruption to local ecosystems will also be inevitable.

General air carrier and full commercial services are predominantly provided to Ottawa County users by the Gerald R. Ford and Muskegon County International Airports. There are, however, six airport facilities in Ottawa County. Two of these, Grand Haven Memorial Airport and Park Township/Holland, are public airports. The other four, Coopersville/Pilot County, Jenison/Riverview Airport, Nunica/Jablonski and Zeeland/Ottawa Executive are all private airstrips.

Water transportation is another important network in the County that creates additional opportunities for access and mobility. Lake ports at Holland and Grand Haven have gradually shifted from predominantly commercial centers to places of recreation. As recreational boating increases, these lake ports will continue to experience more pressure for boating facilities. This will be in addition to pressures from other competing uses for port resources, such as for commercial, industrial, and residential needs.

Of great interest in terms of recreation planning is the recent development and expansion of a non-motorized trail network in Ottawa County (Figure 3.4). This network includes a large number of locally funded separated roadside paths, widened shoulders, sidewalks, and recreational trails that provide not only options for transportation but great recreational value as well. Additionally, a network of regional trails has been implemented in some areas and is in various stages of planning in several others. These trails have the potential to draw residents and visitors to them as a destination in themselves and to spur further trail development to create connections. Cities, towns, businesses, and other public attractions could all benefit from many of these connections.

Figure 3.4
 Non-Motorized Transportation Network



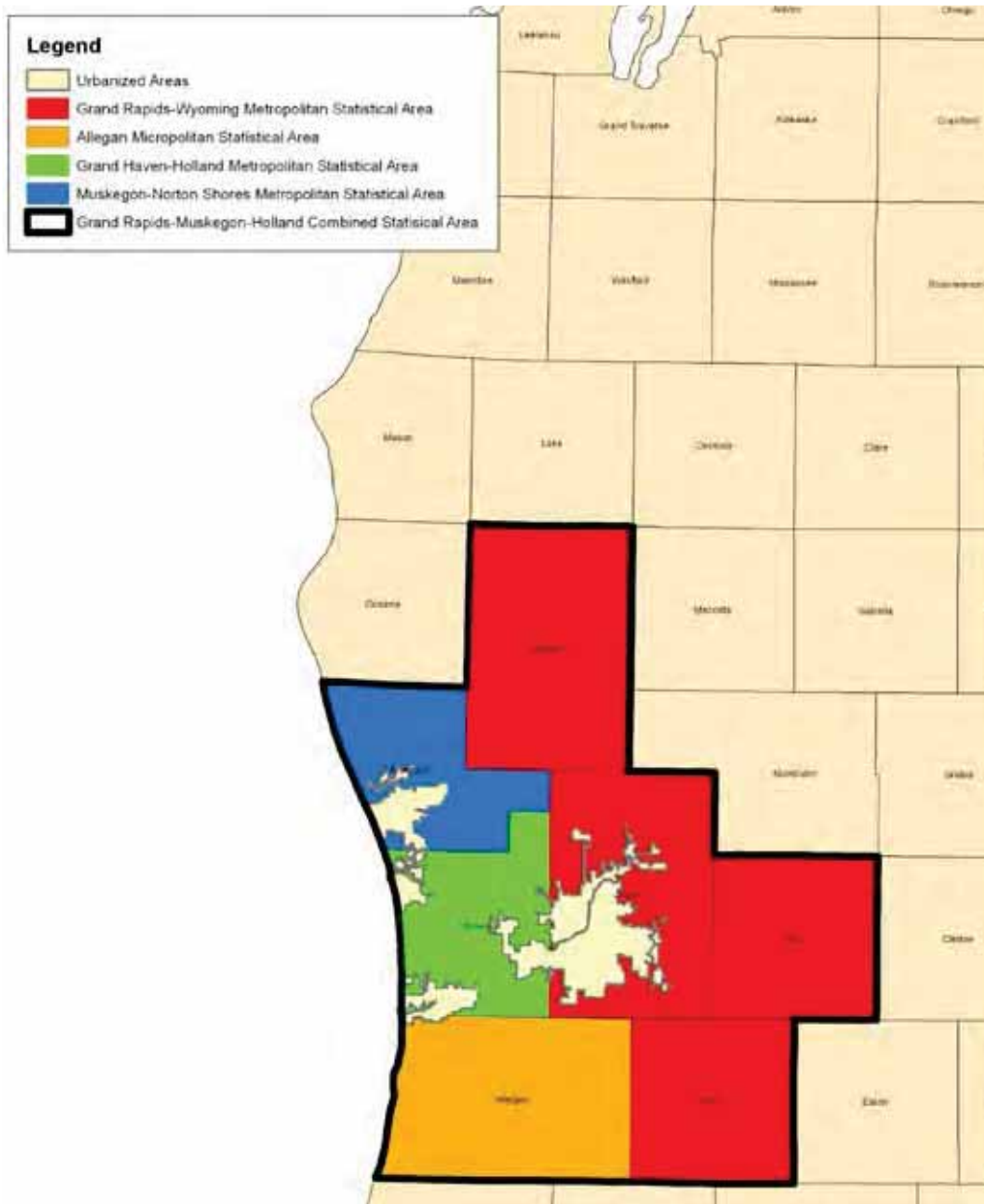
PLANNING AND ZONING

Although not readily visible like other cultural features, the county's political jurisdictions and their planning and zoning regulations will affect almost all future land uses in the county. Figure 3.5 identifies the county's 17 townships, six cities, and one village. These local jurisdictions vary widely in terms of their population, concerns, and level of service. The unique situation of each must be considered as plans for recreation are planned and implemented.

One particularly good indicator of future growth patterns is the zoning regulations for these local jurisdictions. The standardized zoning map (Figure 3.7) shows areas that these local governmental units desire to be developed or kept in less intensive land uses. Again, these unique situations should be considered as county plans proceed.

Ottawa County is also part of larger planning areas. Figure 3.6 identifies the metropolitan statistical areas that cover portions of the county.

Figure 3.6 - Planning Areas



CHAPTER 4 | COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Various population characteristics - size, age, income, education, and geographic distribution become important determinants as to the kind, amount, and location of recreational activities. The recreational interests of a person, for example, change as he or she ages, affecting the type and degree of recreation participation. A large proportion of individuals at a certain age level, such as under 15, would dictate certain types of facilities. In addition, many studies have also indicated that as a person's income and education level rises, so does his participation in recreation. Perhaps, more importantly, the geographic distribution and the size of the population impact the provision of recreation. Facilities need to be located where the people are and in sufficient quantity to avoid overuse or under utilization.

POPULATION TRENDS

Ottawa County ranks first in Michigan for population increase between 2010 and 2014, with an increase of 12,491 people representing a growth rate of 4.7%. In comparison, Kent County grew by 4.4%. The entire State grew by 0.3% during the same time period.

Table 4.1 provides a comparison of population trends and projections to 2030 for Ottawa and surrounding Counties.

Table 4.1 – Population Trends and Projections of Surrounding Counties

County	Population		Projections ¹	
	2010 Census	2014 Estimate	2020	2030
Allegan	111,408	113,847	118,306	125,737
Barry	59,173	59,281	59,874	60,862
Ionia	63,905	64,294	65,162	66,609
Kent	602,222	629,237	672,331	744,154
Muskegon	172,188	172,344	177,848	187,022
Newaygo	48,460	47,900	46,928	45,308
Ottawa	263,801	276,292	296,727	330,785
Michigan	9,883,640	9,909,877	9,982,801	10,104,341

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department

1. Projection data provided by the Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department. The calculations are based on the linear population trend from 2011-2014 in order to reflect the current economic conditions throughout Ottawa County and the State of Michigan.

The continuing growth of West Michigan and the Grand Rapids metropolitan area are strong indicators of the need for cooperative planning in Ottawa County. The economic and living environment of Ottawa County and the surrounding region is likely to continue to attract new employers and residents throughout the coming decade and beyond.

Within Ottawa County, the growth varies widely among local communities, as is shown in Table 4.2. The highest rate increase between 2010 and 2014 occurred in Jamestown Township (9.4% increase

in population). Over half of the population (55.68%) resides in five communities – Georgetown Township, Holland Township, Holland City, Allendale Township, and Park Township. These communities contain a population of 153,842.

Crockery Township, Jamestown Township, and Zeeland Township have all grown by more than 7% since 2010.

Table 4.2 – Ottawa County Population Trends: 2010-2014

Minor Civil Division	2010 Census	2014 Estimate	% Change (2010-2014)	Population Change (2010-2014)
Allendale Township	20,708	21,655	4.6%	947
Blendon Township	5,772	6,147	6.5%	375
Chester Township	2,017	2,058	2.0%	41
Coopersville City	4,275	4,344	1.6%	69
Crockery Township	3,960	4,297	8.5%	337
Ferrysburg City	2,892	2,984	3.2%	92
Georgetown Township	46,985	49,646	5.7%	2,661
Grand Haven City	10,412	10,965	5.3%	553
Grand Haven Township	15,178	15,990	5.3%	812
Holland City*	26,035	26,571	2.1%	536
Holland Township	35,636	37,433	5.0%	1,797
Hudsonville City	7,116	7,323	2.9%	207
Jamestown Township	7,034	7,694	9.4%	660
Olive Township	4,735	4,957	4.7%	222
Park Township	17,802	18,537	4.1%	735
Polkton Township	2,423	2,529	4.4%	106
Port Sheldon Township	4,240	4,443	4.8%	203
Robinson Township	6,084	6,389	5.0%	305
Spring Lake Township	11,977	12,438	3.8%	461
Spring Lake Village	2,323	2,449	5.4%	126
Tallmadge Township	7,575	7,881	4.0%	306
Wright Township	3,147	3,246	3.1%	99
Zeeland City	5,504	5,626	2.2%	122
Zeeland Township	9,971	10,690	7.2%	719
County Total	263,801	276,292	4.7%	12,491

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*Ottawa County Only

Projections of future population growth serve as an important tool for projecting what the future recreational needs of the County may be. Table 4.3 illustrates the population projections for the County to the year 2030. These projections indicate substantial growth within the County for the coming years and therefore support the need for more recreational facilities and open space to meet the needs of County residents in the future.

Table 4.3 – Ottawa County Population Projections: 2010-2030

Minor Civil Division	2020 Projection ¹	2030 Projection ¹	% Change (2010-2020)	% Change (2020-2030)
Allendale Township	23,234	25,865	12.2%	12.7%
Blendon Township	6,759	7,779	17.1%	17.7%
Chester Township	2,127	2,242	5.5%	5.7%
Coopersville City	4,478	4,701	4.7%	5.2%
Crockery Township	4,820	5,691	21.7%	22.0%
Ferrysburg City	3,136	3,390	8.4%	8.8%
Georgetown Township	53,898	60,984	14.7%	15.1%
Grand Haven City	12,053	13,866	15.8%	17.4%
Grand Haven Township	17,418	19,798	14.8%	15.7%
Holland City*	27,431	28,865	5.4%	5.5%
Holland Township	40,194	44,796	12.8%	12.9%
Hudsonville City	7,689	8,299	8.1%	8.6%
Jamestown Township	8,766	10,552	24.6%	25.4%
Olive Township	5,307	5,891	12.1%	12.3%
Park Township	19,717	21,683	10.8%	11.0%
Polkton Township	2,690	2,959	11.0%	11.1%
Port Sheldon Township	4,802	5,400	13.3%	14.1%
Robinson Township	6,910	7,779	13.6%	14.3%
Spring Lake Township	13,175	14,403	10.0%	10.3%
Spring Lake Village	2,679	3,063	15.3%	16.5%
Tallmadge Township	8,366	9,174	10.4%	10.7%
Wright Township	3,415	3,697	8.5%	9.0%
Zeeland City	5,810	6,117	5.6%	5.6%
Zeeland Township	11,853	13,791	18.9%	19.4%
County Total	296,727	330,785	12.5%	12.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department

*Ottawa County only

1. Projection data provided by the Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department. The calculations are based on the linear population trend from 2011-2014 in order to reflect the current economic conditions throughout Ottawa County and the State of Michigan.

AGE

As noted previously, the age of the population is an important indicator for recreation planning. Considerable variation exists with respect to age. For example, while the County median age is 34.5 years, the median in Allendale Township is only 21.1, reflecting the influence of Grand Valley State University. High concentrations of school-age children are found in some of the rural areas such as Blendon, Jamestown, and Olive Townships. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the median ages in the Spring Lake, Ferrysburg, and Grand Haven are 42, 47, and 42 years respectively, indicating an aging population. Table 4.4 shows the age by community in Ottawa County.

Table 4.4 – Age by Community – As a percent of Community Population

Geographic Area	Total Population	Percent of Total Population					Median age (years)
		Under 18 years	18 to 24 years	25 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years and over	
Allendale Township	20,708	17.6	49.3	17.1	11.8	4.2	21.1
Blendon Township	5,772	26.3	10.4	21.7	31.6	10.0	38.5
Chester Township	2,017	24.2	8.9	22.4	32.2	12.4	41.3
Coopersville City	4,275	29.3	9.7	27.8	22.0	11.2	32.8
Crockery Township	3,960	23.3	8.5	24.0	31.7	12.6	41.1
Ferrysburg City	2,892	20.0	6.7	20.2	33.1	20.0	47.1
Georgetown Township	46,985	27.2	10.9	23.9	25.0	13.0	35.3
Grand Haven City	10,412	20.7	7.6	24.1	28.5	19.1	42.9
Grand Haven Township	15,178	27.1	7.0	23.3	31.2	11.3	40.3
Holland City*	26,035	23.5	18.8	25.0	20.4	12.3	30.3
Holland Township	35,636	30.3	9.0	29.7	22.1	8.9	32.0
Hudsonville City	7,116	28.4	8.8	25.7	22.6	14.5	33.5
Jamestown Township	7,034	31.7	7.8	26.8	25.5	8.1	33.1
Olive Township	4,735	27.9	10.5	29.1	25.8	6.7	32.8
Park Township	17,802	26.4	6.3	21.7	32.4	13.2	42.1
Polkton Township	2,423	25.2	9.2	22.9	29.6	13.0	40.4
Port Sheldon Township	4,240	22.9	6.2	20.3	36.7	13.9	45.3
Robinson Township	6,084	28.2	7.1	26.0	30.2	8.5	37.7
Spring Lake Township	11,977	25.5	6.5	22.9	28.8	16.3	42.1
Spring Lake Village	2,323	21.6	6.2	22.5	29.1	20.5	44.8
Tallmadge Township	7,575	25.1	9.5	21.7	32.2	11.5	40.1
Wright Township	3,147	25.0	9.2	23.0	30.3	12.5	39.8
Zeeland City	5,504	25.4	7.6	23.8	20.5	22.7	38.8
Zeeland Township	9,971	31.5	7.5	27.6	23.7	9.6	33.8
County Total	263,801	26.1	12.8	24.3	25.1	11.8	34.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

* Ottawa County only

Data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows that, at the time, the age makeup of Ottawa County did not differ greatly from that of the State overall. Table 4.5 compares the County’s age distribution to that of the State.

Table 4.5 – Age Distribution (2014)

Age	Ottawa County		Michigan Percent
	Number	Percent	
Under 5	17,490	6.3%	5.8%
5-9	19,215	6.9%	6.1%
10-14	19,844	7.2%	6.5%
15-19	23,651	8.6%	6.8%
20-24	26,002	9.4%	7.4%
25-34	32,555	11.8%	12.1%
35-44	32,452	11.7%	12.0%
45-54	36,060	13.0%	14.1%
55-59	17,290	6.3%	7.4%
60-64	15,188	5.5%	6.4%
65-74	20,614	7.5%	8.8%
75-84	10,696	3.9%	4.5%
85+	5,235	1.9%	2.1%
Median Age	34.8		39.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

RACE/ETHNIC GROUP DISTRIBUTION

The majority of the population in Ottawa County is white, non-Hispanic (84.5%). The percent of Ottawa County residents who are white is much higher than the State of Michigan.

The percent of Ottawa County residents who are white, non-Hispanic decreased 1.5% since 2010. The percent statewide decreased by 1.2% during the same time period.

The table below does not break out Hispanics or Latinos as a category under race, as the federal government considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics may be of any race. The U.S. Census does show that 9.4% of Ottawa County’s population indicated they were Hispanic or Latino. This is a significant percentage of Ottawa County’s population and warrants consideration in park planning and program development. Non-scientific observation of park use suggests that Hispanics are well represented in the parks that provide picnic areas, particularly the County Parks along Lake Michigan.

Table 4.6 – Race/Ethnic Group Distribution (2014)

Race	Ottawa County		Michigan Percent
	Number	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	233,456	84.5%	75.8%
Hispanic	25,923	9.4%	4.8%
African American, Non-Hispanic	4,185	1.5%	13.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic	843	0.3%	0.6%
Asian, Non-Hispanic	7,674	2.8%	2.8%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	93	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	4,118	1.5%	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Physical Disabilities Population

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES POPULATION

Ensuring that recreational facilities are accessible to persons of all levels of physical ability is a top priority. Data concerning the number of persons with physical disabilities is an important consideration for programming facility needs. Table 4.7 indicates Ottawa County has slightly lower population levels of physically disabled people than the State of Michigan as a whole. These numbers should not underestimate the importance of making recreational facilities accessible to persons with mobility limitations. Care should be taken in the design of all facilities to ensure they meet the needs of such persons.

Table 4.7 – Physical Disabilities (2014)

Disability Status	Ottawa County		Michigan
	Number	Percent	Percent
Persons Under 18 Years			
Disabled	2,498	3.6%	5.1%
Not Disabled	66,567	96.4%	94.9%
Persons 18 to 64 Years			
Disabled	12,699	7.5%	12.6%
Not Disabled	157,609	92.5%	87.4%
Persons 65 Years and Over			
Disabled	11,121	31.3%	36.1%
Not Disabled	24,400	68.7%	63.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

GENDER

Most communities have a higher proportion of females due to their higher life expectancy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Ottawa County's 2014 population was 49.3% male and 50.7% female. Michigan's 2014 population was 49.1% male and 50.9% female.

HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION

Household distribution can influence a community's recreation needs since the distribution often identifies unique community traits. Ottawa County has several household characteristics that may influence the recreation programming and planning. Table 4.8 shows the County has a higher proportion of family households (74.5 percent) than Michigan (64.8 percent). Within the overall category of family households, the County has a higher percentage of married couple families than the State, a lower proportion of female households with no spouse and a lower percentage of male householders with no spouse. Since Ottawa County has a higher proportion of family households, it follows that it has a lower proportion of non-family households. The County has a lower proportion of one-person households (20.2 percent) and a lower proportion of householders 65 and over living alone.

This information identifies the need to focus attention on family households (while not forgetting non-family households) by providing programs and facilities designed to serve families with children.

Table 4.8 – Household Distribution (2014)

Household Distribution	Ottawa County		Michigan Percent
	Number	Percent	
Total Households	97,198	---	---
Family Households			
Total	72,448	74.5%	64.8%
Married Couple Family	61,288	63.0%	47.3%
Female Householder, no spouse present	7,936	8.2%	12.7%
Male Householder, no spouse present	3,224	3.3%	4.8%
Non Family Households			
Total	24,750	25.5%	35.2%
Householder Living Alone	19,634	20.2%	29.1%
Householder 65 years and over	9,039	9.3%	11.1%
Persons in Household (Average)	2.75		2.53

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

EMPLOYMENT

Table 4.9 identifies Ottawa County and Michigan employment trends for the years 2010 through 2014. The County's labor force increased steadily between 2010 and 2013, and greatly (11%) between 2013 and 2014. Unemployment has steadily decreased in the County since 2010.

The employment information shows the area's employment diversity and emphasizes the variety that exists. Many workers have active jobs while others have sedentary jobs. Recreation facilities and programs should exist that benefit both of these categories.

Table 4.9 – Employment Trends

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ottawa County					
Total Labor Force	127,848	128,895	129,750	131,848	148,812
Employment	113,478	118,084	120,670	122,957	141,774
Unemployment	14,370	10,811	9,080	8,891	7,038
Unemployment Rate	11.2%	8.4%	7.0%	6.7%	4.7%
Region 8					
Unemployment Rate	11.2%	8.7%	7.3%	7.0%	5.2%
State of Michigan					
Unemployment Rate	12.6%	10.4%	9.1%	8.9%	7.3%

Source: Michigan Labor Market Information, Department of Labor and Economic Growth

Economic development of the County began with the exploitation of fur and timber resources during the early nineteenth century. Since that time, the economic base of Ottawa County has steadily expanded and diversified to include various manufacturing activities, numerous agricultural undertakings, and growing tourism-related enterprises. Table 4.10 identifies employment distribution in the County and in Michigan. Ottawa County’s employment distribution shows that “Management, professional and related” is the largest occupation category with “Sales and office” “Manufacturing”, and “Education, health care, and social assistance” as the largest industries. Michigan’s employment distribution differs only slightly with the “Manufacturing” somewhat less important on a statewide basis.

Table 4.10 – Labor Force Employment (2014)

	Ottawa County		Michigan Percent
	Number	Percent	
Employed Population 16 Years and Over	125,096	---	---
Occupation			
Management, professional, and related	42,333	33.8%	33.4%
Service	19,306	15.4%	19.0%
Sales and office	30,502	24.4%	25.6%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	2,760	2.2%	0.7%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair	8,621	6.9%	7.4%
Production, transportation, and material moving	21,574	17.2%	13.9%
Industry			
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	3,951	3.2%	1.4%
Construction	6,866	5.5%	5.0%
Manufacturing	28,548	22.8%	16.0%
Wholesale trade	4,683	3.7%	2.6%
Retail trade	12,536	10.0%	12.1%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	4,875	3.9%	4.0%
Information	2,553	2.0%	1.8%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	5,566	4.4%	5.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management	9,000	7.2%	9.1%
Education, health care, and social assistance	27,429	21.9%	23.8%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service	9,329	7.5%	9.6%
Other services (except public administration)	6,061	4.8%	5.0%
Public administration	3,699	3.0%	4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

The County's household income levels are considerably higher than Michigan's. Table 4.11 shows Ottawa County's 2014 median household income was \$70,676. This figure is much higher than Michigan's median household income of \$62,143. Ottawa County also has a very low percentage of people below the poverty level compared to the State level.

This information indicates most people in Ottawa County can afford to pay for recreational programs and that the area can afford to develop and maintain adequate facilities to meet the growing population needs.

Table 4.11 – Socio-Economic Levels (2014)

	Ottawa County	Michigan
Median Family Income	\$70,676	\$62,143
Per Capita Income	\$26,967	\$26,613
Percentage of Families Below Poverty Level	4.6%	11.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

The educational attainment of Ottawa County residents differs only slightly from the state with the exception of Bachelor's degrees. There are significantly more residents with a Bachelor's degree in Ottawa County compared to the state.

Table 4.12 – Educational Attainment (2014)

	Ottawa County		Michigan
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total Population	169,189	---	---
Less than 9th grade	5,245	3.1%	3.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	7,613	4.5%	6.9%
High school graduate or GED	49,911	29.5%	29.7%
Some college, no degree	35,699	21.1%	23.6%
Associate's degree	15,735	9.3%	9.3%
Bachelor's degree	35,868	21.2%	16.5%
Graduate or professional degree	19,118	11.3%	10.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

SECTION THREE: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



CHAPTER 5 | ADMINISTRATION & OPERATION

CHAPTER 6 | FINANCING & BUDGET PROJECTIONS



CHAPTER 5 | ADMINISTRATION & OPERATION



The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) was established in 1987 by the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners (OCBOC), pursuant to Act 261 of the Public Acts of 1965. Membership of the 10-member Commission, by statute, includes a representative of the Board of Road Commissioners, the Water Resources Commissioner, the representative of the County Planning Commission, and seven members appointed by the OCBOC, not more than three of whom are members of the Board. The OCPRC is a policy-making body that operates under the general control of the OCBOC.

OCPRC's expressed goal for the park system is to provide the highest quality recreational experience possible through creative park design, high quality interpretive programs and by implementing high standards for parks maintenance, facility construction, and security. This goal has been pursued through the diligent efforts of park staff in all aspects of park planning, administration, educational programming and park maintenance and operations.

UPDATED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The basic structure for park operations was established in 1990 when the OCPRC acquired operations from the Road Commission. It has expanded and evolved as the park system has grown. Since its inception, the OCPRC has recognized the seasonal nature of its business and has sought to be efficient by employing a minimum number of highly capable full-time personnel while emphasizing the use of seasonal employees and alternative sources of labor with a major focus on building a solid base of volunteers.

Over the years, the OCPRC has worked with the Ottawa County Human Resources Department to evaluate staffing needs in an effort to keep staffing capability in proportion to the growing operational commitment. In addition, organizational structures from successful parks organizations in the state and region are continually reviewed and analyzed and alternative organizational structures are examined. The county park system encompassed approximately 2,000 acres in 1996 and has expanded to over 6,400 acres by the end of 2015. Numbers of full-time park staff (all functions) grew from nine in 1996 to 17 in 2015.

Assessing the organizational structure of the department include the following:

- A structure that allows for orderly growth and which continues the focus on high-quality maintenance and operations. The system should also result in promotional opportunities for staff, to help ensure motivated employees.
- The need for employees to work independently, since many employees work in off-site locations without direct supervision.
- The need to maintain the appropriate balance of administrative and clerical support staff in the main office with growing volume of activity.
- The potential addition of special facilities such as a campground or other staff-intensive operations requires the need for flexibility in the organizational structure. Decisions should be made by the OCPRC with awareness of staffing needs and the structure should be able to accommodate the necessary staff.
- Recognition that the growing diversity of recreational facilities offered in the park system requires an increasingly diverse staff in terms of training, expertise and cultural intelligence.
- The distance between sites and related travel time, is an important factor which influences how to best shape the park operations system. The need for satellite operations facilities has been identified and implemented.
- The seasonality of the operation sets County Parks apart from most other County departments and needs to be considered in shaping future operations.
- The OCPRC currently uses a wide variety of volunteers to accomplish many special projects within the park system. Staff recognizes the potential to significantly expand the use of volunteers but recognizes the need for adequate staff to manage volunteer resources. The current part-time volunteer coordinator position should be evaluated for the potential to expand hours to keep pace with the growing volunteer program.
- The importance of a strong natural resource management influence the OCPRC to add a Natural Resources Management Supervisor in 2011 and significant progress has been made in detecting and managing invasive species; in inventorying and understanding natural features within the park system; and restoring habitats at various park and opens space lands. Additional staff will be needed in the future to address needs in the expanding park system plus the growing threat from invasive species.
- The importance of effectively communicating the opportunities available within the park system to the public has grown as the park system has expanded and matured. Methods of communicating have changed rapidly over the past decade as people have shifted to more electronic methods (i.e. visiting websites for core information and relying on social media for both communication and information). These factors influenced the OCPRC to add a Communications Specialist position to oversee all formal communications including the parks newsletter, website management, social media, press releases and on-site park informational displays. It is challenging but critically important to keep information up-to-date in all of the different communication outlets to keep the public informed as to how they can benefit from the parks program.

The above observations will continually be assessed and new issues identified as the park system matures. The goal is to be proactive in evolving the organizational structure of the parks department to best manage the growing park system. In line with this approach, the OCPRC has requested

and received approval for a new Maintenance Worker position in 2016 which will allow staffing to decentralize maintenance staff to provide more decision-making capability for regional Park Supervisors.

Past study and experience in managing the park system has led to the establishment of four distinct divisions within the parks and recreation department: Park Operations, Park Planning, Interpretive Services, and Park Administration (see long-term organizational chart on following page). This framework provides a logical division of basic functions within the department that allows for growth of staff and provides for promotional opportunity in all four divisions.

Maintenance and Operations

The Coordinator of Park Maintenance and Operations oversees all maintenance and operations functions including a full-time staff of seven and over 80 part-time and seasonal staff. Park Maintenance and Operations encompasses all park maintenance activities at 39 separate properties as well as administration of fee collection at lakeshore parks and boat launches, winter operations and concessions, and other special operations. The Parks Manager reports to the Coordinator and oversees five full time Park Supervisors plus two full-time Maintenance Workers and Parks Equipment Specialists. When a third Maintenance Worker is added in 2016, the three Maintenance Workers will be assigned to Park Supervisors and fall under their management. The addition of a third full-time Maintenance Worker position reflects a recognition that, while seasonal employees can carry the bulk of the operational burden during the peak summer season, additional maintenance expertise and year around capability is needed to keep the park system functioning at a high level. Adding both seasonal staff and additional Maintenance Worker is considered a cost effective way to adding maintenance and operational capability as the park system grows.

Park Planning and Development

Following approval of the first parks millage, the OCPRC added a Park Planner to help implement the expanding program. The Park Planner was hired with responsibilities for assessing lands, planning new parks and facilities, and developing long-range planning strategies. As the park planning and development functions expanded, the need to add the Coordinator of Park Planning and Development to oversee this function was identified. The position was added in 2005 and Park Planning and Development was established as a division within the department. Park Planning and Development staff prepare and update the long-range parks and open space plan and individual park master plans. They have responsibility for planning and oversight of park improvements within the park system plus provide input and assistance in a wide range of other matters.

Interpretive Services

The Interpretive and Information Services Division within the Parks and Recreation Department oversees all interpretive functions, including operation of the Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing. The four-season interpretive program is based out of the Nature Education Center but also includes programs at parks throughout the system. The Coordinator of Interpretive and Information Services was added in 2009 to oversee the Park Naturalist position. The establishment of this position coincided with the development of the Nature Education Center. Part-time Naturalist Guides were also added in 2010 to help with the expanded interpretive program and operation of the new Center. In addition to nature education programming, the Nature Education Center also functions as a visitor center for the park system and staff provide important public relations functions in addition to their other duties. The number of Nature Education Center guests and program participants has increased significantly. To manage the growing administrative tasks,

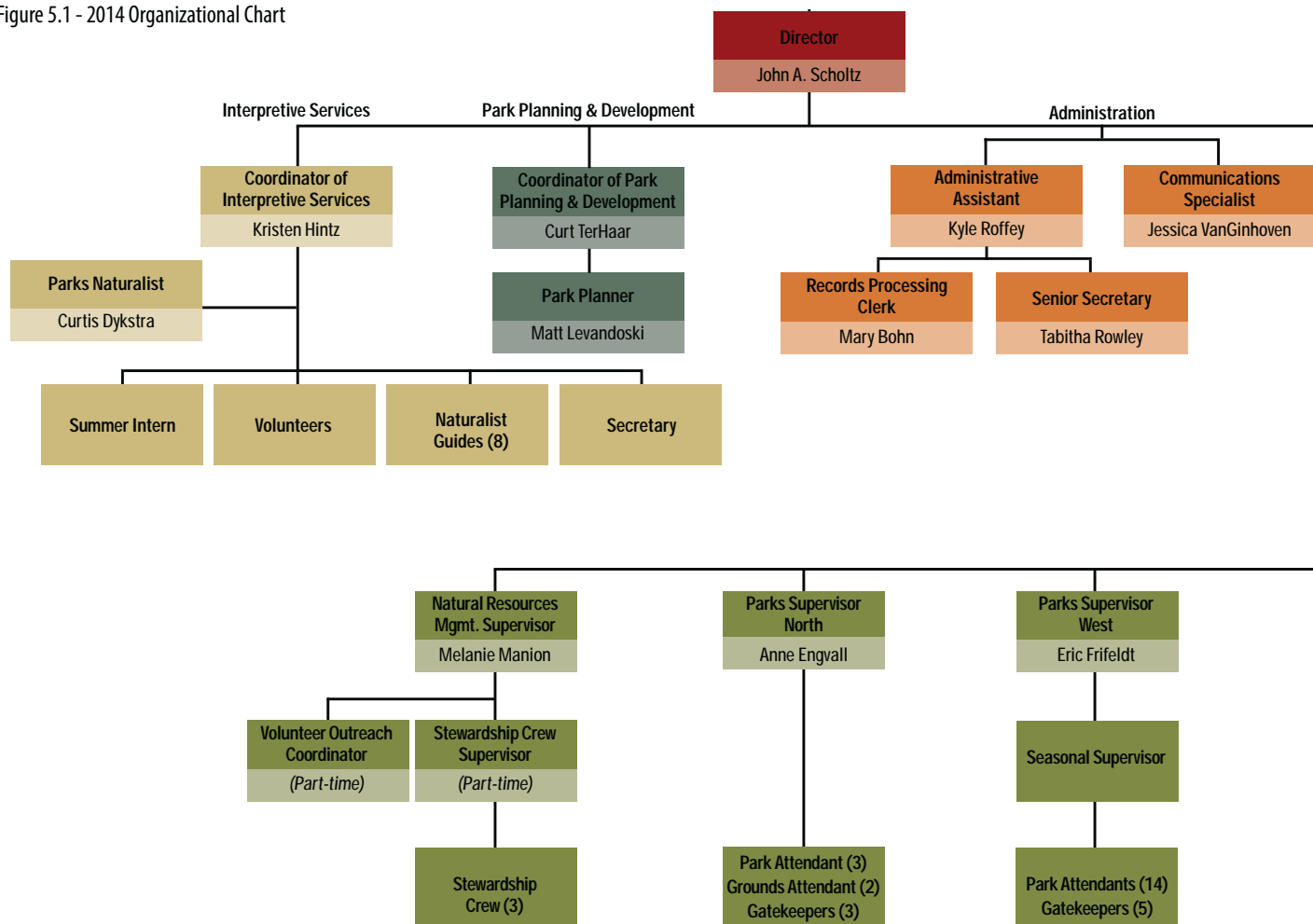
the OCPRC is adding a full-time secretary in 2016. This position will help maintain high standards of programming and high quality customer service.

Administrative Support

General administrative support consists of the Parks Director, Administrative Assistant, Parks Secretary (part-time), Records Processing Clerk II (part-time), and Communications Specialist. The position of Administrative Secretary was created in 2007 (upgraded in 2014) to respond to growth in facility reservations, mailings, general phone inquiries, and a wide range of clerical and administrative functions. The position, which oversees other clerical positions, also provides administrative support for the Director. It will be important to carefully monitor activity levels and increase staffing levels as needed to manage the office and support all necessary services.

The Communications Specialist was added in 2015 in response to the growing need for capacity and expertise in the area of communications as noted previously. The Communications Specialist is the lead staff person for website updates and maintenance, social media, quarterly newsletter, park brochures, annual report, press releases, park kiosk information updates, and a range of other public relations activities.

Figure 5.1 - 2014 Organizational Chart

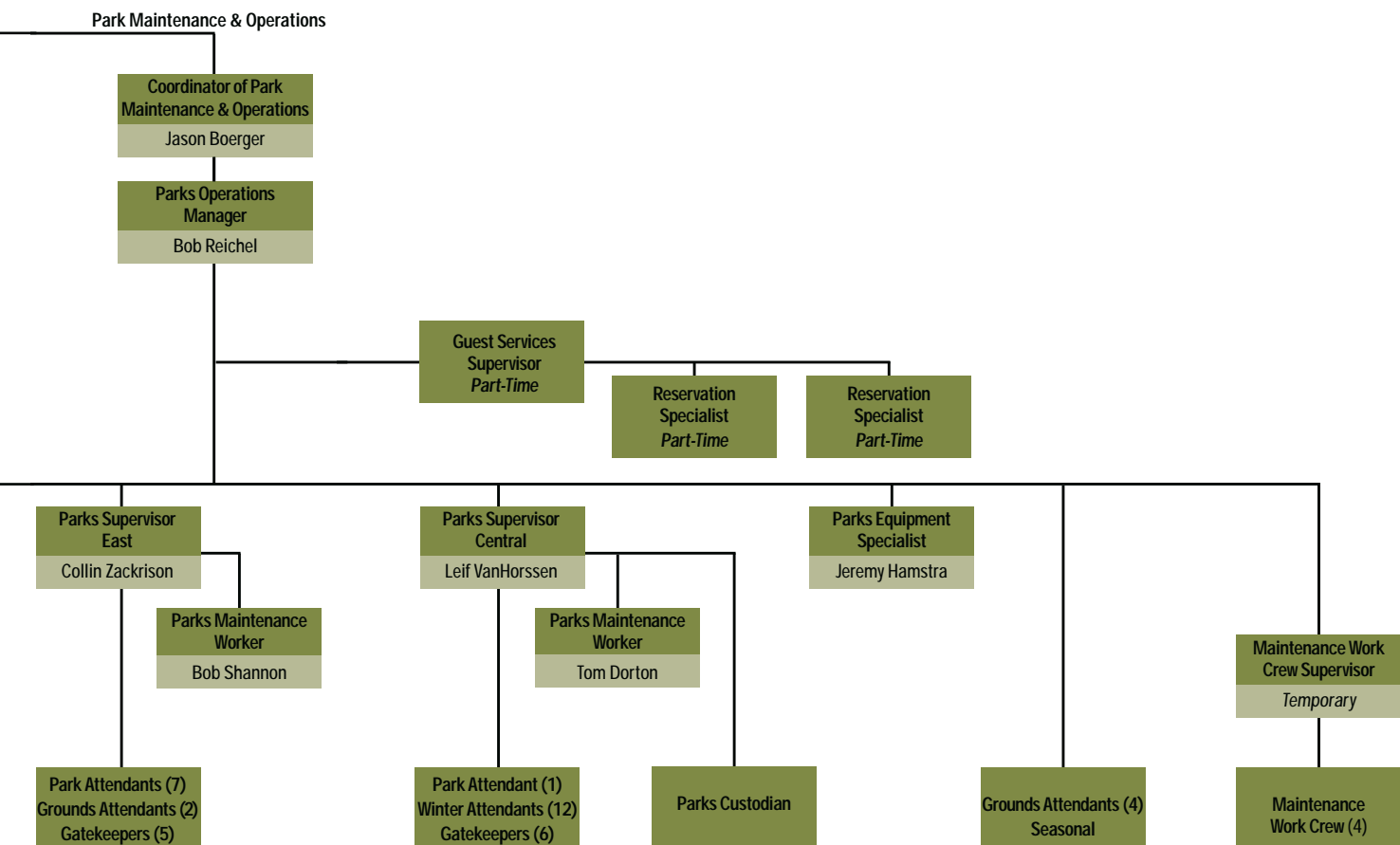


Future Needs

It is critical that the organizational chart (Figure 5.1) remain flexible depending upon how the park system evolves in the future and the types of facilities added. A future campground, for example, would have very specific staffing needs and likely offsetting revenues. It is believed that the current organizational structure could accommodate this type of growth but will likely need to be adjusted in response to opportunities as they arise.

As noted in Chapter 12: Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives, providing “high quality maintenance and operations” is a top priority of the OCPRC. Maintaining high standards in an expanding park system is particularly challenging. It is critical that necessary administrative, operational and seasonal staff be added as operational requirements expand. Funds for supplies, repairs, needed equipment, and related items must also grow proportionately.

The long-range budget projection shown in Table 6.1 estimates staff needs and related operational costs for new facilities as they come on line over the next several-year period. With uncertainty regarding future land purchases and facility development, it is not possible to accurately project all specific operational requirements.



CHAPTER 6 | FINANCING & BUDGET PROJECTIONS

This plan carefully analyzes county-wide park and recreation needs and proposes projects to address those needs. This chapter will examine potential sources for financing those projects as well as the funds needed to maintain and operate the upgraded park system. This chapter reviews the broad range of potential funding sources and uses a long-range budget to illustrate the level of funding available from known sources. This projection is expanded upon in Chapter 13 to include specific projects reflecting current priorities and their potential funding sources including grants and donations.

PARK SYSTEM FINANCING

Generating the necessary financial resources to improve and operate the county park system is a crucial task. Voter approval of the first dedicated millage for Ottawa County Parks in 1996 with a 53.5% approval rating was a monumental event with regard to financing an expanding park system. Renewal of the millage ten years later with support from 67% of the voters was viewed as a demonstration of support for the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission's (OCPRC) progress in improving the park system. However, despite this expanding base of support for its core source of funding, the OCPRC feels strongly it should continue to diversify its funding support to as great an extent as possible. A diversified funding base will put less of a burden on property tax support and likely result in a more sustainable park system on a long-term basis. In this regard, the OCPRC has outlined the following funding strategy:

A diversified funding strategy for the park system should include the following elements:

- A dedicated parks millage of one-third (0.33) mill as a cornerstone to provide funding for expanding and improving parks and open space lands and their operation and maintenance. This plan will serve as the foundation for renewal of the 10 year millage proposed to be on the ballot in 2016.
- Continued emphasis on user fees where appropriate.
- Development of partnerships with the private sector and other units of government whenever possible.
- Concerted efforts to solicit gifts and donations through the recently established Ottawa County Parks Foundation which can provide a vehicle for corporate and other private donors to provide long-term funding assistance.
- Continued aggressive efforts to secure state and federal grant funds.
- While acknowledging the loss of General Fund support for park operations during the current economic down-turn, the Parks Commission should remain alert to opportunities in the future to renew General Fund support when the economy improves.

It is the intention of the OCPRC to investigate all opportunities for generating acquisition, development and operation funds. The following briefly reviews some of the key alternative funding sources which the OCPRC will explore.

GENERAL FUND SUPPORT

For many years, property taxes through Ottawa County's General Fund Budget were the principal means of support for the OCPRC budget. The financing proposal approved by the Board of

Commissioners (OCBOC) in 1996, which included the request to seek millage support, called for continued general fund support. General fund support did in fact continue for 13 years following approval of the parks millage in the form of an allocation frozen at 1997 levels (\$530,000). The General fund allocation was eliminated in the 2010 budget amidst major county-wide funding shortfalls and a declining tax base. The OCPRC was aware that as a non-mandated county function with an alternative means of tax support, the OCPRC would be particularly vulnerable to cutbacks during periods of financial instability. Despite this setback, the OCPRC remains hopeful that general funds may be allocated in the future when economic conditions improve either on an ongoing basis or for special projects.

USER FEES

Surveys of Ottawa County residents indicate support for user fees as a method of paying for parks and recreation services. Currently users of Ottawa County Parks pay motor vehicle parking fees at the four Lake Michigan parks (North Beach, Kirk, Tunnel, and Rosy Mound) and a boat launch fee at Riverside Park. Fee revenues from these sources totaled \$386,980 in 2015, the highest year on record.

In addition to raising revenues to offset operational costs, user fees also provide a means for non-residents to support the park system, assist with management of high use facilities, and provide a way to apportion costs to those who benefit from special services. The OCPRC recognizes the importance of outdoor recreation opportunities to the health and well-being of all people and is concerned that fees could inhibit use of the parks by low-income residents. This concern prompted the OCPRC and OCBOC to establish a policy in 2010 that provides a means for low income residents to apply for and receive a free annual motor vehicle parking permit. Applicants are required to show their Michigan Bridge Card, a benefit card issued by the Department of Social Services to residents qualifying for assistance.

User fees are also charged for facility reservations (i.e., picnic shelters, picnic buildings, etc.) available at many of the parks. This source of user fee support generated over \$132,900 in 2015, which included 1,414 individual reservations serving approximately 91,933 people.

In 2015, total user fees of about \$536,203 made up approximately 17% of the OCPRC's operating budget. The potential to increase revenues from user fees would require either increased fees or implementation of fees for new areas or facilities.

Fees are increased periodically by the OCPRC based on surveys of park users and research into fee levels in surrounding communities. A formal fee policy would be beneficial to help guide future decision-making regarding fees. The potential to implement motor vehicle parking fees at additional parks should be evaluated on a site-by-site basis, however most likely do not have high enough use required to make fees cost-effective.

It should be noted that while user fees are an important source of park revenues, the OCPRC feels it should not over rely on user fees as it establishes plans and financial strategies. User fees can effectively offset a portion of operating costs, but are not a realistic source of capital improvements funds.

MILLAGE

Certainly one of the most reliable sources of funds is that of a voted millage for parks and recreation services. As noted earlier, the OCPRC first approved its dedicated county parks millage of 1/3 mill in 1996 and then renewed in 2006. Another renewal vote is planned for 2016. The millage provides a relatively secure source of annual funding for a 10-year period. The great strides made by the OCPRC

over the past 19 years would not have been possible without the support of residents in the form of millage funding. The ability to use millage funds to leverage grant funds and private donations has been key to the OCPRC's success. The importance of the millage as a source of operating funds for the expanding park system also cannot be overemphasized. As initially envisioned, the percentage of millage funds used for operation and maintenance has risen significantly over the past 10 years as the OCPRC nears its acquisition goals. In 2015, approximately 79% of the maintenance and operations budget of \$3,089,996 is derived from the parks millage.

The 2015 county resident survey showed continued strong support for the parks millage, with 84% of those polled expressing support for the millage and 90% expressing a positive rating for the overall park system. Based on the importance of the 1/3 mill levy in funding both new initiatives and ongoing operations, it is vital that the OCPRC continue to be responsive to voter desires as it expands, improves and operates the county park system.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

Under Michigan State Law, county governments can issue General Obligation Bonds against anticipated tax receipts. The advantage for park and recreation development is that larger amounts of funds can be committed to the development of a major facility. A wide variety of needs can be addressed immediately, and anticipated increases in the cost of acquisition and development can be circumvented by early action. The disadvantages to issuing general obligation bonds are that they commit the county to a long payback (usually 15 to 20 years). This involves interest charges and places financial obligations on future generations.

REVENUE BONDS

In some instances, recreation facilities (e.g., campgrounds, marinas, etc.) can generate revenue for operation and maintenance costs and enough extra to pay back principal and interest on revenue bonds. Before this method of generating revenue is chosen, it is essential to develop a detailed analysis of estimated cost and income for the particular project.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS / PARKS FOUNDATION

Gifts to the OCPRC in the form of land, money or other resources can play a vital role in the development of the park system. The acquisition of the 500 acre North Ottawa Dunes in 2005 is a prime example. With the Land Conservancy of West Michigan helping to spearhead fundraising efforts, private donations to that project exceeded \$1.4 million and played a key role in helping to secure a large state grant.

Donations were also instrumental in the development of the Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center (NEC) located at Hemlock Crossing, with donations of funds and services exceeding \$450,000 to help with construction. Donations came from a variety of sources including individuals, area businesses and local foundations. With the NEC open and operating, an effort is underway to establish an endowment through the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of the Holland / Zeeland Area. The goal is to create a stable source of funding to assist schools and other groups unable to visit the NEC for financial reasons and to help fund educational materials and training opportunities at the NEC.

Donations of land have also been important in establishing both the Pigeon and Grand River Greenways. Additional effort should be made to explore whether additional land donations could

benefit the park system and help achieve current goals.

OCPRC is committed to expanding its efforts to seek and encourage gifts of land, money, and other resources to help support the county park system. Towards that end, the Ottawa County Parks Foundation began organizing in 2015 and initiated fundraising efforts in 2016. The expressed purpose of the organization is to “...assist OCPRC by raising funds to be used for improvement, expansion, and promotion of the county park system...”. Although it is too early to know the level of success the newly formed organization will have with its fundraising efforts, it is a big step forward for the Ottawa County parks program to enlist the support this citizen-based group. The potential to boost funding for a variety of park projects is exciting and could greatly benefit the park system in the future.



PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Opportunities for joint projects with organizations in the public or private sector should be explored when such efforts can assist the OCPRC in accomplishing its stated goals. In 2008, the OCPRC and Holland Township partnered to acquire a 40-acre parcel within the Macatawa Greenway corridor. The Parks Commission's desire was to preserve this land for its natural and recreational value and for its greenway trail potential. Holland Township was seeking a passive park in that portion of the township and agreed to develop and maintain the site. Holland Township has since developed the Hawthorn Pond Natural Area into a high quality park site offering fishing, picnicking, trails and other amenities.

Acquisition of the former Holland Country Club property was aided by partnering with the Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway (ODCMG). The ODCMG raised \$70,000 in private funds to supplement the \$450,000 purchase.

In recent years, Ottawa County Parks has supported the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail with a \$200,000 contribution to assist Zeeland and Jamestown Township, the project sponsors. The new trail serves both Spring Grove Park and the Upper Macatawa Natural Area. Another partnership with the City of Ferrysburg resulted in the Parks Commission committing \$50,000 to the project for the North Shore Drive bike path which provides a non-motorized route to both North Ottawa Dunes and North Beach Park.

OCPRC has also requested and received commitments of support in partnering to complete the Grand River Greenway. Recognizing the tremendous scope of the project, OCPRC appealed to township governments within the greenway corridor project area and so far, both Georgetown and Robinson Townships have made firm commitments of financial support of the project that is expected to be implemented in future years.

Future partnerships of this type should be explored with other potential greenway partners. Private sector partnerships could potentially be structured to provide revenue flow to the county while also providing recreation opportunities to the public. Currently the OCPRC realizes revenues from a lease to a private marina on the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (Park 12) property and from vending concession leases at the Lake Michigan parks.

FRIENDS OF OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS

In 2005, a support group named Friends of Ottawa County Parks (FOOCP) formed and obtained non-profit status. The organization has sponsored numerous activities to build awareness and support for the county park system, has provided support for OCPRC programs, and has raised and donated funds for parks projects including the NEC. An agreement between the OCPRC and the Friends outlines the relationship between the two organizations. The OCPRC is most appreciative of the support it receives from the FOOCP and its members.



PUBLIC GRANT PROGRAMS

There are a variety of competitive public grant programs which are aimed at assisting communities in the development of area recreation facilities. The availability of specific programs and funding levels varies widely from year to year depending on the economy and funding cycles. Following is a brief overview of selected programs and their general guidelines:

Land and Water Conservation Fund

This federal funding program is administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and provides a 50% matching grant for projects that meet the outdoor recreational needs of the County. The funds can be used for development of land and outdoor recreation facilities, such as restrooms, shelters, signs, trails, parking lots, tennis courts, swimming pools, golf courses, etc. Aside from ice skating rinks and indoor pools, major building complexes are presently not eligible.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program has historically been an important source of federal grant monies in the State of Michigan for parks and recreation. Unfortunately, cutbacks at the federal level have substantially reduced the amount of LWCF funds available statewide and the program is under threat of elimination. Additional efforts should be made to promote extension and expansion of the program as the only significant source of federal funding for parks and recreation at the state and local level.



Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) provides grants to both acquire land (or rights to land) develop public recreational facilities.

Funds were initially derived from oil, gas and other mineral lease and royalty payments. By law, no more than 25 percent of the MNRTF revenues available for appropriation each year can be used for development, therefore the majority of funding is allocated for acquisition projects.

There are no minimum or maximum dollar amounts for acquisition projects, although development projects have a minimum funding of \$15,000.00 and maximum funding of \$300,000. All proposals for local grants must include a local match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost.

The MNRTF continues to be the primary source of grant funds in the state, with \$15-\$20 million available each grant year. This total reflects a decrease from prior years and competition for funds is intense.

The MNRTF has been a key source of funding assistance for OCPRC as the park system has evolved over the past two decades. Many of the OCPRC's key projects, including the Rosy Mound Natural Area, North Ottawa Dunes, Crockery Creek property acquisition and the Pigeon River Greenway, relied heavily on the MNRTF for assistance, involving both acquisition and development funds. A gradual shift in the criteria of the MNTRF in recent years, away from high quality natural resource projects toward more of an urban and low income focus, has made it increasingly difficult for Ottawa County Parks to successfully compete for funds.



Recreation Passport Local Public Recreation Facilities Fund

This grant program, which began in 2011, was created by PA 32 of 2010 which creates a Local Public Recreation Facilities Fund for grants to local units of government. The source of funding is a portion of the proceeds from implementation of the Recreation Passport for Michigan State Parks.

The primary focus of the grant program is on improving and renovating existing parks. The minimum grant request is \$7,500 and the maximum is \$45,000 and a 25% match is required. The grant submittal deadline is April 1 with grant awards determined by the DNR director and announced in November.

Coastal Management Program

The Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program, housed in the Office of the Great Lakes within the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), provides grants to qualifying coastal units of government. Grants are restricted to the coastal zone, which, generally extends 1,000 feet inland from Lake Michigan in Ottawa County. It does extend further inland along the Grand River and other locations to encompass important coastal features.

Key objectives of the CZM program include:

- **Public Access:** Creation and enhancement of public access in coastal areas.
- **Water Quality:** Protection of high quality waters through protection, restoration and enhancement of critical coastal resources.
- **Coastal Habitat:** Protection, management and restoration of sensitive coastal habitats including wetlands and sand dunes.
- **Coastal Hazards:** Support for efforts to increase the resilience of coastal communities to both natural and human created threats.
- **Coastal Community Impact:** Promotion of wise management of Great Lakes water and coastal resources through the development of vibrant and resilient coastal communities.

The CZM program has provided assistance with numerous planning, small construction, and

habitat enhancement projects at the OCPRC's coastal parks and open spaces. The program most recently provided funding assistance for a natural features inventory and habitat enhancement project encompassing six coastal park properties. Also, a project was recently approved to renovate dune stairs at North Beach Park as a means to protect the massive dune feature from the erosive effects of foot traffic.



The CZM program provides grants of up to \$100,000. A 1-to-1 match is non-federal match is required.

Waterways Fund Program

The Waterways Fund Program, administered through the MDNR, has the objective to provide assistance with design and construction of recreational boating facilities in the state. Funds are available for engineering studies and infrastructure improvement projects at state-sponsored harbor/mooring and boating access site/launch facilities. Funds for this program are derived from three primary sources: state gasoline tax, watercraft sales, and watercraft registration fees.

Grants-in-aid for the construction of recreational boating facilities, equal to up to 50% of the total cost of such facilities, are made to local units of government. The scope of the grant includes engineering and contingency costs, as well as the costs normally associated with facility development. The sponsoring municipality seeking a grant must provide the land free of cost and agree to operate and maintain the completed facility.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Under this program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funds for state and local post-disaster mitigation measures. Under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, FEMA may contribute up to 75% of the cost of hazard mitigation measures which are determined to be cost-effective and which substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in the declared area. Past flooding and windstorm events in Ottawa County have qualified the county for funding. Funding through this program has been used to purchase land and remove structures on both the Macatawa River Greenway and the Grand River Greenway.

Transportation Alternatives Program

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a federal grant program which provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former divided highways.



A TAP grant was instrumental in funding the non-

motorized trail through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area, a major trail project completed in 2015. The \$941,268 TAP grant assisted with the \$1,778,377 project which has been a tremendous success. Currently TAP funding assistance is being requested for the Robinson Township segment of the Grand River Greenway trail.

LONG-RANGE BUDGET PROJECTION SUMMARY

A long-range budget projection follows (Table 6.1), which shows actual revenue and expenditure data for key categories for the OCPRC from 2008 through 2017. The table also projects this data for 2018 through 2027. There are many variables that are difficult to estimate such as inflation, rate of growth in the county, and other factors that affect both revenues and expenditures. A conservative approach was used in developing the projection. The goal with the projection was to estimate the level of discretionary funding that will be available for a variety of projects including renovation of facilities as they age, new parks and facilities, and for other new initiatives.

The current 10-year parks millage was approved in 2006 for collection of the one-third mill tax levy in 2007 through 2016 for use in budget years 2008 through 2017. The OCPRC will seek authority to place a millage renewal vote on the ballot in 2016 which would authorize tax collection in 2017 through 2026. The OCPRC recognizes that the millage for Ottawa County Parks is key to its continued growth and success. It has been the cornerstone for funding major expansion and improvements in the county park system over the past two decades. As the park system has grown, millage funds have gradually shifted toward funding increased personnel costs and other operating expenditures. This transition in the use of millage funds from land acquisition and park improvements to park operations was envisioned from the beginning and is the logical evolution of the department as the park system reaches its optimal size and more resources are needed to maintain high quality operations and maintenance. The OCPRC has been planning and implementing necessary administrative and operational staff, services and supplies as new lands and facilities have been added.

The OCPRC recognizes that the millage for county parks is key to its continued growth and success. It has been the cornerstone for funding major expansion and improvements in the county park system over the past two decades. As the park system has grown, millage funds have gradually shifted toward funding increased personnel costs and other operating expenditures. This transition in the use of millage funds from land acquisition and park improvements to park operations was envisioned from the beginning and is the logical evolution of the department as the park system reaches its optimal size and more resources are needed to maintain high quality operations and maintenance. The OCPRC has been planning and implementing necessary administrative and operational staff, services and supplies as new lands and facilities have been added.

The projection shows the gradual decline in discretionary funds from 2007 to 2017, then leveling off and increasing slightly for the next decade. This projection was used in developing the capital outlay program in Chapter 13, Recommended Actions (Table 13.1). A key concern is to ensure that the OCPRC plans for adequate funds for maintenance and operation of the park system plus funds needed for renovation of existing facilities within the scope of the existing millage levy and other projected funding sources. New lands and facilities will be possible only with discretionary funds after these needs are met plus funds available from grants and donation. These projects are shown in Table 13.1.

TABLE 6.1 - LONG-RANGE BUDGET PROJECTION SUMMARY

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL 2008-2017
REVENUES											
Millage	\$3,039,393	\$3,141,232	\$3,171,884	\$3,035,087	\$2,987,203	\$2,969,261	\$2,991,778	\$3,084,822	\$3,081,000	\$3,252,870	\$30,754,530
User Fees	\$349,433	\$359,369	\$450,110	\$419,977	\$436,760	\$518,399	\$562,352	\$603,070	\$525,320	\$535,826	\$4,760,616
Leases and Other Revenue	\$75,621	\$52,678	\$37,587	\$63,454	\$35,025	\$67,455	\$64,138	\$30,000	\$21,300	\$20,300	\$467,558
Interest on Investments	\$357,836	\$59,503	\$75,984	\$58,535	\$52,202	-\$7,744	\$74,816	\$40,850	\$74,800	\$40,000	\$826,782
General Fund	\$530,000	\$297,790									\$827,790
Total Revenues	\$4,352,283	\$3,910,572	\$3,735,565	\$3,577,053	\$3,511,190	\$3,547,371	\$3,693,084	\$3,758,742	\$3,702,420	\$3,848,996	\$37,637,276
EXPENDITURES											
Personnel	\$1,270,914	\$1,422,809	\$1,586,349	\$1,616,067	\$1,675,757	\$1,807,624	\$1,834,267	\$2,023,055	\$2,227,023	\$2,282,699	\$17,746,564
Supplies	\$150,542	\$175,117	\$178,720	\$187,125	\$240,111	\$240,111	\$195,616	\$284,495	\$259,555	\$272,533	\$2,183,925
Contractual Services	\$521,899	\$525,941	\$469,450	\$713,957	\$478,312	\$478,312	\$556,559	\$779,930	\$625,799	\$650,831	\$5,800,990
Total Operations	\$1,943,355	\$2,123,867	\$2,234,518	\$2,517,149	\$2,394,180	\$2,526,047	\$2,586,442	\$3,087,480	\$3,112,377	\$3,206,062	\$25,731,478
DISCRETIONARY FUNDS	\$2,408,928	\$1,786,705	\$1,501,046	\$1,059,904	\$1,117,010	\$1,021,324	\$1,106,642	\$671,262	\$590,043	\$642,934	\$11,905,798
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL 2018-2027
REVENUES											
Millage (0.3165 mills + 3.0%)	\$3,350,456	\$3,450,970	\$3,554,499	\$3,661,134	\$3,770,968	\$3,884,097	\$4,000,620	\$4,120,638	\$4,244,258	\$4,371,585	\$38,409,224
User Fees (+ 2.0%)	\$546,543	\$557,474	\$568,623	\$579,996	\$591,596	\$603,428	\$615,496	\$627,806	\$640,362	\$653,169	\$5,984,493
Other - Conc.s, Leases (+ 2.0%)	\$20,706	\$21,120	\$21,543	\$21,973	\$22,413	\$22,861	\$23,318	\$23,785	\$24,260	\$24,746	\$226,725
Interest on Investments (+ 0.0%)	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$400,000
General Fund											\$0
Total Revenues	\$3,957,705	\$4,069,564	\$4,184,665	\$4,303,103	\$4,424,976	\$4,550,386	\$4,679,434	\$4,812,229	\$4,948,880	\$5,089,500	\$45,020,442
EXPENDITURES											
Personnel (+ 2.5%)	\$2,339,766	\$2,398,260	\$2,458,217	\$2,519,672	\$2,582,664	\$2,647,231	\$2,713,411	\$2,781,247	\$2,850,778	\$2,922,047	\$26,213,292
Supplies (+ 5.0%)	\$286,159	\$300,467	\$315,491	\$331,265	\$347,829	\$365,220	\$383,481	\$402,655	\$422,788	\$443,927	\$3,599,282
Contractual Services (+ 4.0%)	\$676,864	\$703,939	\$732,096	\$761,380	\$791,835	\$823,509	\$856,449	\$890,707	\$926,335	\$963,389	\$8,126,504
Total Operations	\$3,302,790	\$3,402,666	\$3,505,804	\$3,612,318	\$3,722,328	\$3,835,959	\$3,953,341	\$4,074,609	\$4,199,901	\$4,329,363	\$37,939,078
DISCRETIONARY FUNDS	\$654,915			4 Millage	Recovery	(+ 0.013	5 mills)	\$138,748	\$142,910	\$147,198	

SECTION FOUR: EXISTING PARKS, NATURAL AREAS, & RECREATION FACILITIES



CHAPTER 7 | RECREATION INVENTORY

Recreation opportunities in Ottawa County are extensive and varied in character. The State operates three state parks along Lake Michigan which provide camping, swimming, nature interpretation and related activities. The county operates 23 improved parks, 2 undeveloped parks, and 14 open space properties, which take advantage of the diverse natural features of the area and provide opportunities for swimming, picnicking, hiking, interpretive programs, cross-country skiing, and more. The various townships, cities and villages within the county further bolster the recreation opportunities with over 120 smaller neighborhood and community-oriented parks, including several large regional facilities. The local private sector provides recreation opportunities as well, including marinas, campgrounds, and golf courses.

The purpose of this section is to identify what recreation facilities and services are currently provided throughout Ottawa County to establish a basis for evaluating needs. The following recreation inventory review has been divided into two sections. The first section presents a classification of park and recreation areas which can be applied to all communities and municipalities. The second section reviews the various providers of recreation programs and facilities specific to Ottawa County including both public and private providers. Included is a review of the particular resources and facilities offered by each recreation provider. A complete listing of park and recreation areas offered by all levels of government is included along with a summary of the facilities available.

CLASSIFICATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

Park and recreation services are most effective when provided through a system in which governmental agencies at all levels as well as the private sector combine to provide a variety of facilities and services. Planning for recreation services must therefore consider the roles and the inter-relationships between each provider in the system. Park and recreation areas are classified to reflect the scope of facilities offered and the approximate service area of each park. Below is a review of this classification system.

1. **Sub-neighborhood** includes tot-lots, mini-parks, playfields and other small recreation areas (usually less than five acres), located within and serving high-density residential areas. Provision of these areas is considered the responsibility of the city, village, township government or school district.
2. **Neighborhood** parks are generally designed as “walk to” parks of approximately five acres and larger serving the neighborhood unit. Typical facilities include play apparatus, multi-

purpose courts, field games area, etc. Neighborhood parks are often planned in conjunction with elementary schools because of the similarity in the service areas of both facilities. This type of park is normally provided by the city, village, township government or school district.

3. **Community** parks are located to serve a group of neighborhoods and be accessible by either bicycle or automobile. Acreage varies from 5-50 acres and the park usually includes a much broader range of facilities than what is normally provided at the neighborhood level. Typical facilities might include playfields, ball diamonds, tennis courts, swimming, ice-skating, a community building, or a wide range of other facilities. As with neighborhood parks, programs, and facilities should be adapted to the particular needs of the community being served. Community parks are the responsibility of city, village or township governments.
4. **Area-Wide and Regional** scale parks differ primarily in the size of their service areas, with area wide parks serving a radius of 10-20 miles as opposed to an approximate service area of 20-40 miles for regional scale parks. Parks in these classifications are usually large (100-500+ acres) and are located to take advantage of unique land and/or water resources. Park development emphasizes preservation of the natural environment and typical facilities might include picnic areas, swimming and boating facilities, camping areas, nature interpretation facilities, winter sports areas and a wide variety of other facilities. Responsibility for parks of this scale generally lies with the County or specially created park districts.
5. **State and National** Parks and Recreation Areas are most often located where outstanding natural resources of state or national significance exist. Development is designed to facilitate primarily passive recreational uses geared to utilize the natural features of the site. In addition to park and recreation areas, the state and federal government also maintain forests, wildlife areas, public access sites and other special-use areas which serve a wide range of public recreation uses.

In addition to the five principal categories of park and recreation areas outlined above, two additional categories are included to round out the total recreation system. These categories include facilities that are not necessarily an integral portion of the five major categories but can play an important role in the total recreation delivery system. They are:

- **Greenway corridors** often provide trail systems (e.g., foot, bridle, bicycle, canoe), and may maintain, protect or preserve existing lineal, natural and cultural features such as watercourses (rivers, streams, shorelines), abandoned transportation rights-of-way (railroad and highway), utility rights-of-way, and scenic drives. The greenway corridor can function as an entity in itself or more ideally as a connecting link to one or more of the five categories listed above. The major recreational use of greenway corridors is typically oriented towards various trail systems; however, other supporting activities can be included at strategic points along the corridor, e.g., picnicking, camping, etc. Greenway corridors often straddle multiple political jurisdictions and require combined efforts of governmental units at all levels.
- The **special use facility** classification is provided to accommodate separate facilities not included in the categories listed above. The development program of such a facility will many times include only a single activity, although it may accommodate several separate closely related activities. Among the more common special use areas are golf courses, sports centers, zoos, group camps, swimming and racket clubs, off-road vehicle areas, horseback riding stables and others.

RECREATION PROVIDERS

Federal Government

The federal government does not actively manage any recreational lands within Ottawa County. It does, however, operate a regional Coast Guard facility in Grand Haven on the Grand River's south side and a Coast Guard substation in Holland. The nearest National Park Service sites are Sleeping Bear Dunes in the northwest lower peninsula and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore just south the state line along Lake Michigan. Other nearby federal lands and facilities include the Manistee National Forest in Muskegon and Newaygo Counties and the North Country (hiking) Trail, which runs through Kent and Newaygo Counties.

State Government

The State of Michigan owns and operates a number of recreation facilities throughout the county. It is primarily through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) that these facilities are managed. The exception is three rest areas along state roadways in the county which are managed by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The MDNR owns and operates three parks, two game areas and numerous boat launches in Ottawa County. All three state parks are located along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The state also owns a large undeveloped recreation area on the Grand River and the Musketawa Trail, a linear trail park located in the northeast section of the county, maintained by Ottawa County Parks.

Though the entrance to P.J. Hoffmaster State Park is in Muskegon County, the southernmost portion of the park is located in the far northwest corner of Spring Lake Township. The total park consists of 1,100 acres devoted to modern camping facilities - including 293 sites, the Gillette Visitor Center (a sand dune interpretive center), picnic areas, playgrounds, swimming and beach house, hiking, and cross-country skiing.

Grand Haven State Park, located several miles south of P.J. Hoffmaster State Park at the mouth of the Grand River, is comprised of 48 acres devoted to modern camping facilities including 174 sites, picnic areas, playgrounds, fishing, swimming beach and related facilities. This park is ranked second in the state for total attendance due to its high quality swimming beach.

Holland State Park, located in the far southwest corner of Ottawa County in Park Township, consists of 142 acres, and provides facilities similar to those of Grand Haven State Park. Also a beach attraction, Holland State Park is ranked first in visitor attendance of all the state parks in Michigan.

In addition, the state manages 1,665 acres in Robinson and Allendale Township in central Ottawa County for future development as a State Recreational Area. In 2002, 550 acres was added to the 1,115 acre Bass River Recreation Area. This purchase includes expansive riverine wetlands, floodplain forest, bayous and approximately 2.25 total miles of frontage on the Grand and Bass Rivers. With such a large expanse of river frontage, this site can be expected to provide significant recreation opportunities in the future. Although a master plan identifying specific park plans has not yet been developed, a management plan designating various use zones has been completed. Currently the site is used primarily for mountain biking, horseback riding and hunting.

The Grand Haven State Game Area, with 1,139 acres in Robinson and Crockery Townships, provides opportunities for waterfowl hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. The Ottawa Mini-Game Areas consist of five separate properties totaling 396 acres in Blendon and Olive Townships. These properties were purchased with hunters' funds to help bolster pheasant populations.

The MDNR operates eight public boat launch facilities located throughout the county. These launches are all constructed of concrete, and all have restroom facilities. Four are located on bayous

along the western half of the Grand River; two are on the Grand River itself, one on Lake Macatawa and one on Pigeon Lake providing access to Lake Michigan.

The Musketawa Trail, which runs from Marne to Muskegon, is a linear park developed on an abandoned rail line. The 12-mile paved section that runs from Marne to Conklin and to the west county line is managed by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) under an agreement approved in 2002. The basis for Ottawa County's involvement in operation of the east half of the trail stems from a commitment made in 1991 whereby the County agreed to operate the trail if the state would acquire and develop the trail corridor. The remaining 16-mile paved section that runs between Ravenna and the outskirts of Muskegon is currently managed though the West Shore Snowmobile Council under a grant from the MDNR. The Musketawa Trail is a barrier-free trail that features opportunities for walking, running, biking, snowmobiling, hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, rollerblading, and nature observation.

County Government

Ottawa County, through the OCPRC, owns and operates 26 parks comprising 3,917 acres and 2,538 acres classified as open space.

Ottawa County's parks, as might be expected, have a strong natural resource orientation. Six parks are located on Lake Michigan, five are on the Grand River, two are located on the Pigeon River and another is situated on Crockery Lake. In addition to water frontage, many of the parks feature mature forests, dune formations, wetlands, high quality native plants and other natural resource features.

In addition to its parks, Ottawa County also owns and manages several large open space lands for conservation and recreation purposes. These properties tend to feature fewer improvements and less restrictive rules (e.g., more hunting opportunities and dogs allowed off-leash). The 1989 County Parks Plan noted Ottawa County's unique situation in that it owned 2,000 acres of undeveloped land—much of it having been acquired as tax-reverted land in the 1930s. Based upon the plan's recommendations, the properties were formally reviewed by the county as to their public value. Some of the smaller properties with less unique natural features were recommended for sale (total 324 acres) with the proceeds used to establish funds for land acquisition and park development. A total of 1,184 acres were dedicated as Open Space and put under management of the OCPRC. Since then, 1,354 additional acres of open space land have been added. There are 19 separate Open Space properties currently managed by Ottawa County Parks.

According to the Ottawa County Open Space Management Plan, adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 1992, Open Space lands are to be maintained in their natural state for future generations except "when their development for expansion of county facilities is considered to be in the county's best interest." The plan listed the following management goals for Open Space lands:

- Promote the natural character and diversity of each site.
- Allow and promote safe, non-intensive recreational uses with an emphasis primarily on activities that require minimal facility development and have limited impact on the natural character of the land.
- Manage timber for recreation, wildlife, and aesthetic purposes as opposed to maximum timber yield.
- Enhance wildlife habitat through conservation measures where feasible.

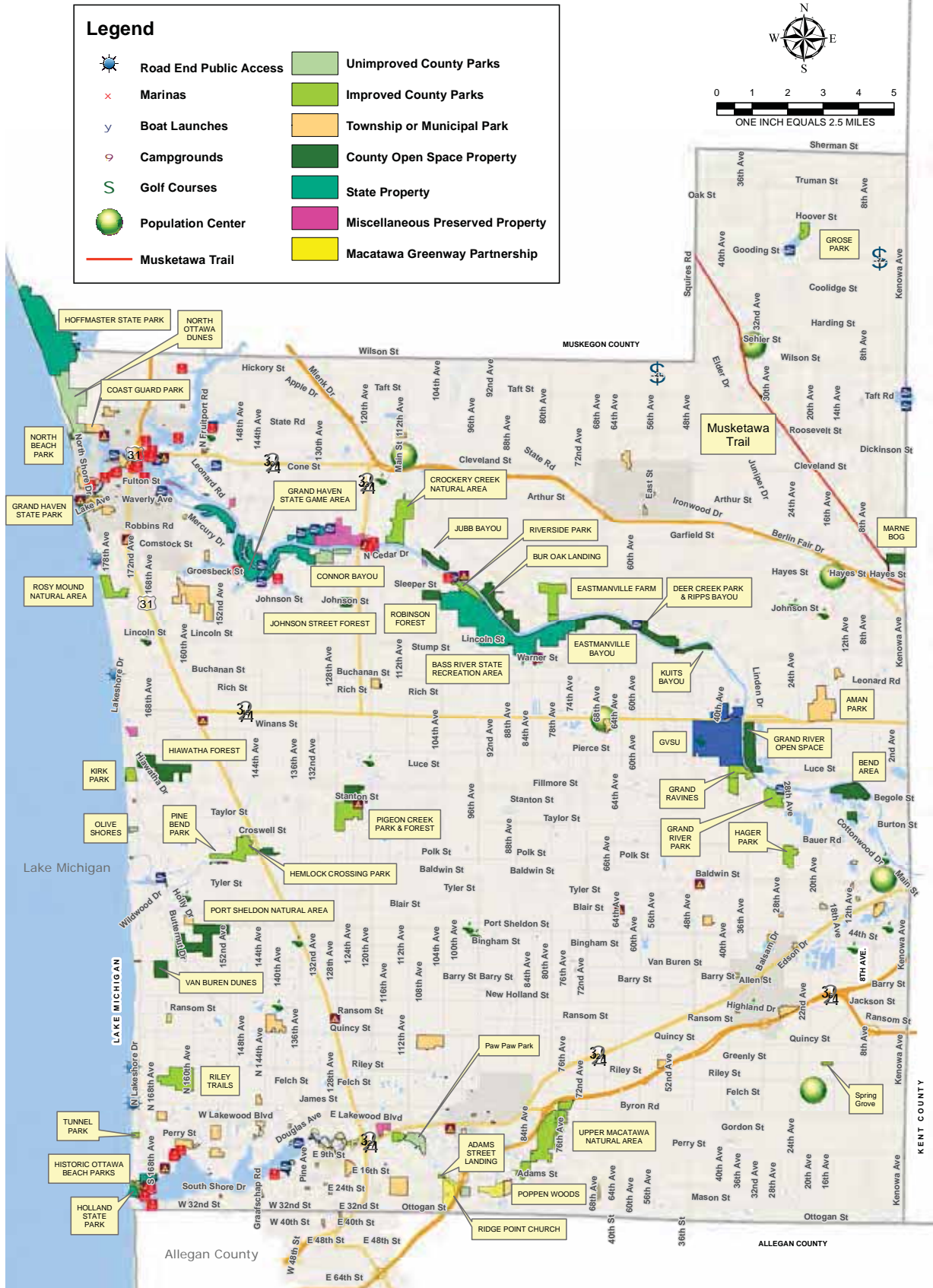
Following is a location map and description of each county property divided according to that property's location within the county greenway system. Several other properties not located within these greenways are also included.

Figure 7.1 - Ottawa County Recreation Inventory Map

OTTAWA COUNTY

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan - 2016

RECREATION INVENTORY MAP



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site



CONNOR BAYOU

Robinson Township

Acquired: 2005

Size: 142 acres

Natural Features: Floodplain with extensive wetlands and high quality natural land with high ground and a fairly mature deciduous-coniferous upland forest. Views from the site are outstanding and encompass the river, Connor Bayou and associated wetlands plus an expansive marsh located immediately across the river.

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 4563 feet (0.9 miles)
- Bayou - 1687 feet (0.32 miles)

Developed: 2012

Facilities/Activities: Paved parking, paved trails, pit toilet, picnicking, kayak launch, renovated log cabin for day use rental, fishing dock, lawn area , and hiking trails.

Trails: 2.99 miles

Grant History:

- 2003 MNRTF Connor Bayou Acquisition TF03-146
(95 acres, \$823,000 grant amount)
- 2012 MNRTF Grand River Accessible Kayak Launches TF12-080
(\$47,500 grant amount)

PARK USER INFORMATION

Alcohol is not permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 Bikes on entry drive and paved surfaces only
 Dogs must remain on leash at all times
 Dog owners must clean up after their pets
 No camping or fires
 No hunting or trapping
 All Ottawa County Park Rules
 & Regulations are in effect on park property

Connor Bayou

Grand River Greenway

GRAND RIVER


















LODGE

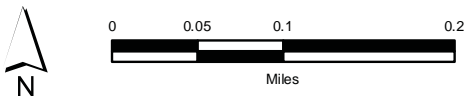
NORTH CEDAR DRIVE

NORTH CEDAR DRIVE

128TH AVE.

LEGEND

-  Parking Area
 -  Restrooms
 -  Trailhead
 -  Fishing Area
 -  Kayak Launch
 -  Hiking Trails
 -  Picnic Building
 -  Swimming Area
 -  Viewing Area
 -  2' Contours
 -  Intersection Map
 -  .28 Distance in Miles
-  Asphalt
 -  Concrete
 -  Gravel
 -  Natural Surface
 -  Wood



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site



CROCKERY CREEK NATURAL AREA

Crockery Township

Acquired: 1999

Size: 334 acres

Natural Features: Diverse mix of wet meadows and buttonbush swamp, floodplain forest, mixed deciduous and coniferous woods. The site is a nesting location for bald eagles and has nearly two miles of Crockery Creek frontage.

Water Frontage: Grand River - 2640 feet (0.5 miles)

Developed: 2006

Facilities/Activities: Minimally developed. Two trail loops provide access to the northeast portion of the site from a trailhead at the end of Wren Drive. An historic farmstead (not restored) is also part of the site.

Trails: 1.57 miles

Grant History:

1999 MNRTF Crockery Creek Site Acquisition TF99-235
(268 acres, \$805,000 grant amount)

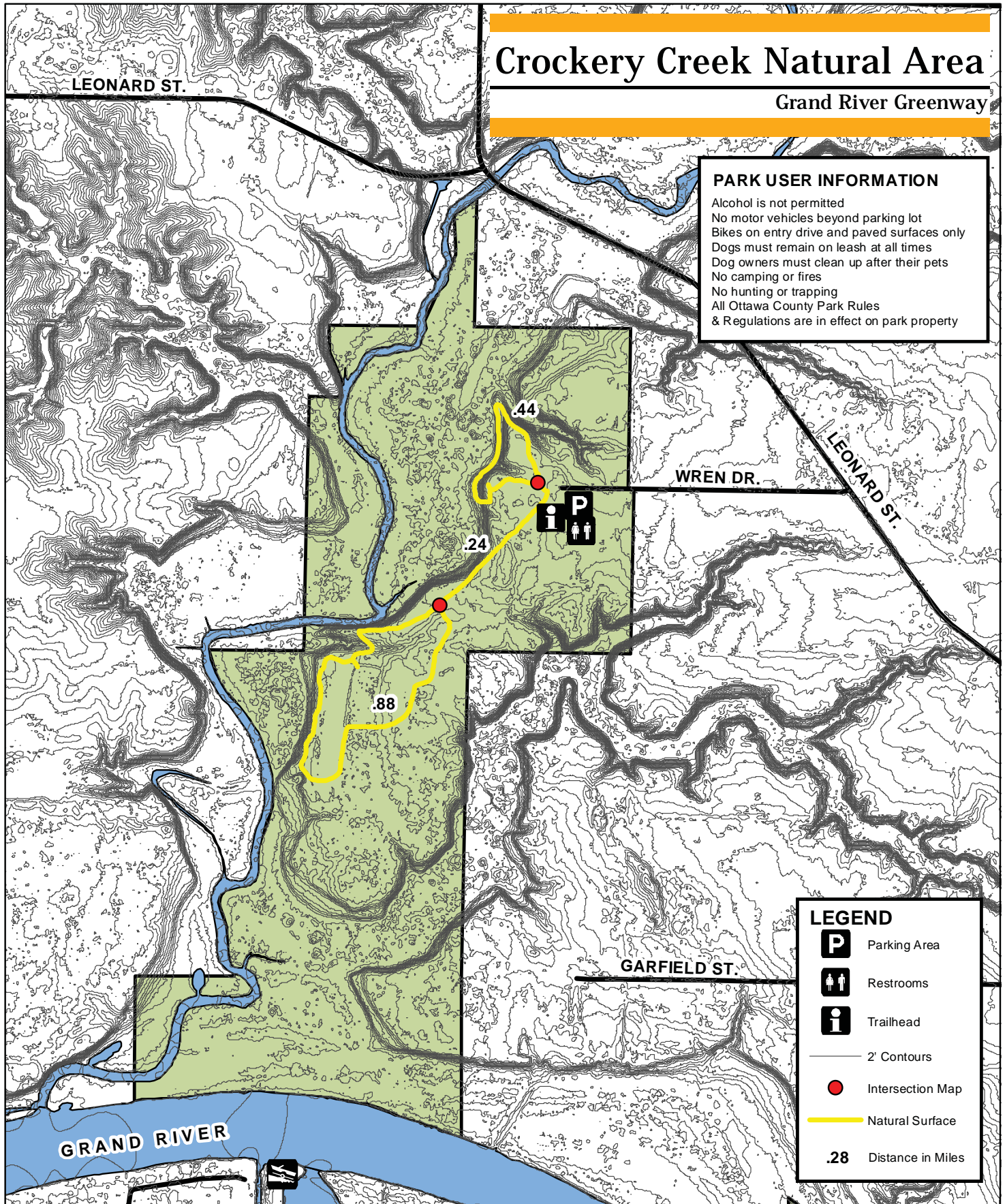
Site Notes: The site has been open to archery deer hunting by permit since 2003.

Crockery Creek Natural Area

Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

Alcohol is not permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bikes on entry drive and paved surfaces only
Dogs must remain on leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting or trapping
All Ottawa County Park Rules
& Regulations are in effect on park property



LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Trailhead
- 2' Contours
- Intersection Map
- Natural Surface
- Distance in Miles



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

JUBB BAYOU

Crockery Township

Acquired: 2005

Size: 97 acres

Natural Features: Inland bayou with associated wetlands and floodplain. Site also contains mixed woods and old farm fields.

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 4589 feet (0.9 miles)
- Bayou - 4026 feet (0.76 miles)

Developed: 2006

Facilities/Activities: Minimally developed with small gravel parking area and information kiosk. A barn remains from previous agricultural use. Bayou is a very good fishing location. There are some informal, unmarked trails accessing the riverfront

Site Notes: Canoes, kayaks and other small boats can be carried to bayou from parking area.

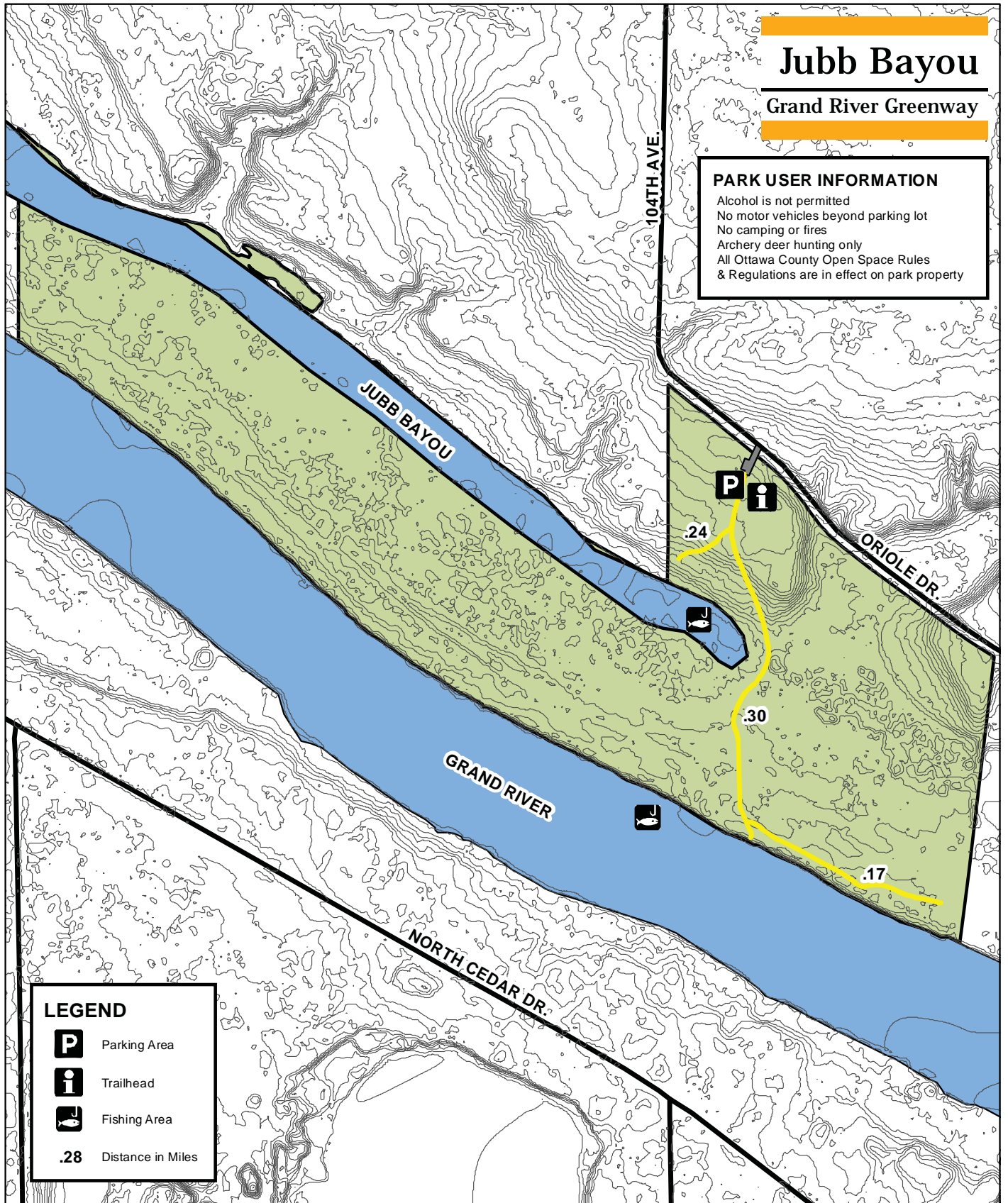


Jubb Bayou

Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

Alcohol is not permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
No camping or fires
Archery deer hunting only
All Ottawa County Open Space Rules
& Regulations are in effect on park property



LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Trailhead
- Fishing Area

.28 Distance in Miles



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

RIVERSIDE PARK

Robinson Township

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission, addition in 1987

Size: 95 acres (includes 31 leased from the State)

Natural Features: Extensive wetlands and floodplain forest parallel to the shoreline of the Grand River. Some upland at west end of site.

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 6,737 feet (1.28 miles)

Developed: 1992, 2007

Facilities/Activities: Facilities include a large boat launch with four concrete ramps and two docks and associated trailer parking. Additional parking for 80 cars is located near a waterfront picnic shelter east of the boat launch and in the upland at the west edge of the park. The park also features pit toilets, barrier-free fishing, and recently signed trail system, including links to the adjacent Bass River State Recreation Area.

Trails: 2.20 miles

Grant History:

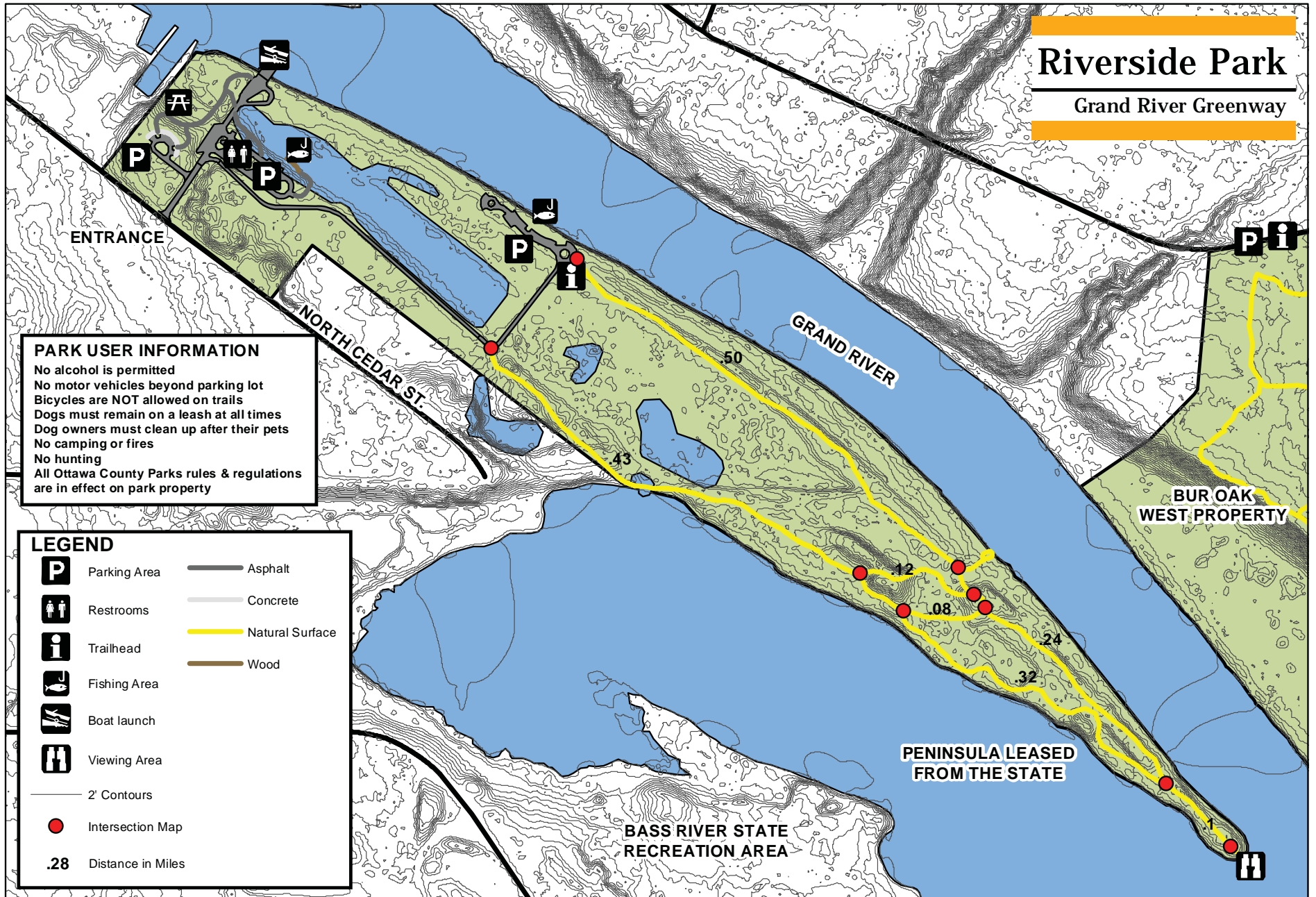
1991 MNRTF Riverside Park Expansion TF91-051
(6 acres, \$114,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: There are no entrance fees to the park; however, there is a self-serve boat launch fee. The park is open year around but is not plowed during the winter.



Riverside Park

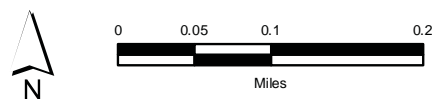
Grand River Greenway



PARK USER INFORMATION
No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

	Parking Area		Asphalt
	Restrooms		Concrete
	Trailhead		Natural Surface
	Fishing Area		Wood
	Boat launch		
	Viewing Area		
	2' Contours		
	Intersection Map		
	Distance in Miles		



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

BUR OAK LANDING

Polkton Township

Acquired: 2006, 2013

Size: 263 acres

Natural Features: Floodplain forest, shrub/scrub swamp, inland bayou, ravines and bluffs above the floodplain.

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 7392 feet (1.4 miles)
- Bayou - 5267 feet (1.0 miles)

Developed: 2006

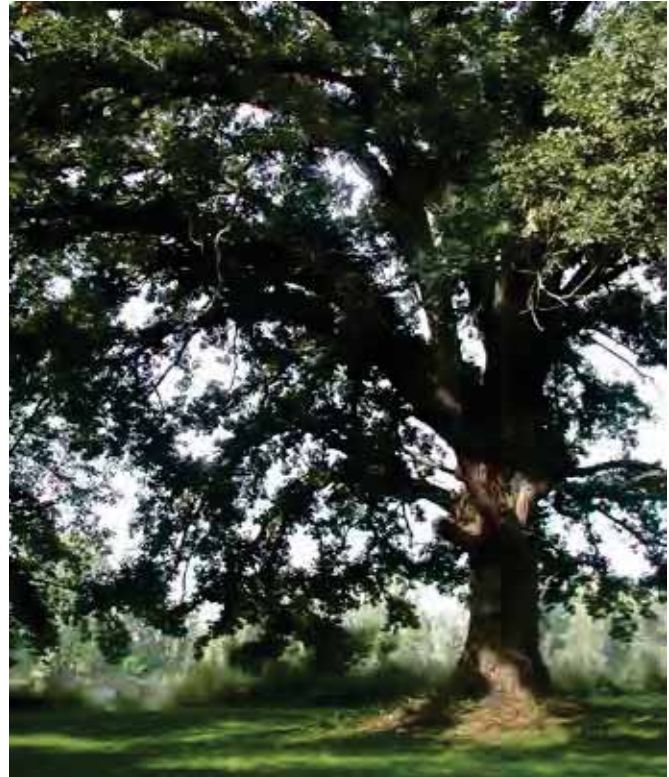
Facilities/Activities: Minimally developed except for small gravel parking areas with information kiosks at three locations and a small marked trail system on the west end of the site.

Trails: 0.97 miles

Grant History:

2006 MNRTF Bur Oak Land Acquisition TF06-208
(175 acres, \$773,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: Archery hunting is allowed on entire site. General hunting is allowed on the portion east of 90th Ave.








Bur Oak Landing

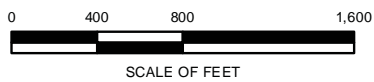
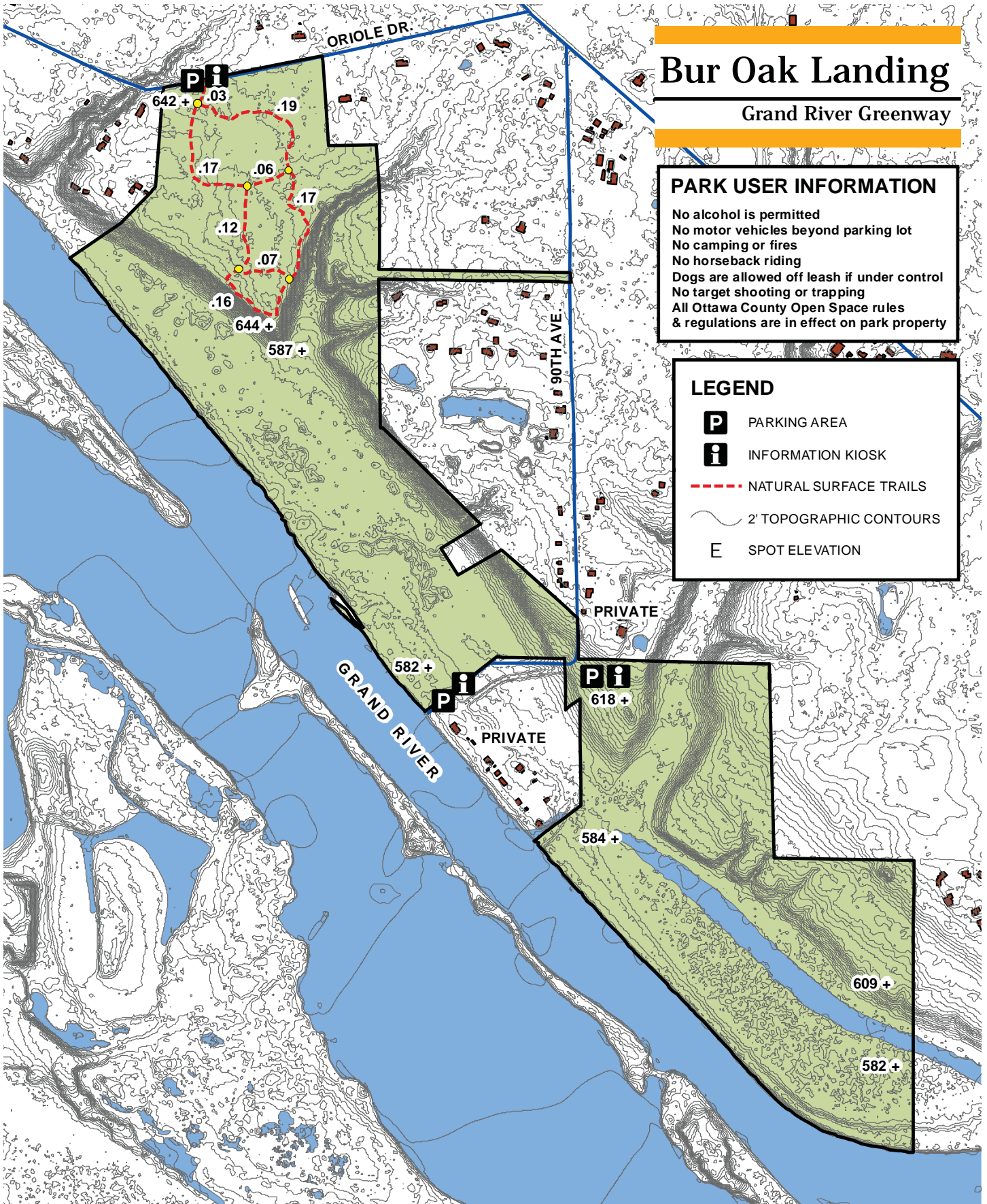
Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 No camping or fires
 No horseback riding
 Dogs are allowed off leash if under control
 No target shooting or trapping
 All Ottawa County Open Space rules
 & regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

-  PARKING AREA
-  INFORMATION KIOSK
-  NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS
-  2' TOPOGRAPHIC CONTOURS
-  SPOT ELEVATION



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

EASTMANVILLE FARM



Polkton Township

Acquired: Land transferred from County in 2005

Size: 229 acres

Natural Features: 29 acres of rolling grassland on the south side with forested riverfront. The acreage north of Leonard includes approximately 30 acres of relatively flat ground where the farm and housing facilities used to be. North of that is approximately 50 acres of rolling terrain with a stream channel. Beyond that is relatively flat pasture land bordered on the east and west by forested ravines.

Water Frontage: Grand River - 1365 feet (0.26 miles)

Developed: 2008

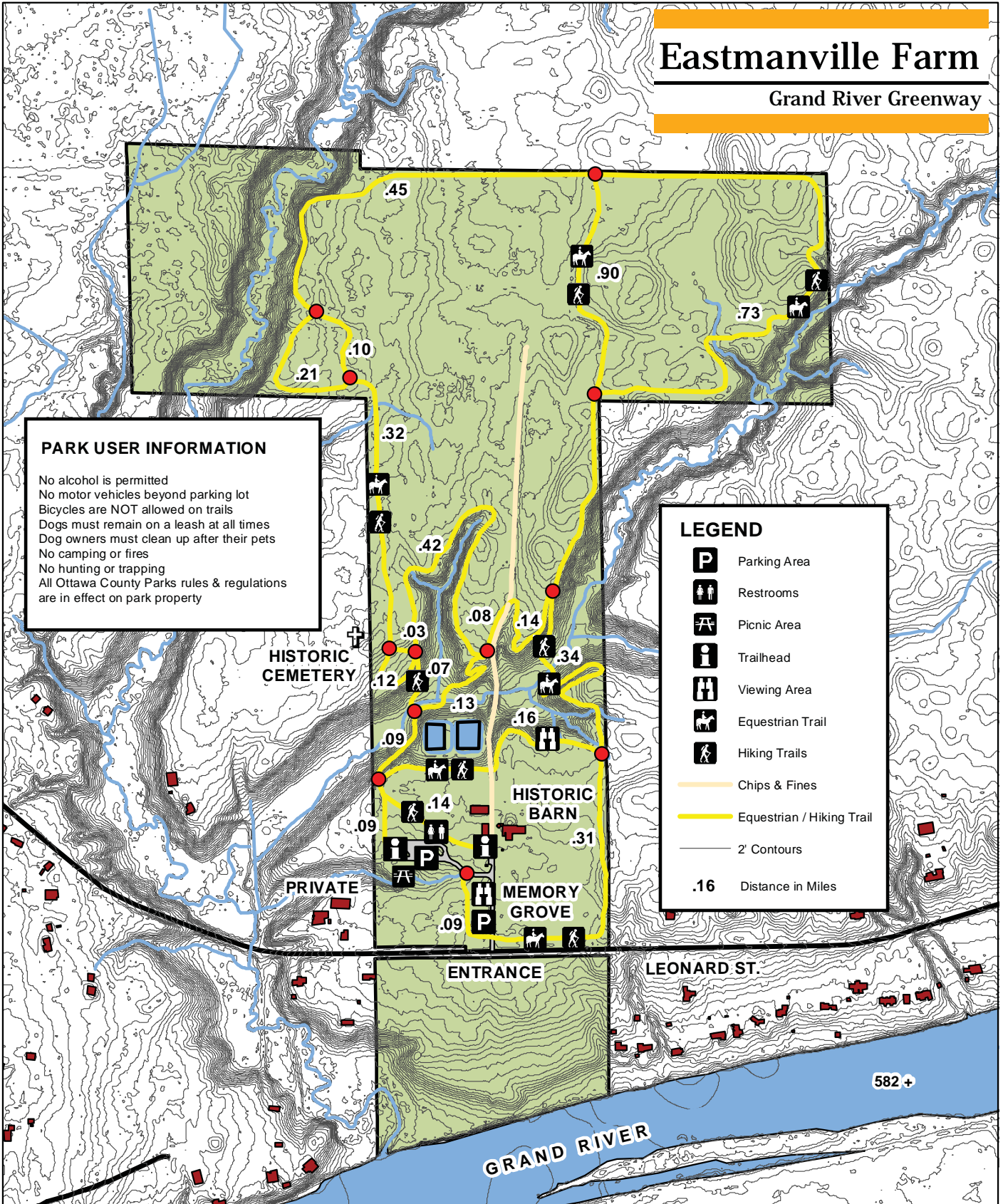
Facilities/Activities: Gravel parking areas, a pedestrian trail loop and over three miles of equestrian trails. The site was the former County Poor Farm. An historic barn and cemetery from that era have been restored. There is also a small plaza area featuring interpretation of the site's history.

Trails: 5.01 miles

Site Notes: A farm education center is part of the site master plan. This center would be funded and operated by a non-profit group leasing land from Ottawa County Parks.

Eastmanville Farm

Grand River Greenway



PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting or trapping
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Trailhead
- Viewing Area
- Equestrian Trail
- Hiking Trails
- Chips & Fines
- Equestrian / Hiking Trail
- 2' Contours
- .16 Distance in Miles



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

EASTMANVILLE BAYOU

Allendale Township

Acquired: Donation in 1997, additional purchase in 2004

Size: 157 acres

Natural Features: Entire site is in the floodplain. The property includes heavily wooded floodplain forest and supports a variety of native flora and fauna including excellent displays of Virginia Bluebells.

Water Frontage:

Grand River - 9364 feet (1.77 miles)

Bayou - 8300 feet (1.57 miles)

Developed: 2010

Facilities/Activities: Paved parking, pit toilets, boat launch to the bayou, a canoe/kayak launch on the Grand River, and a connection under the bridge to the east half of the site. Fishing from the shore on both the Grand River and the bayou is popular. Ice fishing on Eastmanville Bayou in the winter is also popular

Trails: 1.49 miles

Site Notes: A previous owner (west end of site) had dredged a channel from the Bayou to the Grand River which has filled in over time.



Eastmanville Bayou

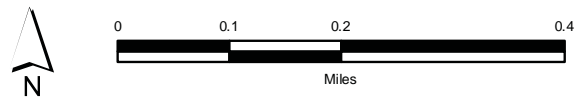
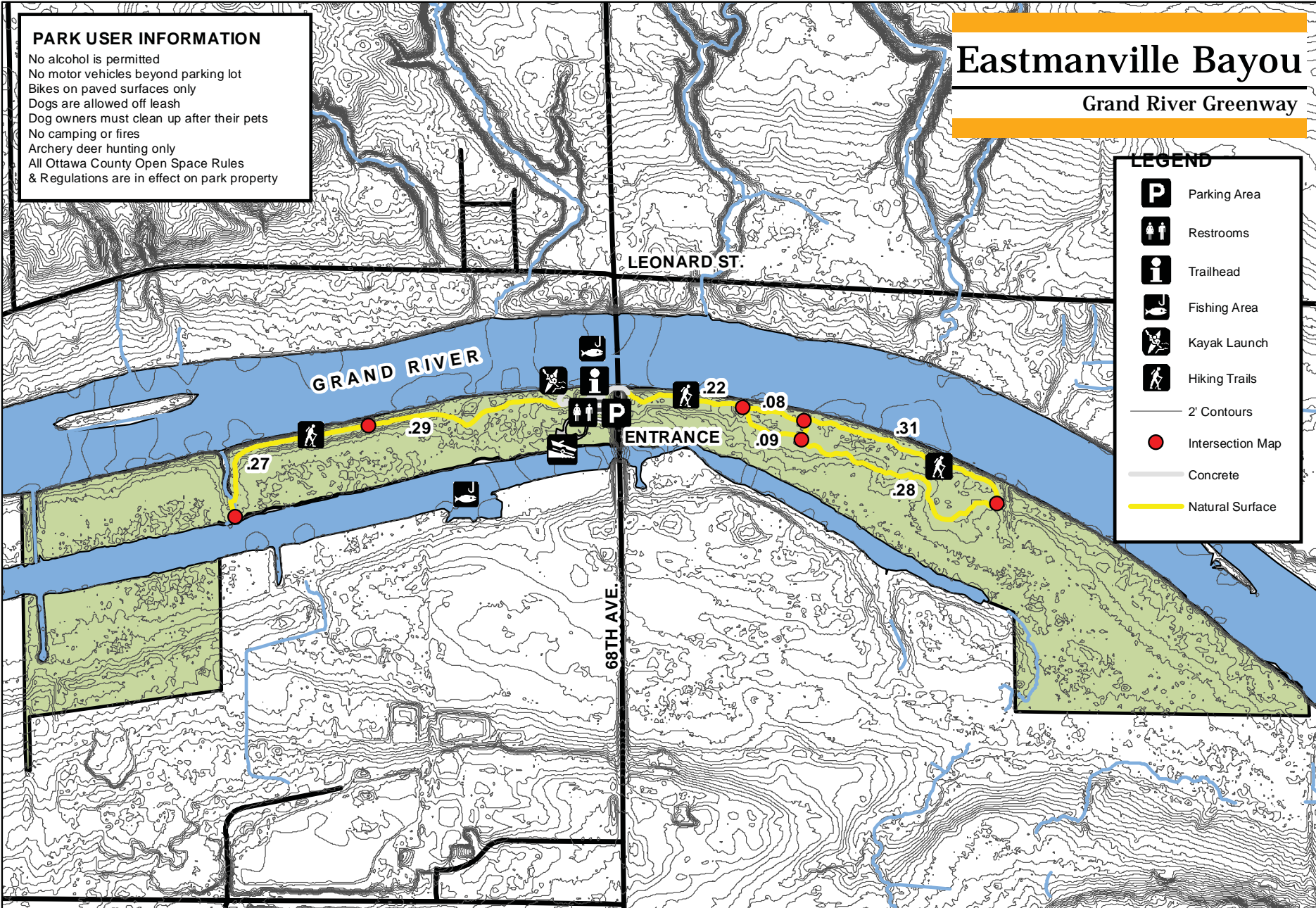
Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

- No alcohol is permitted
- No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
- Bikes on paved surfaces only
- Dogs are allowed off leash
- Dog owners must clean up after their pets
- No camping or fires
- Archery deer hunting only
- All Ottawa County Open Space Rules & Regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Trailhead
- Fishing Area
- Kayak Launch
- Hiking Trails
- 2' Contours
- Intersection Map
- Concrete
- Natural Surface



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

DEER CREEK PARK

Polkton Township

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission, addition in 1987

Size: 2 acres

Natural Features: Located at the mouth of the Deer Creek on the Grand River. Most of the site is mowed grass with northern upland area forested.

Water Frontage: Grand River - 530 feet
(0.10 miles)

Developed: 1990

Facilities/Activities: Facilities include a small hard surface boat launch with gravel car/trailer parking for eight, car-only parking for six vehicles, plus picnic areas and pit toilets.

Site Notes: There are no entrance fees and the park is open year around. The park is not plowed in the winter. This is the smallest of Ottawa County's parks.



RIPPS BAYOU

Polkton Township

Acquired: Four purchases from 1999 to 2004

Size: 173 acres

Natural Features: Floodplain forest which encompasses the majority of the Ripps Bayou.

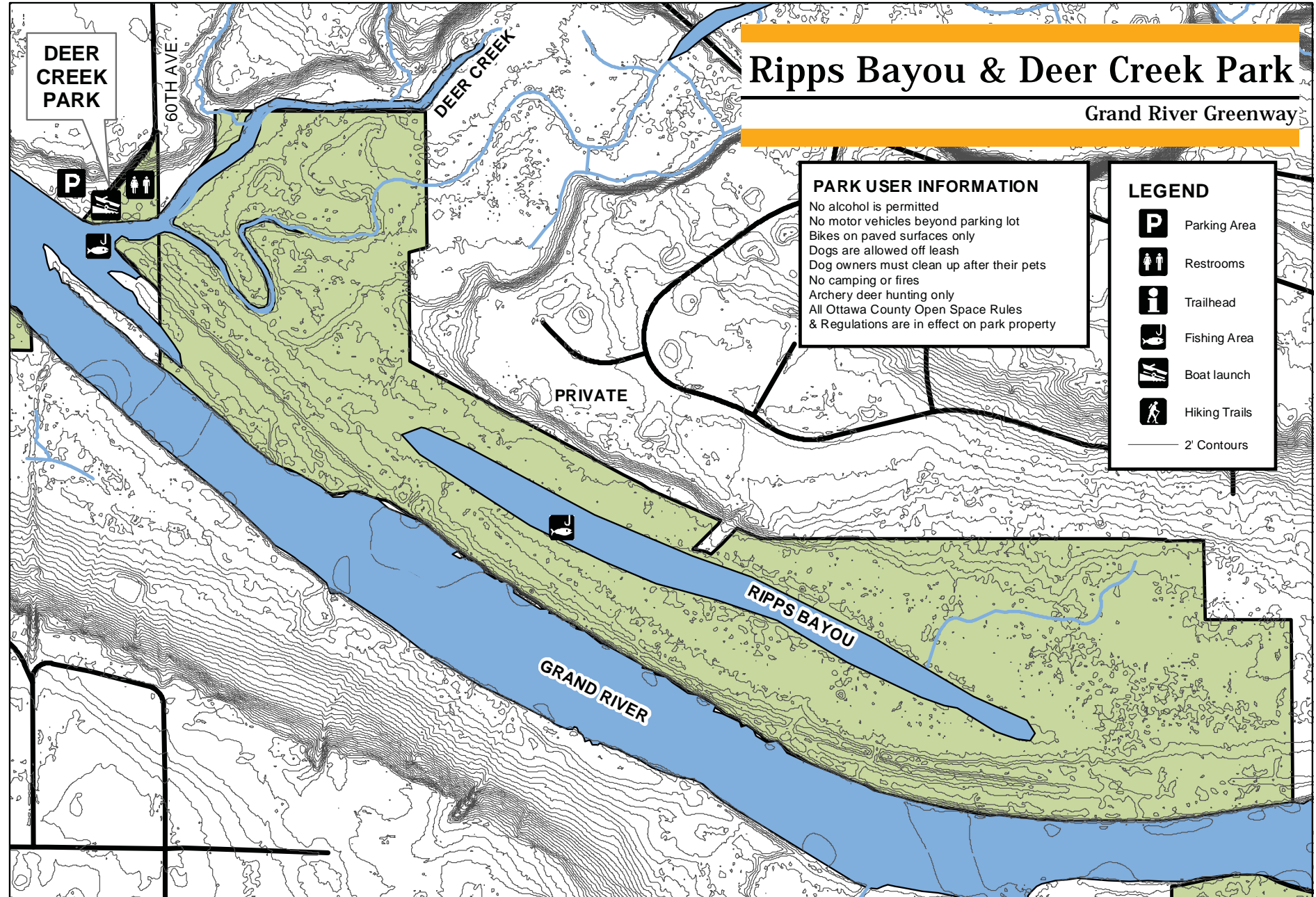
Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 7550 feet (1.43 miles)
- Bayou - 7992 feet (1.51 miles)

Facilities/Activities: Undeveloped. Site is popular with hunters and fishermen

Site Notes: The only public access to the bayou is via portage from the Grand River and only non-motorized water craft are permitted on the bayou.





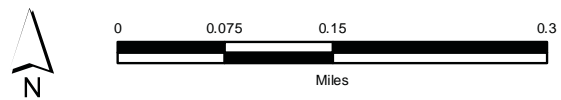
Ripps Bayou & Deer Creek Park

Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

- No alcohol is permitted
- No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
- Bikes on paved surfaces only
- Dogs are allowed off leash
- Dog owners must clean up after their pets
- No camping or fires
- Archery deer hunting only
- All Ottawa County Open Space Rules & Regulations are in effect on park property

- LEGEND**
- Parking Area
 - Restrooms
 - Trailhead
 - Fishing Area
 - Boat launch
 - Hiking Trails
 - 2' Contours



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

KUITS BAYOU

Allendale Township

Acquired: Two purchases in 2009

Size: 80 acres

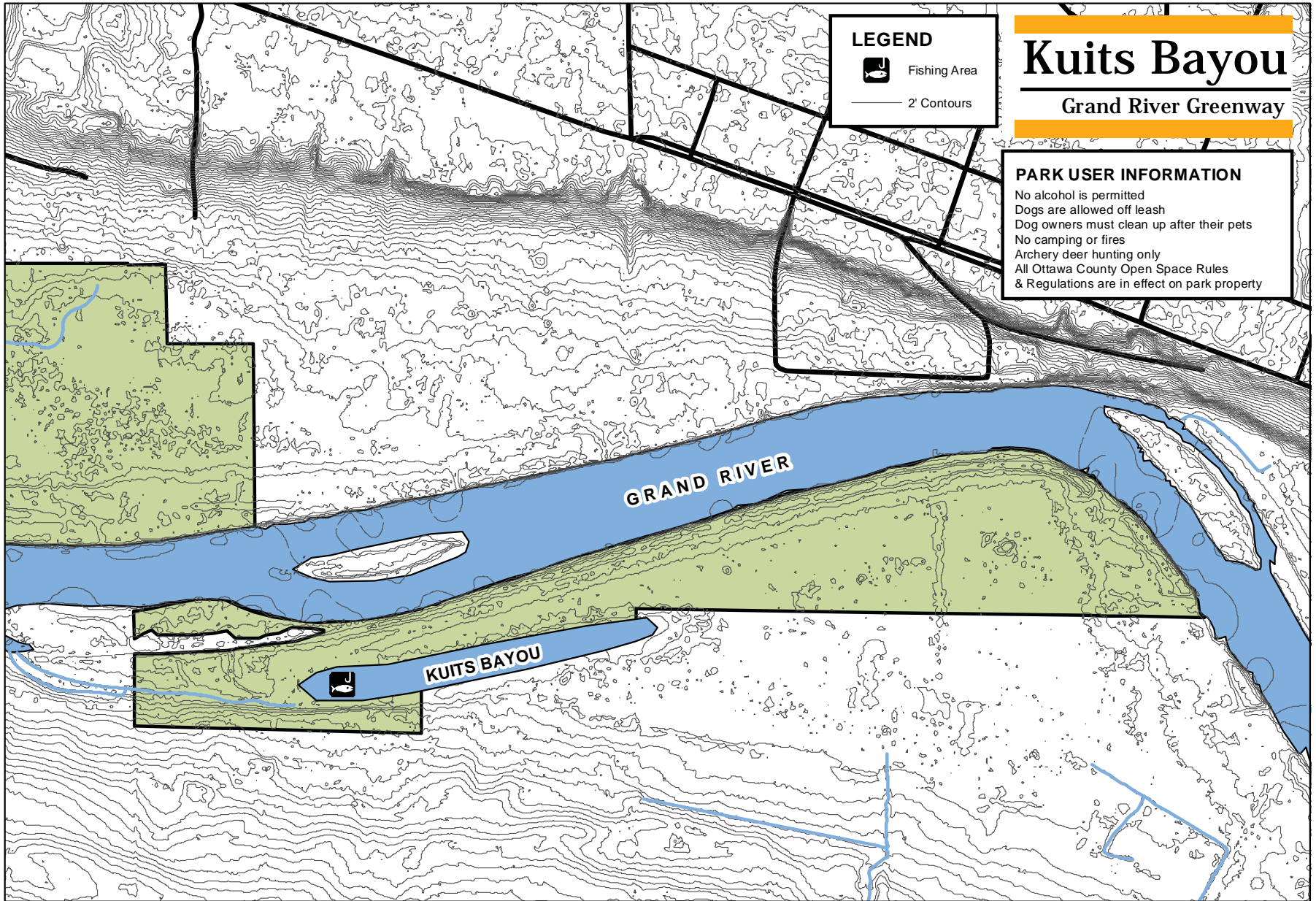
Natural Features: Floodplain forest with portion of inland bayou

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 6191 feet (1.17 miles)
- Bayou - 2650 feet (0.50 miles)

Facilities/Activities: Undeveloped. Site is popular with hunters and fishermen

Site Notes: Access is currently by boat only.



LEGEND

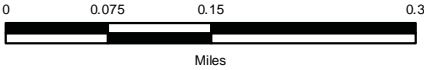
-  Fishing Area
-  2' Contours

Kuits Bayou

Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

- No alcohol is permitted
- Dogs are allowed off leash
- Dog owners must clean up after their pets
- No camping or fires
- Archery deer hunting only
- All Ottawa County Open Space Rules & Regulations are in effect on park property



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

GRAND RAVINES

Georgetown Township

Acquired: South area 1999, North area 2010, riverfront addition in 2012.

Size: 187 acres

Natural Features: Scenic and ecologically significant steep wooded ravines extending from interior of site to the Grand River shoreline. Flatter, upland portions of site are former farm field. North fields have been restored to native grassland.

Water Frontage: Grand River - 2640 feet (0.50 miles)

Developed: 2015

Facilities/Activities: South area has access from Fillmore Street including gravel parking area, pit toilet, dog park, and hiking trails. There is also a restored historic barn at this location. North area includes paved entrance drive and parking, renovated house overlooking the river, a ravine overlook deck, and trails.

Trails: 3.19 miles

Grant History:

2009 MNRTF Grand River Ravines Acquisition TF09-075
(100 acres, \$720,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: Extensive additional improvements including more marked trails is scheduled for 2016.



Photo by Kevin Povenz

Grand Ravines

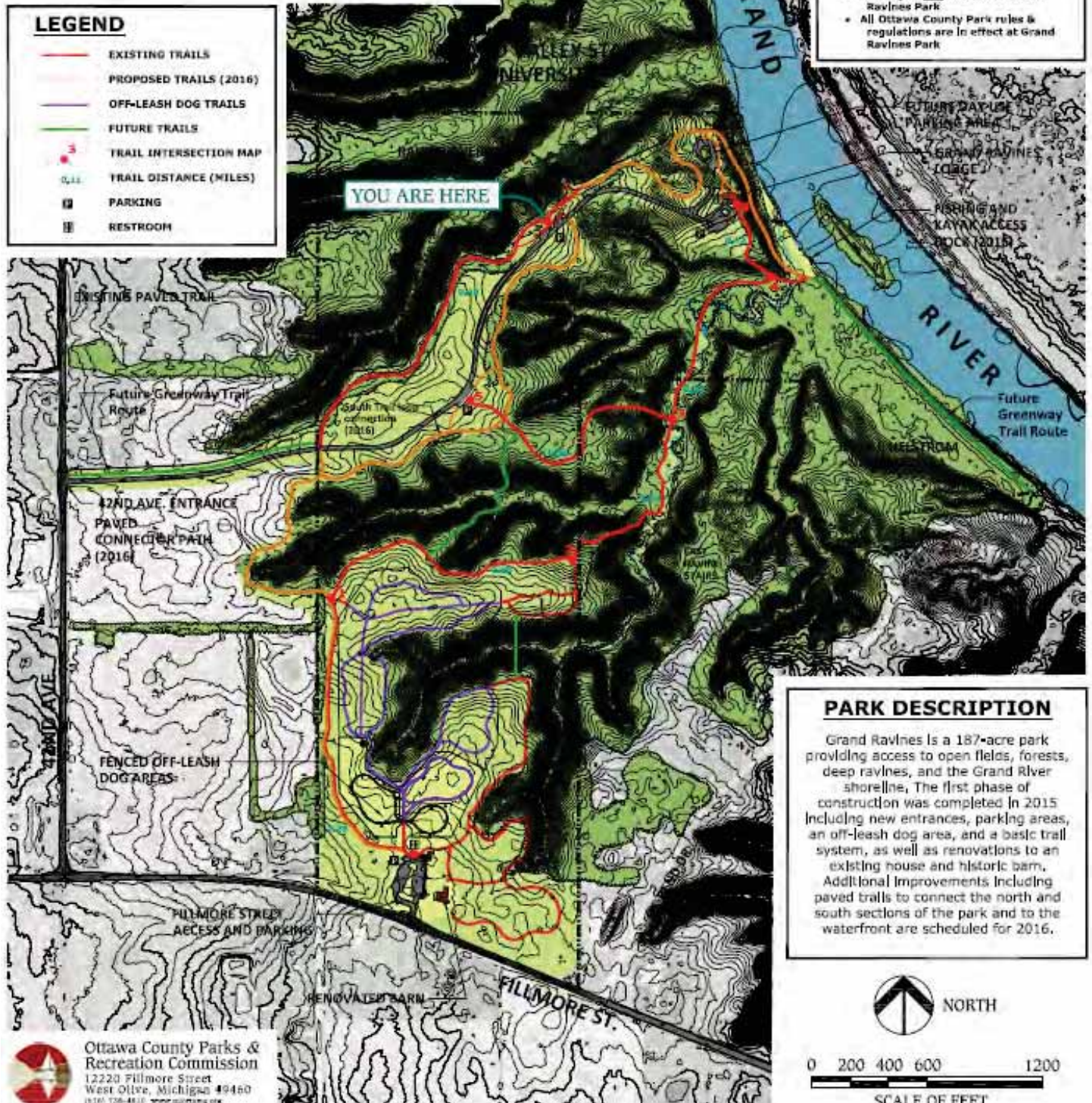
Grand River Greenway

LEGEND

-  EXISTING TRAILS
-  PROPOSED TRAILS (2016)
-  OFF-LEASH DOG TRAILS
-  FUTURE TRAILS
-  TRAIL INTERSECTION MAP
-  TRAIL DISTANCE (MILES)
-  PARKING
-  RESTROOM

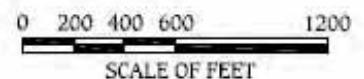
PARK USER INFORMATION

- No Alcohol is permitted
- No Motor vehicles beyond parking lots
- Horses are NOT allowed on trails
- Bicycles allowed on paved trails only
- Dogs must remain on a leash at all times except in fenced off-leash areas
- Dog owners must clean up after their pets
- No camping or fires
- Hunting is NOT allowed in Grand Ravines Park
- All Ottawa County Park rules & regulations are in effect at Grand Ravines Park



PARK DESCRIPTION

Grand Ravines is a 187-acre park providing access to open fields, forests, deep ravines, and the Grand River shoreline. The first phase of construction was completed in 2015 including new entrances, parking areas, an off-leash dog area, and a basic trail system, as well as renovations to an existing house and historic barn. Additional improvements including paved trails to connect the north and south sections of the park and to the waterfront are scheduled for 2016.



Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubbs Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

GRAND RIVER PARK



Georgetown Township

Acquired: Transferred from Georgetown Township in 1999.

Size: 162 acres

Natural Features: The park features wooded hills, floodplain forest, wetlands, a small man-made lake and restored native grassland areas.

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 2505 feet (0.47 miles)
- Inland lake

Developed: 1990

Facilities/Activities: The park offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and skiing on the nature trails as well as fishing from a wooden dock/boardwalk or from the shore of the lake and the Grand River. The park also features a boat launch and universally accessible kayak launch at the Grand River, overlook decks, a fully enclosed picnic building and a barrier-free children's playground.

Trails: 3.43 miles

Grant History:

- 1983 MNRTF Grand River Park Acquisition TF 710 (160 acres, \$120,000 grant amount)
- 1987 MNRTF Grand River Park Development TF87-229 (\$120,000 grant amount)
- 2012 MNRTF Grand River Accessible Kayak Launches TF12-080 (\$47,500 grant amount)

Site Notes: There are no entrance or boat launch fees and the park is open year around. In 1999 Ottawa County Parks and Recreation received a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to restore approximately 22 acres of existing farmland to native grassland.

Grand River Park

Grand River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

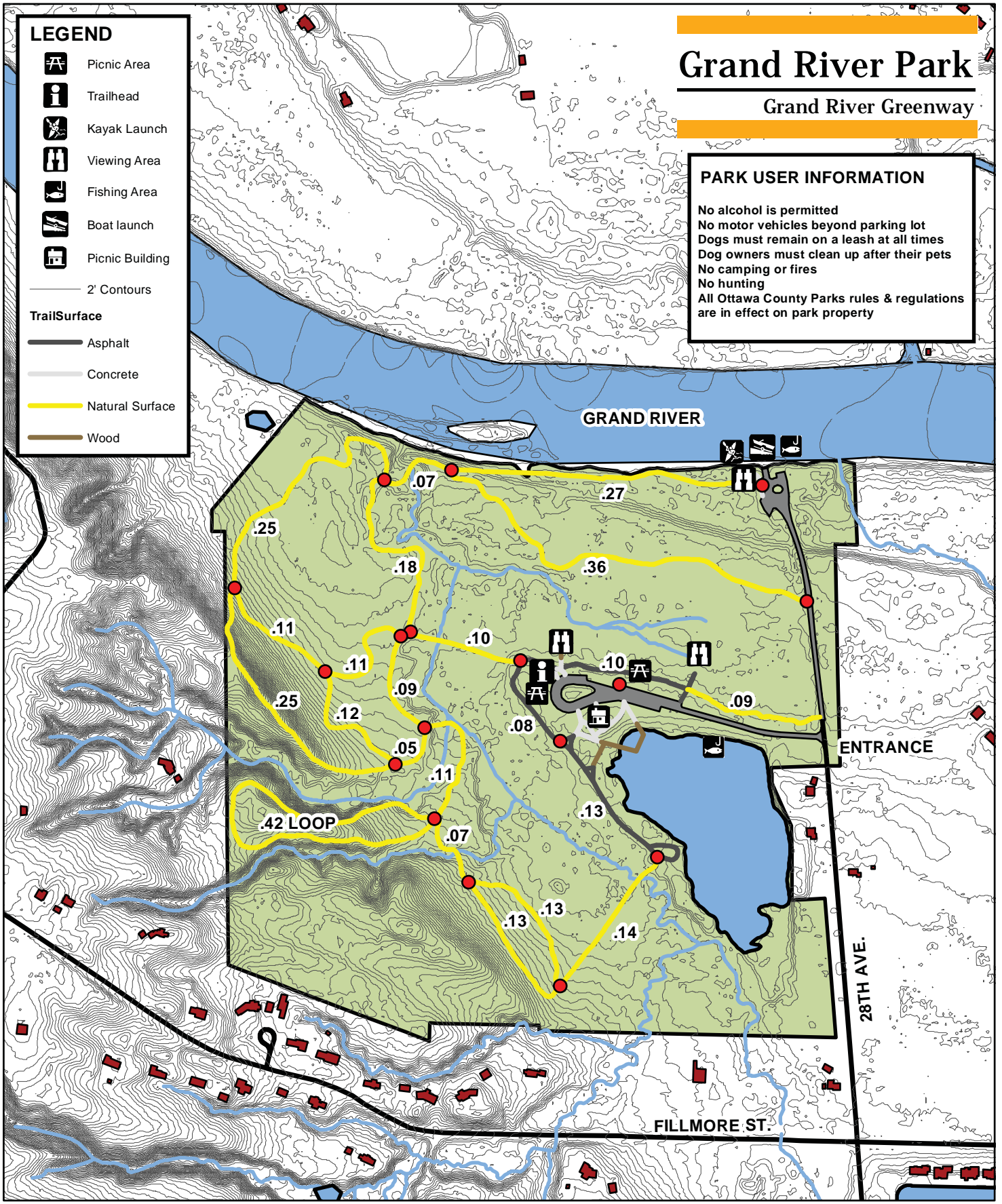
LEGEND

- Picnic Area
- Trailhead
- Kayak Launch
- Viewing Area
- Fishing Area
- Boat launch
- Picnic Building

2' Contours

TrailSurface

- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Natural Surface
- Wood



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

BEND AREA



Photo by Kevin Povenz

Georgetown Township

Acquired: 2007

Size: 258 acres

Natural Features: Mixed floodplain vegetation including wooded areas, wetland and former gravel mining areas.

Water Frontage:

- Grand River - 2505 feet (1.31 miles)
- Inland lake

Developed: 2009

Facilities/Activities: A gravel parking lot provides access from the end of 12th Avenue. The site is popular for hunting and fishing.

Site Notes: The site contains several active oil wells that will likely remain in use for the foreseeable future.


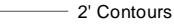
PARK USER INFORMATION

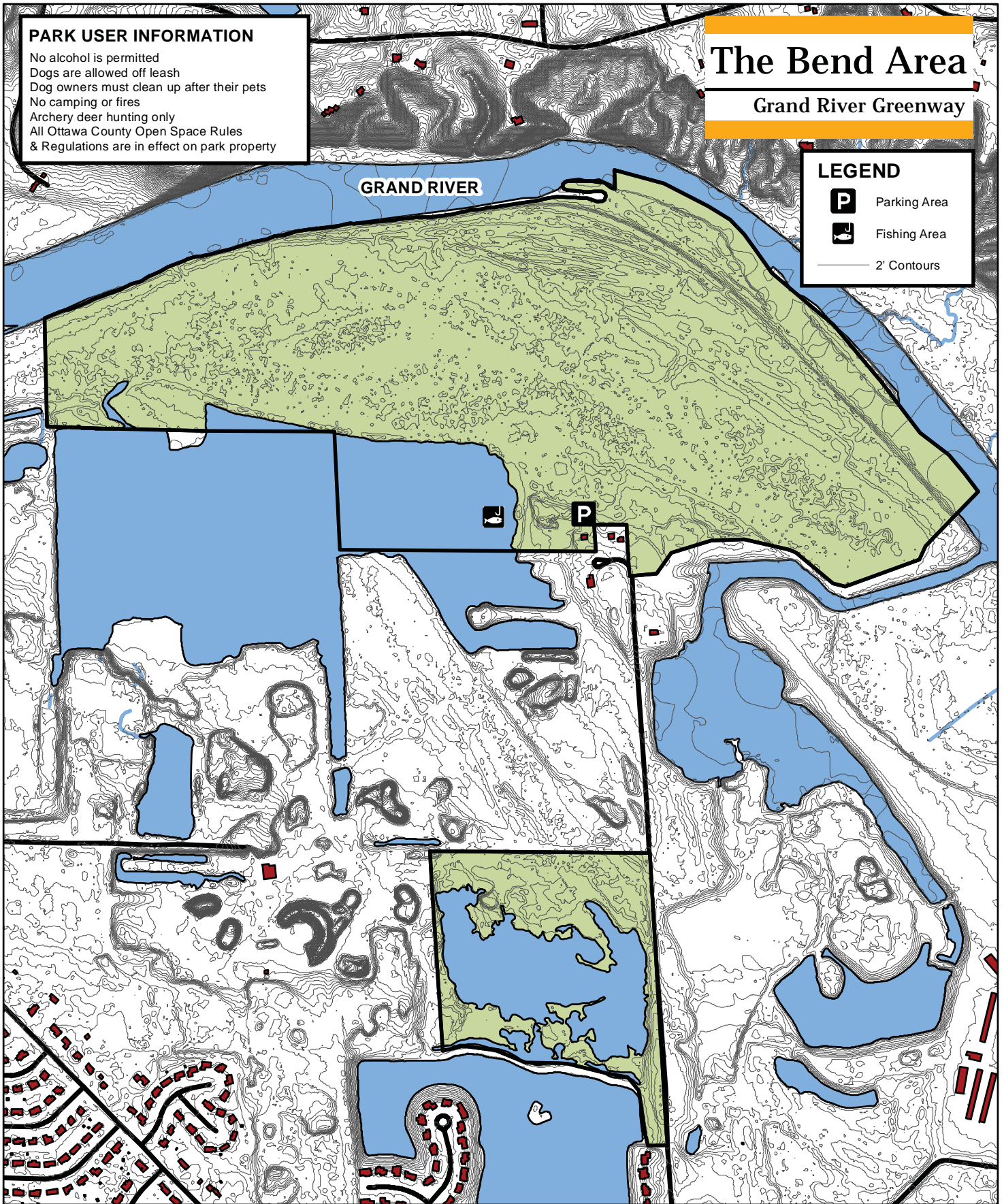
No alcohol is permitted
Dogs are allowed off leash
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
Archery deer hunting only
All Ottawa County Open Space Rules
& Regulations are in effect on park property

The Bend Area

Grand River Greenway

LEGEND

-  Parking Area
-  Fishing Area
-  2' Contours



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

Grand River Greenway

Connor Bayou, Crockery Creek Natural Area, Jubb Bayou, Riverside Park, Bur Oak Landing, Eastmanville Farm, Eastmanville Bayou, Deer Creek Park, Ripps Bayou, Kuits Bayou, Grand River Open Space, Grand Ravines, Grand River Park, Bend Area, Georgetown East Grand River Site

GEORGETOWN EAST GRAND RIVER SITE

Georgetown Township

Acquired: 2012

Size: 6 acres

Natural Features: Floodplain forest

Water Frontage: Grand River - 405 feet (0.08 miles)

Facilities/Activities: Undeveloped.

Site Notes: Access is currently by boat only.

Pigeon River Greenway

Hemlock Crossing, Pine Bend, Pigeon River Open Space, Pigeon Creek Park & Forest

HEMLOCK CROSSING/PINE BEND

Port Sheldon Township

Acquired: 1998-2004

Size: 239 acres

Natural Features: Woods and wetlands meander through bottomland and upland forest, old pine plantations and along the river.

Water Frontage: Pigeon River - 7902 feet
(1.50 miles)

Developed: Main park facility 2003, Nature Education Center 2009

Facilities/Activities: Facilities include two small picnic shelters, a kayak/canoe launch and over a mile of paved trail. There are over 6 miles of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. Pine Bend is a secondary access on the west end of the property that offers parking and a trail head. A pedestrian bridge and numerous overlooks offer scenic views of the river corridor, wetlands, natural springs and woods. Hemlock Crossing is the site of the 8000 square foot Nature Education Center which houses staff offices, a classroom, meeting space, and interpretive room. Pine Bend is also the site of the Weaver House, a restored residence available for event rental.

Trails: 6.25 miles

Grant History:

- 1997 MNRTF Pigeon River Greenway Acquisition TF97-242
(86 acres, \$397,500 grant amount)
- 1998 MNRTF Pigeon River Greenway II Addition TF98-285
(61 acres, \$390,000 grant amount)
- 2001 MNRTF Pigeon River Greenway Improvements TF01.159
(\$471,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: There are no entrance fees at Hemlock Crossing or Pine Bend and both are open all year.

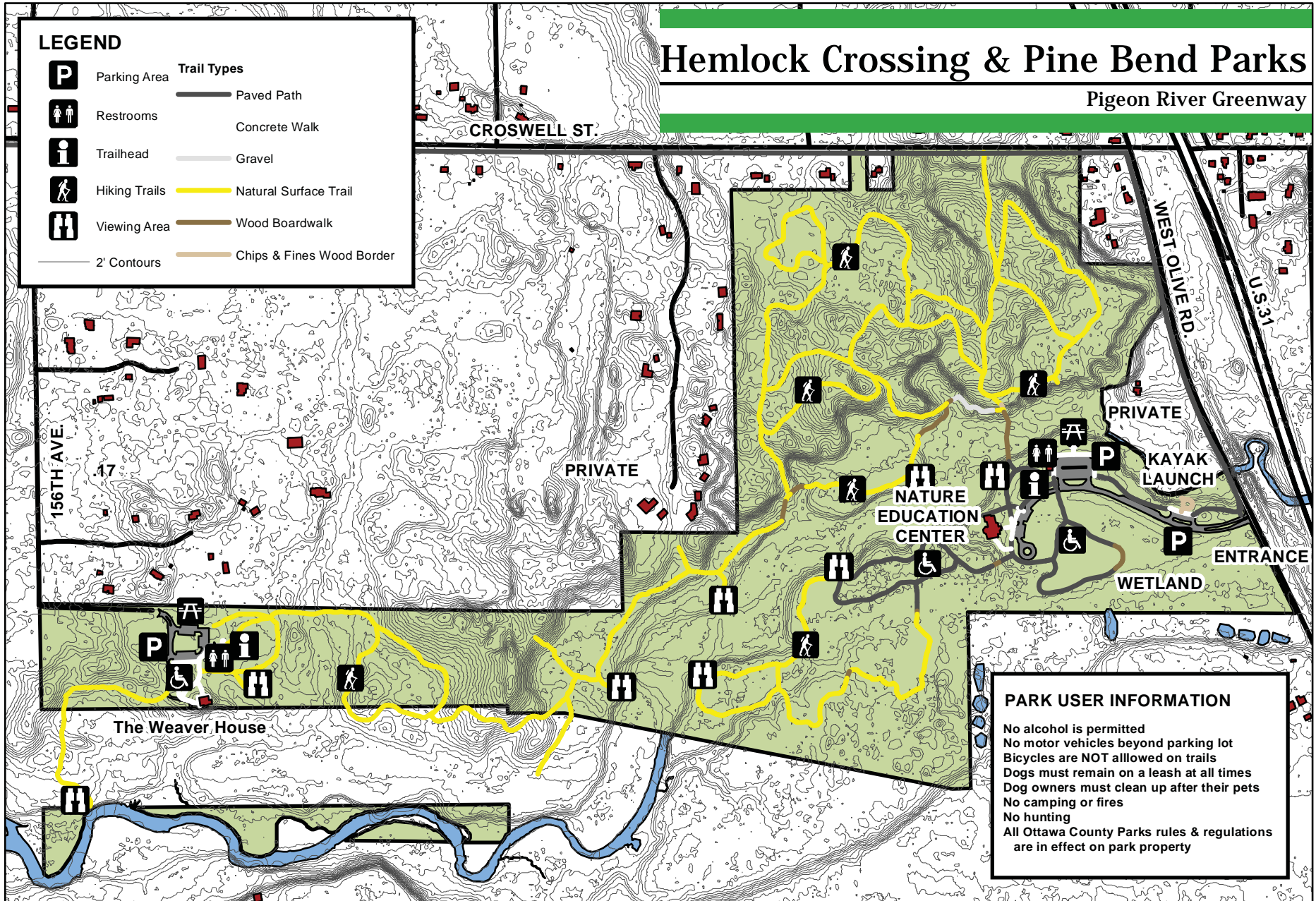


Hemlock Crossing & Pine Bend Parks

Pigeon River Greenway

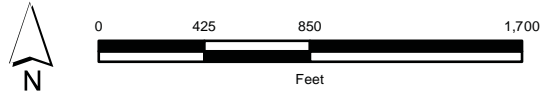
LEGEND

Trail Types	
Parking Area	Paved Path
Restrooms	Concrete Walk
Trailhead	Gravel
Hiking Trails	Natural Surface Trail
Viewing Area	Wood Boardwalk
2' Contours	Chips & Fines Wood Border



PARK USER INFORMATION

- No alcohol is permitted
- No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
- Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
- Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
- Dog owners must clean up after their pets
- No camping or fires
- No hunting
- All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



Pigeon River Greenway

Hemlock Crossing, Pine Bend, Pigeon River Open Space, Pigeon Creek Park & Forest

PIGEON RIVER OPEN SPACE

Olive Township

Acquired: Donated

Size: 46 acres

Natural Features: Floodplain forest with over 2000' of frontage on the Pigeon River.

Water Frontage: Pigeon River - 2354 feet (0.46 miles)

Facilities/Activities: Undeveloped

Site Notes: Site was donated to Parks Commission from a private citizen.

Pigeon River Greenway

Hemlock Crossing, Pine Bend, Pigeon River Open Space, Pigeon Creek Park & Forest

PIGEON CREEK PARK & FOREST

Olive Township

Acquired: 1989

Size: 412 acres

Natural Features: The majority of the park is heavily wooded with a diversity of habitat types including upland deciduous forest, pine plantations, floodplain forest, and wetlands.

Water Frontage: Pigeon River - 3200 feet (0.61 miles)

Developed: 2003, lodge in 1996, lodge and parking addition in 2012

Facilities/Activities: Facilities at the park include the Pigeon Creek Lodge, group camp area, sledding hills, picnic areas and over 10 miles of trails used for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and equestrian use. There are three miles of cross country trails that are lighted for evening skiing. There is approximately a one-mile trail loop that generally meets barrier-free standards. During the winter, the lodge offers ski rental and concessions. The lodge functions as a picnic building which can be reserved in the non-winter months.

Trails: 10.13 miles

Grant History:

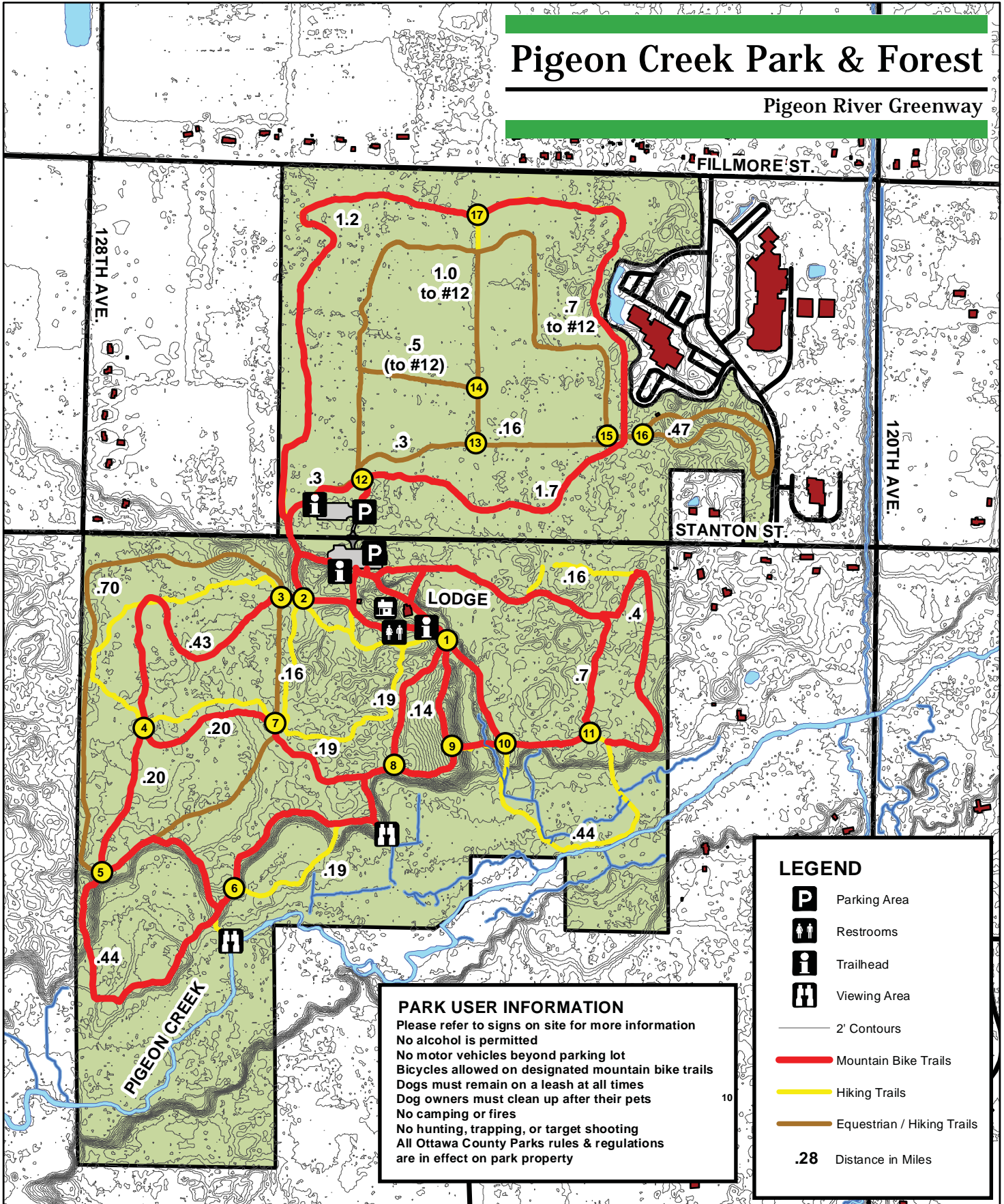
- 1989 MNRTF Pigeon River Expansion Acquisition TF89-232 (86 acres, \$397,500 grant amount)
- 1993 MNRTF Pigeon Creek Park Development TF93-106 (\$315,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: There are no entrance fees and the park is open year around, with the bulk of use occurring in the winter months. On the corner of 120th Avenue and Fillmore Street is the Ottawa County Fillmore Complex where county offices are located, including the Parks and Recreation Office.



Pigeon Creek Park & Forest

Pigeon River Greenway



Macatawa Greenway

Paw Paw Park West & East, Hawthorn Pond Natural Area, Upper Macatawa Natural Area

PAW PAW PARK WEST

City of Holland

Acquired: Management transferred from City of Holland in 2015 via long-term lease

Size: 50 acres

Natural Features: The site is almost completely in the Macatawa River floodplain and consists mostly of floodplain forest.

Water Frontage:

Macatawa River - 2063 (0.39 miles)

Developed: 1998

Facilities/Activities: Paved entrance drive and parking area with vehicle access to the riverfront. Park has a small picnic shelter and mowed trails.

Trails: 1.33 miles



PAW PAW PARK EAST

(FORMER MACATAWA GREENSPACE)

City of Holland

Acquired: 2010

Size: 122 acres

Natural Features: The site contains some natural floodplain forest. Most of the remainder of the site is former golf greens and fairways with scattered large trees that have been restored to various types of wetland. Twenty-four acres of floodplain forest were also restored in 2010 as part of an agreement to provide space to Request Foods, Inc. for required wetland mitigation.

Water Frontage: Macatawa River - 4815 feet (0.91 miles)

Developed: 1998

Facilities/Activities: Paved entrance drive and parking, pit toilets, paved and natural surface trails, picnic tables, and 18 basket disc golf course.

Trails: 3.16 miles

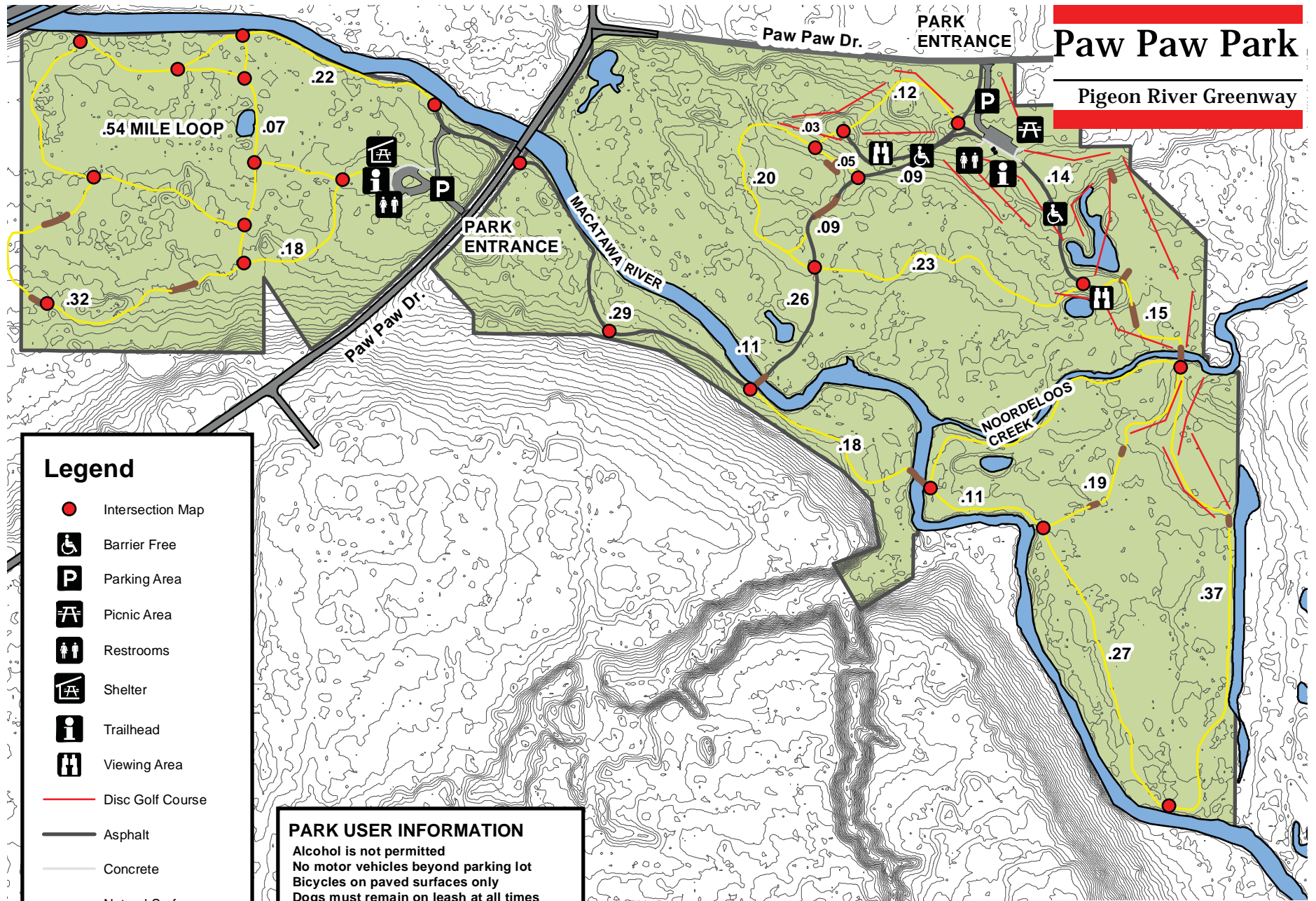
Grant History:

- 2010 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant (\$650,000 grant amount)
- 2015 Michigan Department of Community Health - Building Healthy Communities Grant (\$63,000 grant amount)



Paw Paw Park

Pigeon River Greenway

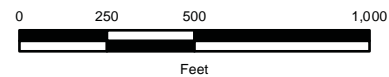


Legend

- Intersection Map
- Barrier Free
- Parking Area
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- Shelter
- Trailhead
- Viewing Area
- Disc Golf Course
- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Natural Surface
- Boardwalk
- .32** Distance in Miles

PARK USER INFORMATION

Alcohol is not permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 Bicycles on paved surfaces only
 Dogs must remain on leash at all times
 Dog owners must clean up after their pets
 No camping or fires
 No hunting, trapping, or target shooting
 All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations
 are in effect on park property



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Macatawa Greenway

Paw Paw Park West & East, Hawthorn Pond Natural Area, Upper Macatawa Natural Area

ADAMS STREET LANDING

Holland Township

Acquired: 1999

Size: 10 acres

Natural Features: The site is covered with mature trees and floodplain forest.

Water Frontage: Macatawa River 1100 feet (0.21 miles)

Developed: 2006

Facilities/Activities: This small park provides hiking and picnicking. It also serves as a staging location for canoes and kayaks. A separated non-motorized pathway runs past the property on Adams Street. The location is a very popular fishing spot.

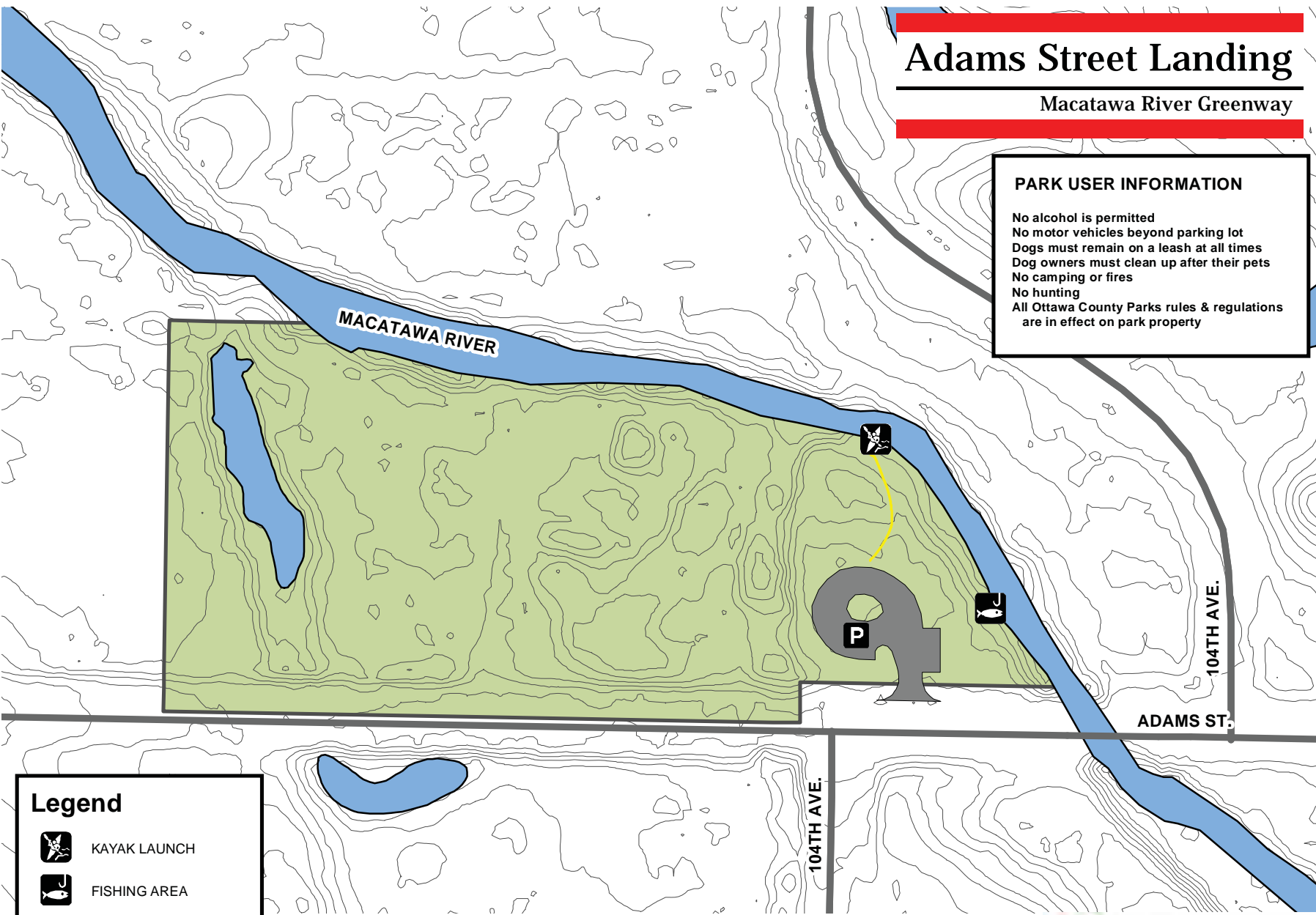
Site Notes: In 1999, Ottawa County Parks received a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Hazard Mitigation Grant to purchase and remove flood-prone structures in the floodplain of the Macatawa River. With the assistance of the grant funds, Ottawa County purchased 10 acres including two houses in Holland Township and removed them in 2002.







Adams Street Landing

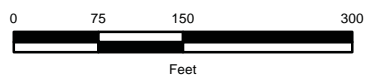
Macatawa River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION
No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



Legend

-  KAYAK LAUNCH
-  FISHING AREA
-  Parking Area
-  Natural Surface Trail



Paw Paw Park West & East, Hawthorn Pond Natural Area, Upper Macatawa Natural Area

HAWTHORN POND NATURAL AREA

Holland Township

Acquired: 2008

Size: 40 acres

Natural Features: Five-acre pond with deep water, wetlands, and forest along almost 1800 linear feet of Macatawa River shoreline.

Facilities/Activities: Paved entrance drive and parking, fishing dock , shelter, and trails around lake.

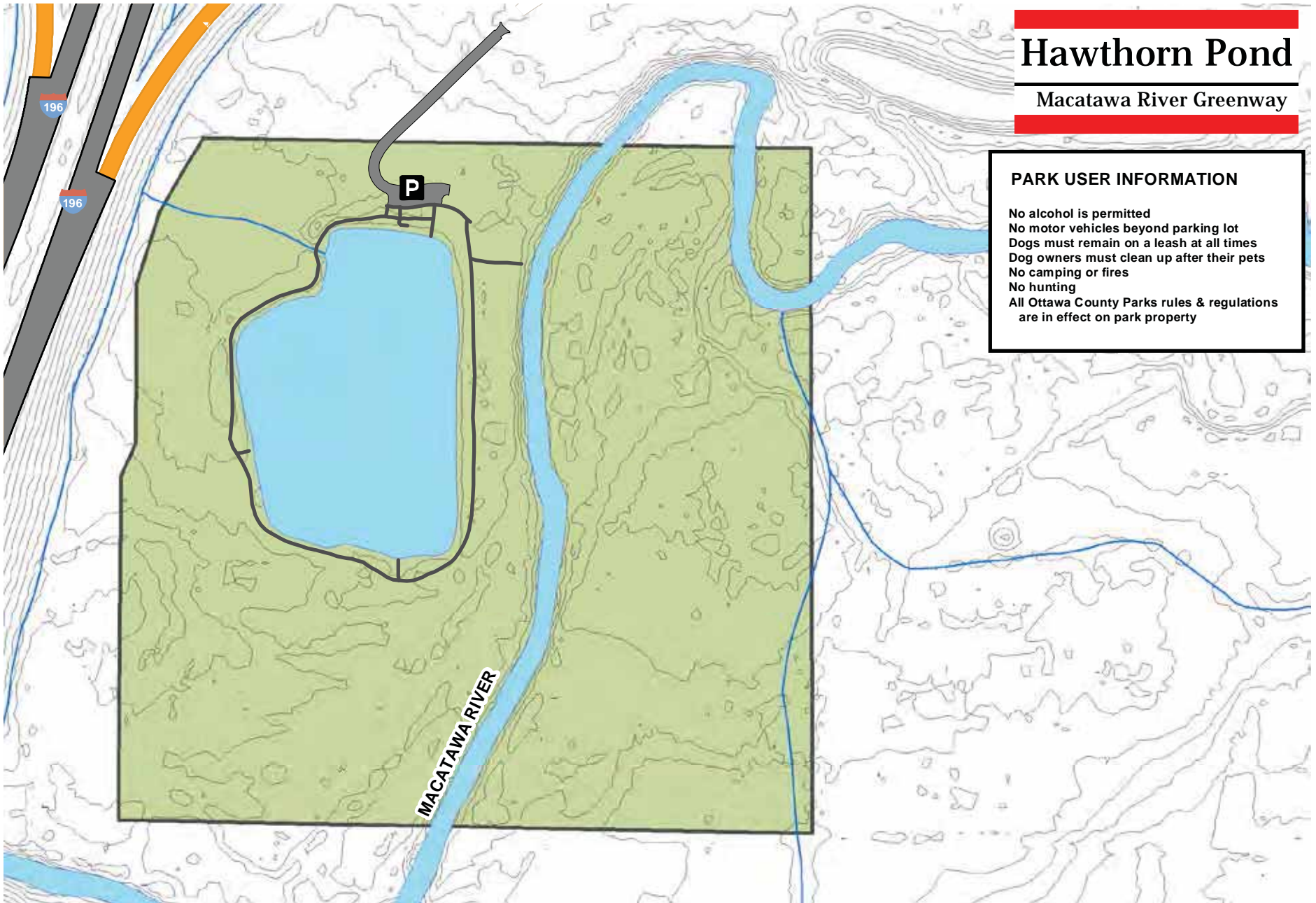
Site Notes: This site was purchased jointly with Holland Township, who is responsible for management and development.

Hawthorn Pond

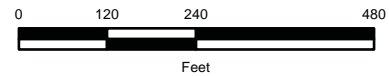
Macatawa River Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations
are in effect on park property



MACATAWA RIVER



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Macatawa Greenway

Paw Paw Park West & East, Hawthorn Pond Natural Area, Upper Macatawa Natural Area

UPPER MACATAWA NATURAL AREA

Zeeland Township

Acquired: 2000-2001

Size: 612 acres

Natural Features: Located on the upper reaches of the Macatawa River, the property includes a variety of restored wetlands, restored grasslands and an extensive system of deep wooded ravines that support native vegetation and a variety of wildlife.

Water Frontage: Macatawa River 1100 feet (0.21 miles)

Developed: Main development 2007, Paved path and trailhead improvements 2015

Facilities/Activities: Improvements include two access points with parking, pit toilets, and picnic tables and access to a system of trails, boardwalks, overlooks, and interpretive displays. Recent improvements include a paved non-motorized trail traversing the entire site from north to south and trail head amenities including a shelter and water supply. This site also provides technically challenging mountain bike trails

Trails: 8.21 miles

Site Notes: The Parks Commission began issuing a limited number of special permits for bow hunting deer on the property in 2004. The permits are issued on a lottery basis each fall.

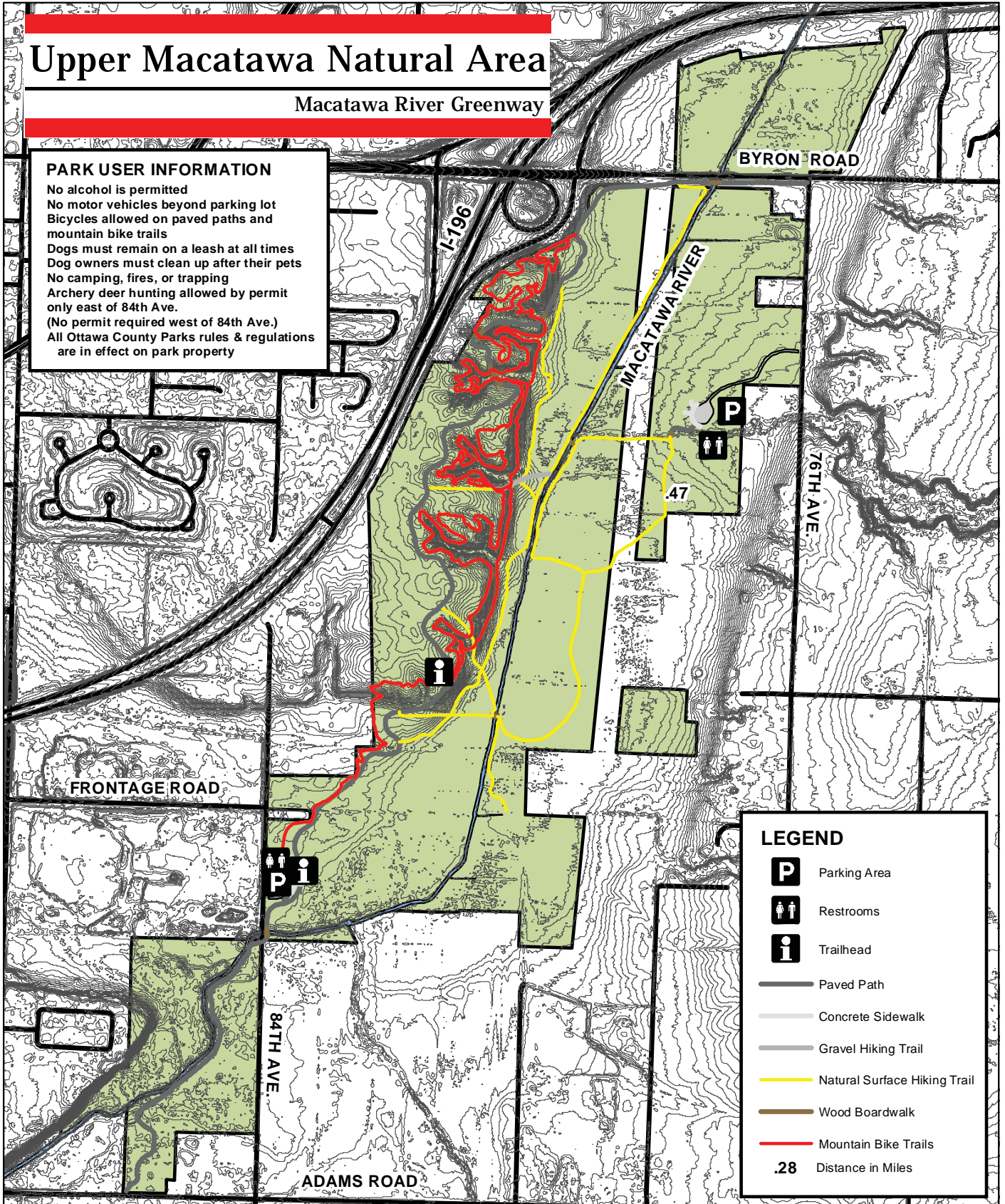


Upper Macatawa Natural Area

Macatawa River Greenway

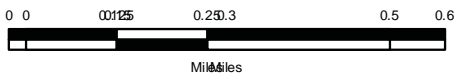
PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles allowed on paved paths and mountain bike trails
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping, fires, or trapping
Archery deer hunting allowed by permit only east of 84th Ave.
(No permit required west of 84th Ave.)
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Trailhead
- Paved Path
- Concrete Sidewalk
- Gravel Hiking Trail
- Natural Surface Hiking Trail
- Wood Boardwalk
- Mountain Bike Trails
- .28 Distance in Miles



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

NORTH OTTAWA DUNES

City of Ferrysburg

Acquired: 2005

Size: 513 acres

Natural Features: Extensive undeveloped dunes and forestlands, and although it does not have frontage on Lake Michigan, it does provide views of the lake and an experience of the unique Lake Michigan shoreline environment.

Facilities/Activities: Over eight miles of natural surface trails provide access to the entire site and a connection to Hoffmaster State Park and North Beach Park. The North Beach Park connection includes extensive boardwalks, stairs, and overlooks through the largest dunes on the site. Access is provided by a paved parking area in adjacent Coast Guard Park (City of Ferrysburg). Amenities include a restroom, picnic tables, donor recognition plaza, and trailhead kiosk.

Trails: 8.67 miles

Grant History:

2004 MNRTF North Ottawa Dune Acquisition TF04-108
(500 acres, \$3,900,00 grant amount)

Site Notes: Purchase of this site was made possible by extensive private fundraising.



HOFFMASTER
STATE
PARK

North Ottawa Dunes

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles allowed on paved paths and mountain bike trails
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping, fires, or trapping
Archery deer hunting allowed by permit only east of 84th Ave.
(No permit required west of 84th Ave.)
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

COAST GUARD PARK

NORTH SHORE DR. ENTRANCE

North
Beach
Park

LEGEND



Parking Area



Restrooms



Trailhead



Viewing Area

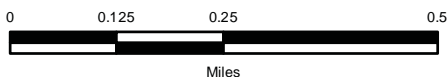
— Paved Path

— Concrete Sidewalk

— Natural Surface Hiking Trail

— Wood Boardwalk

.28 Distance in Miles



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

NORTH BEACH PARK

City of Ferrysburg

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission in 1987

Size: 7 acres

Natural Features: Large open, sandy beach with some natural dune inland.

Water Frontage: Lake Michigan - 745 feet (0.14 miles)

Developed: Various projects 1985-1993; Extensive improvements 1997

Facilities/Activities: Facilities include parking for 187 cars (including six barrier-free spaces), a large picnic shelter, play area, volleyball court, restrooms, vending machine concession, a dune climb stairway with viewing deck, and a seasonal boardwalk for barrier-free access to the beach and Lake Michigan.

Grant History:

1995 MNRTF North Beach Improvements TF95-208
(\$150,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: The park is open year around and vehicle parking fees are in effect between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend.



North Beach Park

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
No dogs allowed
No camping or fires
All Ottawa County Parks rules
& regulations are in effect on
park property

PRIVATE

NORTH SHORE ESTATES RD.

NORTH OTTAWA DUNES


LAKE MICHIGAN


P

ENTRANCE


PRIVATE


LEGEND


 Parking Area

 Restrooms

 Paved Path

 Concrete Sidewalk

 Natural Surface Hiking Trail

 Wood Boardwalk



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

ROSY MOUND NATURAL AREA

Grand Haven Township

Acquired: 1994

Size: 164 acres

Natural Features: Rosy Mound is a classic Great Lakes dune system including high wooded dunes, foredunes, a dune blowout, and sandy Lake Michigan shoreline.

Water Frontage: Lake Michigan - 3450 feet (0.65 miles)

Developed: 2001

Facilities/Activities: 0.7 mile hiking trail from the parking area to the Lake Michigan shoreline, including 1,000 feet of stairs up and down the dune and scenic views of the woods, dunes and Lake Michigan. A unique shade canopy, dune boardwalk trail and restrooms are located near the beach. A parking lot, restroom building and picnic facilities were constructed on the east side of the dune as well as a crushed stone looped trail installed through the woods and open dune area.

Trails: 1.87 miles

Grant History:

2001 MNRTF Rosy Mound Improvements TF01.158
(\$500,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: A connection was made to the Lakeshore Drive bike path by a paved path extension through the park. Motor vehicle parking fees are in effect from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, and the park is open year around.



Rosy Mound Natural Area

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
No dogs allowed
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property
.69 mile from parking lot to the beach deck, including 410 steps

LAKE MICHIGAN

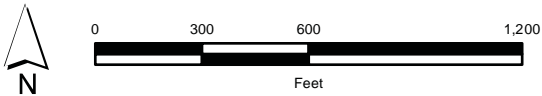
LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Trailhead
- Viewing Area
- 2' Contours
- Paved Path
- Concrete Walk
- Natural Surface Trail
- Wood Boardwalk
- Chips & Fines Wood Border

(RUSTIC & MODERN RESTROOMS)

ENTRANCE

LAKESHORE DR.



Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

KIRK PARK

Grand Haven Township

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission in 1987

Size: 68 acres

Natural Features: Rugged, forested dunes and sand beach.

Water Frontage: Lake Michigan - 1850 feet (0.35 miles)

Developed: Various projects 1986-1990

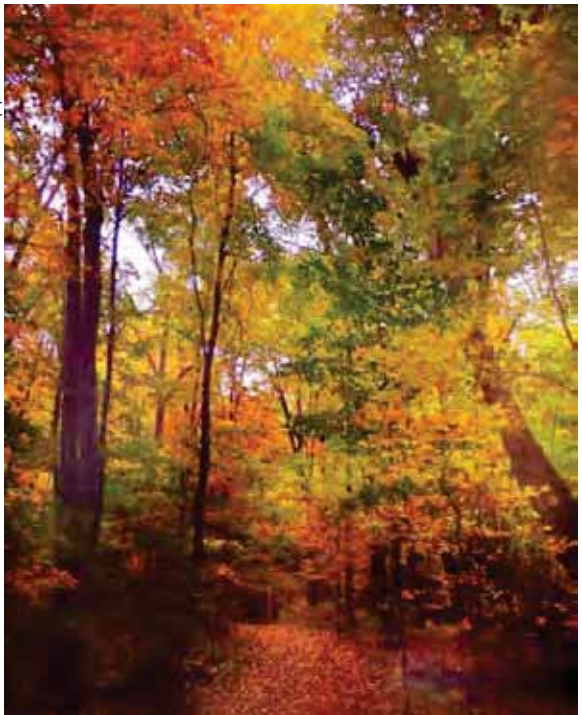
Facilities/Activities: Facilities include extensive picnic areas with a large picnic shelter and a park lodge used as a picnic building. The lodge is also used for overnight outings in the off-season. Well-marked trails include many boardwalks and viewing decks overlooking Lake Michigan. Hard surface walkways lead to interpretive displays at the waterfront and stairs to the beach. Other facilities include a modern restroom building with an attached concession, vending machine enclosure, two playgrounds, and parking for 314 vehicles.

Trails: 2.01 miles










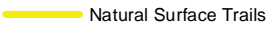
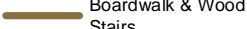
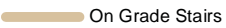
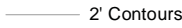
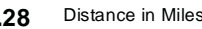
Grant History:

- 1972 Camp Kirk County Park 26-00384 (27 acres, \$80,000 grant amount)
- 1981 Kirk Park Acquisition #2 26-01216 (15 acres, \$50,345 grant amount)
- 1986 Kirk Park Development 26-01468 (\$99,783 grant amount)
- 1989 Kirk Park Phase II Development 26-01482 (\$72,933 grant amount)

Site Notes: Motor vehicle parking fees are in effect Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.



LEGEND

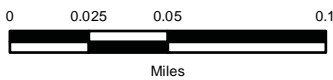
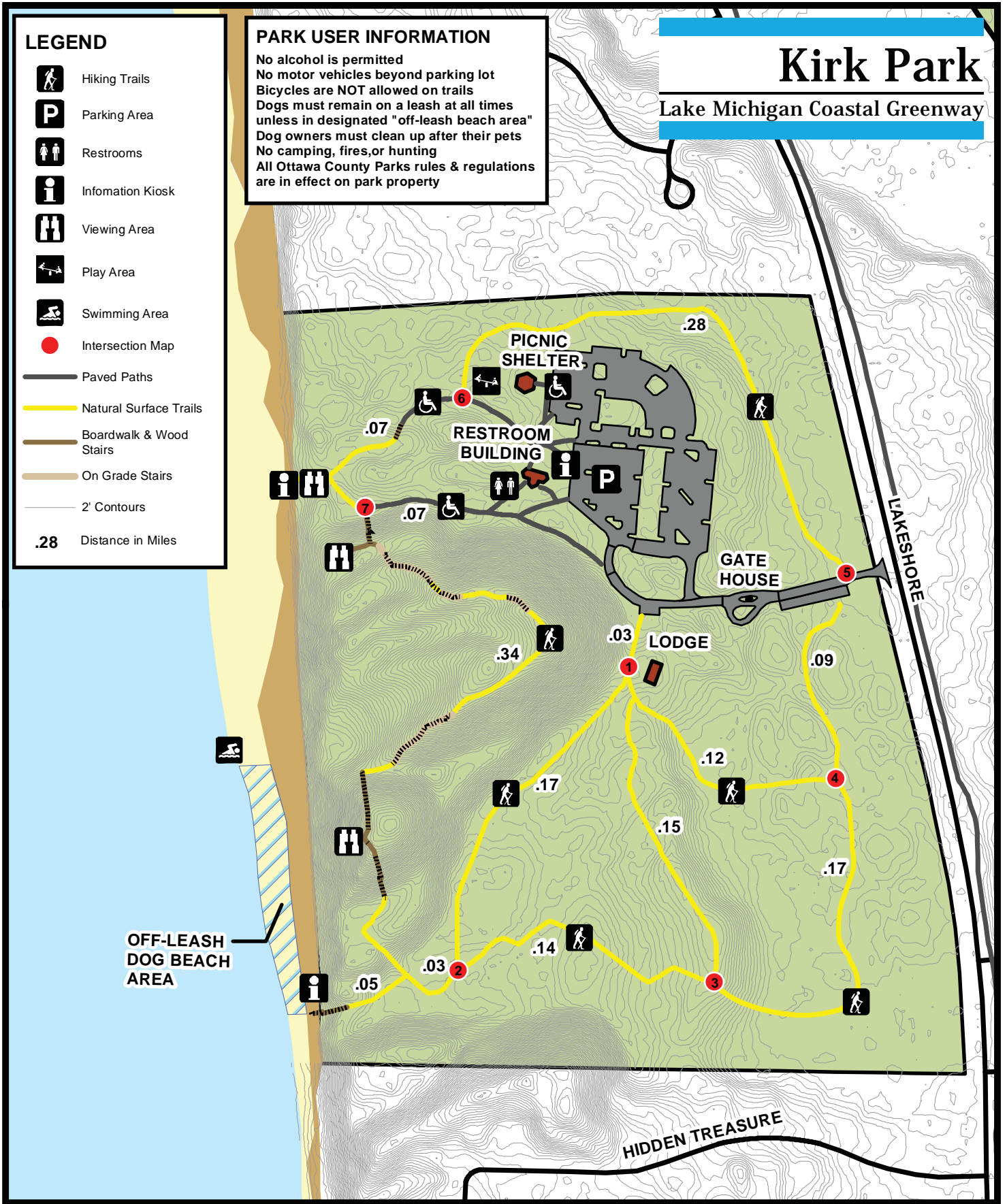
-  Hiking Trails
-  Parking Area
-  Restrooms
-  Information Kiosk
-  Viewing Area
-  Play Area
-  Swimming Area
-  Intersection Map
-  Paved Paths
-  Natural Surface Trails
-  Boardwalk & Wood Stairs
-  On Grade Stairs
-  2' Contours
-  .28 Distance in Miles

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
 Dogs must remain on a leash at all times unless in designated "off-leash beach area"
 Dog owners must clean up after their pets
 No camping, fires, or hunting
 All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

Kirk Park

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

OLIVE SHORES

Port Sheldon Township

Acquired: 2008

Size: 21 acres

Natural Features: A very high, steep dune is the dominant natural feature of the property along with 750 feet of shoreline on Lake Michigan. The dune is a classic beech–maple–hemlock dune with mature woods. Inland sections of the site include red pine plantation and dune savannah.

Water Frontage: Lake Michigan - 738 feet (0.14 miles)

Developed: 2011

Facilities/Activities: Recent improvements include paved parking, a modern restroom, trailhead, walkways, and an extensive system of wood stairs and boardwalks providing access over the dune to the Lake Michigan beach.

Trails: 0.57 miles

Grant History:

- 2007 Olive Shores Park Acquisition TF07-090
(13.5 acres, \$2,000,000 grant amount)
- 2010 Olive Shores Park Improvement TF01-101
(\$365,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: An interesting note about the property is that it was a filming location for the movie “The Road to Perdition” starring Tom Hanks.



Olive Shores

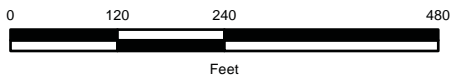
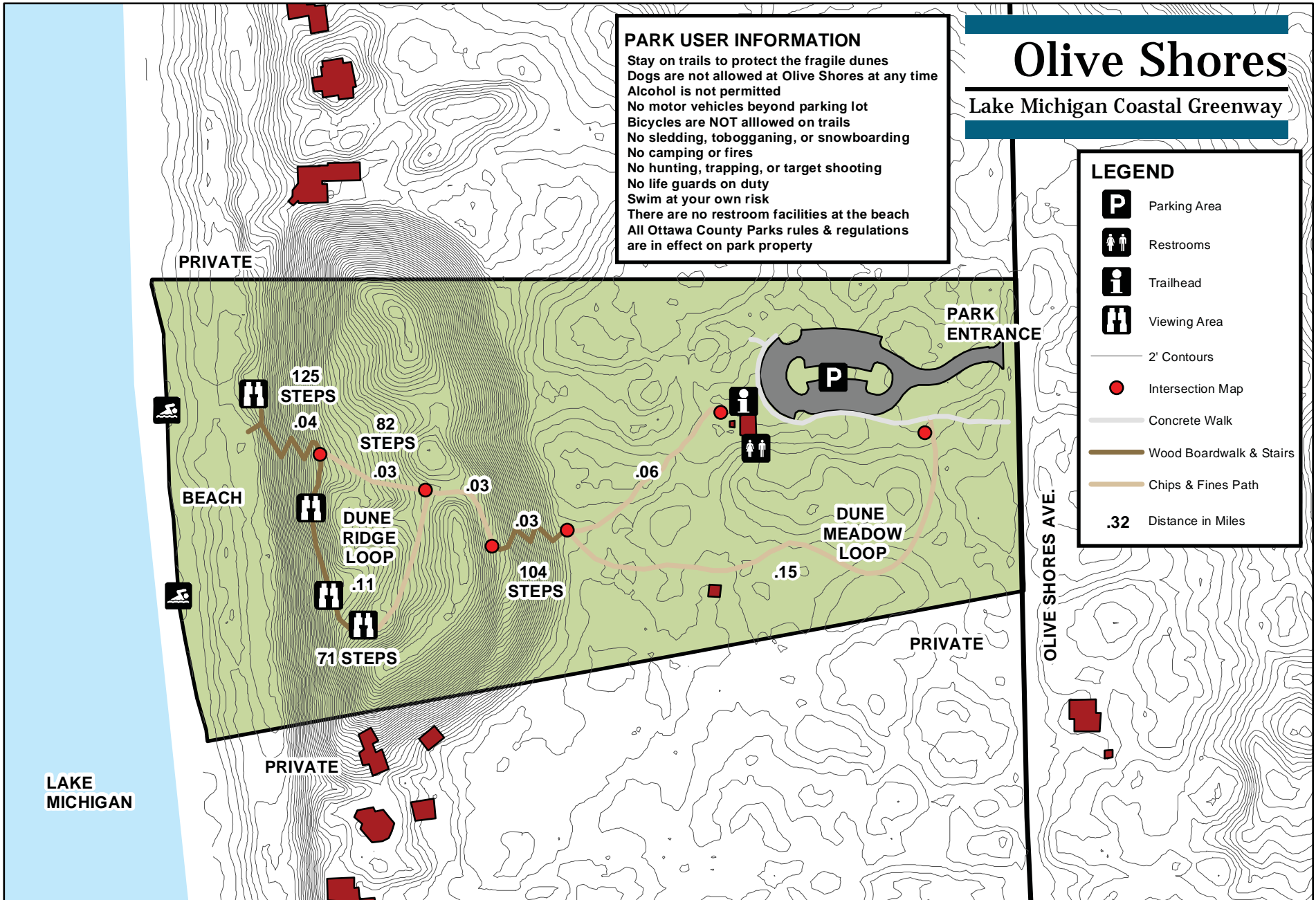
Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

PARK USER INFORMATION

Stay on trails to protect the fragile dunes
Dogs are not allowed at Olive Shores at any time
Alcohol is not permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
No sledding, tobogganing, or snowboarding
No camping or fires
No hunting, trapping, or target shooting
No life guards on duty
Swim at your own risk
There are no restroom facilities at the beach
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Trailhead
- Viewing Area
- 2' Contours
- Intersection Map
- Concrete Walk
- Wood Boardwalk & Stairs
- Chips & Fines Path
- .32 Distance in Miles



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

TUNNEL PARK

Park Township

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission

Size: 23 acres (includes approximately 5 acres leased from the City of Holland)

Natural Features: Open and forested dune along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The remainder of the site is developed.

Water Frontage: Lake Michigan - 950 feet (0.18 miles)

Developed: 2011

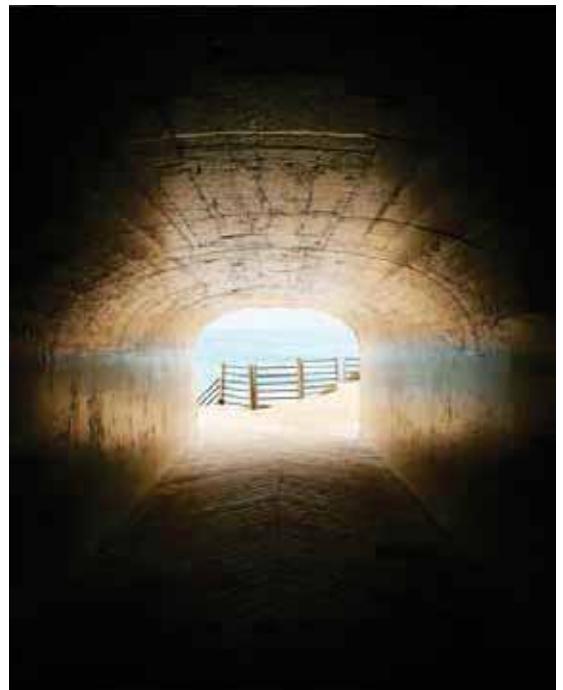
Facilities/Activities: Named after its unique tunnel through the dune providing beach access, Tunnel Park provides parking capacity (including overflow) for over 400, Tunnel Park has the most parking capacity of any County Park and is typically the busiest park during prime beach season. Facilities include four sand volleyball courts, extensive picnic areas including two covered shelters, modern restrooms, a large playground with an adjacent dune climb, and a dune-top viewing area.

Trails: 0.57 miles

Grant History:

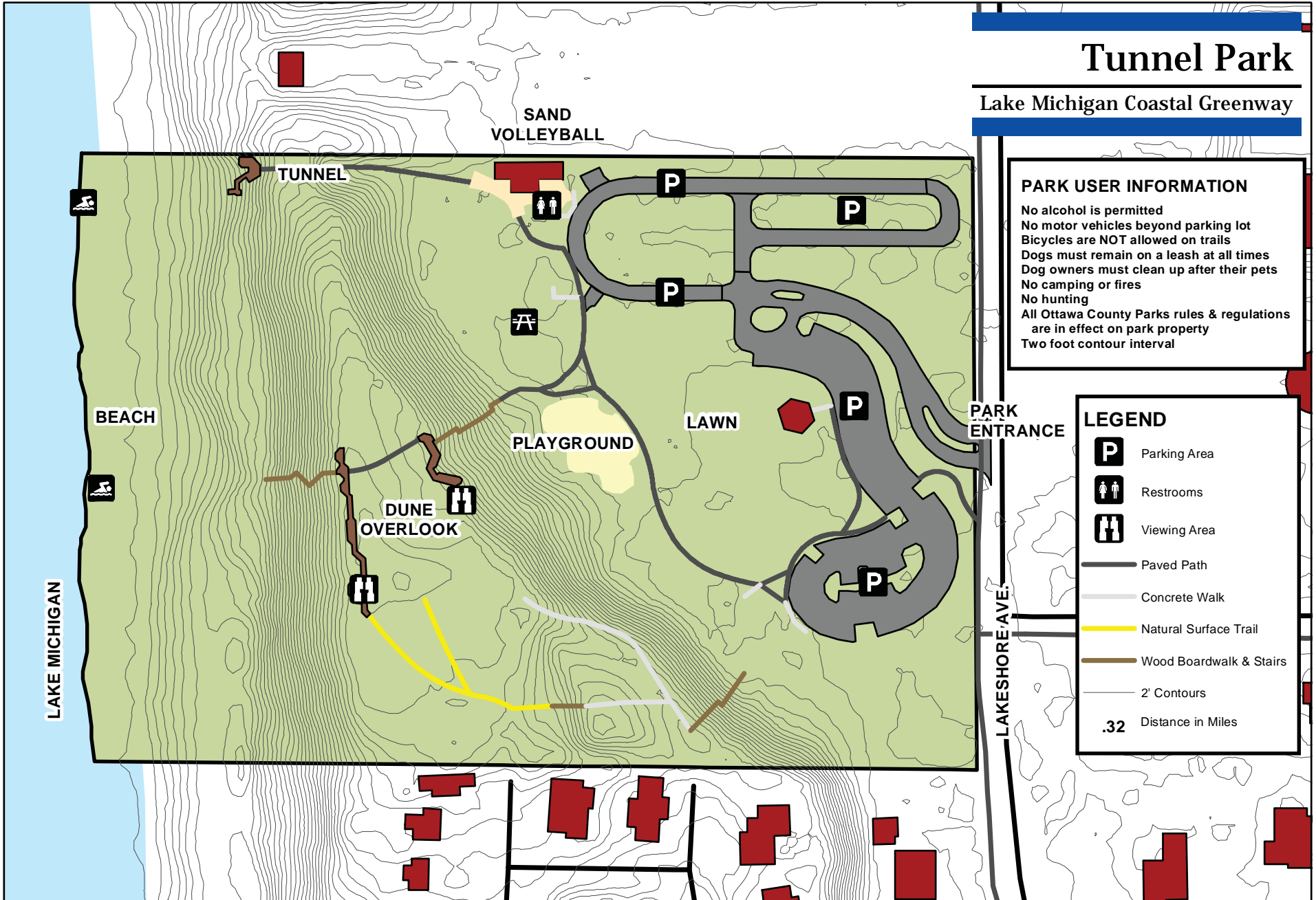
- 1988 Ottawa County Tunnel Park Development
26-01474
(\$103,260 grant amount)
- 1992 Bond Fund Tunnel Park Development
BF92-234
(\$113,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: Vehicle parking fees are required between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend and the park is closed between November 1 and March 31.



Tunnel Park

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway



PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations
are in effect on park property
Two foot contour interval

LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Viewing Area
- Paved Path
- Concrete Walk
- Natural Surface Trail
- Wood Boardwalk & Stairs
- 2' Contours
- .32 Distance in Miles



Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

North Ottawa Dunes, North Beach Park, Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores, Tunnel Park, Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

HISTORIC OTTAWA BEACH PARKS

Park Township

Acquired: Park came under management of the Parks Commission in 2005 after court agreement

Size: 12 separate parcels of land near Holland State Park that total 58 acres

Natural Features: The property features natural dune formations and vegetation including Mt. Pisgah, a landmark dune, as well as inland and great lakes shoreline.

Water Frontage:

- Lake Michigan - 756 feet (0.18 miles)
- Lake Macatawa - 2560 feet (0.48 miles)

Developed: Multiple phases of development 2004-2015

Facilities/Activities: Recent improvements include a separated bike path along Ottawa Beach Road, trails through the dunes including the Mt. Pisgah dune climb stairs, and Lake Macatawa waterfront improvements including parking, walkways and boardwalks along the shoreline, picnic tables, benches and fishing piers. The lakefront also contains the recently restored Pumphouse building.

Trails: 0.96 miles

Grant History:

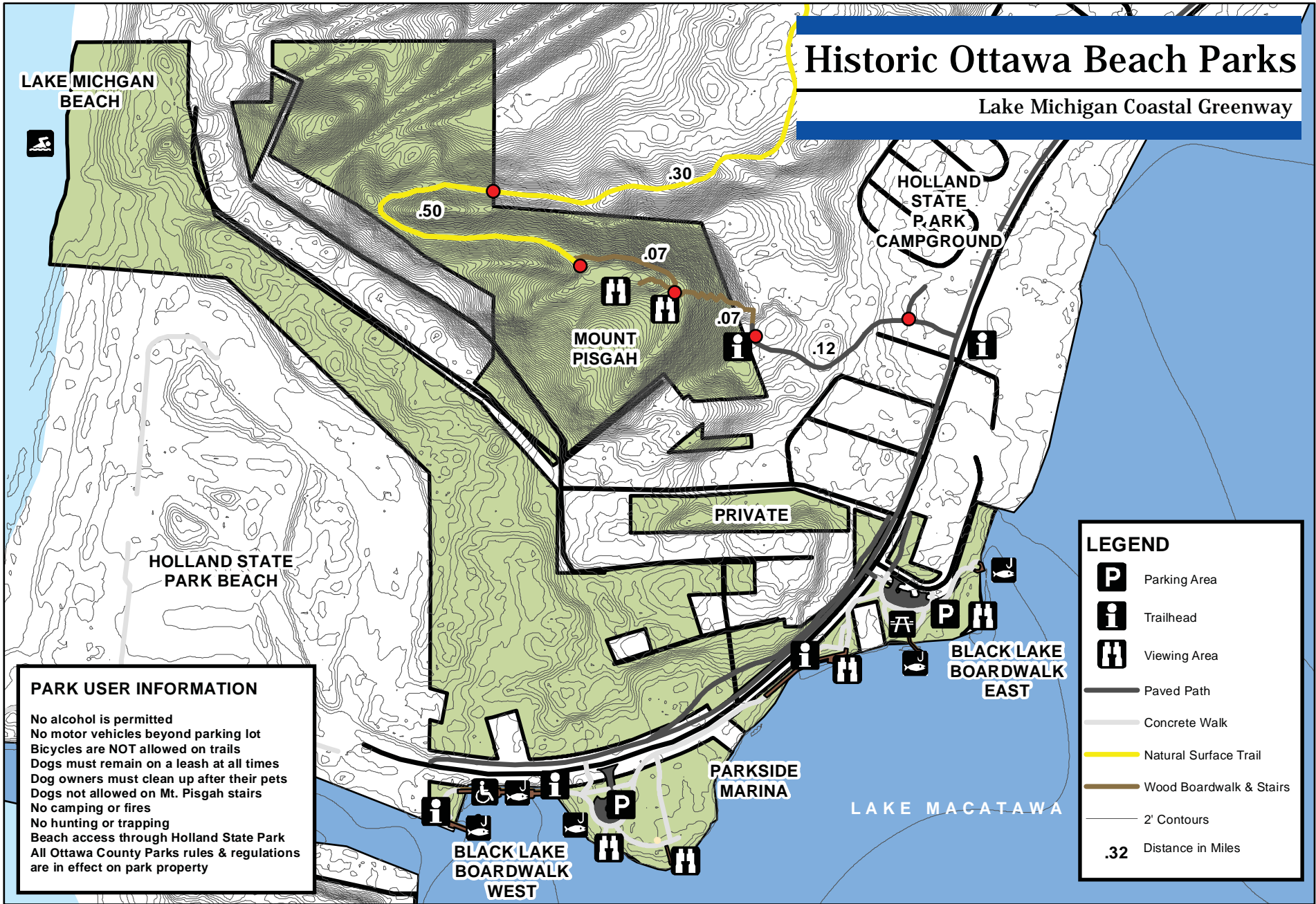
- Great Lakes Fisheries Trust
- Holland Harbor Fishing Access
- 2006 Mt. Pisgah Dune Protection Project TF06-067 (\$280,000 grant amount)
- 2011 Ottawa Beach Waterfront Walkway Development TF11-106 (\$300,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: Unique site location requires continuing cooperation with Holland State Park and the West Michigan Parks Association, the local homeowners association.



Historic Ottawa Beach Parks

Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

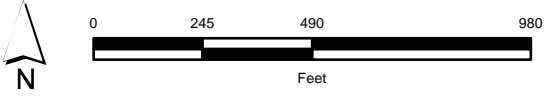


PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
 Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
 Dog owners must clean up after their pets
 Dogs not allowed on Mt. Pisgah stairs
 No camping or fires
 No hunting or trapping
 Beach access through Holland State Park
 All Ottawa County Parks & regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Trailhead
- Viewing Area
- Paved Path
- Concrete Walk
- Natural Surface Trail
- Wood Boardwalk & Stairs
- 2' Contours
- .32 Distance in Miles



General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

MUSKETAWA TRAIL

Wright & Chester Townships

Size: Total trail is a 26-mile linear park in both Ottawa and Muskegon Counties. Portion in Ottawa County is 10.83 miles long including new Fred Meijer Pioneer trail portion.

Natural Features: The trail traverses mostly agricultural lands with scattered forest.

Developed: 1992

Facilities/Activities: This multi-use trail is barrier free and used by several groups such as bikers, horseback riders, rollerbladers, cross country skiers, hikers and even snowmobilers when the snow conditions are favorable.

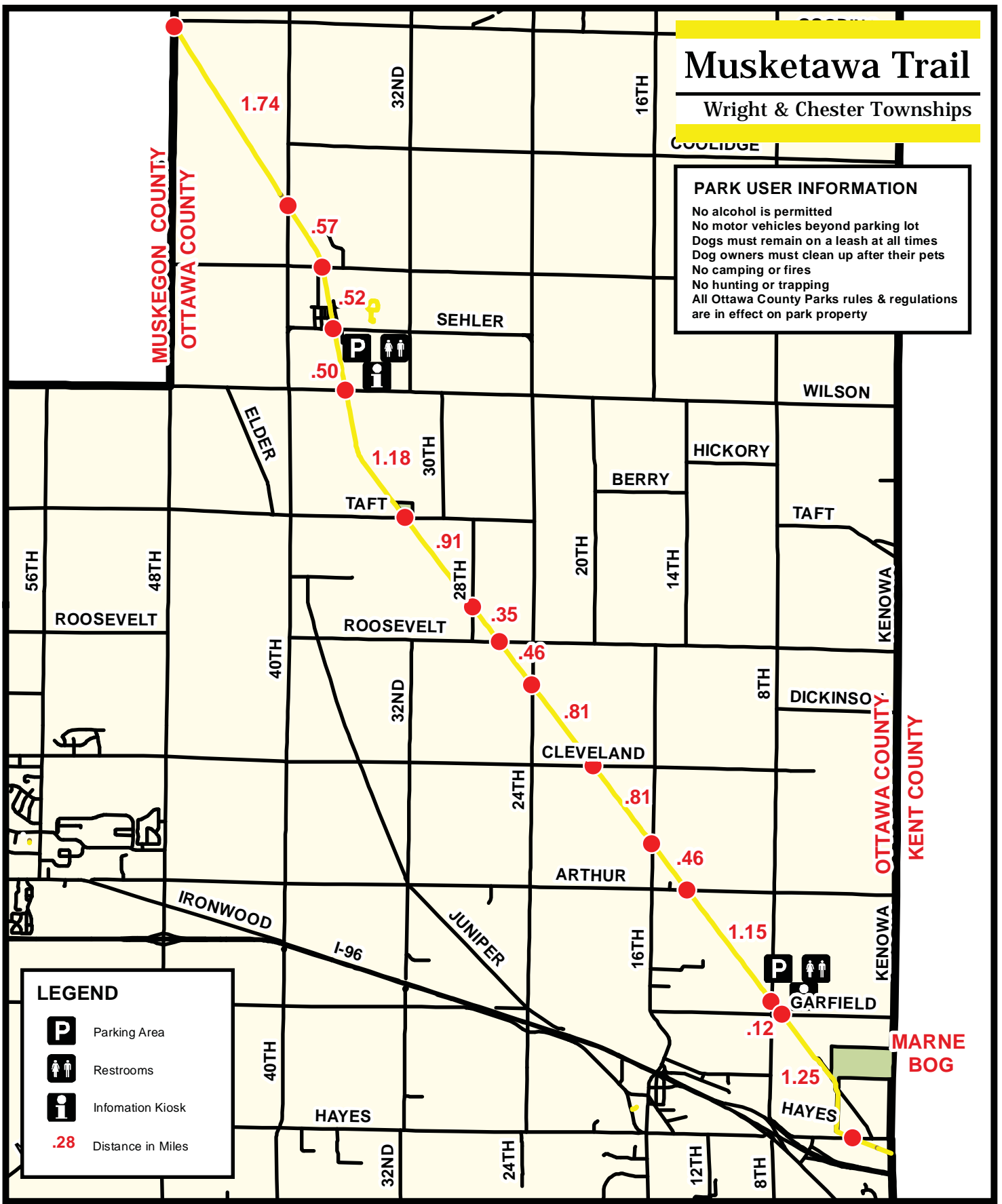
Site Notes: The trail is owned by the State of Michigan. Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission currently manages the trail from Marne to the Muskegon/Ottawa County line and the West Shore Snowmobile Council manages the remaining trail. The Musketawa trail was extended to the east in 2013 to connect to the White Pine Trail in Comstock Park. This section of trail is named the Fred Meijer Pioneer trail. It was developed by Kent County, but the portion in Ottawa County is managed by Ottawa County Parks.



Musketawa Trail

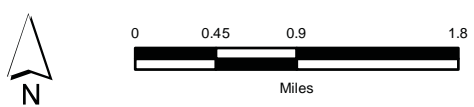
Wright & Chester Townships

PARK USER INFORMATION
No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting or trapping
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Information Kiosk
- .28 Distance in Miles



General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

UNNAMED SITE

Wright Township

Acquired: Donated in 1995

Size: 8 acres

Natural Features: Wet woods

Facilities/Activities: There are no park facilities on the site.

Site Notes: This property is adjacent to the Musketawa Trail in the northwestern corner of Wright Township.

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

GROSE PARK

Chester Township

Acquired: 1990

Size: 40 acres

Natural Features: The site includes a large area of mature hardwood forest with exceptional wildflowers and native plants as well as shoreline along Crockery Lake.

Water Frontage: Crockery Lake - 823 feet (0.16 miles)

Developed: 2000

Facilities/Activities: There are facilities available for the entire family including a fishing deck, small swimming beach, two picnic shelters, sand volleyball courts, a children's playground, horseshoe pits, and hiking trails.

Trails: 1.58 miles

















Grant History:

1998 MNRTF Grose Park Improvements TF98-052
(\$410,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: There are no entry fees and the park is closed between November 1 and March 31.



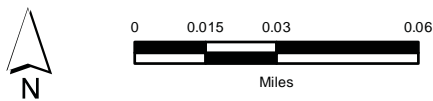
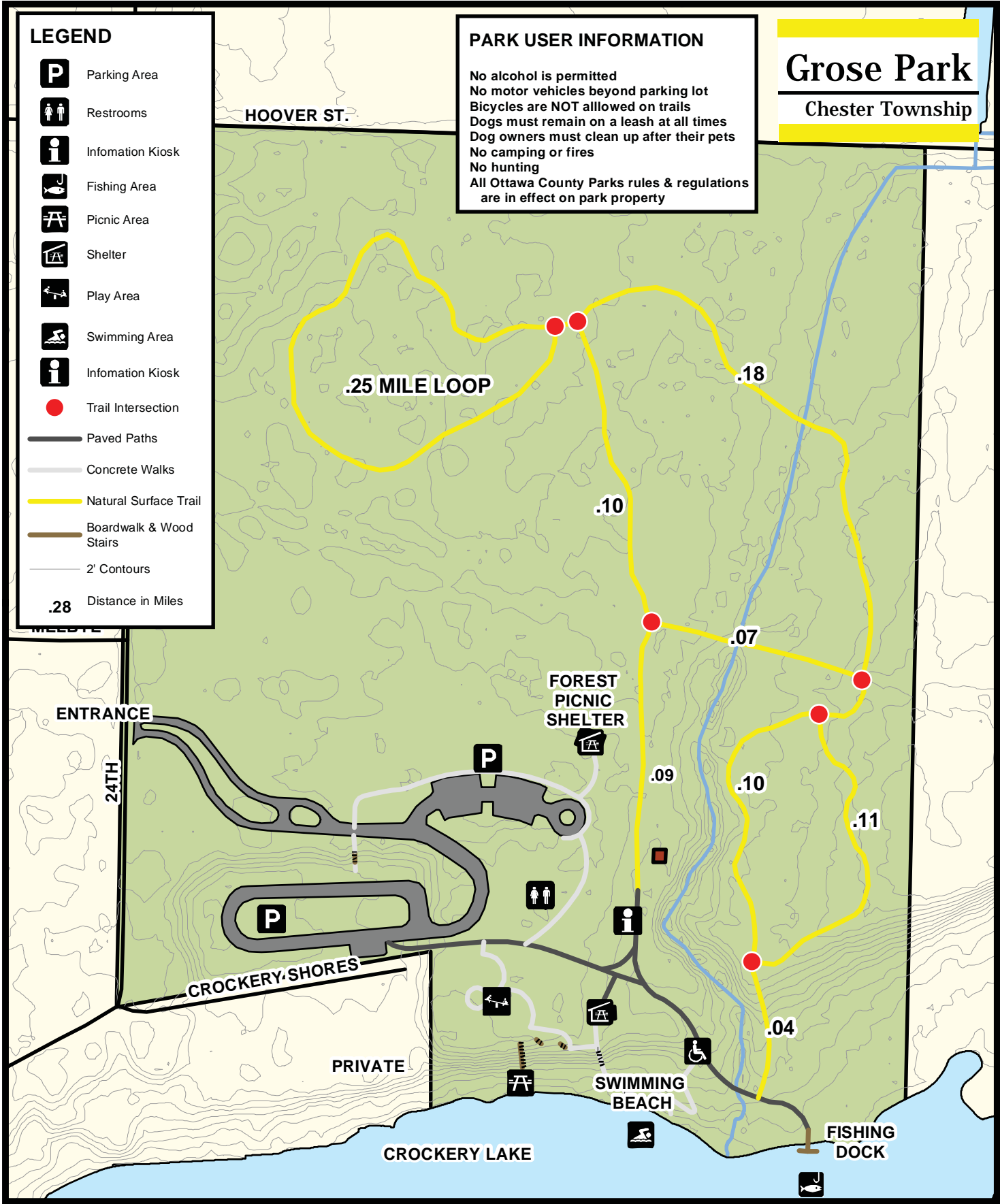
LEGEND

-  Parking Area
-  Restrooms
-  Information Kiosk
-  Fishing Area
-  Picnic Area
-  Shelter
-  Play Area
-  Swimming Area
-  Information Kiosk
-  Trail Intersection
-  Paved Paths
-  Concrete Walks
-  Natural Surface Trail
-  Boardwalk & Wood Stairs
-  2' Contours
-  .28 Distance in Miles

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
 Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
 Dog owners must clean up after their pets
 No camping or fires
 No hunting
 All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property

Grose Park
 Chester Township



General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

MARNE BOG

Wright Township

Acquired: Donated in 2004, expanded in 2011

Size: 83 acres

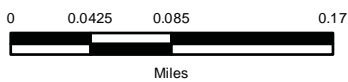
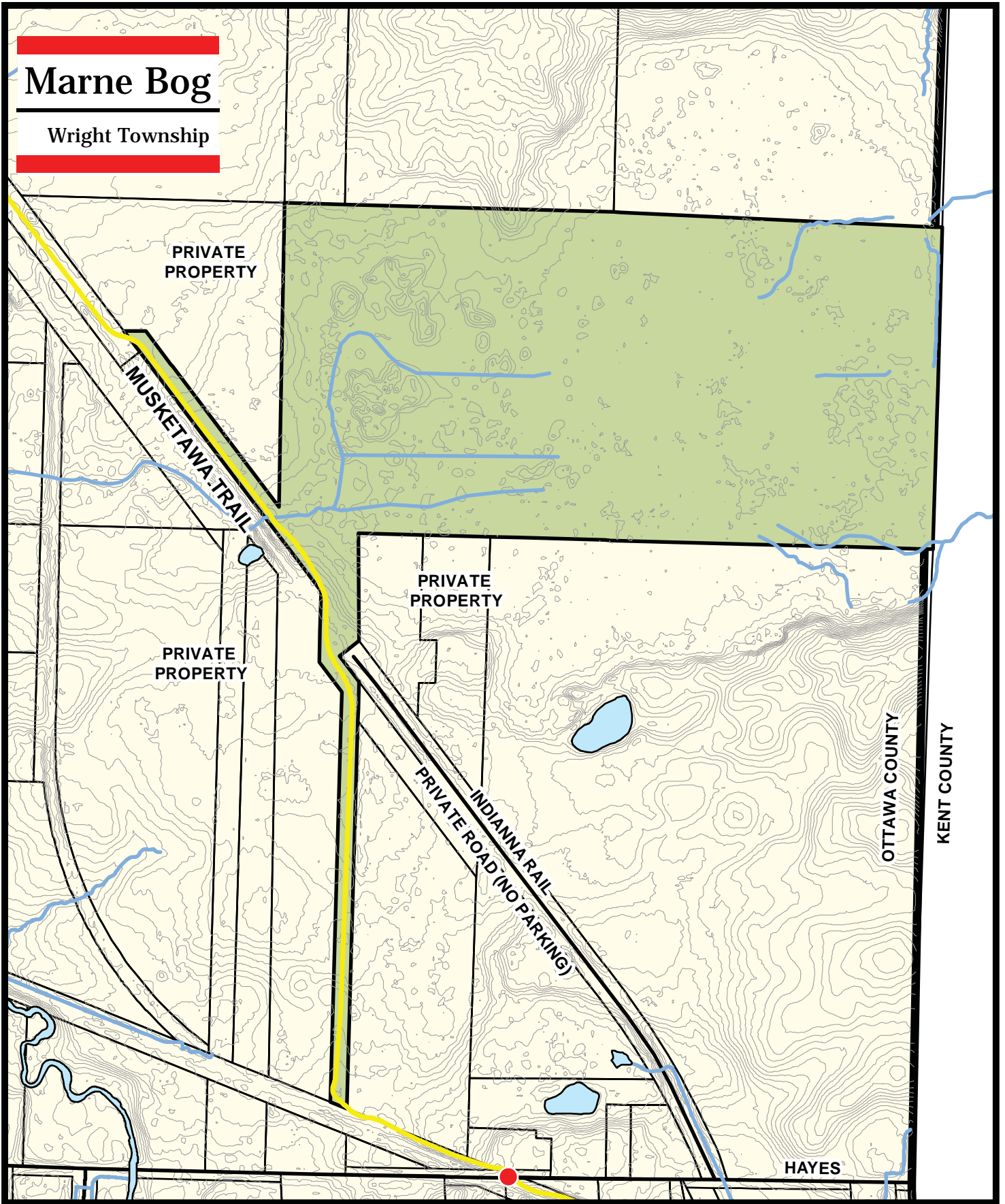
Natural Features: 25-acre natural bog which was determined to be notably significant in the 1988 Natural Features Inventory of Ottawa County.

Facilities/Activities: This site is not currently developed. It is accessible by foot from the Musketawa Trail, although the terrain is extremely difficult to traverse.



Marne Bog

Wright Township



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails



ROBINSON FOREST

Robinson Township

Acquired: County land transferred to OCPRC 1987.

Size: 80 acres

Natural Features: A large portion of this relatively flat site is covered with a 40- to 50-year old red pine plantation with the remainder combination of oaks and white pines. Management removed significant numbers of red pines to spur natural forest regeneration in 2009.

Facilities/Activities: Roadside parking and an information kiosk are provided on 104th Avenue were added in 2006


Developed: 0.44 miles


Site Notes: The site has been closely monitored by forest researchers at Grand Valley State University and is considered an excellent red pine demonstration area.


Robinson Forest


Robinson Township

LEGEND

 Trailhead

 Parking Area

 Natural Surface

 2' Contours

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking area
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs are allowed off leash
No camping or fires
All Ottawa County OpenSpace rules
& regulations are in effect on park property

SLEEPER ST.

PRIVATE

.50

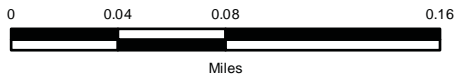
PRIVATE

104TH AVE.





ENTRANCE



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

JOHNSON STREET FOREST

Robinson Township

Acquired: County land transferred to OCPRC 1987.

Size: 50 acres

Natural Features: Vegetation consists of mixed hardwoods.

Facilities/Activities: Roadside parking and an information kiosk are provided on Johnson Street. These facilities were added in 2006

Site Notes: Forest management for wildlife has been a priority in the past.

LEGEND



Trailhead



Parking Area

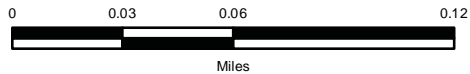
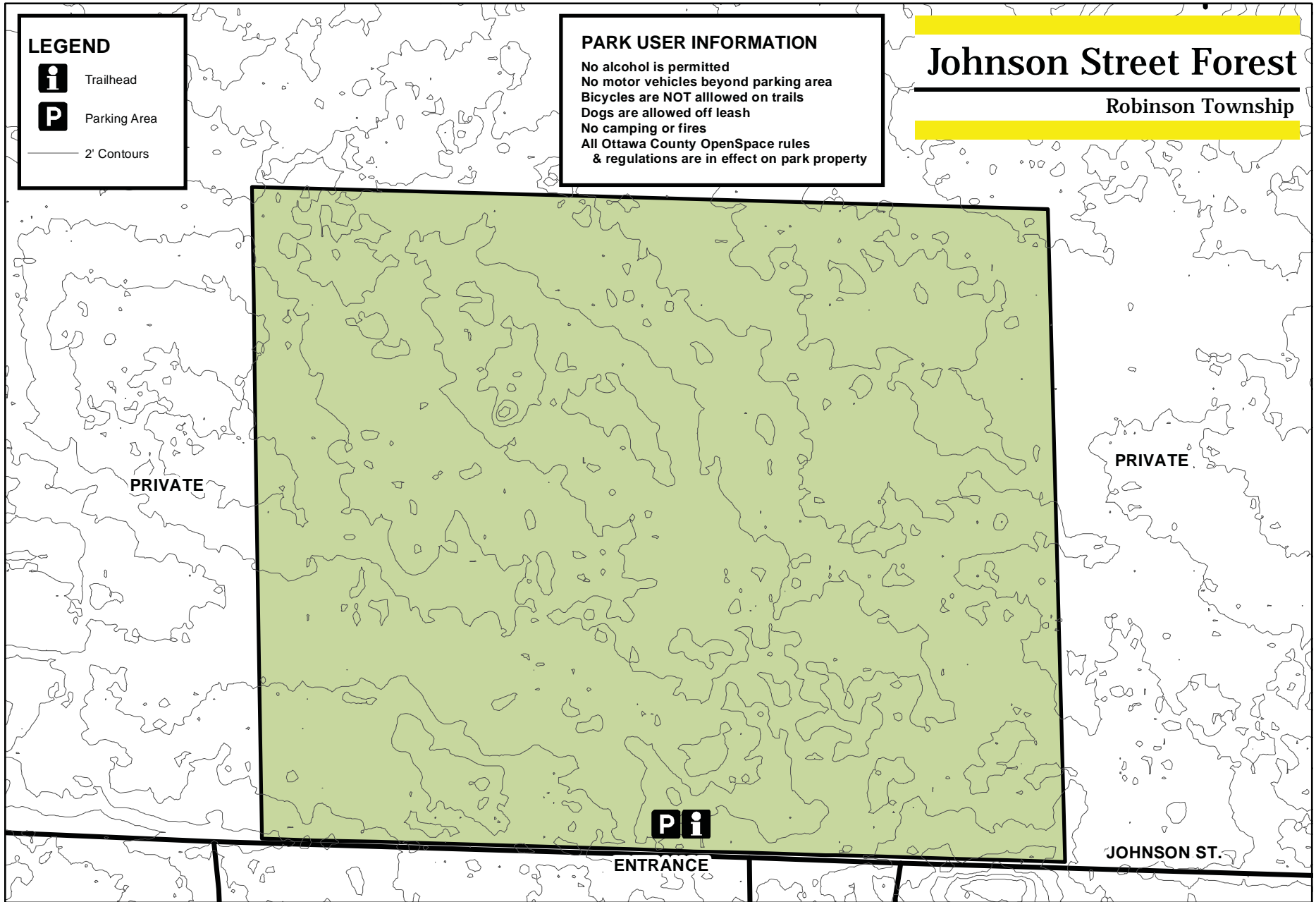
— 2' Contours

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking area
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs are allowed off leash
No camping or fires
All Ottawa County OpenSpace rules
& regulations are in effect on park property

Johnson Street Forest

Robinson Township



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails



HIAWATHA FOREST

Grand Haven Township

Acquired: County land transferred to OCPRC 1987.

Size: 365 acres

Natural Features: The site is flat and heavily forested with both hardwood stands and red pine plantations.

Facilities/Activities: An undeveloped road/trail easement connects the property with Kirk Park. Roadside Parking and an information kiosk area on Fillmore Street were added in 2006 as well as a marked trail systems.

Trails: 1.89 miles

Site Notes: This is the second largest of the Open Space Lands, and the Park Operations Center for Ottawa County Parks occupies approximately two acres on the southwest corner of this site on Fillmore near the intersection with 168th Avenue.



Hiawatha Forest

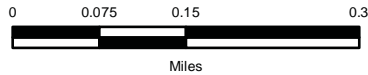
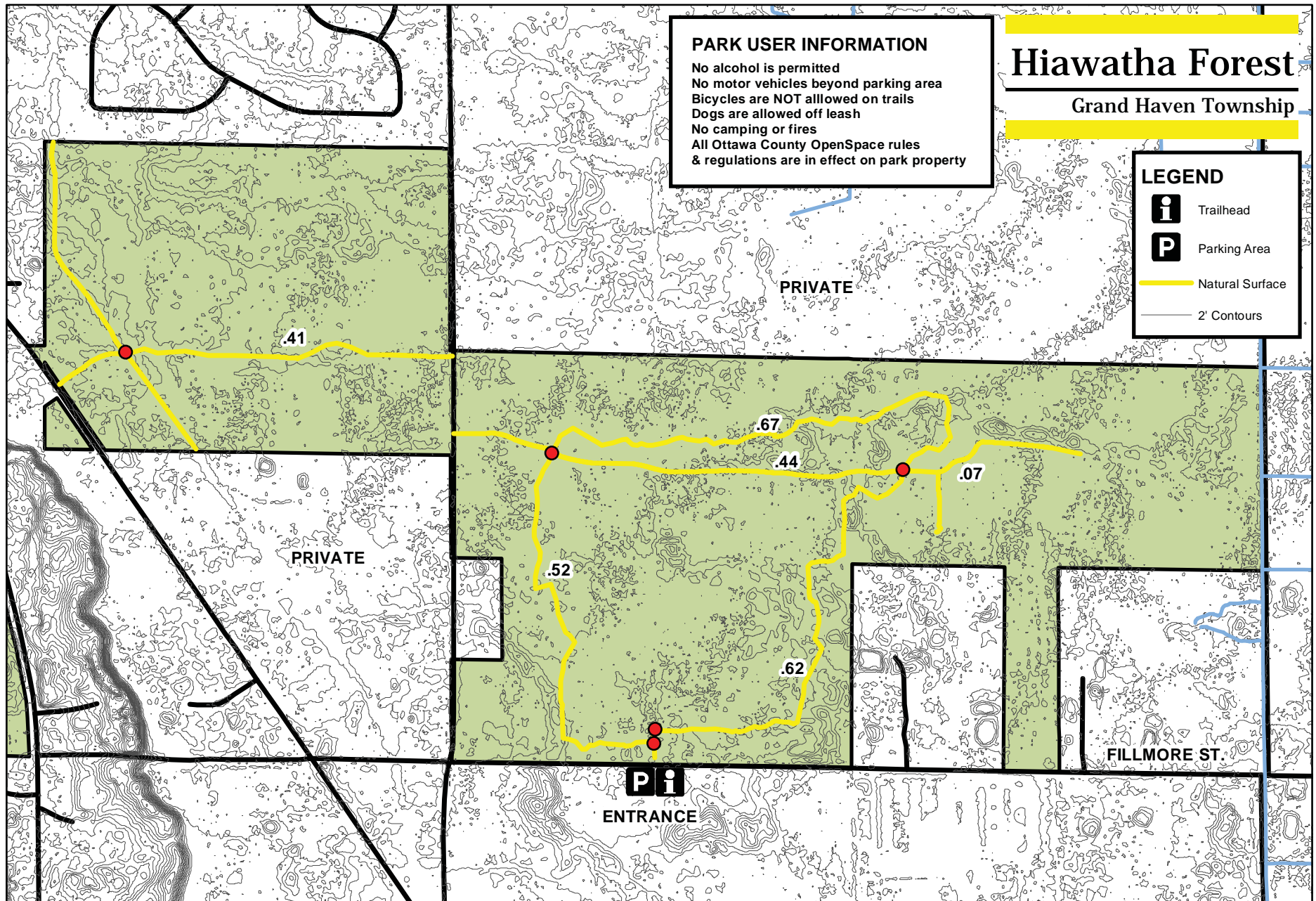
Grand Haven Township

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking area
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs are allowed off leash
No camping or fires
All Ottawa County OpenSpace rules
& regulations are in effect on park property

LEGEND

-  Trailhead
-  Parking Area
-  Natural Surface
-  2' Contours



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

HAGER PARK

Georgetown Township

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission

Size: 104 acres

Natural Features: A former arboretum covers approximately 40 acres and displays a large variety of trees and shrubs. Much of this area that is open has been restored to a native grassland community. The southern half of the site is mature hardwood forest known for its spring wildflowers. Two creeks flow through and converge in the center of the site.

Developed: 1991-1992, Major improvements in 2002

Facilities/Activities: The park features a wide variety of recreation opportunities. Numerous picnic facilities exist in the park including a picnic shelter, a picnic building, and two multi-purpose rooms available for reservations. The huge Age of Discovery community-built playground is a major attraction for families. The unique play area incorporates a terrain map of the United States exhibiting state boundaries, major water bodies and mountain ranges. Near the play area, there is also a restroom, plaza area with concessions and picnic tables, and a small shelter. A paved path provides barrier-free and bicycle circulation through the park, connecting the park to the neighborhoods on the northeast and southeast sides.

Trails: 2.99 miles

Grant History:

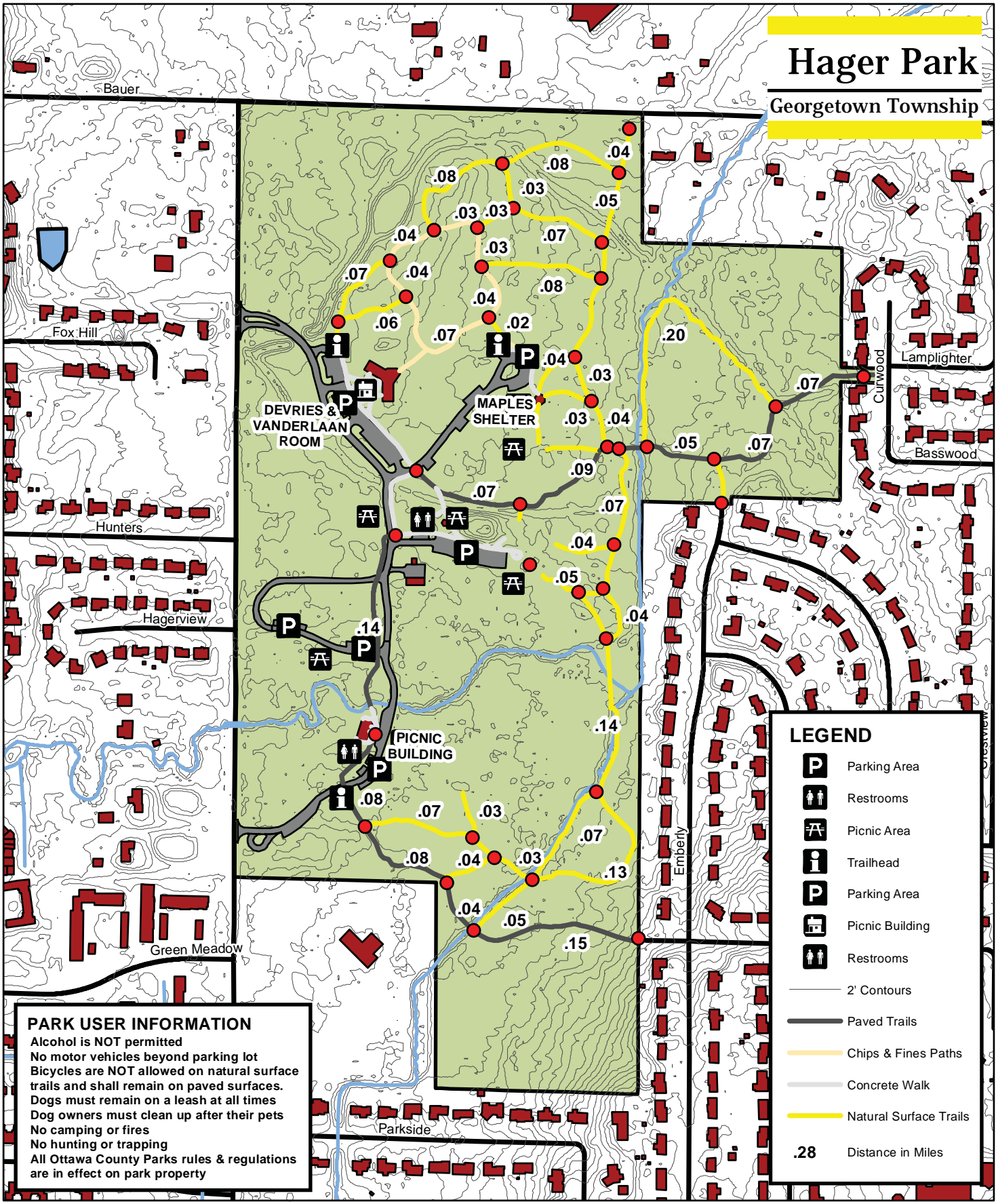
- 1966 Hager Hardwood Park 26-00089 (27 acres, \$80,000 grant amount)
- 1989 Bond Fund Hager Park - Phase 1 BF89-474 (\$225,000 grant amount)

Site Notes: Hager Park is one of the most popular of the County's parks. In addition to the park facilities being improved in 2004, Hager Creek itself was restored utilizing a Clean Michigan Initiative grant. Best Management Practices (BMPs) including rock riffles, new diversion structures and stream bioengineering were established to repair past erosion damage and prevent future damage. There are no park fees and the park is open year around.



Hager Park

Georgetown Township

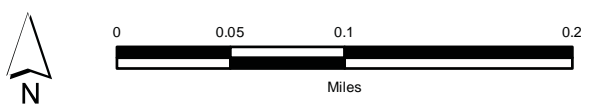


LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Trailhead
- Parking Area
- Picnic Building
- Restrooms
- 2' Contours
- Paved Trails
- Chips & Fines Paths
- Concrete Walk
- Natural Surface Trails
- .28** Distance in Miles

PARK USER INFORMATION

Alcohol is NOT permitted
 No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
 Bicycles are NOT allowed on natural surface trails and shall remain on paved surfaces.
 Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
 Dog owners must clean up after their pets
 No camping or fires
 No hunting or trapping
 All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

PORT SHELDON NATURAL AREA

Port Sheldon Township

Acquired: County land transferred to OCPRC 1987.

Size: 440 acres

Natural Features: This site has gently rolling terrain, a diversity of vegetation including hardwood forest and pine plantations, five wildlife ponds, and is bisected by Ten Hagen Creek.

Facilities/Activities: Constructed in 2006, two small gravel parking areas with trailhead kiosks provide access from 168th Avenue. New marked trails have also been constructed.

Trails: 2.55 miles

Site Notes: Red pine thinning occurred on this site in 2009.



Port Sheldon Natural Area

Port Sheldon Township

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs allowed off leash
No camping or fires
All Ottawa County Open Space rules
& regulations are in effect on park property

PORT SHELDON ST.




160TH AVE.

VAN BUREN ST.

85 MILE LOOP

TEN HAGEN CREEK

LEGEND

-  Trailhead
-  Parking Area
-  Natural Surface
-  2' Contours



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

VAN BUREN DUNES

Port Sheldon Township

Acquired: County land transferred to OCPRC 1987.

Size: 120 acres

Natural Features: This site has the most topographical relief of the Open Space lands. Vegetation consists of red pine plantations with scattered pockets of deciduous forest. The soils are extremely sandy.

Facilities/Activities: A trail system developed in 2006 provides access around the site. Roadside parking and an information kiosk are located on Van Buren Street.

Trails: 1.51 miles

Site Notes: Significant damage from past and present off-road vehicle use is evident.

PARK USER INFORMATION

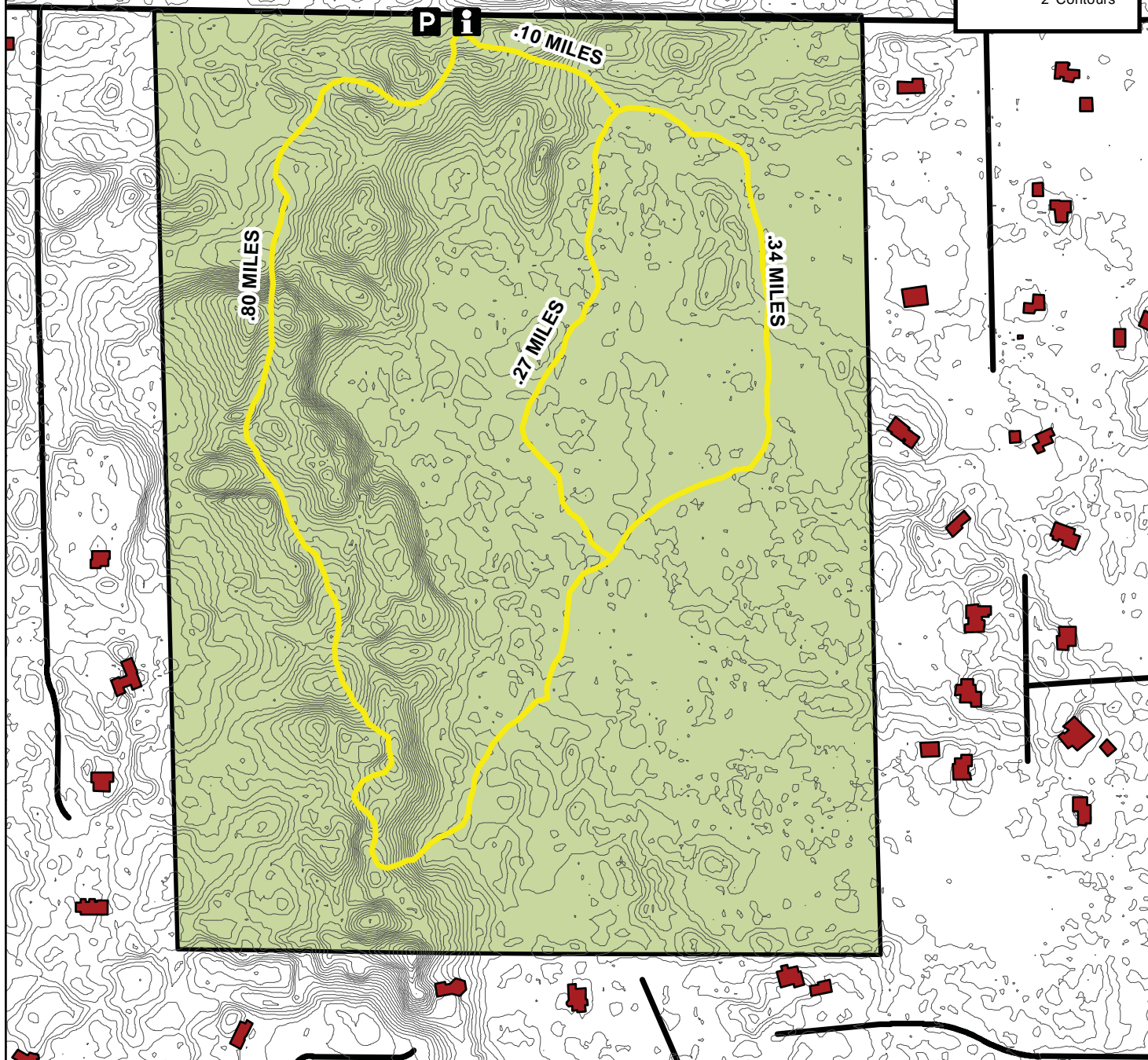
No alcohol is permitted
Dogs are allowed off leash
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
Archery deer hunting only
All Ottawa County Open Space Rules
& Regulations are in effect on park property

Van Buren Street Dunes

Port Sheldon Township

LEGEND

-  Parking Area
-  Trailhead
-  2' Contours



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

SPRING GROVE PARK

Jamestown Township

Acquired: Original park transferred from Road Commission

Size: 16 acres

Natural Features: This park features towering beech and maple trees and a flowing artesian spring.

Facilities/Activities: The most popular activity is picnicking, and a unique rustic picnic building is available to rent. A small playground is provided as well as a ball field, fire pit, and horseshoes. A trellis-covered gathering spot is also available and is heavily used for weddings and other ceremonies. The site is also popular with photographers.

Trails: 0.31 miles

Site Notes: There are no entrance fees and the park is closed from November 1 through March 31.



Spring Grove Park

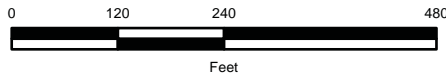
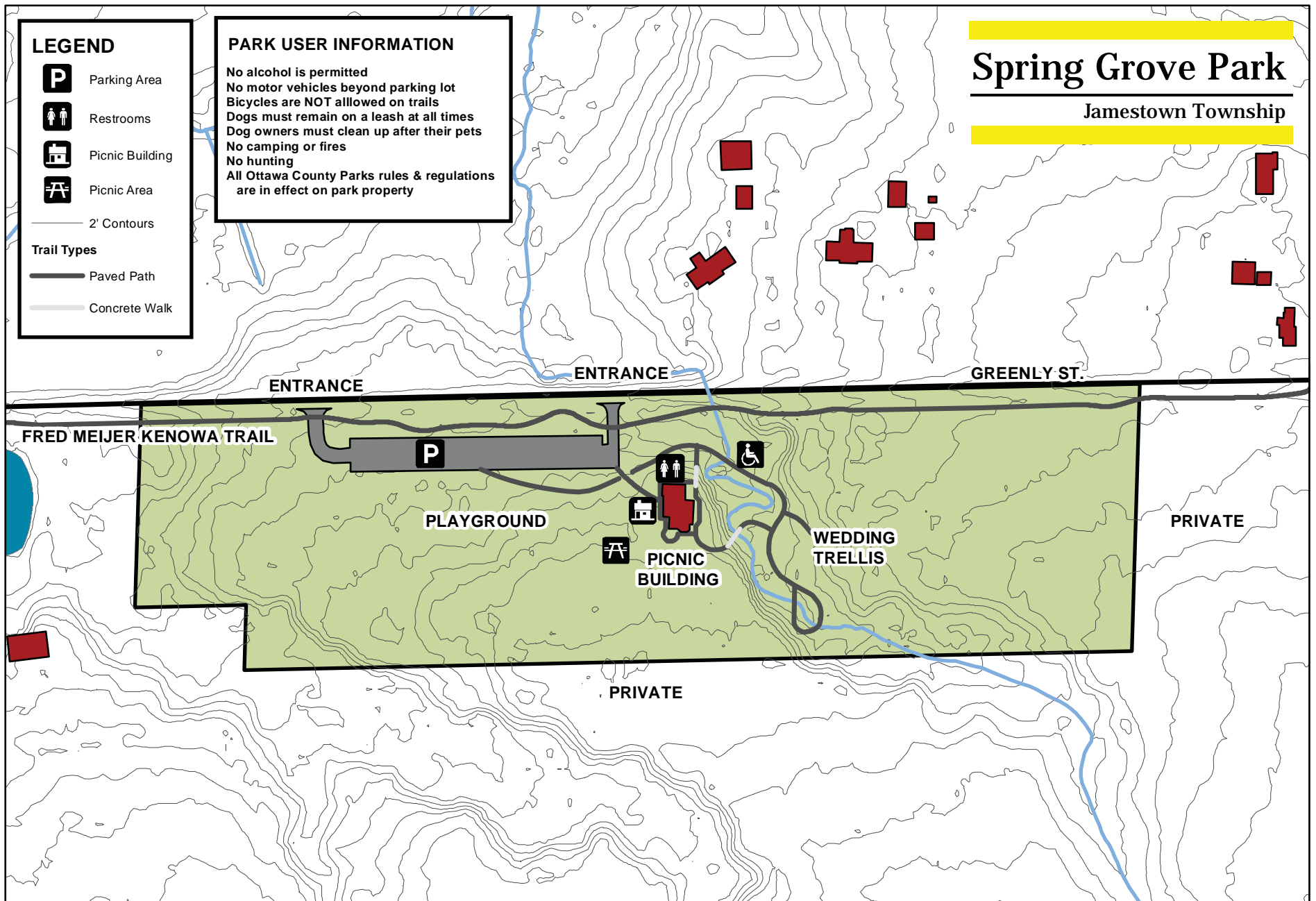
Jamestown Township

LEGEND

- Parking Area
- Restrooms
- Picnic Building
- Picnic Area
- 2' Contours
- Trail Types**
- Paved Path
- Concrete Walk

PARK USER INFORMATION

No alcohol is permitted
No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
Dog owners must clean up after their pets
No camping or fires
No hunting
All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

General Parks, Open Space Lands, & Trails

Musketawa Trail, Unnamed Site, Grose Park, Marne Bog, Robinson Forest, Johnson Street Forest, Hiawatha Forest, Hager Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Van Buren Dunes, Spring Grove Park, Riley Trails

RILEY TRAILS

Park Township

Acquired: Transferred from Ottawa County and designated as a park in 2006

Size: 300 acres

Natural Features: With the exception of the old landfill part of the property (a fenced 40-acre mound), the site consists of attractive rolling woodlands including mixed hardwoods and pine plantations. As part of the landfill recapping, a 2-acre pond was added in the north central section of the park.

Developed: 2007

Facilities/Activities: The park has a system of hiking and cross-country skiing trails which receive extensive use. Access is provided from Riley Street including gravel parking, pit toilets, and an information kiosk.

Trails: 10.0 miles






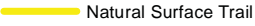

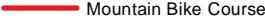


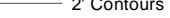
Site Notes: Ottawa County, through the Road Commission, currently maintains a large system of purge wells and a water treatment facility to mitigate water quality problems from the former landfill. The landfill portion of the site is currently closed to the public. Future plans for this area include trails and sledding hills.

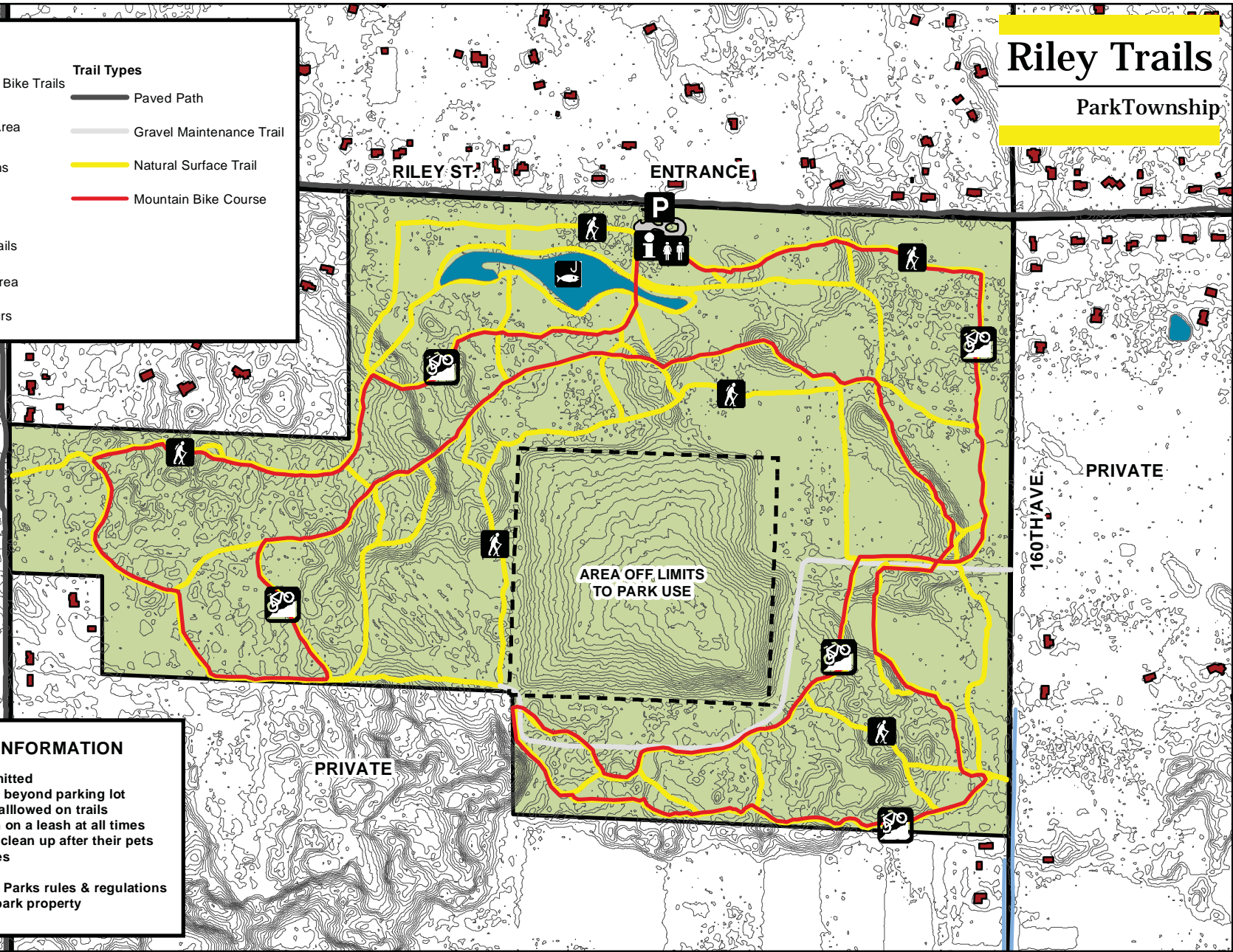


Riley Trails

Park Township

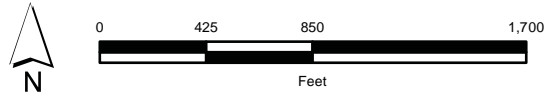
LEGEND

- | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---|------------|
|  | Mountain Bike Trails | Trail Types |  | Paved Path |
|  | Parking Area |  | Gravel Maintenance Trail | |
|  | Restrooms |  | Natural Surface Trail | |
|  | Trailhead |  | Mountain Bike Course | |
|  | Hiking Trails | | | |
|  | Fishing Area | | | |
|  | 2' Contours | | | |



PARK USER INFORMATION

- No alcohol is permitted
- No motor vehicles beyond parking lot
- Bicycles are NOT allowed on trails
- Dogs must remain on a leash at all times
- Dog owners must clean up after their pets
- No camping or fires
- No hunting
- All Ottawa County Parks rules & regulations are in effect on park property



TOWNSHIPS AND CITY GOVERNMENTS

As federal, state and county governments have traditionally led the way in providing regional recreation facilities based on significant natural resources, local jurisdictions including villages, cities and townships have typically undertaken the provision of more locally oriented recreation facilities such as neighborhood parks, community parks and community centers. Ottawa County exemplifies this scenario as well as any other county in the state.

Local townships and city governments provide a wide array of facilities aimed at meeting the more local recreation needs of their respective communities. These facilities generally vary from less than one acre to more than 60, but most are less than 20 acres in size. Some consist of nothing more than a ball field while others are more intensively developed, including recreation and community centers. Over 120 local park facilities were identified in a detailed inventory completed for Ottawa County (see Appendix C).

Although they are the exception, there are a number of local park facilities within Ottawa County that are larger, resource-based parks that attract significant users from outside the local community. Because these facilities may affect Ottawa County's plans, a more detailed description of each park is provided below:

Mulligan's Hollow, City of Grand Haven

In addition to its conventional local park facilities, this 81-acre park features one of the few downhill skiing and snowboarding facilities in the region. The park also features a unique children's playground, a skate park, and natural areas. The ski facility is operated by a non-profit organization.

Waterfront Development, City of Grand Haven

Though not a typical park, the waterfront of Grand Haven is certainly a primary recreation resource and attracts both residents and tourists. The piers, waterfront walkways, marinas, and associated facilities all act to create an exciting environment where the urban development interfaces with the Grand River and Lake Michigan.

Hofma Park, Grand Haven Township

Known for its unique floating boardwalk across Pottawattomi Bayou wetlands, Hofma Park is the largest township park in Ottawa County. It provides hiking trails and natural areas as well as more conventional local recreation facilities including ball fields, soccer, and a playground.

Aman Park, City of Grand Rapids

Though owned by the City of Grand Rapids, this 320-acre park is situated in Tallmadge Township in Ottawa County, on Sand Creek. Attractions at the park include high quality natural areas, hiking trails, cross-county ski trails and a Rotary-operated camp serving children with disabilities. As one of the larger public parks in Ottawa County with high quality natural features, the site has importance as a County-wide recreation attraction. Because the park is owned by a municipality, Ottawa County should monitor the status of the site and be prepared to add the park to the County Park system if it requires better management to protect its natural resources.

Maplewood Park/Georgetown Community Park

These two popular Georgetown Township parks provide the only swimming beaches in this heavily populated area. They exemplify the excellent recreation potential associated with gravel pit lakes in eastern Ottawa County.

Kollen Park, City of Holland

This popular 14.5-acre Holland City park, located on Lake Macatawa, is known for its beautiful lake views, picnic areas, band shell, large boat launch, and fishing opportunities.

DeGraaf Nature Center, City of Holland

Although small in size, the DeGraaf Nature Center is one of the only facilities offering formal instruction in outdoor education in Ottawa County. The 11-acre site includes a stream, pond, nature trails, and an interpretive building.

Van Raalte Farm, City of Holland

This large 155-acre park contains a century old farmhouse on a hilltop overlooking pastureland and a valley with a stream. The park is known for its three miles of trails, large lighted sledding area, parking areas and picnicking.

Hudsonville Nature Center

This 74-acre site contains some of the best displays of spring wildflowers in the county. It includes tables for picnicking, hiking trails, and a scenic overlook.

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL PROVIDERS OUTSIDE OF OTTAWA COUNTY

Although not in the geographical limits of Ottawa County, several facilities in adjacent counties provide services and facilities that draw from a more regional base of users including residents of Ottawa County. Figure 4.2 shows the location of these and other public facilities in adjacent counties.

Several of the most significant of these sites are described below.

Consumers Energy Pigeon Lake North Pier Boardwalk

To mitigate for fish kills at the Ludington Pumped Hydroelectric Storage Facility in Ludington, Consumers Energy constructed a wooden boardwalk with overlook decks and fishing platforms along the north shore of Pigeon Lake. The boardwalk is more than ½ mile long and extends from a public parking lot on the Consumers Energy property westward all the way to the north pier of the Pigeon Lake outlet into Lake Michigan. It offers a nice length hike and good fishing access on the lake.

Millennium Park, Kent County

This project is seeking to reclaim over 1500 acres of heavily used land for public recreation. Current facilities include a 6-acre beach with a splash pad and almost 20 miles of trails. It also is connected to the Kent Trails non-motorized path and touches the local municipalities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Grandville, and Walker.

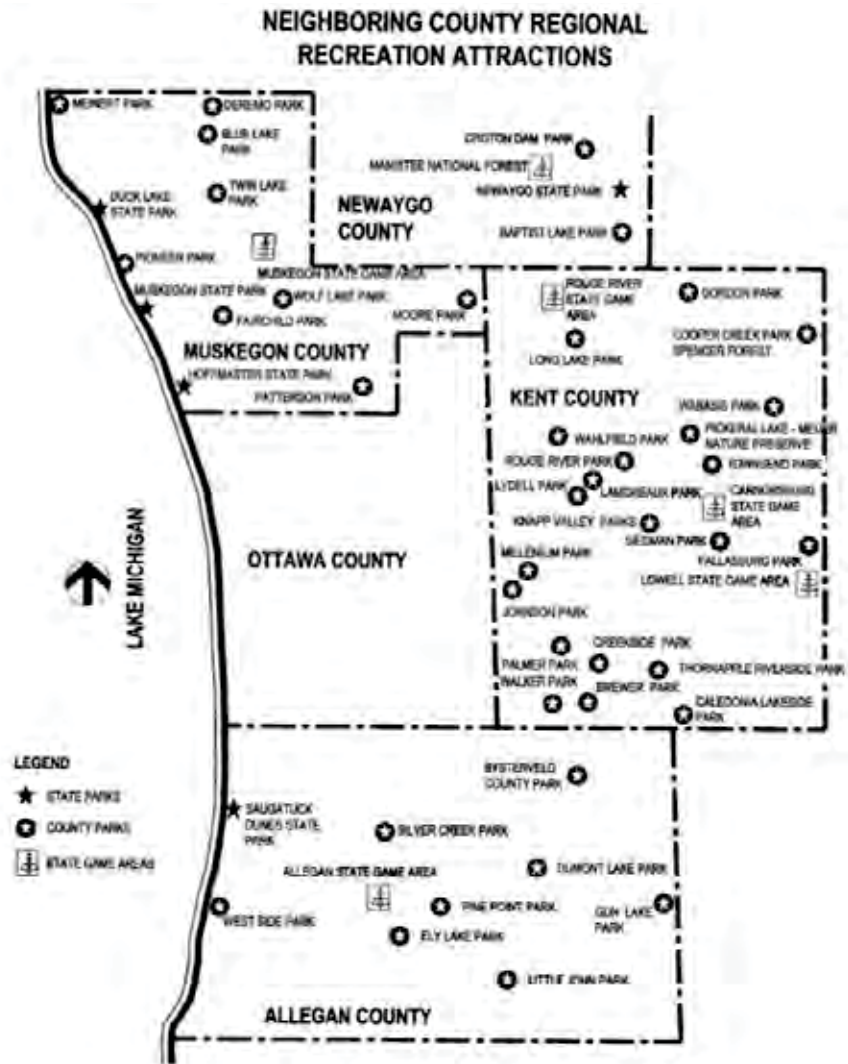
Kent Trails

Kent Trails is a 15 mile paved, non-motorized trail running north and south through western Kent County. A spur of the trail connects to Ottawa County in Jenison near their water treatment facility.

Saugatuck Dunes State Park

This approximately 1000-acre park is relatively undeveloped and offers a secluded experience of coastal dunes with over 2.5 miles of shoreline. It offers a day use area, but no camping.

Fig. 7.2 - Adjacent County Public Recreation Facilities



Allegan State Game Area

At 50,000-acres, this large natural area in Allegan County provides many outdoor opportunities including hunting, fishing, mountain biking, hiking trails, boat launches, camping, and cross-country skiing. It also showcases Oak-Pine Barrens, an unusual plant community suited to dry sandy soils.

Silver Creek Park

This park offers regionally significant opportunities for equestrians, including a rustic equestrian camping area. It is also a primary staging area to access over 25 miles of trails in and around the Allegan State Game Area, in addition to the 320 acres in the park itself.

Hoffmaster State Park

Hoffmaster State Park is known for its excellent formations of sand dunes and the Gillette Visitor Center, a regionally important nature center. The 1200-acre park includes dune stairs and overlooks, a modern campground, Lake Michigan swimming area, and three picnic areas. Three hundred acres of the park are located in the northwest corner of Ottawa County, with the remainder, including the entrance and visitor facilities, in Muskegon County.

SCHOOLS

In many areas, school systems serve as the backbone of locally oriented recreation facilities. While rural townships and cities may not have the resources, schools frequently provide neighborhoods with basic recreation opportunities as part of their overriding philosophy of education. Whether it is basketball courts, ball fields or gymnasiums, the schools and their facilities are available to the public at the most basic levels of social structure: the neighborhood.

Colleges, universities and similar advanced education institutions also provide recreation facilities which, though often dominated by the respective student population, are nearly always open to the general public to some extent. Hope College in the City of Holland and Grand Valley State University in Allendale Township provide this service.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

As one moves from a smaller to a larger population area, private and commercial recreation providers play an increasingly greater role in the delivery of area-wide recreational facilities. This is due, in large part, to the fact that larger populations are necessary to support many of the private and commercial recreation providers. Commercial providers play a particularly important role in Ottawa County where tourism increases the demand for many types of recreation-related business.

Private recreation providers in Ottawa County cover a wide spectrum, from bowling alleys to fitness clubs. For purposes of this study, only marinas, campgrounds, and golf courses were considered. Detailed discussion about Ottawa County's role in relation to these private facilities is included in Chapter 10-Activity Needs Analysis

SECTION FIVE: NEEDS ASSESSMENT



CHAPTER 8 | NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS

CHAPTER 9 | PARK & OPEN SPACE ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 10 | ACTIVITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 11 | ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS



CHAPTER 8 | NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS



Assessing the recreation needs of Ottawa County involved a number of techniques aimed at gathering as much pertinent data as possible to gain insight into the public's perception of the quality and availability of recreation opportunities in Ottawa County. The following pages briefly review the various methods used during the preparation of this plan and highlights some of the results.

2015 COUNTY RESIDENT SURVEY

One of the primary tools in evaluating current attitudes and desires with regard to outdoor recreation in Ottawa County is a scientific survey of county residents. A telephone survey of Ottawa County residents was conducted in the fall of 2015 to provide insight regarding resident perceptions of the current park system and their needs and preferences for outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The survey, completed by EPIC-MRA of Lansing was patterned closely after surveys of residents conducted approximately every five years since 1994. The similarity of the surveys allows comparison to reveal changes and possible trends in attitudes among county residents. A complete summary of 2015 survey results is provided in Appendix C.

Some particular observations are shown below. Many of these observations have special interest because they can be compared to the similar survey completed in 2010:

- 90% of county residents gave the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission (OCPRC) a positive rating
- Strong majorities agree with six of the seven policy options:
 - Support regional trail systems (82%)
 - Reduce deer population to protect vegetation (76%)
 - Consider tourist needs (73%)
 - Develop revenue-producing facilities (64%)
 - Acquire more park land (64%) - less support compared to other surveys; see Graphs 8.1 and 8.2 for resident agreement/disagreement with different types of land acquisitions
 - Provide overnight camping (63%)
 - Allow hunting in unimproved areas (48%)

Figure 8.1 - Attitude Toward Types of Land Acquisition (Level of Agreement)

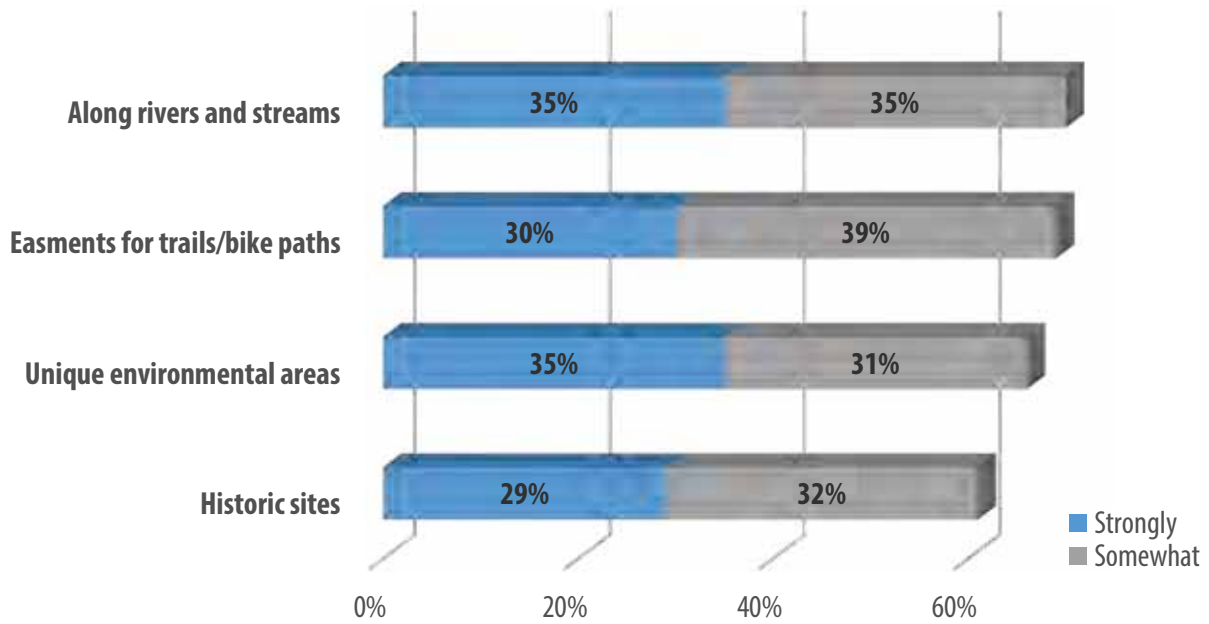
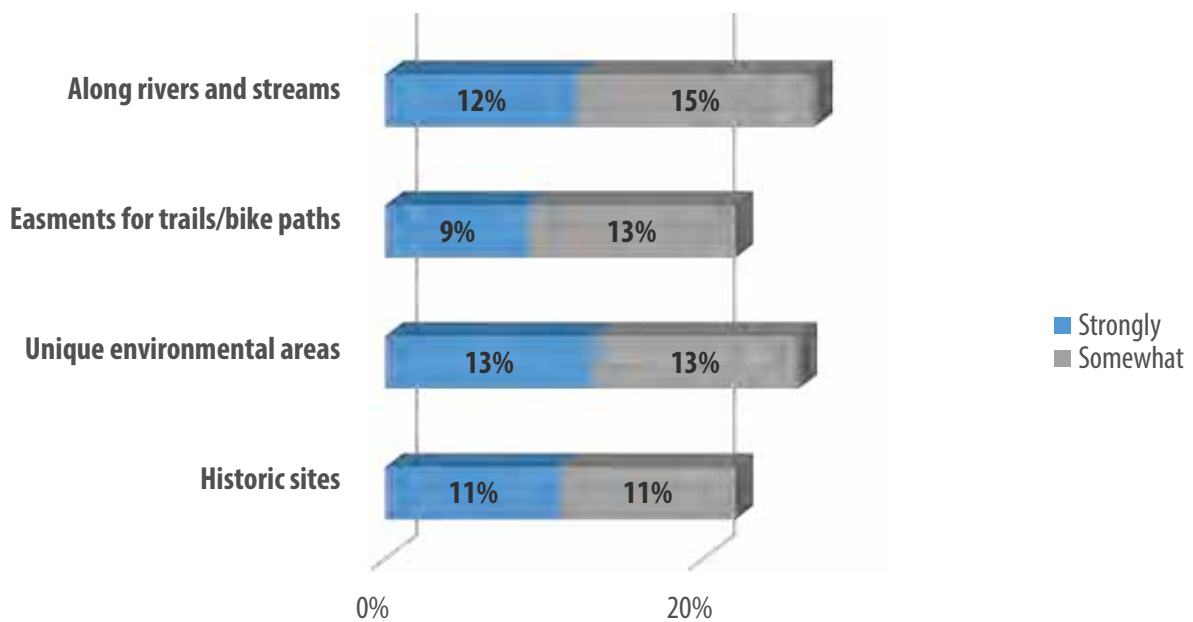


Figure 8.2 - Attitude Toward Types of Land Acquisition (Level of Disagreement)



Residents were asked whether they were satisfied with facilities/opportunities the county is offering or considering offering; Table 8.1 reflects the respondents answers (Much more needed, more needed, enough, too much, undecided/refused).

Table 8.1 - Facilities/Opportunities Satisfaction

	Much More	More	Enough	Too Much	Und/Ref
Nature education programs	21%	32%	35%	1%	11%
Canoeing & kayaking sites	15%	37%	35%	1%	12%
Paved paths for biking & rollerblading	16%	36%	38%	4%	6%
Camping facilities	16%	32%	42%	1%	9%
Hiking trails	12%	35%	46%	1%	6%
Sledding runs	13%	33%	39%	2%	13%
Fishing sites	15%	30%	45%	1%	9%
Nature centers	15%	29%	48%	1%	7%
Water play areas or splash parks	9%	35%	45%	4%	7%
Picnic facilities	10%	31%	54%	1%	4%
Cross-country skiing	10%	30%	45%	1%	14%
Mountain bike trails	10%	28%	40%	4%	18%
Dog parks	11%	26%	43%	6%	14%
Boat launches	9%	27%	48%	2%	14%
Disc or Frisbee golf facilities	7%	26%	46%	5%	16%
Horseback riding trails	8%	24%	38%	6%	24%
County beach parks	7%	24%	63%	1%	5%
Hunting areas	11%	20%	45%	10%	14%
Snowmobile areas	7%	22%	40%	11%	20%
Public marinas	7%	20%	52%	4%	17%

2015 PARK USER SURVEY

An extensive survey of actual users of the Ottawa County Parks system was conducted from February through July of 2015. The survey was conducted by the Frost Research Center of Hope College and was again patterned after a similar survey completed by Hope College students in the summers of 1993, 2001, and 2010. Over 1000 individual surveys were conducted at 27 Ottawa County Park locations. Appendix D provides a complete summary of the 2015 survey results.

The following are significant observations from this report:

Demographics

- The largest proportion of park attendees came in groups of two. Large groups were most common at Hager, Spring Grove and Tunnel Parks.
- 68% of visitors were Ottawa County residents with a large proportion living in Holland, Grand Haven and Georgetown Township.
- Parks with the highest % of non-resident users were the Musketawa Trail (76%), Grose Park (58%), Historic Ottawa Beach (56%) and Kirk Park (39%).

- Among out-of-state visitors, the highest percentage was from Indiana and Illinois.
- 40% of overall users were under 21, 37% were aged 21-50 and 23% were over 50.

Park Usage

- 27% of respondents were frequent visitors, reporting they had visited 10 or more times in the past year.
- The activities most frequently stated for visiting a park were hiking, swimming, and picnicking. The highest percentage of users at Crockery Creek, Rosy Mound and Riley Trails were hikers, whereas Spring Grove and Tunnel Parks had the highest percentage of picnickers.

Park Opinions

- Trails were most liked at Riley Trails and Hemlock Crossing, playgrounds were best liked at Hager Park, Grose and Tunnel Parks.
- The majority of visitors reported being happy with the park they visited indicating no aspect of the park they disliked.
- Bathrooms were most often selected as the item needing improvement overall; with the highest number of these responses at Riley Trails, Kirk Park, Riverside Park and Tunnel Park.

2015 ONLINE SURVEY

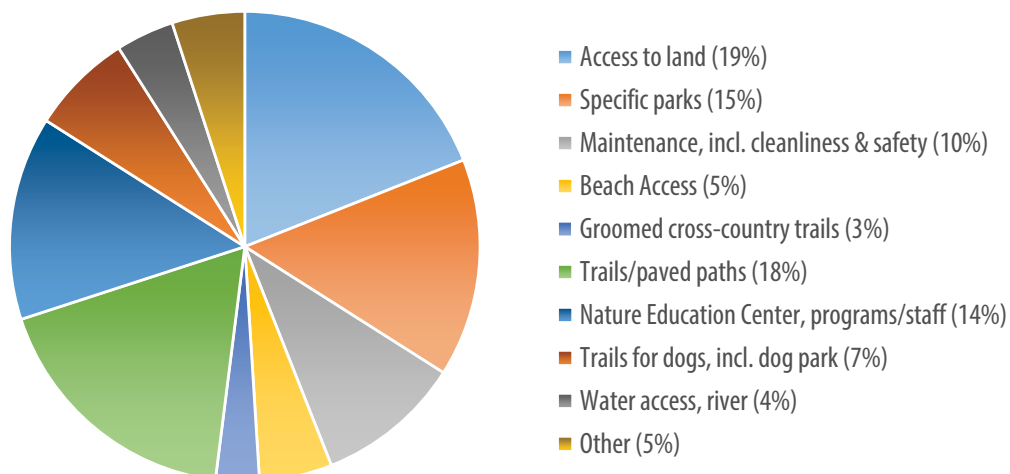
One new source of public input for the 2016 plan was an on-line survey available on the parks website during October 2015. This survey was based on the 2015 County Resident Survey and was available to anyone wanting to participate. It was also advertised via email and social media to existing park mailing and Facebook lists. The survey elicited over 450 responses. Although not scientifically valid as a measure of the general county population, the survey does provide valuable information from a group of people familiar and interested in the county park system.

Observations gleaned from the survey are summarized below, and complete results included in Appendix E.

Most/Least Value in Exchange for Taxes Paid

- 24% of respondents reported that access to a large quantity of diverse land provided the most value in exchange for the taxes paid. 5% of those respondents specified beach access.
- 14% said that the Nature Education Center, programs, and/or the staff provided the most value.
- 69% of respondents answered that they either could not think of something or that there was nothing of least value in exchange for taxes paid.

Figure 8.3 - Most Valuable Park Features in Exchange for Taxes Paid



Summary

- Nearly 99% of survey respondents rated Ottawa County Parks excellent/pretty good in providing recreational spaces to citizens; 71% of survey respondents rated Ottawa County Parks excellent/pretty good in providing educational programs to citizens
- Most Popular Parks: Kirk Park, Rosy Mound, Pigeon Creek, Hemlock Crossing and Tunnel Park. Over half of the respondents had visited Kirk Park and Rosy Mound.
- There was strong support for a regional trail system linking different communities for walkers, bicyclists, and roller-bladers as well as canoeing/kayaking sites and additional hiking trails.
- There was strong agreement (nearly 90% support) among these respondents that the county should acquire additional property for conservation and recreational purposes, with less support for purchase of historic sites.
- Respondents seem very satisfied with beach parks, picnic facilities, nature centers and boat launches.
- Desire for improvements to existing facilities include water, modern restrooms, playgrounds, and adequate parking.

PARKS COMMISSION WORK SESSIONS & RETREATS

The OCPRC periodically engages in special meetings to discuss particular planning and policy topics. These 3-4 hour retreats are designed to provide time for the OCPRC to focus solely on long-range planning issues and to evaluate public input, concerns, and suggestions. Special planning sessions were held on November, 20, 2013, September 23, 2014, and April 15, 2015. The results of these sessions are reflected throughout this plan document and notes and resulting documents for each are provided in Appendix F.

In addition, every few years a special tour is given by parks staff to OCPRC. This tour highlights recent improvements to the parks system along with current planning, operations, or programming issues. The hope is to inform the county's public officials of current and proposed parks initiatives so that they can better engage with their constituents.

PARK MASTER PLANNING MEETINGS

Ottawa County Parks conducts public input meetings in conjunction with all new planning and / or development projects. Although these meetings are usually site specific, parks staff often present general park planning information to provide background and context for the current project efforts. For example, OCPRC's emphasis on greenways along its river corridors and efforts to connect recreation spaces with trails are often presented. These meetings also allow informal time to discuss a wide variety of topics of interest to citizens and provide opportunities for park improvement suggestions. Since the 2011 plan, public meetings were held for the following projects:

- Holland CC (Macatawa Greenspace/Paw Paw Park) restoration and master planning
- Grand Ravines Master Planning
- Bend Area Expansion grant application
- Historic Ottawa Beach Waterfront Walkway

RESERVATION FACILITY USER SURVEY

In 2010, a system was put in place to measure satisfaction with services and facilities provided for park patrons paying to reserve facilities in the county park system. All patrons who have completed

a reservation and have an email address are sent a link to a survey via email with questions related to their experience with the reservation process, service, and facilities. A portion of the survey also provides opportunities for comments. 20% of users given the opportunity to participate have responded. This information is compiled and analyzed to recognize trends and determine areas of possible improvement. 78% of park patrons reserving facilities have rated the facilities 5 stars with a total of 95% rating 4 stars or better. In 2015, 54% reservation patrons never rented before, going up from the 48% in 2014. Family and friends continue to be the highest percentage for patrons hearing about reservations sites, with Internet search coming in as the second highest at 27% up from 19% in 2014. Many site improvements have resulted from user survey comments as we continually monitor feedback and strive for excellent customer service.

COMMENT CARDS & GENERAL PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

For many years the OCPRC has had an ongoing effort to solicit input from park users through the use of comment cards at the highest use county parks (see sample card in Appendix J). Boxes labeled “Comment Cards” were installed at key locations within the parks and users were encouraged by park staff to share their feelings about the parks. The program has proven very popular and hundreds of comments have been received over the years. Numerous helpful suggestions as well as many compliments have resulted in adjustments or strengthening of planning initiatives. The OCPRC and staff review and discuss all comment cards received on a regular basis.

In addition, general correspondence from the public via email, social media, and US mail regularly provide opportunities for the public to make their suggestions and comments known to park staff. These exchanges are taken seriously with timely responses from parks staff and inclusion of the correspondence in the pre-meeting package provided to parks commissioners.

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL RECREATION PLANS

Recreation plans were collected from all local units of government within Ottawa County as well as adjacent counties. The documents were reviewed and plans identified in an effort to refine the direction of the county’s park and recreation system.

As has been the case in previous reviews, it was generally concluded from the local recreation plans that most communities are providing very good recreation opportunities at the local level. Therefore, the county should not try to duplicate local recreation services but rather complement them by concentrating on larger, resource-based parks, which offer opportunities for picnicking, swimming, hiking, and other uses which rely upon natural features. In addition, the plans reveal that no major initiatives are being proposed that would significantly alter conditions for planning future county park improvements. Other general observations of emphases in these plans include the following:

- Serving all age groups and abilities including barrier-free issues
- Year-round recreation both indoor and outdoor
- Non-motorized trails with connections to residential areas and schools
- Geographic balance of park sites and amenities
- Natural area protection
- A discussion of specific local facilities is provided in Chapter 10, with a complete listing provided in Appendix B.

COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

A review of the data presented in Chapter Four reveals several items of interest for park planning purposes. The most significant of these is the expected substantial growth in overall county population as well as exponential growth in specific areas. This increase almost surely will result in an increased need for recreation land and programming. Several of the most popular parks are already at capacity on a regular basis and will require additional land and/or facilities to accommodate this use.

A second area of interest is in the county's growing ethnic diversity. Although still overwhelmingly white, non-Hispanic, the overall population continues to trend toward greater diversity with the Hispanic population now at almost 10%. Continued efforts to monitor needs and desires of these minority populations as well as specific communication strategies may be required.

ANALYSIS OF OTHER OUTSTANDING PARK SYSTEMS IN MICHIGAN

An Internet search of the websites of 10 of Michigan's best and most active park systems was completed to determine what facilities and services are regularly provided in this region and what trends are becoming evident. Several of these systems are leaders regionally in developing programs to serve their residents and are located in areas such as growing suburban Detroit that could serve as models for some aspects of park system evolution in Ottawa County.

As with the analysis completed in the 2011 plan, there are several activities that are fairly common in other parks systems that are not currently provided by Ottawa County Parks. These include water/splash play, camping, boat rental, sports fields and courts, and picnic accommodations for large groups (over 200 people). These other systems are also continuing to evolve to provide a broader range of facilities and services that meet their own local circumstances. It should be noted that Ottawa County has followed this trend by adding disc golf and dog parks to its list of services in the last five years. Although these uses are not at the core of the OCPRC's mission, they do require large land resources and meet growing outdoor recreation needs.

Some specific trends identified in this most recent review include accommodations for fat tire winter bike riding and for snow tubing including tube rental. Interestingly, zip lines and archery facilities, although more common throughout the country, have not made an impact on these Michigan Park systems

A chart showing a comparison of these park systems with Ottawa County is included in Appendix I.

REVIEW OF STATE INITIATIVES

The State Michigan has evaluated public recreation needs from a variety of perspectives and taken public comment on a number of topics related to outdoor activities, land management, and tourism. Results of these efforts have been recorded in several documents including the following:

- *The Future of Michigan's Parks and Outdoor Recreation: A Report to Governor Rick Snyder* prepared by the Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel in 2012.
- *The Michigan Comprehensive Trail Plan* prepared by the Michigan Snowmobile and Trail Advisory Council in 2013.
- *The Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2013-2013* by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

- *The Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan* prepared by the Michigan Department of Community Health in 2012.
- *The Managed Public Land Strategy* by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (2013).

Although these initiatives cover a broad range of topics, several common themes can be seen that are applicable to the work of Ottawa County Parks. These include a strong emphasis on regional trail networks (both land and water) and collaboration between units of government as well as between the public and private sectors.

REVIEW OF NATIONAL INITIATIVES

Ottawa County Parks is a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), the largest organization of park and recreation professional in the United States. For several years NRPA has promoted the concept of three pillars of recreation. These pillars are Conservation, Health & Wellness, and Social Equity. Information resources and other support are provided to members so that they can build on these pillars of healthy communities. The NRPA national conference in particular has recently focused on the need for parks to be a major component of healthy lifestyles by providing facilities and access from neighborhoods to those facilities that can help people lead active and healthy lives. Research and experiences of members continues to grow showing that parks can and should be viewed as an essential public service.

REVIEW OF NATIONAL RESEARCH

Several organizations conduct research to determine levels of participation and trends in outdoor recreation at a national level. Some of these findings are applicable to Ottawa County as indicators of potential future needs or areas that need to be evaluated on a regular basis. In particular, the Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2015 and the 2015 Special Report on paddlesports produced by The Outdoor Foundation provide detailed data to inform park planning and design decisions.

In particular the most recent participation report ranked activities with participation rates as follows:

- 50% of US residents participated in some form of outdoor recreation last year.
- 54% of participants are male, except for the 18-24 year age group which is 59% female.

The top five outdoor activities with percentage of population involved are as follows:

Running	19.8%	Camping	13.8%
Biking	16.1%	Hiking	11.9
Fishing	15.8%		

Other activities of interest:

Wildlife viewing	7.4%	Horseback riding	2.8%
Birdwatching	4.9%	Archery	2.6%
Hunting	4.7%	Trail running	2.3%
Canoeing	3.5%	Snowmobiling	1.0%
Recreational kayaking	3.0%		

Trends: Top 3-year growth activities with percentage increase:

Adventure racing	38%	BMX bicycling	16%
Off-road triathlon	34%	Traditional climbing	16%
Stand-up paddling	31%	White water kayaking	15%
Kayak fishing	20%	Board sailing	13%
Traditional triathlon	19%	Sea kayaking	13%

*Based on the Outdoor Foundation Outdoor Participation Report 2014

One of the easiest ways for individuals to become more active and healthy is to increase the amount of walking they do on a regular basis. Based on this fact, the Surgeon General of the United States is strongly promoting walking and walkable communities. The rationale and recommendations for this effort are presented in *Step it Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities*.

This recent emphasis supports current and proposed efforts of Ottawa County Parks to develop trails within parks and also to provide more regional connections to and from developed residential areas.

PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS

A planning workshop was held to provide a forum for identifying and prioritizing attitudes within the community as to how Ottawa County could improve its park and recreation services. Invitations were sent to representatives of local park and recreation departments and local government officials, and the public was notified through news media.

The workshop was held on November 17 of 2015, a key time during the planning process before final recommendations were developed. The meeting began with introductions and an overview of the planning process and required components for the new parks and open space plan, park staff proceeded with presentations and discussions regarding the OCPRC's role, progress over the previous five-year plan period, current activity needs, and proposed focus areas for acquisition and development in the next five years. The ideas, information, and priorities gathered at the meeting, were tabulated and meeting notes were recorded (see Appendix G). Key comments from the approximately 30 attendees included:

- Maintain quality – plan enough funds for maintenance and renovations
- Keep invasive species management a top priority
- Increase fees for non-residents in light of high non-resident use
- Partner with Pure Michigan especially for winter operations
- Create an awareness campaign – too many Ottawa County residents are not aware of the parks available and their amenities; make the connection between millage and all that parks offer; connect the value of parks to the quality of life; remind people of the millage with every public relations output with a tag “supported by a dedicated parks millage”.
- Make sure future logging projects have defined expectations and results; not happy with the way Riley Trails was logged during the thinning of red pines.
- Find other mountain bike trail sites
- Keep water trails open and free from obstacles
- Maintain walking trails – especially clay areas
- Be sustainable with travel time between projects – regionalize resources
- Consider visitors who use parks as a stopping point between Chicago and northern vacation sites; they generate revenue for dining, overnights for the county, and return on investment

Additional public comment periods were provided at a regular OCPRC meetings held on December 2, 2015 and January 6, 2016 to present the plan to the public and accept public comment. Minutes from those meeting are included as Appendix H.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The draft plan was made available on the Ottawa County Parks website and at local public libraries located throughout the county from January 7, 2016 through February 8, 2016. All comments were collected, presented to the OCPRC, and incorporated into the plan if appropriate.

CHAPTER 9 | PARKS & OPEN SPACE ANALYSIS



Parks and recreation plans, including past efforts of Ottawa County, commonly state the need to plan for future park and open space needs, but rarely is there a concerted effort to analyze and plan for open space needs beyond the requirements of parklands and recreation facilities. The term “open space,” although difficult to define, includes parklands, but is a much broader concept encompassing a wide range of undeveloped lands. For purposes of this plan, open space is broadly defined as **land which is free from intensive development and where the natural or cultural character of the land has been preserved or can be restored.**

As in the previous plans, a key objective of the 2016 plan is to clearly define the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission’s (OCPRC) role in the protection of open space. The job of protecting open space in Ottawa County is a huge task which falls upon a wide range of entities. In addition to Ottawa County Parks, responsibility to address the task lies with local planning and parks commissions, the Ottawa County Planning Commission, private nonprofit land conservancy groups, and various state regulatory agencies.

Based on the results of past long-range planning efforts, the role of Ottawa County Parks in the protection of open space lands has emerged as one of identifying and acquiring select high-quality natural and recreational lands for use by the public. Clearly, it is not feasible to protect a large percentage of the land base as open space in Ottawa County through direct acquisition. However, by acquiring key high-quality natural and recreational lands, the OCPRC can provide the core natural lands which can serve as a basic green infrastructure for the county’s future growth. The responsibility lies with local planning agencies and others to implement the necessary land use controls to limit sprawl and promote growth patterns which preserve open space.

This chapter will first explore the value of natural features and open space and comment on public support for these efforts. A review is then provided of past open space planning efforts which are important to understanding how the OCPRC’s approach to open space planning has evolved. Park and open space acreage standards are discussed and guidelines are identified to help evaluate needs on a countywide basis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a detailed review of various land acquisition and greenway initiatives established by the OCPRC and the direction of each is assessed.

THE VALUE OF NATURAL FEATURES AND OPEN SPACE

General attitudes toward land have changed in recent decades as people have become more aware of the effects of human activity on the environment. A new realization has emerged that development activities which destroy natural features and remove open space carry greater long-term costs. These costs include the loss of water quality and wildlife habitat and diminished attractiveness for tourism and other economic development. The natural and open space features of Ottawa County - its lakes, rivers and streams, sand dunes, wetlands, forests, grasslands and

agricultural lands also create a special character and unique “sense of place” that can be damaged by insensitive alterations to these features.

Most citizens now recognize that protected natural features and open space contribute to the county’s outstanding quality of life. Some of the general benefits of protecting and conserving these features include:

- Clean and adequate supplies of municipal and private water sources
- Wildlife habitat
- Groundwater recharge and purification, flood control, pollution protection and the support of unique plant and animal life
- Recreational opportunities including hiking, skiing, swimming, sledding, nature study, fishing, photography and related pursuits
- Aesthetics (views, serenity, rural nature, etc.)
- Educational and research opportunities (natural history, biology, geology, ecology, etc.)
- Economic opportunities in areas such as farming, forestry and tourism plus the improved ability to attract and retain businesses



Citizens in Ottawa County are acutely aware of the quality of the environment and appear to support strong policies protecting environmental assets and open spaces. County residents, increasingly sensitive to the value of their environment, are generally supportive of reasonable policies to help ensure that these resources will be present for future generations to enjoy. The 2015 County Resident Survey showed similar results to the earlier surveys revealing a strong interest in open space protection as noted in the findings cited below.

- 64% felt there is a need to acquire additional land for future public use. This percentage represents an increase from the previous survey, possibly reflecting the stronger economy.
- 70% felt that Ottawa County Parks should focus on acquisition of “land along major rivers and streams.”
- 66% felt that Ottawa County Parks should acquire “unique environmental areas such as wetlands, sand dunes, mature woodlands, and wildlife areas.”

REVIEW OF PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The 2016 Plan seeks to build off previous plans to establish a workable framework for open space planning in Ottawa County. Recognizing the many unique natural and open space resources found throughout Ottawa County and the threat to these assets posed by the County’s growth and sprawl, the OCPRC seeks to take a proactive position to preserve and protect selected resources of countywide significance for future generations.

As noted in Chapter 1, there have been many excellent plans prepared for the county park system over the years. As part of the current planning process, past plans have been reviewed in an effort to evaluate and benefit from previous planning efforts. The 1995 plan utilized a basic approach to identify open space areas for protection involving mapping a wide range of natural, cultural

and recreation features for all of Ottawa County. Studying the results of the overlay mapping process revealed concentrations of features that were then identified as “Areas of Interest.” These areas of interest led to a focus in the 2000 Plan on greenways along the Grand, Macatawa and Pigeon River corridors. This emphasis was reinforced and expanded in the 2006 and 2011 plans with the addition of the Lake Michigan coastal greenway as a focus area. Not surprisingly, a look back 40 years to the 1970 Parks Plan reveals a focus on these same natural resource areas for development of parks and preserves.

Results from the 1995 Plan were used along with additional information to structure the 1996 millage proposal to provide dedicated funds to expand the county’s park and open space system. The Parks Commission structured a millage proposal that included the establishment of greenways along the three key river corridors as the foundation for the millage campaign. Millage campaign language described the greenway initiative as follows:

Many of Ottawa County’s best remaining natural features are associated with its rivers. The Parks Commission has identified three high priority river corridors for establishment of greenways. The goal would be to protect selected high quality natural, historic, and recreational lands through public/private partnerships with a long-range goal of providing a linked system of natural preserves, parks, and historic sites. Opportunities would be provided for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, canoeing, and other recreational activities.

The 2006 millage renewal supported this strategy and identified a goal of adding 1,800 acres to the park and open space system as well as developing new parks, expanding existing facilities, and continuing high quality maintenance and land stewardship. With a year remaining on the current millage (2017), the Parks Commission has acquired 1,209 acres, somewhat short of the goal. The remaining acreage has been identified and, in some cases, initial steps taken toward acquisition and funds earmarked. In looking to the next millage (vote in 2016 for 2018-2027), funds available for acquisition will be reduced but there will be a continued emphasis on completing key greenway land purchases.

LAND ACQUISITION CRITERIA

As the OCPRC began assessing lands for acquisition, it soon became clear that well-defined land acquisition criteria were needed to help with the evaluation process. The following acquisition criteria have been adopted as a guide for use in reviewing properties under consideration for purchase. It is important to note that while a point system is used and properties are ranked, the purpose of the criteria is primarily a discussion tool to be used in the decision-making process.

Property Acquisition Criteria:

NATURAL FEATURES

- Presence of unique or rare type of ecological association, natural community, or species that could be protected or sustained in a park setting.
- Occurrence of unique or dramatic geological or topographical features (e.g., ravines, glacial landforms, barrier dunes, steep slopes, gravel pit lakes, etc.).
- Presence of water-related natural features. Examples include Lake Michigan



shoreline, riparian lands (i.e., riverfront or lakefront), streams, wetlands, etc.

SOCIAL-ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

- Recreation value in terms of type, uniqueness, and quality of recreational use anticipated at the site. Also, consider factors such as appropriateness of the site for the uses intended, the general attractiveness of the site and its surroundings, the suitability of the site for recreation development and meeting needs of special populations and the impact the proposed recreation development would have on the natural environment.
- Historical importance of the site. Does the site offer the opportunity to protect significant historical features? Do opportunities exist for historical interpretation to the public?
- Size of overall acquisition project. Park plan guidelines require 100 to 500 acres to fit the definition of an area-wide or regional park, with larger sites receiving higher priority. Size is less important when evaluating lands as part of recreation corridors (e.g., greenways).
- Location of site. Consider the following factors:
 - Is part of a greenway/recreation corridor linking other public/natural lands; is part of an identified greenway project.
 - Is contiguous with or complementary to existing park or open space areas.
 - Provides access to park or open space areas.
 - Is located in a highly populated area or high-growth portion of Ottawa County.
 - Compatibility with adjacent land uses.
 - Potential for adverse development (e.g., higher importance given to sites where threat of development is imminent).
 - Lands possessing outstanding scenic qualities visible to the public from highways, public waterways, or park areas.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

- Is the property available for sale with a willing seller?
- Sale price.
- Revenue production potential.
- Environmental and development issues related to the property. What developmental limitations exist? Are high maintenance costs anticipated? Is environmental restoration required?
- Will the project provide significant economic benefits to the county? Does the project have significant potential to attract tourists or enhance the attractiveness of the county as a place to locate employment-producing enterprises?

PARK AND OPEN SPACE ACREAGE GUIDELINES

Standards have been used by many park and recreation agencies in the past to provide a benchmark or guide to help establish goals for the basic quantity of park and open space lands to set aside for the future. Although the OCPRC acknowledges standards of this type are somewhat subjective in nature, they can be an important tool in establishing goals.

The OCPRC has examined past standards and guidelines issued by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and supports a classification system for park and open spaces which includes suggested acreage guidelines. For “local/closetohome space” including city and township parks, the suggested guideline is 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 population. For “regional space,”

comparable to the role of Ottawa County Parks, including regional/metropolitan parks and regional park preserves, the suggested guideline is 15 to 20 acres per 1,000.

After considering survey results and other factors involved in evaluating park and open space needs in Ottawa County, the OCPRC has adopted a guideline of a minimum of 20 acres per 1,000 population for county park and open space lands. In developing the guideline the OCPRC has taken into consideration the strong public interest in preservation of natural lands and open space; the overall need for parklands and facilities to meet identified activity needs; and the importance of tourism in Ottawa County and the added demand this places upon parklands.

Based on the 2014 Census estimate of 276,292, Ottawa County should have 5,526 acres of park and open space land to meet the guideline of 20 acres per 1,000 people. Currently Ottawa County Parks manages 6,448 acres. Therefore, there is a surplus of 922 acres based on the guideline. By the year 2030, the population estimated at 330,785 would require 6,616 acres. Based on that projection, there would be a deficit of 168 acres. As indicated, these are guidelines only.

An important factor to consider is that acquiring high quality park land today will be much easier and less expensive than after significant population growth occurs. Another important consideration is the amount of land needed by the OCPRC to accomplish current goals and initiatives. Currently, completion of plans for the Grand River Greenway and Macatawa River Greenway will require purchase of an estimated 800 acres. If this is achieved, the park system would encompass approximately 7,248 acres and would exceed the 20 acres per 1,000 population guideline for the near future. However, as noted, the OCPRC would achieve its greenway goals and be well positioned for future growth in the county.

There are other factors to consider as well. In particular, the goal of optimizing each park site in terms of habitat protection, aesthetics, and function has become a primary consideration. If all existing park and open space lands were expanded to their optimal potential, the park system would grow by two to three thousand acres. The availability of funds will be an obvious limiting factor to the growth of the park system. The OCPRC will need to monitor public interest for an expanded park system as well as funding availability as it searches for the ideal long-term size of the park system to meet current and future needs.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Ottawa County's focus on greenways is essentially a component of a broader way of looking at green space preservation in the country referred to as green infrastructure planning. As the name implies, green infrastructure planning views green space as essential to the functioning of a community. One description, put forth by the work group of The Conservation Fund and USDA Forest Service, reads as follows:

“Green infrastructure is our nation’s natural life support system – an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas; greenways, parks and other conservation lands; working farms, ranches and forests; and wilderness and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to the health and quality of life for America’s communities and people.”

Green infrastructure planning challenges the park and open space planners to think more broadly and consider the health of the natural system beyond park and recreation needs. Mark Benedict and Edward McMahon refer to the following green infrastructure principles in their article “Green

Infrastructure: Smart Conservation for the 21st Century”:

- 1) Green infrastructure should be the framework for conservation and development.
- 2) Design and plan green infrastructure before development.
- 3) Linkage is key.
- 4) Green infrastructure functions across multiple jurisdictions and at different scales.
- 5) Green infrastructure is grounded in science and land-use planning theories and practices.
- 6) Green infrastructure is a critical public investment.
- 7) Green infrastructure involves diverse stakeholders.

GREENWAY INITIATIVES

As previously noted, Ottawa County has identified the establishment of greenways along the Grand, Pigeon, and Macatawa Rivers plus the Lake Michigan coast in Ottawa County as high priority. Detailed assessments of each proposed greenway corridor are included in this section. First, however, some general information on greenways is provided.

The word “greenway” can be defined as 1) a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridge-line, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route, 2) any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage, 3) an open space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas, and 4) locally, certain strip or linear parks designated as a parkway or greenbelt (Source: Charles Little, *Greenways for America*).

There are literally hundreds of greenways across the United States. Their popularity stems from the growing awareness that preserving linear corridors serves the interests of protecting both natural habitat and providing opportunities for public recreation. Corridors of protected natural lands allow wildlife and plant life to migrate through the linear space to meet habitat needs. Trail-related recreation activities such as biking, rollerblading, and hiking are ideally suited to greenway corridors and have been growing in popularity in recent years.

Ottawa County’s greenway initiatives focus on key river corridors and the Lake Michigan shoreline because these areas contain a concentration of the county’s remaining high-quality natural features and offer the potential to preserve large acreages of natural lands in a linked system. It is important to note that the scope of the greenway projects is very large, and in order to be successful and protect a significant portion of the natural landscape, it will be necessary to involve the efforts of many different entities, all working toward the same basic goal. Potential partners include private landowners, state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit groups such as the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, the Audubon Society, and others.

Grand River Greenway

The Grand River and its surrounding lands have tremendous significance as a natural corridor within Ottawa County and across the state. With its headwaters near Jackson, the Grand is the state’s longest river at 252 miles, encompassing a wide variety of natural features along the way from bayous and wetlands to rapids and deep ravines. Ottawa County’s vision for a greenway along the Grand River is to ensure that the unique character of this corridor within Ottawa County is preserved and enhanced as stated below:

- Prime natural features including many of Ottawa County’s best remaining wetlands, floodplain forests, ravines, rare plant communities and other ecologically significant areas will be protected for future generations.
- An extensive natural corridor will be protected which will provide habitat for wildlife movement.
- Key recreation areas along the river will be acquired and made available for public use.
- Facilities for picnicking, nature study, hiking, fishing, boating and other popular recreation activities will be provided which will help meet long-range recreation needs in Ottawa County.
- Recreation areas will be connected by pathways for bicycling, hiking, and other recreational uses. Pathways will be constructed adjacent to the river in some places and run along existing roadways in other areas where private property or sensitive natural features preclude access to the riverfront.
- Private sector involvement will be encouraged in the establishment of the greenway through development of commercial recreation facilities (i.e., campgrounds, marinas, etc.), restaurants, or other compatible developments.
- Private landowner rights will be respected and every attempt made to seek the cooperation and agreement of landowners as greenway plans are implemented.
- Greenway planning and implementation will be a cooperative effort involving public/private partnership of citizens, organizations, businesses, and government agencies at all levels.
- The greenway will help maintain and enhance the quality of life for Ottawa County residents and visitors and will have positive economic benefits for the County as a whole, as well as landowners adjacent to the greenway.



Significant progress has been made over the past two decades in implementing this vision for the Grand River Greenway, but much more remains to be done. Over 2,400 acres have been acquired including 13 miles of riverfront encompassing bayous, wetlands, ravines and riparian forest land. Yet, there are still key lands and connecting properties to acquire in order to provide the linkages needed to accommodate both wildlife and people. The OCPRC has conceptual plans (Figure 9.1) for the Grand River Greenway showing lands targeted for acquisition and/or easements to accommodate parks and trails. Given the large scale and complexity of the Grand River corridor in Ottawa County, the greenway master plan is an evolving project which will take many more years to complete.

As noted above, the basic vision for the Grand River Greenway is to link greenway lands with a hard-surface trail. A general concept for the trail location is shown in Figure 9.1. With many

of the key properties in place, efforts can begin to focus on trail construction as a next step in the development of the greenway. Development of the trail will be undertaken in sections as land and easement acquisition in each section are completed. The route shown on the map should be considered conceptual and will likely be revised as the OCPRC works with landowners to determine what is feasible. The long-range goal is to provide a hard surface trail linking Grand Haven, where the existing pathway already extends to 144th Avenue, to Georgetown Township and nearby Kent County trails which end very close to the county line in Grandville. The Grand River Greenway Trail is envisioned as a destination recreation trail with significance in the regional trail network and an important route for bicycle commuters traveling between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids.

The conceptual plan divides the river corridor into three segments based generally on the character of the river and the level of development in the area. The Urban Greenway Segment consists of the western portion of the river from Lake Michigan to approximately 120th Avenue. This segment is fairly developed and offers limited opportunities for large-scale land acquisition. A fair amount of public land is in place, as is a system of non-motorized paths including well used paths that generally follow the river along area roads.

Improvements were made to Connor Bayou, located on the eastern edge of this segment, during 2011 and 2012. Improvements included new parking, boardwalks and trails, a fishing dock plus renovations to an existing log structure as a rental facility. Ottawa County's greenway focus in this area could also include acquisition of points of interest along the river corridor, trail expansion, and enhancement, acquisition of key natural lands, preservation of cultural and historic features, and other efforts to be identified.

The *Rural Conservation Greenway Segment* extends from approximately 120th Avenue east to M-45. This portion of the river is the most rural segment and contains primarily farming and residential land uses. The Crockery Creek and Bass River are two significant tributaries located in this stretch of river, and both have large expanses of natural lands located near their confluence with the Grand River. Opportunities still exist in this segment for relatively large-scale land acquisition. There is a need to further study lands and evaluate the potential to establish or expand parks and open spaces.

Recent efforts in this segment have focused on improvements to park and open space lands. Eastmanville Bayou site improvements were completed in 2011 including parking, bayou boat launch, picnic area and shelter, trails plus a universally accessible kayak launch on the Grand river. Also, trail work was completed at Bur Oak Landing and Eastmanville Farm in 2012.

The most significant development in this segment in recent years was the completion of the M-231 bypass between M-45 and M-104 during 2015. The highway project includes a new bridge over the Grand River which was constructed with a non-motorized pedestrian/bike path crossing. Ottawa County was instrumental in convincing the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to include the non-motorized crossing, and in turn pledged to work to connect the non-motorized bridge crossing to trails on both the north and south sides of the Grand River.

The Grand River Greenway Trail is the logical connector for the south end of the non-motorized bridge crossing, and this development has prompted the Parks Commission to rank the trail between Connor Bayou and Riverside Park as the highest priority and first segment of the Grand River Greenway Trail to be developed. Efforts are underway to secure a grant from MDOT to assist with trail construction in 2016 or 2017.

The Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department has taken the lead for developing the trail running north from the non-motorized bridge crossing. The plan is to develop

Figure 9.1 - Grand River Greenway Concept



GRAND RIVER GREENWAY - CONCEPT PLAN

OTTAWA COUNTY

PARKS, RECREATION and OPEN SPACE PLAN - 2016

the Spoonville Trail as a link running north to connect to the North Bank Trail. Efforts are well underway to secure funding for this trail link with the first phase anticipated to break ground in 2016.

Another property of special significance in this segment is the Bass River Recreation Area located adjacent to Ottawa County's Riverside Park. The Bass River was most recently expanded in 2001 and compasses 1,665 acres with over 3 miles of riverfront. The relatively undeveloped site offers trails for mountain bikers and equestrians and is managed jointly by the Michigan State Parks and Recreation Division and the Michigan Wildlife Division. Initial steps have been taken by the state to develop a master plan for this area but completion of the plan is still years away. Ottawa County Parks has a request pending with the DNR for permission to run the Grand River Greenway Trail through the state property. Coordination will be needed to maximize recreation opportunities that span state and county properties while preserving the unique attractions of the state property which include offering opportunities for hunting.

As shown in Figure 9.1, the route for the Grand River Greenway Trail is shown running south from Eastmanville Bayou and through Allendale before reconnecting with the river at Grand Ravines. This alternate route was developed because land/easement acquisition efforts along the river in Allendale Township are proceeding slower than anticipated. Also, Allendale Township has expressed interest in linking its commercial and recreation amenities to the Grand River Greenway Trail and providing access for residents. The potential exists for Allendale to function as a "trail town" offering amenities for travelers on the Grand River Greenway trail. The route along the river is still shown as a desired route long-term and the Parks Commission will continue to pursue opportunities to acquire land and easements for this trail segment as opportunities arise.

The *East Transition Greenway Segment* runs from M-45 to the Kent County line and consists of a more urban and suburban area. Although opportunities for large-scale land acquisition still exist, they are diminishing as Ottawa County's largest and fastest-growing population concentration expands toward the river.

Fortunately, Ottawa County Parks has been able to complete some key acquisitions in this segment in recent years. Most notably, 119 acres was added to the Grand Ravines property in 2011. This riverfront property with dramatic terrain and scenic views has since (2015) been developed with park facilities with more planned for 2016. Other acquisitions at Grand River Open Space included 122 acres in 2011 and 46 acres in 2014—greatly enhancing this large riverfront property.

Grand Valley State University (GVSU) is located in this segment and the university controls an expansive stretch of unique natural land along the river adjoining Grand Ravines to the south. With over a mile of frontage encompassing a large portion of the Grand Valley ravines, the area was designated by the Natural Features Inventory of Ottawa County (1988) as one of the highest-quality natural sites remaining in Ottawa County. Portions of the ravine system with high-quality natural lands extend south of the campus on private lands along the river to Grand River Park. Ottawa County Parks is working with GVSU to explore the potential for a joint hiking trail system (unpaved) linking Grand Ravines and GVSU's natural land along the river.

A key park property located within this segment is the Bend Area. The vision for the Bend Area is to expand from its current 258 acres to between 500 and 700 acres and offer trails, fishing, swimming beaches, boating and many other recreation amenities. Ottawa County Parks is currently exploring options for expansion of the site and will continue to make this a priority.

Other efforts have focused on the riverfront property closer to the Kent County line. Several property

owners have been contacted and Ottawa County Parks acquired a six acre riverfront property in 2012. Georgetown Township also owns an adjacent property that is available for greenway purposes. A meeting was held with Grandville City staff to discuss and coordinate a future trail connection.

Overall, this segment of river is in close proximity to the county's highest population concentration and is experiencing the most rapid changes in land use. Opportunities must be evaluated and acted upon in order to put in place a system of green space before the landscape is fully developed. Special attention should be focused on greenway trail linkages between sites before development precludes this opportunity.

Pigeon River Greenway

In contrast to the Grand River, the Pigeon River is much smaller and therefore somewhat easier to evaluate in terms of greenway potential. A greenway master-planning process was undertaken in 2000 with funding assistance from the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program administered by the MDEQ. The Pigeon River is a relatively high-quality river corridor, with intact adjacent wetlands and much of the main branch of the river still in forest cover with good water quality overall. In recent years, the DNR has resumed planting trout in the river downstream of 120th Avenue, an indicator that water quality levels have improved.

The Pigeon River Greenway Concept Plan (Figure 9.2) shows the river corridor from approximately 116th Avenue west to Lake Michigan. There is an extraordinary amount of diversity of natural and recreational resources in this stretch of river. In the upper stretches, the river runs through a mixture of upland forests and wetlands, with large expanses of native woodlands still intact.

Pigeon Creek Park is located in this upper segment. The park encompasses 282 acres and approximately 3/4 miles of natural riverfront and offers a wide range of activities with a focus on trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

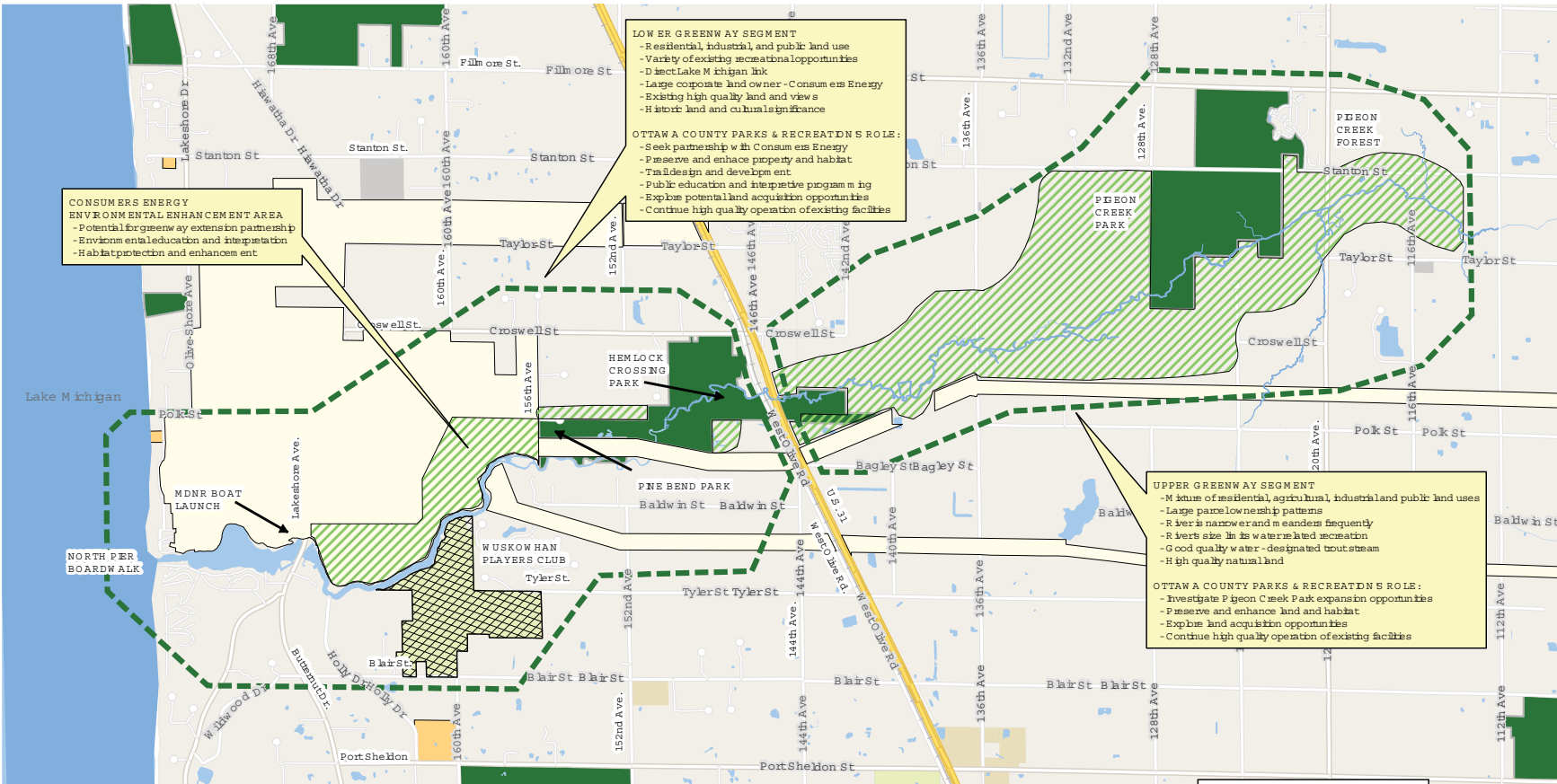
Upstream of Pigeon Creek Park, the river is natural and flows through a wooded corridor for approximately one to two miles before it splits into drainage courses and loses its natural character. Potential exists for park/greenway expansion in this stretch of river, and additional study is needed.

Downstream of Pigeon Creek Park, before US-31, the two-mile stretch of river is undeveloped and heavily wooded with rolling hills, wetlands, and attractive natural features. The extensive tract of land that the river flows through is primarily in one large ownership with some smaller ownership immediately east of US31. Several parcels in this area, totaling 46 acres of wooded riverfront, were donated to Ottawa County between 2003 and 2013 by a conservation minded landowner. The large ownership, or portions thereof, would be highly attractive as a future addition to the greenway system and additional investigation is needed to evaluate this potential further. Currently the land is well managed as a private conservation reserve and does not appear to be under immediate threat of development.

The Pigeon River Greenway Master Plan (not enclosed) focused on the lower stretch of river west of US-31 and provided detailed concepts for the eventual development of Hemlock Crossing and Pine Bend parks. These parks provide excellent access to the natural lands along the Pigeon River and house the Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center and the historic Weaver House, a unique rental facility that has been further enhanced in recent years.

Consumers Energy has large land holdings that border these parks and extend to Lakeshore Drive, including approximately one and one-half mile of natural riverfront land. A significant portion of their land holdings in this area is used for fly ash disposal. However, Consumers has extensive

Figure 9.2 - Pigeon River Greenway Concept

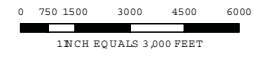


PIGEON RIVER GREENWAY - CONCEPT PLAN
OTTAWA COUNTY
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LEGEND

- Greenway Segment Boundary
- Greenway Focus Area
- County Parks & Open Spaces
- Township or Municipal Park
- Consumer Energy



acreage and all of their riverfront set aside as conservation land. In the past, Consumers sponsored a biological field station at the site offering educational opportunities for area schools.

The Pigeon River Greenway Plan plan shows a concept for a continuous trail proposed to run through Ottawa County property and extend through Consumers Energy property out to Lakeshore Drive. The trail could connect to the Lakeshore Drive bike path that runs between Holland and Grand Haven. Port Sheldon Township operates Sheldon Landing, a small park on Lakeshore Drive with riverfront that serves as a downstream staging area for canoeists and kayakers and could potentially serve as a westerly trailhead for a hiking trail along the Pigeon River. Ottawa County Parks is seeking to collaborate with Consumers Energy on the greenway, which could eventually lead to construction of a trail through their conservation property. Ottawa County Parks should continually monitor the Consumers Energy natural riverfront land, seeking trail access or possible long-term acquisition. Ottawa County Parks should explore partnership opportunities with Port Sheldon Township for improvements to Sheldon Landing given it is mostly unimproved and could be enhanced as both a canoe/kayak staging area and possibly in the future as a trailhead for hikers.

The OCPRC's vision of a trail through the Pigeon River greenway differs somewhat from other greenway projects. Unlike the Grand River greenway trail, for example, which would include a paved connector pathway, the Pigeon River trail is envisioned to be an unpaved nature trail suitable for hiking, cross-country skiing, and nature study. Recent (2010) development of a separated roadside bike path by Port Sheldon Township along Croswell Street, between Lakeshore Drive and West Olive Road, provides a logical route for bicycles paralleling the Pigeon River. The Township recently extended the pathway down West Olive Road to link to the Nature Education Center which greatly enhances non-motorized access to the facility.

West of Lakeshore Drive, the Pigeon River flows into Pigeon Lake before emptying into Lake Michigan through the pier heads. Opportunities for land acquisition in this area are limited due to extensive development on Pigeon Lake. Public recreation opportunities currently existing in this area include a large DNR boat launch located on the north side of the lake along Lakeshore Drive. Public access facilities also include a public boardwalk constructed by Consumers Energy to provide fishing and pedestrian access to their north pier. The boardwalk runs along the edge of Pigeon Lake from an interior location where parking is provided.

A long-range vision for the Pigeon River Greenway should include a continuous trail running from Pigeon Creek Park west to Lake Michigan. Although not on the immediate horizon, and contingent upon decisions of private landowners as well as funding availability, such a trail could be a tremendous asset, exposing trail users to some of the best natural features in the county including upland forests, wooded wetlands, Great Lakes marshes, and coastal dunes.

Macatawa River Greenway

The Macatawa River drains a large expanse of southern Ottawa County and flows through the suburbanizing countryside in Zeeland and Holland Townships before entering the already highly developed City of Holland and Lake Macatawa. Although highly impacted by nonpoint source pollutants, the river is an under-rated recreation resource with many attractive amenities including extensive natural lands, expansive wetlands, and scenic views. This analysis focuses on the main branch of the river flowing from northeast Zeeland Township on through Lake Macatawa to Lake Michigan.

In addition to assessing the physical resources of the river, it is important to note from the outset that the Macatawa River has an important resource not found presently on the Grand and Pigeon

Rivers a strong advocacy group. The Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway (ODCMG) is a nonprofit group committed to preserving and connecting natural habitats, waterways, and open lands in the Macatawa watershed. Although the organization's focus is upon the entire watershed, they are concentrating much of their initial effort on the protection of land and trail establishment on the main river branch from Windmill Island upstream through Zeeland Township.

Figure 9.3 shows a basic concept plan and analysis for the Macatawa River. The river corridor is divided into four segments. The first segment, in the upper stretches of the river, called the Upper Macatawa Greenway Segment, encompasses a portion of river that runs through fairly open, agricultural land with relatively large ownership blocks. The river has been channelized in the upper portion of this segment and has less natural character than in lower stretches of river. The floodplain is broad through this area, and vast areas flood in major storm events.

Many years ago the Macatawa Greenway partners held a vision setting session for the upper Macatawa drainage area which fostered the idea to permanently protect certain critical lands north of Adams Road and east of 88th Avenue along the Upper Macatawa River drainage in order to create a significant greenway, enhance the area's water management capabilities, and establish a new park for the area's rapidly growing population. This vision, which Ottawa County Parks was a key player in developing, led to the establishment of the Upper Macatawa Natural Area. This park is unique in that the OCPRC has established diverse goals for the site including 1) provide park and open space land, 2) create and restore wildlife habitat, 3) improve water quality, and 4) expand flood storage. In addition to addressing a range of needs in the community, these broader goals provide more diverse opportunities for funding assistance.

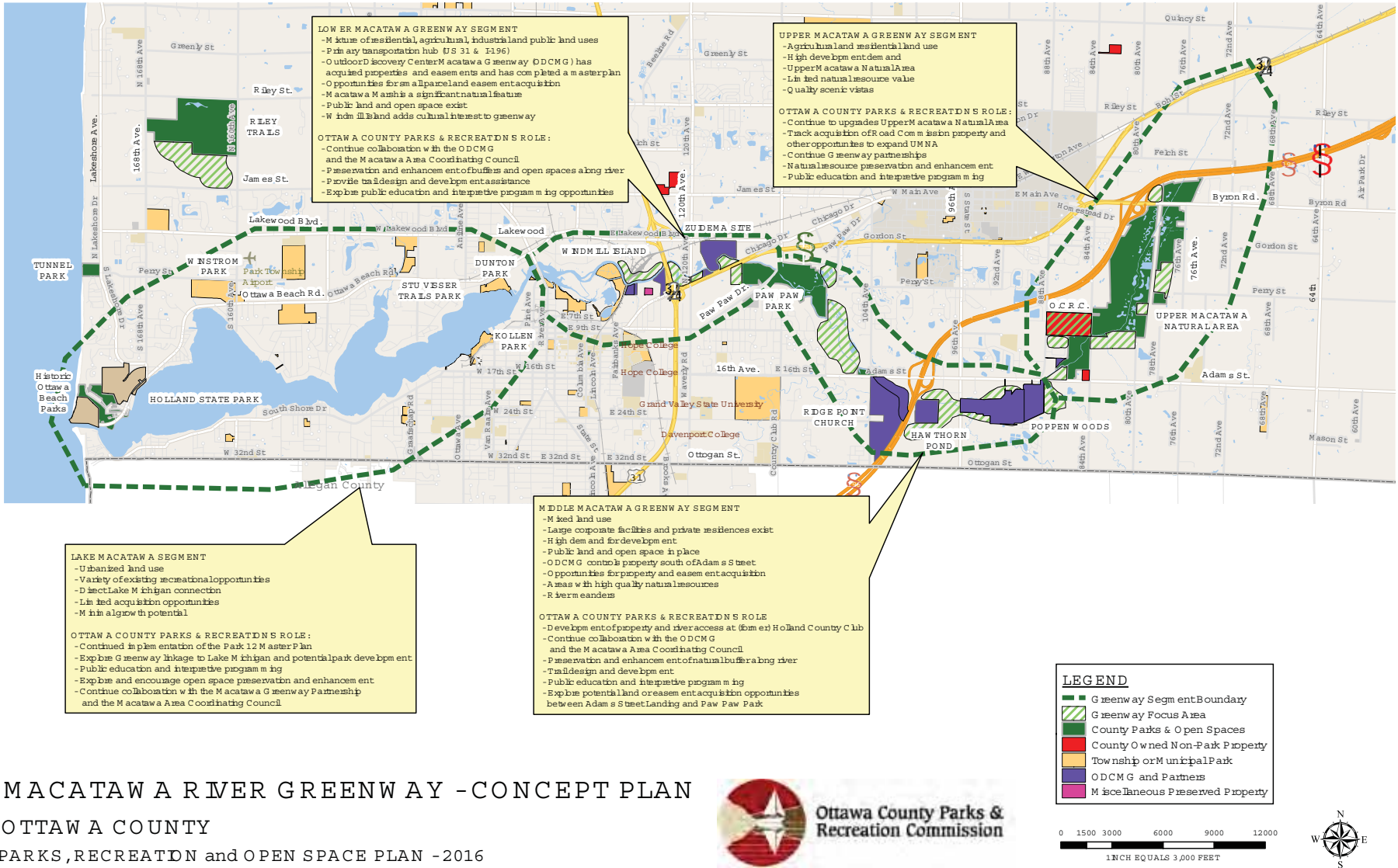
The reference to enhancing the area's water management capabilities complements plans of the Macatawa Watershed Project, an EPA-funded project to improve water quality in the Macatawa Watershed. This organization calls for restoration efforts in the upper portion of the river to help reduce sedimentation and phosphorous loading in the river. With assistance from the DEQ, USDA and other agencies focused on water quality enhancement, hundreds of acres of wetlands have been constructed at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area designed to enhance water quality.

In addition to habitat improvements, recreational amenities have been added to the Upper Macatawa Natural Area in recent years. Initial parking areas and trail improvements were completed back in 2006. In 2014 and 2015, recreational amenities were greatly expanded. With assistance from a TAP grant from MDOT, a 2.4 mile paved pathway was constructed representing an initial segment of the Macatawa Greenway Trail. The 10 foot wide paved trail features bridges over ravines and runs through a 60 acre prairie as it connects the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail on Byron Road to the bike path along Adams Street. It immediately became popular with bikers, walker and other non-motorized users. In conjunction with this project, improvements were also completed to the 84th Avenue parking area including paving the parking lot, addition of a small picnic shelter, plus water service and lighting.

As with the other river greenway projects, successful implementation of the Macatawa River Greenway will require the combined efforts of many governmental agencies as well as private and nonprofit groups. The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission views itself as a key organization to implement portions of the greenway and has targeted the Upper Macatawa Natural Area as one of its top priorities in the watershed.

The *Middle Macatawa Greenway Corridor*, the next river segment to the west, is in a high-growth area. Although still rural in nature, the area is rapidly developing and opportunities for land preservation and greenway establishment are disappearing. This area has some quality natural land

Figure 9.3 - Macatawa River Greenway Concept



MACATAWA RIVER GREENWAY - CONCEPT PLAN
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remaining and includes scenic landscapes. Additional study and investigation is needed to assess potential for park and greenway establishment in this area. Ottawa County Parks has a significant presence in this segment with the park access at Adams Street Landing, a highly visible location along a very busy primary road, and the 172 acre Paw Paw Park located within the City of Holland.

Ottawa County's involvement with Paw Paw Park began with the purchase of 122 acres in 2010 including the majority of acreage from the former Holland Country Club. A large EPA grant assisted with the restoration of wetlands at the site the following year as did a large wetland mitigation project which involved a private corporation paying to develop wetlands within the park in accordance with park plans. In 2015, Ottawa County Parks agreed to a long-term lease with the City of Holland for its 50 acre Paw Paw Park located west of Paw Paw Drive. Combined with the former Holland County Club property, the 172 acre Paw Paw Park will be managed as one site. Improvements were made to the former city park during 2015. Also in 2015, a grant from through the Michigan Department of Community Health, facilitated by the Ottawa County Department of Public Health, provided funding to assist with the development of a half-mile paved trail through Paw Paw Park connecting the two halves of the park and improving access for surrounding neighborhoods.

Greenway Partners, Ridge Point Church and the ODCMG also hold significant acreage in the Middle Macatawa Segment. The ODCMG has acquired significant acreage over the past few years along the Macatawa River south of Adams Street in conjunction with its Project Clarity Initiative. Project Clarity is a project focused on improving water quality in Lake Macatawa and the watershed through the construction of wetlands similar to what was accomplished at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area and Paw Paw Park. A total of 115 acres was recently acquired extending nearly one mile along the river corridor linking the 53-acre Poppen Woods to Hawthorn Pond Natural Area. Restoration work in this section of the river was completed in 2015 and the wetland design will accommodate a paved trail in the future using a maintenance road constructed as part of the project.

Other notable improvements in the Middle Macatawa Segment include Holland Township's improvements to the Hawthorn Pond Natural Area. This 40 acre site was acquired jointly by Ottawa County and Holland Township with the idea that the township would develop it as a township park. Holland Township completed initial improvements in 2011 with additional enhancements added in 2015. The park offers a kayak launch, fishing dock plus boardwalks and trails around the pond and picnicking opportunities. Ottawa County's interest was in preserving the natural land and maintaining the potential for the greenway trail to traverse the site in the future.

With the ODCMG actively involved in owning land and making improvements to its properties, there is a need to better define the role Ottawa County Parks should play in future efforts to complete the Macatawa River Greenway. After consulting with partners and considering its funding levels, the OCPRC determined that it can best serve the growing greenway by focusing on the section from Byron Road down to Adams Street, encompassing the Upper Macatawa Natural Area, plus the portion of the Middle Macatawa Segment from Adams Street Landing to Paw Paw Park, where additional work is needed to acquire land and easements and construct trail to connect the two parks. The ODCMG and other project partners will focus on the Middle Macatawa Segment South of Adams Street and the Lower Macatawa Greenway segment west of Paw Paw Park. All entities will collaborate and work jointly as possible but the responsibilities for taking the lead on the various segments will be clearly defined with this approach. It should be noted that Ottawa County Parks made a commitment to acquire a small parcel of land from the ODCMG which links to Hawthorn Pond and will honor this commitment as the opportunity presents itself in the future.

The *Lower Macatawa Greenway Corridor* has been an area of focus for the ODCMG and partners

in recent years as a collaborative effort has been taken to fund a pedestrian bridge that would link Windmill Island to Holland Township paths to the north. Other collaboration has occurred between the ODCMG and the Holland Board of Light and Power (BLP) as the BLP constructs a new gas fired power plant on the south side of the Macatawa River just east of Windmill Island. As part of their project, the BLP is providing some assistance with trail development in the area around the power plant.

Despite its more urbanized nature, quality natural lands still exist in this stretch of river, most significantly the wetlands in the lower portion. The river throughout this segment is highly conducive to canoeing and kayaking. Windmill Island, a unique attraction featuring an authentic Dutch windmill, is located in the Macatawa Marsh at the west edge of this segment. The Macatawa Greenway Partnership has been active and successful in acquiring some small parcels and easements east of Windmill Island with a short-term goal of linking to river to Paw Paw Park.

The last segment, called the *Lake Macatawa Segment*, is highly developed with limited opportunities for larger-scale land acquisitions. Existing parklands in this segment include Holland's Kollen Park, the major public access point on the south side of the lake; Holland Township's Dunton Park, providing the major public access point on the northeast end of the Lake; Park Township's efforts to preserve lands along two small watersheds to the lake, including the Winstrom Preserve, and Pine Creek Bay; and the Holland State Park and Ottawa County's Historic Ottawa Beach Parks, providing the linkage to Lake Michigan. Additional study is needed to determine Ottawa County's role in greenway implementation in this segment. The Historic Ottawa Beach Parks are discussed under the Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway.

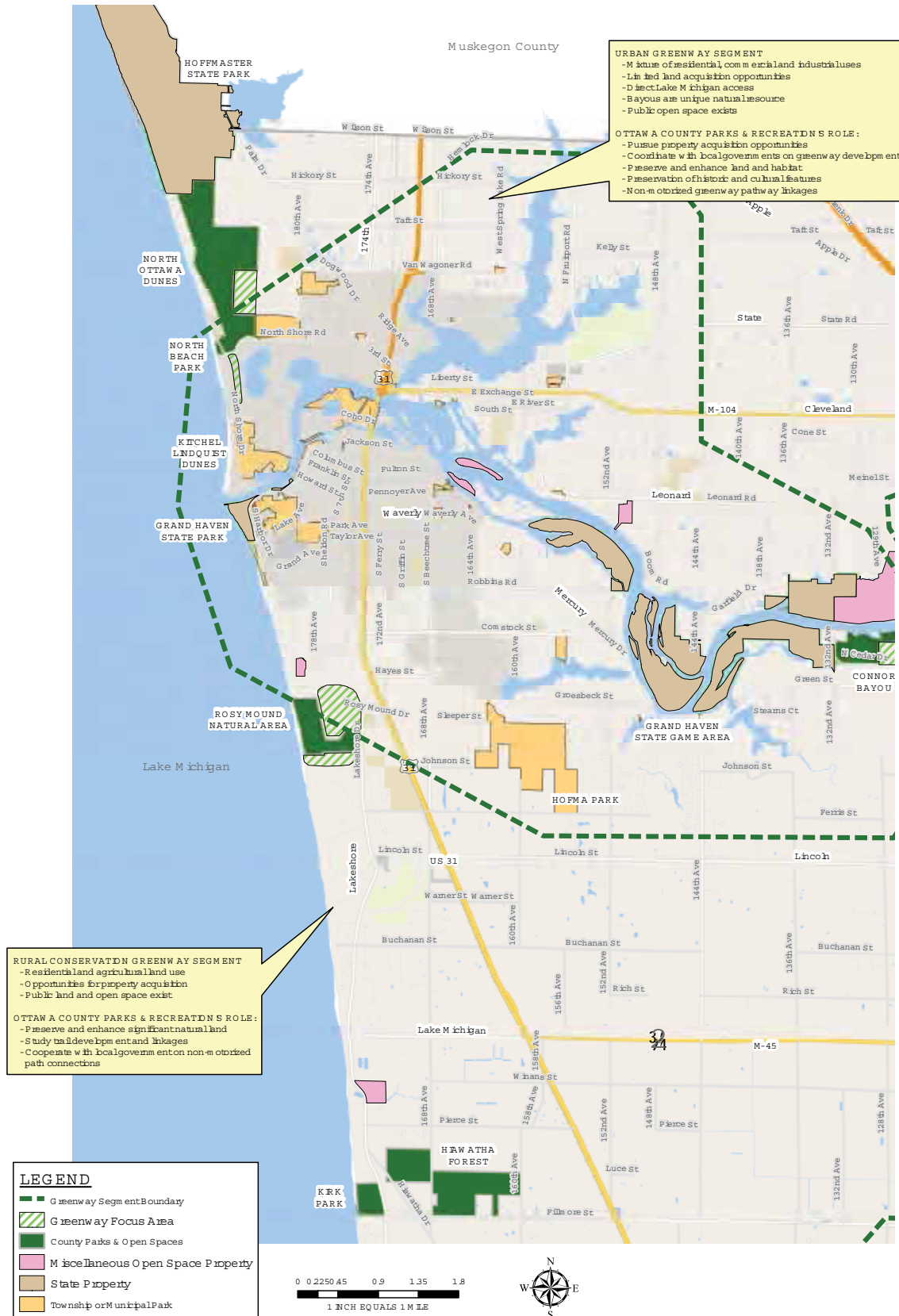
Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway

Ottawa County's Lake Michigan shoreline and associated sand dunes comprise a tremendous recreational resource that attracts millions of parks visitors each year. It is also a well-defined linear corridor with a large number of public parks that are linked via the Lakeshore Drive bike path. The corridor also has extensive forested lands and unique natural features (i.e., dunes, waterfront, etc.) that have tremendous habitat importance for wildlife, particularly migratory birds. Considering all of these factors, the Parks Commission has made the decision to view the county's shoreline resources as a Coastal Greenway and consider the planning for this greenway in the same framework as the river-based greenways (See Figures 9.4 and 9.5).

Currently, access to Lake Michigan is provided through combined efforts of the State, County and local units of government. The State of Michigan operates three parks with Lake Michigan frontage in Ottawa County, including P.J. Hoffmaster, Grand Haven and Holland State Parks. County parks with Lake Michigan frontage include North Beach Park (745 feet), Rosy Mound Natural Area (3,400 feet), Kirk Park (1,850 feet), Olive Shores (738 feet) and Tunnel Park (950 feet). Ottawa County also owns Lake Michigan frontage adjacent to Holland State Park as part of the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (756 feet). Local parks with Lake Michigan frontage are limited but include Grand Haven's City Beach, Grand Haven Township's Brucker Beach, and Port Sheldon Township's Kow and Winds Nest Parks. In addition, several road ends with established public access provide additional Lake Michigan access.

The most significant recent accomplishment by Ottawa County relative to the Coastal Greenway was the development of Olive Shores as a new county lake-front park in 2012. Park improvements include a parking area, modern restrooms, an accessible trail loop, and stairs and boardwalks traversing the dune and providing access to the Lake Michigan beach. The park offers an opportunity for a Lake Michigan beach experience in a natural setting and has been gradually growing in popularity.

Figure 9.4 - North Coastal Greenway Concept



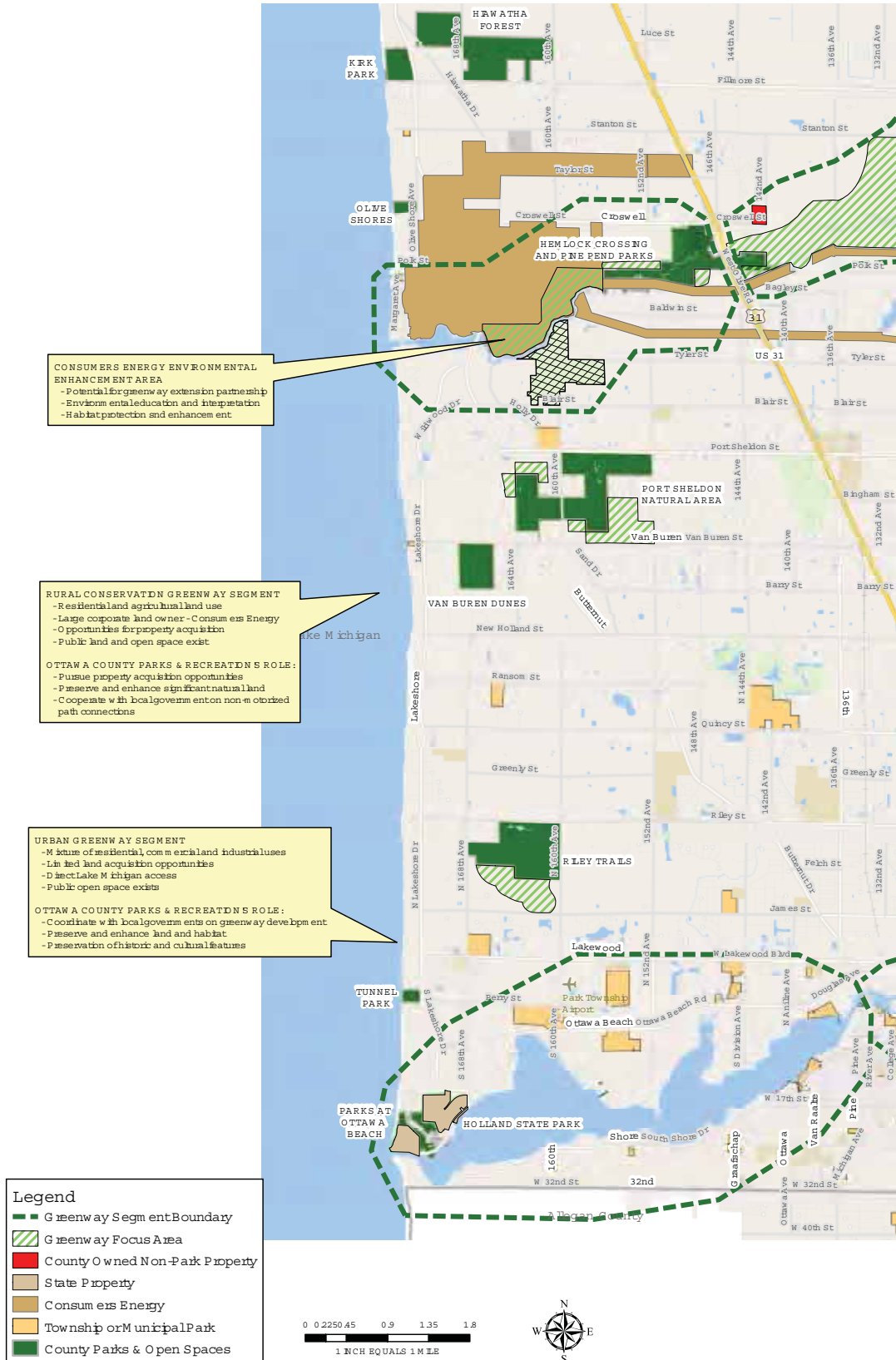
NORTH COASTAL GREENWAY - CONCEPT PLAN

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Figure 9.5 - South Coastal Greenway Concept



SOUTH COASTAL GREENWAY - CONCEPT PLAN

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In total, an estimated 20,000 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline is in public ownership. This amounts to approximately 15% of the total shoreline in Ottawa County. Further public acquisition opportunities are limited, but unique situations to enhance public access need to be considered if they become available.

Although desirable, properties need not have Lake Michigan frontage to be important for the Coastal Greenway. The North Ottawa Dunes Acquisition Project, involving the acquisition of 500 acres of pristine forested dune property, is an outstanding example of a greenway project that adds significantly to the area's green infrastructure. This property was acquired in December 2005 for \$7 million with funding assistance (\$3.9 million) from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and \$1.4 million in private funds raised by project partners, including the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and the Committee to Acquire North Ottawa Dunes.

The qualities that make it outstanding include its 1) size: large acreage that stretches nearly two miles, 2) special natural features: high quality dunes with significant topography, mature forest, rare and threatened plants, 3) linkage: the site connects P.J. Hoffmaster State Park to the county's North Beach Park to Ferrysburg's Coast Guard Park, 4) wildlife habitat: combined with other parklands, the property preserves and links a vast wildlife habitat area with importance for many species, and 5) recreation potential: the site can support a wide range of trail activities and recreational activities including hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, hunting, etc.

The potential to expand the North Ottawa Dunes property to its maximum possible size should be explored. Spring Lake Township has shown strong support for the North Ottawa Dunes project including a willingness to trade 100 acres of township owned land for a key 80 acre privately owned parcel that is integral to implementing the long-term master plan for North Ottawa Dunes. The potential trade was on hold for many years during the economic down-turn but is currently being discussed as a potential for 2016. If successful, the opportunity may exist to further implement the North Ottawa Dunes master plan which calls for an additional northerly access site and connecting trails. The master plan calls for a paved trail running along the easterly edge of the North Ottawa Dunes property (primarily the proposed 80 acre expansion) and connecting to the North Shore Drive bike path. The North Shore Drive bike path linking to North Beach Park was completed by the City of Ferrysburg in 2015.

Future study should also focus on the potential to link the site to Grand Haven City dune property and Ferrysburg's Kitchel-Lindquist Dunes, located to the south. This connection could be important in the future for both people and as a wildlife corridor.

The coastal corridor should be studied further to seek opportunities to preserve significant natural lands and habitat, especially those that can link to existing public lands. High priority should be given to expanding existing parks where possible.

As noted previously in discussions of the river greenways, local units of government, private entities, and nonprofit groups should be encouraged to play a role in preserving land within the coastal greenway. Local units of government currently operate numerous parks within the greenway corridor. Consumers Energy, with its huge landholdings at the Campbell Plant in Port Sheldon, controls a tremendous amount of natural land along the coastline. The Land Conservancy of West Michigan also has several important preserves along the shoreline.

GENERAL PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS

In addition to the four greenways, Ottawa County Parks is interested in other opportunities to

acquire new parks and open space lands and improve and expand existing sites. The initial 1996 millage campaign identified the greenways and Lake Michigan as target areas but also called for “general park, open space and trail acquisition” in other portions of the county where opportunities exist to protect significant natural features and open space properties.

Land acquisition criteria as identified previously will be used to assess various opportunities to create new county parks. There is a need to systematically evaluate portions of Ottawa County not already under study as part of the greenway programs or Lake Michigan shoreline study. Ottawa County’s Geographic Information System has proven to be of great assistance in assessing lands on a county-wide basis. Within this category, lands should also be considered which are in high-growth areas and, although potentially lacking outstanding natural features, may provide important open space in the future. Expansion of existing parks and open space lands is also a high priority. The Parks Commission will be continually studying and evaluating the potential to add lands to existing sites when quality lands are available and park use levels warrant expansion.

Pathways and trails are another focus of the OCPRC. As indicated previously, the OCPRC operates the Musketawa Trail, and trails are planned as part of the greenway projects. Hard surface trails are components of both the Grand River Greenway and Macatawa River Greenway. These trails could be part of a countywide system of trails that provide recreation experiences and also serve non-motorized transportation needs.

As referenced in Chapter 10, the Ottawa County Planning Commission, in conjunction with County Parks, completed a non-motorized pathway study in Ottawa County in 2002 which has subsequently been updated. The study recommended a system of regional trail linkages for both separated pathways and widened road shoulders. In accordance with the plan recommendations, Ottawa County Parks assisted with the funding of widened road shoulders along Lakeshore Drive as part of the Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway. Several segments of widened shoulder have been completed with hopes of completing the entire corridor within the next 3-5 years.

Ottawa County Parks was also instrumental in the project to complete the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail in southern Ottawa County and connect the Musketawa Trail to the White Pine Trail in northern Ottawa and Kent Counties. The project had been delayed due to a perceived conflict with an agricultural operation located adjacent to the newly proposed trail. As part of a solution developed by Ottawa County government, Ottawa County Parks acquired a property which enabled the trail corridor to bypass the agricultural operation.

In the process of acquiring the trail bypass property, the OCPRC also acquired key land to expand its Marne Bog property and provide future public access to the bog land via a connection from the Musketawa Trail. A total of 43 acres was added to the Marne Bog property as part of this project. There are additional properties to add to the Marne Bog to complete acquisition of the naturally significant land if the opportunity arises in the future. Because the property was one of Ottawa County’s best remaining natural sites as determined in the 1988 Natural Features Inventory, every effort should be made to expand the bog site if possible. Future access should be constructed via a boardwalk linking to the Musketawa Trail to enable park visitors visit the bog in a way that does not damage the natural feature. It is likely a simple boardwalk with interpretive displays would be a logical addition to the site and would provide a nice rest stop and diversion for users of the Musketawa Trail.

WATER TRAILS

“Water trails”, sometimes referred to as “blueways,” have been growing rapidly in popularity in

recent years across the country and are becoming recognized for their recreational, educational and economic value. The National Water Trails System defines water trails as “recreational routes on waterways with a network of public access points supported by broad-based community partnerships. Water trails provide both conservation and recreational opportunities.”

With its Lake Michigan coastline and three rivers with paddling potential, Ottawa County offers tremendous opportunity for water trail development and steps have already been taken to implement a system of water trails. Following is a description of the potential and status of water trail development for Ottawa County’s primary bodies of water.

Lake Michigan Water Trail

Spurred by federal funding assistance through the Coastal Zone Management program, considerable planning for a Lake Michigan water trail has been completed in recent years for Michigan’s west coast. In fact, planners from all four states bordering Lake Michigan are working together to develop what will be the longest, continuous freshwater sea kayaking loop in the world. With its extensive Lake Michigan shoreline and numerous access points to the lake, participating in this water trail initiative is a natural fit for Ottawa County Parks.

During 2014, studies were completed by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission and the West Michigan Environmental Action Council working in partnership with Grand Valley State University. Ottawa County Park facilities have been inventoried and information is available as websites are developed showing access points and their amenities. Additional study is still needed to determine how Ottawa County Parks can further the development and use of Lake Michigan as a paddling destination. Some of the issues that have been identified are listed below:

- Many park waterfronts are 100% identified as swim areas with no watercraft of any type allowed for safety purposes. The potential to provide launch/landing spots for non-motorized watercraft needs to be explored while maintaining the safety of the beaches for swimmers. Access is recommended every five miles along the coast.
- Universal access is recommended at all harbors where feasible. Study has been completed which recommends the development of a universally accessible launch at Historic Ottawa Beach where it could serve both Lake Michigan Water Trail users as well as paddlers on the Macatawa Water Trail.
- Although Lake Michigan camping is available at Holland and Grand Haven State Parks, a gap exists in the middle. Studies recommend camping be provided every 10 miles. Opportunities should be explored for overnight camping for sea kayakers—potentially in the area of the Pigeon River.
- Finding public access points while traveling off the coast in a sea kayak can be challenging. Ottawa County Parks should monitor the development of a uniform system for marking access sites and participate at prime access points.
- Information on Ottawa County’s parks and recreational amenities should be kept up-to-date on all Lake Michigan websites.
- Further study should be undertaken into the need for various amenities at sea kayak access points and they should be added as feasible when demand warrants. Potential amenities include kayak storage lockers, transportation arrangements to local stores and restaurants, access to water and restrooms, etc.

Grand River Water Trail

Canoeing and kayaking on the Grand River has grown in popularity in recent decades, prompted in part by Grand River Expedition 1990, an organized group paddle which traveled from the river's headwaters near Jackson all the way to the river's mouth in Grand Haven, a journey of over 250 miles. The goal of the expedition was to raise awareness of the tremendous resource the Grand River represents. The expedition drew attention to water quality issues and helped to educate the public on issues related to the river. The trip continued in recent decades with over 150 paddlers making the trip in 2000 and 2010. The expeditions have been successful in renewing interest in the river as a recreational resource.

The numbers of paddlers on the river have grown along with the awareness of the Grand River as a paddling destination. This interest in paddling on the Grand River prompted Ottawa County Parks to develop the Grand River Heritage Water Trail in 2010. The Grand River Heritage Water Trail generally follows Public Act 454 of 2002 adopted by the Michigan legislature and overseen by the Great Lakes Center for Maritime Studies at Western Michigan University. The basic goal of a "heritage trail" is to integrate educational information related to the cultural resources of the river. From the Native Americans who lived on its banks for a thousands of years, to the fur trappers who set up trading posts, to the European settlement of the area and the subsequent impact on the river during the logging era, followed by the steamboat era, there is no shortage of interesting cultural heritage to interpret along the Grand River.

With its focus in recent years on the development of a greenway along the Grand River, establishment of a water trail was a logical next step. Ottawa County Parks has 13 properties along the Grand River and seven are currently used for launch and retrieval of canoes and kayaks. Development of the Grand River Heritage Water Trail has involved adding signage in selected locations, development of a network of three universally accessible launches, and establishing a website which provides detailed information about the water trail. Specifically, the website provides information on launch sites (all sites—county, state and local government) and the amenities offered at each, detailed maps showing the distances between access points to aid in trip planning, and information about both natural and cultural features in each section of the river.

Additional work is needed to improve the Grand River Heritage Water Trail. Specifically, additional water trail signs at various access points would be beneficial. Signs located along the river to help paddlers identify their location as well as park boundaries, bridges and other landmarks would be helpful. A study is underway (2015-2016) by the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, with funding by the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, to evaluate improvements need to the Grand River Heritage Water Trail in Ottawa County—both in terms of facility/sign improvements as well as ways to improve marketing the water trail to ensure the public is aware of all that is offered.

Study is also underway, led by the MDNR, to evaluate the establishment of a Grand River Water Trail along the full length of the 250 mile long river. Representatives from local communities along the way have been meeting in 2015-2016 to discuss the potential for establishment of a Grand River Water Trail.

Macatawa Water Trail

Ottawa County Parks began in 2015 to help coordinate a Macatawa Water Trail, a much smaller and more manageable task than the effort underway on the Grand River. Meetings have been held with Holland Township, the City of Holland, Park Township and the ODCMG to discuss how a

water trail could assist paddlers to take advantage of the unique paddling opportunities available on the Macatawa River and Lake Macatawa.

Work is underway to document the primary access points and collect information about the amenities available at each. The plan is to develop a website which each community can link to with trip planning information for paddlers interested in opportunities within the Macatawa watershed.

Efforts are also underway to determine how facilities can be improved to best serve paddlers. For example, Ottawa County Parks is studying Paw Paw Park to assess how the launch facility within that park can be improved. Ottawa County Parks, the City of Holland and Park Township were all co-sponsors of a Great Lakes Trail Town grant which focused on the need for universally accessible launches in the Macatawa area. This work, along with park planning within each governmental unit, should lead to enhanced access for paddlers which will be featured in water trail information as it is developed.

Pigeon River Water Trail

Although the Pigeon River has not technically been referred to as a water trail, and the overall resource is smaller in scope than the Macatawa, the Pigeon may be the most popular paddling destination in Ottawa County. The river above Hemlock Crossing is too small and brushy for good paddling, but the trip west of Hemlock Crossing to Lakeshore Drive is scenic and attractive for beginning and experienced paddlers alike. Large numbers of paddlers use the launch at Hemlock Crossing and spot a car at Sheldon Landing in Port Sheldon Township for the approximate two hour trip downstream. Others begin and end their trip at Sheldon Landing, paddling up-river and then returning to their point of origin. Much of the neighboring land between the two access points is natural and undeveloped, owned either by Ottawa County Parks or Consumers Energy, providing a great close to home opportunity to paddle in a high quality natural environment.

In addition to the paddlers who enjoy the experience offered on the Pigeon River, the river with its drowned river mouth lake also has importance for Lake Michigan paddlers. The needs of both group might be considered in developing camping facilities in the future if land can be secured for this purpose and it is determined there is adequate demand.

CHAPTER 10 | ACTIVITY NEEDS ANALYSIS



Assessing recreation needs requires the planning process to go beyond identifying what general programs, lands, and facilities should be provided. Below is a discussion of the needs assessment as it pertains to selected activities and facilities which the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission (OCPRC) feels are consistent with its role as a recreation provider in Ottawa County. The list likely does not include all types of recreation areas and facilities that may be considered for development by the OCPRC.

SWIMMING / BEACH ACTIVITIES

Swimming is a highly popular recreational activity that is a key attraction in the Ottawa County Park System. Because of the basic differences between Lake Michigan beaches and inland water bodies, they are discussed separately below.

Lake Michigan

The beautiful sugar sand beaches of Lake Michigan in Ottawa County and throughout West Michigan are arguably among the best in the world. Evidence of this is the popularity of the Michigan State Parks located in Ottawa County, with Holland and Grand Haven State Parks consistently ranked in the top three in statewide attendance. Ottawa County's six Lake Michigan beach parks are the busiest parks in the County Park system during the warm summer months. They include North Beach Park, the Rosy Mound Natural Area, Kirk Park, Olive Shores and Tunnel Parks plus Historic Ottawa Beach. Historic Ottawa Beach is a cluster of small parks dedicated in a late 19th century subdivision plat in Park Township which includes 756 feet of shoreline on Lake Michigan adjacent to and immediately north of the Holland State Park beach. This Lake Michigan beach is accessed through Holland State Park or via public walkways through the



historic cottage development.

The attraction of the Lake Michigan shoreline parks goes beyond simply the enjoyment of beach activities. These parks provide visitors an opportunity to experience and enjoy the vast open space that Lake Michigan has to offer. Hundreds of square miles of open water provide an extraordinary backdrop for both active and passive recreation pursuits.

The demand for access to Lake Michigan beaches can exceed the supply during peak summer periods. The OCPRC has long recognized that the dunes and beaches along the coast of Lake Michigan are the county's most important recreational resource. This realization led the Parks Commission to acquire and improve the Rosy Mound property on Lake Michigan as one of its first priorities after it was formed in the late 1980's. It also influenced the OCPRC to study the Lake Michigan shoreline to identify other possible opportunities, knowing that few opportunities exist to assemble larger blocks of natural land along the highly coveted shoreline.

In 2001, the OCPRC identified a target area and acquired an undeveloped parcel with 200 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline in Port Sheldon Township. In 2009, with help from a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, the Parks Commission acquired an additional 538 feet of adjacent undeveloped lake frontage to complete land acquisition for a new Lake Michigan beach park in this location. The site's rugged terrain and high-quality natural features were factors which influenced the park master planning process resulting in a plan which limits parking to 50 cars and emphasizes preservation of the site's unique natural setting. Known as Olive Shores, the 20 acre park in Port Sheldon Township opened in 2012 and, similar to the Rosy Mound Natural Area, provides visitors an opportunity for a Lake Michigan beach experience in a more natural setting in comparison



to more typical high volume Lake Michigan beaches.

With six parks on Lake Michigan encompassing 1.6 miles of shoreline, the county parks system offers substantial access to this amazing resource and a diversity of experiences. The OCPRC will continue to look for new opportunities to expand access, but few opportunities remain along the highly developed coast for park development on a scale appropriate for county park involvement. This may not be as big of a concern as it once was for the OCPRC, as the 2015 survey revealed that 63% of county

residents feel that county beach parks provide enough access. But the challenge is always to meet the needs of an expanding population and therefore the OCPRC will always be alert for opportunities to expand Lake Michigan access.

Efforts to increase shoreline access should consider all possible strategies involving all levels of government before opportunities disappear and as development pressure along the shoreline intensifies further. Local units of government, for example, should be encouraged to work with the Road Commission to protect and enhance road-end access points to Lake Michigan.

One example of how shoreline access can be expanded without acquiring additional waterfront is the North Ottawa Dunes project. The trail and stairs which connect North Ottawa Dunes to parking in Ferrysburg's Coast Guard Park also provide additional access to adjacent North Beach Park. North Beach Park has always had ample beach capacity but limited parking, so the potential

exists for some beachgoers to park at Coast Guard Park and hike to the beach at North Beach Park or even further north to the beaches within Hoffmaster State Park. Similar strategies should be explored at other sites to maximize public access to the lakeshore.

Inland Beaches

While Ottawa County's Lake Michigan beaches are clearly the area's most popular swimming and sunbathing attractions, inland water bodies should be recognized for their potential to meet more localized swimming needs. And it should also be noted that inland water bodies have some advantages over Lake Michigan beaches in that they typically warm sooner and are not subject to high wave conditions, which frequently limit use at Lake Michigan beaches.



Other than Crockery Lake in Chester Township, where Grose Park offers a swimming beach, natural lakes are not common in Ottawa County. Lake Macatawa and Spring Lake are drowned river-mouth lakes that are tremendously popular recreation resources. Otherwise, lake resources are primarily limited to small water bodies created through gravel mining. Some of these lakes do offer important recreation opportunities with a good example being Georgetown Township's 8th Avenue Park which features a popular swimming beach.

Another excellent example of nearby swimming opportunities that can be provided through gravel pit development is Kent County's Millennium Park. This 1,500-acre park, located just east of the Ottawa-Kent County line, has attracted large numbers of beachgoers since opening in 2003. The park offers a large public beach with high use capacity and many amenities.

The OCPRC's first long-range parks plan in 1989 identified the need for an "Eastern Inland Water Facility" to meet deficiencies in "swimming, boating, fishing and other recreation opportunities" in the eastern portion of Ottawa County where the bulk of the population resides. Water-based recreation opportunities are still lacking today in this area. Georgetown Township closed its Maplewood Beach in recent years leaving only 8th Avenue Park as a swimming destination in the immediate area.

This focus on water-based recreation opportunities in eastern Ottawa County led to discussions with the multiple gravel pit owners at the Bend Area, the name given to the large maze of gravel pits north of Fillmore Street and Cottonwood Drive. In 2000 the Bend Area Master Plan was adopted as both a park master plan and the area's mine reclamation plan. The Bend Area master plan illustrates how the area could offer a large public beach located on an approximate 125-acre water body which could provide excellent swimming and other water-based recreation opportunities. Land acquisition for this project has begun with two purchases completed so far totaling 258 acres. Over 700 acres in total has been targeted for acquisition at the Bend Area including many smaller water features in addition to the main water body. Currently (Fall 2015) the Parks Commission is seeking grant support from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to assist with the purchase of 231 additional acres which would expand the site to 495 acres. The goal has always been to acquire the properties when mining is completed and it appears this long awaited opportunity will present itself within the next few years.

An additional opportunity for a swimming facility is potentially available at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area. Adjacent to the restoration areas, an 80-acre property owned by the Ottawa County Road Commission and currently used for mineral extraction has the potential to provide swimming opportunities by coordinating extraction activities with park planning. A series of meetings with the Road Commission led to agreement to include the property in the park master plan. The OCPRC and Road Commission have agreed to work together on shaping the site for future park use, provided the Road Commission can extract the mineral needed for its purposes. At present, no specific timetable has been identified for mineral extraction, but both parties recognize that mineral extraction is likely to continue for many years into the future.

Efforts should continue to identify resources which can meet the water-based recreation needs of Ottawa County residents, particularly in eastern and central Ottawa County.

BOATING

Recreational boating (i.e. power boats, sail boats, etc.) in Ottawa County is another tremendously popular activity. The Grand River, Spring Lake, and Lake Macatawa serve as focal points for boating activity, with all offering prime access to Lake Michigan. Boat traffic in these areas is extremely heavy during the peak summer months.



Presently, Ottawa County's role in boating involves the provision of boat launches at Riverside Park, Grand River Park, and Deer Creek Park. Ottawa County Parks also leases property to Parkside Marina on Lake Macatawa which provides approximately 80 slips with easy access to Lake Michigan.

Riverside Park, located on the Grand River, has a large fee-based launch site, which provides access to the upper stretches of the deeper dredged river channel. The United States Army Corps of Engineers historically dredged the channel up to the Bass River gravel pits located immediately upstream of Riverside Park. Regular dredging operations were discontinued when gravel mining ended in the 1970s, but the river channel has maintained a functional depth for recreational boats in the small to mid-size category. Upstream of Riverside Park, in the portion of river served by both Deer Creek and Grand River Parks, water depths limit boating to small or shallow draft vessels.

The State of Michigan, through its Waterways Program, has taken the lead role in meeting the launch ramp needs of recreational boaters in Michigan both by operating launches and through grants-in-aid to local units of government. The three launches operated by Ottawa County Parks have each been funded with assistance from State boating programs. Additional launches are provided by numerous other local park agencies, most developed with assistance from State funds. An example is the Grand Haven Township launch on the Grand River at 144th Avenue, which was developed with State assistance. An evaluation of the need for Ottawa County Parks to expand its role in the provision of boat launches should consider a number of questions: Is the demand for boating growing in Ottawa County? Are there water resources in Ottawa County suitable for boating that are currently under-served by boat launches? Which level of government is the most logical service provider? Ottawa County Parks should do its part to ensure good long-term boating access to key

water bodies in Ottawa County with respect to the role that is logical for Ottawa County.

In assessing these questions, the OCPRC generally feels navigable waters of the County are generally well served by the current system of launches. The economic down-turn which began in 2008 had the effect of depressing growth in recreational boating. But recent improvements in the economy have seen boating come back with launch ramps at or exceeding capacity on prime summer weekends and heavy boat traffic on Spring Lake, Lake Macatawa, and its connecting waters. The current volume of boat traffic raises the question as to whether or not the need exists to expand launch capacity further.

Small boater access to the upper portions of the Grand River within Ottawa County is likely adequate, but should be studied further. The launch at Grand River Park and a Kent County launch located just across the county line provide the primary access points. Further consideration should be given to additional launch capacity in conjunction with the Grand River Greenway implementation, but overall, current demand appears to be met adequately by the existing launches.

However, access to the many small bayous acquired as part of the Grand River Greenway initiative should be studied on an individual basis. Most are suitable for smaller boats with limited or no motors, but some sites, like Eastmanville Bayou in Allendale Township, have capacity for public recreational use with small motors. Ottawa County Parks included a launch and access for small fishing boats to Eastmanville Bayou when it made improvements to this 157 acre Open Space in 2011 and the site has been tremendously popular with fishermen.

The master plan for the Bend Area calls for a “marina” as part of the long-range plan along with swimming and other water-based recreation activities. Because the vision for the park is for non-motorized boat uses at the park, the park’s marina would likely include fishing, boat rental, canoe and kayak rental, stand-up paddleboards, plus sailboats and possible pedal boats. The park is envisioned to become a major destination for people seeking water-based recreation experiences and the boat rentals will ensure access to a variety of experiences. It is likely there would also be lessons offered for the various types of water sports available.

A boating-related issue requiring further study relates to access needs of personal watercraft. The numbers of personal watercraft in Ottawa County have grown significantly in recent years. The affordability of these water craft combined with technological advances have allowed greater numbers of people to enjoy boating. The large numbers of these craft have also raised policy issues.

Because personal watercraft are typically smaller and lighter, they can often be launched in areas with less-developed ramp facilities. However, when this involves Lake Michigan beaches, they bring with them serious safety concerns, fuel smells and noise, which are disruptive to traditional beach users. Ottawa County Parks has taken steps to discourage the use of personal watercraft at North Beach and Tunnel Parks due to conflicts with swimmers and sunbathers. Similar steps have been taken at the State Parks.

Another issue of concern with personal watercraft is their use in areas that have been previously inaccessible to high-speed powerboats. The smaller size of these craft combined with their jet propulsion allows them to travel through



shallower waters with less concern for grounding. Concerns relate to the use of high-speed watercraft in areas like the upper Grand River, which has significant wildlife value and has until recently experienced relatively little boat traffic. Further study is needed to assess impacts of personal watercraft on wildlife and to develop appropriate policies.

As noted above, OCPRC involvement in marinas has been limited to the lease of property on Lake Macatawa to a private marina operator, Parkside Marina, for private marina operation. In general, the OCPRC feels the private sector does an adequate job of meeting needs for marina services in Ottawa County. However, as owner of the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks, with its ideal marina location to provide boating access to Lake Michigan and its long history of marina use, Ottawa County has an inherent interest in continuing marina operations at this location. The master plan for the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks calls for a marina in this location and the vision as established in the plan will provide a greatly enhanced setting for a marina when the plan is fully implemented.

Ottawa County's lease to Parkside Marina was reviewed and renegotiated in 2012 . A five year lease was granted with the understanding the lease would not be automatically renewed when it expires at the end of the 2017 boating season. A decision was made to create a plan for a more publicly accessible marina facility with a waterfront walkway. Portions of the plan will be implemented by Ottawa County Parks and dock installation and slip rental will be competitively bid to private sector operators. The goal is to provide for an enhanced marina that will improve the aesthetics and overall public recreation value of the site.

In summary, Ottawa County Parks has a limited role in meeting boater needs in Ottawa County. Future efforts should focus on evaluating access needs in the upper Grand River within Ottawa County and policies addressing personal watercraft access. Ottawa County Parks will also follow through with plans to upgrade marina facilities at Historic Ottawa Beach with a goal to expand public access to the waterfront.

CANOEING & KAYAKING

Lacking fast flowing rivers, Ottawa County has not been known historically as a destination for canoeing and kayaking. However, the tremendous increase in the popularity of kayaking in recent years has greatly expanded the demand for access to local water resources. The 2015 survey of Ottawa County residents revealed that 52% feel there is a need for additional canoeing and kayaking sites, which was second only to nature education programs in terms of additional opportunities desired. Meeting canoeing and kayaking needs in Ottawa County requires examination of suitable water bodies along with study of access needs. The goal for all water bodies should be to work toward a connected system of access points and water trails which will facilitate a variety of user preferences for trip length, level of difficulty, and other amenities.

Pigeon River

A kayak/canoe launch was constructed at Hemlock Crossing in 2003 providing access to the Pigeon River. Since its development, use has grown tremendously as paddlers enjoy the scenic stretch of river between US-31 and Lakeshore Drive. Kayakers use both



the Hemlock Crossing launch and the Sheldon Landing downstream access point operated by Port Sheldon Township. Consideration should be given to adding another landing at Pine Bend to provide paddlers an opportunity to stop and explore this site which includes the historic Weaver House. Consideration should also be given to partnering with Port Sheldon Township to upgrade Sheldon Landing to make it more attractive and functional for launch and retrieval as well as for general park use.

Macatawa River

Kayaking and canoeing activity has increased significantly on not only the Pigeon River but also the Macatawa and Grand Rivers. On the Macatawa, Ottawa County Parks installed a launch at Adams Street Landing on the Macatawa River in Holland Township. This launch receives use when water levels are higher in the spring and fall. Ottawa County Parks also took over management of Holland's Paw Paw Park which provides canoe and kayak access to the Macatawa River. Improvements are needed at this site to improve access to the river by modifying steep banks. Ottawa County Parks is currently (Fall 2015) coordinating an effort to establish a Macatawa Water Trail. The effort involves coordinating all of the recreation providers (City of Holland, Holland Township, Park Township and the Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway) to ensure adequate access and services for paddlers while also marketing the network of access points through a website and other means to help water trail users plan trips and take advantage of the resources available.

Grand River

Canoeists and kayakers have also been discovering the Grand River as a paddling resource. The number of paddlers using existing access points has risen significantly in recent years. To help promote the vast opportunities for paddling on the Grand River and its tributaries in Ottawa County, Ottawa County Parks established the Grand River Heritage Water Trail in 2010. The initial focus has been to provide paddlers web-based information on access points to help paddlers plan their trips. The river is divided into "reaches" and information is also provided on natural and historic features within each reach. Efforts are underway to expand the water trail to include signs located on the river to help orient paddlers.

As demand for access on the Grand River has grown, Ottawa County Parks has responded with new fully accessible facilities. A new park was developed (opened 2012) on the Grand River at Eastmanville Bayou (on the south side where 68th Avenue intersects the Grand River) which includes a universally accessible kayak launch. An accessible hard surface pathway connects the parking area to the Grand River where a unique floating dock system provides a people of all abilities an opportunity to launch and retrieve kayaks. A ramp to the floating dock is designed for wheel-chairs and a transfer station helps individuals with disabilities get in and out of a kayak. The kayak is positioned on rollers and handrails allow the participant to guide the kayak in and out of the water. It is a great way to enable paddlers to launch and retrieve their kayak on a stable, accessible surface. Based on the success and popularity of the Eastmanville launch,



additional universally accessible launches were installed at Connor Bayou and Grand River Parks in 2014 with assistance from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). The three launches, all spaced about a two hour paddle apart, provide a network of universally accessible launches on the Grand River.

The Crockery Creek, a major tributary to the Grand River, is one of the few other watercourses in Ottawa County with potential for canoeing and kayaking. Many paddlers on the Grand River currently explore upstream from the river mouth. The Crockery Creek Natural Area includes approximately two miles of riverfront on the east bank of the creek and an effort has been made to keep the waterway free of obstructions in this area. Consideration should be given to locating an upstream launch site and maintaining a clear water course downstream to the Grand River to provide an added resource for paddlers in Ottawa County.

In addition to rivers and streams, kayakers and canoeists also seek out opportunities on other types of water bodies. The many bayous of the lower Grand River offer great paddling opportunities and access opportunities are generally good. Some smaller bayous, many within the county park system (including Rippis, Jubbs and Kuits) offer unique opportunities for exploration and additional effort may be needed to encourage use by kayakers.

Lake Michigan

Lake Michigan is another paddling resource offering a totally different type of challenge than inland waters. Sea kayaking on Lake Michigan is gradually growing in popularity. Led by federal funding through the Coastal Zone Management program, extensive planning has occurred in recent years, and a Lake Michigan Water Trail has been established extending along the Lake Michigan coast. Frequent rough seas along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan create challenges for uninterrupted travel, but the goal is to offer coastal paddlers the resources needed to safely travel the shoreline. Ottawa County Parks will be evaluating how the county park system can help facilitate the Lake Michigan Water Trail. Kayaks are not allowed in marked swim areas, which encompass much of the park system's shoreline, but provisions have been made successfully to allow launching watercraft at North Beach Park adjacent to the swim area. Other parks will be studied for access opportunities as well. Studies indicate there may also be a need for markers to guide lake kayakers to access points and this will be evaluated as a unified system is developed. Gaps in camping opportunities have been noted in central Ottawa County (half-way between Holland and Grand Haven) and this will be studied as well.

In addition to providing access, it is important to ensure adequate canoe/kayak rental opportunities to serve the large number of potential users who do not own watercraft. Presently, there are a few vendors providing rental and put-in and take-out service tailored to the needs of small groups and meeting their needs for trip planning and logistics. Ottawa County Parks should monitor the market and look for ways to ensure continued availability of rental opportunities with a priority on continued service through private vendors. Efforts should be made to provide private vendors easy access to launch areas such as at Connor Bayou where Ottawa County Parks allow vendors special access for launch and retrieval of watercraft.



FISHING

Fishing in Ottawa County is a tremendously popular sport on Lake Michigan, as well as on smaller inland waters, and has important economic benefits. Area sport fish include salmon, lake trout, perch, pike, bass, panfish, and others. The popularity of fishing was reflected in the 2010 County Resident Survey, with 95% of the respondents listing fishing as a moderately desirable or very desirable recreation activity.



Fishing opportunities can be enhanced in a number of ways. For some fisherman, the key is to provide launch facilities to access the area's water bodies. The Riverside Park boat launch is particularly popular with anglers and has been a favored location for large bass-fishing tournaments in past years. The recent addition of a launch for small boats on Eastmanville Bayou was primarily motivated by a desire to provide fishing access to this water body, which has proven to be extremely popular as a fishing destination. Ottawa County Parks also provides boat launches serving fishermen at Deer Creek and Grand River Parks.

Provision of shore fishing access and docks is another way of serving anglers, including ice fishermen in the winter. Most park properties with waterfront receive some fishing pressure. Given that the Ottawa County Park system offers over 26 miles of frontage on Lake Michigan and major rivers and bayous, a vast resource exists for anglers to explore. In addition to shoreline access, a number of improved fishing access points are currently available in Ottawa County Parks including a barrier-free fishing dock at Riverside Park, a large fishing dock at Grand River Park, and a barrier-free fishing dock at Grose Park on Crockery Lake. Shore fishing is also popular at Riverside Park, Deer Creek Park, and Grand River Park and at some Lake Michigan locations in the early spring and fall. Ottawa County Parks has recently developed an extensive system of fishing docks along the Lake Macatawa shoreline at its Historic Ottawa Beach Parks which has proven tremendously popular. Funding assistance was provided by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust which was interested in helping with fishing access where the waters of Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan meet and fishing can be excellent. Completed in 2011, the docks provide universally accessible fishing opportunities for a range of fish species.

A number of other unique fishing opportunities are available in the county park system, including Ripps Bayou. This mile-long narrow, remote bayou in Polkton Township is entirely owned by Ottawa County Parks and currently accessible to the general public only from the Grand River. Anglers historically access the bayou by portaging small boats from the Grand River approximately 200 feet to the bayou. In addition to this site and Eastmanville Bayou mentioned earlier, other bayou fishing opportunities are available at Jubb Bayou, Bur Oak Landing (Rice Lake), Kuits Bayou and the Bend Area where recent parkland acquisitions have opened access to water bodies which have previously lacked public access. Yet an additional opportunity for fishing access was made available when Ottawa County Parks partnered with Holland Township to acquire the Hawthorn Pond Natural Area. Holland Township has since completed park development at the site which provides excellent access for fishermen.

Ottawa County Parks has cooperated with efforts of Trout Unlimited and other parties to improve

habitat for trout in the Pigeon River. Although very little trout water exists in Ottawa County, the Pigeon River is a designated trout stream west of 120th Avenue. The Parks Commission will continue to cooperate with efforts to improve this fishery with a goal of providing quality trout fishing opportunities in Ottawa County at some point in the future.



In addition to shore fishing available in Ottawa County Parks, quality fishing opportunities also exist at a number of city and township parks in the county, including Grand Haven Township's Pottawattamie Park, the City of Grand Haven's Chinook Pier Park, Spring Lake's Mill Point Park and Holland's Kollen and VanBragt Parks. Fishing from the piers in Grand Haven, Holland, and Port Sheldon is also very popular.

Given the range of fishing opportunities available in Ottawa County, it was no surprise that the 2015 survey of county residents revealed that 46% feel there are adequate opportunities for fishing with 45% desiring additional fishing sites. The Parks Commission will continue to evaluate existing and future parklands with a goal to provide a wide range of fishing opportunities for the public. A good example is the Bend Area in eastern Ottawa County which offers tremendous opportunities to expand fishing access in close location to a very large population base. Another potential exists at Riley Trails where improved fishing access to the pond could be attractive for children and their parents.

CAMPING

Ottawa County is a popular camping destination as reflected in unusually high occupancy rates at area State Parks and a well-established commercial campground industry. Most public sector camping opportunities are provided at the popular State Park campgrounds on Lake Michigan. Generally, private campgrounds lack access to unique natural resource features but offer visitors close access to major transportation routes (particularly US-31), full service sites, and amenities such as arcades, swimming pools and other attractions.

The 2010 county resident survey revealed strong support for camping in the county park system with 92% of respondents listing camping as moderately or very desirable. When asked what type of camping opportunities they prefer, it was clear that residents would prefer a mix of modern and rustic facilities. The 2015 survey asked whether more camping opportunities are needed in the county and 48% of respondents said yes while 43% said they felt enough camping opportunities exist now and 9% were undecided.

Some residents may be looking to the county to provide camping opportunities in settings with significant natural resource features. In the past, the Parks Commission has been concerned with competing with the private sector but has long felt that camping should be considered in existing or future County Parks when a particular site offers a resource-based camping experience not generally available in the private sector or when/if the private sector does not meet the demand for overnight camping.

A recent review of campgrounds throughout West Michigan revealed a wide range of public and private facilities with diverse facility types. In general, most successful public campgrounds are based around a significant water feature as a major amenity for swimming, fishing and other water-

based recreation activities. Most successful sites are also located relatively close to major travel corridors such as US-31. Sites within the Ottawa County Park system with water features, the space needed for a public campground, and near travel corridors are extremely limited. The Parks Commission feels it is important to operate a campground in a revenue neutral manner, which means site selection is of the utmost importance.

Based on the strength of its ranking in the resident survey and among Park Commissioners, efforts should intensify to assess existing and potential sites as to their suitability for development of a public campground that would provide natural resource-based camping experiences for residents and visitors to Ottawa County. Further study of camping should address issues such as the mix of rustic and modern facilities, the types of amenities needed, the operational demands a campground will place on the park administrative capabilities, and a range of other issues.

In addition to the traditional public campgrounds discussed above, the OCPRC is concerned with the needs of scouts, church groups and other organized groups for camping opportunities. Two facilities in the county park system currently help meet this need. Groups may reserve the Kirk Park Lodge between September and May for overnight group outings. Twenty-four bunks are available in a rustic building with a fireplace, kitchen, and restrooms. For groups desiring an outdoor experience, a group campground was developed at Pigeon Creek Park as part of the 1995 construction project. This barrier-free rustic camp area has proven popular, offering parking, restrooms, water, tent sites, fire pits, picnic tables, and access to park trails.

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Ottawa County has a rich natural and cultural history. Over 6,400 acres of natural land is managed by the OCPRC, providing a unique outdoor classroom to interpret the diverse natural features to park visitors of all ages throughout the year. In addition, a number of park properties include buildings and other features of cultural significance such as the Weaver House at Pine Bend. With its focus on resource-based parks and greenways, it is important that Ottawa County Parks offer a variety of interpretive programs to help park visitors understand this natural and cultural history, and enjoy the diversity of recreational opportunities available to connect with nature. The goal of interpretive staff is as follows:

To provide people a positive experience interacting with nature in order to initiate and encourage further exploration, deepen understanding and develop an emotional connection with nature, in hopes of leading them to a greater sense of connection to their place in the environment and thus promoting an attitude of responsible stewardship.

Ottawa County Parks is not the only provider of interpretive services serving Ottawa County. The Gillette Visitors Center at Hoffmaster State Park in Muskegon County has interpretive staff and is well known for its excellent interpretive programming focused on sand dune ecology. The DeGraff Nature Center run by the City of Holland provides important interpretive services to schools and citizens in the Holland and surrounding area. The ODCMG, located on the north side of Allegan County, is a rapidly growing non-profit nature center that provides interpretive programs throughout the region.



Although other interpretive services exist in the region, Ottawa County Parks, with its focus on natural resource based parks, considers it vitally important that it offer an active program to educate and connect park users with the natural features found in the park system in order to foster a greater appreciation and promote future stewardship.

In 1998, the OCPRC hired its first full-time parks naturalist to develop, coordinate, and implement interpretive services in the parks system, resulting in the development of a wide variety of year-round interpretive programs for people of all ages. These programs included interpretive walks, field trips, workshops and other activities. These programs proved popular which led to a desire to expand services in line with the growing park system.

In 2010 Ottawa County Parks opened a new Nature Education Center (NEC) at Hemlock Crossing and hired a second full-time naturalist. The Ottawa County Parks NEC is an 8,000-square-foot facility

designed to serve as a base of operations for interpretive programs in the county park system and also functions as an information center for the entire parks system. The Center provides a place for people to connect with each other, with staff and the outdoors. The building is certified as a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building at the gold level. The facility is available for rent for various types of functions when not in use for education programs.

In order to expand programs, especially to schools and other youth groups, a number of part-time Naturalist Guides were hired to assist with educational programming. Many school groups visit the center regularly with the highest use in the spring and fall. While many interpretive programs are focused at Hemlock Crossing because of the proximity of the educational facility, a wide range of programs continue to be offered throughout the park system, taking advantage of the unique natural and cultural features in the various parks. An example of this are ecosystem explorations at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area and Grand River Park plus dune ecology programs at the Rosy Mound Natural Area and North Ottawa Dunes.

Another method of interpretation is through wayside interpretive signs that have been designed, fabricated, and installed at several parks to interpret natural and cultural features of these sites.



Interpretive signs can be found at the Rosy Mound Natural Area, Hemlock Crossing, Upper Macatawa Natural Area, Paw Paw Park, Historic Ottawa Beach and Tunnel Parks. In addition, trailhead signs have been installed at most parks and open spaces which provide additional opportunities to display interpretive and general information.

One often-overlooked area of interpretation is self-discovery. Many visitors desire to visit parks alone or with friends and family and are



not interested in a naturalist-led interpretive program. These visitors are best accommodated by providing properties with unique features along with an attractive and easy-to-navigate trail system and other facilities. Land acquisitions, the opening of new parks, and the design of many miles of trails are providing this opportunity. Parks maps are now available on the parks' web site for those wishing to explore new areas.

The 2015 county resident survey indicated that 53% of citizens desire additional opportunities for nature education programs. This was the highest ranked facility/activity where citizens would like expanded opportunities. Parks interpretive staff expects that programs and participation will continue to gradually increase. Recent (2015) completion of the Grand Ravines Lodge is significant in that it will provide a unique venue for interpretive programs in eastern Ottawa County. The new facility will offer public rentals and meeting space also, but use as a satellite nature center on the east side of the county offers exciting potential.

WALKING & HIKING

Surveys across the nation reveal a high level of public interest and support for expanded walking and hiking opportunities. A national trend toward walking for exercise further supports the need for trails. In a 2010 survey county residents ranked hiking as one of their top activities, with 96% listing this activity as moderately or very desirable.

The health benefits of walking and hiking are also being widely recognized. A report issued in the fall of 2015 by the United States Surgeon General stated the following:

One out of every two U.S. adults is living with a chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer, or diabetes. These diseases contribute to disability, premature death, and health care costs. Increasing people's physical activity levels will significantly reduce their risk of chronic diseases and related risk factors. Because physical activity has numerous other health benefits—such as supporting positive mental health and healthy aging—it is one of the most important actions people can take to improve their overall health.

Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities recognizes the importance of physical activity for people of all ages and abilities. It calls on Americans to be more physically active through walking and calls on the nation to better support walking and walkability. Improving walkability means that communities are created or enhanced to make it safe and easy to walk and that pedestrian activity is encouraged for all people. The purpose of the Call to Action is to increase walking across the United States by calling for improved access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll and by creating a culture that supports these activities for people of all ages and abilities.

The call to action by the Surgeon General is consistent with local trends and observed needs. Ottawa County Parks has begun partnering with the Ottawa County Health Department in looking for opportunities to improve opportunities for people to access walking trails. That partnership led to the addition of a half-mile trail at Paw Paw Park in 2015 which connects neighborhoods and greatly improved the park's walking opportunities.

Fitness and greater contact with the outdoor environment are listed as reasons for people engaging in walking and hiking. The availability of interesting natural features combined with nearly a hundred miles of trail make the county park system a logical destination for walkers and hikers. It is believed that the beauty of the natural environment can be a real motivator in getting people out to exercise. Ottawa County Parks' efforts to meet the area demand for walking and hiking

opportunities should focus on areas with unique natural features and address the need for varying degrees of trail difficulty, length, and distribution of trails throughout the county. The overwhelming popularity of the Rosy Mound Natural Area, opened in the spring of 2004, is likely due to the combination of outstanding scenic beauty of the site with an accessible trail surface attractive to all types of trail users. Similarly, the extensive trails at North Ottawa Dunes, waterfront walkways at Historic Ottawa Beach, and new trails through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area are being widely used by people desiring to both exercise and experience nature.

The 1989 Parks Plan first noted that while numerous parks offered trails of 1 to 3 miles in length, no opportunities existed for longer-distance hiking opportunities. Pigeon Creek Park was identified as a location for a regional trails center, which led to the development of the popular 10-mile multi-use trail system that exists today. The popularity of this site influenced the Parks Commission to develop the 6-mile trail system at Hemlock Crossing and Pine Bend on the Pigeon River, which opened in the fall of 2003. Additional sites with longer distance trails now exist at Riley Trails with 7 miles of multi-use trails; the Upper Macatawa Natural Area, with over 8 miles of hiking trails; North Ottawa Dunes with over 8 miles of hiking trails; and, the Musketawa Trail with 10 miles within Ottawa County. These large parks with long distance hiking opportunities have greatly expanded opportunities available to hikers in Ottawa County in recent years.



Ottawa County Parks also offers quality hiking opportunities at Grand River Park in Georgetown Township and at Kirk Park in Grand Haven Township. Each park offers between 2 and 3 miles of trail with challenging terrain in attractive settings. The Rosy Mound Natural Area, mentioned above, is an attractive hiking area, and additional hiking opportunities exist at Grose Park and Hager Park, each with approximately 2 miles of trail. Recent trail improvements at Riverside Park, made possible by a lease of 31 acres of Bass River Recreation Area land from the State, resulted in the addition of 2 miles of highly scenic waterfront trails at this park.

Recently acquired properties offer tremendous potential to expand hiking opportunities. In light of the high popularity of hiking, Ottawa County Parks should continue its focus on expanding hiking trails where possible within the park system to maximize the opportunities available and the proximity of trails to where people live. A good example is the new Grand Ravines Park which will provide additional hiking opportunities in eastern Ottawa County. The potential to link with trails through natural areas at Grand Valley State University is being explored as a means to offer expanded trail opportunities.

WINTER SPORTS

Ottawa County’s climate permits participation in a full range of winter sports activities, particularly in the snow belt area located along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Presently, winter sports activities in the County Parks include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and sledding at a number of parks that are open year-round.

Pigeon Creek Park has been the focal point for winter recreation opportunities in the county park system. Sledding is provided at the park in addition to 10 miles of trail groomed regularly for both classic cross-country skiers as well as ski skating.

Cross-Country Skiing

The 2010 county resident survey indicated that 94% of county residents identified cross-country skiing as moderately or very desirable compared to 51% in 2004. Meeting the demand for cross-country ski opportunities is, to a large degree, similar to hiking trails. Health, fitness, and general enjoyment, along with greater contact with the outdoor environment are primary reasons individuals participate in the activity. Accordingly, a variety of trail lengths and levels of difficulty are critical elements to be considered in responding to this demand. As with hiking trails, a need exists to offer longer trail distances to provide attractive and worthwhile opportunities for this sport.



Pigeon Creek Park has been a tremendous success in terms of attracting large numbers of skiers because of the quality of skiing opportunities provided. The park offers over 10 miles of groomed ski trails for all skill levels, plus trails for ski skaters as well as classic skiers. Its rolling terrain combined with diverse natural features makes it an attractive destination. The lodge/warming house is important to the facility's success because it provides ski rental and concessions, and serves as a gathering spot for skiers before and after their outing. The park's three miles of lighted trails extend park hours until 10:00 p.m., an important consideration given the shortened daylight hours during the winter months. Visitor bureaus in Holland and Grand Haven promote Pigeon Creek Park as a ski destination with a goal of attracting overnight visitors to the area.

Trends in cross-country skiing suggest the numbers of skiers will be steady and increasing in the future, driven by fitness motivation and those seeking opportunities to enjoy the out-of-doors in the winter. With good ski conditions, Pigeon Creek Park would routinely reach its parking capacity (150+ cars) by mid-day on weekends and continue at maximum capacity until early evening. This led to the expansion of the parking lot to 212 spaces in 2013. With an average stay for most visitors estimated at two hours, it is clear that a tremendous number of users are accommodated in a busy weekend at the park.

Skiers will likely continue to want well-groomed trails including opportunities for ski skating. However, trends suggest skiers also desire adventure at a realistic level in the form of narrower trails offering a sense of discovery. This was considered in planning the trails at Hemlock Crossing and Pine Bend, which offer 6 miles of ungroomed trails, geared for the more adventurous skiers seeking a more secluded and rustic outdoor experience, in comparison to Pigeon Creek Park with its busy groomed trails. The addition of the NEC which can be used as a warming location, has increased ski use at this park.

The 2015 survey determined that 45% of residents feel that existing opportunities are adequate

while just 40% felt more are needed. This is seen as support for a continued focus on Pigeon Creek Park as the primary destination for groomed ski trails with rental, warming areas and concessions. As with hiking, cross-country skiing is a logical activity to offer in large natural resource-based park areas and can usually be accommodated for minimal expense (primarily signing to explain trail difficulty levels). The goal should be to offer a range of opportunities to serve everyone from the ski skater, requiring the more developed facility offered at Pigeon Creek Park, to skiers desiring a more rustic or backcountry experience. In addition to resident needs, consideration should be given to tourism interests where the goal is to provide facilities that can serve as winter attractions during this typically slow tourist season while also providing high quality cross-country ski opportunities for county residents.

Snowshoeing

The Outdoor Participation Report by the Outdoor Foundation reveals that, on a national level, snowshoeing is enjoyed by a small but steadily growing segment of the population. Numbers are likely higher in northern states like Michigan where more and more people are looking for ways to stay active in the winter months. Snowshoeing is popular at many Ottawa County Parks where ungroomed trails are used by walkers, skiers and snowshoers. Recently, snow shoe trails and rentals have been added at Pigeon Creek Park in response to requests from park users. Groups will come to the park with individuals desiring to participate in multiple sports including sledding, skiing and snowshoeing. Their desire is to enjoy the warming house and other park amenities together while engaging in separate activities. Park staff is looking for opportunities to expand snowshoe trails further at the park to accommodate this demand.



Sledding/Tobogganing

Sledding opportunities were favored by 67% of county residents in the 2004 survey, but dropped to 55% identifying the activity as moderately or very desirable in the 2010 survey. The 2015 survey asked whether adequate opportunities exist for the activity and 46% said more opportunities are needed while 41% said there was enough or too much already. As noted previously, sledding hills at Pigeon Creek Park have been extremely popular when conditions are good—often too crowded during peak periods. Other existing facilities in Ottawa County are fairly limited—usually small, informal facilities provided by local communities. An exception is Holland’s VanRaalte Farm Park with its large, lighted sledding runs. One unique regional facility in the area is the winter sports park located at Muskegon State Park, which features a high quality luge run in addition to lighted cross-country skiing and ice-skating. The luge is a highly specialized winter sport activity that is open to members of the general public that are willing to pay a fee and take the necessary lessons.



Other than Pigeon Creek Park, no other organized sledding opportunities exist in the County Park system. However, the Riverside Park master plan calls for development of a sledding area utilizing an existing hill. In addition, when Ottawa County installed a new cap on the 40-acre closed landfill located within the 300 acre Riley Trails site, extra expense was incurred to reshape the northeasterly facing slopes to maximize the site's value for sledding use in the future. The capped landfill is closed at the present time until methane gas emissions from vent pipes in the landfill are reduced to safe levels. The Riley Trails site offers a unique potential for a major destination sledding area, possibly combined with other sliding sports such as tubing and snowboarding. The site should be continually monitored for methane gas emissions and the OCPRC should watch trends in this area carefully to determine what type of facility would best meet Ottawa County's future needs. Ingham County recently offered a multi-use sledding, tubing and snowboarding facility with a rope tow that has proven very popular. Such a facility could feature snow-making equipment and be combined with cross-country ski and skating facilities to offer a true winter sports destination.

Ice Skating

Outdoor ice skating opportunities have generally been considered a local government recreation responsibility, since they have traditionally been provided on the neighborhood level or in community parks. While Ottawa County Parks supports local governments taking the lead role in this area, it should also evaluate the potential to develop a large destination ice rink as part of a future winter facility for countywide use. The potential exists for a warming house, restrooms and other support facilities to serve users of multiple winter activities. Following this logic, it would make sense to consider adding an ice rink at Pigeon Creek Park where skiing and sledding already exist; however, the site and support facilities are already beyond maximum capacity during peak periods and no logical location exists for an ice rink given the current layout of the site. Consideration should be given to possible inclusion of an ice rink when sledding facilities are added at Riley Trails in the future.

Snowmobiling

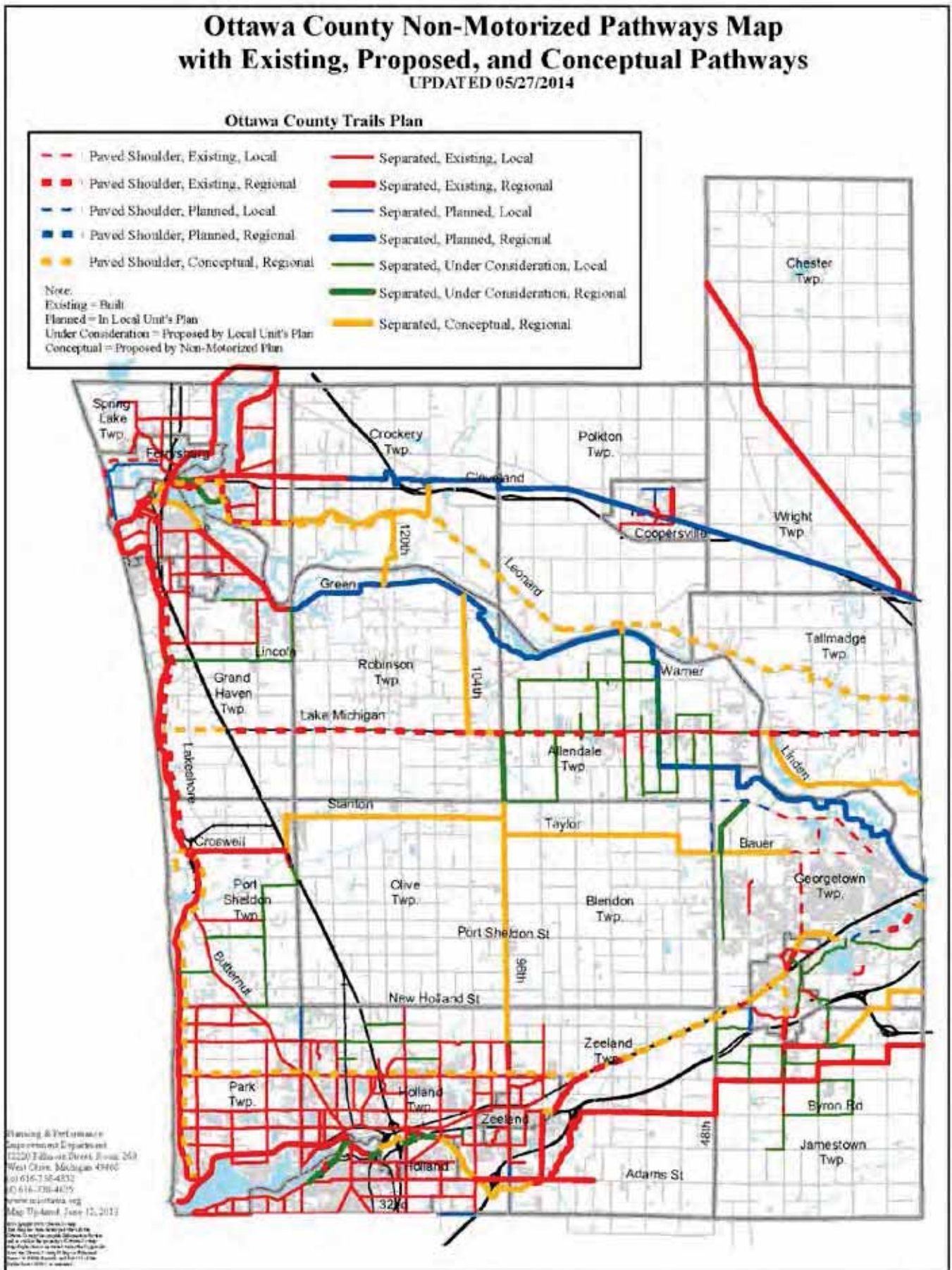
Snowmobiling was the lowest ranked activity within the 2015 County Resident Survey. This activity, similar to ATV use, requires extensive acreage for safe enjoyment of the sport, which is normally beyond the scope of the county's potential. However, snowmobiles have been included as a designated winter use on the Musketawa Trail (winter operations administered by the state) because this facility has the length of trail needed to provide a meaningful snowmobile experience.

BICYCLING / NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

The 2010 county resident survey revealed that 94% of residents feel "paths for biking and rollerblading" are either very desirable (62%) or moderately desirable (32%). The more recent 2015 survey indicated that 52% of county residents desire more opportunities while just 36% felt there was enough or too much at the present time. Also, in the most recent survey 82% of respondents agreed with the statement "The OCPRC should support a regional trail system linking different communities for walkers, bicyclists, and rollerbladers." It is easy to see the support for bike trails in Ottawa County by observing the level of use on existing trails and summer events in the area focusing on bicycling, and other trail activities. Another important sub-group within the biking community, mountain bikers, were not addressed specifically in the resident survey, but the unique needs of this user group are assessed later in this chapter.

Meeting the demand for expansion and development of new trails must address three particular

Figure 10.1 - Non-Motorized Pathways Map with Existing, Proposed, and Conceptual Pathways



user groups; 1) those persons who use the trails as functional linkages between two points, 2) those persons who use the trails for fitness, health and general enjoyment reasons, and 3) those persons who may use the trails as a recreation destination. Each user group has its own needs, though some may overlap, and the development of bicycle trails must be responsive to these needs.

Trail development can best be accomplished by a cooperative effort involving all levels of government. Many local units of government in Ottawa County have made bike paths a high priority and have passed millages to provide funding for development of local bike path systems. The North Bank Trail, a joint effort of the North Bank Communities of Spring Lake Village and Township, Crockery and Polkton Townships has made great progress in recent years and illustrates the strong commitment to trails. These combined efforts have resulted in a vast network of local trails that is promoted by area visitor's bureaus including the Holland Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Grand Haven–Spring Lake Area Visitor Bureau.

Non-Motorized Pathway Study

In an effort to provide leadership, expertise, and general assistance to local municipalities interested in developing and expanding their local non-motorized circulation network, the Parks Commission teamed with Ottawa County Planning Commission in completing the Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathway Study in 2002. The plan, updated in 2011 and in 2014, is shown in Figure 10.1. The plan focuses on the county regional trail linkages – those that connect communities. It proposes both a separated pathway system and widened road shoulders in key locations. Currently, separated pathways along roadways are the most common type of pathways in Ottawa County. The plan recommends that separated pathways be 8 to 14 feet wide, and that paved road shoulders be a minimum 4-foot width, consistent with nationally accepted standards.

Widened Road Shoulders

The non-motorized pathway study envisions widened road shoulders in key locations within the county for both recreational and commuter use. In 2004, the County Road Commission announced plans to re-paved approximately 7 miles of Lakeshore Drive between Hayes and Fillmore streets with 3 foot shoulders. The Road Commission indicated its willingness to work with outside agencies to widen the paved shoulders from the Road Commission's standard width of 3 feet to 4 feet wide to meet AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) bike path standards. The County, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning and Performance Improvement Department and Road Commission shared the additional cost of \$125,000 and the wider shoulders were installed. Since that initial project, there has been collaboration on additional paving projects to add widened shoulder extending to New Holland Street on the south side of Port Sheldon Township. Leadership has been provided by the Ottawa County Planning and Performance Improvement Department and funding assistance has been provided by Ottawa County Parks , Port Sheldon Township and private donors. The goal is to continue to extend the widened shoulder as road paving projects in Park Township take place in the next few years. With both a separated pathway and widened shoulder, Lakeshore Drive provides alternatives for bicyclists which increases its appeal as a recreational and commuter corridor.

Regional Trails

To the extent feasible, Ottawa County Parks desires to play a role in providing or assisting with non-motorized trails that have a regional recreational appeal. As far back as 1990, Ottawa County Parks, along with Muskegon County, was approached by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to consider a partnership in the development of a linear park on the abandoned railroad

right-of-way between Marne and Muskegon. An extensive planning and public hearing process ensued and the right-of-way was acquired by the State in 1991. A 12-foot-wide asphalt trail along with staging/parking areas was constructed in 1997. The trail is known as the Musketawa Trail and Ottawa County Parks accepted its partnership responsibility and now manages the 10-mile segment of the Musketawa Trail located in Ottawa County.

One major regional trail development in recent years was completion of the six mile Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail which links to the Musketawa Trail and runs southeast toward Walker, a suburb of Grand Rapids. Spearheaded by Kent County Parks and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the trail ends at Fred Meijer Park across from Meijer Headquarters but will eventually be extended to Comstock Park to link to the White Pine Trail. Ottawa County Government was key in working with the Department of Natural Resources and Kent County to re-route the trail around an active feedlot operation in response to concerns within the agricultural community that the trail would have an adverse economic effect on the operation. Ottawa County Parks acquired property for re-routing the trail which included the adjacent Marne Bog, a remote high quality natural area that is now connected to the Musketawa Trail corridor. The Parks Commission plans to make hiking trail linkages in the future between the Musketawa Trail and the bog.

Steady progress has been made on the North Bank Trail in recent years. The North Bank Trail, a collaborative project which includes several North Bank communities, is a proposed 18 mile non-motorized, multipurpose pathway located generally along the former Grand Trunk Railroad that extends from Spring Lake to Coopersville. The goal for the proposed path is to connect the east end of the Village of Spring Lake Bike Path to the east end of the Musketawa Trail and serve as a regional link. Currently the trail extends from the Village of Spring Lake through Spring Lake Township to 136th Avenue in Crockery Township.

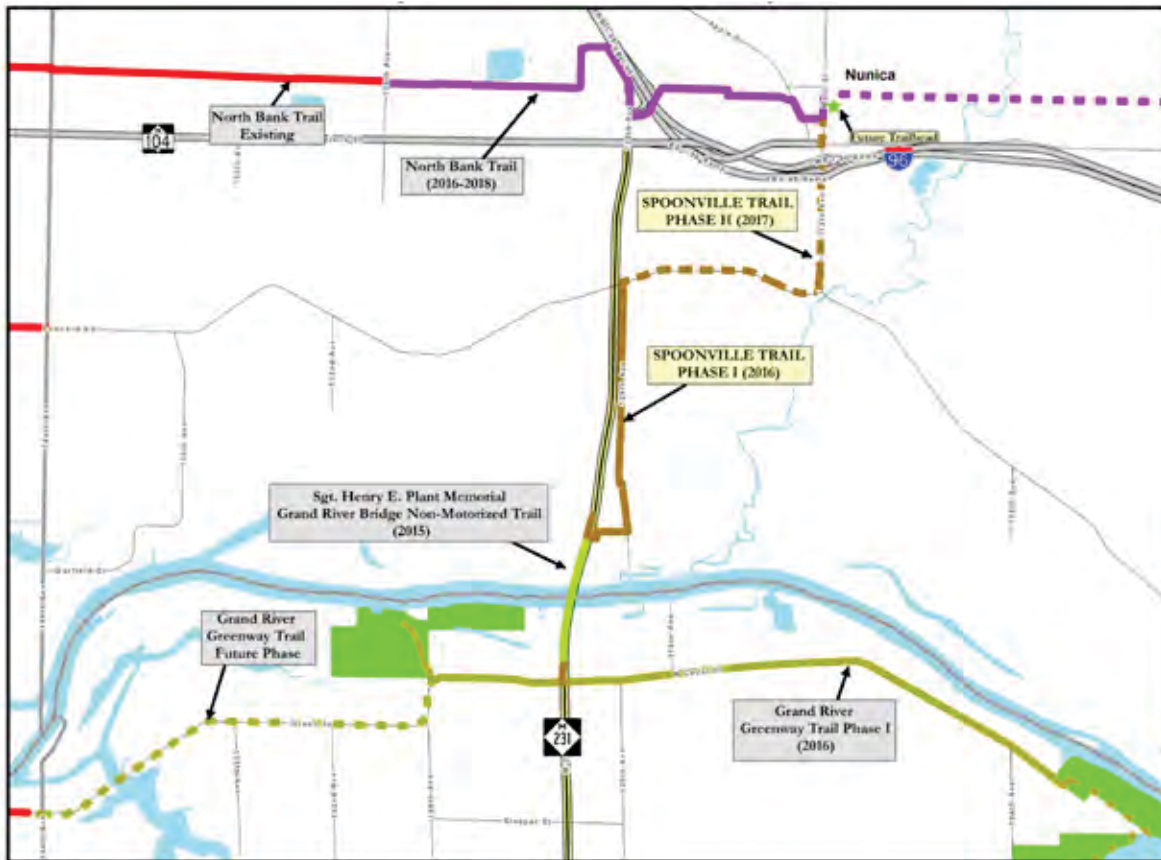
Another significant regional trail development is the construction of a non-motorized crossing as part of the M-231 bridge over the Grand River which was completed in November of 2015. Named the Henry E. Plant Memorial Grand River Non-Motorized Trail, the bridge crossing is 14 feet wide and offers tremendous views of the Grand River and associated wetlands. The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners had urged the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to install the non-motorized crossing on the bridge and MDOT agreed with the understanding that Ottawa County would take a leadership role in providing trail connections on both ends of the crossing. The Ottawa County Planning and Performance Department has taken a leadership role in developing the Spoonville Trail (Figure 10.2) which will connect the north end of the bridge crossing to the North Bank Trail. Funding is in place for the first phase of the trail. Ottawa County Parks is the lead agency for connecting the south end of the bridge crossing to the proposed Grand River Greenway Trail. More detail on the status of the Grand River Greenway project is provided under Greenway Trails below.

Another significant regional trail development in Ottawa County is the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail which runs nearly 10 miles from the north end of the Upper Macatawa Natural Area through Zeeland and Jamestown Townships. The trail works its way east and north to Spring Grove Park before ending at Kenowa Avenue. This trail was spearheaded by Zeeland and Jamestown Townships with funding assistance from the Meijer Foundation and a contribution of \$200,000 from Ottawa County Parks. Ottawa County Parks contributed funds to encourage and support the project which borders and provides access to both the Upper Macatawa Natural Area and Spring Grove Park. With the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail in place, Ottawa County Parks was able to secure an MDOT grant to fund the first segment of the Macatawa Greenway Trail. This project is discussed under the Greenway Trails section below.

Greenway Trails

Ottawa County's efforts to establish greenways along the Grand, Pigeon and Macatawa Rivers

Figure 10.2 - Spoonville Trail & Connector Pathways



provide excellent opportunities for establishment of destination recreational trails within these corridors. With their scenic attributes, linear nature and concentration of parklands, greenways have the potential to incorporate trails that can meet non-motorized transportation needs and provide a significant destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Macatawa Greenway Trail

Working with its non-profit partner, the ODCMG, the OCPRC's vision of establishing a paved, multi-purpose greenway trail within the greenway corridor is beginning to take shape. Ottawa County Parks completed the first large-scale portion of the trail in early 2015 when it connected to the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail on Byron Road and developed 2.4 miles of trail south through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area to link to existing bike path along Adams Street. The trail connects to an existing 0.5 mile segment of trail within the park to provide a total of nearly 3 miles of very scenic paved trail within the park.

Future efforts will focus on extending the greenway trail along the river corridor as ownership or easements are put in place, with a long-term goal of establishing a linkage to the City of Holland's riverfront parks, including Windmill Island and Window on the Waterfront. Recent land acquisitions by the ODCMG as part of Project Clarity will likely help facilitate a trail route in the future.

Grand River Greenway Trail

Significant progress has been made in the acquisition of key riverfront parcels to preserve land and provide for a variety of recreational uses which include a future paved multi-use greenway trail. Efforts are underway to secure a mix of public and private funding to help fund the final land and easement purchases and the paved greenway trail. In relation to the commitment to MDOT to connect to the non-motorized Grand River bridge crossing, Ottawa County Parks has committed to building the first segment of the Grand River Greenway Trail between Connor Bayou and Riverside Parks which will encompass the bridge crossing. Preliminary engineering has been completed for the initial segment of the trail and a grant request has been submitted to MDOT for funding assistance through the Transportation Alternatives Program. If successful, the goal is to build the trail in 2016.

Concurrently, work is underway to assess opportunities for construction of other segments of the trail. Coordination of roles and responsibilities with local units of government are key considerations before beginning actual trail construction. Strong support has been demonstrated by Robinson, Georgetown and Allendale Townships in early discussions regarding the trail. Both Robinson and Georgetown Townships have pledged financial support to the development of the trail in their townships.

Pigeon River Greenway Trails

The vision for the Pigeon River is for natural surface trails accommodating a range of uses as demonstrated at Pigeon Creek Park and Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend where a combined total of over 16 miles of trail serve users at both parks. The long-term vision is to link both Pigeon Creek Park and Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend with trails and extend west through Consumers Energy property to connect to Lakeshore Drive and eventually to Lake Michigan. That is admittedly an ambitious goal and will depend on both future landowner willingness to cooperate and funding availability. The Parks Commission recognizes its vision for the Pigeon River may take many years to achieve.

An initial step that should be pursued is to seek approval from Consumers Energy to extend a trail west from Pine Bend to connect to Port Sheldon Township's Sheldon Landing. This attractive natural riverfront land is not used by Consumers Energy as part of their energy generation and could provide an outstanding addition to the county's trail system for hikers and cross-country skiers.

Coastal Greenway Trails

The Lake Michigan shoreline has long been a top recreational attraction which prompted local units of government to develop the Lakeshore Drive bike path, an 8 foot wide paved pathway for walking, biking and other recreational uses that runs from Grand Haven south to Tunnel Park and beyond to Holland State Park. Given the popularity of the route with higher speed cyclists, Ottawa County Parks is supporting the addition of a widened road shoulder as part of the Coastal Greenway corridor.

Although intense development along the shoreline precludes opportunities for continuous hiking trails in most areas, Ottawa County Parks offers trails at several of its lakeshore parks for walkers, hikers, trail runners and cross-country skiers. A unique opportunity exists at North Ottawa Dunes where trails link to P.J. Hoffmaster State Park offering five miles of continuous high quality forested dune habitat. The potential should be explored to extend trails even further to the south to link to City of Grand Haven property and the Kitchel Lindquist Dune Preserve owned by the City of Ferrysburg. This would provide a tremendously unique opportunity for hiking and habitat

preservation and would be a regionally significant attraction.

Non-Motorized Trail Summary

The identified role of Ottawa County Parks in the provision of bike paths and non-motorized trails in Ottawa County includes the following:

- To promote a connected system of trails and pathways through efforts like the Non-Motorized Pathway Study and bike path brochures.
- To fulfill its partnership responsibility with the DNR and operate the Musketawa Trail, a true linear park and regional recreation destination.
- To support the linkage of regional trails in West Michigan.
- To work to develop greenway trails as multi-purpose regional recreational pathways in greenway corridors along the Grand River, the Macatawa River, and the Coastal Greenway (Note that the vision for Pigeon River Greenway trails is unpaved, rustic trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, equestrians, etc.).

Mountain Biking

An important sub-group of the biking community is mountain bikers. Mountain biking involves the use of specialized bikes to ride over rugged terrain. For many years Ottawa County Parks has permitted mountain bikes on designated trails at Pigeon Creek Park, Grand River Park and Riley Trails. Recent improvements at Riley Trails resulted in the designation of a 4 mile mountain bike loop which was improved with gravel in areas that were previously too sandy. Mountain bike use has risen dramatically at the site since the improvements. Other opportunities for mountain biking on public lands in Ottawa County exist at the Bass River State Recreation Area. It should be noted that existing trails in many of the Ottawa County Parks are generally shorter, wider, and flatter than preferred by skilled mountain bikers.

Because opportunities for quality mountain biking experiences in Ottawa County were lacking, Ottawa County Parks welcomed the opportunity to partner with the Michigan Edge Mountain Biking Association (MEMBA) to construct trails in ravines at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area.

MEMBA designed and constructed the trails under the guidance of park staff and the resulting six-mile trail system, completed in 2015, has proven tremendously popular. It is a highly technical trail with a high level of difficulty that appeals to the more skilled mountain bikers.

Consideration should be given to the expansion of mountain biking opportunities in the county park system with input from user groups. As developed at the Upper Macatawa site, provision of narrower trails with longer distance over varied terrain should be explored. The challenge is to find suitable terrain in Ottawa County, which is generally flat. As with other trail uses, site selection must consider environmental impacts of the sport, which can lead to erosion and potential damage to plant communities. Erosion is of particular concern due to the erodible nature of much of the county's soil. Potential for conflicts with other user



groups (i.e., hikers, equestrians, etc.) must also be considered.

PLAYGROUNDS

Ottawa County Parks provides many playgrounds within the county park system. These playgrounds are important because they provide an active recreation outlet for young children and are particularly important as support facilities for large group picnic outings.

Neighborhood or community park playgrounds, which are located in close proximity to population concentrations, are typically considered a local government responsibility. Because many rural communities do not have an active park system, many of the County Parks fill the need for playgrounds in these communities.

Beyond serving strictly local recreation needs or as support facilities in a larger park setting, playgrounds



can be developed as destination facilities attracting users from a 10- to 20-mile radius. Playgrounds of this magnitude are considered appropriate for the county park system. The Age of Discovery Playground at Hager Park is an excellent example of a destination playground, with its extensive play apparatus and unique theme tied to the adjacent terrain map of the United States. The playground at Tunnel Park, while smaller in scale than the Hager Park playground, provides a unique attraction due to its adjacent dune climb.

Because of the anticipated growth of the county park system, the development of new playgrounds in conjunction with large group picnic areas is likely. It is important to consider the unique opportunities for connections that may exist between playgrounds and the natural environment. Playgrounds can be not only a place for children to play but to learn as well. In this regard, “natural playgrounds” are an emerging trend in playground design which should be considered. These designated outdoor areas utilize natural materials including rocks, boulders, wood, water, landforms, and even living plants to form an interactive environment for children to play in and manipulate. The master plan developed for Paw Paw Park includes a nature based playground as a future element.

PICNICKING

Picnicking is an important recreational activity within the Ottawa County Park system and one of the most popular. The 2010 County Resident Survey found that picnic facilities had the second highest mean score of the activities listed, with 98% of respondents classifying the activity as moderately or very desirable. The 2015 survey revealed that while 41% of respondents wanted more picnic opportunities, 54% felt existing opportunities to be adequate. Existing facilities range from enclosed picnic buildings with kitchens to picnic tables in a wooded setting.

For planning purposes, it is important to distinguish between smaller family picnics and large group outings. Small family-sized groups can normally utilize a few tables and grills on a first-come, first-served basis and have their needs met without making arrangements in advance through the county parks office. Large group outings, however, normally desire advance reservations and have more extensive facility requirements.

A wide range of facilities is currently available for reservation by larger groups within the County Park System. Group facilities have been added in recent years at Connor Bayou and Grand Ravines. In order to schedule reservations in advance, it is necessary to have park staff on-site to oversee reservations, perform necessary cleaning, and complete other operational tasks. Parks with on-site staff and facilities which are reserved in advance include eight picnic shelters, seven enclosed picnic buildings, one group picnic area, the Vander Laan and DeVries Rooms at Hager Park, the Pigeon Creek Park Lodge, the Weaver House, Connor Bayou Cabin and Grand Ravines Lodge with the latter six having more modern indoor facilities. The total number of annual reservations has grown to over 1,000 in 2010, serving over 70,000 park users annually.



Large group picnics are clearly a popular activity within the park system and, while family picnic opportunities may be adequate, demand is expected to continue to increase for group areas. Expansion of large group picnic facilities is recommended and many of the current park master plans reflect this need with the addition of picnic shelters.

One apparent need that is not yet reflected in any current park plans is the provision of a group facility capable of accommodating 200 to 500 people. The county parks office receives many requests for facilities to serve larger sized groups but all current facilities are targeted at groups ranging from 50 to 125. Meeting the needs of these larger group gatherings includes not only provision of a large shelter and adequate tables but also adequate support facilities such as parking, restrooms, play area and possibly volleyball and similar group activities. Consideration should be given to establishment of a large group shelter in a centralized, accessible location in the future.

GOLF

Over the years, the potential for development of a golf course in the county park system has been discussed frequently but never fully evaluated. Many county park systems in Michigan and around the country operate golf courses to provide recreation for their residents and as revenue-producing facilities. In some high growth and urbanized areas, public courses are provided to maintain adequate golf opportunities as privately owned golf courses give way to development pressure. The goal in these situations is typically to provide economically priced golf activity for county residents. In other park systems, golf courses are developed as revenue-producing facilities and many feature amenities designed to attract golfers seeking a higher quality and more exclusive golfing experience. No formal study or evaluation has occurred to determine the particular market segment that would be served if a course were to be developed in Ottawa County or whether such an endeavor would be economically feasible.

Previous surveys of county residents revealed that the majority of county residents do not consider development of a golf course a high priority for Ottawa County Parks. In the 2010 survey, county residents ranked golf low relative to other priorities, but did show support for the activity. Questions pertaining to golf were not specifically included in the 2015 survey.

The OCPRC feels that development of a public golf course is not a high priority at the present time,

especially with a general decline in golf participation in recent years and the relative health and abundance of privately owned public courses in Ottawa County. Further study should occur in the future to ascertain whether development of a golf course could further the goals of the county parks and meet the needs of residents.

HUNTING

Ottawa County Parks is one of the leading county park systems in Michigan in providing opportunities for hunting on county park-managed lands. A survey by park staff in the fall of 2014 revealed that of 36 counties with active park programs, only 12 offered some type of hunting. The combined acreage of the parks survey totaled 57,354, of which 14,091 acres were available for hunting (25%). The majority of those hunting acres were deer hunting only (72%). Of the 6,395 acres in the park system at that time, Ottawa County Parks had 3,818 acres open to some form of hunting (60%) and 74% open to deer hunting only. Among all of the counties surveyed, only 1,795 acres were open to a full range of DNR hunting opportunities. Of this total, 1,010 acres (56% of the statewide total) was in Ottawa County Parks.

Hunting opportunities are provided on many of the open space properties and at selected park properties within the county park system. Since 2011 when the last parks plan was completed, Ottawa County Parks has acquired additional land at Grand River Open Space and dedicated the entire site (258 acres) to a full range of hunting opportunities in accordance with DNR rules.

Although hunting was revealed to be one of the less popular activities in recent county resident surveys, the Parks Commission feels it is important to consider a range of concerns in evaluating this issue:

- Hunting has been a long-standing use on many of the county's Open Space Lands.
- There is a strong tradition of hunting in Ottawa County.
- Hunting can be an important tool in management of certain wildlife populations (most notably deer). A good example of this is the population control hunt initiated in 2005 by the MDNR at P.J. Hoffmaster State Park.
- Hunting requires no facility development and therefore has limited start-up costs.
- Encroaching suburban development on park-managed lands will likely result in increasing safety concerns associated with hunting, particularly regarding the use of firearms.
- Managing properties offering both hunting and general recreational use has great potential for user conflicts, with general recreational users shying away from hunting areas.



The OCPRC will continue to evaluate properties on an individual basis as to their suitability for hunting. The intent is to continue to allow hunting on properties that are larger and receive less general recreational use.

GEOCACHING

Capitalizing on current technology, geocaching is a family-friendly activity that has grown rapidly in popularity in recent years. It combines the use of global positioning system (GPS) and internet

technology with the exploration of parks, fields, streets, and communities. A geocache is typically a small weather-resistant container that contains a logbook and an assortment of “treasures” for the finder. These geocaches are hidden by players over a wide geographic area and listed on an internet site for other players to see. A player visits the web site, documents a geocache location in degrees latitude and longitude, then uses a hand-held GPS receiver to locate the geocache. Once found, the player signs the log and if they take part of the “treasure,” they are expected to leave something in return, typically of equal or greater value. Ottawa County Parks has established guidelines which support geocaching in the county parks while protecting high quality natural features.

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

Horse-back riding is a popular activity in Ottawa County. Many equestrians are actively seeking public lands with riding trails and are equipped to trailer their horse to these locations. Although the percentage of horse owners is low in the general population relative to other user groups, the activity is one which the OCPRC feels fits with its role of providing large resource-based parks.



Designated horse trails exist at three locations within the Ottawa County Parks system. The Musketawa Trail, located on a former rail line, features a separate horse path along much of the 10-mile section located in Ottawa County. More popular with equestrians are the trails at Pigeon Creek Park, where equestrians have had access to over three miles of trails for many years. Equestrian trails are kept separate from hiking and mountain bike trails to avoid conflict and because horse traffic softens up trail surfaces, making them difficult to use for hikers and bikers. Recently developed equestrian facilities and trails at Eastmanville Farm are gaining in popularity at this unique county park with its historic barn and rolling hills and fields. Approximately three and a half miles of trail exist currently at this site, with more planned in the future.

In addition to equestrian trails in the County Parks, the State’s Bass River Recreation Area also offers several miles of horse-back riding trails.

The Parks Commission envisions focusing equestrian use at the sites identified above with no plans currently to add sites in the future. Short-term plans call for expansion of trails where possible at existing sites. As noted above, the potential exists to add additional equestrian facilities and amenities at Eastmanville Farm in the near future. Additional study should be undertaken as needed to explore the county parks’ role in meeting future needs of the equestrian community.

DISC GOLF

Disc golf is a sport that appears to be growing in popularity in recent years. It is played like regular golf, except the goal is to throw a disc into a basket instead of hitting a ball into a hole. In 1990, there were about 300 courses world-wide, and by 2009 the number had grown to 3,000.

A number of individuals have approached Ottawa County Parks over the years, particularly in the Holland area, requesting Ottawa County Parks develop a course on one of its properties. The

OCPRC has long felt this activity could be a good fit within the county park system if the right site could be found. After assessing the feasibility of installing a course at the Paw Paw Park on the former Holland Country Club property, a decision was made to install a course as part of park improvements following large scale restoration of the property. The new disc golf course opened in 2013 and became instantly popular. Based on the popularity of the course with a wide range of age groups, Ottawa County Parks will watch for future sites where disc golf opportunities can be made available.



DOG PARKS

The Parks Commission has been studying dog parks in larger Midwest park systems for several years to determine whether it should be the role of Ottawa County Parks to provide dog parks within the county park system. A dog park, for this discussion, is considered to be a fenced-in area where the public is allowed to bring dogs and run them off-leash. Many large county and regional park systems in the Midwest have elected to provide dog parks within their park systems. Most are near large urban areas where opportunities to run dogs off-leash are limited.



Over the years, Ottawa County Parks has been approached by individuals encouraging Ottawa County Parks to provide a dog park in the Georgetown Township area. After further study, the Parks Commission made the decision to include an off-leash dog park in the master plan for the new Grand Ravines County Park on the southern portion of the site that fronts on Fillmore Street.

In the fall of 2015, Ottawa County Parks opened Grand Ravines Dog Park, a 21 acre fenced off-leash area including two separate large dog areas and one small dog area plus fenced areas for people to walk their dogs on trails off-leash. The popularity of the dog park, still quite new at the time of this writing, has been amazing. With more amenities planned for 2016, the realization is growing that the 80 car parking area will be insufficient to meet the parking demands of the popular facility.

In recent years, five local units of government have opened dog parks in Ottawa County – Park Township, the City of Ferrysburg, the Village of Spring Lake, the City of Grand Haven and Holland Township. The goal of the County Park system is to complement the smaller dog parks by providing a larger, regional facility that can attract users from a longer distance for special outings, in addition to serving the daily needs of dog owners in the nearby high population area.

Unlike many park departments where dogs must always be leashed, Ottawa County Parks allows dogs off-leash in its open space lands. A recent initiative to add trails within its open space lands provided greatly expanded opportunities for dog owners desiring to run their dogs off-leash in the

county park system. Note that properties designated as parks, as opposed to the lesser-developed open space lands, have strict leash rules.

It should be noted that while the trails on open space lands allow dogs off-leash, they do not provide the secure, fenced area that is desired by many dog owners. Some dog owners are primarily seeking a place to walk their dog off-leash, while others are seeking to allow their dog to socialize with other dogs in a large, fenced-in setting.

OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The above list of recreation activities and facilities is not intended to include all possible areas of involvement by the OCPRC. Ongoing study and evaluation is needed to assess involvement in new areas considered appropriate for Ottawa County Parks, given its stated mission and focus on a natural resource-based system of parks and programs. At the Eastmanville Farm property, for example, a partnership with the agricultural community is being explored to establish an educational farm to interpret this important part of the county's heritage for the public. A new trend, zip lines, is being studied to determine whether this type of facility fits within the county park system. A zip line is included in Grand Ravines master plan, but no steps have been taken to implement the facility pending further study. The OCPRC will continue to focus on traditional resource-based recreation activities while also assessing new and emerging activities as to their appropriateness and feasibility to be offered within the county park system.

CHAPTER 11 | ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS

An expressed goal of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) is to offer facilities, programs, and services that are accessible to all persons regardless of their level of ability. Meeting this goal requires close examination of not only physical barriers to participation but also the attitudes and philosophy of the agency itself. The OCPRC has adopted the following statement of philosophy:

The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission intends to fully comply in spirit and intent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will provide reasonable accommodation to provide an opportunity for all to participate in an inclusive environment to provide quality leisure experiences.

Considerable legislation exists to ensure the rights of people with disabilities to participate in recreation opportunities. Most significant is “The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990” (ADA) which was enacted “to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.” Since that time standards and guidelines have been published by the Department of Justice and the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) to regulate and guide new and renovated facilities.

Current enforceable standards have been incorporated in the Department of Justice 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. These standards provide clear direction for the development of accessible parking, buildings and many other types of facilities. Standards for additional recreational site elements (published in the Federal Register on September 14, 2010 and put into effect on March 15, 2012) such as playgrounds, amusement parks, fitness equipment, sports facilities, golf, recreational boating and fishing facilities are also included in the 2010 standards. Guidelines for other recreational facilities including trails, picnic areas, overlooks and viewing areas, beach access routes, and camping facilities are addressed in a separate final draft Guideline for Outdoor Developed Areas report produced by the Access Board and made available to the public in 2009. Although not enforceable, these guidelines provide the best available approach to meet the general requirement of the ADA to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Evaluation of Ottawa County park facilities in this chapter utilizes both the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (the standards) and the Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (the guidelines).

APPLICATION OF THE STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

The OCPRC has made tremendous strides in eliminating barriers in the county park system. Extensive renovations at older county parks as well as new facilities at Hemlock Connor Bayou, Olive Shores, Upper Macatawa Natural Area, and Historic Ottawa Beach were completed with strict attention to the ADA Standards and Guidelines. In addition to these large projects, many other smaller modifications have been completed throughout the park system that have significantly improved accessibility.

As a public agency, Ottawa County Parks is required to meet the “Program Access Test” for accessible facilities and to produce a “Transition Plan” that defines the improvements needed and timeframe to bring the park system into compliance with applicable regulations. The program access test is based on the determination that a public entity may not deny the benefits of its programs, activities, and services to individuals with disabilities because its facilities are inaccessible. This does not mean that each and every nonconforming facility must be made accessible, but that all services, programs, or activities, when viewed in their entirety (i.e., system-wide) must be readily accessible

to all potential users. In addition, since the experience of the natural environments in the county parks is one of the primary attractions, an overall goal is to provide opportunities for all users to experience the various natural environments to a significant degree even if all areas are not accessible. Table 11.1 summarizes the results of the program access test for developed parks in Ottawa County based on comprehensive site reviews of each site found later in this chapter.

Table 11.1 - Program Access Test Chart

PROGRAM ACCESS TEST CHART	PARKING	WALKWAYS & TRAILS	OVERLOOKS	PICNIC TABLES	PICNIC SHELTER	RENTAL BUILDING	MODERN RESTROOMS	PIT OR PORTABLE TOILETS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	SWIMMING BEACH	BOAT LAUNCH RAMP	CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH	FISHING DOCK/PIER	SEATING	BALLFIELD	HORSESHOES	SAND VOLLEYBALL	TRAILHEAD	INTERPRETIVE SIGNS
Park Name (Developed Parks only)																				
Adams Street Landing	N	S											N		S					
Connor Bayou	A	S	A	S	A	A		A					A	A	A					A
Crockery Creek Natural Area	N	N																		N
Deer Creek Park	P	N		N				N				N								
Eastmanville Bayou	S	S		N	A			A				N	A						A	A
Eastmanville Farm	N	N		N				A											N	S
Grand Ravines - North	A	S	A	A		A	A								A				A	
Grand Ravines - South	A	S		A				A							N				A	
Grand River Open Space	N							P							N				P	
Grand River Park	A	S	N	S		A	A			S		A	A	P					P	
Grose Park	A	S	S	S	A		A			S	A			A	S	N	N	N	P	A
Hager Park	A	S		S	A	P	A		A	P					S		N		P	
Hemlock Crossing	A	S	S	S	A	A	A	A					S		S				P	S
Historic Ottawa Beach Parks	A	S	S	A				S			A			A	S				A	A
Kirk Park	A	S	S	S	A		S		A	N	N				S		N		P	A
North Beach Park	A	S	S	S	A		S		A	P	A				S			S		A
North Ottawa Dunes	A	S	NF	A			A								S				P	
Olive Shores	A	S	NF	A			A	A			N				S				A	S
Paw Paw Park - West	A	S	A		A			A							N					
Paw Paw Park - East	A	S	A	S				A							S				A	S
Pigeon Creek Park	P	S	N	S		A		A	A						S				P	
Pine Bend	A	S		N		A		A							S				P	A
Riley Trails	P	S	A					A							S				P	
Riverside Park	A	S		S	A			A				A		A	S				P	
Rosy Mound Natural Area	A	S	NF	A			A	A			NF				S				A	S
Spring Grove Park	A	S		S		A	A			P						N	N			
Tunnel Park	A	S	S	S	A		A		A	P	N				S		N	N		NF
UMNA - 84th Ave.	A	S	A	S	A			A							A				P	A
UMNA - 76th Ave.	P	S	A	S				A							A				P	

A - All items/areas in category are accessible

N - Not currently accessible

S - Meets Standards, improvements may be desired

NF - Element provided but compliance is Not Feasible

P - Partially accessible - some improvements needed to meet current standards

Although the chart indicates that Ottawa County has fulfilled the requirements of the program access test for most elements and activities, it is clear that additional basic improvements should be provided at many sites to meet both the letter and the spirit of the law. In addition, many accessibility improvements, although not required by current legislation, would be desirable additions to the park system.

In this regard, Ottawa County Parks seeks to implement universal design principles. As defined by the Center for Universal Design:

“Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

–Ron Mace

The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities”

ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

The first comprehensive analysis of accessibility in the County Park System was conducted in 1993 by park staff. Since that time additional reviews have been undertaken as new standards and guidelines became available and the park system developed and aged. This 2016 plan again updates the recommended improvements and transition plan based on current standards and existing park conditions. The review was completed by Coordinator of Park Planning and Development, Curt TerHaar , with assistance from various park operations staff, in consultation with Ms. Cindy Burkhour of Access to Recreation Group, a recognized expert in inclusive universal design and accessible recreation facility issues .

Table 11.2 at the end of this chapter lists all recommended actions needed to meet regulatory requirements and those recognized as desirable but not necessarily required. This list serves as the current transition plan. Items that are required are given time frames for implementation while other desirable items will likely be pursued as opportunities become available such as nearby construction or renovation.

REVIEW BY PARK/FACILITY

The following section consists of a description and assessment of developed park facilities to date. Parks are listed alphabetically. Barriers to accessibility are identified and summarized for each park and by activity type. While it is unlikely that every barrier to participation by persons with disabilities has been identified, it is hoped that this assessment can serve as a foundation leading to the development of a maximally accessible park system. Each park is also rated for accessibility compared to the 2010 ADA Standards on the following scale:

- 1 = None of the site elements meet the standards
- 2 = Some
- 3 = Most
- 4 = All
- 5 = The facility meets the principals of universal design

ADAMS STREET LANDING

Accessibility Rating: 2

- **PARKING:** Gravel surface parking includes 16 spaces. **A barrier-free parking sign needs to be added to designate one barrier-free space. The space should also be resurfaced to meet barrier-free requirements.**
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** An accessible crushed-stone path leads from the parking area to the river access point. A paved bike path is located along the street and traverses along the entire length of the site and connects to a paved path that goes under the Adams Street bridge over the Macatawa River on the southeast corner of the site. Long term plans call for a paved trail to traverse the site and connect to the bridge underpass; however, it would be desirable to add a barrier-free walk connection to the paved portions of the path in the near future.
- **CANOE AND KAYAK LAUNCH:** A set of wood timber stairs leads from the end of the crushed stone path to the edge of the river. A more accessible route is not feasible due to the steepness of the river bank. Currently there are not accessible facilities in the Macatawa River Area, and this site is marginal at best as a destination for boaters. Regional plans call for accessible launches in other locations. When those are developed, signage should be added directing boaters to those sites.
- **SEATING:** A backed bench is located along the crushed stone path.

CONNOR BAYOU

Accessibility Rating: 4

- **PARKING:** Paved parking is provided in two areas. One area, related to the rentable woodland cabin contains —spaces, two of which are fully accessible. The second area designed for regular day use contains —spaces and the required —accessible spaces.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Accessible paved walks are adjacent to all parking areas and lead to the pit toilet, woodland cabin, and many other amenities. A crushed stone path leads to the three overlook locations. The remainder of the trails in the park are natural surface.
- **OVERLOOKS:** Three designated overlooks provide outstanding views of the river and associated wetlands. All three are accessible via crushed stone trails .
- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are five permanent picnic tables mounted on concrete pads. Two of these area accessible from the paved paths. Both of these also have grills that are not connected by an accessible surface. **Accessible surface should be added between the picnic tables and the grills and around the grills as necessary.**
- **PICNIC SHELTER:** A roofed shelter directly adjacent to the woodland cabin provides additional outdoor space for cabin renters. It has a concrete floor and is connected to accessible paved paths.
- **WOODLAND CABIN:** A renovated log cabin home provides a rentable space for family events and gatherings. The public spaces including the main floor, basement, deck, patio, and restrooms are fully accessible.
- **PIT TOILET:** An accessible pit toilet is located near the day use parking area on an accessible route.

- **CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH:** A universally accessible floating dock launch is provided with a paved trail connection.
- **FISHING DOCK:** A wood dock extends into a cove in the river bank allowing better views and fishing access over the water. The dock has lowered railings in locations to allow accessible fishing opportunities and is connected to an paved accessible route.
- **SEATING:** There are backed benches located at two of the overlooks. Both of them have adequate space near them for a wheelchair companion
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.

CROCKERY CREEK NATURAL AREA

Accessibility Rating: 1

This park is undeveloped except for a basic trail system. Master planning and an initial phase of development will greatly expand accessibility in the future.

- **PARKING:** Roadside parking is available on the end of the Wren Drive cul-de-sac. The surface is gravel and there is no designated barrier-free parking space. **A sign and new surfacing should be installed near the trailhead.**
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk with park trail information is located near the start of the trail loops. **The sign should be updated to show accessibility information, and an accessible path installed to it from the parking area.**
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** Natural surface trails lead from Wren Drive on to two trail loops that traverse a portion of the park. Accessible trails will be constructed in the first phase of development.
- **SEATING:** There is one bench seating area along a natural surface trail. Additional accessible seating will be included in park master planning.

DEER CREEK PARK

Accessibility Rating: 2

Deer Creek Park is a small 2-acre park in Polkton Township. Accessibility improvements have been made in the park, although significant limitations exist for disabled users. It was hoped to remedy several of these conditions in conjunction with a project to connect Deer Creek Park with the newly expanded Ripps Bayou project via a bridge over the Deer Creek. This project was determined to be prohibitively expensive and was delayed. Improvements in the shorter term should be considered.

- **PARKING:** The total capacity of the parking area is six cars and eight car/trailer spaces. One of the six car spaces is designated as an accessible space, although the surface of the entire parking area is gravel, which is not an acceptable accessible surface. **The space should be resurfaced. In addition, one of the car/trailer spaces should be designated as accessible with new signage and surfacing.**
- **RESTROOMS:** Two pit toilets are provided which are constructed to meet accessibility guidelines. The path leading to the restrooms is a dirt and wood chip path which, although well compacted, does not meet accessibility guidelines. **An accessible parking space should**

be added along the road at the entrance to the path to the toilets and the path improved to meet standards.

- **BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY:** A small boat launch exists for access to Deer Creek and the Grand River. No dock is provided at this location and no particular facilities to aid people with disabilities are present. **Signage should be added to direct people with disabilities to accessible facilities at nearby Riverside Park.**
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** No hard surface pathways exist in the park to connect the parking lot to the principal use areas. Because the park is in a floodplain area, it was necessary to construct the restrooms on higher ground near the park entrance to comply with floodplain ordinances. Restroom users must traverse the gravel entrance drive to access the restrooms from the main use portion of the park.
- **PICNIC AREAS/STRUCTURES:** There are two picnic tables located in grass areas of the park. **One of these should be connected to the barrier free parking space with an accessible pathway.**
- **SEATING:** There are two backed benches in the park located in grass areas. **An accessible route should be provided to one of these benches.**
- **FISHING AREAS:** Fishing is a popular activity along the banks of Deer Creek. Although the banks are relatively level, they are grass covered, and no hard-surface walkways or dock structures provide access to the water's edge. **A new accessible path combined with connections to a picnic table and bench should provide a location near the river for fishing.**

EASTMANVILLE BAYOU

Accessibility Rating: 3

- **PARKING:** The main forty-car parking area is paved with the required two accessible spaces. Access to the launch ramp is provided by gravel drives and parking for ten vehicles. **It would be desirable to add a barrier free space close to the launch ramp.**
- **WALKS AND TRAILS:** Concrete walkways surround most of the parking lot and connect to the restroom, picnic shelter, and kayak launch. The park has a significant amount of hiking trails that are natural surface
- **RESTROOMS:** There are two accessible vault toilet buildings both located along an accessible route from the main parking area
- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are five permanent picnic tables located in the grass areas of the park. Two are intended to be along a paved path to be developed in the future. **It would be desirable to add at least one accessible table with connecting paved walks in the near term.**
- **PICNIC SHELTER :** A small open shelter is provided along an accessible route. It has one permanent accessible table.
- **BOAT LAUNCH RAMP:** A small concrete plank boat launch ramp provides access to the inland bayou parallel to the Grand River. There is no skid pier, and it has a gravel approach. **A sign directing people to the nearest accessible launch site should be provided.**
- **CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH:** A universally accessible floating dock launch is provided with a paved trail connection.

- TRAILHEAD: A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.
- INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE: Two interpretive signs are located on an accessible route. They meet height and space requirements.

EASTMANVILLE FARM

Accessibility Rating: 2

- PARKING: Gravel surface parking is provided for equestrians with vehicles and trailers, regular park visitors, and at the historic “Memory Grove” historic display. None of these areas have designated accessible spaces. **Accessible spaces need to be added including signage and surfacing.**
- WALKS AND TRAILS: There is paved walkway from the parking area to the memory grove display. All other existing paths are grass surfaced. **It would be desirable to add a hard-surfaced path to provide a barrier-free route to more areas of the site.** If not before, these improvements will be completed with future phases of development.
- RESTROOMS: A barrier-free pit toilet is provided. It is accessed via a crushed stone path from the equestrian parking area.
- PICNIC TABLES: Four picnic tables are located near the equestrian parking area, none of which are located on hard surfaces. **An accessible route should be added to at least one of these picnic table locations.**
- TRAILHEAD: A kiosk with park trail information is located in the equestrian parking area. Additional trail signage is located near the barn. **Both areas of signage should be updated to show accessibility information.**

GRAND RAVINES –NORTH

Accessibility Rating: 3

- PARKING: Paved parking is provided in three locations including two small areas for accessing the trails and a larger area serving the lodge. All have the required accessible spaces.
- WALKWAYS AND TRAILS: Concrete walkways abut all of the parking areas and provide access to the lodge, overlooks, and trails. Future phases will add to this system of accessible walkways to provide additional access to the waterfront and between the north and south sections of the park. Additional sections of trail through the wooded ravines of the park are natural surface.
- OVERLOOKS: There are two overlook locations including one featuring the deep ravines and the other adjacent to the lodge overlooking the Grand River. Both are fully accessible.
- PICNIC TABLES: There are permanent picnic tables located along the concrete walkways adjacent to the two smaller parking areas. Both are accessible.
- GRAND RAVINES LODGE: An existing home has been renovated to be suitable for rental to the public. All entrances and the adjoining deck area accessible.
- RESTROOMS: There is a modern public restroom attached to the lodge building that is

accessible via paved paths.

- SEATING: There is a box bench located at one overlook and two benches located at the lodge overlook that are accessible.
- TRAILHEAD: A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.

GRAND RAVINES–SOUTH

Accessibility Rating: 3

- PARKING: A gravel parking area serves the south portion of the park providing over 70 spaces. Four paved accessible spaces are provided.
- WALKWAYS AND TRAILS: Concrete walkways about the parking area and provide access to the dog park and pit toilet. There is also a paved loop within the fenced off-leash dog area. Future phases will add to this system of accessible walkways to provide additional access to other areas of the dog park, the barn and between the north and south sections of the park. Other sections of trail through the wooded ravines old farm fields of the park are natural surface or mowed grass.
- PICNIC TABLES: There are two permanent picnic tables located along the concrete walkways adjacent to the parking areas. Both are accessible.
- RESTROOMS: There is one accessible vault toilet located near the parking area with paved access.
- SEATING: There are nine benches total in this area. Eight are in the dog park with six being accessible along and on paved surfaces. One located outside the dog park is located near an unusual tree and is not connected to a paved access route. Future phases will add more accessible benches throughout the site.
- TRAILHEAD: A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.
- DRINKING FOUNTAINS: There are three drinking fountains in the dog park which are accessible.

GRAND RIVER OPEN SPACE

Accessibility Rating: 2

- PARKING: The site is accessed by a gravel road with gravel parking lots. A small parking area is located along the entrance drive (three spaces) and a larger area (19 spaces) in a more central location. Neither location has a designated accessible space. **Accessible surfacing and signage need to be added.**
- WALKS AND TRAILS: There is a mowed path from the main parking area to the lake, but there are no other designated trails
- RESTROOMS: There is accessible vault toilet building directly adjacent to the parking area. **An accessible surface should be provided from the accessible parking space.**
- SEATING: There is one bench located in a grassy area near the main parking lot. **An accessible route should be provided.**

- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area. **An accessible surface should be provided from the accessible parking space.**

GRAND RIVER PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

- **PARKING:** Total capacity is 86 spaces with seven signed accessible spaces. One space is van-accessible. Another parking area is located at the boat launch near the river. There are fourteen spaces for vehicle parking and approximately six spaces for vehicle/trailer parking. An accessible space is provided.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** The primary routes of travel to the picnic building, restrooms, drinking fountain, play area, fishing dock, trailhead, and limited trails are accessible to persons with disabilities via hard-surfaced paths. The majority of the trails used for hiking and skiing are not considered to be within accessibility guidelines due to trail surfacing and terrain. However, there is about one half mile of hard-surfaced accessible trail located within the park, which allows visitors to experience portions of the park's natural area as well as primary destination points.
- **OVERLOOKS:** Two viewing platforms overlooking wetlands within the park are not considered accessible, due to stairs leading to the raised decks. These structures will be removed when their useful life is over.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are twelve picnic tables located in areas surrounding the parking lot. The majority of the picnic tables located in the park have accessible features. Two tables with concrete pads and accessible routes were added in 2009. **An accessible route to at least one additional table needs to be provided to meet current standards.**
- **PICNIC BUILDING:** A rental building in the center of the park is accessible from barrier-free parking via a concrete walkway. The shelter is used by groups for picnics and other types of outings. Banquet-style tables are available which are accessible.
- **RESTROOMS:** The restrooms are located at the south end of the picnic building and are accessible to people with disabilities.
- **PLAYGROUND:** Two play areas exist at Grand River Park. The older is a small play area located west of the picnic building which features a limited variety of equipment. Although this play area has safety surfacing which is considered accessible, the route of travel to this play area is over lawn, which is not considered accessible to persons with disabilities. It is anticipated that this area will be removed when its useful life is over.

An accessible play area installed in 1999 features a play structure with a transfer station and swings. This play area is located along an accessible concrete walkway and has a concrete ramp from the walkway to the surfacing. This will be upgraded to meet current standards when it is renovated in the future.

- **BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY:** The boat launch is a hard-surface area with ramps sloping down to and below the surface of the river. One skid pier dock is provided to assist boaters. The dock meets accessibility standards in width and has a ramp providing smooth access for wheelchairs and other mobility-impaired users.
- **CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH:** A universally accessible floating launch ramp was installed in 2014 and connected to the boat launch parking area with a paved path.

- **FISHING DOCK:** Fishing is a popular activity along the shores of the lake and on the boardwalk, which goes over the lake. Although the boardwalk provides access to the water for persons with disabilities, the rail height limits accessibility. **Modifications to the boardwalk railing for accessible fishing need to be completed.** Fishing is also popular along the Grand River shoreline. A paved area along the route to the kayak launch provides access.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk with park trail information is located adjacent to the parking area and is fully accessible. **Information needs to be added describing trail widths, surface types, slopes and other accessibility features.**
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS:** There is a accessible drinking fountain on the south side of the picnic building.

GROSE PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

A large park improvement project was completed in 2001 which addressed significant barriers that existed to disabled persons in the park prior to this project.

- **PARKING:** Parking improvements included a new barrier-free walk that makes it possible for people with disabilities to use the lower lot. Because of this, five barrier-free parking spaces are provided in this area. Three of these spaces will be van-accessible. A second lot is also barrier-free with 30 spaces and 2 spaces that are barrier free.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** A complete barrier-free pedestrian circulation pathway connects to the majority of the park facilities. This includes access from parking locations to the restrooms, playground, picnic shelters, to the lower beach and sunbathing area and to a fully accessible fishing platform.

There is approximately one mile of unmarked pathway that winds through woodlands within Grose Park. The trail surfaces are dirt and no improvements exist for trail users in terms of surface preparation. There is access to natural areas (including a stream overlook deck) via hard surface paths.

- **OVERLOOKS:** There are decks overlooking a stream and Crockery Lake. Both are accessible via paved paths
- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are three accessible picnic areas adjacent to hard surface paths in the park, one of which has a grill. Barrier-free pathways enable disabled users greater access to the miscellaneous picnic areas throughout the park.
- **PICNIC SHELTERS:** There are two picnic shelters located in the park with barrier-free accessible routes. Of the eight picnic tables located in the Lake Shelter, four accessible seating locations and a barrier-free grill are provided. Under the Forest Shelter, there are 15 permanent picnic tables with four accessible seats and one large accessible grill.
- **RESTROOMS:** A modern accessible restroom building took the place of the old inaccessible restroom building in the 2001 project. The restroom is located on a hard-surfaced pathway.
- **PLAY EQUIPMENT:** There are two barrier-free play areas in the park, which includes separated play areas for ages two to five and six to twelve. Both of these play areas are accessible from hard-surfaced walkways and have accessible surfacing. These areas will be updated to the latest standards when they are renovated in the future

- **SWIMMING AREA/SUNBATHING:** The swimming beach is a major destination within the park and is accessed from a hard-surfaced path that leads to a concrete patio bordering the beach. The sand beach has ramp access from the concrete patio.
- **FISHING DOCK:** A fully accessible fishing dock with lowered railings is provided at the end of an accessible route.
- **SEATING:** Benches and other seating areas are located throughout the park along accessible routes.
- **GAME AND SPORTS AREAS:** Two horseshoe pits and one ball field are available within the park. Both types of facilities are located in grass areas and are not accessible by hard-surfaced pathways. However, both are located in relatively flat areas presenting few other access problems. There are two sand volleyball courts located near the Forest Shelter. Neither the ball field or volleyball courts are accessible due to their surfacing material. **Accessible walkways should be provided to each of these areas.**
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk with park trail information is located along a paved pedestrian path which is accessible; however, **information about accessibility should be added.**
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:** Signs providing information about the natural features of the site are located at the accessible trailhead kiosk.
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS:** There is a wall-mounted barrier-free drinking fountain located near the entrance of the restroom building.

HAGER PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

Hager Park is a heavily used facility which received many improvements in 2004 to address accessibility issues.

- **PARKING:** Numerous parking lots exist throughout the park with a total of 198 parking spaces prior to the 2004 project. ADA requirements are met with six accessible parking spaces, and all are signed and marked to conform to the ADA standards. In 2004, additional parking was provided at the Visitor Center in anticipation of additional reservable use. Nineteen spaces were added with one of them barrier-free. Also added were five new spaces (one barrier-free) in conjunction with a new restroom building near the Age of Discovery play area.
- **RESTROOMS:** Hager Park has four restroom facilities, two in the DeVries/Vanderlaan building, one at the Picnic Building, and a new restroom building built in 2004 near the Age of Discovery play area. This has become the park's primary restroom and meets all ADA requirements.

The restrooms located within the VanderLaan Room at the Visitor Center lack the size required to permit wheelchair access. Users of the this facility have the option to use these restrooms or the accessible restrooms in the Visitor Center lobby. **Modifications should be made to these interior restrooms.**

- A barrier-free unisex toilet was added to the picnic building that is accessible from hard-surfaced walkways to all users of the picnic building and surrounding areas.

- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Accessible paved walkways abut all accessible parking spaces and provide access routes to major facilities in the park including buildings, the Age of Discovery playground, and picnic shelter. In addition, an 8-foot wide bituminous path, creates an accessible spine from the northeast neighborhood through the Age of Discovery play area, past the picnic building and then to the southeast neighborhood and includes portions through the picnic areas and natural woodlands of the park. Additional accessible routes include a chips-and-fines pathway loop leading through the restored grasslands of the northern half of the park. Other less than fully accessible trails include mowed trails through the grasslands and natural surface paths through forested areas. Two of the four bridges in the southern half of the park were replaced in 2004 to be barrier-free. **Other bridges on the trails are not accessible and should eventually be replaced.**
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS:** There are eight drinking fountains in Hager Park. One fountain is a wall-mounted unit located within the Visitor Center lobby. This fountain is accessible to wheelchair users using the side approach. The height of the fountain controls are 34” instead of the required 32” maximum. The second drinking fountain is located adjacent to the Age of Discovery Playground. This fountain is a cantilevered freestanding fountain designed to meet ADA guidelines; however, the surface surrounding the fountain exceeds slope requirements and therefore offers barriers to accessibility. In addition, due to the slope in front of the fountain, the height of the fountain is less than the 27” required from the ground to the underside of the fountain to provide knee space for wheelchair users. Because modifications were considered infeasible, a new cantilevered drinking fountain was installed immediately nearby to meet accessibility guidelines. This fountain is located on a flat surface adjacent to the walkway running along the parking lot. A wall-mounted fountain meeting ADA requirements was included on the restroom building built in 2004. Two drinking fountains are located on the south side of the park in grass areas which are not accessible by a hard-surface pathway. Both are pedestal style fountains which are accessible using the side approach by wheelchair users. However, both fountains are 1 1/2” higher than ADA guidelines. The sixth fountain is located within the picnic building and is a wall-mounted fountain. This fountain is at the correct height for wheelchair users employing the side approach. An additional fountain installed on the patio of the picnic building is the cantilevered type and is located on concrete surface and is fully accessible.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Picnicking is a primary activity at Hager Park and extensive picnic facilities exist. Forty-four permanent picnic tables are located in various areas of the park. These tables are of an accessible design, however, only two tables are located on a hard surface and designed with adequate legroom for wheelchair users. These tables are located along the walkway adjacent to the Age of Discovery Playground. Additional concrete was added to enlarge the existing concrete pads to meet accessibility guidelines for turning space. **Improvements to provide access to tables in various other locations needs to be provided.**
- **PICNIC SHELTERS:** One picnic shelter, the Maples Shelter, is located on the north side of the park. A hard-surfaced pathway connects the nearby accessible parking with the shelter. Of the nine picnic tables in the shelter, four accessible seating locations are provided. **One large group grill is accessible at the shelter on a hard surface but needs to be reoriented to allowed better access to wheelchair users.**

A second older open shelter is located east of the park drive in the south picnic area. It is available on a first come, first served basis. The shelter and an associated drinking fountain

are not accessible. **An accessible route should be provided to the shelter and drinking fountain.**

The gazebo at the Age of Discovery play area was replaced in 2004 with a shelter with two picnic tables, each including one wheelchair spot. Although this shelter was intended to be fully accessible, **clear space around the tables and benches in this area is not provided and needs to be added.**

- **PICNIC BUILDINGS:** The Picnic Building located in the south area of the park is accessible. It also has sixteen picnic tables with eight accessible seating locations located on adjacent patio space. The accessible seating spaces do not have adequate paving to allow circulation by wheelchair users or use of the nearby grill. **Additional paving should be added to meet standards.**

The VanderLaan and DeVries Rooms located within the Visitor Center are also used by large groups for picnics and other types of outings. Banquet-style tables are available which are accessible. The VanderLaan Room also features an outdoor patio space and kitchen. The patio is accessible, however the circular outdoor tables provided do not have accessible seating locations. **Tables should be added to create the required accessible seating locations.** In the kitchen clear spaces are less than required. **Modifications to cabinetry and other elements should be completed to meet standards.**

- **PLAYGROUNDS:** Two play areas exist at Hager Park. The oldest is a small play area located on the south side of the park, which features a limited variety of equipment located in a grass area with the ground cover being primarily wood chips. This play area offers few opportunities for participation by disabled users and is not accessible via a hard-surfaced pathway from the parking area. **The play area will be reconstructed to meet current standards when the useful life of the current facility is completed.**

The Age of Discovery Playground, constructed in 1992, is a large play area designed specifically to provide opportunities for persons of all abilities. Approximately 75% of the play structure surface is either boardwalk or a special engineered wood fiber (e.g., “Fibar”) which is accessible by wheelchair users. The major limitation noted to the Age of Discovery Playground was the inaccessibility of the sand area which covers approximately 25% of the play area surface. Swings located here are not available elsewhere within the play area which limits opportunities to disabled users. Steps were identified in several areas within the playground which exceed the ADA riser height parameters of 4 to 7 inches.

The large terrain map of the United States, located to the north of the playground complex and considered a part of it, lacks accessible features due to its grass surface and **crushed limestone border.** A crushed stone path should be added from the crushed stone surface **surrounding the map the adjacent paved path.**

- **GAME AND SPORTS AREAS:** There are two sets of horseshoe pits located south of the picnic building. Neither is adjacent to an accessible route. **New paths should be provided to provide access from nearby paved paths.**
- **SEATING:** Accessible benches are located in several areas of the park.
- **TRAILHEAD KIOSKS:** Three information kiosks are located near parking areas at trail access points to provide information about the trail system, The central one is fully accessible. **The other two require improved surfacing to meet ADA standards.**
- **FIRE PIT:** There is a designated area for fires located across the park drive and east of the

picnic building. It currently has a dirt surface. **An accessible route should be provided from the parking area and accessible surfacing installed around the fire pit and associated wood bench seating.**

- TELEPHONE: Two public pay phones are available in the park. Both meet accessibility requirements. One is in the Visitor Center lobby and the other is on the new restroom building.

HEMLOCK CROSSING PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

This park in Port Sheldon Township was completed in 2004 and was designed to meet the then-current accessibility standards.

- PARKING: The parking lot at the restroom building has 75 parking spaces, of which four are barrier free and van accessible. There is a second small parking lot near the kayak launch in the park with ten parking spaces, two of which are barrier free and van accessible.

In 2010 an additional area of parking was added in association with the Nature Education Center. It has the required accessible parking spaces.

- RESTROOMS: The restroom building is located at the west end of the parking lot and is constructed with one barrier-free stall in each of the men and women's restroom. All other facilities meet ADA requirements. There is also an accessible vault toilet at the east end of the parking lot.
- WALKWAYS AND TRAILS: Paved surface paths connect the parking areas to all the main park features including the Nature Education Center, restrooms, and picnic shelters. Additional bituminous pathway provides separate loops through the restored grassland and through mature forest as well as connecting to the bike trail along West Olive Road, the kayak launch area, several overlooks and the large bridge over the Pigeon River. Beyond the bridge, the trail reverts to an earthen surface with some wood-chip sections, and is not considered accessible. The balance of the paths in the park are natural earth hiking and cross-county ski trails dotted with boardwalks and overlook decks which are not fully accessible.
- PICNIC AREAS/STRUCTURES: There are two small picnic shelters accessed by a concrete path. Each shelter has two barrier-free picnic tables and one grill with appropriate accessibility space around it.
- NATURE EDUCATION CENTER (NEC): An 8000-square-foot building was constructed in 2009 to house nature interpretation, promote the park system, and is open for public rental for special events. The building including restrooms and other indoor facilities is fully accessible.
- SEATING: Accessible benches are located in several areas of the park although not all benches have surfacing to allow companion seating. **Appropriate surfacing should be added to benches as required.**
- KAYAK LAUNCH: Access to the Pigeon river for kayaks and canoes is provided via an accessible crushed stone path from nearby parking and paved path. A wood platform at the edge of the river is also accessible.

- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located along an accessible path. **Signage should be updated describing trail widths, surface types, slopes and other accessibility details.**

A second kiosk in front of the NEC which provides changing information current activities is in a paved plaza area that is fully accessible.

- **OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS:** Two outdoor classrooms with permanent wood bench seating have been constructed to facilitate nature center programming. Neither has accessible surfacing connecting to adjacent paved paths. **Crushed stone paths should be provided to connect from the accessible route to the seating areas.**
- **DRINKING FOUNTAIN** There is a double drinking fountain attached at ADA-specified heights on the front of the restroom building.

HISTORIC OTTAWA BEACH PARKS

Accessibility Rating: 4

Several improvements have been completed in recent years at different locations within the Ottawa Beach Area. All improvements recognized accessible standards and were designed accordingly.

- **PARKING:** Small paved parking areas area provided at the east and west ends of the Lake Macatawa waterfront walkway. Each has the required accessible spaces.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Concrete walkways connect the parking areas to major attractions of the park including the waterfront walkway, overlooks, and interpretive features including the renovated Pumphouse building.

Accessible routes include all of the waterfront walkways and decks, the separated paved path along Ottawa Beach Road, and connecting walkway to the base of the Mt. Pisgah dune climb stairs.

As with other dune properties with steep terrain, strict conformance to the standards was not feasible at the Mt. Pisgah dune climb, however, maximum accessibility has been provided. The massive stairway leading to the dune top was constructed following barrier-free design with low risers and wide treads. Accessible paths are provided where possible, and extensive signage directs patrons to alternative routes to access the overlooks and interpretive displays at the top of the dune. Signage in an accessible location displays pictures and interprets inaccessible portions of the site, including dune-top views.

- **OVERLOOKS:** The waterfront walkway provides special areas for viewing the lake at six locations along its length. All are fully accessible. As discussed above, overlooks on the dune climb have limited accessibility due to the natural terrain.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Four picnic table are provided along the waterfront walkway one of which is covered by a small shelter. Each is on a paved accessible route and two are of a universal design.
- **RESTROOMS:** Portable toilets are provided at each of the parking areas. Only one has an accessible design. **This toilet should be changed to an accessible model.**
- **SWIMMING BEACH:** The park provides 750 feet of Lake Michigan Beach directly adjacent to Holland State Park. A seasonal hard surface walkway leads to this beach which supplements the full accessibility to the entire beach area provided by Holland State Park.

- **FISHING DOCKS:** The waterfront walkway provides special areas for fishing at several locations along its length. All are fully accessible and have lowered railings or no railings at all.
- **SEATING:** Many benches are provided at multiple locations. Benches along the waterfront walkway are accessible with companion spaces. Benches on the dune climb are limited as discussed above.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:** The trailhead at Mt. Pisgah is fully accessible and provides information describing access to various portions of the site.

KIRK PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

The assessment of Kirk Park has identified areas where accessibility improvements are needed. A basic limitation of this park relates to exceptionally steep terrain which limits accessibility to undeveloped areas.

- **PARKING:** Total capacity is 312 cars, which requires eight accessible spaces with one to be van accessible. Eight accessible spaces currently exist, but several are located on a slight slope, which is not fully acceptable under ADA guidelines. Two van accessible spaces are presently provided.
- **LODGE:** The Kirk Park Lodge was constructed prior to the ADA and therefore has accessibility limitations including door widths, restroom stall widths, and lack of a barrier-free access route. Although the ADA pertains primarily to new construction, it also applies to alterations of existing facilities and it is the Park Commission's philosophy to make its facilities as accessible as reasonably possible.
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** Hard surface pathways in the core of the park provide good accessibility to many of the key use areas. Signs are lacking, however, to direct disabled users to the most accessible routes. For example, two paved paths to the beach are provided, but one has a flight of stairs which is not evident at the beginning of the trail.

Over two miles of woodchip paths, boardwalks and stairways wind through the rugged dunes in Kirk Park. Although accessibility limitations will always exist in many areas, the trail loop north of the main parking lot could be upgraded with improved surfacing to provide a moderately accessible route for mobility-impaired persons. A barrier-free asphalt walk connects the picnic shelter with the restrooms and separates vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

- **OVERLOOKS:** A viewing deck complete with interpretive displays is fully accessible on the Lake Michigan shoreline overlooking the beach. Other view areas are located along the trails in the steep dunes and are not accessible.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are approximately 25 permanent picnic tables located primarily around the main parking area. Of the picnic areas located throughout the park, one is fully accessible with an accessible table and grill adjacent to barrier-free parking. Other accessible tables/grills are located on grass or other non-accessible surfaces but meet other ADA requirements. **Accessible routes should be added to the required number of tables.**

- **PICNIC SHELTER:** One picnic shelter exists which is accessible from the parking lot via an asphalt pathway. At the ten picnic tables in the shelter, four accessible seating locations are provided. One large accessible group grill is provided at the shelter.
- **RENTAL BUILDING:** The Kirk Park Lodge is used as an overnight camp facility for organized groups from fall through spring. Twenty-four bunks are installed on a seasonal basis for this purpose. Recent improvements have made the restrooms and kitchen up to standards.

The Lodge is also used as a picnic building in the summer months. Of the eight picnic tables, two are accessible with two accessible seating locations provided.

The slope of the route of travel to the Kirk Lodge exceeds the ADA requirements. **An accessible route should be constructed.**

- **RESTROOMS:** Although the main park restrooms are generally accessible, a number of modifications are necessary. The width of the handicapped stall in both restrooms is too narrow to meet current ADA requirements, but it meets previous standards. The changing stalls are too narrow for wheelchair access and lack handrails. **Improvements should be made when the restroom is renovated.**
- **CONCESSIONS:** Vending machines are located on the outside of the restroom building accessible from the paved plaza area.
- **PLAY EQUIPMENT:** The play area west of the picnic shelter has an engineered wood chip surface which is considered to be accessible. It is near an accessible path and shelter, however **an accessible route into the play area is needed. The play equipment offers limited opportunities for participation by disabled children and should be replaced with a more accessible structure or equipment.** A second, smaller inaccessible play area located south of the main entrance drive was recently removed.
- **SWIMMING AREA/SUNBATHING:** Although accessible walkways lead to a waterfront viewing deck, a steep incline requiring stairs down the foredune prevents barrier-free access to the beach and water's edge. The stairs, combined with the loose sand beach, make access very difficult or impossible for mobility-impaired users. The amount of elevation change makes construction of a ramp impractical. The 1999 Guidelines recognize that often the natural environment will prevent full compliance with certain technical provisions in the Guidelines and allows for departures from the provisions if certain conditions exist. **Visitors with disabilities seeking a beach experience should be directed with signage to North Beach Park, where accessible beach access is provided.**
- **SEATING:** Benches and other accessible seating are provided along accessible routes.
- **GAME & SPORTS AREAS:** Horseshoe pits are located near a hard-surface pathway. A moderate slope to the pits makes access possible, although the lack of a hard surface immediately surrounding the pits limits accessibility. When beach widths permit, a volleyball court is erected in the sand beach which is not accessible to mobility-impaired users. The horseshoe pits are to be removed as part of general park upgrades.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A central point for trail information is located at the restroom building. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:** Displays describing the dunes and their formation are located on the accessible lake overlook.

- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS/FOOTWASHES:** The park contains two drinking fountains. One cantilevered type fountain is located in the picnic area near but is not directly adjacent to an accessible path. **An accessible pad still needs to be installed.** A barrier-free cantilevered drinking fountain and foot wash were installed alongside the walk leading to the beach from the restrooms.
- **TELEPHONE:** A public pay phone exists in an accessible location and meets accessibility requirements.

NORTH BEACH PARK

Accessibility Rating: 4

- **PARKING:** Total capacity is 187 cars which requires six spaces to be accessible with one to be van-accessible. Eight accessible spaces currently exist, two of which are van-accessible. A two space accessible parking area is also located off from North Shore Estates Drive to give access to a boardwalk and deck that provide views of the large dune east of the park.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** The primary attraction at this park, the beach, contains a hard-surface walkway, installed on a seasonal basis, providing access to the lower beach area near the water's edge. The trail and walkway to the dune overlook covers steep terrain and a 10-foot-wide concrete walk along the west side of the parking lot separates vehicles and beach users. The walkway serves as the core pedestrian circulation route connecting primary use areas including the restroom, play area, shelter, and picnic tables. A seasonal boardwalk allows barrier-free access to the beach area. A steep walkway/trail up the large dune to the east of the parking lot lacks accessibility due to the steepness of the terrain and the necessity for stairs.
- **OVERLOOKS:** Dune top overlooks are not accessible due to the steep terrain. There is a lower dune viewing area with an interpretive display that is fully accessible. Lake viewing is accessible from the picnic shelter and from the two decks alongside the accessible ramp/walkway.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Two accessible picnic sites are located directly west of the parking area. These picnic sites include a pedestal table, grill and trash receptacle and are accessible from the barrier-free walk along the west side of the parking lot.
- **PICNIC SHELTER:** One picnic shelter exists which can be accessed from the main park walkway. Of the 18 picnic tables in the shelter, four accessible seating locations are available, which meets current ADA standards. Two large group grills and serving tables serving the shelter is located on an accessible surface with the proper height and circulation for wheelchair users.
- **RESTROOMS:** Although generally accessible, a number of problems requiring modification were noted:
 - Signs are lacking to indicate handicap accessibility.
 - Entrance doors exceed resistance limits to open.
 - Accessible stalls are not marked with signs.
 - The width of the handicapped stall in both restrooms is too narrow to meet ADA, but meets previous standards.

Improvements will be included in future restroom renovations.

- CONCESSIONS: Vending machines are located on the outside of the restroom building accessible from the paved plaza area.
- PLAY EQUIPMENT: The park has a barrier-free play area that features a rubberized tile surface which is accessible from the barrier-free walk along the west side of the parking lot. Because of sand, the swings are not accessible.
- SWIMMING/SUNBATHING AREAS: The seasonal barrier-free ramp/walkway described above makes it possible for people with disabilities to access the beach area. The ramp has two deck areas located along the ramp/walkway which make it possible to stop out of the main route of travel and to turn around. The ramps and decks are removed during the winter season because of the severe wind erosion which occurs.
- SEATING: Benches and other accessible seating area provided along accessible routes.
- GAME & SPORTS AREAS: One volleyball court is provided in a sand area within close proximity of the park walkway.
- INTERPRETIVE SIGNS: Displays describing the dunes and their formation are located on the accessible dune overlook.
- DRINKING FOUNTAINS/FOOTWASHES: The park has two barrier-free drinking fountains and footwashes which are located on accessible surfaces. One of the fountains is located near the entrance of the restroom and is wall mounted. The other is located near the picnic shelter and is a cantilevered model. The footwashes are located near the drinking fountains. Both the drinking fountains and footwashes are fully accessible.
- TELEPHONE: A public pay phone exists in an accessible location and meets ADA requirements.

NORTH OTTAWA DUNES

Accessibility Rating: 3

- PARKING: A parking area serving the North Ottawa Dunes property was developed in the adjacent Coast Guard Park, which is owned by the City of Ferrysburg. The bituminous paved lot contains 19 spaces. Two spaces meeting barrier-free requirements including signage are provided.
- PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL: The parking area is surrounded by barrier-free walkways connecting to picnic tables, the donor recognition plaza, trailhead sign, and nearby restroom.

In cooperation with the City of Ferrysburg, a paved path along North Shore Drive was completed in 2015. This trail, which utilizes some park property, is accessible and provides an important link from the NOD trailhead to North Beach Park.

The extensive trail system through the natural areas of the park is completely natural surface except for wooden stairs to traverse steep areas of terrain. There are also numerous very sandy areas of trail that make access difficult. **Future phases including a section of paved trail will provide access to representative areas of the park.**

- PICNIC TABLES: The trailhead area includes two picnic table pads which are along an accessible route and are barrier-free.

- **SEATING:** Benches are provided along accessible routes. **Companion spaces need to be provided.**
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located at the main parking area. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**

OLIVE SHORES

Accessibility Rating: 4

This new park was developed in 2011 to meet all current standards. As with the Rosy Mound site that was developed several years earlier, the unique characteristics of the barrier dunes between the parking area and Lake Michigan make it impracticable to make all of the trails fully accessible. The constructed elements east of the barrier dunes, however, comply with current accessibility standards. Trails through the barrier dunes to the beach are not fully accessible due to the existence of stairs, but comply with the 1999 Guidelines. Stairs are constructed using ADA design standards, and all trail sections between stairs are fully accessible.

- **PARKING:** The parking lot at the restroom building and trailhead has a capacity of 49 vehicles. Two of the spaces are barrier-free.
- **RESTROOMS:** The restroom building is located on the west side of the parking lot and is constructed with one barrier-free stall in each of the men and women's restrooms. All other facilities meet ADA requirements. There is also an accessible vault toilet on the west side of the restroom building for off-season use.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Concrete walkways surround most of the parking lot and connect to the restroom, picnic areas, and provide an accessible route from a pedestrian entrance at the roadway. A chips and fines trail loop designed to meet ADA standards traverses the eastern half of the site and brings visitors to the base of the large sand dunes that separate the developed area of the site from Lake Michigan. From this point massive stairs and boardwalks traverse the steep slopes but limit access. The stairs themselves meet ADA requirements for stairs and handrails.
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS AND TELEPHONE:** There is a drinking fountain on the west side of the restroom building that is fully compliant with the ADA. There is also a water bottle filler mounted on a paved surface. Currently there is no telephone at the park.
- **PICNIC AREAS:** There are three separate picnic nodes adjacent to the parking lot connected by concrete walkways. All meet the circulation and height requirements of the ADA and all of the tables are approachable by wheelchairs from multiple directions.
- **SEATING:** There is a bench along the crushed stone path which is accessible with a companion seat location.
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE:** An interpretive sign is located along the chips and fines path and is at the proper height. Additional signs are located near the beach and are not accessible.

PAW PAW PARK WEST

Accessibility Rating: 4

- **PARKING:** The existing bituminous paved lot contains 17 spaces and provides one space meeting accessibility requirements. There is also vehicle access provided to the riverfront area of the park. The remainder of the trails in the park are mowed grass or crushed stone and are generally not accessible.
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** The parking area is surrounded by concrete walkways connecting to the picnic shelter, and a paved trail leads from the riverfront area across Paw Paw Drive to Paw Paw Park East.
- **OVERLOOKS:** There is a small deck overlook the Macatawa River. It is accessible via a paved path.
- **PICNIC SHELTER:** There is a small non-reservable shelter connected by concrete walk to the parking area. It has four permanent accessible tables and an accessible grill.
- **SEATING:** There are two backless benches along the natural surface trails which are not accessible.

PAW PAW PARK EAST

Accessibility Rating: 4

- **PARKING:** The existing bituminous paved lot contains 17 spaces and provides one space meeting accessibility requirements. There is also vehicle access provided to the riverfront area of the park. The remainder of the trails in the park are mowed grass or crushed stone and are generally not accessible.
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** The parking area is connected to paved walkways that provide access to the restrooms, picnic tables, and overlook. Additional paved paths provide access to the interior of the site and a connection to Paw Paw Park West. The remainder of the trails in the park are mowed grass.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Four permanent picnic tables are located near the parking area. Two are connected to accessible routes and are of an accessible design.
- **OVERLOOKS:** A small plaza area located on a high point of the site provides views of the restored river valley.
- **RESTROOMS:** There are two accessible vault toilets along an accessible route south of the parking area.
- **SEATING:** There are six benches. Five are located along accessible routes; three of these are accessible with companion seating locations. The sixth bench is located along a mowed trail.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area and along a concrete path.
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:** A set of three signs at the overlook plaza are fully accessible and the plaza is along an accessible route. A fourth sign, located at the site of an historic building (no longer standing) is along a grass trail and is not accessible.
- **DISC GOLF COURSE:** Paw Paw Park East is home to Ottawa County Parks only disc golf course. Although the course is primarily mowed turf, bridges and boardwalks between holes would allow use of a golf cart for users who required it.

PIGEON CREEK PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

Existing facilities at the park include the Pigeon Creek Lodge, a group camp area, and over 10 miles of trails used for hiking, skiing, biking, and horseback riding. The majority of the park facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

- **PARKING:** The parking lot surface is gravel with parking capacity for an estimated 120 cars. The ADA guidelines call for five accessible spaces and four are currently provided. Two of these spaces are designated for van-accessibility. **One accessible space should be added and should be signed.**
- **RESTROOMS:** There are two accessible pit toilets in the park. One set is near the main parking lot and another is in the group camp area. Accessible restrooms are also available in the Pigeon Creek Lodge.
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** Hard-surfaced (chips and fines) pathways connect main use areas to the parking lots. Main use areas include the lodge building, picnic sites, trailhead, and sledding hills. Over 10 miles of trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, biking and equestrian use are located at the park. Because of surfacing and terrain, the majority of the trail system is not fully accessible in terms of meeting all slope and surfacing requirements. However, approximately one mile of trail (constructed with stone chips and fines) is generally within barrier-free standards.
- **OVERLOOKS:** Two designated locations are provided with views over the Pigeon Creek. They on the natural surface trail system and not fully accessible.
- **PICNIC AREAS/STRUCTURES:** Although picnicking is not one of the main uses at the park, accessible facilities do exist for this use. The lodge building is available to reserve for various outings and contains seating for approximately 80 people. The lodge is fully accessible to people with disabilities. Adjacent to the lodge building is a concrete patio which contains four accessible picnic tables. East of the parking lot, there are three picnic areas which are fully accessible. The lodge and picnic areas are accessible from the parking lot with chips-and-fines pathways.
- **SEATING:** Benches are provided at various locations along accessible routes.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located at the main parking area and near the lodge along a crushed stone path. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**
- **GROUP CAMPING:** Pigeon Creek Park has a reservable group camping facility which is accessible to people with disabilities. The group camping area contains barrier-free pit toilets, a hand water pump, a fire circle, picnic areas, and tent pads with transfer stations. There is a gravel parking lot with approximately 25 parking spaces but none of the spaces is currently signed as barrier-free. **ADA guidelines require one space to be signed.**
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS:** The only outside water source within the park is a hand pump located on an accessible path which is located near the group camp area.
- **TELEPHONE:** One public pay phone exists near the east entrance to the lodge building which meets accessibility requirements.

PINE BEND PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

Pine Bend Park is located at the far west end of the same property as Hemlock Crossing Park; this is the location of the historic Weaver House.

- **PARKING:** The parking lot is paved with a total capacity of 64 cars. There is a 6-foot-wide concrete walk at the edge of the lot with two barrier-free ramps. The parking area has the required parking spaces for access to the house and trails.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Concrete walks connect the parking to the restroom, historic Weaver House, and the new wedding trellis. The site also serves as an access point to a large system of natural surface trails
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Five tables are located near the parking area along with two grills. These tables are of a pedestal design that is accessible, but they are in grass areas not connected to accessible routes. **Accessible routes need to be added to two of these tables.**
- **RESTROOMS:** There is a barrier-free vault toilet near the parking lot accessed from the concrete walk.
- **WEAVER HOUSE:** The Weaver House is a renovated historic early twentieth century building available for group rentals. It has accessible walks and ramps that provide access to the house and attached porch and deck.
- **WEDDING TREELIS:** A trellis that can be used for weddings or other activities was constructed in 2012. It is on an accessible route
- **SEATING:** An accessible bench is provided at the interpretive plaza. Other benches along the unpaved trails are not accessible.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area and along a concrete path. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**
- **INTERPRETIVE PLAZA:** A paved area with signage interpreting the history of the house and site is fully accessible.

RILEY TRAILS

Accessibility Rating: 2

- **PARKING:** Thirty-nine spaces are provided in a gravel parking area. One designated space is currently provided. **An additional space with a sign and appropriate surface needs to be provided.**
- **PATHWAYS AND ROUTES OF TRAVEL:** An accessible crushed stone path connects parking to the restrooms and to an accessible bridge over a portion of the nearby pond. The remaining trails on the site are natural surface.
- **OVERLOOKS:** The bridge offers excellent views of the lake and is accessible.
- **RESTROOMS:** Two rustic toilets are provided that meet barrier-free requirements and are on a crushed-stone accessible path.
- **FISHING:** Fishing is a popular activity on the shoreline of the small lake on the north side of the park. **Better accessibility should be considered in the long term.**

- SEATING: An accessible bench is provided along the crushed-stone path.
- TRAILHEAD: A kiosk is located near the parking area. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**

RIVERSIDE PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

Additions and renovations in 2008 addressed most barrier-free deficiencies.

- PARKING: There are three parking areas within the park: one is located near the entrance serving the western end of the park, a second serves the boat launch facility, and the last is on the far east side of the park serving the picnic shelter and riverfront. The west parking area has 12 paved spaces with an accessible space. The boat launch parking area has 43 car/trailer parking spaces and 16 car-only parking spaces. Three car parking spaces in this parking lot include two van-accessible spaces and one accessible car/trailer space. The eastern lot is newly constructed with 47 spaces, including two barrier-free spaces.
- WALKWAYS AND TRAILS: The boat launch area is connected to two of the parking lots and restrooms with asphalt pathways. Although not all of the paths meet slope requirements, fully accessible paths connect the parking areas to the boat launch, picnic tables, restrooms and other park areas. Another hard-surface pathway leads from barrier-free parking on the east end of the paved lot to the accessible fishing docks. An accessible path also connects the east parking area to the adjacent picnic shelter. Other park trails are natural surface and are not accessible.
- PICNIC TABLES: Several pedestal-based tables meeting accessibility standards are provided near the launch ramp, picnic shelter, and new western parking area, but only one is connected to hard-surface trails. **Additional accessible routes and surfacing should be added to meet requirements.**
- PICNIC SHELTER: One picnic shelter is provided which is completely accessible, including a grill and serving table. At the eight picnic tables located under the shelter, four accessible seats are provided.

Two of the four picnic tables provided at the new western parking area are accessible. Several pedestal-based tables meeting accessibility standards are provided in other areas of the park, but they are not connected to hard-surface trails.

- RESTROOMS: Two pit toilets are provided adjacent to the boat launch parking lot. The restrooms are fully accessible. An accessible portable restroom is available seasonally at the east parking area.
- BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY: The boat launch is a large, hard-surface area with concrete ramps sloping down to and below the surface of the water. Two skid pier docks are provided to assist boaters. Both docks meet accessibility standards in width, and both have ramps providing smooth access for wheelchairs and other mobility-impaired users.
- FISHING AREAS: Fishing is a popular activity along the banks of the large pond within Riverside Park and from the banks of the Grand River. Although there are many areas where grass extends to the Grand River water's edge at a gradual slope, no hard-surface walkways or docks provide accessible points for disabled anglers to approach the river. **Connecting walkways should be added.**

There is a barrier-free boardwalk and fishing platform on the edge of the large pond within the park. These improvements are accessible to people with disabilities, with a hard-surface path leading from the parking lot where accessible parking exists.

- **VIEW AREAS:** Although no expansive overlooks exist within the park, viewing the Grand River from the riverbank is a popular activity. As noted previously, no hard-surface pathways aid mobility-impaired users in gaining access to the riverfront. The park master plan illustrates a series of pathways linking elements throughout the park that will be barrier-free when implemented.
- **SEATING:** Benches are located in various locations along the riverfront. **Accommodations should be made to add some accessible benches.**
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the picnic shelter parking area. **An accessible route to the kiosk needs to be provided and additional signage to address accessibility issues should also be added.**

ROSY MOUND NATURAL AREA

Accessibility Rating: 4

Completed in 2004, improvements to the Rosy Mound Natural Area presented unique opportunities and challenges from an accessibility standpoint. The Rosy Mound Natural Area is a 160-acre site featuring 3,400 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline and rugged and pristine coastal barrier dunes. Much of the site is regulated by Michigan's Sand Dune Protection and Management Act which regulates development in legally designated Critical Dune Areas.

When developing plans for the park, accessibility and compliance with the ADA was determined to be essential to the project, with recognition of the challenges created by the steep slopes and rugged natural terrain. Other challenges are created by the lack of approved ADA standards for outdoor recreation facilities. Recognizing these challenges, the Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities & Outdoor Recreation Areas (1999), (1999 Guidelines) published by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) were utilized, and an Inclusive Recreation Consultant was hired to advise and assist with the project.

The unique characteristics of the barrier dunes between the parking area and Lake Michigan make it impracticable to make all of the trails fully accessible. The constructed elements east of the barrier dunes, however, comply with the ADA. Trails through the barrier dunes to the beach are not fully accessible due to the existence of stairs, but comply with the 1999 Guidelines. Stairs are constructed using ADA design standards, and all trail sections between stairs are fully accessible.

- **PARKING:** The parking lot at the restroom building and trailhead has a capacity of 49 vehicles. Two of the spaces are barrier-free: one located at the restrooms and one van-accessible space at the trailhead.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** There are paved paths adjacent to the parking area providing access to the restroom, picnic areas, and trail head kiosk. West of the parking area, the trail reverts to crushed stone. The 1999 Guidelines recognize that often the natural environment will prevent full compliance with certain technical provisions of the recommendations and allow for departures from the provisions if certain conditions exist. The pathways east of the primary dune were designed to meet the 1999 Guidelines and are fully accessible. Because the surface is crushed stone, there is, however, a greater difficulty factor than a paved trail

such as that at Hemlock Crossing Park. As the trail leads to the beach, there comes a point where departures from the provisions were necessary due to the very steep existing grade and impact to the natural resources. The running slope of the trail gets steep and there are areas of wooden stairs. Whenever possible, the trail returns to meet the recommended technical provisions.

A paved accessible path also provides access from Lakeshore Drive and the parallel paved non-motorized trail to the parking area facilities.

- **OVERLOOKS:** Several outstanding viewing points overlook the dune and Lake Michigan in the western dune area of the park. These are not fully accessible.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are three separate picnic areas surrounding the parking lot. None of the picnic nodes have shelter. All meet the circulation and height requirements of the ADA and all of the tables are approachable by wheelchairs at either end. The first picnic node has one table and no grill. The second has two tables and one grill and the last area has three tables and one grill.
- **RESTROOMS:** The restroom building is located on the north side of the parking lot and is constructed with one barrier-free stall in each of the men and women's restrooms. All other facilities meet ADA requirements. There is also an accessible vault toilet on the west side of the restroom building for off-season use.
- **SEATING:** Benches are provided along the crushed stone path. Most of these have companion seating locations. There are also seating on concrete walls at the connection to the trail system. Adjacent paved surfacing provides accessibility and companion seating area. Benches in the western part of the park are not fully accessible.
- **TRAILHEAD:** A kiosk is located near the parking area. It is along a paved path and provides information about trail accessibility.
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:** Several displays along the trail interpret the dune environment. One is located along the accessible crushed stone path, but the others are inaccessible as described above.
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS:** There is a drinking fountain on the west side of the restroom building that is fully compliant with the ADA. A water bottle filling station was recently added that is on a paved surface.

SPRING GROVE PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

Due to park improvements in 2000, Spring Grove Park has become much more user-friendly for those with disabilities.

- **PARKING:** The total capacity of Spring Grove Park is 90 spaces. ADA requirements are met with four accessible spaces, one of which is van-accessible.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** A hard-surface pathway connects the parking lot to the picnic building, which is the primary destination within the park. Barrier-free bituminous paths connect the parking lot and picnic building to the wedding trellis and spring in the lower part of the park. This walk also provides access to the new barrier-free play area. There are no hiking trails in this park.

- **PICNIC TABLES:** Permanent picnic tables are located at various locations within the park. **Accessible routes to a number of these should be provided.**
- **PICNIC BUILDING:** As noted previously, the park contains a large picnic building that is accessible from the parking lot by a hard-surface pathway. Of the 16 picnic tables within the picnic building, four accessible seating locations are provided.
As part of a previous transition plan, an outdoor picnic area with accessible surfacing was constructed in 2009.
- **WEDDING TRELIS:** A trellis that can be used for weddings or other activities was constructed in 2000 along with other improvements to the spring area that make the lower part of the park accessible.
- **RESTROOMS:** The park restrooms are located adjoining the picnic building and are fully accessible.
- **PLAY EQUIPMENT:** A barrier-free play area is located along an accessible route of travel west of the picnic building and uses engineered wood fiber safety surfacing which meets barrier-free standards. The other, older play equipment located in the park offers few opportunities for disabled users and is not accessible via a hard-surface path.
- **GAME AND SPORTS AREAS:** Horseshoe pits are provided in a grass/dirt area which is not served by a hard-surface pathway. **An accessible route should be provided.** A very informal ball field on the very east end of the park is not accessible via a pathway, but it will be removed or improved when future park development occurs in that area as per the park master plan.
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS:** There is one drinking fountain located on a hard surface near the picnic building that meets accessibility requirements.

TUNNEL PARK

Accessibility Rating: 3

Tunnel Park has undergone many accessibility improvements since 1989. The assessment highlights those areas where additional improvements are required. Overall, the park is fairly accessible with the exception of the beach. As with other Lake Michigan beaches, the steep slopes associated with waterfront dune formations limit accessibility.

- **PARKING:** Total parking capacity, not including the overflow area, is 270 cars; this capacity requires seven accessible spaces with one to be van accessible. Seven accessible spaces currently exist, including two at each picnic shelter and three at the restroom/concession area. Two van-accessible spaces are presently provided.
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Hard-surface pathways in the core of the park provide barrier-free access to most of the key use areas. Exceptions are the dune top, which is accessible only by long stairways, and the beach, where steep slopes and sand limit accessibility. A small portion of trails in the dunes at the south end of the park are unpaved, but all other trails are paved or boardwalk. It should be noted that old wood stairways were recently replaced. The new stairs meet ADA tread and riser ratios and have appropriate railings to maximize access.
- **OVERLOOKS:** A viewing deck is fully accessible via the dune tunnel to the Lake Michigan

shoreline overlooking the beach . The other prime view area, located on the dune top, is not accessible due to steep stairways.

- **PICNIC TABLES:** There are 28 permanent individual picnic tables located throughout the park. Five of these located on the dune top are not accessible due to the stairs needed to get to them. Of the remaining 23 table, three are located at the restroom plaza and are fully accessible. Two others are also accessible via short walkways from accessible parking. **It would be desirable to add access to additional tables in other areas of the park.**
- **PICNIC SHELTERS:** Two picnic shelters in the park are both fully accessible by asphalt pathways. The northern shelter has twelve permanent tables with eight accessible seating locations. The south shelter has moveable tables. One large group grill is provided on a hard surface adjacent to each shelter with the proper height and circulation requirements for use by a person in a wheelchair.
- **RESTROOMS:** A major renovation to the restroom building in 2007 provided for full barrier-free features including a new family restroom and changing areas.
- **CONCESSIONS:** Vending machines are located on the outside of the restroom building accessible from the paved plaza area.
- **PLAY EQUIPMENT:** A large children’s playground and adjoining dune climb are located along a hard-surface pathway. A barrier-free area with rubberized surfacing makes the play structure accessible to people with disabilities. Other play equipment located in the playground is not accessible due to the sand surfacing. A steep slope and sand also make the dune climb inaccessible to persons with disabilities.
- **SWIMMING AREA/SUNBATHING:** Although accessible walkways lead to viewing areas of the beach, as with the other dune parks, the steep incline requires stairs to access the beach/waterfront, which presents a significant barrier to disabled users.
- **SEATING:** Benches are provided in several locations. Two benches at the restroom plaza are accessible with companion seating. Seven at the play area are directly adjacent to paved surfaces allowing companion seating areas. There are three benches in grass areas that are not accessible.
- **GAME AND SPORTS AREAS:** Four volleyball courts are located in a grass area on the north side of the park, and two sets of horseshoe pits are placed south of the play area. No hard-surface pathways provide access to the courts for spectators or users. **Accessible routes should be provided.**
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE:** A set of three interpretive signs are located at the overlook and are at an appropriate height, however it is not feasible to provide an accessible route to this part of the park.
- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS/FOOT WASHES:** Tunnel Park contains two pedestal-type drinking fountains. One is located on the patio in front of the restroom building. The second fountain is located on a hard-surface path near the playground.

Tunnel Park also has two barrier-free foot washes, which are located near the restrooms along the walk that leads to the beach.
- **TELEPHONE:** A public pay phone exists in an accessible location and meets accessibility requirements.

UPPER MACATAWA NATURAL AREA—84TH AVE.

Accessibility Rating: 3

- **PARKING:** The 34-space lot off from 84th Avenue was paved in 2015 and contains two accessible spaces
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Concrete walkways lead from the parking lot to the restroom, picnic shelter and other amenities. From the 84th Avenue lot, a half-mile paved bicycle and pedestrian path leads to a seating and overlook area on top of a bluff overlooking the Macatawa River valley. Although the elevation change is significant, this trail was carefully designed to meet barrier-free standards for trail slopes. In addition, another two miles of paved accessible trail including wooden bridges was added in 2015. This trail connects to existing accessible roadside trails at each end.

The UNNA has several miles of additional trails for walking and Mt. biking that are natural surface or mowed.

- **PARKING:** A crushed stone parking area is provided, serving the northeastern portion of the site from 76th Avenue. The lot contains 34 spaces and provides two marked barrier-free spaces with ramps to the accessible paths. The existing surface is firm and stable.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Three permanent picnic tables are provided. Two of the three tables are accessible.
- **PICNIC SHELTER:** A small non-reservable shelter is located near the parking lot and is accessible via a paved path.
- **RESTROOMS:** There is an accessible vault toilet on a paved trail.
- **OVERLOOKS:** A viewing area overlooking the Macatawa River valley is accessible via the paved non-motorized trail.
- **SEATING:** Accessible benches are provided along the paved trail and at the overlook.
- **TRAILHEAD:** An information kiosk is provided along an accessible paths. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**
- **INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE:** A set of three interpretive signs are located at the overlook and are at an appropriate height.

UPPER MACATAWA NATURAL AREA—76TH AVE.

Accessibility Rating: 3

- **PARKING:** A crushed stone parking area is provided, serving the northeastern portion of the site from 76th Avenue. The lot contains 34 spaces and provides two marked barrier-free spaces with ramps to the accessible paths. **The existing surface is fairly firm and stable but could be improved.**
- **WALKWAYS AND TRAILS:** Paved accessible paths lead from the 76th Avenue parking area to the nearby wetland overlooks and to the bridge over Dutchman's Creek. The remaining trails accessed from this area are natural surface.
- **PICNIC TABLES:** Three permanent picnic tables are provided. One of three tables is accessible.

- **RESTROOMS:** There is an accessible vault toilet on a paved trail.
- **OVERLOOKS:** Two areas overlooking and adjacent wetland are accessible via paved paths.
- **SEATING:** Accessible benches are provided at the two overlook locations.
- **TRAILHEAD:** An information kiosk is provided along an accessible paths. **Additional signage to address accessibility issues should be provided.**

PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

As noted previously in this document, the OCPRC offers a variety of programs and special events within the park system. In addition to physical access, program accessibility is an important part of responding to ADA and other accessibility requirements.

A basic consideration in the provision of programs is the physical location for the activity and the accessibility of that particular area or facility. Whenever possible, accessible County facilities are used for program locations. Equally important are the methods of advertising, registration procedures and adaptive aides or techniques used to accommodate people with various disabilities. Adequate staff training is needed to become familiar with the ways of accommodating different disabilities.

The OCPRC should review its program advertising and registration procedures to ensure that they do not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Training should be provided to educate staff regarding ways to accommodate various disabilities. As the Commission's program offerings are expanded, additional staff education should be provided to ensure that new program offerings are designed to be accessible to all people.

EMPLOYEE ACCOMMODATIONS

The OCPRC also understands that accessibility is required for its employees to fulfill their job responsibilities. Many areas of the parks, although fully accessible to the general public may not have features that make them accessible to all employees in their "behind-the-scenes" service roles. Ottawa County Parks is prepared to make reasonable modifications and accommodations for these employees as needs become evident.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS & COSTS

Table 11.2 details modifications required throughout the Ottawa County Park System to meet compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, cost estimates have been added for each modification required.

Table 11.2 only covers costs associated with facility modifications, and does not identify costs associated with staff training and related costs required to meet ADA program and administrative compliance. These costs will be absorbed in the Parks Commission's annual operating budget which includes funds for employee training and conferences.

As stated previously, final guidelines for ADA accessibility relating to outdoor recreation areas and facilities have not yet been approved and adopted. The recommendations and costs outlined in this report are intended to bring the County Park System into compliance with known ADA requirements. Additional review will be required following the release of new guidelines which may identify further modifications and additional costs.

Table 11.2 ADA Transition Plan/ Facility Modifications List

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT LIST

Park Name (Developed Parks Only)	IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	REQUIRED	DESIRED	YEAR	COST/COMMENTS
Adams Street Landing	Add accessible parking surface and sign	X		2017	\$500
	Add accessible walk connection to paved trail		X		
	Add alternate launch site sign in future		X		
Connor Bayou	Add accessible surface at grills	X		2019	\$500
Crockery Creek Natural Area	Add accessible parking surface and sign	X		2017	\$300
	Add accessibility information and path to trailhead	X		2017	\$200
Deer Creek Park	Add accessible parking surface	X		2018	\$500
	Add information about alternate launch site	X		2018	\$100
	Add accessible walk to picnic tables	X		2018	\$750
	Add accessible walk to restroom		X		With future improvements
Eastmanville Bayou	Add accessible parking surface and sign at launch	X		2020	\$500
	Add information about alternate launch site	X		2020	\$100
	Add accessible picnic table	X		2020	\$750
Eastmanville Farm	Add accessible parking surface and signs	X		2025	\$1,200
	Add barrier-free picnic tables	X		2025	\$750
	Add barrier-free trail segment		X		With future improvements
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2018	\$200
Grand Ravines - North					No projects
Grand Ravines - South					No projects
Grand River Open Space	Add accessible parking surface and signs	X		2026	\$1,000
	Add accessible surface to site elements	X		2026	\$500
Grand River Park	Modify boardwalk railing for fishing	X		2018	\$1,000
	Add accessible surface to picnic table	X		2018	\$500
	Upgrade playground		X		
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2018	\$200
Grose Park	Add accessible walks to sports activities	X		2025	\$2,000
	Upgrade playground to add accessible features		X		
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2018	\$200
Hager Park	Add accessible walks to various site elements	X		2017	\$5,000
	Modify bathrooms in rental buildings	X		2017	\$5,000
	Add accessible tables to patio space	X		2017	\$2,000
	Replace trail bridges		X		
	Upgrade play area		X		
Hemlock Crossing	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2024	\$200
	Add accessible walks to outdoor classrooms	X		2024	\$2,000
Historic Ottawa Beach Parks	Change portable toilet to accessible design	X		2017	\$0

Park Name (Developed Parks Only)	IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	REQUIRED	DESIRED	YEAR	COST/COMMENTS
Kirk Park	Add signage to direct users to accessible beach site	X		2017	\$100
	Add accessible route to picnic tables	X		2021	\$1,000
	Add accessible pad for drinking fountain	X		2021	Part of future project
	Add accessible trail segment in backdune		X		
	Upgrade playground including accessible route	X		2021	Part of future project
	Provide accessible route to lodge	X		2021	Part of future project
North Beach Park	Upgrade restroom stalls and signage		X		
North Ottawa Dunes	Add accessible trail segment		X		
	Add companion seating locations at benches	X		2022	\$200
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2022	\$200
Olive Shores					No projects
Paw Paw Park West					No projects
Paw Paw Park East					No projects
Pigeon Creek Park	Add accessible parking surface and sign	X		2018	\$600
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2018	\$200
Pine Bend	Add accessible route to picnic tables	X		2019	\$500
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2021	\$200
Riley Trails	Add barrier-free parking surface and signs	X		2021	\$600
	Add accessible fishing location		X		
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2021	\$200
Riverside Park	Add accessible walkway along riverfront		X		
	Add accessible route to picnic tables	X		2023	\$1,000
	Add accessible benches	X		2023	\$1,000
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2023	\$200
Rosy Mound					No projects
Spring Grove Park	Add accessible walks to horseshoes, ball field		X		With Phase II Improvements
	Add accessible route to picnic tables	X		2022	\$1,000
	Restroom Modifications	X		2017	\$100
	Rental building kitchen modifications	X		2017	\$500
Tunnel Park	Add accessible route to picnic tables	X		2020	\$2,000
	Add accessible walks to volleyball, horseshoes	X		2020	\$1,500
UMNA - 84th Ave.	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2018	\$200
UMNA - 76th Ave.	Add accessible parking surface	X		2018	\$300
	Add accessibility information to trailhead	X		2018	\$200
TOTAL					\$34,750

SECTION SIX: GOALS & OBJECTIVES



CHAPTER 12 | MISSION, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

The following mission statement was prepared to provide the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission (OCPRC) with a long-term sense of purpose and direction. It is not expected to change dramatically over the years but to serve as the foundation for the OCPRCs activities as Ottawa County moves into the 21st Century and beyond.

THE COMMISSION'S MISSION

The OCPRC enhances quality of life for residents and visitors, by preserving parks and open spaces and providing outdoor and natural resource-based recreation and education experiences.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To carry out its mission, the OCPRC has identified four basic goals. For each goal, a series of objectives is outlined. The goals and objectives correspond to the recreation needs identified earlier in this plan and will provide solid direction for the following chapter, which identifies the Commission's specific action plan.

GOAL 1: Preserve and manage park and open space lands which protect and enhance significant landscapes and natural communities, to benefit both people and wildlife.

Objectives:

- Provide a high level of stewardship for natural lands.
- Identify high-quality natural resource features in Ottawa County and seek to preserve key parcels and interconnected natural lands through establishment of new parks and open spaces.
- Advocate for improved water-quality levels for all regional waterways and water bodies.

GOAL 2: Provide high-quality outdoor and natural-resource based recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of all levels of ability.

Objectives:

- Provide a wide range of outdoor and natural resource-based recreation opportunities and facilities to meet identified needs in the long-range parks and open space plan.
- Identify areas within Ottawa County not adequately served by county park lands and facilities, and expand recreation opportunities in these areas when natural resource features suitable for county park development are available.
- Maintain high standards for maintenance and operation of all park and open space lands and facilities.
- Provide lands and facilities which are accessible to individuals of all levels of ability (comply with and exceed standards established by the Americans with Disabilities Act with a goal to achieve universal accessibility).

GOAL 3: Promote understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural history of Ottawa County and awareness of Commission-operated facilities, programs, and services.

Objectives:

- Provide a wide range of educational and outdoor recreation programs and special events for people of all ages, interests and abilities.
- Provide interpretive facilities for both natural and cultural history at park lands and open spaces.
- Promote good stewardship of county park lands and open spaces.
- Utilize programs and special events to promote awareness and use of the park and open space system.

GOAL 4: Ensure organizational sustainability.

Objectives:

- Continue to emphasize responsible financial management and transparency in all aspects of park system administration.
- Maintain and operate the park system in a cost-effective manner which minimizes environmental impacts and demonstrates organizational commitment to conservation values.
- Emphasize a strong communications and marketing program to make the public aware of the lands, facilities and programs offered by the Parks Commission.
- Maintain a diversified financial base for both short- and long-term development, expansion, operation and maintenance of the park system
 - Leverage tax dollars whenever possible by maximizing grant funds and private donations.
 - Implement user fees where appropriate and consistent with Commission policies and in a socially responsible manner.
 - Expand partnerships to help achieve identified goals.
 - Sustain the dedicated parks millage as the base funding source for maintenance and operation.

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PROGRAM

CHAPTER 13 | RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following chapter details recommended actions for the Ottawa County park system as a whole and for each individual park or open space site. Actions that relate to the park system as a whole or to all individual sites in general are provided first, with more detailed information following.

System-wide items and issues are divided into the following categories:

- General Land Acquisition Goals and Strategies
- General Planning, Design, and Operational Issues

More specific land acquisition, park improvement and park planning needs are identified next, with recommended actions divided by regional greenway initiative areas as follows:

- Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway
- Grand River Greenway
- Pigeon River Greenway
- Macatawa River Greenway
- General Parks, Open Space Lands and Trails

Where applicable, issues related to each park and open space site are further described in terms of the following subcategories:

- Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities
- Planning Strategies
- Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements
- Operational Issues

It is recognized that many of these recommendations will need to be prioritized as opportunities and funding issues become evident over time. Specifically, realistic projections of proposed funding will narrow the scope of efforts and improvements considered to be prudent and feasible. The Capital Improvement Schedule, provided at the end of this chapter, outlines the current financial projections and their impact on proposed capital improvements for the next ten years.

Additionally, it should be noted that the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission (OCPRC) seeks to be proactive in identifying new issues and concerns and to be responsive to those needs. Therefore, efforts of the OCPRC will go beyond the recommended actions identified herein to address new issues as they arise.

GENERAL LAND ACQUISITION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

As presented in Chapter 9, the OCPRC considers a number of factors in determining the need to acquire additional land for the park system. One of those factors is a guideline of 20 acres per 1,000 population, which the OCPRC adopted to provide an indicator of park and open space needs relative to the size of the Ottawa County's population. This guideline suggests the size of the park system (6,455 acres) is adequate to meet current needs but a slight deficit (168 acres) will develop by 2030 based on projected population growth.

Other factors the OCPRC considers are the acreage needed to accomplish established greenway goals and the optimal size of its parks to maximize both habitat and recreation potential. It is estimated that completion of the Grand River Greenway including land proposed to optimize the

size of the Bend Area will require acquisition of approximately 572 acres. Land required to complete the OCPRC's defined role in the Macatawa Greenway is estimated at 46 acres. Land required to maximize the size and scope of existing parks is estimated in the range of 700 to 2,400 acres. Many of the properties included in the higher acreage estimate are not likely to be available in the near future. However, if the opportunity to acquire any of these becomes available the Parks Commission will want to explore all possible means to add the lands to the park system in the long-term interest of Ottawa County. Funding limitations will be an issue, however, if opportunities do arise.

Over the next five year period, the OCPRC will seek to acquire the 572 acres needed to complete the Grand River Greenway including land needed to expand the Bend Area site plus the 46 acres to complete Ottawa County's portion of the Macatawa River Greenway. Success in reaching this goal of 618 acres will depend in part on fundraising success plus the willingness of various landowners to work with the Parks Department on the land transactions. The OCPRC will also seek to expand current park and open space sites as opportunities arise contingent on its ability to secure funds needed for purchase from both internal and external sources. The 2016 budget calls for acquisition of 88 acres to expand existing park and open space lands. This 88 acres combined with the 618 of proposed greenway land acquisitions would result in the expansion of the park system by a total of 706 acres during the next five years if successful as proposed.

GENERAL PLANNING, DESIGN, & OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Although each park site and facility has its own unique set of concerns, several issues applicable to all county parks properties and activities will be addressed in the next few years and beyond.

A. Maintain Up-to-date Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plans

The OCPRC recognizes that the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is an evolving document which must be updated on a regular basis to reflect changing needs and opportunities. The Commission will monitor the plan and prepare updates as needed.

B. High Quality Maintenance and Operations

The importance of providing the highest quality maintenance and operations has been a top goal of the Parks Commission since its establishment. The challenge to maintain high standards in an expanding park system is particularly difficult. Special funding sources available for capital outlay expenses are not available for operational costs and the tendency is to fall behind in operational capacity. Through this strategy, the Parks Commission recognizes the difficulty in maintaining high operational standards and identifies the need to properly plan for operational support before proceeding with development.

C. Security

Maintaining a safe, family atmosphere within the Ottawa County Park system is an important concern of the OCPRC. The OCPRC receives excellent support and cooperation from the Ottawa County Sheriff Department on all issues related to enforcement in the county park system. Although park user surveys, comment cards and records of incidents within the parks do not suggest a significant problem with security, the Commission would like to be proactive in addressing security-related issues.

Park rules and regulations were most recently updated in 2011, increasing the ability of law enforcement officials to address problems within the park system. Additional review should occur regularly to ensure that park rules and regulations provide the best tools possible for necessary

enforcement activity in the park system.

Ongoing efforts should be made to analyze and address security-related issues within the County Park System. The Parks Commission will continue to actively seek advice and input from the Ottawa County Sheriff Department, the Ottawa County Prosecuting Attorney and other law enforcement officials regarding methods for maintaining a high level of security.

D. Natural Resources Management and Land Management Planning

In order to be good stewards of parks-managed properties, the OCPRC, led by its Natural Resources Management Supervisor (position added in 2011), is working toward the development and implementation of a comprehensive Land Management Plan over the next five years. This plan will be science-based and will be reviewed periodically by area resource people that are experts in different areas of land management. The Land Management Plan will include, but is not limited, to the following strategies.

Forest Management: Along with district foresters, OCPRC has conducted forest inventories on several key properties. This inventory will be continued. The plan will make recommendations on various forest management options that focus on the protection and management of the diversity of flora and fauna in parks forests.

Wildlife Management: In addition to continuing the ongoing collection of data on the diversity and distribution of wildlife in the parks system, the plan will address any perceived wildlife problems and make recommendations to address these problems. The plan will also make recommendations on managing for specific species.

Invasive Species: Invasive plant and animals are a serious threat and problem for Ottawa County Parks. Parks staff has been targeting selected exotic species since 2000, primarily garlic mustard, phragmites and spotted knapweed. This plan will address the growing list of invasive species and make recommendations on how best to control them. In addition to invasives that are already present, parks must be prepared for looming problems including beech bark disease and the hemlock wooly adelgid.

Natural Feature Inventories: In order to provide meaningful management strategies, it is important to continue to conduct accurate natural feature inventories of parks properties, especially flora. All listed species should be protected.

Restoration: The restoration of natural communities on parks property is becoming more frequent. Examples are the native grassland restoration at Grand River Park, Hager Creek restoration and wetland restoration at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area. This plan will identify areas that would benefit from restoration in the park system. Funding for this work is identified in Project R63.

Monitoring: Necessary to evaluate the success of many land management requirements; when applicable, monitoring will be built into various projects and programs.

Partnering with local and regional partners is an important part of keeping abreast of current best management practices and related land management projects. When reasonable, Ottawa County Parks will work with local and regional partners to manage the natural resources at a landscape scale and to leverage resources.

E. Use of Volunteers

Ottawa County Parks is committed to the use of volunteers in managing the park system and has adopted the following philosophy:

Volunteers from across Ottawa County and West Michigan serve an important, integral role in helping the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission achieve its mission of enhancing the quality of life for County residents and visitors by working with staff to preserve parks and open spaces and provide natural resource based recreation and educational opportunities.

The Parks Commission is committed to investing in the volunteer program with the belief that volunteers will contribute time, talent, skills and leadership to enhance the service level offered through the county park system.

F. Regional Trails and Non-Motorized Pathways

As indicated in Chapter 10, the OCPRC is committed to expanding regional trails and destination recreational trails within Ottawa County. There are many examples of recent projects that exhibit this commitment including recent extension of the Musketawa Trail into Kent County, ongoing management of the Ottawa County portion of the Musketawa Trail, investment in the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail through Zeeland and Jamestown Townships, development of the Macatawa Greenway Trail segment through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area which links to the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail, and efforts to develop the first segments of the Grand River Greenway Trail.

Ottawa County Parks will remain committed to playing a lead role in the development of regional trails within Ottawa County, particularly when those trails link to OCPRC lands and facilities. The OCPRC is highly committed to the establishment of non-motorized trails along and within the greenway corridors, specifically for the Grand and Macatawa Rivers. It will continue to seek partnerships with local units of government and other groups in the development of these non-motorized greenway trails.

G. Low Environmental Impact and Sustainable Design

The OCPRC was founded with the goal of protecting and preserving significant natural lands in Ottawa County. This ideal has and will continue to guide all aspects of park planning including acquisition priorities, planning, and park facility implementation. Specifically, park facilities are to be constructed in ways that limit disturbance to natural features and, if possible, enhance or restore them. Park facilities and amenities will be implemented utilizing best practices and with a consideration for the long-term sustainability of the constructed element and its surrounding environment. Use of local, recycled, and renewable materials will be encouraged. Implementation of energy saving technology such as LED lighting has been and will continue to be a priority. Although LEED certification likely will not be sought for all future improvements, the recent completion of the Nature Education Center as LEED gold certified shows the OCPRC's commitment to this goal and serves as a model for future improvements.

H. Accessibility Improvements/Universal Design

Chapter 11 identifies accessibility improvements required within the county park system to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other desired improvements related to accessibility of park facilities. A comprehensive list of proposed improvements is shown in Figure 11.2.

The OCPRC also recognizes the need to go beyond the minimum requirements of the law to seek what has been defined as “universal design” - the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Although many sites within the park system create significant obstacles to meeting this goal (e.g., the steep and high slopes of dune environments), the OCPRC is committed to making a good-faith

effort to serve users of all physical abilities at all park sites. Therefore, principles of universal design will be considered for all future construction and renovations.

I. Visibility and Public Relations

Visibility, name recognition, and public awareness of county park facilities and programs is a critical aspect to the overall management and success of Ottawa County Parks.

While public recognition of county parks and differentiation between which unit of government manages specific properties has improved, there is a lack of awareness of educational and recreational programming offered to the community. Ottawa County Parks will continue to focus efforts on promoting parks and programs to residents – both new and long-term in a variety of ways:

- Redesign old and outdated kiosk signage
- Expand use of county-wide email marketing software (GovDelivery) to deliver Parks news and press releases
- Further improvement to Parks website
- More frequent community events
- Increase engagement with the general public using a variety of social media tools
- Frequent interaction with local media
- Identification and nurturing of key communications partners (e.g. local schools, bloggers, photographers, visitors bureaus, welcoming committees, etc.).
- Reaching out to underserved populations.

Surveys have shown that many residents, including avid parks supporters, are unaware of the parks millage. With the millage up for renewal in 2016, there will be an ongoing effort to connect the lands and recreational experiences the public enjoys to the funding source.

Tourism is a major industry in West Michigan. Ottawa County Parks has concentrated communications on county residents, but can improve partnership and cross-communications with local and state-wide tourism campaigns. Because of the very high quality and variety of its park lands, Ottawa County Parks has an opportunity to be a well-known park system in the state.

Improvements in communications since the 2011 plan include: improved road signs, including a large highway sign on US-31 for the Nature Education Center, updated trail signage, creation of a parks brochure, improved website functionality (e.g. online event calendar), regular and structured use of social media, and the hiring of a full-time communications specialist.

J. Four C's Initiative

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, at the recommendation of the County Administrator, has established the Four C's Initiative as key strategy for Ottawa County government. The Four C's include: Customer Service; Cultural Intelligence; Communication; and Creativity. All Ottawa County employees have opportunities for training in these areas with a goal to delivery government services in Ottawa County in the most effective, creative way possible, with outstanding customer service and a high level of cultural sensitivity. The Parks Commission embraces this initiative and is committed to take the steps necessary to create the culture in the department that fully supports all aspects of this initiative.

K. Outdoor Education Programming

As a natural resource-based park system, it is important that Ottawa County Parks educate park users and the general public on the natural features found in the parks—both to enhance the enjoyment of the park visitors and to foster respect for and protection of the natural features. Nature

interpretive programming is based at the Nature Education Center located at Hemlock Crossing but conducts programs throughout the park system. The following vision statement describes the OCPRC's commitment to interpretive programming:

“Through interpretive programming, we hope to provide people a positive experience interacting with nature in order to initiate and encourage further exploration, and develop an emotional connection with nature that will lead to a wider perspective of their sense of place in the environment, and promote a greater understanding and attitude of responsible stewardship.”

LAKE MICHIGAN COASTAL GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The OCPRC recognizes Lake Michigan beaches are the county's top recreation attraction and the coastal dunes are one of its most unique natural resources. With the acquisition of the Olive Shores property in 2008, the Commission also realizes that the opportunities for acquisition of additional shoreline of sufficient size (recognizing a general guideline of 500 feet minimum frontage) are essentially non-existent outside of a unique and unforeseeable course of events. However, it will continue to seek opportunities to acquire additional Lake Michigan access as per OCPRC goals, through expansion of existing Lake Michigan park sites and by exploring other possible means of expanding lake access.

Planning Strategies: The OCPRC will continue efforts to study the coastal corridor to better identify opportunities for habitat protection, public access to shoreline, trail linkages and to achieve other greenway goals.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: The OCPRC will work with local governments, the Road Commission and other entities to improve and expand trail connections between greenway park sites. Further expansion of a widened road shoulder along Lakeshore Drive similar to what was completed in 2004 and 2015 would be an example of a desirable project to meet this objective.

B. North Ottawa Dunes

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: At the time of initial acquisition and through the master planning of this 500-acre site, the idea of expanding the site by adding a key 80-acre inholding on the eastern edge of the property through a land trade and donation from Spring Lake Township has been an important priority. Ottawa County Parks should continue to pursue this property in cooperation with the township or with other property owners and groups as opportunities become available (Project A2). In addition, the Commission should be open to other opportunities to expand the site into adjacent undeveloped lands, some of which are already in public ownership.

Planning Strategies: Funded with assistance from the Coastal Management Program through the MDNR, a comprehensive master plan process was completed for this site in 2007 (Figure 13.1). The process included extensive public input and resulted in a detailed plan that balances public use and natural resource preservation. Some additional work has also been completed to evaluate possible trail connections to City of Grand Haven Dune property and the Kitchell-Lindquist Dunes to the south (Project A21). The Commission should continue to monitor land ownership and development plans in those areas to take advantage of opportunities to create new connections.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: A comprehensive system of natural surface trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, linking P.J. Hoffmaster State Park to North Beach Park, Coast Guard Park and Spring Lake Township property, was implemented in 2008. The project included trail signage, a trailhead constructed in cooperation with the city of Ferrysburg in Coast Guard Park, and an extensive system of stairs and boardwalks connecting to North Beach Park. Additional improvements as called for in the master plan, including paved trails extending along the eastern border of the site as well as a new northern vehicle access point (Project D5), should be developed as the final disposition of additional park land is determined. Some renovations to existing facilities are also anticipated (Project R25).

Operational Issues: Efforts to stabilize the large moving dune adjacent to and formerly part of North Beach Park need to be monitored for effectiveness and needed corrective action.

Figure 13.1 - North Ottawa Dunes Master Plan



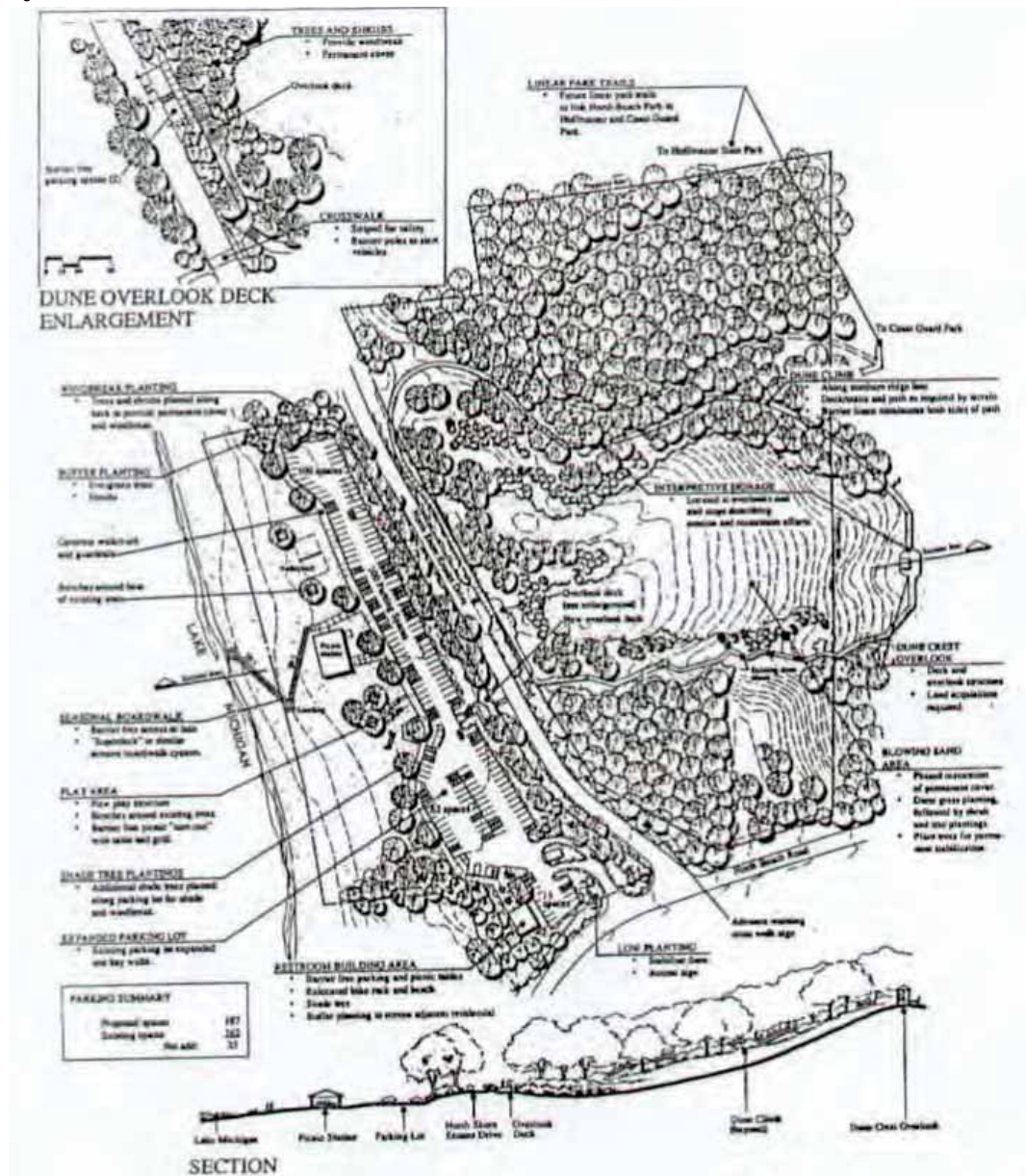
C. North Beach Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although bordered by cottages and homes with limited and expensive expansion opportunities, the Parks Commission will be alert for opportunities to add valuable lakefront and acreage to the park. With the addition of the adjacent North Ottawa Dunes property, North Beach Park has in essence been expanded substantially to include trails, boardwalks, and overlooks in the nearby dunes.

Planning Strategies: Improvements to North Beach Park including those in the adjacent North Ottawa Dunes substantially completed the master plan for this park (Figure 13.2). Master Plan updates should be completed if and when conditions at the site require significant adjustments.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Major improvements have been completed. Ottawa County Parks should continue to evaluate use patterns and trends for possible desired or needed facilities. Renovations to existing facilities are anticipated (Projects R26, R27, R28, R64).

Figure 13.2 - North Beach Park Master Plan



E. Kirk Park

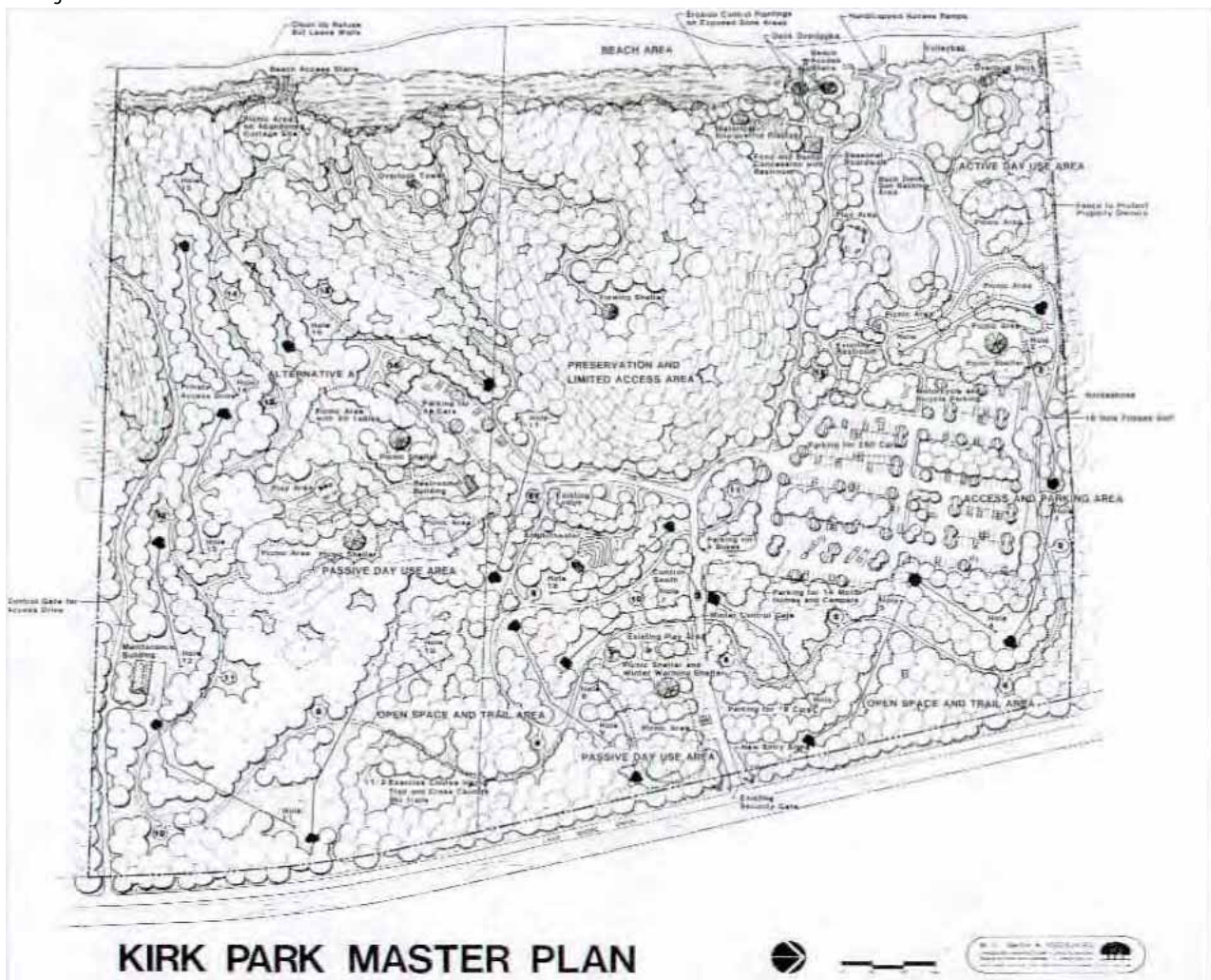
Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although bordered by cottages and homes with limited expansion opportunities, the OCPRC will be alert for opportunities to add valuable acreage to the park.

Planning Strategies: There is a need to update the Kirk Park master plan as shown in Figure 13.4, as several elements are no longer considered desirable (Project P4). Consideration should also be given to timeframes for improving an existing pedestrian easement linking Kirk Park to the Hiawatha Forest Open Space land, located east of the park.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Improvements to the trail system including the addition of on-grade stairs in steep portions of the dunes and a beach stairway at the southern boundary of the site were added in 2006. The map system for the trails was recently upgraded and modifications made to the Kirk Park Lodge to enhance accessibility. Many of the existing park facilities were developed in the early 1990's and are reaching the end of the useful lifespan. Several renovation projects are anticipated (Projects R19 - R24).

Operational Issues: An area of beach designated for off-leash dogs was recently added. Rule enforcement issues as well as adjustments related to Lake Michigan water levels will need to be monitored.

Figure 13.4 - Kirk Park Master Plan



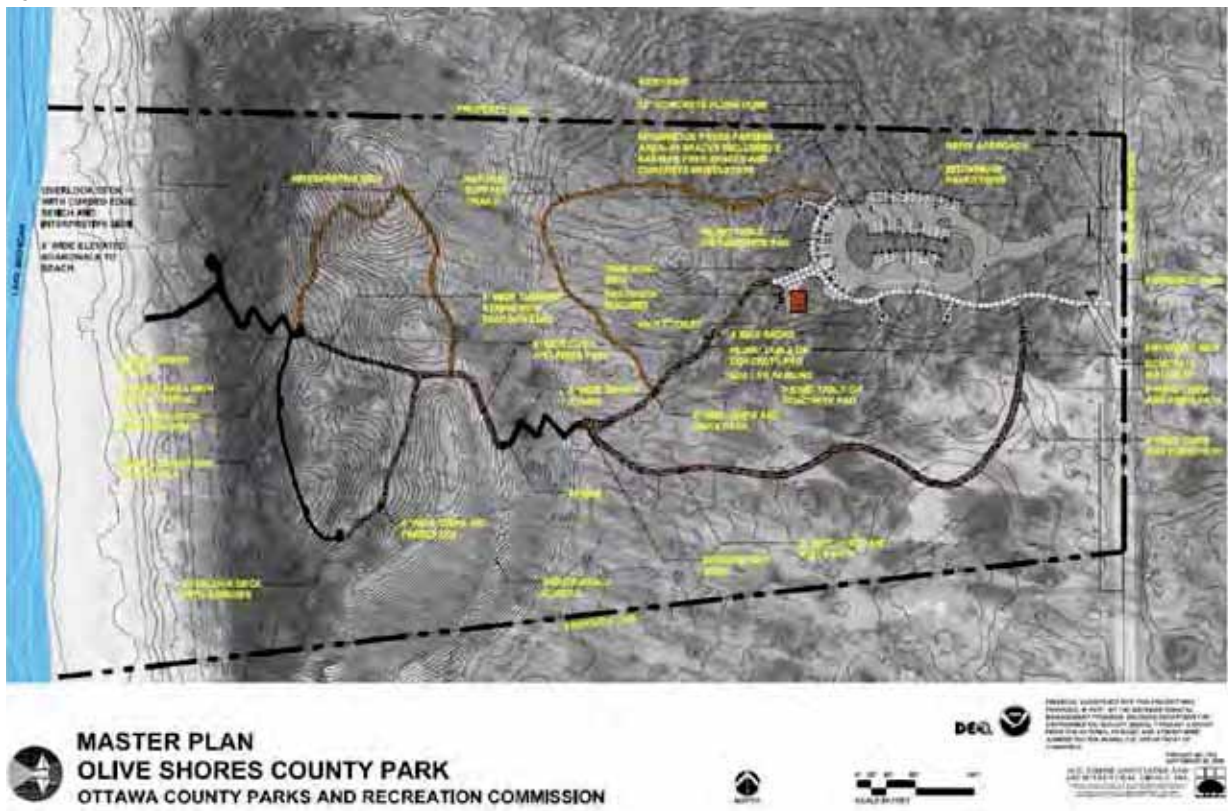
F. Olive Shores

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although this site has limited expansion opportunities, the OCPRC will be alert for opportunities to add acreage to the park if it becomes available.

Planning Strategies: A master plan for the site was completed in 2009 (Figure 10.5) showing all proposed public-access improvements. Work to link the park site to the bike trail on Lakeshore Drive would be desirable.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Full park development in accordance with the master plan was completed in 2011. No major additional improvements are expected, although maintenance on the parking lot is anticipated (Project R29).

Figure 13.5 -Olive Shores Master Plan



G. Tunnel Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: This site is surrounded by residential development and the local water plant. Additions to the park are therefore unlikely. The OCPRC completed an extension of its lease agreement with Holland Board of Public Works for 200 feet of Lake Michigan frontage in 2014. This lease should be maintained as long as needed for park purposes.

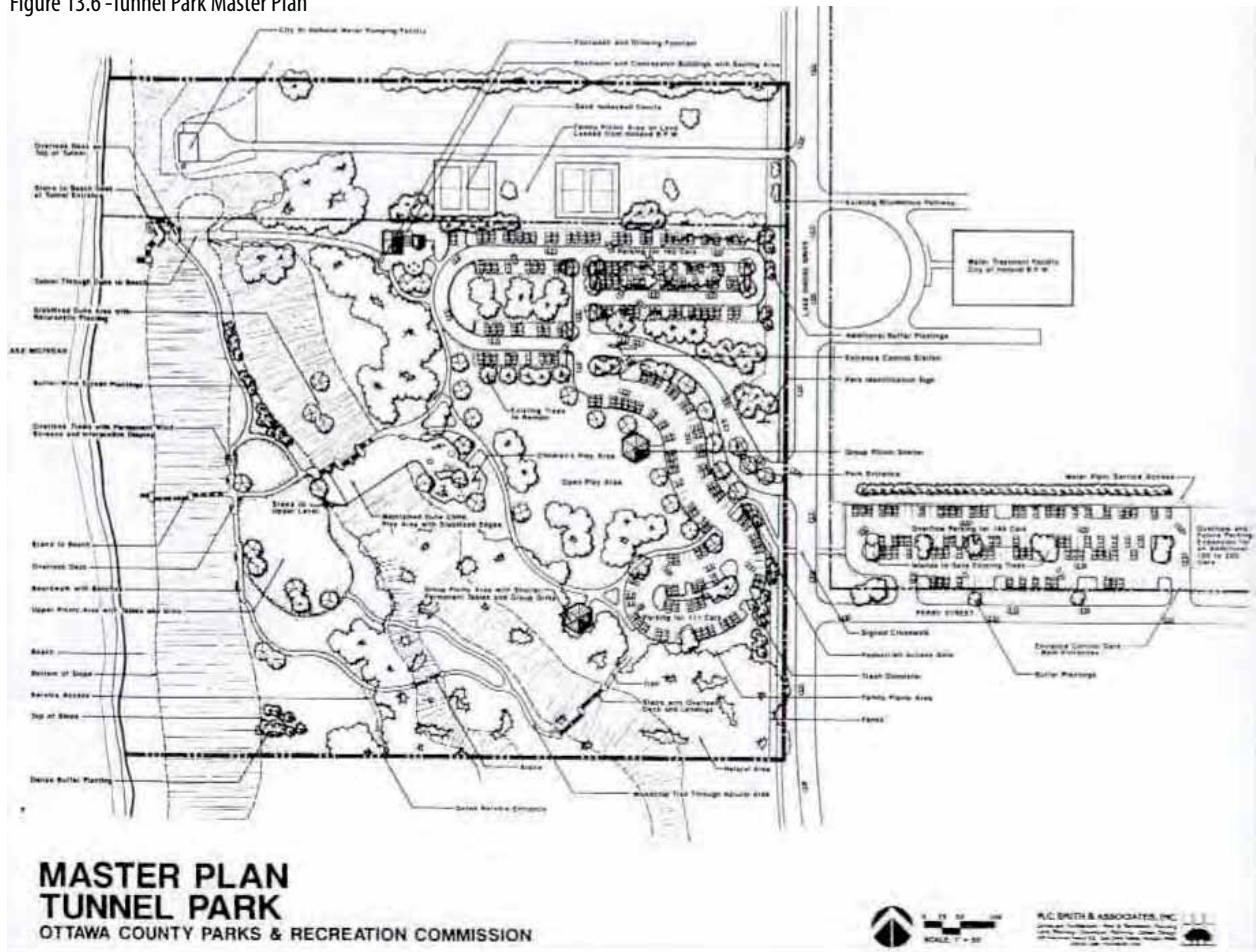
Planning Strategies: The OCPRC will maintain an up-to-date master plan for the park. See current plan graphic in Figure 10.6.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Restroom improvements including the addition of changing rooms were completed 2006. Both the playground (2013) and dune top decks and stairways (2015) were recently renovated. Since most original improvements to this park are now almost 20 years old, renovations have been included in the capital improvement

plan (Projects R33 - R36). **Operational Issues:** Facilities should continue to be carefully monitored for additional needed renovations.

H. Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (Park 12)

Figure 13.6 -Tunnel Park Master Plan



Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Limited acquisition of key small parcels may be desirable to maximize the potential of the park master plan, especially with regard to parking and vehicle circulation issues related to Mt. Pisgah and Holland State Park. It may also be desirable to seek the purchase of the remaining private parcel at the Parkside Marina (Project A22).

Planning Strategies: The current park master plan (see Figures 10.7 and 10.8) was completed in March 2004 following extensive public review and comment. In August of 2005, the 20th Circuit Court approved an agreement (Stipulation and Order) between Ottawa County and the West Michigan Park Association (WMPA), which cleared the way for implementation of the master plan.

A feasibility study was also completed in 2011 for future improvements to the marina area currently leased to Parkside Marina along the Lake Macatawa shoreline. This area was intentionally left open on the master plan pending further analysis.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Significant progress has been made in implementing the park master plan. These projects include the Black Lake Boardwalk waterfront walkway improvements, the Ottawa Beach Road Bike Path, the Mt. Pisgah Dune Protection

Figure 13.7 - Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (all Park 12 parcels) Conceptual Master Plan



Project, various improvements to parking and walkways in the cottage areas, and renovation of the historic red brick Pumphouse building. The only remaining large improvement projects are for the area currently leased to Parkside Marina (Project D6) and further development of the Pumphouse Museum (Project D12). The idea of providing full accessibility to the top of Mt. Pisgah, although not specifically in the master plan, is desirable (Project D31). Renovation of aging paving in the Black Lake East parking area (Project R30) and continued renovations of public walkways between the existing private cottages (Project R31) are also anticipated.

Operational Issues: Coordination with Holland State Park and the West Michigan Park Association will continue to be critical to the overall success of this area. Final determination of the use and management of the marina area potentially with a private entity will also affect future operational plans

Figure 13.8 - Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (waterfront area) Conceptual Master Plan



GRAND RIVER GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: As indicated in Chapter 9, acquisition of land and easements is vital to implementation of the Grand River Greenway. The OCPRC recognizes that the Grand River corridor is the largest greenway corridor in Ottawa County and has greatest potential for land acquisition. Ottawa County Parks will seek to expand the greenway through protection of key natural and recreational lands as identified in the greenway concept plan (Project A1).

Planning/Operational Strategies: As land-acquisition efforts have succeeded in establishing a solid base for the greenway, a more detailed Grand River Greenway plan (figure 9.1) has been prepared that builds on the framework of the earlier concept plan. The plan identifies acquisition targets and trail linkages that unify the overall greenway corridor. As final acquisitions come into place, detailed plans will be produced to accurately locate the trail corridor and its relationship to adjacent public and private property. The final planning process will also incorporate the recently implemented Grand River Heritage Water Trail, a system of canoe/kayak trails and access points within the river corridor.

Park and Open Space Improvements: The concept for the Grand River Greenway calls for establishment of parking, picnic areas, trails (land and water), viewing decks and other park facilities on county-owned lands acquired for the greenway. In addition, a greenway non-motorized paved pathway is envisioned, linking parks and open spaces located along the entire greenway (Projects D1 and D2). Although completion of the all greenway trails is likely not feasible in the 5- year timeframe outlined in this plan, funds are earmarked for construction of initial trail segments.

B. Connor Bayou

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The OCPRC will seek to expand the Connor Bayou site if opportunities arise to acquire high quality natural or other undeveloped land bordering the park (Project A9). Efforts to assist Robinson Township to purchase and remove flood-prone structures in the Van Lopik and Limberlost subdivisions east of Connor Bayou were unsuccessful when significant numbers of property owners were not willing to participate in the FEMA program; however, the OCPRC should be willing to consider future opportunities in this area if available.

Planning Strategies: A park master plan process was completed in 2010 (Figures 13.9 and 13.10).

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Initial improvements to facilitate public access were completed 2011, including parking, trails, and renovations to the existing cabin to make it suitable for use by groups on a reservation basis. A universally accessible kayak launch dock was added in 2013. These improvements substantially complete the elements as called for in the master plan, although paving of the entrance drive (Project D35) should be pursued if the North Cedar Drive, the public access road to the site is paved. In addition, renovations to the existing cabin are anticipated as mechanical systems and other components age beyond expected lifespans (Project R6).

C. Crockery Creek Natural Area

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: A significant amount of prime natural land exists surrounding the 334-acre Crockery Creek Site. Although recent efforts were unsuccessful, concerted effort should continue to be made to acquire additional land to expand this outstanding natural area (Project A15). The Crockery Creek site is one of very few sites remaining in Ottawa County where lands adjacent to the existing park include high quality natural features combined with relatively large parcels.

Planning/Operational Strategies: Development of a park master plan for the Crockery Creek site should be undertaken (Project P2) when acquisition efforts to expand the site have been completed or reasonable projections can be made. A copy of the current site concept plan is shown in Figure 13.11. A detailed natural features inventory was completed in 2003, which is an important first step in the planning process. As with all park master plans, strong emphasis should be placed on obtaining public input into the planning process. Preliminary plans identified when the property was acquired called for possible canoe/kayak access to the Crockery Creek, trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, fishing access, archery deer-hunting opportunities (currently being provided), picnicking, historic interpretation, and other possible uses.

Park and Open Space Improvements: A basic trail system consisting of two loops totaling 1.5 miles was implemented in 2006. The system originates at the existing road end and includes a trail head kiosk, thereby providing visitors a better chance to discover and enjoy the area prior to further improvements. Improvements to the system should be considered in the near term. The existing historic farmhouse, barn and outbuildings should be stabilized and preserved (roofs, paint and basic repairs) at least until their value for historic interpretive use has been evaluated in the master planning process (Project R7). Major improvements to provide better visitor amenities and access as well as improvements to the historic farmstead will be considered when the master plan is complete (Projects D9 and D28).

Figure 13.9 - Connor Bayou - West Master Plan

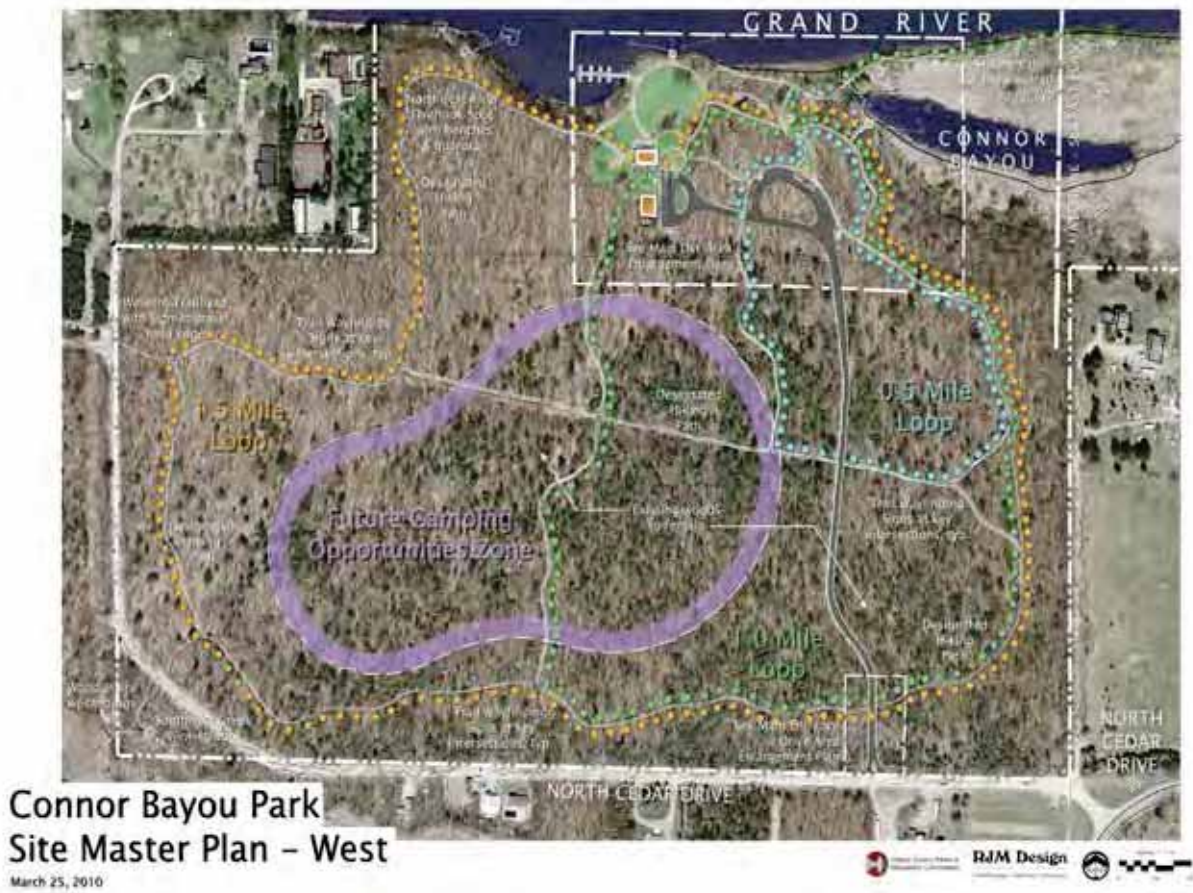


Figure 13.10 - Connor Bayou - East Master Plan



Figure 13.11 - Crockery Creek Natural Area Concept Plan



D. Jubb Bayou Property

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The OCPRC should seek to expand the Jubb Bayou site if opportunities arise to acquire high-quality natural land bordering the park, especially if a connection could be made to connect to the nearby Crockery Creek Natural Area (Project A19).

Planning Strategies: No long-range plans currently exist for the site. Plans will be developed as planning for the Grand River Greenway corridor moves forward. An existing barn will be evaluated for historic importance and possibly retained or relocated.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: An existing house has been removed and a small parking area and kiosk have been installed to provide basic access and information. Minimal additional improvements are scheduled until greenway planning work is finalized. Marked trails should be considered in the near future to encourage more public use.

E. Riverside Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The OCPRC should seek to expand Riverside Park if opportunities arise to acquire contiguous lands. Although opportunities appear limited, adjacent land currently owned by the Ottawa County Road Commission, including the lowland northeast of North Cedar Drive and possibly even the road end itself along with adjacent natural land, should be considered (Project A20). A long-term lease agreement with the State of Michigan to allow use and management of the riverfront peninsula extending east of the park in the Bass River Recreation area has been completed, allowing public access to this area from Riverside Park.

Planning Strategies: The master plan (Figure 13.12) for this site should be updated to include the trail system going onto State land and to reflect the decision by the OCPRC to continue a vehicular crossing of the wetland area to allow parking near the river (Project P5). Trailhead facilities for the Grand River Greenway Trail near the west parking area should also be included.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Improvements to the park include a new parking area, picnic sites, and barrier-free paths in the previously underutilized western section

Figure 13.12 - Riverside Park Master Plan



of the park, and the renovation of the riverfront parking area and shelter. This project was implemented in 2007. As use increases, further improvements consistent with the master plan should be pursued, including additional picnic and playground facilities. Other improvements could include trailhead facilities in conjunction with the Grand River Greenway trail. Renovations to the paving and other facilities at this park are anticipated (Projects R16 - R18).

Operational Issues: Good communication with State Park planning officials regarding planning and future uses of the Bass River Recreation Area should be maintained.

F. Bur Oak Landing

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Parcels with natural features similar to existing property exist to the east of Bur Oak Landing and in between the east and west portions of this site. The Parks Commission should keep alert to opportunities for expansion in these areas (Project A8).

Planning Strategies: Further work to determine optimal trail locations needs to be completed to plan for provide better access to interior areas of the site. A conceptual plan (see Figure 13.13) has been prepared showing trails and basic amenities. More detailed planning should be completed when acquisitions are completed.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Gravel parking areas and information kiosks have been installed at three locations to provide access to this site. Trail improvements in the very northwest portion of the site were implemented in 2011. Additional trail improvements should be considered that are compatible with other current uses, especially hunting (Project D19).

Figure 13.13 - Bur Oak Landing Preliminary Site Development Plan



G. Eastmanville Farm

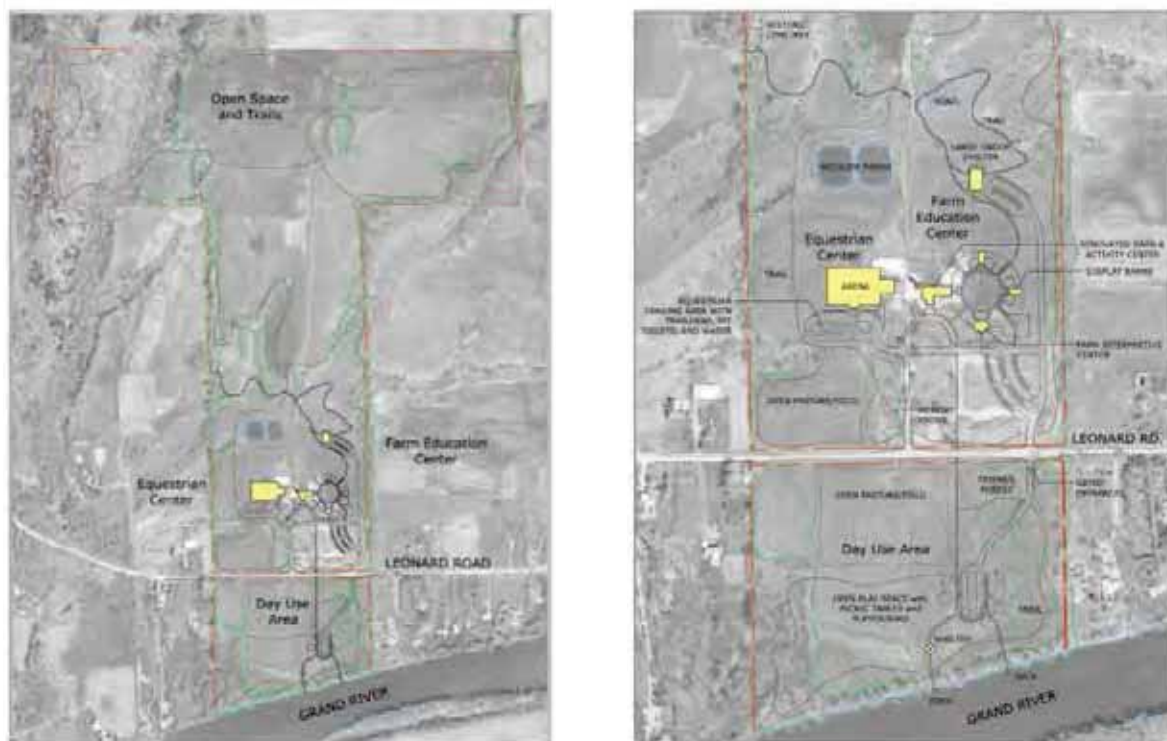
Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The OCPRC should remain open to possibilities of park expansion, especially if those acquisitions could expand and enhance the existing equestrian and hiking trail system (project A3).

Planning Strategies: Parks staff conducted a park master planning process in 2007 including public input sessions resulting in a plan that shows the development of an educational farm, equestrian facilities, large-group picnic facilities and other related activities. The current plan (see Figure 13.14) is still conceptual in nature but provides a good basis for future more detailed design decisions, including development of a Farm Education Center.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Improvements at the site include barn repairs, a new entrance with signage, gravel parking, and equestrian trails and support facilities. In addition, the historic poor farm cemetery was restored and dedicated in 2010, and the “Memory Grove,” an interpretive area highlighting the historic use of the site as a home for indigent county residents was added in 2011. Additional improvements to be considered in the near future include improvements to the barn as required to facilitate more public use (Projects R11 and D10) and additional construction in conjunction with the proposed farm education center (Project D36). Improvements along the riverfront (Project D29) should also be considered as park uses continue to evolve.

Operational Issues: A lease of a significant portion of the site to a non-profit farm education group is now in place. This group will seek to begin use of these areas for agricultural purposes. As plans for the farm education center proceed, much more discussion about maintenance and operational issues will need to take place to assure complementary use of the site by a greater number and more diverse set of park visitors. This site is also home to the north side parks operations building which is inadequate for current maintenance activities. A new or renovated operations shop is proposed in the near future (Project R10).

Figure 13.14 - Eastmanville Farm (Community Haven) Preliminary Map



H. Eastmanville Bayou

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: With the purchase of 28 acres in late 2008, connections have been completed between the previously acquired east and west portions of this site and with the Bass River State Recreation Area. Additional properties conducive to enhancing the site's natural values should continue to be evaluated, and properties to the east should be analyzed for their potential to provide connections for the greenway trail (Project A10).

Figure 13.15- Eastmanville Bayou Master Plan

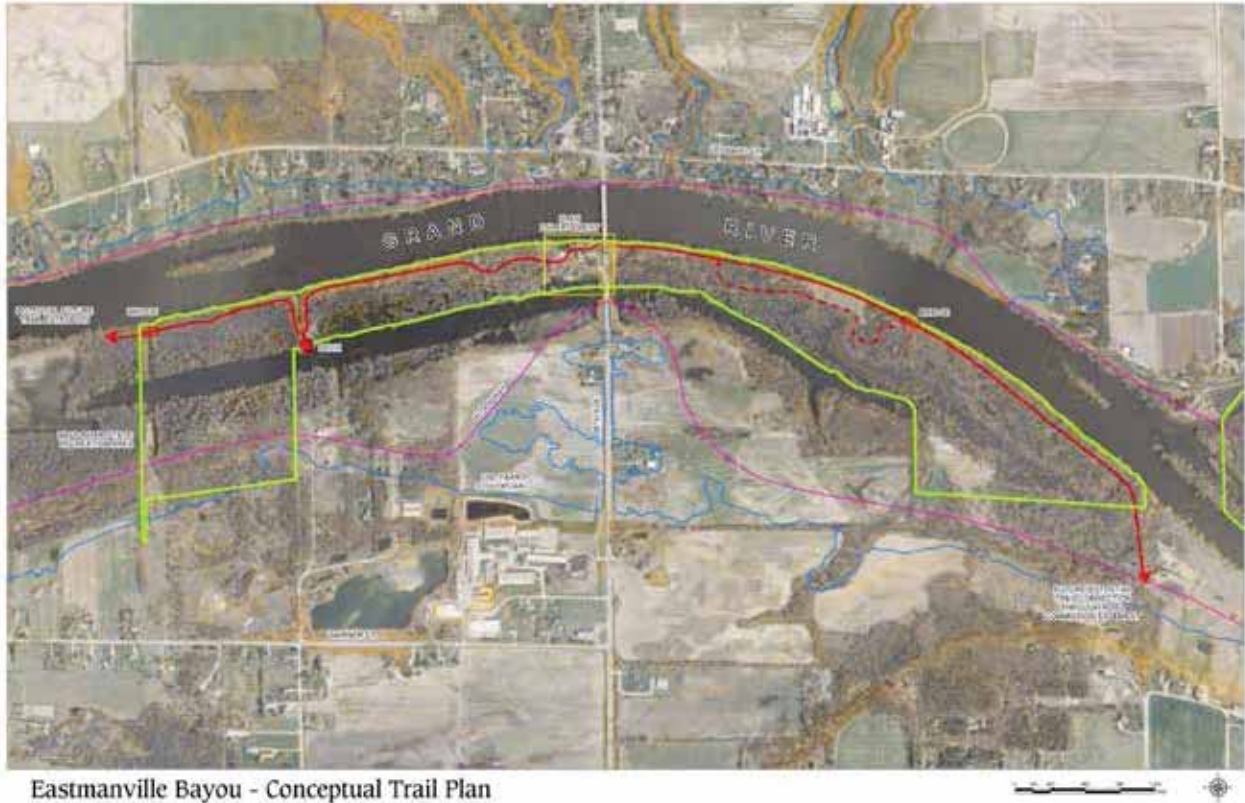


Planning Strategies: Site master planning efforts were completed in 2010 (See Figure 13.15) detailing public access improvements and general trail locations (Figure 13.16). Additional efforts to determine trail connections on either end of this property will need to continue. Ottawa County Parks recognizes the unique potential in this area to provide the public an opportunity to enjoy a large expanse of publicly owned shoreline along the Grand River. With Riverside Park located adjacent to the Bass River Recreation Area, this area provides 6 miles of contiguous public shoreline, presenting tremendous opportunities for natural resource protection and expanded public recreation opportunities. Efforts to include the greenway trail in Michigan State Park's management and use zone planning for the Bass River area have been initiated and should be continued.

Park and Open Space Improvements: Park improvements just west of 68th Avenue were completed in 2011. These improvements provide access to the bayou, the Grand River and to a riverfront trail system which could eventually be part of the Grand River Greenway paved trail. Minor renovations to the paving are anticipated in the mid-term (Project R9).

Operational Issues: Concerns from neighbors expressed during the planning process, including off-hours use, trash, and overuse of the resource, need to be monitored and appropriate actions implemented. The presence of a large colony of rare Virginia Bluebells in the eastern portion of the site must be a consideration when trails or other improvements are implemented.

Figure 13.16 - Eastmanville Bayou Conceptual Trail Plan



I. Ripps Bayou / Deer Creek Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: A land trade in 2008 achieved the long desired goal of connecting Ripps Bayou with Deer Creek Park and creating a continuous 1.5 mile stretch of Grand River frontage. Opportunities to expand the parkland to the east appear feasible, as much of this riverfront land is natural and undeveloped (Project A6). Eastern expansion could also provide connections to the residential areas of Lamont to provide new recreational opportunities for local walkers and hikers. Acquisition of the upland north of the Deer Creek Park would also be desirable (Project A16).

Planning Strategies: Despite the land trade, pedestrian access from Deer Creek Park to the Ripps Bayou site is prohibited by the mouth of Deer Creek. An engineering study to determine the feasibility of crossing Deer Creek was completed in 2009. Although feasible, significant costs to implement the project appear to prohibit development at this time. Additional research should be conducted to see if other options (e.g. a ferry) might make this crossing economically viable. Formal master planning for the entire site will await completion of land acquisition efforts.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Short-term plans call for Ripps Bayou to remain unimproved, pending expanded access. Improvements to Deer Creek Park should await resolution of the Deer Creek crossing issue (Project D30), although minor renovations to maintain existing facilities will be required (Project R8).

Operational Issues: Ripps Bayou is currently only accessible via the Grand River. Current efforts will focus on property signing and management to ensure existing users, including anglers, kayakers and archery hunters, respect adjacent private properties and do not negatively impact the natural features of the site.

J. Kuits Bayou

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Purchased in 2009, this 80-acre site with almost 6,200 linear feet of Grand River frontage offers a significant stretch of natural land along the Grand River and initiates efforts to secure land for the future Grand River Greenway trail connections in Allendale Township. Efforts need to be made to evaluate additional properties on either side of Kuits Bayou to create necessary linkages for the trail.

Planning Strategies: Planning for this site will be conducted in coordination with other nearby sites and planning for the Grand River Greenway Trail.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Public access is currently limited to visitors accessing the site by boat from the Grand River. Short-term plans call for the site to remain unimproved pending expanded access.

Operational Issues: Current efforts will focus on property signing and management to ensure existing users, including anglers, kayakers and archery hunters, respect adjacent private properties and do not negatively impact the natural features of the site.

K. Grand River Open Space

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Ottawa County purchased this initial 111-acre property in early 2010. Working with the property owner and the USDA, a conservation easement was placed on most of the property prior to its purchase. The Parks Commission then acquired the remaining property rights. Two additional purchases of riverfront land an inland lake frontage have increased the size of the site to its current 269 acres. Further expansion along the riverfront is desirable (Project A17).

Planning Strategies: Initial planning was completed to facilitate initial public access improvements, but additional detailed planning for the trail system or other improvements still needs to be completed. A natural features inventory for this site should also be considered, as well as a land and wildlife management plan.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Extensive floodplain forest restoration plantings were completed in early 2010 including 15,000 trees and shrubs. Short-term development plans call for the site to remain primarily unimproved, however the existing gravel entrance drive was improved and a gravel parking area installed including a pit toilet and trailhead kiosk. A basic system of trails to access the riverfront is desirable (Project D11).

Operational Issues: Current efforts will focus on property signing and management to ensure existing users, including anglers, kayakers and archery hunters, respect adjacent private properties and do not negatively impact the natural features of the site.

L. Grand Ravines

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: A 68-acre property previously known as Fillmore at the Bend was acquired in 1999 in anticipation of acquiring an adjoining approximate 100-acre property with Grand River frontage. This property, acquired in 2010, has dramatic ravines and high quality natural communities and was identified as one of Ottawa County's highest quality natural areas in the Natural Features Inventory of Ottawa County (1988). The property also links to an extensive natural ravine system owned by Grand Valley State University (GVSU), and preliminary plans called for a partnership with GVSU to offer a linked trail system through the area. In late 2011 a third purchase of 19 acres, funded by a private donation, was added

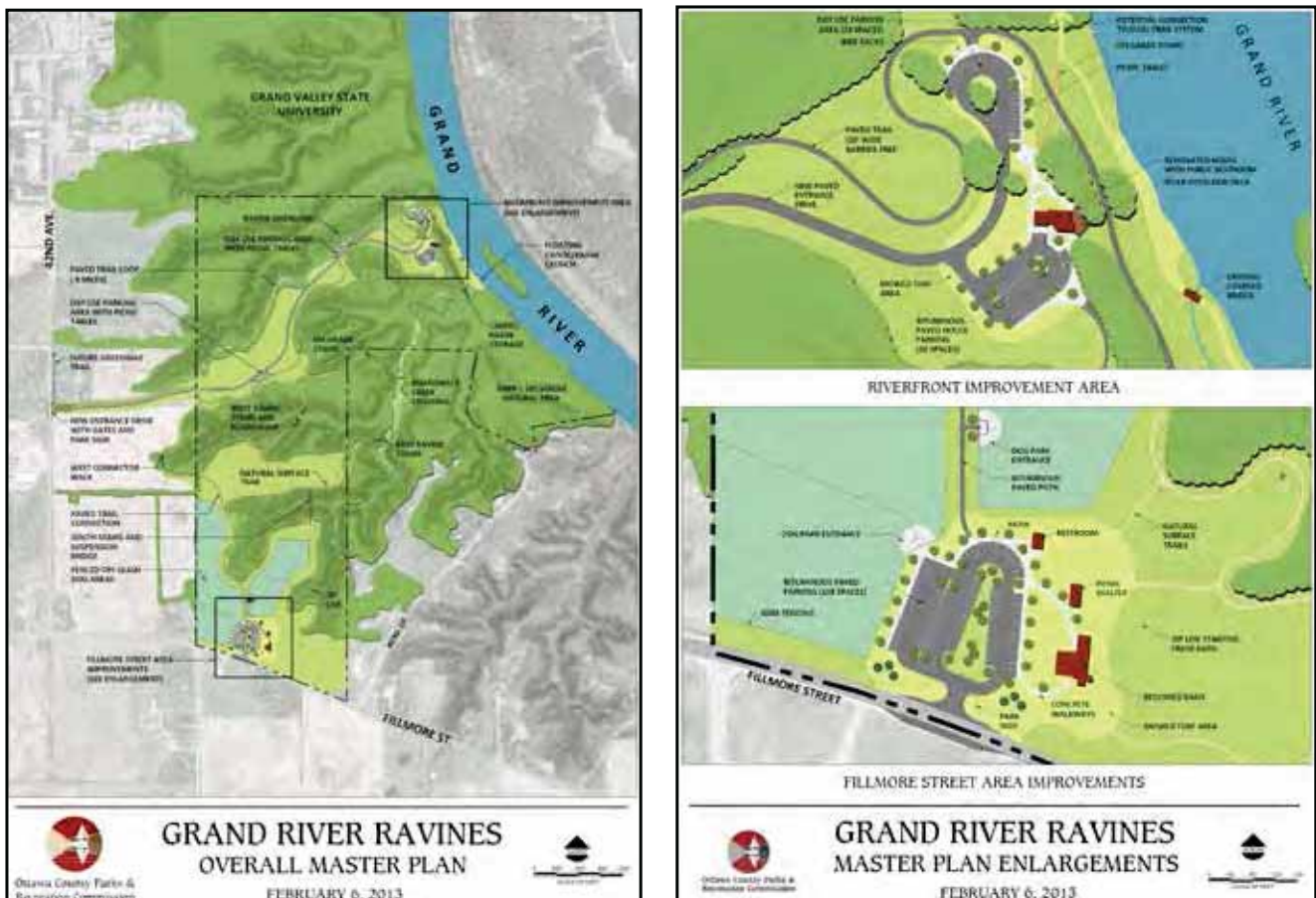
to the park and named the John J. Helstrom Natural Area. Further trail expansion is also envisioned with the goal of linking to the Bend Area and ultimately to Kent County trails and other recreation areas. Other natural areas to the southeast of the current site would also be desirable additions (Project A18).

Planning Strategies: A formal master plan for the site was approved in 2013 (Figure 13.17). More detailed planning will need to be completed when portions of future improvements consistent with the master plan are to be implemented including layout of the greenway trail.

Park and Open Space Improvements: Major improvements consistent with the master plan were completed in 2014 and 2015. These included improved entrances and parking at both the north and south portions of the site, construction of an off-leash dog park, ravine overlook deck, and new entrance road. The existing house overlooking the river was also renovated and the historic barn along Fillmore Street restored. Additional improvements are scheduled for 2016 to create a complete park experience (Project D3), although some unique items of the master plan including a zip line, suspension bridge, and additional wooden stairway await further consideration, planning, and funding (Project D20). It is also anticipated that this site will be very desirable as a wedding venue. Improvements to facilitate this use should be considered (Project D21).

Operational Issues: Extremely heavy initial use at the dog park will need to be monitored and actions taken to maintain a high quality experience.

Figure 13.17 - Grand Ravines Preliminary Site Development Plan



M. Grand River Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The potential exists to expand this 162-acre park to add high-quality natural land, buffer existing natural features within the park, and link the park via easements or direct ownership upstream to the Bend Area or downstream to the Grand River Ravines site and GVSU. Given the population growth in the immediate area and high quality natural riverfront lands adjacent to the park, an effort should be made to expand the park and create linkages to other greenway sites.

Planning/Operational Strategies: A full master plan has not been developed for Grand River Park since acquiring the park from Georgetown Township in 1999. At that time consideration was given to improving the 12-acre water body within the park to offer swimming. Recognizing the greater potential of the Bend Area for large-scale water-based recreation activities, a decision was made to delay master planning for Grand River Park until the goals of the site are better defined. Considering that the park is functioning well as currently designed, this plan recommends, as in previous plans, to delay work on a full master plan (Project P3) until the Parks Commission can progress further with the Bend Area Park and can better assess other nearby greenway opportunities. Continued cooperation and communication with Georgetown Township should be pursued to maximize opportunities for connections to be considered in public planning and private development approvals.

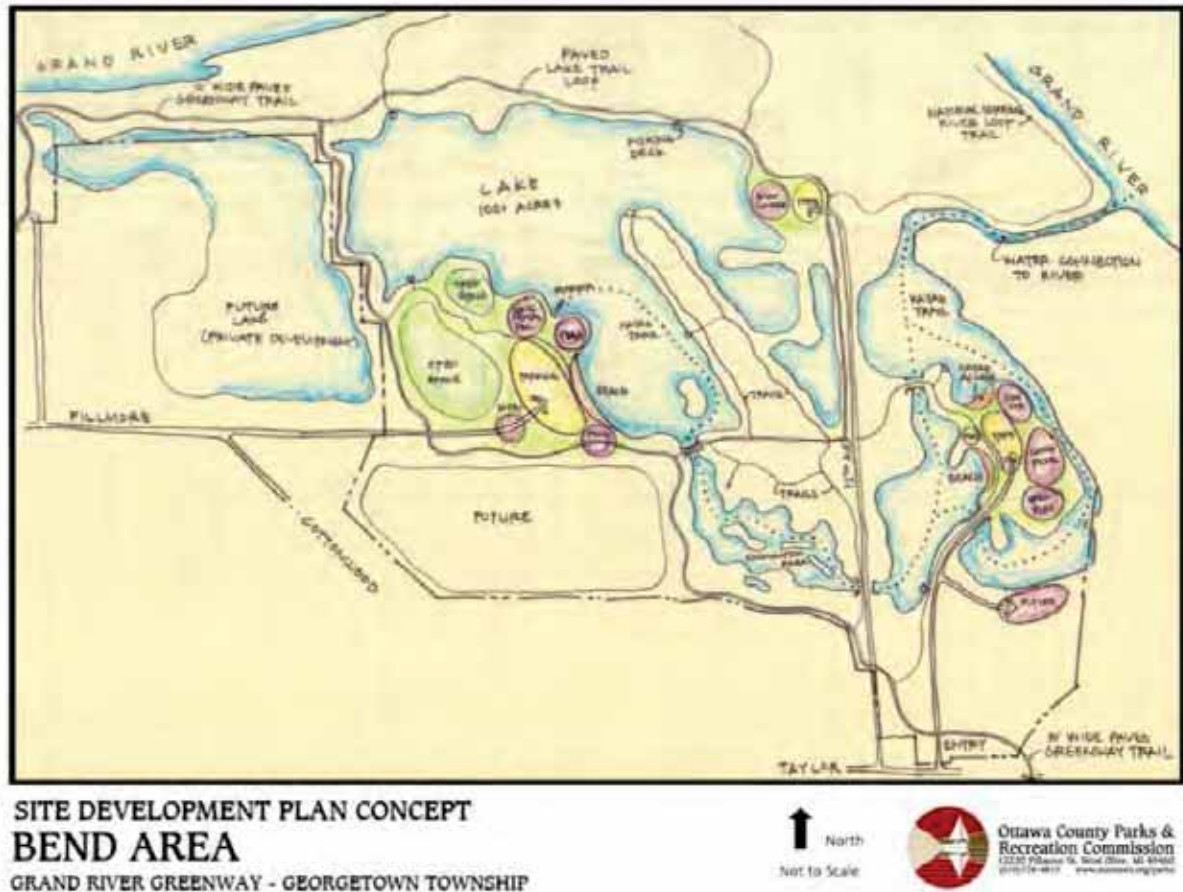
Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: The park functions well following basic site improvements by parks staff in 1999. Path replacement and repairs, including the addition of barrier-free picnic sites, were completed in 2010, as well as significant renovations of the wet portions of the existing trail system. Renovation of the existing boat launch was completed 2011, and a universally accessible kayak launch added soon after. Continued high-quality maintenance and general site improvements for other areas of the site should continue until further direction is obtained from a future park master plan. In particular, renovations to the existing drive and parking, rental building, play area, and fishing deck need to be considered (Projects R12 - R15). This site also needs to support the greenway trail development with improvements to connect existing amenities and support facilities to the paved trail corridor (Project D4).

N. Bend Area

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: Unique in its development, this project exists primarily as a master plan now, with Ottawa County completing its first 188-acre purchase in the master plan area in 2007. The OCPRC, with a goal to provide swimming and other water-based recreation opportunities in eastern Ottawa County plus expand the greenway, contacted the landowners, primarily gravel-mining operations, and obtained agreement to work with the owners to develop a master plan for the site. The goal was to develop a plan which would result in a county park as the end use and serve as the mine reclamation plan for the entire site. Negotiations with the two main landholders in the master plan area as well as with adjacent property owners should continue. These lands are considered part of the Grand River Greenway initiative (Project A1).

Planning/Operational Strategies: The Bend Area Master Plan was completed in September 2000, and the plan graphic is shown in Figure 13.18. Additional planning work was completed in 2010 to update the plan based on actual site conditions and better understanding of the status and likely extent of mining operations. The conceptual plan produced by this process is shown in Figure 13.19A. Following preliminary negotiations with the owner of the property east of 12th Ave. and west of the Jenison airport, further conceptual planning for an even larger area was completed (see Figure 19B). This latest plan should form the basis for a final master

Figure 13.19B - Bend Area Preliminary Master Plan Update



plan to be completed when final property boundaries are determined (Project P1).

Park and Open Space Improvements: Two old buildings were removed and a gravel parking area constructed at the end of 12th Avenue in 2009, providing access to the new park parcels. As other properties are acquired or purchase agreements put in place, an early focus should be on site restoration and establishment of wetlands in previously mined areas as called for in the master plan (Project D7). In the short term, development of a marked system of trails would be desirable along with basic visitor access facilities (Project D8a). Major facility development will wait until the acquisition of key properties is completed and will be coordinated with development of the Grand River Greenway Trail (Project D8b).

Operational Issues: On-going oil extraction operations including wells, tanks, electrical lines, and piping will need special consideration as public use continues and increases with further development.

PIGEON RIVER GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The OCPRC should seek to expand the greenway through protection of key natural and recreational lands as identified in the greenway concept plan (Project A25). The Pigeon River is unique relative to the other greenway initiatives in that it is smaller in scope overall and the majority of desirable greenway expansion property is held by just a few very large private owners.

Consumers Energy owns nearly all riverfront land downstream of Pine Bend. Consumers currently cooperates with Ottawa County by leasing a small portion of its right-of-way to help facilitate trail connections at Pine Bend. Ottawa County has sought and will continue to seek further partnership opportunities with Consumers Energy. As described in the park master plan, the potential exists to provide trails along Consumers' one and one-half mile stretch of natural riverfront land located between Pine Bend and Lakeshore Drive. If successful with Consumers Energy, the OCPRC will also need to develop a cooperative arrangement with Port Sheldon Township through their Sheldon Landing Park (Project D18) located on Lakeshore Drive to connect land trails and canoe/kayak trails via the river. Even longer-range efforts to extend greenway public access beyond Lakeshore Drive to the Consumers Energy Pier Walkway is a goal that would provide a unique and highly attractive greenway trail experience of statewide significance.

Long-range potential also exists to work with the large landowner located upstream of Hemlock Crossing to provide a future greenway connection to Pigeon Creek Park. This tremendous expanse of natural land is being maintained in its natural state by current landowners, and Ottawa County should be ready to step forward to ensure long-range protection of the greenway corridor if the opportunity arises. Donation of a small (8-acre) parcel immediately upstream of Hemlock Crossing (east of US-31) occurred in early 2005 with an additional 22-acre donation completed in 2006. Additional acquisition should be considered to ensure the future opportunity to link to the larger landholdings, should the opportunity arise.

Planning Strategies: The existing master plan for the Pigeon River Greenway should be evaluated periodically and kept up to date. Control of many of Consumers Energy's right-of-ways has been transferred to ITC, a management company. Ottawa County Parks should pursue and develop a good working relationship with this new controlling company.

B. Pigeon Creek Park (and adjacent Open Space land)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: As identified in the greenway concept plan, Pigeon Creek Park should be expanded if adjacent high-quality natural land becomes available. Although the park has more miles of trail (10) than any other county park, the addition of adjacent riverfront land to expand trail distance would be of great benefit to all key user groups including hikers, cross-country skiers, equestrians, and mountain bikers.

Planning Strategies: The current plan has been substantially completed. The OCPRC should maintain an up-to-date park master plan as new needs arise.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Expansion of the equestrian parking area was completed in 2008, and the main parking area expanded in 2012 to provide needed parking for busy winter recreation days. The lodge was also expanded in 2012 and lighting improved on one of the trail loops to improve winter activities. No other immediate needs currently exist; the Parks Commission should continue to upgrade trails and facilities as necessary. This could include a small trail expansion into the area south of the Pigeon River (Project D27) and renovation of the lodge mechanical systems (Project R61). The recently installed highway sign directing people to the nature education center will also need to be updated (Project R62).

Operational Issues: Thinning of red pine areas of the park was completed in 2008, and damaged trails were re-established after this work was completed. Efforts to enhance the reestablishment of native vegetation is underway through tree planting projects by volunteer groups.

C. Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: As indicated above, efforts to expand the greenway with additional riverfront both upstream and downstream via lease, easement or acquisition should occur to maximize the potential of this unique natural resource area (Project A26).

Planning Strategies: The current plan has been substantially completed. The OCPRC should maintain an up-to-date park master plan as new needs arise. Communication should be maintained with Consumers Energy and adjacent landowners.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Since the 2006 plan, two major capital improvement projects have been implemented. First, restoration and expansion of the historic Weaver House at Pine Bend was completed in 2006. The building is now suitable for a wide range of events including corporate retreats, family gatherings and other uses desiring a unique and attractive setting. Additional site work near the house, including renovation of an existing small building and development of a ceremonial trellis, platform, and garden area was also completed to enhance the site for weddings and other larger outdoor events. Second, a new Nature Education Center including parking and grassland restoration was completed in 2009. As use of this facility grows, modifications to existing facilities may be desirable to best facilitate use of the entire developed area of Hemlock Crossing. Some renovation of existing facilities is anticipated (Projects R57 through R60).

MACATAWA RIVER GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: As indicated in Chapter 9, acquisition of land and easements is key to implementation of the Macatawa River Greenway. Ottawa County Parks will seek to further expand the greenway through protection of key natural and recreational lands as identified in the greenway concept plan.

Planning/Operational Strategies: Ottawa County Parks will continue to partner with the Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway and local units of government in the development of long-range greenway plans. Further study is needed to analyze natural resource features along the river corridor and assess land acquisition potential. The potential for new trails linking greenway sites will be evaluated.

Park and Open Space Improvements: The concept for the Macatawa River Greenway is to preserve key blocks of land and establish trails, picnic areas, and other park facilities to provide access to the river corridor. In addition, a greenway non-motorized paved pathway is envisioned, linking parks and open spaces within the greenway corridor. Although completion of the entire greenway trail is likely not feasible in the 5-year timeframe outlined in this plan, portions of the trail could be implemented on existing public properties.. Note that the review and discussion of the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks county park property with frontage on both Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan, is included in this plan under the Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway.

B. Upper Macatawa Natural Area

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The potential exists to expand the Upper Macatawa Conservation Area from its existing 612 acres to over 700 acres (Project A11). The resulting park would be one of the largest in the county park system, offering valuable resource protection

and public recreation benefits in a rapidly urbanizing area. Lands targeted for acquisition are shown on the greenway concept plan and include an approximate 80-acre Road Commission parcel plus additional riverfront and floodplain property (Project A24).

Planning/Operational Strategies: A comprehensive park master plan was completed in early 2006 and then updated in 2012 (Figure 13.20). The approved plan seeks to accomplish four basic goals, including: 1) expand park and open space land and outdoor recreation opportunities, 2) improve water quality, 3) expand flood storage, and 4) preserve, expand and enhance wildlife habitat. The updated plan specifically dealt with the addition of mountain bike trails to the

Figure 13.20 - Upper Macatawa Natural Area Master Plan

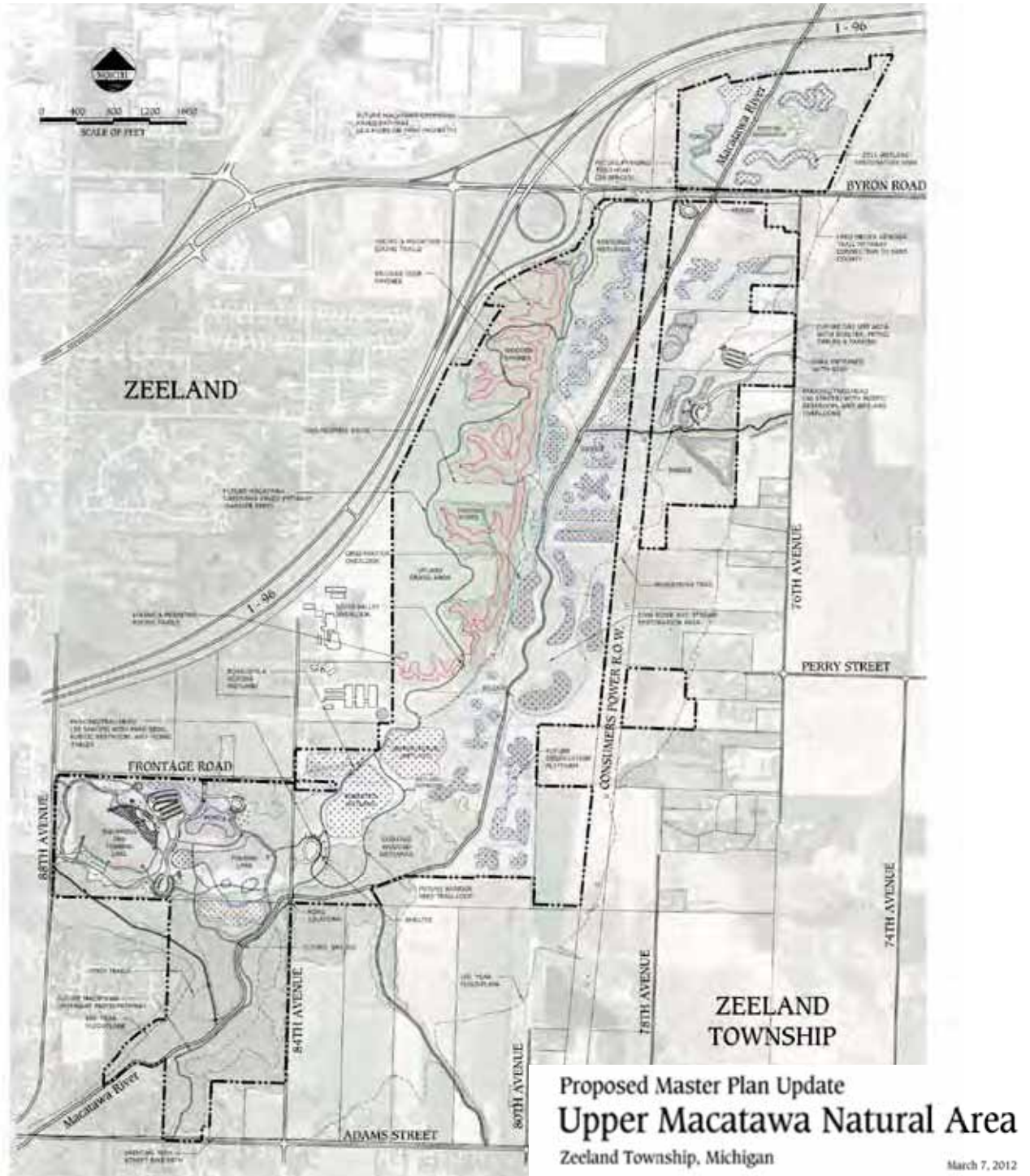


Figure 13.21 - Upper Macatawa Natural Area Conceptual Master Plan



wooded ravines. With development of the paved greenway trail segment, master plan elements are substantially complete except for a potential multipurpose rental building accessible from the 76th Ave. entrance (Project D32).

Park and Open Space Improvements: Significant restoration work was completed at the Upper Macatawa properties from 2003-2010. Native grasslands and shallow water wetlands were installed in almost all areas of previously farmed floodplain. Initial public access improvements to the site in the form of parking areas and trails were completed in 2007. Recent additions include several miles of mountain bike trails, a 10' wide paved non-motorized trail that traverses the entire length of the park, and trailhead amenities at the 84th Ave. entrance including paved parking, a shelter, water sources, and solar powered parking area lights. With the increased use at this location, the development of a modern restroom facility is desirable (Project D15). The development of the west activity area (Project D38) would only occur with transfer of this property from the Road Commission.

C. Adams Street Landing

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The OCPRC will seek to expand this 10-acre site through the acquisition of adjacent natural riverfront land. Special emphasis should be placed on making a connection via purchase or easements to Paw Paw park to the northwest (Project A5).

Planning/Operational Strategies: A conceptual plan for the site was developed in 2005 (Figure 13.21). The site is envisioned as a river access point for anglers and kayakers and as a staging area for bicyclists riding the future greenway trail. Some limited opportunities for picnicking will also be provided. Additional planning will need to be undertaken when land acquisition and trail connections are completed. Other planning and development work in the greenway including work on the adjacent church property south of Adams Street and Paw Paw Park (see below) need to be considered to determine what future facilities best complement other projects and serve greenway users.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Development of a parking and river access point was completed in 2006. Additional improvements including a bridge, restrooms and information signage are also shown on the concept. These facilities would probably be developed in conjunction with construction of the greenway trail (Project D22).

Figure 13.22 - Macatawa River Adams Street Site Concept Plan



D. Paw Paw Park (former Macatawa Greenspace)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: This site is composed of the 122-acre former Holland Country Club property, purchased in 2010, and the former City of Holland’s Paw Paw Park located west of Paw Paw Drive which was transferred for management purposes to the Parks Commission via long-term lease in 2015. The Parks Commission will seek to expand this site through the acquisition of adjacent natural or undeveloped riverfront land. Connections to Adams Street Landing and nearby neighborhoods should be priorities (Project A5).

Planning Strategies: A master plan was produced in early 2011. The plan has guided development to serve three main purposes. First, a large portion of the floodplain area has been restored to wetland and other native habitats. Second, the relatively higher northeast portion of the site provides space for more active recreational uses (an existing disc golf course and trail system and future play area and modern restrooms). Finally, all plans will facilitate the future development of the paved Macatawa Greenway trail traversing the length of the site from Paw Paw drive to the south property line.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Restoration work started in 2010 on over 50 acres of floodplain. This work was made possible through an agreement with Request Foods, Inc. that allows them to use twenty acres of this area as mitigation for wetlands destroyed as part of their plant expansion in Holland Township and a USEPA grant used to restore an additional 32 acres. User facilities were developed in conjunction with the restoration including parking, a trail system, and a disc golf course. Other future improvements included in the master plan that should be considered as use patterns are established include a modern restroom and nature based play area at the east entrance (Project D13 and D23) and a segment of paved non-

motorized trail along the Macatawa River (Project D14). At Paw Paw Park west, significant renovations are needed to raise this area of the park to Ottawa County Park standards (Projects R37 and R63).

GENERAL PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

A. General Parks and Open Space Lands

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: In addition to its focus on the coastal and river-based greenways, the Parks Commission is interested in acquiring additional land for park and open space purposes where suitable natural resource features exist in the county. Recent discussions about the need for additional mountain biking in northwest Ottawa County, for example, could lead to land analysis and possible acquisitions (Project D24).

Planning and Operational Strategies: Park master plans for non-greenway parks should be kept up to date as guides for expansion and improvements. Other studies (e.g., Natural Features Inventory of Ottawa County) as well as other sources of information should be utilized to seek out properties with unique natural resource features suited for inclusion in the county park and open space system.

B. Grose Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although opportunities have diminished due to development near the park's easterly boundary, the expansion of Grose Park through the acquisition of adjacent natural land should continue to be explored (Project A12).

Planning Strategies: An up-to-date park master plan should be maintained for the park (current park master plan approved in 1994 – see Figure 13.23).

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Major park improvements as called for in the master plan have been completed. In addition, a major renovation to the beach area to make it more accessible and to address erosion issues was completed in 2007. Additional work to provide access and seating areas on the bluff overlooking the lake were also completed in late 2010. Renovations to some park elements due to age are anticipated (Projects R38, R39, R41, and R42).

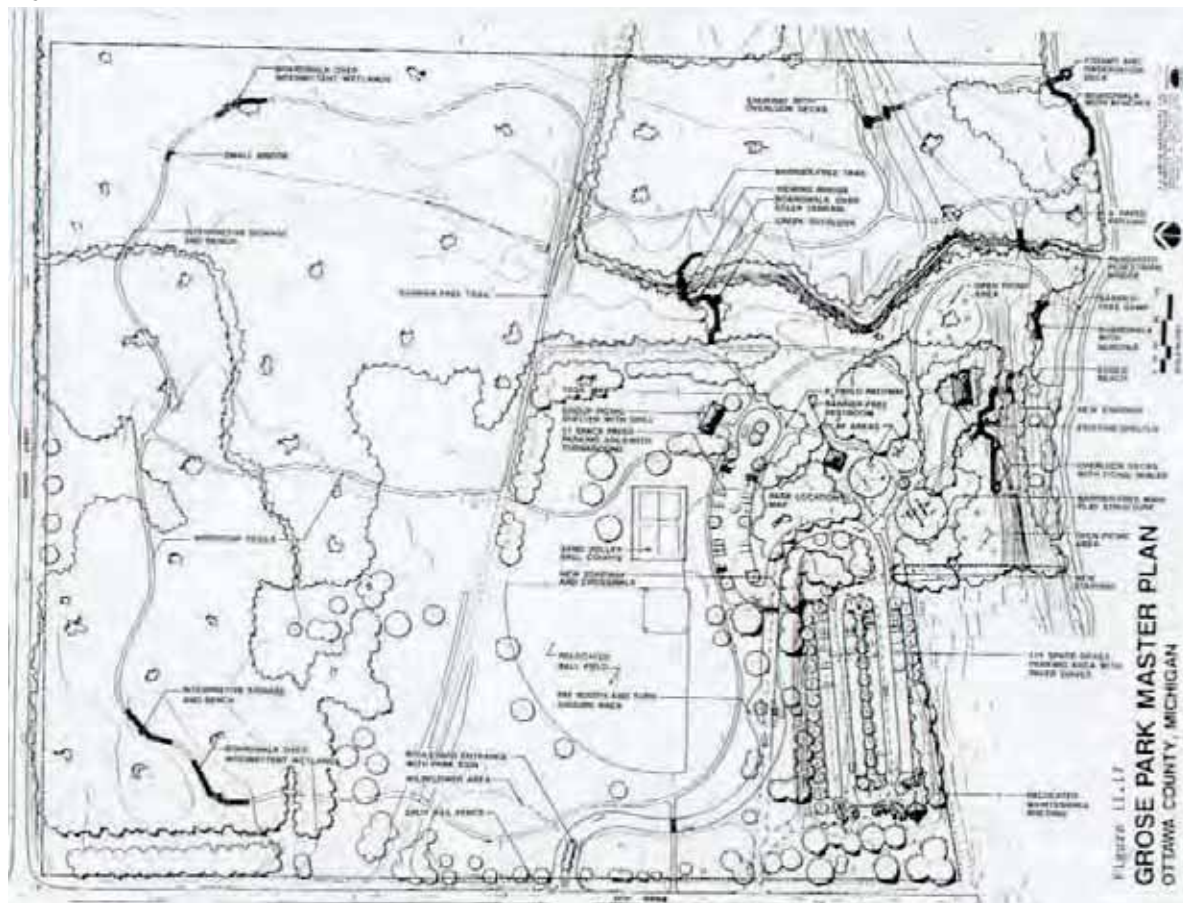
Operational Issues: Sand movement along the beach continues to be a maintenance issue. Long-term management techniques should be investigated and implemented if possible. The existing stream corridor is also subject to flooding and bank erosion. Efforts to remedy this erosion should be explored (Project R40).

C. Musketawa Trail

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The approximate 10-mile segment of the Musketawa Trail located in Ottawa County is owned by the MDNR and managed by Ottawa County Parks through an operating agreement approved in 2002. Ottawa County Parks owns an 8-acre parcel, acquired via donation, located adjacent to the trail in Wright Township. Consideration should be given to purchase of other key parcels along the trail corridor which would preserve key natural lands and enhance the experience of trail users. A good example is the Marne Bog (see next page) which has potential to both preserve unique land and provide an interesting and educational outlet for users of the trail.

Planning Strategies: Spurred by federal funds secured by Kent County, an effort to complete a trail connection between the Musketawa Trail and the White Pines Trail in Comstock Park was

Figure 13.23 - Grose Park Master Plan



successful. The Kent County Road Commission was responsible for implementing the trail, and Ottawa County Parks took a lead role in addressing concerns raised by adjacent landowners and the County Board of Commissioners about potential impacts to existing agricultural operations.

Operational Issues: An issue requiring further study is the deterioration of the asphalt trail surface. Currently the trail surface is being degraded by the carbide snowmobile studs used during periods of inadequate snow depths, growth of vegetation along the edges, and woodchucks undermining the rail bed in addition to the basic aging of the existing pavement. The damage to the trail surface will soon begin to limit use by rollerbladers, and eventually bikes. Efforts to restrict snowmobile use to periods with adequate snow base have had limited success. Regardless, resurfacing of the entire trail may be necessary in the relatively near future to ensure the popularity of the trail. Bridge decking and structural supports are also a maintenance concern.

D. Marne Bog

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The initial 40-acre bog property was acquired via donation and had no public access. In conjunction with the extension of the Musketawa Trail near the property an additional parcel was acquired which protects more of the bog and provides a route from the Musketawa Trail. Efforts should continue focus on acquisition of undeveloped buffer land around the bog (Project A13).

Planning/Operational Strategies: More detailed planning should be completed to determine the exact connecting route between the Musketawa Trail and the most interesting areas of the bog as well as the type and extent of facilities that would be appropriate.

Park and Open Space Improvements: Any site improvements will follow the completion of land acquisition and site planning. The Parks Commission recognizes the key value of this site is to preserve it as a natural area and envisions future improvements to be limited to possible trail/boardwalk, viewing platform and interpretive displays (Project D25).

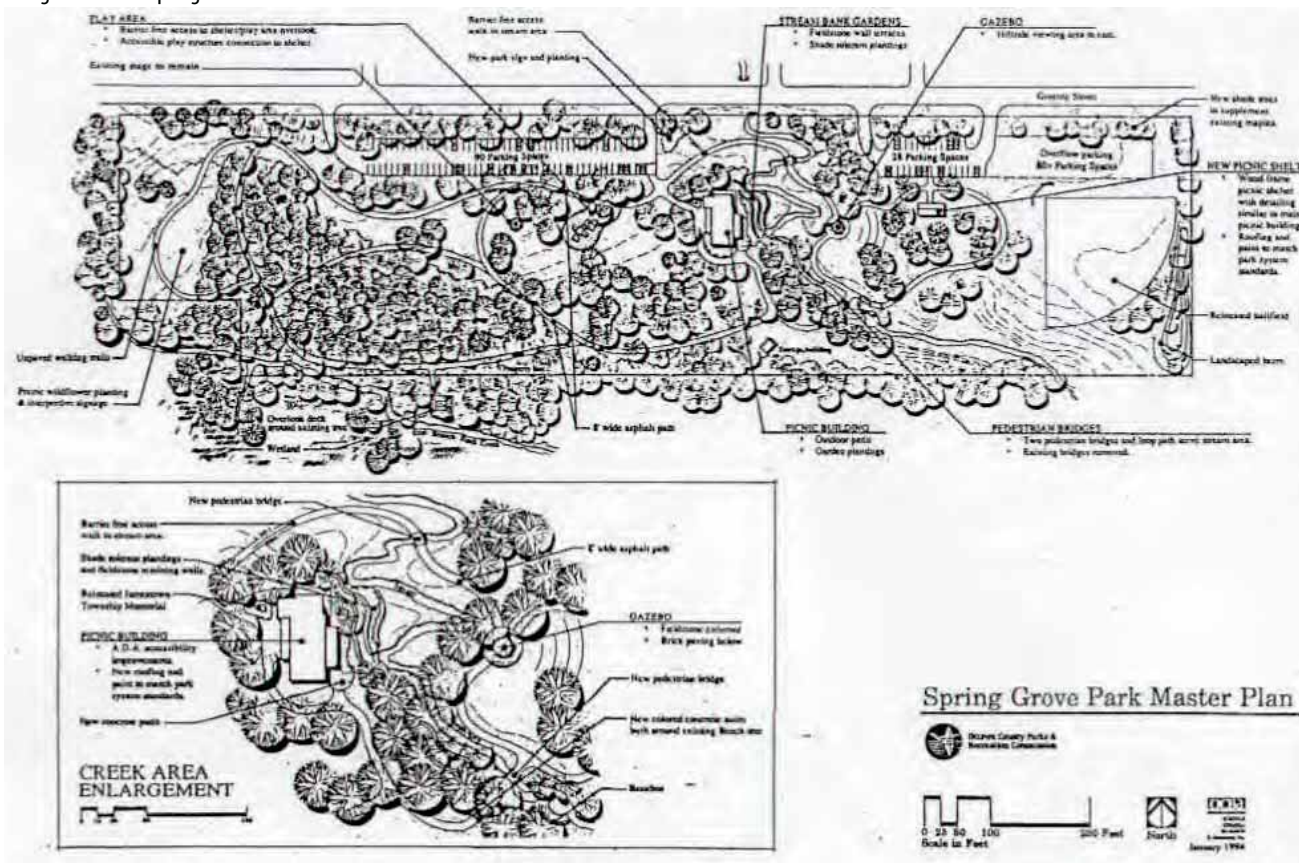
E. Spring Grove Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The area surrounding Spring Grove Park continues to suburbanize, and potential park expansion opportunities are diminishing. The Spring Grove Park master plan identifies the desirability of acquiring approximately 30 acres of wetlands and uplands adjacent to the park. The acquisition would protect the integrity of the wetlands as an important natural feature, expand open space land in Ottawa County, and permit interpretation of the resource to park visitors. Additional upstream lands should also be considered as required to implement a strategy to control stormwater flows in the creek that often prove damaging to the water features in the park (Project A14).

Planning Strategies: An up-to-date park master plan should be maintained for the park (current park master plan approved in 1994). Evaluation of possible flood control measures should be initiated (Project D34).

Park and Open Space Improvements: The Spring Grove Park Phase II improvement project on the eastern portion of the site (Project D33) should continue to be evaluated as it relates to current uses and needs. This project would continue with development items identified in the 1994 park master plan as shown in Figure 13.24. The focus of improvements would be expanded recreation opportunities in the east half of the park which currently receives little use. A new parking lot would be constructed along with a new picnic shelter. Other improvements would

Figure 13.24 - Spring Grove Park Master Plan



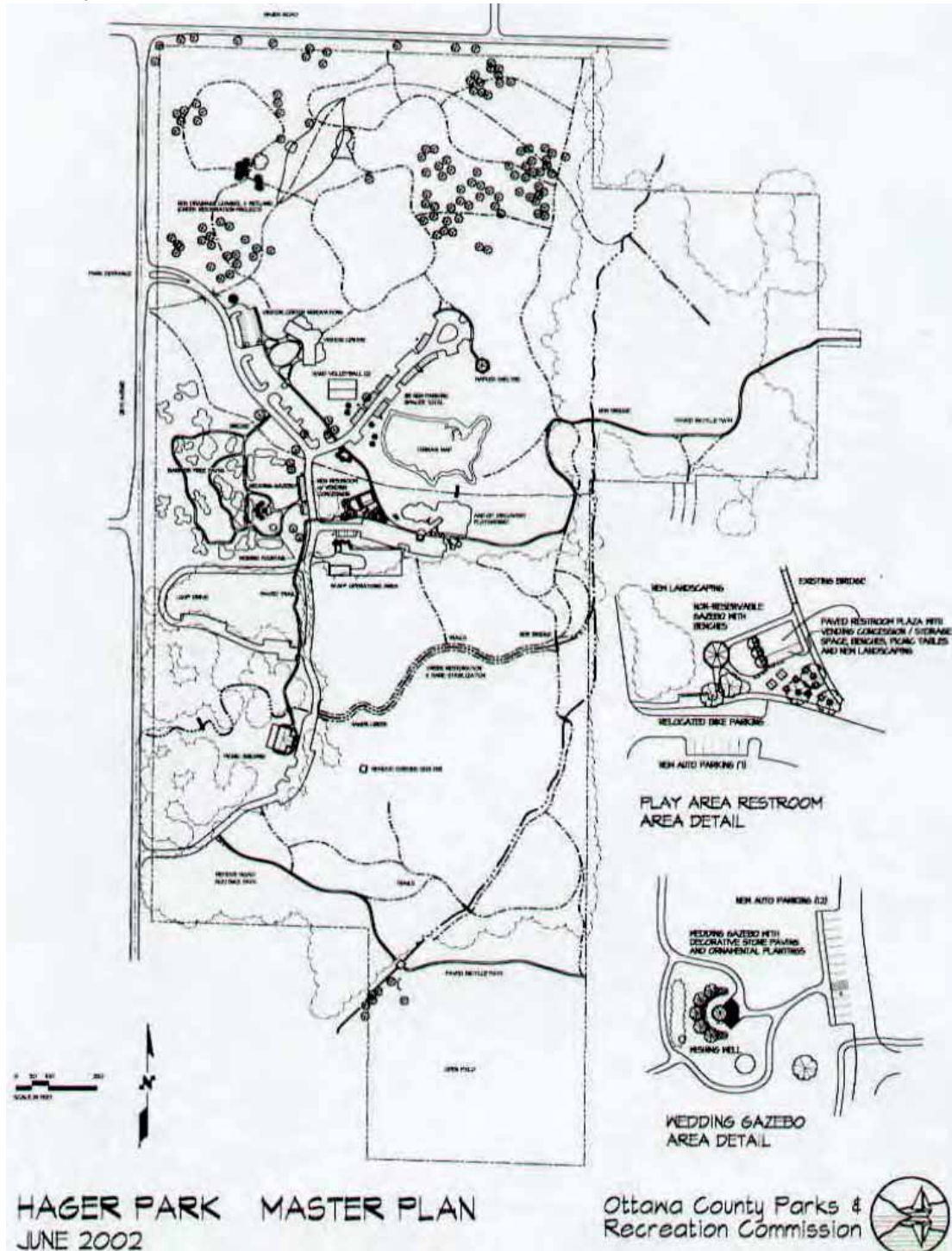
include ballfield improvements and development of trails and interpretive facilities. The project would significantly expand picnic opportunities in an area of high demand.

One of the oldest parks in the entire park system, Spring Grove will require some renovations in the near future (Projects R53 through R56).

F. Hager Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion priorities: With subdivisions now nearly surrounding the park, opportunities for park expansion appear limited. The Parks Commission should,

Figure 13. 25 - Hager Park Master Plan



however, remain alert to opportunities to expand the park boundaries, given the high use and popularity of Hager Park. Opportunities may still exist to provide a greenway linkage to the north connecting all the way to Grand River Park.

Planning Strategies: The current Hager Park Master Plan, updated in 2002, is included in Figure 13.25. The plan should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Recent improvements at Hager Park include renovation of a wing of the previous park visitor center into the DeVries Room, now a popular rental facility, and the installation of barrier fencing along the restored creek in areas of high public use. Trailhead signage has also been installed to better orient visitors to park trails. Future improvements should focus on projects identified in the park master plan including establishment of a wedding gazebo with related hard-surface trails (Project D16), and other improvements identified in the plan. Much of this park was developed in the early 1990's, and required renovations and reconstruction are expected (projects R45 through R51).

Operational Issues: Restoration measures installed at Hager Creek, a small stream running through the park, should also be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis to help ensure long-term success in controlling bank erosion and protecting water quality. Work on other stream corridors within the park would also be desirable to alleviate erosion concerns (Project R43 and R44).

G. Riley Trails

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Riley Trails abuts roads and residential development on its north, west, and east boundaries. Therefore, few opportunities exist for expansion in those areas. The OCPRC should, however, remain alert to opportunities to expand the park boundaries to the south as opportunities to acquire undeveloped parcels become available (Project A7).

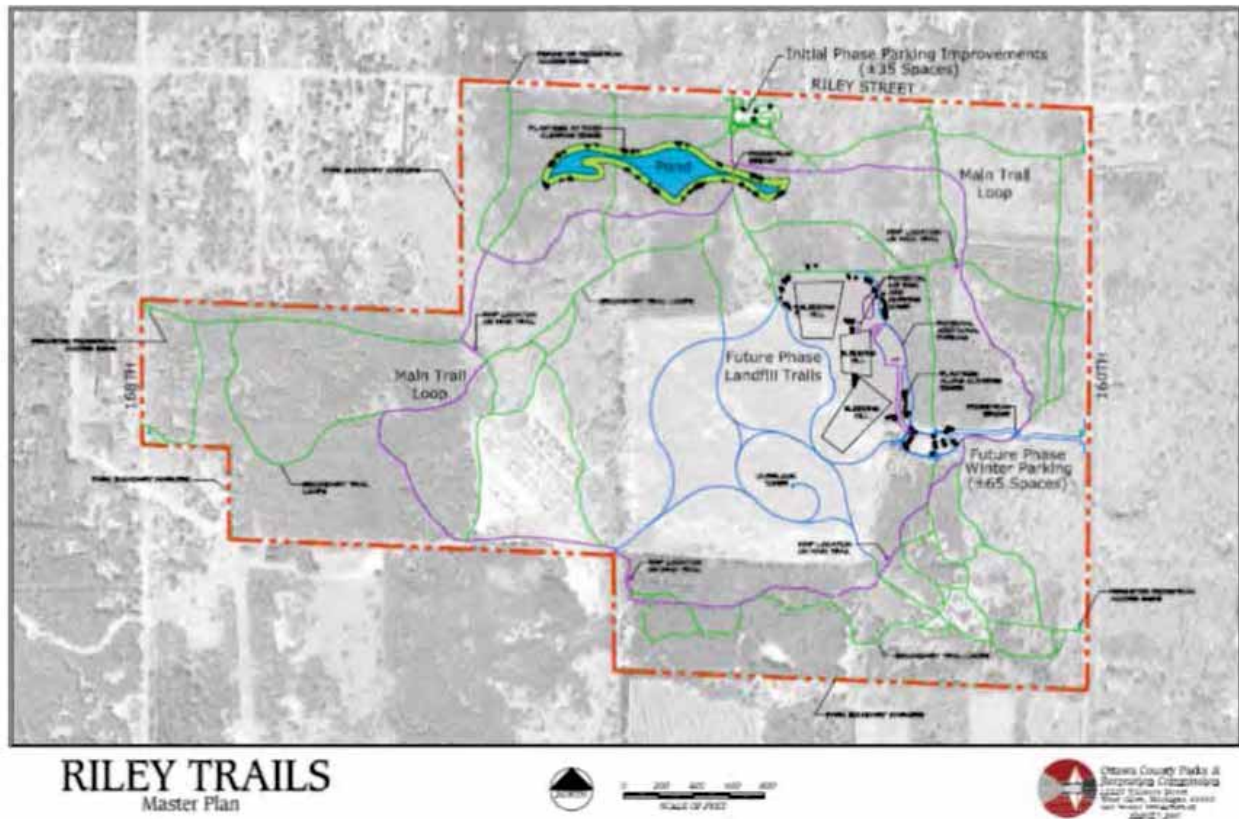
Planning Strategies: Following extensive construction work to recap the landfill (under management of the Ottawa County Road Commission Utilities Engineers) including excavation of a 2-acre pond, a comprehensive master plan for the site was prepared in 2007. This plan recommended improvements both to the currently used areas of the site as well as the portion of the site occupied by the former Southwest Ottawa County Landfill which is currently closed to the public (see Figure 13.26).

Park and Open Space Improvements: Initial improvements to the main access point on Riley Street were completed in 2008. These improvements included a bridge over the pond, renovated gravel parking, rustic toilets, information kiosk, and other amenities including trail signage. Substantial additional trail improvements were completed in 2013. Based on current use, near future improvements could include a barrier-free fishing area on the existing pond (Project D17) and a modern restroom (Project D26) Further improvements, especially winter sports facilities (Project D39) as shown on the master plan, will be considered when the landfill area is opened to public use. Some minor renovations on the existing bridge are also anticipated (Project R52).

H. Open Space Lands

In addition to Open Space Lands previously identified and discussed as part of the Grand River Greenway (i.e., Ripps Bayou, Eastmanville Bayou site and Timmer Farm), Ottawa County Parks manages six (6) additional inland sites not located within the identified greenway corridors. They are listed below and include a total of 1185 acres. Further information is available in the Chapter 7.

Figure 13. 26 - Riley Trails Master Plan



- Robinson Forest: 80 acres, Robinson Township
- Johnson Street Wildlife Management Area: 50 acres, Robinson Township
- Hiawatha Forest: 365 acres, Grand Haven Township
- Port Sheldon Natural Area: 440 acres, Port Sheldon Township
- Van Buren Street Dunes: 120 acres, Port Sheldon Township
- Pigeon Creek Forest: 130 acres, Olive Township

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Each site should be studied to determine if opportunities exist to acquire adjacent lands or inholdings consisting of good quality natural lands or connections to other resources. Port Sheldon Natural Area in particular has recently been surveyed and found to be highly diverse and ecologically valuable on a statewide basis. Efforts to expand this property to protect and buffer more resources should be pursued (Project A26).

Planning Strategies: Management of the extensive red pine plantations on many of these sites consisting of selective thinning has recently been implemented at almost all open space sites. Because the OCPRC's overall goal is to promote the natural character and diversity of each site, the OCPRC should work to develop broader natural resource management plans for each property and take steps to enhance the habitat value of each site in accordance with these plans. Planning for trails and other low impact visitor facilities should continue to be evaluated as use patterns are better understood.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Relative to recreational use, the OCPRC's primary goal with these properties is to provide the public opportunity for access to less structured outdoor recreation environments. The Commission also recognizes that growth and development of lands surrounding Open Space Lands puts pressure on these sites

to accommodate additional public use. Guidelines developed in the original Open Space Management Plan state that improvements should promote “safe non-intensive recreation uses with an emphasis on activities that require minimal facility development and have limited impact on the natural character of the land.”

Basic access improvements including gravel roadside parking areas and information kiosks were installed at each of these sites in 2006. The current goal is to construct and mark a simple trail loop at each site to provide suitable access for more users, many of whom are not comfortable traversing a site without a trail and guidance. Loops at Van Buren Dunes, Port Sheldon Natural Area, and Hiawatha Forest were implemented in late 2010. Trails at remaining sites should be installed, and additions to existing trails should be considered as the extent of use becomes known.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

A capital improvement schedule follows (Table 13.1), which outlines proposed projects for 2017 through 2026.

This schedule is divided into two major sections. The first section lists projects that could be completed within the available discretionary (non-operating) funds identified in the long-range budget projection summary (Table 6.1). The second section identifies additional projects that could be completed if the full millage rate originally approved by voters (0.33 mills) is restored from its current Headlee rollback amount (0.3165 mills).

It should be noted that this capital improvement schedule does not include every project described in this chapter. All of these projects are listed in Appendix M. Instead a select group of projects is presented that best meet the needs and desires identified in the needs assessment section of the plan, take advantage of the opportunities that are currently available, and are feasible within the available funding. Other identified projects may be considered as conditions change, and other as yet undefined projects may also be pursued in the future if they are thought to best meet the OCPRC’s mission and goals.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE -BASED ON PROJECTED DISCRETIONARY FUNDS																									
Greenway	ID	Project Description	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025		2026		2027		TOTAL
			Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	
General	R05	Accessibility improvements	\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000				
	R01	Minor Renovations	\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000				
	R02	Plumbing Renovations	\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000				
	R65	Native Landscape Restoration	\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500		\$ 7,500				
	R03	Trail Improvements	\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000				
	R04	Tree Plantings	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,000)			
Projected Capital expenditures			\$ 2,621,950	\$ (771,000)	\$ 6,039,900	\$ (4,639,500)	\$ 3,361,750	\$ (2,862,500)	\$ 3,808,450	\$ (2,839,500)	\$ 3,865,000	\$ (3,109,500)	\$ 277,300	\$ (57,000)	\$ 415,500	\$ (2,000)	\$ 47,500	\$ (2,000)	\$ 327,350	\$ (72,000)	\$ 542,700	\$ (2,000)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,950,400
Projected Discretionary funds			\$ 642,934		\$ 654,915		\$ 666,897		\$ 678,861		\$ 690,785		\$ 702,649		\$ 714,426		\$ 726,093		\$ 737,620		\$ 748,979		\$ 760,137		\$ 7,724,298
Net in pact on fund balance			\$ (1,208,016)		\$ (745,485)		\$ 167,647		\$ (290,089)		\$ (64,715)		\$ 482,349		\$ 300,926		\$ 680,593		\$ 482,270		\$ 208,279		\$ 760,137		\$ 773,898

POTENTIAL PRIORITY PROJECTS -REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDS FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES (additional discretionary, grants, donations, etc.)																									
Greenway	ID	Project Description	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025		2026		2027		TOTAL
			Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	Total Cost	Grant/Donation	
Millage Restoration Projects	D12	Pumphouse - Phase 2	\$ 150,000																						
	D15	UMNA 84th Ave Restroom			\$ 175,000																				
	D20	Grand Ravines Phase 3					\$ 475,000	\$ (400,000)																	
	D09	Crockerly Creek Day Use							\$ 500,000	\$ (200,000)															
	D41	HOB Accessible Kayak Launch							\$ 60,000	\$ (30,000)															
	A05	Adams Street Landing Linkage (40 acres)									\$ 225,000														
	D8a	Bend Area (Phase 1)													\$ 600,000	\$ (300,000)									
	D14	Paw Paw Macatawa Greenway Trail													\$ 1,000,000	\$ (800,000)									
D18	Shelton Landing Development															\$ 300,000	\$ (150,000)								
Additional Capital Projects Totals			\$ 150,000		\$ 175,000		\$ 475,000	\$ (400,000)	\$ 560,000	\$ (230,000)	\$ 225,000		\$ -		\$ 1,600,000	\$ (1,100,000)	\$ 300,000	\$ (150,000)	\$ -		\$ -		\$ -		\$ 1,605,000

SECTION EIGHT: APPENDICES



- Appendix A Michigan Natural Features Inventory
- Appendix B Local Park and Recreation Inventory
- Appendix C 2015 County Resident Survey Results
- Appendix D 2015 Park User Survey Summary
- Appendix E 2015 Online Survey Summary
- Appendix F Parks Commission Retreat Results
- Appendix G Public Workshop Notes
- Appendix H Public Notices and Parks Commission Minutes
- Appendix I Outstanding Michigan Park System Comparison
- Appendix J Comment Card
- Appendix K Non-Motorized Pathways Study Executive Summary
- Appendix L The Seven Principals of Universal Design
- Appendix M Capital Project List



MICHIGAN NATURAL FEATURES INVENTORY PROGRAM.
REVIEW OF SPECIAL SITES IN OTTAWA COUNTY

The following is a review of the 15 sites which were identified by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory Program for Ottawa County as being of particular significance. The site reviews, as described in the Program's findings, are numbered and refer to the identified sites in Figure 3.3.

Kitchel Dunes (PNA #5)

Sec. 19, T. 8N., R.16W., Spring Lake Township. This site lies just northwest of downtown Grand Haven, across the Grand River. It is situated south of North Shore Road and east of North Shore Drive. Kitchel Dunes was determined to have three notably significant natural community occurrences: Open Dunes, Interdunal Wetland and Great Lakes Barrens.

The 94 acre dunes are dominated by Sand Cherry (Prunus pumila) and a Dunegrass (Calamovilfa longifolia). A number of artificial disturbances degrade these dunes. A road on the lakeward side of the dunes has disrupted natural excavation and deposition of sand; a sand mine is present on the north side of the site; and the west half of the dunes were planted with pines in the 1940's.

Six Interdunal Wetlands totaling 16 acres are located within the dunes. They are dominated by Twig-rush (Cladium mariscoides) and Jack Pine (Pinus banksiana). Surrounding these wetlands in sand-filled interdunal troughs are Jack pine-dominated Great Lakes Barrens totaling 40 acres. In both of these natural communities, sand deposition is believed to be occurring faster than naturally.

One population of a state threatened plant and one population of a state threatened/proposed federally threatened plant occur at this site. Ownership is by the City of Ferrysburg, Central Michigan University, the City of Grand Haven and Construction Aggregates Corporation. The majority of the area is under the first two ownerships and is protected as a natural area.

Hoffmaster State Park (PNA #7)

Sec. 1, T.8N., R.17W. and w 1/2 sec 6, T.8N., R.16W., Spring Lake Township. This site is midway between Muskegon and Grand Haven, in both Ottawa and Muskegon Counties. It was determined to have two natural communities of exceptional significance: Dry-Mesic Southern Forest and Open Dunes. In addition, populations of a state threatened and a federally threatened/state threatened plant occurs within the Ottawa County acreage of this site.

The 256 acre mature Dry-mesic Southern Forest is dominated by

Northern Red Oak, Beech and Sugar Maple. It is transitional to Mesic Northern Forest and includes a dozen 5-10 acre stands of this community type. The 116 acre dunes rise in a series of blowouts 180' above Lake Michigan. They are dominated by a Dunegrass (Calamovilfa longifolia), with either Merram Grass or Little Bluestem (Andropogon scoparius) co-dominant. Some ORV use and locally heavy foot traffic are major artificial disturbances on the dunes.

One population of a state threatened plant and one population of a state threatened/proposed federally threatened plant occur here. Ownership (within Ottawa County) is nearly all in P. J. Hoffmaster State Park, with only a few acres owned by Construction Aggregates Corporation. The majority of the natural quality acreage in the park is designated as Hoffmaster Natural Area.

South Lloyd Island (PNA #10):

S 1/2, SE 1/4, sec. 22, N 1/2, NE 1/4, sec 27; and NW 1/4, NW 1/4, NW 1/4, sec. 26, T.8N., R.16W., Spring Lake Township. This 31 acre marsh is approximately one mile due south of Spring Lake and is one in a series of natural-quality marshes found on islands within the Grand River. Natural-quality marsh, in contrast to previously cultivated (or otherwise disturbed) land, occupies approximately one-half of the island which is owned by Twin Lakes Farms, Incorporated.

This island is a mosaic of Southern Wet Meadow and Emergent Marsh (including tall emergent, broad-leaved emergent, and floating-leaved zones), with Submergent Marsh (dominated by Coontail (Ceratophyllum demersum) and Water-milfoil (Myriophyllum sp.)) restricted to the small protected bayous. The meadow is dominated by Blue-joint (Calamagrostis canadensis) and Reed Canary-grass (Phalaris arundinacea), and occupies the south, southeast, southwest and west sides of the island. These areas appeared to be heavily disturbed in 1938 aerial photographs, perhaps the result of either agriculture and/or use as river dredging spoil sites. In addition to the meadows, Willows (Salix sp.) and Purple loosestrife are locally dominant here. The Emergent Marsh is of natural quality and was locally dominated by either Hybrid Cat-tail (Typha X glauca), Pickerel-weed or Arrow-arum. The substrate is a deep silt, generally under 1-2 feet of water in 1988.

This island is the site for one state threatened plant population. No other Special Plants or Special Animals are known from, or were encountered while surveying this marsh. This marsh was determined to be a notably significant Great Lakes Marsh occurrence.

Pottawattomie Bayou (PNA #11)

SW 1/4; W 1/4, SE 1/4; SW 1/4, NW 1/4; W 1/2, SE 1/4, NW 1/4, sec. 2; N 1/2, NW 1/4, W 1/2, NW 1/4, NE 1/4, sec. 11; NE 1/4, NE

1/4, NE 1/4, sec. 10; E 1/2, sec. 3, T.7N, R. 16W., Grand Haven Township; and SE 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 34, T.8N., R.16W., Spring Lake Township. This 122 acre marsh lies approximately 3 miles south south-east of Grand Haven. It is locally known as Hofma Park and is accessible from a boardwalk near the east end of Sleeper Street, 0.75 miles east of 168th Avenue. The majority of the site is owned and protected by the Township of Grand Haven, with significant additional unprotected acreage in Pitcher Investment company, Ester D. Witteveen, McBeath & Kule, and Nicholas Wolf.

Highly diverse Emergent and Southern Wet Meadow communities dominate most of the area, with moderately diverse Submergent Marsh (dominated by Coontail and Greater Duckweed (Spiroldela polyrhiza)) restricted to the main channel and the deeper, northern portions of the marsh. The Emergent Marsh is dominated by Arrow-arum and Pond-lily and gradually grades into atypical Southern Wet Meadow community (dominated by either Sedge (Carex aquatilis) or Swamp Loosestrife (Decodon verticillata) and Beggar-ticks (Ridens cernua) as the floating peat mat becomes more stable. Meadows on unstable mats are rarely encountered in Great Lakes Marshes. A narrow zone of Southern Shrub-Carr (dominated by Red-osier (Cornus stolonifera), Speckled Alder (Alnus rugosa), and Rice Cut-Grass (Leersia oryzoides) occurs at the base of the uplands. The only major disturbance to this marsh is a former railroad right-of-way which crosses through the center of the site. It is now occupied by an elevated boardwalk which allows for a natural hydrologic regime.

This site was determined to be exceptionally significant as a Great Lakes Marsh. It is the highest quality estuary-type marsh in the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. In addition, it has a population of a state threatened plant species. No Special Animals are known from this marsh.

Dermo Island (PNA #14)

S 1/2, SE 1/4, NW 1/4; S 1/2, NE 1/4; NE 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 26, T.8N., R.16W., Spring Lake township. This 88 acre marsh lies approximately two miles east of Grand Haven and is one in a series of natural marshes on islands within the Grand River. Approximately one-half of this island was determined to be natural quality Great Lakes marsh, with the remainder (at the north and south ends of the island) as former agricultural land and/or river dredge spoil sites. These latter areas are dominated by Hybrid Cat-tail, Willows, Reed Canary-grass and Purple Loosestrife. The island is owned by the State of Michigan and is part of the Grand Haven State Game Area.

The essentially undisturbed marsh, on the south and west sides of the island, consists of a mixture of Southern Wet Meadow, Emergent Marsh (including tall emergent, broad-leaved emergent, and floating-leaved zones), and Submergent Marsh. A Bulrush (Scirpus fluviatilis), locally dominant within the Emergent Marsh, is uncommon in other marshes along the Grand River.

A portion of this island was determined to be notably significant Great Lakes Marsh occurrence. No Special Plants or Special Animals are known from this island.

Indian Channel (PNA #15)

Sec. 36, T.8N., R.16W., Spring Lake Township; NE 1/4; NE 1/4, NE 1/4, NW 1/4 sec. 1, T.7N., R.16W. Spring Lake Township; NW 1/4, sec. 6, T.7N., R.15W., Robinson Township; and S 1/2, sec. 31, T.8N., R.15W., Robinson Township. This 503 acre marsh lies 3 miles southeast of Grand Haven and is situated alongside and within the Grand River. The site consists of three adjacent marshes including an island west and south of Indian Channel, the wetland portion of a peninsula immediately east of the channel, and marsh east of these areas and immediately south of the main channel of the Grand River. The entire wetland acreage north of the Grand River was determined to be a Great Lakes Marsh of natural quality. The site south of the river is natural quality except immediately alongside the river, where dredging spoils may have been deposited. The majority of the area is within Grand Haven State Game Area. Significant private tracts include Felix Pytlinske, Marc Leona Crum, and Walter Maciejewski.

The island west of Indian Channel consisted of either Hybrid Cat-tails on exposed, sandy ground, or Arrow-arum on deep, unstable muck. High recent water levels have significantly lowered plant diversity at this site. The area east of the channel was primarily Arrow-arum, with Coontail and Greater Duckweed in the Submergent Marsh. The marsh south of the Grand River is dominated by three floating-leaved Emergent Marsh species: Water Lily, Pond-lily, and a Pondweed (Potamogeton nodosus). This plant community exists where water depths exceed three feet. The emergent-leaved plant community of Hybrid Cat-tail, Bur-reed (Sparganium eurycarpum), and Softstem Bulrush (Scirpus validus) occurs on slightly more elevated sites (0.5 to 2.5 feet of water depth). In between these two zones (in depths from 2.5 to 3 feet) are Pickerel-weed and Arrow-arum. A submergent zone was found in deeper water throughout the area and is dominated by Star Duckweed (Lemna trisulca), Waterweed (Elodia nuttallii), and Coontail.

This site was determined to be a notably significant Great Lakes Marsh occurrence. One state threatened animal is known from the Indian Channel of the Grand River. While no other Special Animals or Special Plants are known from the area, there is a likelihood of a state threatened plant occurring here.

Millhouse Bayou (PNA #16)

SW 1/4, sec. 1 and W 1/2, NE 1/4; E 1/2, NE 1/4, NW 1/4, sec. 12, T.7N., R.16W., Grand Haven Township. This 57 acre marsh lies approximately four miles southeast of Grand Haven, on a tributary of the Grand River. The vegetation is similar to Potawattomie

Bayou (PNA #11) one mile west, but the zonation is much narrower due to the smaller size of the bayou. The exotic weed Purple Loosestrife is abundant in localized areas in this marsh, which makes this a lower quality community than Potawattomie Bayou, despite less artificial disturbance. This site is owned by Floyd Payne, Ruth Kube, George Unger, and Martin Zimonick.

This site was determined to be a notably significant Great Lakes Marsh occurrence. A population of a state threatened plant occurs here. No other Special Plants or Special Animals are known from this marsh.

Vincent Creek Woods (PNA #19)

N 1/2, NE 1/4, sec. 6, T.8N., R.15W., Crockery Township. This site miles 1.5 miles southeast of Fruitport, 0.25 miles due south of the I-96/Fruitport Road interchange. It is characterized by a 65 acre notably significant Mesic Northern Forest, locally dominated by either Hemlock with White and Black Oak or Northern Red Oak and Sugar Maple. It represents the only natural quality example of a Hemlock forest type that was once widespread in the western part of the county. While many Hemlock and White Pine stumps are present from logging in the 1890's, some remain and there is reproduction of these species.

The two tracts comprising this site are owned by C. Jesiek and Don Jablonski. Moderate to locally heavy logging took place in 1987 to a mature to old second growth White Oak stand immediately west of Vincent Creek Woods. There are no Special Animals or Special Plants known from this site.

Bruce Bayou (PNA #20)

N 1/4, sec. 32; N 1/4, sec. 33; S 1/2, SE 1/4, SW 1/4; S 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 29; SW 1/4; SW 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 28, T.8N., R. 15W., Crockery Township. This 379 acre marsh lies along the Grand River, 3.5 miles southwest of Nunica. The majority of the site is within the boundaries of the Grand Haven State Game Area, with private ownerships in Spoonville Gun Club, John Leavitt, Clinton Peterson, and Arn. Johnson.

This site is characterized by an extensive Emergent Marsh dominated by Arrow-arum and Water-lily on 3.5 to 6 feet of unstable muck. It is mostly undisturbed, with the exception of a long, shallow ditch through the northeast part of the site. Submergent Marsh is restricted to protected embayments and is dominated by Coontail. Southern Wet Meadow is found where muck depth is less than 3.5 feet and underlain by sand. These meadows are dominated by Reed Canary-grass and Willow-weed (Polygonum lapathifolium).

This site was determined to be a notably significant Great Lakes Marsh occurrence. A population of a state threatened plant was found here. No other Special Plants or Special Animals are known

to occur in this marsh.

Stearns Bayou (PNA #22)

S 1/2, Sw 1/4; W 1/2, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 5 and NE 1/4; E 1/2, NE 1/4, NW 1/4, sec. 8, T.7N., R.15W., Robinson Township. This site was determined to be non-qualifying as a Great Lakes Marsh based on a field evaluation. However, a state threatened plant population occurs here. Ownership of the threatened plant habitat is by Chester Stolarz.

Grand Valley Ravines (PNA #26)

W 1/2, sec. 29; E 1/2, SE 1/4; SE 1/4, NE 1/4, sec. 30; E 1/2, NE 1/4; NE 1/4; SE 1/4 sec. 31; and NW 1/4, sec. 32, T.7N., R.13W., Tallmadge Township. This site lies six miles north of Hudsonville, along the west banks of the Grand River at Grand Valley State college. It extends from 0.2 to 1.3 miles south of the M-45 bridge over the Grand River. The 170 acre Mesic Southern Forest was determined to be notably significant. It is a diverse mature to old-growth woods dominated by Sugar Maple, Beech and Northern Red Oak. Included in this acreage are small areas of Dry-Mesic Southern Forest (Oak-Maple) and a Red Ash-Sugar Maple Southern Floodplain Forest, neither of which are large enough to be recognized as element occurrences.

Grand Valley Ravines was a historic locality for a state threatened plant, as well as being adjacent to more recent occurrences for a state threatened plant and a special concern plant. Ownership is by Grand Valley State College, Grand Valley State College Faculty Club and Calvin Aldrink.

Aman Park (PNA #31)

Sec. 22, T.7N., R.13W., Tallmadge Township. This site is located about six miles northwest of Grandville, two miles east of Grand Valley on M-45. It lies in the northwest part of a park owned by the City of Grand Rapids. This 23 acre Dry-Mesic Southern Forest was determined to be notably significant. It lies atop a 40-50' escarpment and is dominated by Northern Red Oak and White Oak. Historic fires probably maintained an Oak Opening natural community in presettlement times. Presently, the forest canopy has closed in and the woods are undergoing succession to a Beech-Sugar Maple stand due to lack of fire.

No Special Plants or Special Animals are known from within the natural community, although two plants inhabit the floodplain forest downslope.

South Grand Valley Ravine (PNA #32)

SE 1/4, sec. 32, T.7N., R.13W., Tallmadge Township and sec. 5, T.6N., R.13W., Georgetown Township. This site lies five miles north of Hudsonville, on the south bank of the Grand River. It

was determined to be a notably significant Mesic Southern Forest dominated by Sugar Maple and Beech. While old growth trees still remain, many of the oaks and beech were cut 20-24 years ago. This 47 acre forest contains small acreages of Dry-Mesic Southern Forest and Southern Floodplain Forest, which individually do not qualify as natural community occurrences. The site is owned by Ricardo Meana. There are Special Plants or Special Animals reported from the site.

Marne Bog (PNA #33)

E 1/2, sec. 36, T.8N., R.13W., Wright Township. This site lies 1.5 miles east of Marne, between Garfield and Hayes Streets. It was determined to be a notably significant, 25 acre Bog dominated by Cat-tails, Sphagnum and a Sedge (Carex stricta). The Bog lies in the center of a shallow depression on glacial outwash, surrounded by Relict Conifer Swamp and Southern Swamp. While the former is of high natural quality, it is not large enough to be a natural community occurrence.

This site is owned by Henry Kaptein. There are no Special Plants or Special Animals reported from here.

Stafford Lake (PNA #36)

Sec. 25 and 36, T.N., R.13W., Tallmadge Township. This site lies approximately four miles north of Grandville, 0.2 miles northwest of the junction of Fennessy Drive and 2nd Avenue. It was determined to be a notably significant Bog (11 acres) and Emergent Marsh (22 acres). The Bog is locally dominated by Cat-tails and a Spike-rush (Eleocharis sp.) and is essentially undisturbed. The Emergent Marsh is dominated by Water Lily and is also essentially undisturbed. However, both of these communities are of rather low diversity.

A historical record for a population of a state threatened/federal candidate plant is known from this site. It was not possible to verify the occurrence of this species at the site since permission for access to its appropriate habitat was denied by the landowner. The site is under multiple ownership, including: Jack Goodale, Ruth Densel, Teresa Kasperlik, Richard Bjork and Consumers Power Company.

STATE & COUNTY PARK FACILITY INVENTORY 2015			PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments	
Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																				
STATE OF MICHIGAN																						
Hoffmaster State Park	1100 (± 300 in Ott. Co.)	Lake Michigan, Dunes	X	X	X										X			X	X		Nature Center, Camping	
Grand Haven State Park	48	Lake Michigan	X	X	X	X	X						X		X						Pier fishing, camping, walk connections to downtown G.H.	
Holland State Park	142	Lake Michigan, Dunes	X	X	X	X	X						X		X			X	X	X	Camping	
Bass River State Recreation Area	1665	Grand River													X	X	X	X				
Grand Haven State Game Area	1139	Grand River															X					
Ottawa Mini Game Areas (6)	425	n/a																X				
Petty's Bayou Boat Launch	1.45	Spring Lake															X					
Lbyds Bayou Launch	4.55	Grand River															X					
Robinson Township Boat Launch	5.04	Grand River															X					
Musketawa Trail		n/a																			Regional Bike Path	
State Total	3730																					
OTTAWA COUNTY																						
<u>Grand River Greenway</u>																						
Connor Bayou	142	Grand River, Inland Bayou	X	X	X	X									X	X		X	X		Accessible Kayak Launch	
Crockery Creek Natural Area	334	Grand River, Crockery Creek	X			X							X					X	X		Open Space	
Jubb Bayou	97	Grand River, Inland Bayou													X			X	X		Open Space	
Riverside Park	95	Grand River	X	X		X									X	X	X	X				
Bur Oak Landing	263	Grand River													X		X					
Eastmanville Farm	239	Grand River	X			X												X	X		Equestrian trails	
Eastmanville Bayou	157	Grand River, Inland Bayou	X	X		X									X	X	X	X			Accessible Kayak Launch	
Deer Creek Park	2	Grand River, small stream	X			X											X					

STATE & COUNTY PARK FACILITY INVENTORY 2015			PENIC AREA	PENIC SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments
Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																			
OTTAWA COUNTY (cont'd)																					
Ripps Bayou	173	Grand River, Inland Bayou														X		X			limited access
Kuits Bayou	80	Grand River, Inland Bayou																X			limited access
Grand River Open Space	279	Grand River				X										X		X	X		Open space, hunting
Grand Ravines Park	187	Grand River/Ravines	X	X	X	X										X		X	X	X	OffLeash Dog Park
Grand River Park	162	Grand River, Inland Pond	X		X	X		X						X		X	X	X	X		Accessible Kayak Launch
Bend Area (Open Space)	258	Grand River, Inland Lake														X	X	X	X		shore fishing
Un-named Site -Georgetown Twp.	6	Forested Wetland																			
<u>Pigeon River Greenway</u>																					
Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend	229	Pigeon River	X	X	X	X								X		X	X	X	X	X	kayak, canoe launch
Pigeon River Open Space	46	Pigeon River																X			
Pigeon Creek Park	282	Pigeon River	X		X	X								X		X		X	X	X	groomed skitails
Pigeon Creek Forest	130	Pigeon River	X															X	X	X	groomed skitails
<u>Macatawa River Greenway</u>																					
Macatawa Greenspace	172	Macatawa River	X	X		X		X								X		X	X	X	18-hole disc golf
Adams Street Landing	10	Macatawa River	X															X	X		kayak, canoe launch
Hawthorne Pond Natural Area	40	Macatawa River																X			joint ownership with Holland Twp., currently undeveloped
Upper Macatawa Natural Area	612	Macatawa River	X	X		X												X	X	X	mountain bike trails
<u>Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway</u>																					
North Ottawa Dunes	513	Dunes	X			X								X				X	X		
North Beach Park	7	Lake Michigan	X	X	X	X		X					X		X						
Rosy Mound Natural Area	164	Lake Michigan, Dunes	X	X		X												X	X		
Kirk Park	68	Lake Michigan, Dunes	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X			X	X		dog beach

STATE & COUNTY PARK FACILITY INVENTORY 2015

Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)	PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments
OTTAWA COUNTY (contd)																					
Olive Shores	21	Lake Michigan, Dunes	X			X												X	X		currently undeveloped
Tunnel Park	23	Lake Michigan, Dunes	X	X		X	X	X					X		X			X	X		
Historic Ottawa Beach Parks	58	Lake Michigan, Lake Macatawa, Dunes	X												X	X		X	X	X	
<u>General Parks, Open Space and Trails</u>																					
Musketawa Trail			X																		X
Un-named Site - Wright Township	8	Forested Wetland																X			
Goose Park	40	Crocker Lake	X	X		X								X	X	X		X	X		
Mame Bog	83	Bog, wetland																X			
Robinson Forest (Open Space)	80	Forest																X			
Johnson Street Forest (Open Space)	50	Forest																X			
Hawatha Forest (Open Space)	365	Forest																X	X		
Hager Park	104	Forest	X	X	X	X		X						X				X	X	X	
Port Sheldon Natural Area (Open Space)	440	TenHagen Creek																X	X		
VanBuren Street Dunes (Open Space)	120	Dunes																X	X		
Spring Grove Park	16	Artesian Spring	X		X	X												X			
Riley Trails	300	Forest, pond				X								X				X	X		
County Total	6455																				

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY			POND AREA	POND SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS		
Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																				Comments
CITY OF COOPERSVILLE																						
Coopersville Community Park	10	3 acre pond	X	X	X	X		X	X		X							X				
Grove Street Park	4.83	Deer Creek	X			X	X		X		X											
Main Street Park	4	Deer Creek	X															X				
Veterans Memorial Park	1.28		X	X		X																
City Sports Complex	10.9		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X										3 ballfields + lights
Total	31.01																					
CITY OF FERRYSBURG																						
William Ferry Park	2	Grand River	X	X		X		X										X				400 ft. boardwalk
Coast Guard Park	80	Forest, dunes	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X		Dog Park
Fire Barn Park	5		X			X		X	X	X	X											Ice Skating
Kitchell/Lindquist Dunes Preserve	113	Grand River													X				X	X		
Natural Preserve	43																		X			No parking / improvements
Sunnyside Park			X			X		X														
Mike Heman Field						X			X													
Total	243																					
CITY OF GRAND HAVEN																						
City Beach	13.86	Lake Michigan	X			X										X						
Bicentennial Park	2.3	Grand River	X			X	X											X				Boardwalk
Bob Park	0.9		X																			Greenspace
Central Park	2.4		X																	X		Fountain, benches

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)	PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSDN	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	Comments	
CITY OF GRAND HAVEN (cont)																						
Chinook Pier Park	1	Grand River	X			X		X													Grills	
Duncan Woods Park	37.8	Forest	X												X				X	X	Sledding	
East Grand River Park	5.5	Grand River	X	X		X		X	X	X			X		X		X	X	X	X	Grills, Dog Park	
Escanaba Park	0.9	Grand River	X																X	X	Escanaba mast, boardwalk	
Harbor Island	23	Grand River	X			X							X				X	X	X	X		
Harbor Island Linear Park	6	Grand River	X	X											X		X					
Johnston Park	0.1		X																		Greenspace	
Klaver Park	0.2		X																		Greenspace	
Kempel Park	0.2		X																		Greenspace	
Lighthouse Connector Park	4	Grand River	X				X										X			X	Boardwalk	
Mulligan's Hollow	80.5	Dunes	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X	X	Shuffleboard
Municipal Marina	2	Grand River	X		X	X											X	X				
Musical Fountain and North Shore Open Space	142.28	Grand River, Dewey Hill																		X	Fountain area is 3.7 acres	
North Shore Fisherman's Lot	1.7	Lake Michigan				X											X					
Rick Robinson Park	6.3		X														X				Grills	
Suka Field	5.5		X			X		X	X				X								Outdoor Ice rink	
William Hatton Park	0.9		X																			
Veterans Memorial Park	1.14		X																			
Willow Park	0.02		X																			
Total	337.34																					

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY			P I N I C AREA	P I N I C SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	Comments	
Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																				
CITY OF HOLLAND																						
Lakeview City Park	2.8		X	X	X		X		X					X					X	X		
Centennial Park	5.6		X	X	X															X	Historic park	
Smal lenburg Park	10.6		X	X	X		X	X			X		X								Ice skating, stadium, Bouws Pool	
Matt Urban Sports and Recreation Complex	23		X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X								
Window on the Waterfront	30	Macatawa River	X	X				X	X				X					X	X	X		
Kollen Park	17	Lake Macatawa	X	X	X		X										X	X		X	Boardwalk	
Holland Heights Park	1		X	X				X	X	X											Totbt	
Holland Heights School Park	6		X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X							X		
VanBragt Park	3.4	Macatawa River	X														X	X	X			
Prospect Park	7.5		X					X											X	X		
Rosa Green (College Avenue) Park	3.2		X	X				X	X	X												
DeGraaf Nature Center	18	Forest, wetlands	X		X	X		X											X	X	Educational facility	
Windmill Island	49	Macatawa River	X	X	X	X	X	X											X		Historic windmill, fee area	
Moran Park	4.2		X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X							Shuffleboard, fitness stations	
Van Raalte Farm	160	Forest, stream	X	X	X		X								X				X	X	Sledding	
Macatawa Marsh	109	Macatawa River															X		X		Wildlife observation	
37th Street Preserve	4																		X		Wooded open space	

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)	PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	Comments
CITY OF HOLLAND (cont)																					
Columbia Avenue Tennis Courts	1.4										X										
Water Tower Park	0.3		X					X												X	wellness trail
Maplewood Youth Complex	10.5		X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X								
Total	466.5																				
CITY OF HUDSONVILLE																					
Veteran's Park	1		X																		
Sunrise Park	12.6	Rush Creek	X	X		X		X	X					X					X	X	Formerly Northeast Park
Hudsonville Nature Center	74	DeWeerd Drain	X		X	X													X	X	Boardwalk, scenic overlook
Hughes Park	19.2		X	X		X		X	X	X				X							Disc golf
Hillside Park	3.7		X	X		X		X						X							
Total	110.5																				

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)	PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	Comments
ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP																					
Alendale Recreation Park	41.86		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X	Shuffleboard, veterans & memorial gardens, splash pads, pickle ball
Total	41.86																				
CHESTER TOWNSHIP																					
Chester Park	15.76		X	X	X		X	X	X										X		Township Hall
Total	15.76																				
CROCKERY TOWNSHIP																					
Crockery Township Recreational Facility	20		X	X	X		X	X	X					X	X				X	X	
Total	20																				
GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP																					
8th Avenue Community Park	55		X	X	X		X	X	X							X	X		X	X	Non resident entrance fee
Dale E. Wagner Little League Complex	27.9				X	X		X													
Georgetown Ice Arena																					
Woodcrest Park	10.9							X					X				X	X			Pond

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)	PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	Comments
HOLLAND TOWNSHIP																					
Beechwood Park	4.5		X	X	X		X		X	X									X		Lighted shuffleboard & tennis
Brookwood Park	1		X	X			X		X												
Howard B. Dunton Park	21	Lake Macatawa	X	X	X		X										X	X	X	X	Boardwalks, viewing shelters
Helder Park	159		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X					X	X	Boardwalks
Quincy Street Park	133		X	X	X		X	X		X			X						X		
Hawthorne Pond Natural Area	40	Pond, forest															X	X		X	Kayak Launch Ramp
Total	318.5																				
PARK TOWNSHIP																					
Ashwood Reserve	0.6	Lake Macatawa																	X		Kayak & canoeing, natural beach
Brookside Bicycle Park	8.56		X																X		Bike route
Chief Waukazoo Park	0.75		X																X		
Cooper-Van Wieren Park	66																		X	X	Horseback riding
Virginia Park / Maatman Center	6		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X						X	X	Shuffleboard, lighted tennis
Park Twp. Comm. Center / Park (Fairgrounds)	68.25		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X					X	X	Lighted tennis, dog & skateboard parks, indoor & outdoor basketball
Stu Visser Trails	37	Pine Creek	X																	X	Boardwalk, pond, wetlands
Ransom Park	20		X	X				X		X			X		X				X	X	Open sports field, Disc Golf
Wendt Park	24		X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X						X	X	Fitness trail

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY			PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS		
Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																				Comments
ROBINSON TOWNSHIP																						
Robinson Township Park	42		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X		
Total	42																					
SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP																						
Dewitt School Historic Facilities	2		X		X																	
Water Tower Park	4.25		X					X		X		X										
River Run Park	2.76		X	X																		Bike path
Rycenga Park	80		X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X						X	X		Disc golf, boardwalks
VanWagoner Park	13																					
Total	89.01																					
TALLMADGE TOWNSHIP																						
Amman Park (Owned by the City of Grand Rapids)	331	Sand Creek													X				X	X		Indian Trails Camp (private)
Township Community Park	27		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		Pond w/dock
Total	358																					
WRIGHT TOWNSHIP																						
Cole Memorial Park	3	Sand Creek	X																X	X		Footbridge & viewing deck
Veterans Park	0.5		X	X																		
Total	3																					

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK FACILITY INVENTORY			PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	HORSESHOES	SOC CER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	
Park Location and Name	Total Acres	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																			Comments
ZEELAND TOWNSHIP																					
Drenthe Grove	19.1		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							X		X	X	Shuffleboard
VanZoeren Woods	34.6	Ravines																	X	X	
Total	53.7																				
Local Grand Total	3243																				

Ottawa County Parkland Acreage Comparison		
Area	Acres	%
Total Ottawa County Land Area	369,005	100.00
State Park Lands	3,730	1.01
County Park Lands	6,455	1.75
Local Park Lands	3,243	0.88
Park Lands Total	13,428	3.64

ADJACENT COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

Park Location and Name	Total Acres/Miles	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)	PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments
KENT COUNTY																					
Bettes Memorial Park	3 acres																				open space preservation
Earl Brewer Park	95 acres		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									disc golf
Caldonia Lakeside Park	43 acres	Emmons Lake	X	X	X	X									X	X			X		
Chief Hazy Cloud Park	120 acres	Grand River	X		X													X	X		
Coldwater River Park	6 acres	Coldwater River	X		X										X						
Cooper Creek Park	6 acres	Cooper Creek			X										X		X	X			bridal trails
Creekside Park	32 acres		X	X	X		X	X			X								X	X	exercise station
Douglas Waker Park	81 acres	Buck Creek	X	X	X		X	X											X	X	Kent Trails staging area, rugby, winter sports, horseshoes
Dutton Shadyside Park	18 acres	Plaster Creek	X	X	X		X	X		X											
Dwight Lydell Park	39 acres	Mill Creek, ponds	X	X	X		X	X	X						X				X		
Fallasburg Park	324 acres	Flat River, Page Creek	X	X	X		X								X		X	X			shelter house, winter sports
Fisk Knob Park	4 acres		X																		highest geographic point in County
Gordon Park	28 acres		X	X	X		X	X										X	X		
Johnson Park	258 acres	Grand River	X	X	X		X	X							X	X		X	X		disc golf, exercise station, shelter house, winter sports, scenic drive
Kent Trails	15 miles	Grand River												X	X			X	X		
Knapp Valley Forest	104 acres																	X	X		
Kroes Park	31 acres																				open space preservation
Lamoreaux Park	263 acres	Grand River, ponds						X					X	X		X	X				winter sports
Lamoreaux Memorial Park	2 acres																		X	X	staging for White Pine Trail

ADJACENT COUNTY PARK FACILITIES			PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments	
Park Location and Name	Total Acres/Miles	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																				
KENT COUNTY, (cont.)																						
Leopard Preserve	52 acres																	X	X		preserve	
Long Lake Park	231 acres	Long Lake	X	X	X			X	X						X	X	X				non motorized watercraft, shelter house	
Lowell Regional Park	484 acres																	X			preserved open space	
Luton Park	264 acres												X					X	X	X		
Millennium Park	1,465 acres	Grand River, lake	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	beach house, splash park	
M-6 Trail	8.5 miles																		X	X	non motorized use, passes Butler & Creekside parks	
Myers Lake Park	6 acres	Big & Little Myers Lakes	X		X		X								X	X		X			changing area	
Palmer Park	335 acres	Buck Creek	X	X	X		X	X						X		X		X	X		18 hole golf course	
Paris Park	70 acres													X				X	X			
Paul Henry Thomapple Trail	4.8 miles													X		X			X	X	non motorized use	
Pickrell Lake Park (Fred Meijer Nature Preserve)	310 acres	Pickrell Lake				X								X		X		X	X		boardwalks	
Provin Trails Park	45 acres					X								X				X	X		winter sports	
Rogue River Park	79 acres	Rogue River	X	X	X		X	X		X				X		X		X	X	X		
Ruehs Park	5 acres	Thomapple River	X			X		X								X						
Siedman Park	422 acres	ponds				X								X		X		X	X		winter sports	
Spencer Forest	550 acres													X				X	X		bridle trails, winter sports	
Thomapple River bend Park	209 acres	Thomapple River																X			preserved open space	
Townsend Park	144 acres	Bear Creek	X	X	X		X	X						X		X		X	X		preserved green space, winter sports, shelter house	
Two Rivers Park	91 acres	Thomapple & Coldwater Rivers																			preserved open space	

ADJACENT COUNTY PARK FACILITIES			PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	RECREATION BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments	
Park Location and Name	Total Acres/Miles	Natural Resource (River, Dune, etc.)																				
KENT COUNTY, (cont.)																						
Wabasis Lake Park	104 acres	Wabasis Lake	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X			campground, beach house, shelter house, wintersports
Walfield Park	265 acres		X	X	X	X							X					X	X			wintersports
White Pine Park	60 acres		X		X													X	X			preserved open space
MUSKEGON COUNTY																						
Blue Lake Park	25 acres	Big Blue Lake	X												X	X						campground
Denemo Access Site		Big Blue Lake														X	X					
Meher Park	88 acres	Lake Michigan, sand dunes	X	X											X			X	X			campground, rental cottage
Moore Park	36 acres	Half Moon Lake	X	X	X										X	X	X	X				
Patterson Park	28 acres	Little Rib Grande Creek	X	X	X													X				
Pioneer Park	145 acres	Lake Michigan, sand dunes	X	X	X			X	X	X			X		X			X				campground
Twin Lake Park	15 acres	Twin Lake	X	X		X	X				X		X		X		X		X			
Duck Lake State Park	728 acres	Lake Michigan, Duck Lake, sand dunes	X	X										X	X	X	X	X	X			hunting, snowmobiling, beach house
Muskegon State Park	1,165 acres	Lake Michigan, Muskegon Lake, forested dunes	X	X			X							X	X	X	X	X	X			hike, beach bath house
P.J. Hoffmaster State Park	1,200 acres	Lake Michigan, sand dunes	X	X	X									X	X	X		X	X			Gillette Visitor Center, camping
Hart-Montague Trail State Park	22 miles		X											X					X	X		snowmobiling

ADJACENT COUNTY PARK FACILITIES			PICNIC AREA	PICNIC SHELTER	REC BUILDING	RESTROOMS	CONCESSION	PLAYGROUND	BALLFIELD	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOCCER	VOLLEYBALL	X-COUNTRY SKIING	SWIMMING BEACH	FISHING	LAUNCH RAMP	NATURAL AREAS	HIKING TRAILS	BIKE PATH	Comments
ALLEGAN COUNTY																					
Bysterfeld Park	70 acres															X		X	X		
Dumont Lake Park	186 acres	Dumont Lake	X	X	X		X								X	X					
Dumont Lake boat launch	3 acres	Dumont Lake															X				vault toilets
Ely Lake Campground	90 acres	Ely Lake	X			X									X	x	X				non motorized watercraft, vault toilets
Gun Lake Park & launch	4 acres	Gun Lake	X	X	X		X		X						X		X				modern restrooms, ADA dock
Littlejohn Lake Park	113 acres	Littlejohn Lake	X	X	X		X	X	X				X		X			X	X		ADA beach walkway, horseshoes
New Richmond Bridge Park	80 acres	Kalamazoo River	X			X										X		X	X		restored 400' swing bridge, boardwalk
Pine Point Campground & Equestrian Park	80 acres	Swan Creek Pond				X								X	X	X	X		X		camping, equestrian camping & trails, vault toilets
Silver Creek Park & Campground	320 acres	Silver Creek	X			X												X	X		trout stream, camping, equestrian camping & trails, vault toilets
West Side Park	11 acres	Lake Michigan, dunes	X	X	X		X	X													dune stairways, modern restrooms
Allegan State Game Area	50,000 acres		X			X								X		X	X	X	X	X	hunting, mountain bike trails
Saugatuck Dunes State Park	1,000 acres	Lake Michigan, dunes	X	X										X				X	X		
NEW AYGO COUNTY																					
Diamond Lake County Park	156 acres	Diamond Lake, Manistee National Forest	X	X		X		X					X		X	X	X	X	X		camping w/bathhouses, sanitation station, horseshoes, boat rental
Sandy Beach County Park	129 acres	Hardy Pond	X			X		X							X	X	X	X			camping w/bathhouses, sanitation station, boat & dock rental at Hardy Dam County Marina
Ed H. Henning County Park	82 acres	Muskegon River	X					X		X	X	X			X	X	X				camping w/bathhouses, sanitation station
Pettibone Lake County Park	3 acres	Pettibone Lake		X											X	X	X				camping, vault toilets
Newaygo State Park	257 acres	Hardy Dam Pond, Muskegon River	X					X							X	X	X	X			rustic camping, disc golf

Ottawa County Citizen Survey

August 2015

Presented by:
EPIC ■ MRA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY and DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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METHODOLOGY

EPIC ▪ MRA administered interviews with 400 registered voters residing in Ottawa County, Michigan, from August 26, 2015 through August 27, 2015. Respondents were selected utilizing an interval method of randomly selecting records of published residential telephone numbers. In addition, a commercially available list of cell phones designated as in the possession of Ottawa County residents was obtained; Twenty percent of the sample, or 80 interviews, were completed via cell phone contact. The sample was stratified so that every area of the county is represented in the sample according to its contribution to a general election turnout. Interviews were terminated if the respondent indicated that he or she had not voted in at least one of the two most recent November general elections.

In interpreting survey results, all surveys are subject to error; that is, the results of the survey may differ from those that would have been obtained if the entire populations were interviewed. This “margin of error” quantifies the degree to which random sampling will differ from a survey of the entire population, taking into account, among other things, the disposition of individuals who do not complete the interview. Put another way, the opinions of those who are not randomly selected or who decline to be interviewed, are no more or less likely to be different – within the margin of error – than the opinions of those who complete an interview and are included in the sample. The size of sampling error depends on the total number of respondents to the particular question.

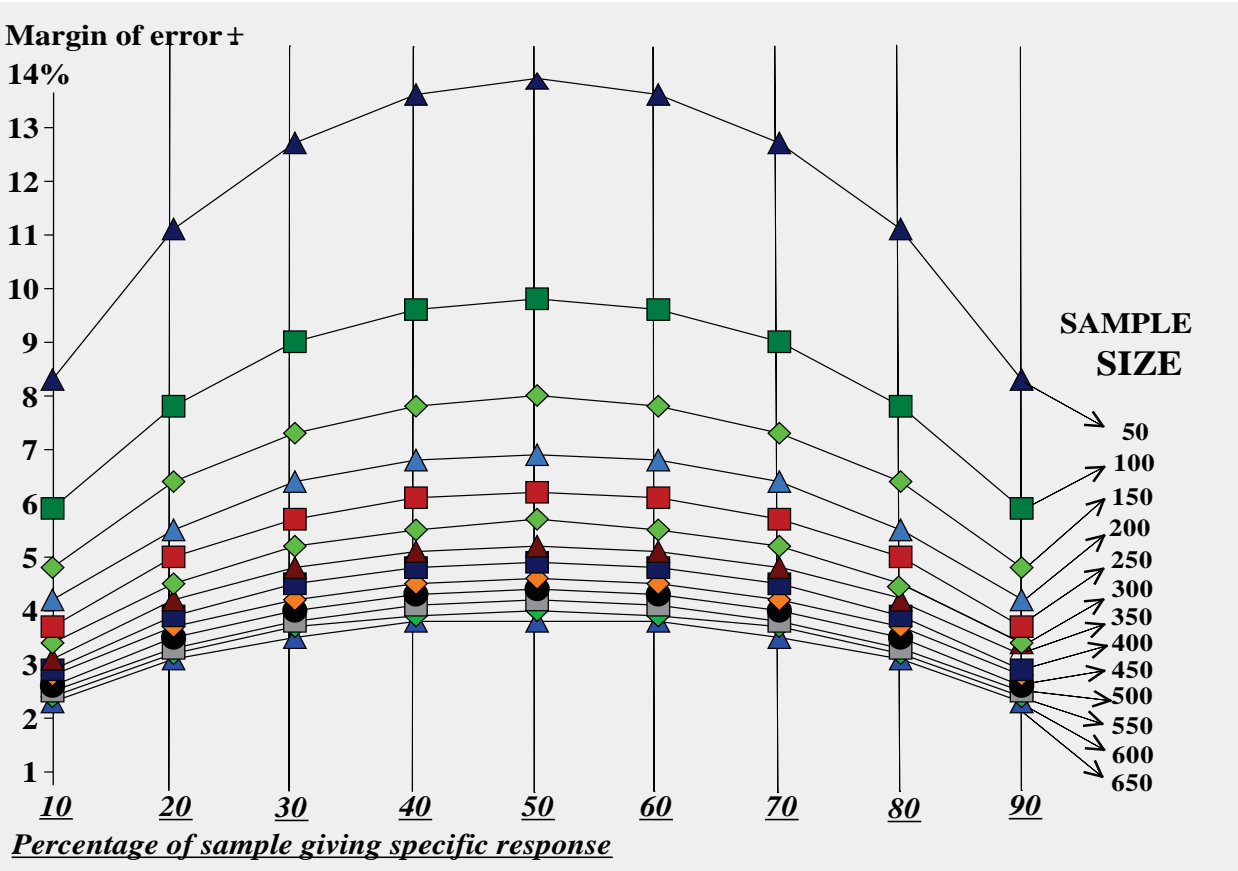
For example, 53 percent of all 400 respondents reported being “Unaware” that a special 1/3 of a mill dedicated to Ottawa County Parks was passed by the voters in 2006 (Q.08). As indicated in the chart below, this percentage would have a sampling error of plus or minus 4.9 percent. This means that with repeated sampling, it is very likely (95 times out of every 100), the percentage for the entire population would fall between 48.1 percent and 57.9 percent, hence 53 percent \pm 4.9 percent within a 95 percent degree of confidence.

For analysis purposes, the county geography was broken down into five regions. Where variations in responses are found among or between regions, it is noted in the textual report. A chart illustrating the jurisdictional components of each of the regions can be found in the appendix.

EPIC • MRA SAMPLING ERROR BY PERCENTAGE (AT 95 IN 100 CONFIDENCE LEVEL)

Percentage of sample giving specific response

SAMPLE SIZE:	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>90</u>
	% margin of error ±								
650	2.3	3.1	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.1	2.3
600	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
550	2.5	3.3	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.3	2.5
500	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6
450	2.8	3.7	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.7	2.8
400	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
350	3.1	4.2	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.1	4.8	4.2	3.1
300	3.4	4.5	5.2	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4
250	3.7	5.0	5.7	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.0	3.7
200	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
150	4.8	6.4	7.3	7.8	8.0	7.8	7.3	6.4	4.8
100	5.9	7.8	9.0	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9
50	8.3	11.1	12.7	13.6	13.9	13.6	12.7	11.1	8.3



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EPIC ▪ MRA was commissioned in 2015 by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission (the Commission) to measure public opinion concerning the performance of the commission in providing parks and recreation opportunities as well gauging public receptivity to a request for a millage renewal slated to be presented to the voters in August of 2016. The portion of the survey focusing on residents' awareness of, attitudes toward and preferences concerning, a variety of issues and programs concerning the parks builds upon prior work performed by other researchers hired by the Commission over the past several years. That portion of the survey testing receptivity to a request for a renewal of the existing dedicated millage is unique to this survey.

-- Sample Frame

The dual purpose of the survey posed something of a challenge in that satisfying the ongoing interest of the Commission to garner citizen input as a guide to plan future activities, a significant amount of interview time had to be apportioned to fairly detailed inquiry concerning existing and potential facilities and activities. By the same token, without a firm grasp on attitudes toward the renewal of the dedicated millage, the revenue with which to execute the Commission's mission could be jeopardized. In light of the latter reality, it was decided to conduct the survey among respondents who reported having voted in at least one of the last two November general elections. Turnout for these high visibility elections is always the strongest – particularly in presidential election years as 2016 will be – so the sample frame was able to capture as large a portion of the county's adult population for parks and recreation preference purposes as possible, while still maintaining the integrity of the data concerning intended voting behavior.

-- Questionnaire Frame

With this survey charged with the dual purpose of acting as the latest iteration of prior studies designed to measure public awareness and satisfaction with the county's park property and recreation opportunities, as well as measuring public sentiment toward a renewal of a dedicated millage that make the Department's activities possible, it was important to structure the interview so as to eliminate – or at least minimize – the bias one set of inquiries could have on the other. In an attempt to accomplish this goal, three questions concerning the millage followed immediately after the questions about county services deemed as being of the most and least value for taxes spent and a question asking respondents to rate the job the Parks and Recreation Commission does in discharging its duties. The first of the three millage-specific questions sought to measure citizen awareness of the existence of the current 1/3 dedicated mill, the next asked if they favored or opposed the current millage and the third asked

respondents how they would vote if a question asking for a renewal of the parks and recreation millage were in front of them today.

The interview then went into a test of respondents' opinions about a comprehensive list of activities the Commission is engaged in or might engage in; their perception of whether or not the level of opportunity for a wide variety of recreational activities was appropriate; a request to recite the county-operated venues they have recently visited; and, input about the characteristics of property the Commission should acquire should it expand its holdings.

It was not until the comprehensive list of parks and recreation opportunities and issues were presented to respondents and they were asked to register an opinion about them was completed that a second question about intended voting behavior about a millage renewal request was asked. Following this second "vote" on the question, the interview concluded with a complete battery of demographic questions.

-- General Observations

Several measures taken in the survey show the remarkably positive attitude Ottawa County residents have in regard to their Parks and Recreation Commission and this attitude bodes very well for passage of a ballot question to renew a dedicated millage. For instance, "Parks and Recreation" tied with "Road Commission" (12 percent each) for garnering the most mentions as the County service providing greatest value for taxes paid, with no other county department breaking double digits. Nine-out-of-ten respondents issue a "Positive" rating for the Commission in discharging its duties and eight-in-ten favor the existing 1/3 dedicated mill even though a solid majority of respondents (53 percent "unaware"; 2 percent "undecided") reported in a previous question that they were unaware the dedicated millage existed. Critically, a total of eight-in-ten would vote yes on a renewal question when first asked the question near the beginning of the interview, with this proportion moving up to 84 percent yes near the end of the interview, following a fairly comprehensive description of the Commission's activities.

It would appear the public's use of park resources and their concurrence with the direction and scope of the Commission's work is the impetus for the tremendous support recorded in the aforementioned measurements. The following general results serve as examples:

- The vast majority of respondents (84 percent) were able to cite the name what they believed was an Ottawa County park or recreation area that either they or a member of their household visited in the past year;
- Out of list of twenty Commission-sponsored recreational activities, a majority of respondents found only three items – Nature education programs; Canoe and Kayak sites; and, Paved pathways for bikes and rollerblading – where they thought "More" ought to be done; and,

- In only two instances did respondents feel “Too much” was being done in proportions exceeding single digits – Snowmobile areas and Hunting areas – and then only by margins of 11 percent and 10 percent respectively.
- When asked to name up to two types of park facilities or recreation programming they believed Ottawa County should offer, 74 percent were unable to cite a particular response and of those who did, no individual category exceeded two percent.
- Each of four general descriptions of park area expansion presented to respondents was met by no less than six-in-ten respondents agreeing with the contemplated acquisition and none of them received more than 27 percent disagreement;
- The County Parks Website ranks second only to “Word of mouth” as being the source of most respondents’ information about Commission activities.

Taken together, these general observations demonstrate tremendous public approval for the work being done by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission. Moreover, this approval translates in an overwhelming willingness to renew a dedicated 1/3 mill tax assessment – even by those who were not aware of the fact that this dedicated millage has been in place for nearly the past ten years.

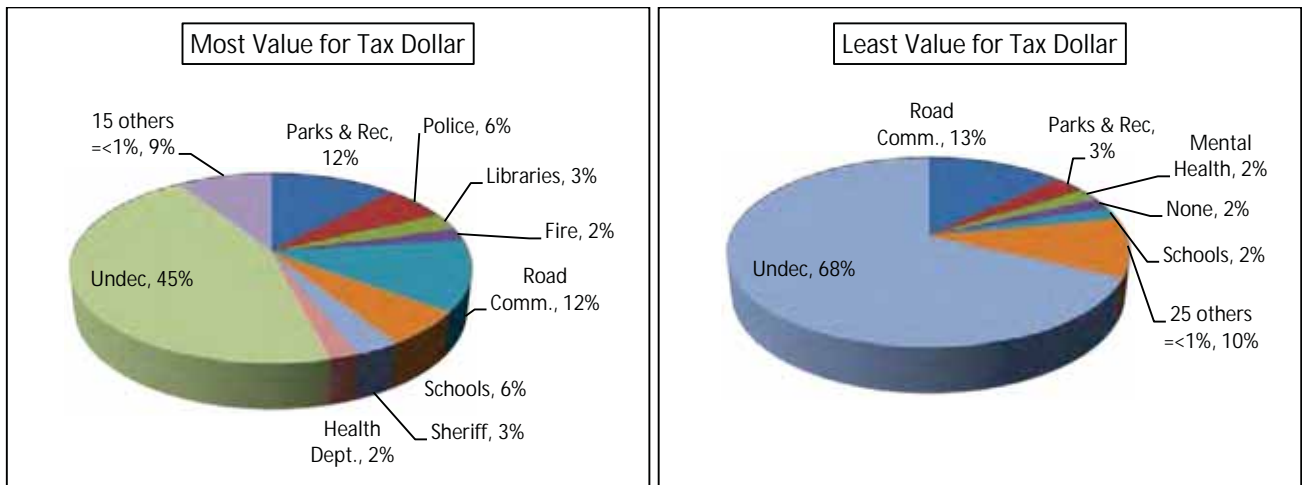
QUESTION-BY-QUESTION RESULTS

-- Most and Least Value for Taxes Paid. – (Qs. 04 & 05)

In the first of a series of questions designed to measure the relative importance Ottawa County residents place on Parks and Recreation, respondents are asked in an open-ended question to name the one specific county government program or service they think provides the most value for tax dollars paid to fund it. A follow-up open-ended question then asks them to name the program or service they perceive as returning the least value for tax dollar spent.

As can be seen in the charts below, Parks and Recreation and Road Commission occupy top-tier spots on the roster of activities and programs as being viewed as providing both the most and the least value for the taxes devoted to funding them. However, it is notable that while those two governmental agencies share the top ranking for being of most value, Parks and Recreation’s number two position on the least valuable scale is only at a total proportion of three percent – being cited at a rate of less than a quarter of the respondents naming “Road Commission”.

It is also telling that 50 percent more respondents were “undecided” about the least valuable county service than were so about the most valuable county service; a circumstance resulting in fewer specific departments being named as least valuable and all in very small proportions.



Subgroups reporting Parks and Recreation “Most value” in proportions greater than the norm of 12% included:

- 19% \$75K-\$100K hh income
- 18% Aware of millage
- Info source – Grand Haven Tribune
- Post HS education
- 17% People in hh – 3
- Residence – 1-15 years
- 16% Info source – Word of mouth
- People in hh – 4

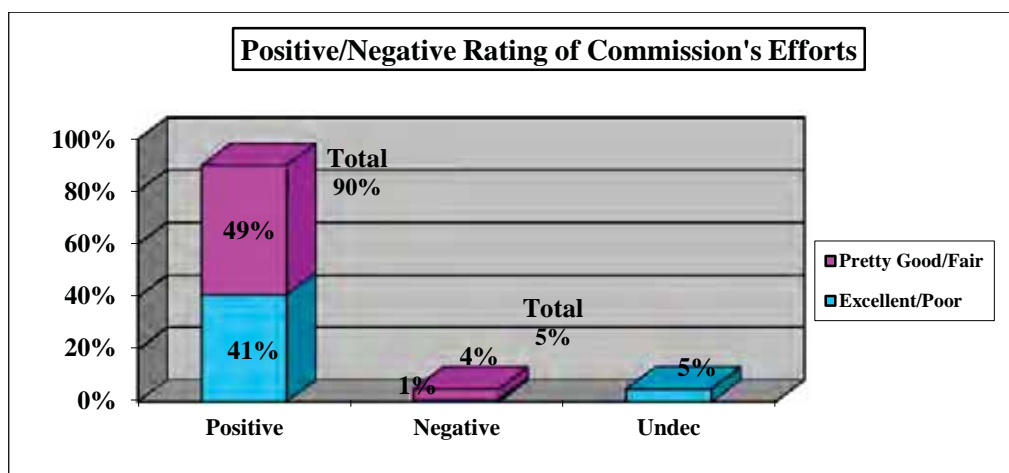
15% Children in home – 2
 Region 2
 Region 3
 First “vote” – Yes
 Age 50-64
 Renters

Subgroups reporting Parks and Recreation “Least value” in proportions greater than the norm of 3% included:

8% Second “vote” – No
 Info source – Grand Rapids Press
 \$25K-\$50K hh income
 7% Vote in primaries – Most of the time
 First “vote” – No
 Children in home – 3+
 6% Age 18-34

-- Rate Parks and Recreation Commission - (Q. 06)

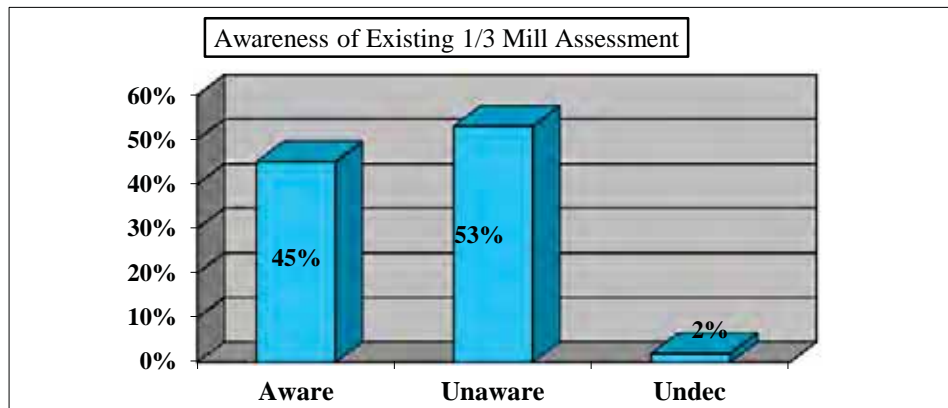
When asked to issue a “Positive” or “Negative” rating to the Commission for the job it does in providing recreational spaces and programs to Ottawa County citizens compared to efforts the respondent might know about in surrounding counties, nine-in-ten respondents gave a positive rating. This level of “Positive” is among the highest – if not the highest – recorded for a governmental body by EPIC ▪ MRA in over twenty years of conducting surveys. For analysis purposes, it is also important to note the Positive and Negative ratings consist of two subdivisions each: Excellent and Poor as the more intense descriptors for the respective overall ratings; and, the less adamantly held rating of Pretty good and Only Fair. As the graph below illustrates, to the extent respondents registered a negative assessment, it was not held with great vehemence. By contrast, nearly half of the respondents who issued a positive assessment did so with the more intense “excellent” description.



With such lopsided results, analysis of subgroups is unenlightening.

-- Cognizance of Existing Millage - (Q. 08)

As the first query designed to establish a benchmark regarding citizens’ attitudes towards taxes *viz-a-vis* the Parks and Recreation Commission, respondents were told that a special dedicated millage of 1/3 mill was approved by voters of the county in 2006 to help fund the Commission’s activities. After being informed of this, they were then asked to report whether or not they were previously aware of the existence of this millage. Over half the respondents – 53 percent – reported they were “unaware”, with another two percent not offering an answer.

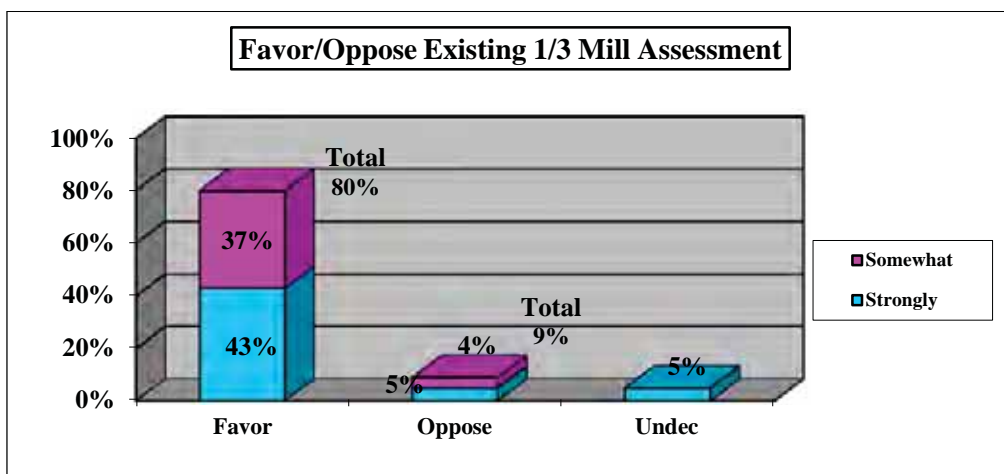


Subgroups reporting Unaware in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 53% included:

- 83% Age 18-34
- 80% Voted in one of last two general elections
- 72% Men 18-49
- 70% Renters
- 68% Region 1
- Vote in primaries – Seldom/Never
- 67% People in home – 5+
- 66% First “vote” – No
- Children at home
- Age 35-49
- 65% Second “vote” – No
- 61% Residence – 1-15 years
- 60% Use social media – Daily
- Residence – 16-30 years
- Over \$100K hh income
- 59% People in home – 4
- \$50K-\$75K hh income
- 58% Vote in primaries – Half the time

-- Favor/Oppose Existing 1/3 Mill Assessment- (Q. 09)

Immediately following the awareness question, respondents were told the annual cost of the 1/3 mill was \$25.00 per-year based on an average home value of \$150,000. They were then asked if they “Favored” or, “Opposed” the existing tax. If the respondent opted for either choice, they were asked to indicate whether their position was “Strongly” or “Somewhat” held. As demonstrated by the chart below, an overwhelming 80 percent majority reported favoring the existing millage, with over half of these respondents saying they “Strongly favored” the millage.



Subgroups reporting Favor in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 80% included:

- 93% First “vote” – Yes
- 90% Second “vote” – Yes
- 89% People in home – 4
- 88% Info source – Advance
- Info source – website
- Age 35-49
- Men 18-49
- 87% \$50K - \$75K hh income
- \$75K - \$100K hh income
- 86% Vote in primaries – Half the time
- Aware of existing millage – Yes
- Residence – 1-15 years
- College education
- Children at home
- Age 50-64
- Over \$100K hh income

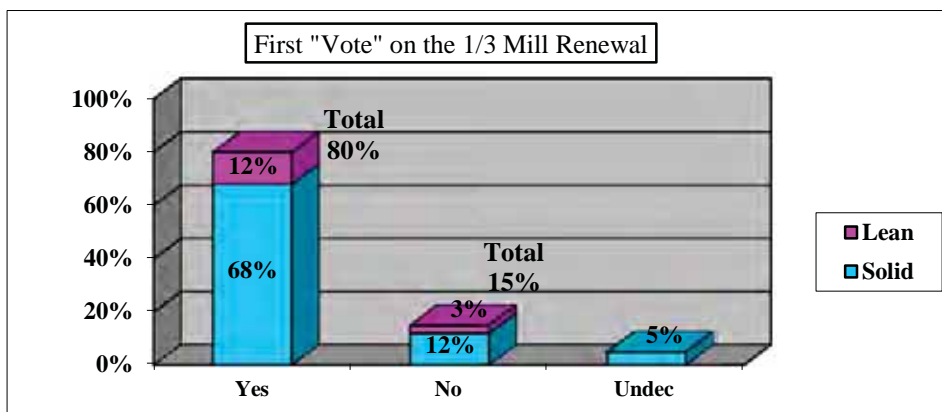
Subgroups reporting Oppose in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 9% included:

- 51% First “vote” – No
- 50% Second “vote” – No
- 19% Under \$25K hh income
- 17% Age 65+
- 16% H.S. or less
- 15% AV voters
- Info source – Grand Rapids Press
- People in home – 1

14% Men 50+
 13% Region 4
 Vote in primaries – All the time
 Use social media -- Never

-- First “Vote” on the Millage Renewal - (Q. 10)

Following the Favor/Oppose question, the first hypothetical “vote” was presented to respondents. The question posed asked respondents if they would vote yes or no if a proposal to renew the 1/3 mill were place on a future election ballot. Often, respondents who report favoring an existing assessment will “hold back” when presented with a question about intended future voting behavior. However, such is not the case with the current question regarding the 1/3 mill renewal. As is illustrated in the chart below, total support in form of the Total Yes “vote” mirrors the Total Favor mark of 80 percent found in the previous question. However, opposition solidified somewhat, with a Total No “vote” registering in this first test of the question at fifteen percent. In reading the chart below, the “Solid” designation for the yes and no votes is given to a response offered by the respondent directly to the question posed. The “Lean” designation is applied when the respondent initially reports “Undecided” but the interviewer presses for an answer by asking: “. . . But if you had to vote today, would you “lean” one way or the other?” Conventional wisdom holds that “lean” votes are notoriously soft, particularly if recorded in favor of a tax proposal. This caveat is rendered moot, however, by the 68 percent Solid Yes “vote” recorded on this first asking of the question.



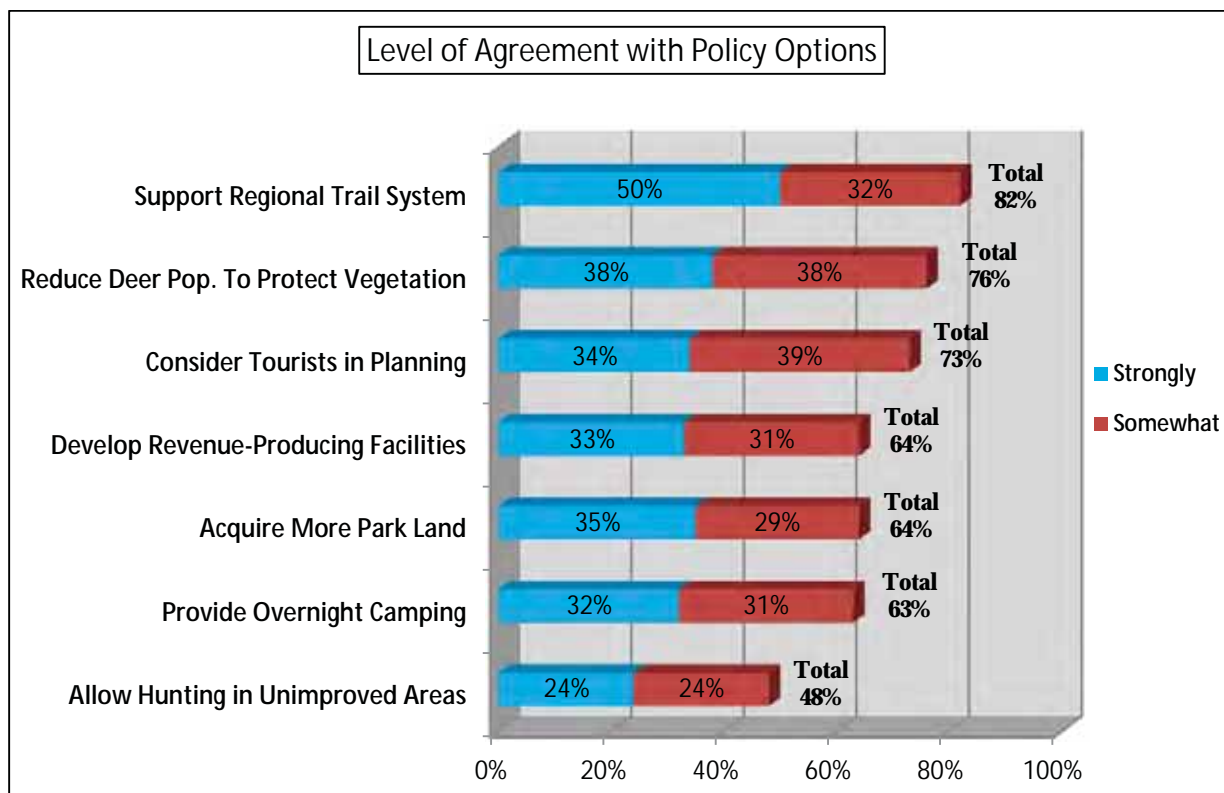
Subgroups “voting” No in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 15% included:

86% Second “vote” – No
 26% Voted in one of last two general elections
 24% H.S. or less education
 23% No college men
 22% Under \$25K hh income
 20% Renters
 19% Info source – Grand Haven Tribune
 People in home – 1
 Age 65+

-- Level of Concurrence with the Commission’s Policy Options - (Qs. 11-17)

One of the dual aims of the survey was to replicate some of the lines of inquiry from past studies that went to specific Commission policies, practices and direction. In keeping with that part of this survey’s objective, respondents were presented with batteries of questions comprehensively covering fairly detailed and specific aspects of the Commission’s activities. The first of these batteries of questions consisted of a recitation of broad policy directions the Commission might take – including, in some cases, the basis for a policy option – followed by a request for the respondent to register whether they “Agreed” or “Disagreed” with the policy statement. Like most other tests of this nature, the intensity of the respondents’ expressed sentiment was sought with a follow up asking: “Would that be Strongly or Somewhat?”

The following graph rank orders the seven broad policy options presented to respondents based on “Total Agreement” (i.e. combination of Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree):



As can be seen from the graph, respondents agree with almost all of the policy options by wide majority margins. In particular, the Commission’s participation in the regional trail system enjoys the highest level of agreement from respondents, with over eight-in-ten reporting concurrence with this

direction. Moreover, it is the only policy statement presented garnering at least half of respondents’ “Strong” support.

Interestingly, the second-highest agreement is found for, “. . . *reducing* [the deer numbers] *as necessary to protect vegetation in high quality natural areas.*” but the least agreement – indeed the only statement not receiving a majority of agreement – suggested allowing hunting in unimproved portions of county parks and open spaces. Obviously, county residents recognize the need to regulate the deer herd but are uncomfortable about the prospect of an open season to hunters as a means of doing so.

Juxtaposed below, are two sets of subgroups for the questions dealing with controlling the deer population and hunting on park land. The first set consists of those subgroups that are above the norm of 76 percent who agree with the policy statement of the need to regulate the deer population, followed by the subset consisting of those groups that are above the norm in disagreeing with a policy which would allow hunting on undeveloped park land. The second set reverses the agreement/disagreement for the two questions. Common – or near common – subgroups are in bold.

Subgroups “Agreeing” with the need to regulate the deer population in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 76% included:

- 84% **Info source – Holland Sentinel**
- 83% **Region 3**
Vote in primaries – Half the time
Under \$25K hh income
- 82% **Info source – Grand Haven Tribune**
Age 35-49
- 80% **First “vote” – No**
Residence – 16-30 years
Children in home – 2
\$50K - \$75K hh income

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with the need to allow hunting in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 44% included:

- 60% **Voted in one of last two general elections**
- 55% **AV voters**
- 54% **Info source – TV**
Age 35-49
- 53% **Vote in primaries – Seldom/Never**
- 52% **Second “vote” – No**
Info source – Holland Sentinel
Under \$25K hh income
- 51% **Region 1**
Hunting/Fishing license – No
\$50K - \$75k hh income
- 50% **People in home – 2**
Age 65+
- 49% **Residence – 1-15 years**

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with the need to regulate the deer population in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 17% included:

29%	<i>Info source – Website</i>
24%	<i>Votes in primaries – Seldom/Never</i>
23%	<i>Region 5</i>
	<i>Post HS education</i>
	<i>Age 18-34</i>
	<i>\$50K - \$75K hh income</i>
21%	<i>Region 2</i>
	<i>Residence – 1-15 years</i>
20%	<i>People in home – 3</i>

Subgroups “Agreeing” with the need to allow hunting in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 48% included:

79%	<i>Region 5</i>
60%	<i>Hunting/Fishing license – Yes</i>
66%	<i>Vote in primaries – Half the time</i>
57%	<i>People in home – 3</i>
	<i>People in home – 4</i>
54%	<i>Age 35-49</i>
	<i>Under \$25K hh income</i>
	<i>\$75K - \$\$100K hh income</i>
52%	<i>Region 4</i>
	<i>Aware of existing millage</i>
	<i>Post HS education</i>
	<i>Children at home</i>

The foregoing analysis points to a notable swath of the electorate who hold what would appear to be conflicting views about the wisdom of controlling the deer population in order to protect vegetation in sensitive park land area and the virtues of opening undeveloped park land to hunters. Then again, it is possible that for these individuals, reconciling the two seemingly conflicting policy positions poses no conflict at all. That is, some may feel there is no compelling need to regulate the deer population for the stated purpose but nevertheless believe public park land ought to be open for hunting. Likewise, those who do see a need for the Commission to concern itself with controlling the deer herd in particular areas do not view this position as giving carte blanche to hunting throughout the county parks. In any event, it is noted that all four groups have among them those who report not voting in primary elections with great regularity.

-- More, Enough, Too Much of . . . - (Qs. 18-37)

Twenty separate facility types and recreation opportunities sponsored and maintained by the Parks and Recreation Commission were presented to respondents, who were then asked to assess whether there should be More of that recited item available, if Enough already existed or, if Too Much was already available.

As can be seen in the chart below, six of the twenty listed sites and activities had a plurality of respondents indicating an opinion that the Parks and Recreation Commission should do “More” to

make greater opportunity available for the selected item, and of these six, only three found a majority of respondents expressing a desire for more. Specifically, a majority of respondents indicated the Commission should focus on providing “More”:

- *Nature education programs* (53 percent – 21 percent “Much more”);
- *Canoeing and kayaking sites* (52 percent – 15 percent “Much more”); and,
- *Paved bike/rollerblade paths* (52 percent – 16 percent “Much more”).

[ROTATE Qs.18 - 37] Sorted High-to-Low “Total More”	<u>Much More</u>	<u>TOTAL More</u>	<u>Diff. More/Enough</u>		<u>Enough</u>	<u>Too Much</u>	<u>Und/Ref</u>
Nature education programs.	21%	53%	18%		35%	1%	11%
Canoeing and kayaking sites.	15%	52%	17%		35%	1%	12%
Paved paths for biking and rollerblading.	16%	52%	14%		38%	4%	6%
Camping facilities.	16%	48%	6%		42%	1%	9%
Hiking trails.	12%	47%	1%		46%	1%	6%
Sledding runs.	13%	46%	7%		39%	2%	13%
Fishing sites.	15%	45%	--	--	45%	1%	9%
Nature centers.	15%	44%		4%	48%	1%	7%
Water play areas or splash parks.	9%	44%		1%	45%	4%	7%
Picnic facilities.	10%	41%		13%	54%	1%	4%
Cross-country skiing.	10%	40%		5%	45%	1%	14%
Mountain bike trails	10%	38%		2%	40%	4%	18%
Dog parks.	11%	37%		6%	43%	6%	14%
Boat launches.	9%	36%		12%	48%	2%	14%
Disc or Frisbee golf facilities.	7%	33%		13%	46%	5%	16%
Horseback riding trails.	8%	32%		6%	38%	6%	24%
County beach parks	7%	31%		32%	63%	1%	5%
Hunting areas.	11%	31%		14%	45%	10%	14%
Snowmobile areas.	7%	29%		11%	40%	11%	20%
Public marinas.	7%	27%		25%	52%	4%	17%

In an attempt to decipher meaning from the swarm of numbers filling the chart above, a useful exercise is to calculate the number of percentage points that separate a given item’s score for “Total More” from its score for “Enough”. If a re-ranking is conducted on this basis, it is clear that the top three “More” items remain in their relative ranking positions as they had been when ranked by “Total More”. The ordering is considerably altered however, for those items that fell below a plurality on the “Total More” ranking basis. The following chart illustrates the point for the thirteen items that displayed proportional plurality or majority of “Enough” responses:

Sorted High-to-Low On Difference between “Enough” vs. “Total More”	<u>Much More</u>	<u>TOTAL More</u>	<u>Diff. More/Enough</u>		<u>Enough</u>	<u>Too Much</u>	<u>Und/Ref</u>
County beach parks	7%	31%		32%	63%	1%	5%
Public marinas.	7%	27%		25%	52%	4%	17%
Hunting areas.	11%	31%		14%	45%	10%	14%
Picnic facilities.	10%	41%		13%	54%	1%	4%
Disc or Frisbee golf facilities.	7%	33%		13%	46%	5%	16%
Boat launches.	9%	36%		12%	48%	2%	14%
Snowmobile areas.	7%	29%		11%	40%	11%	20%
Dog parks.	11%	37%		6%	43%	6%	14%
Horseback riding trails.	8%	32%		6%	38%	6%	24%
Cross-country skiing.	10%	40%		5%	45%	1%	14%
Nature centers.	15%	44%		4%	48%	1%	7%
Mountain bike trails	10%	38%		2%	40%	4%	18%
Water play areas or a splash parks.	9%	44%		1%	45%	4%	7%

As can be seen from the re-ordering based on the “Enough/Total More” differential ranking, respondents clearly perceive an abundance of *County beach parks* and – with only one percent recorded as “Too much” and five percent “Undecided” – are not at all displeased with the existing level of opportunity the Commission currently provides for this amenity. Similarly, *Picnic facilities*, *Nature Centers* and *Water play areas*, while not exhibiting as high “Enough”-to-“Total more” differential, nevertheless have very low proportions of “Too much” and “Undecided” responses, again signaling satisfaction with the status quo.

Some of the items received relatively high ratings on the “Enough”-to-“Total more” differential scale and also received fairly high proportions of “Undecided” from respondents, while maintaining relatively low “Too Much” proportions. These items tend to center on specialized activities such as *Disc or Frisbee golf, Boat launches, Dog parks, Horseback trails and Mountain biking trails*, indicating relative indifference toward the existence of these items by the majority of respondents.

Two of the listed items, *Snowmobile areas* and *Hunting Areas*, are unique in that they are the only items where ten percent or more of the respondents reported there is already “Too Much” accommodation for these activities. These two items also exhibit among the lowest proportions of “Total More”, with a clear plurality of respondents reporting their belief there are already “Enough” of these opportunities. At least in the case of *Hunting Areas*, the results are corroborated by the data from a test earlier in the interview asking respondents to register agreement or disagreement with a broad policy option available to the Commission. In that test, (Qs. 11-17), the statement: “*Hunting should be allowed in unimproved portions of county parks and open space lands.*” was the only policy option that did not meet with agreement by a majority of respondents. Indeed, agreement with the statement only reached 48 percent – fifteen points lower than the next highest ranked policy option – and of the 44 percent who “Disagreed” with the statement, 30 percent – over two thirds – expressed this sentiment “Strongly”.

The issue of *Public marinas* is a bit more complex. On the one hand, marinas are one of only three items where a majority of respondents expressed the opinion that there are currently “Enough” and, at 27 percent, ranks last in the proportion of respondents who report they would like to see “More”. That is, unlike “Hunting”, there is not a significant contingent reporting “Too much” in regard to these facilities because, like the other two items receiving a majority “Enough”, a very small percentage – only four percent – expressed a belief that there are already “Too [many]”. However, unlike the two other items receiving a majority of “Enough” responses and a tiny portion “Too much” (*County beaches* and *Picnic areas*) the question of providing more Public marinas sees a relatively high number of respondents – 17 percent – being undecided on the question.

For insight into the somewhat unique positioning of public marinas in this battery of questions, the preceding series of questions regarding policy options is again consulted. The policy option of, “*Revenue-producing facilities such as campgrounds, golf courses and marinas to help finance the park system should be developed (emphasis added)*”, was met with “Agreement” by 64 percent of respondents and placed exactly in the middle of the pack for the seven separate policy options presented for consideration. However, with the exception of expanding park land available to hunting, this option also received the highest level of “Disagreement”.

Granted, the earlier “Agree/Disagree” policy option did not isolate public marinas for specific consideration and the later, “More, Enough, Too much” series did not give any hint at the revenue-producing potential of marinas, so drawing too much from the juxtaposition of the respective response ranking for marinas in general is not warranted. Nevertheless, the relatively unique results of *Public marinas* in the “More, Enough, Too much” test – i.e. high “undecided” and low “too much” – coupled with the favorable placement as a policy option when framed as a revenue-producing endeavor, suggests that the Commission could safely pursue the notion of added public marinas without experiencing the level of backlash it might if it should pursue greater access of public park land to hunters.

-- What’s Missing? - (Q. 38)

After hearing the roster of twenty items and being asked their opinion about the level of availability for each of them, respondents were asked in an open-ended question to identify up to two other facilities or recreational opportunities the Commission ought to offer. In total, 434 responses were offered, meaning only 34 of the 400 respondents came up with more than one response. As further testimony to the comprehensive offerings provided by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission, of the over 48 individual categories of responses, none received over two percent consensus. Indeed, nearly three-out-of-four (74 percent) respondents landed in the “None-Adequate as is” or, “Undecided/Don’t know” categories.

-- What Parks Do You Visit? - (Q. 39)

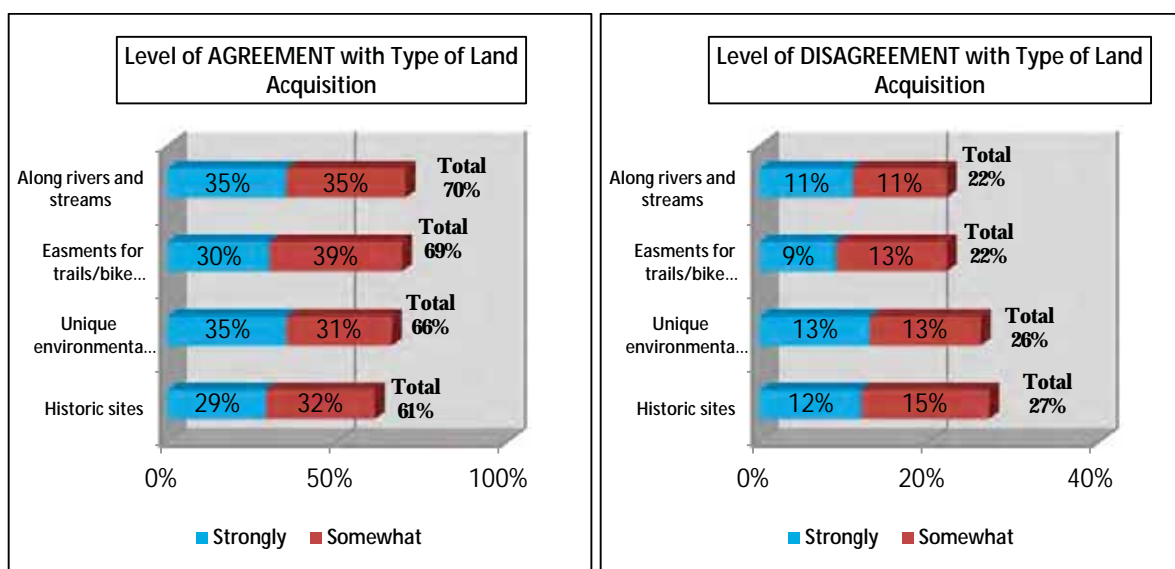
Respondents were next asked to name up to five Ottawa County parks they or another member of their household had visited within the past year. In all, 727 responses were elicited, with only 16 percent reporting “None” or, “Undecided/Refused”. Clearly, with 84 percent of respondents able to make mention of a park name they or a household member visited in the past year, the Commission’s efforts have generated use by a wide swath of the county’s citizens.

Over seventy-one different park names were mentioned (inevitably, a few of which are not under the Commission’s jurisdiction) with a wide and fairly uniform disbursement of citations. The most frequently mentioned parks – at nine percent of the total each –were Kirk Park and Tunnel Park. Hager Park and Pigeon Creek were mentioned by six percent and North Beach Park and Rosy Mount Natural Area received mention by four percent each. The balance of the 71 named places received three percent or fewer mentions out of the 727 total responses.

-- Type of Parkland to Acquire - (Qs. 40-43)

Following the open-ended question asking respondents to name Ottawa County parks they had recently visited, interview participants were then presented with four descriptions of the types of land the Commission might acquire if it were to expand its holdings. The framing of the question did not allow for a respondent to offer an opinion about the more general issue of whether or not the Commission should acquire more land but rather, asked them to agree or disagree with acquiring the type of land described in each of the four statements. Normally, a presentation that presupposes land acquisition by the Commission would justifiably invite criticism, but the broader question of further land acquisition was directly addressed earlier in the interview at question 12, where nearly two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) agreed with a statement urging further action by the Commission to acquire parkland. With less than one-quarter of respondents (24 percent) disagreeing with a policy of further land acquisition, concern about the framing of the instant battery of questions is obviated. As a further crosscheck, a recitation of the subgroups who disagree with the policy statement in question 12 and who disagree with acquisition of the specific types of land in questions 40-43 is made following the graph.

Each of the types of property described met with strong majorities of respondents agreeing that it is of a type that the Commission should acquire. Disagreement with acquiring a property type never saw over 27 percent of respondents disagreeing that it was an appropriate type, but the intensity of disagreement was strong compared to the intensity of agreement. The graphs below illustrate the relative levels of intensity of sentiment for the respective Agree/Disagree positions:



Common – or near common – subgroups are in bold.

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with the policy option of: “. . . acquire[ing] additional park land for future public use” (Q 12) in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 24% included:

62% **Second “vote” – No**
 57% **First “vote” – No**
 37% **Info source – Holland Sentinel**
 33% **H.S. or less**
 31% **Region 5**
People in home –1
Age 65+
 29% **Info source – Grand Rapids Press**
Use social media – Never

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with acquiring more land for Trails and Bike Paths in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 22% included:

71% **Second “vote” – No**
 56% **First “vote” – No**
 37% **Age 65+**
 30% **Info source – Holland Sentinel**
 29% **AV voters**
Use social media – Never
 28% **Region 3**
People in home – 2
Residence – 30+ years
 27% **H.S. or less**
Children at home – No
Under \$25K hh income

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with acquiring Unique Environmental Areas in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 26% included:

68% **Second “vote” – No**
 54% **First “vote” – No**
 37% **H.S. or less**
 33% **Age 65+**
Under \$25K hh income
 34% **Vote in primaries – Most times**
AV voters
 32% **Use social media – Never**
 31% **People in home – 1**

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with acquiring land along Major Rivers and Streams in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 22% included:

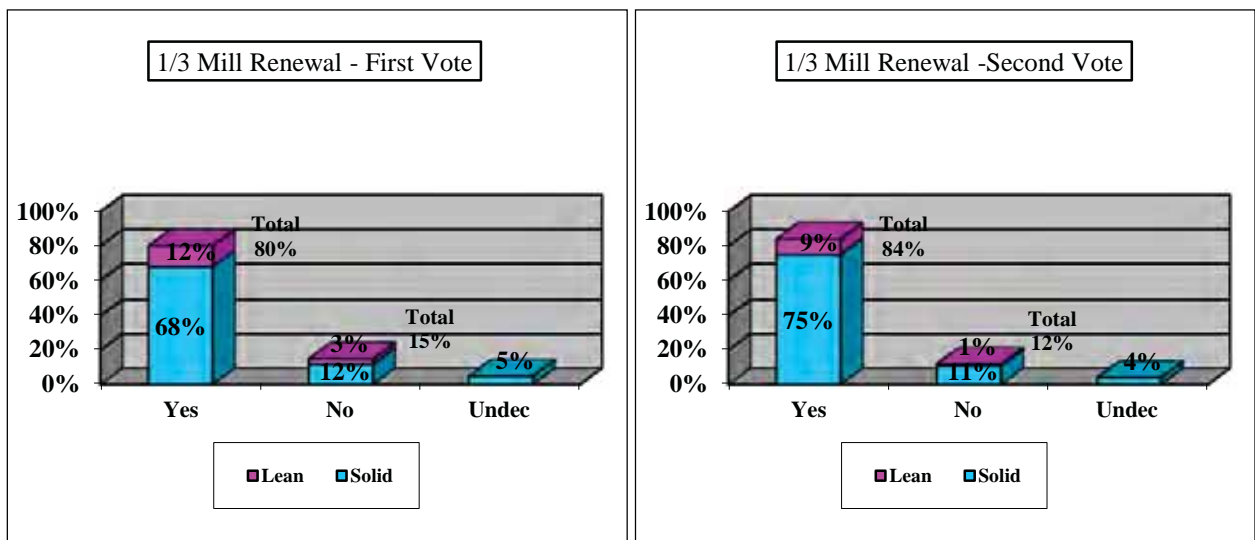
67% **Second “vote” – No**
 58% **First “vote” – No**
 31% **Info source – Grand Haven Tribune**
H.S. or less
 30% **People in home – 1**
 29% **Region 4**
Renters
Under \$25K hh income
 28% **Region 5**
Vote in primaries – Most times
 27% **Age 65+**
Hunting/Fishing License – No

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with acquiring Historic Sites in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 27% included:

- 67% **Second “vote” – No**
- 54% **First “vote” – No**
- 38% **Children in home – 3+**
- 37% **Region 4**
- 34% **Info source – Grand Rapids Press**
- H.S. or less**
- 33% **Voted in one of last two general elections**
- 32% **Info source – TV**
- People in hh – 5**
- Age 65+**

-- Second “Vote” on the Millage Renewal - (Q. 44)

In the final substantive question of the survey, respondents were asked to again report if they would vote Yes to support the 1/3 Mill dedicated levy for parks and recreation or No, to oppose it. As noted in the earlier section about the “Questionnaire Frame”, this second “vote” was intentionally placed following the extensive questions about the particulars of the Commission’s activities so as to allow for a comparative measurement between the first “Cold vote” (i.e. with little information) and a second, “Informed vote”. By aligning the “votes” in this fashion, it is possible to determine whether or not focusing the respondents’ attention on the facilities and recreational opportunities funded by the millage revenue have an effect on the outcome of the second “vote”. As can be seen from the charts below, informing and/or reminding respondents of the wide-ranging services and venues provided by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission serves to increase the total support for the measure by four percentage points. More important, however, is the seven percentage point increase in the “solid” vote, moving from its previous 68 percent to 75 percent in the second asking of the question.



Common Subgroups Opposed to Key Questions in Proportions Above the Norm			
	First Vote No - Q. 10 Overall = 15%	Acquire More Land Disagree - Q. 12 Overall = 24%	Second Vote No - Q. 44 Overall = 12%
Voted in 1 of last 2 general elections	26%		20%
First “vote” – No	100%	57%	71%
Second vote – No	62%	86%	100%
Info Source – Grand Rapids Press		29%	16%
Info Source – Grand Haven Tribune	19%		19%
People in home – 1	19%	31%	16%
H.S. or less	24%	33%	21%
Age 65+	19%	31%	18%
Renters	20%		17%
Under \$25K hh income	22%		19%

Subgroups “voting” No in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 15% included – Q. 10:

- 86% *Second “vote” – No*
- 26% *Voted in one of last two general elections*
- 24% *H.S. or less education*
- 22% *Under \$25K hh income*
- 20% *Renters*
- 19% *Info source – Grand Haven Tribune*
- People in home – 1*
- Age 65+*

Subgroups “Disagreeing” with the policy option of: “. . . acquire[ing] additional park land for future public use” (Q 12) in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 24% included – Q. 12:

- 62% *Second “vote” – No*
- 57% *First “vote” – No*
- 37% *Info source – Holland Sentinel*
- 33% *H.S. or less*
- 31% *Region 5*
- People in home –1*
- Age 65+*
- 29% *Info source – Grand Rapids Press*
- Use social media – Never*

Subgroups “voting” No in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 12% included – Q. 44:

- 71% *First “vote” – No*
- 21% *H.S. or less*
- 20% *Voted in one of last two general elections*
- 19% *Info Source – Grand Haven Tribune*
- Under \$25K hh income*
- 18% *Age 65+*
- 17% *Renters*
- 16% *Info Source – Grand Rapids Press*
- People in home – 1*

-- Information Sources - (Q. 46)

Respondents were asked to name up to three sources from which they received most of their information about the activities of Ottawa county government. In all, 610 responses were offered, breaking out in the various source categories illustrated below:

32%	Print Media Total	
	10%	<i>Grand Rapids Press</i>
	8%	<i>The Advance</i>
	6%	<i>Grand Haven Tribune</i>
	6%	<i>The Holland Sentinel</i>
	1%	<i>MLive</i>
	1%	<i>Muskegon Chronicle</i>
23%	Government Sources	
	16%	<i>The County Parks Website – www.miOttawa.org/parks</i>
	7%	<i>Newsletters from the county</i>
15%	Electronic Media Total	
	13%	<i>Television coverage of the county</i>
	2%	<i>Radio coverage of the county</i>
23%	Misc. Sources	
	17%	<i>Comments from friends/word of mouth</i>
	5%	<i>Social media, Internet, Library, Email</i>
7%	Other/Undecided/Refused	

-- Use of Social Media Sites - (Qs. 47 & 48)

Over one-third of respondents use social media every day and over half access this method at least a few times a week, with Facebook completely dominating the field with 93 percent of social media users accessing its site.

36%	Every day
6%	Most days
9%	A few times a week
3%	Several times a month
4%	Seldom
41%	Or Never
1%	Undecided/Refused

Subgroups reporting “Never” in proportions significantly greater than the norm of 41% included:

- 70% *People in home – 1*
- 67% *Age 65+*
- 62% *Info source – Advance*
- 61% *Men 50+*
- 57% *AV voters*
- 56% *Info source – Grand Rapids Press*
- Under \$25K hh income*
- 54% *H.S. or less*
- 49% *Info source – TV*
- Men*
- 48% *Second “vote” – No*

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS

A 79 percent majority of survey respondents said they have called Ottawa County their home for more than 15 years, with 21 percent reporting tenure of 15 years or fewer. As is typical of most areas in the state, just over two-thirds of respondents (67 percent) report having no school age children in their home.

The predominantly white cohort of respondents (94 percent), exhibit a fairly high level of formal education, with 51 percent attaining a bachelor's or post-graduate degree, and 69 percent reporting some form of post-secondary education.

More than nine-in-ten respondents (91 percent) report being homeowners, with the balance reporting either leasing, renting or refusing to offer a response. A little over four-in-ten respondents (42 percent) report a household income of less than \$75,000 with 28 percent reporting a household income in the \$75,000 to \$150,000 range, and nine percent reporting a household income in excess of \$150,000.

As in all of its surveys of this nature, EPIC ▪ MRA attempts to stratify the male/female ratio in a manner that reflects conventional voter turnout based on gender. This produced a female/male ratio of 52-to-48 percent.

####

APPENDIX

REGION 1	REGION 2	REGION 3	REGION 4	REGION 5
Holland City	Georgetown Twp.	Ferrysburg City	Allendale Twp.	Chester Twp.
Holland Twp.	Hudsonville City	Grand Haven City	Blendon Twp.	Coopersville City
Park Twp.	Jamestown Twp.	Grand Haven Twp.	Olive Twp.	Crockery Twp.
Zeeland City		Spring Lake Twp.		Polkton Twp.
Zeeland Twp.				Tallmadge Twp.
				Wright Twp.



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission
miottawa.org/parks

Ottawa County Parks and
Recreation Commission
2015 Park User Survey



Hope COLLEGE

FROST RESEARCH CENTER

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Executive Summary

The 2015 Park User Survey was conducted by the Frost Research Center for the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission. The Park User Survey focused on respondents' demographics, purpose for visit, opinions on park fees, and specific thoughts on park amenities. Overall, *1003 surveys were completed from February through July 2015 at twenty seven Ottawa County Parks.* The following presents a synopsis of overall survey results.

Demographics

- The largest proportion of park attendees come in *groups of two.* *Large groups* of park guests are most likely to visit *Hager and Tunnel Parks.*
- Park visitors are most often *under the age of 21,* particularly in *Hager, Grose and Spring Grove Parks.*
- Most park visitors are Ottawa County residents with a large proportion of them living in *Holland and Grand Haven.*

Park Usage

- Parks are visited frequently. Most park users reported using the park they had visited *10 or more times* in the past year.
- Park users most often *visit the park for hiking, swimming and picnicking.* *Crockery Creek* was most popular for hiking whereas *Spring Grove* has the largest percentage of visitors coming for picnicking.

Park Opinions

- The majority of survey respondents completed a survey at a non-lakeshore park.
- The largest proportion of visitors most liked the *trails* about the park they visited, particularly those at *Riley Trails and Hemlock Crossings.*
- The majority of visitors reported being happy with the park they visited, *indicating no aspect of the park they disliked.*
- *Bathroom improvements* were most often selected on the supplied list of answer categories. Most written improvement suggestions involved *maintenance of trails and park facilities.*
- More than half of park visitors felt the park they were visiting *did not need additional facilities.* Visitors at *Rosy Mound and Hemlock Crossings* were *most satisfied* with these parks' existing facilities.
- The majority of visitors at lakeshore parks feel *the current entrance fee is reasonable.* Those not visiting a lakeshore park would most often be *willing to pay a minimal fee such as \$1 a day* with most open-ended comments indicating an unwillingness to pay a fee.

Ottawa County Residents

- Most Ottawa County residents were *unaware of the millage* passed to support and expand the Ottawa County Parks System yet the *majority of respondents support it.*

Introduction

Ottawa County is situated between Allegan, Kent, and Muskegon counties on the west side of Michigan. The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission oversees thirty-eight county parks featuring a wide variety of amenities. Six county parks are located on the shore of Lake Michigan while others offer impressive playgrounds, trails, sports fields, and lake or river access.

The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission contracted the Frost Research Center to conduct a Park User Survey in February 2015. The following report provides a snapshot of park visitor demographics, opinions, and comments regarding Ottawa County Parks.

Methodology

Surveys were distributed at twenty-seven Ottawa County parks during two separate data collection periods, from February 7 to March 27 and June 1 to July 17, 2015. Surveys were administered through various methods, yielding a total of 1003 completed surveys from Ottawa County Park users.

Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission Staff

Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission employees surveyed park visitors at nine parks including Olive Shores, Musketawa Trail, Rosy Mound, Historic Ottawa Beach, North Beach Park, Hemlock Crossing, Kirk Park, Pigeon Creek (winter), and Tunnel Park. Park booth attendants distributed the surveys to entering vehicles and collected the surveys upon their exit. Employees on foot and park naturalists administered surveys to visitors at parks without entrance fees.

Frost Research Center Staff

Trained staff from the Frost Research Center distributed and collected surveys at ten locations: Macatawa Greenspace, North Ottawa Dunes, Riley Trails, Connor Bayou, Grand River Park, Grose Park, Riverside Park, Spring Grove, Upper Macatawa Natural Area, and Hager Park. These parks are without regularly stationed park employees but the parks' number of visitors warranted survey staffing. Staff identified themselves with Frost Research Center shirts and name tags, collecting surveys from June 1 – June 19, 2015. Frost Staff collected surveys from each park on at least two different days, including at least one weekday and one weekend day.

Remote Methods

Surveys were distributed in the remaining parks of Adams Street Landing, Grand River Open Space, Deer Creek Park, Eastmanville Bayou, North Ottawa Dunes, Crockery Creek, Pine Bend, Eastmanville Farm, Pigeon Creek Park (springtime) via a booth that included information about the surveys, blank surveys, a depository for completed surveys, and postage-paid return envelopes. Park users were instructed to complete a survey and return it in the depository or complete it elsewhere and use the postage-paid envelope to send the survey directly to the Frost Center.

The estimated number of park visitors helped to establish a goal number of completed surveys at each park. Parks experiencing the fewest numbers of visitors had a goal of 20 completed

surveys and those with the largest numbers had park survey completion goals of 70. The overall goal was 986 completed surveys.

The completed surveys were delivered or mailed to the Frost Research Center where they were organized and scanned. The data was cleaned and checked for consistency prior to analysis.

Survey Results

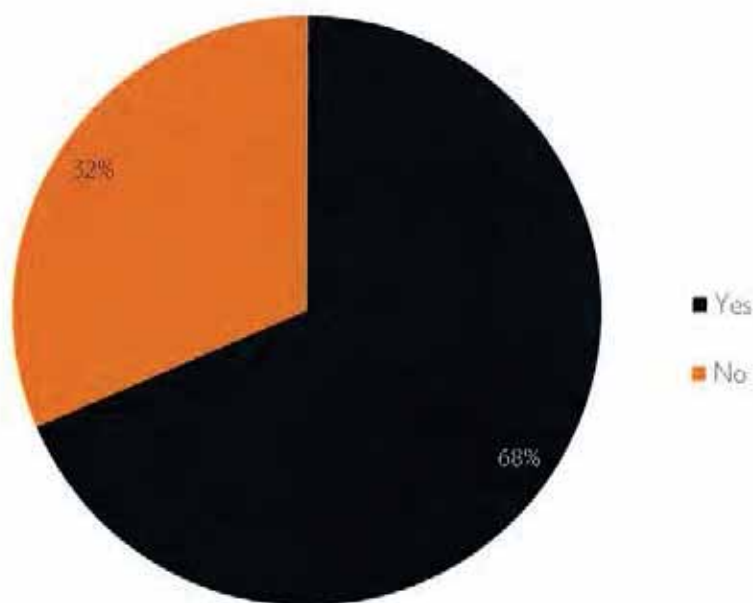
The first portion of survey results includes data from all 1003 collected surveys in the twenty-seven parks. The subsequent section divides data by park and only includes parks with twenty or more collected surveys in graphs.

Respondent Demographics

Ottawa County Residents

The majority (68%) of survey respondents were residents of Ottawa County.

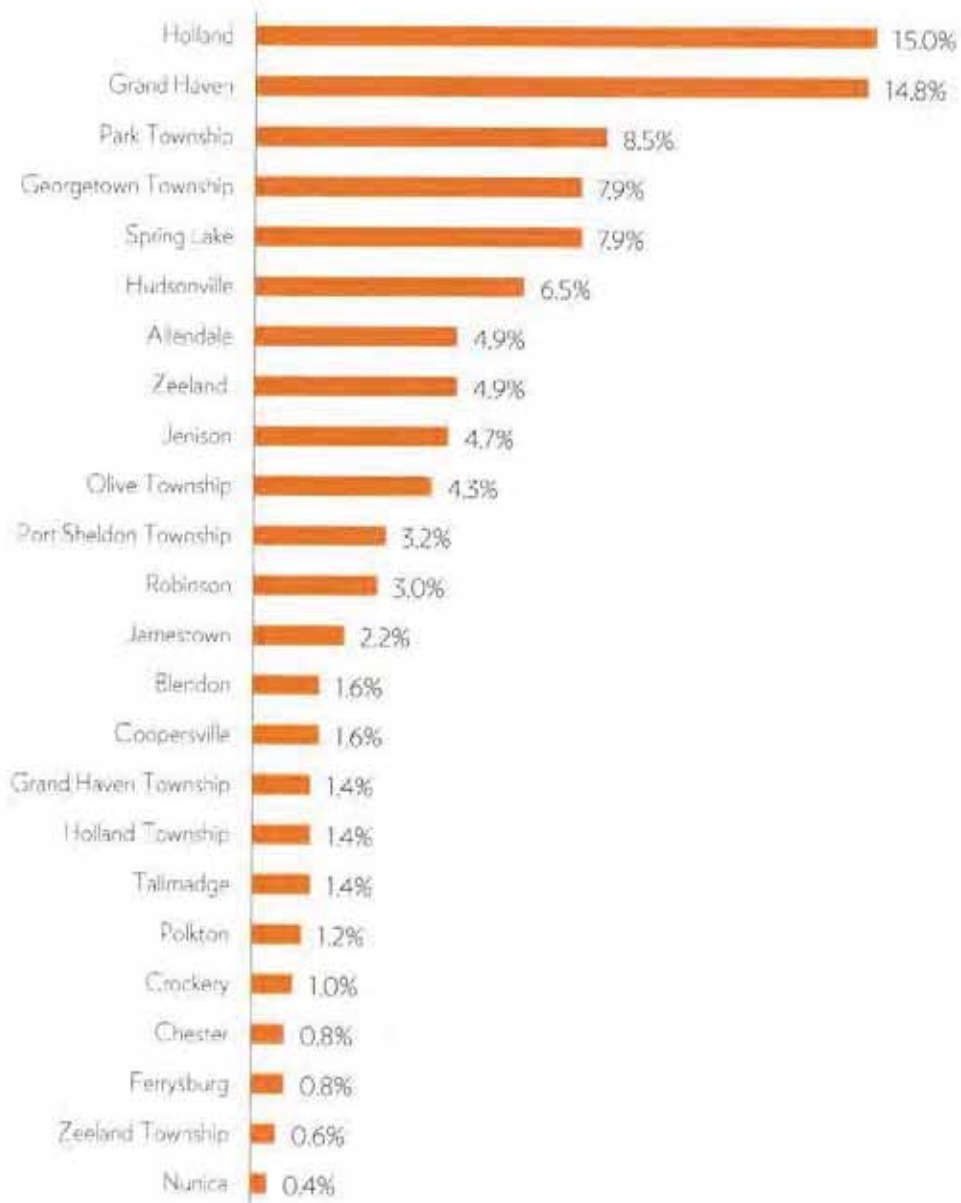
Are you a resident of Ottawa County?



Respondent City or Township

Park users from Ottawa County most often lived in Holland (15%) or Grand Haven (14.8%).

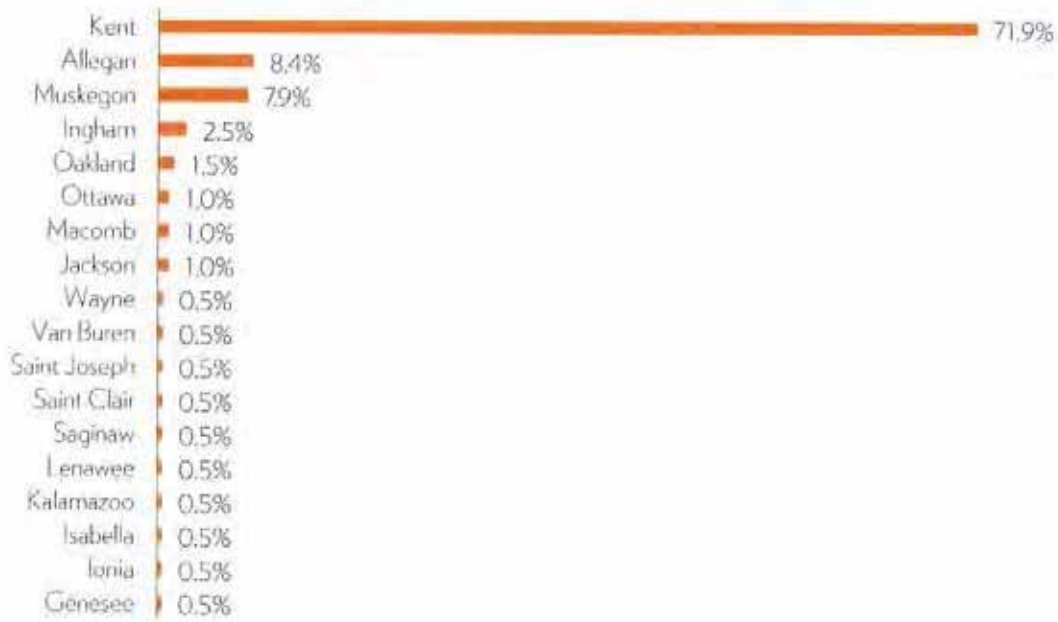
If a resident of Ottawa County, in which city or township do you live?



County

Park users from outside of Ottawa County overwhelmingly lived in Kent County (71.9%). Allegan County residents were second most common, representing 8.4% of respondents.

If not a resident of Ottawa County, in which county do you live?



State

Respondents from outside Michigan were most often from Indiana (32%), Illinois (20%), or Iowa (12%).

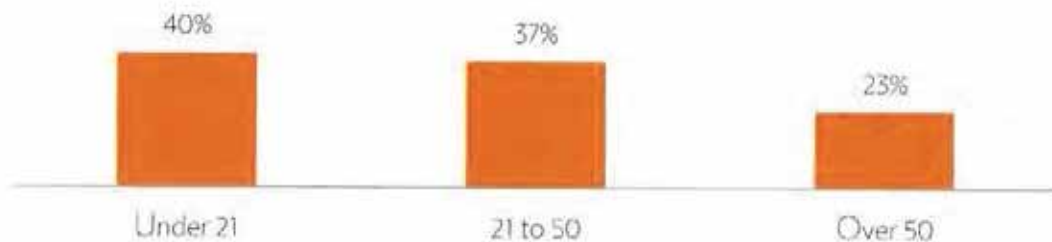
Out-of-state visitors



Age

Ottawa County parks were most often used by people 21 years and younger (40%). Visitors older than 50 years made up 23% of all park users.

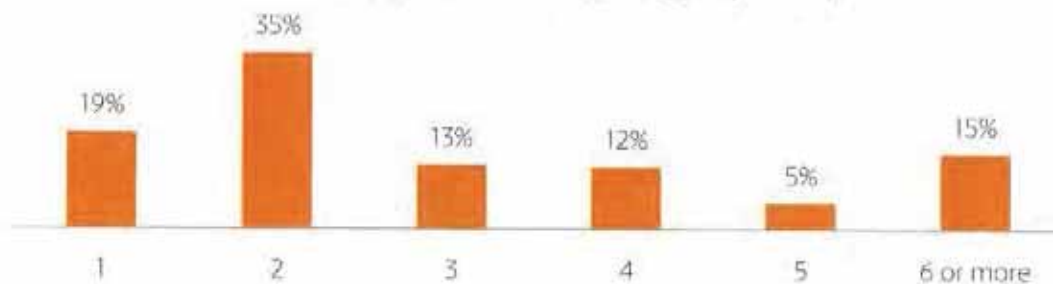
Please mark the age range for each person in your group:



Group size

Survey respondents most often visited Ottawa County parks in groups of two people. Nearly one-fifth of park users came alone whereas 15% were in groups of six or more people.

How many people are in your group today?



Survey Data – All Locations

Season

Park user surveys collected during the winter at Pigeon Creek made up twelve percent (12%) of the total sample. Nearly thirty percent of surveys were collected during the spring and the majority (60%) were collected during the summer.

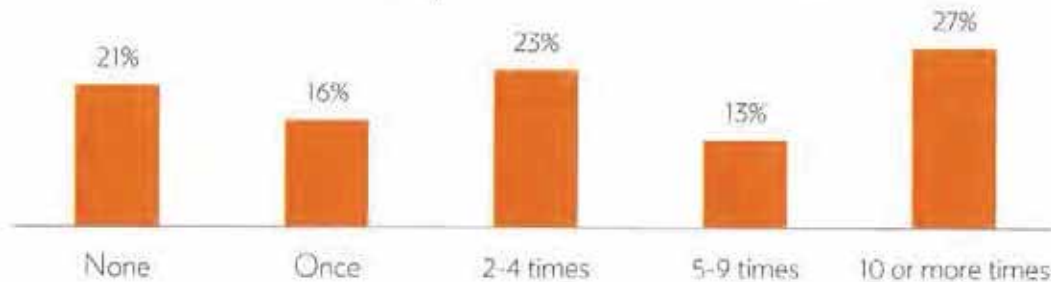
Please mark the current season:



Frequency of Use

Survey data suggests most users visit parks regularly. The largest proportion (27%) of survey respondents visited the park where they completed the survey 10 or more times in 2014.

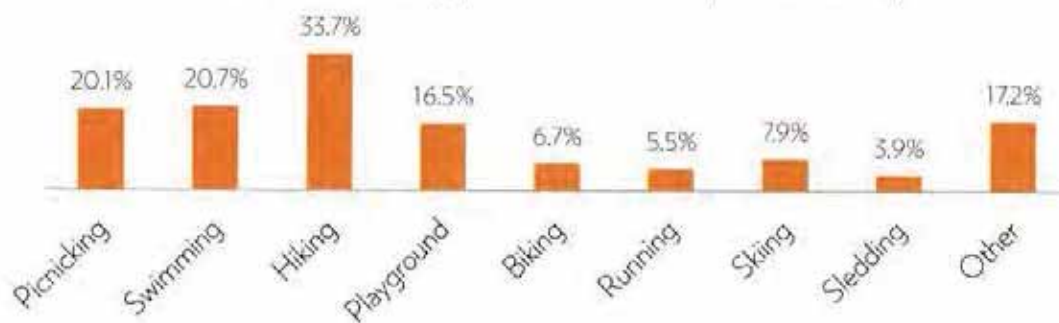
How often did you use THIS PARK in 2014?



Activity

A third of survey respondents (33.7%) indicated they had visited the park for hiking. Picnicking and swimming were the second and third most common responses with slightly more than 20% of survey respondents indicating they had come to the park for these activities. Other open ended responses most often mentioned disc golf, fishing, kayaking and walking.

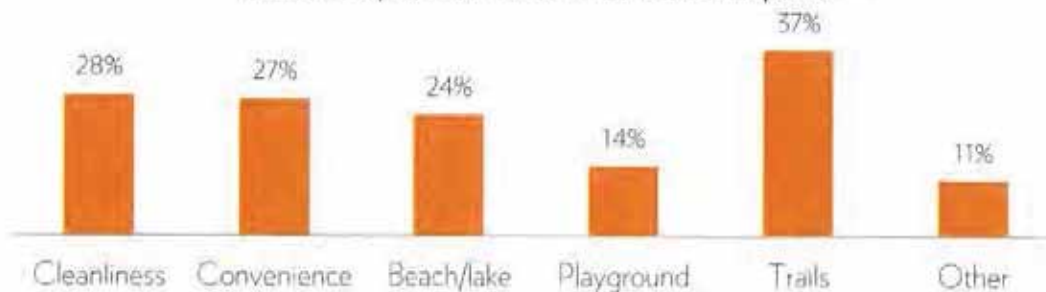
What is the activity you came to the park for today?



Most Enjoy

Most survey respondents (37%) indicated liking the trails most about the park they visited. The smallest group (14%) of respondents most enjoyed the playground out of the listed park amenities. Open ended responses often focused on the beauty and tranquility of the park environment.

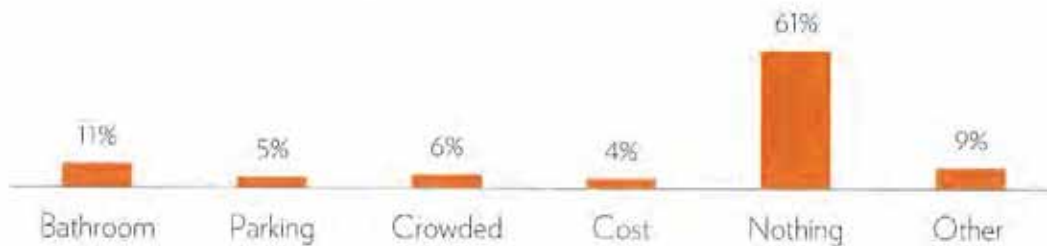
What do you like MOST about this park?



Like Least

Most park visitors (61%) indicated no displeasure with the park they visited. Eleven percent (11%) indicated liking the bathrooms least about the park they had visited. Nine percent (9%) of visitors disliked something else about the park which often included maintenance issues or natural inconveniences such as bugs and tree roots.

What do you like LEAST about this park?



Most Improvement

The largest segment of survey respondents (26%) indicated that park improvements should focus on something other than the given answer choices. These answers most often dealt with maintenance issues of the park facility or trails. One fifth of respondents (20%) felt that improvements should be made to the bathrooms of the park they visited.

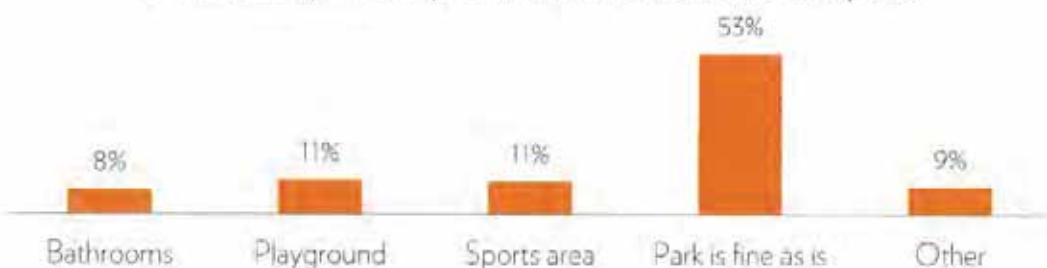
What aspect of the park do you think needs the most improvement?



Added Facilities

More than half (53%) of respondents expressed satisfaction with the park facility they visited. Eleven percent of respondents indicated they would like to see an additional sports area or playground added to the park they visited. Other open ended responses focused on visitors' requests for more trails.

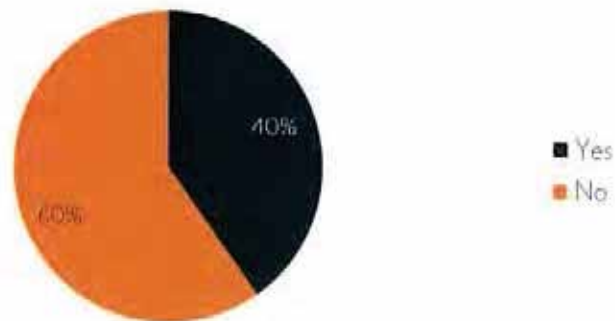
What facility would you like to see added to this park?



Lakeshore Park

The majority of surveys (60%) were collected in parks not located on the lakeshore; 40% were completed in lakeshore parks.

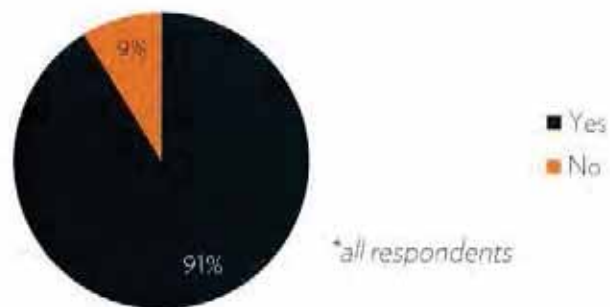
Is the park you are visiting today located on the lakeshore?



Fee Reasonable

Some non-lakeshore park users answered the following question regarding reasonableness of park fee despite instructions indicating otherwise. The first graph displays the data from all completed surveys. Of this group, less than 10% feel that the park fee is unreasonable.

Do you feel that the current fee to use this park is reasonable?



When selecting data from surveys completed only at lakeshore parks, the percentage of park visitors feeling the current fee is unreasonable increases to 14%. However, the majority (86%) of these park users feel that the current rate is reasonable.

Do you feel that the current fee to use this park is reasonable?

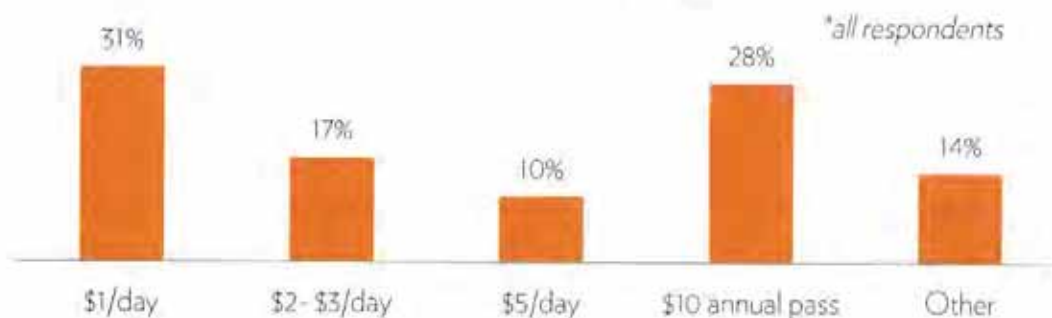


**respondents visiting a park on the lakeshore*

Entrance Fee Willingness

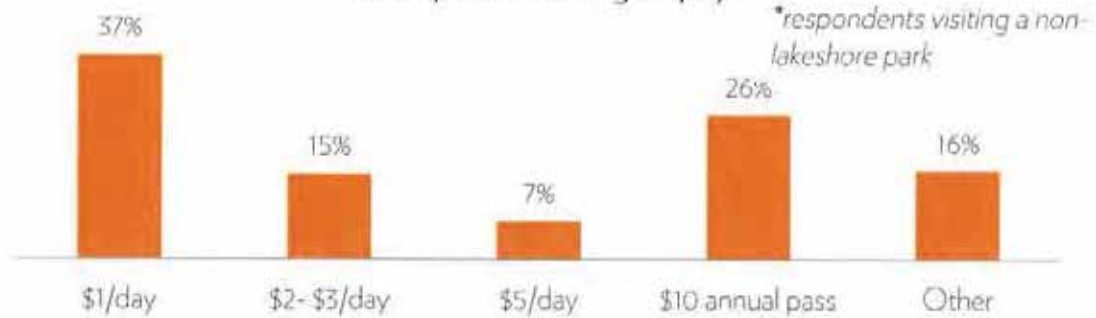
Some respondents visiting lakeshore parks also answered the question regarding the amount they are willing to pay for park entrance. The largest group of respondents (31%) from all completed surveys indicated they would be willing to pay a dollar a day. Twenty eight percent (28%) would be willing to pay a \$10 annual pass for park entrance. Most open ended responses reported that visitors would not be willing to pay for park entrance.

If there were to be an entrance fee for this park, how much would you be willing to pay?



When narrowing the data to only respondents visiting a non-lakeshore park, the percentage of visitors willing to pay a dollar a day increases whereas the proportions of those willing to pay larger amounts such as three or five dollars a day decreases.

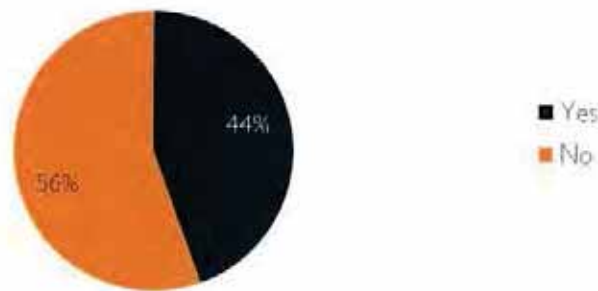
If there were to be an entrance fee for this park, how much would you be willing to pay?



Millage Awareness

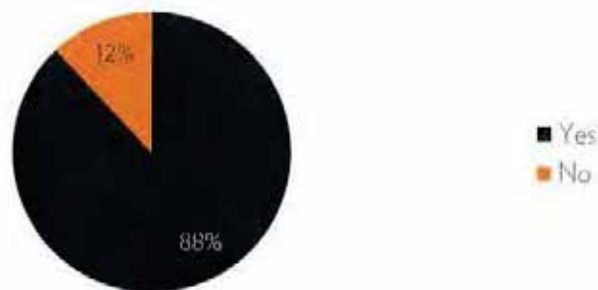
Most survey respondents (56%) are unaware of the millage passed to support and expand the Ottawa County Parks system. However, the majority of respondents (88%) indicated they support the millage.

Are you aware a special millage was passed to support and expand the Ottawa County Parks System?



Millage Support

Do you support the County Parks millage?

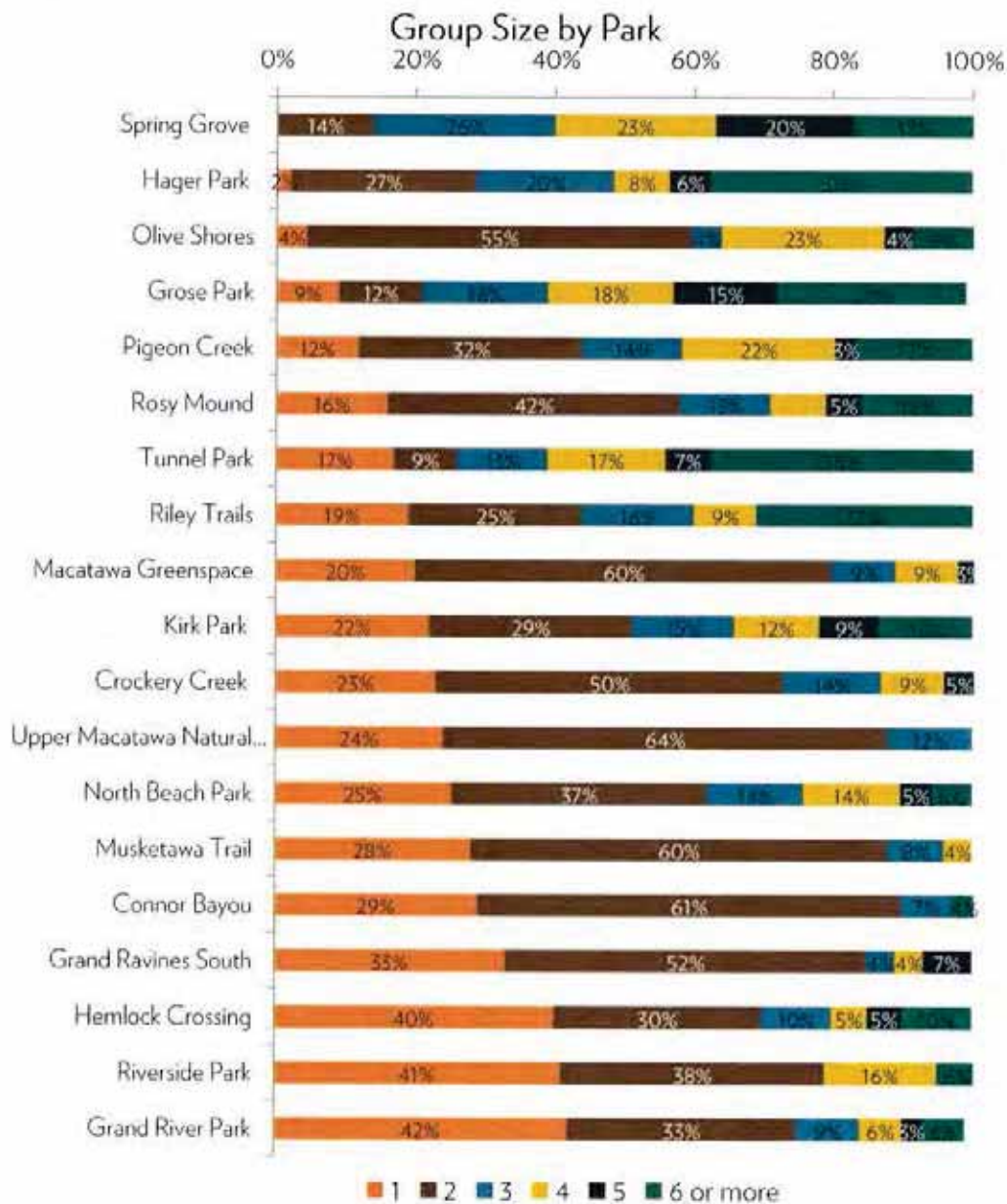


Park Specific Data

Park level data analysis allowed for comparison between parks on various data points. Parks with less than twenty completed surveys were excluded from graphs as the limited sample size does not ensure an accurate measure of the opinions of park users.

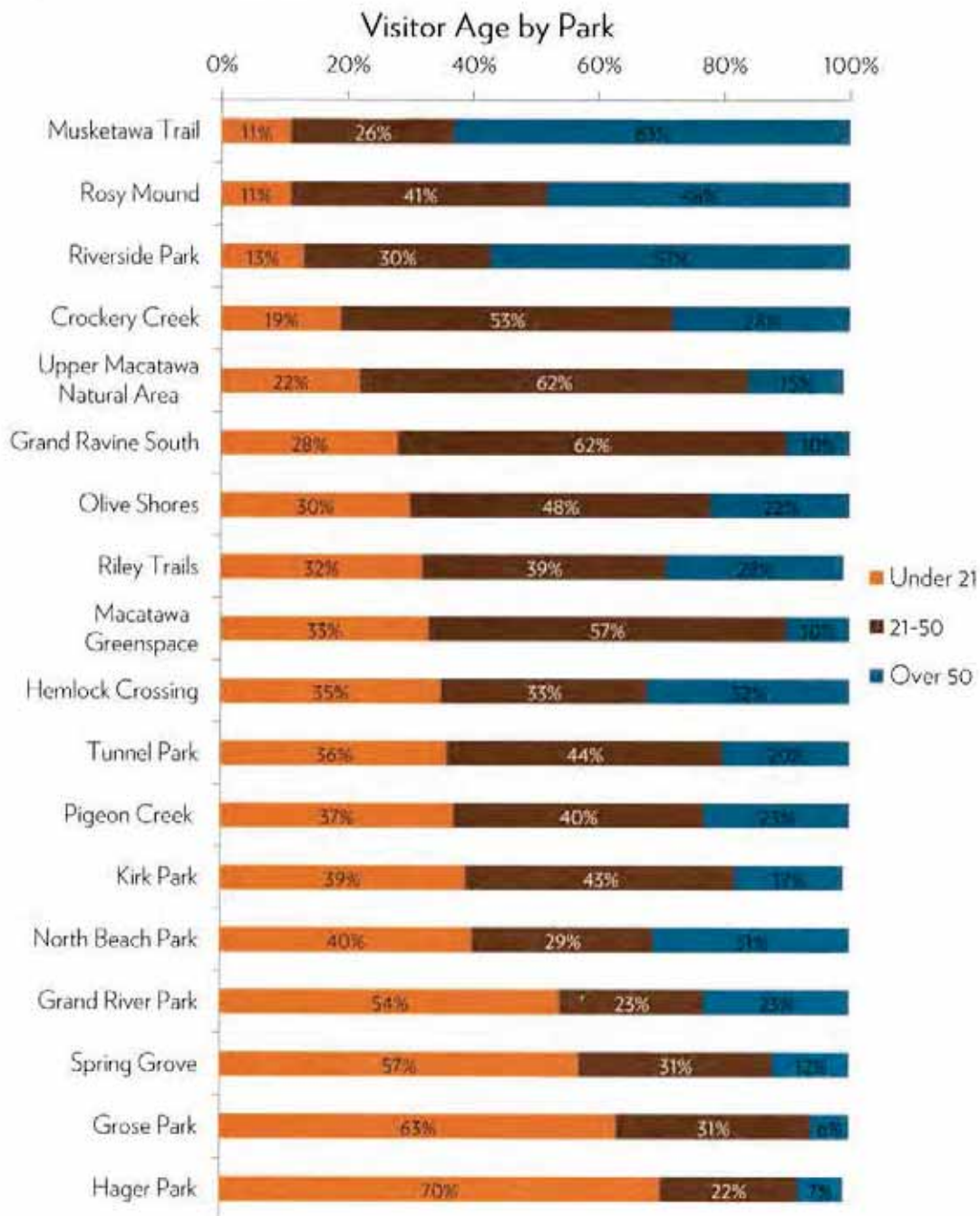
Group Size by Park

Clear patterns of park visitation emerged based on group size. Individuals or small groups of two or three were more likely to visit some parks whereas large groups tended to visit other parks. Nearly 40% of respondents visiting Tunnel and Hager Park were visiting in groups of six people or more. Grand River Park and River Side Park were most popular with individuals visiting alone.



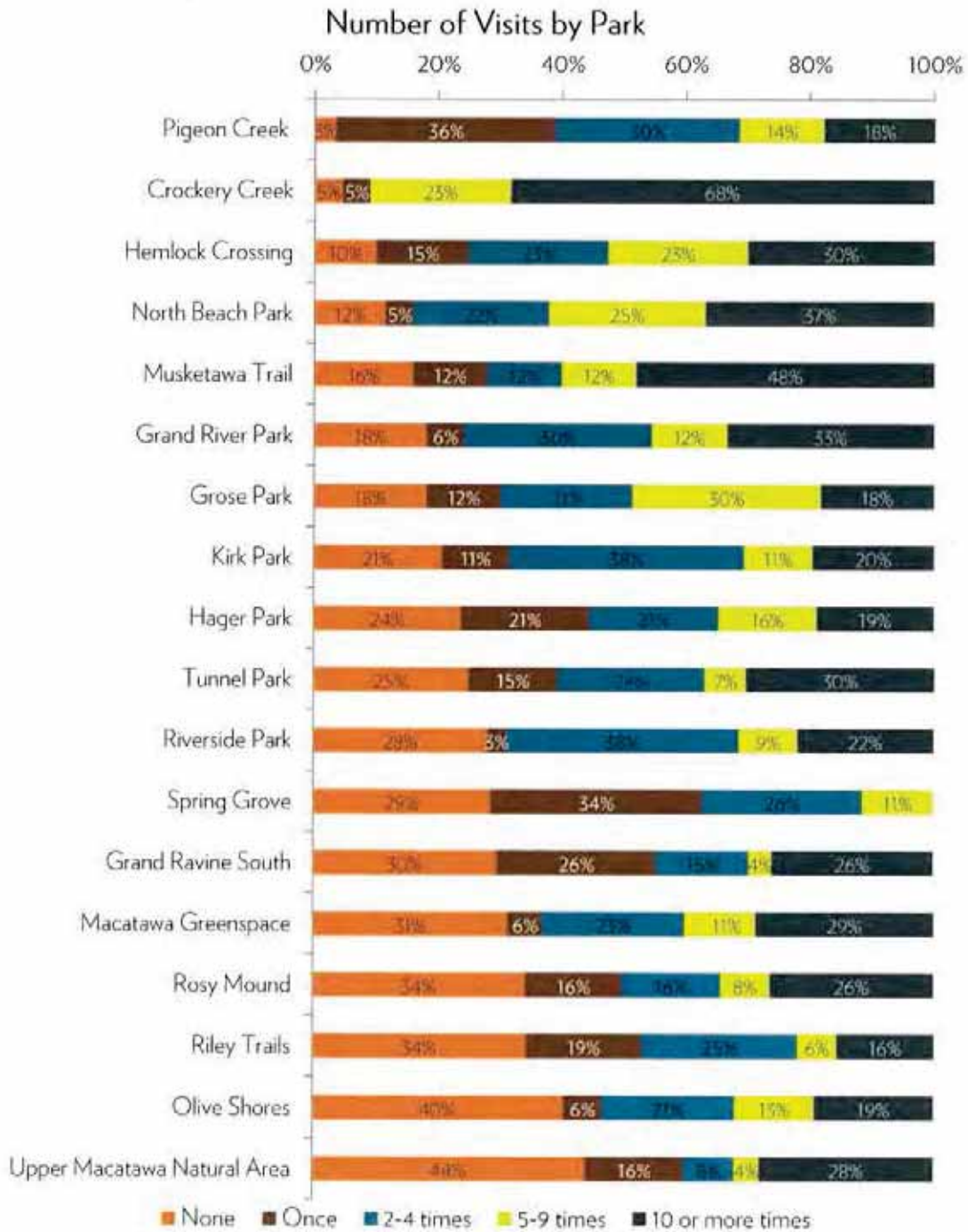
Ages by Park

Some parks are more likely to attract visitors of specific ages. Hagar Park, Grose Park, and Spring Grove Park had the largest proportions of park users under the age of 21. Musketawa Trail, Riverside Park and Rosy Mound were most likely to attract visitors over 50 years of age compared to other surveyed parks.



Number of Visits by Park

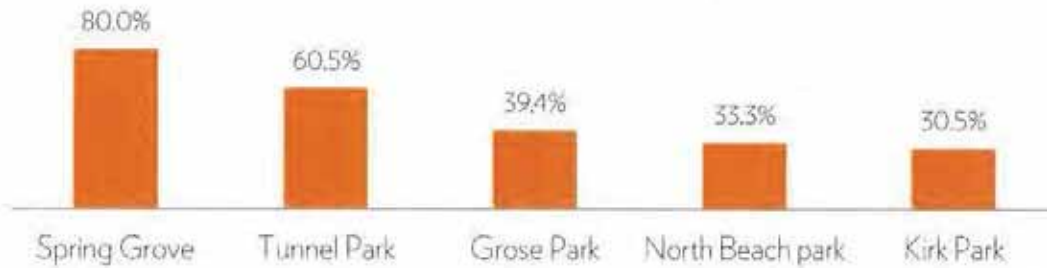
The number of visits per park was assessed at a park level with clear user trends emerging. When assessing the data on a park level, some parks emerged as more likely to be visited repeatedly whereas others attracted rare visitors. The majority of visitors to Crockery Creek (68%) had visited that park ten or more times in 2014. Upper Macatawa Natural Area (44%) and Olive Shores (40%) were most likely to have visitors who had not come to the park in 2014.



Activities by Park

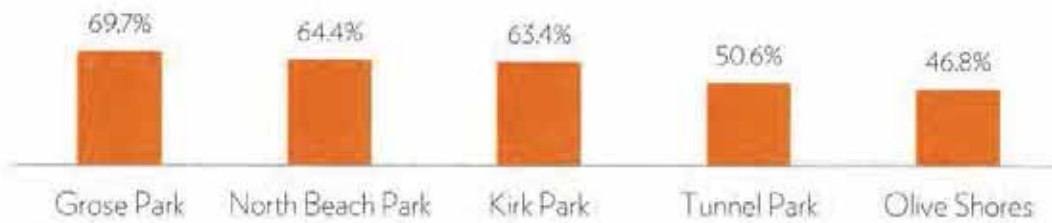
Spring Grove and Tunnel Park had the largest percentages of respondents visiting the park for picnicking activities.

Top Parks for Picnicking



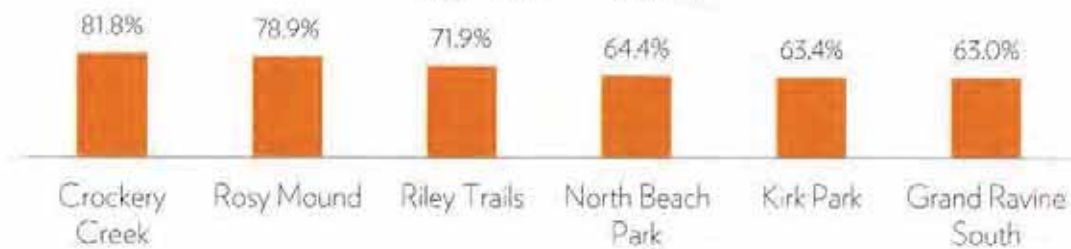
Grose Park and North Beach Park had the highest percentages of visitors for the purposes of swimming.

Top Parks for Swimming



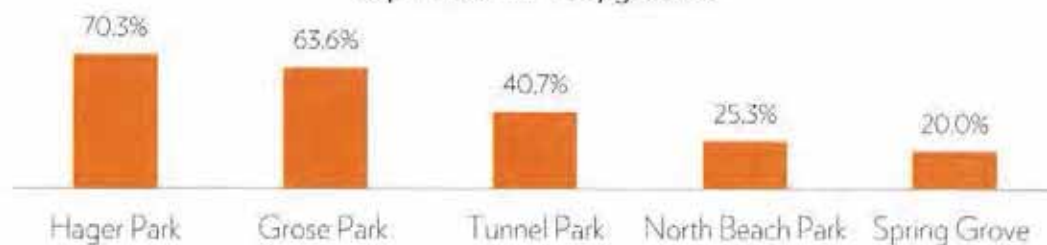
Crockery Creek, Rosy Mound, and Riley Trails had the highest proportions of visitors coming for hiking purposes.

Top Parks for Hiking



Over seventy percent (70%) of Hager Park visitors had come to use the park's playground.

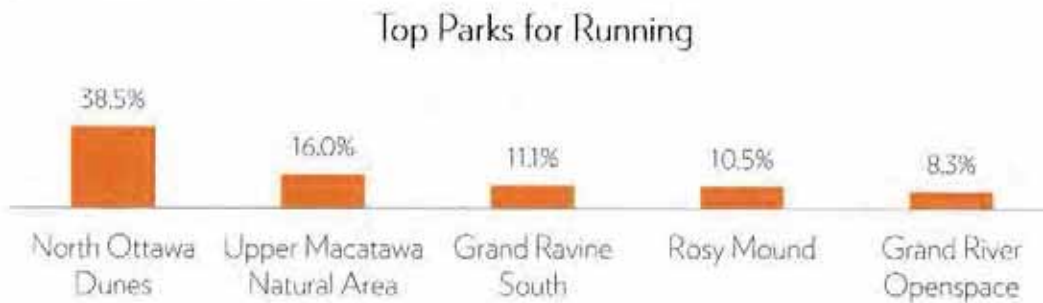
Top Parks for Playground



The majority (76% and 64%) of visitors to Musketawa Trail and Upper Macatawa Natural Area came for the purpose of biking. These proportions are significantly larger than the parks third and fourth most popular for biking, Riley Trails and Tunnel Park.



Nearly forty percent (40%) of visitors to North Ottawa Dunes came for the purpose of running. The next most popular park for running was Upper Macatawa Natural Area with 16% of respondents coming to the park for this reason.

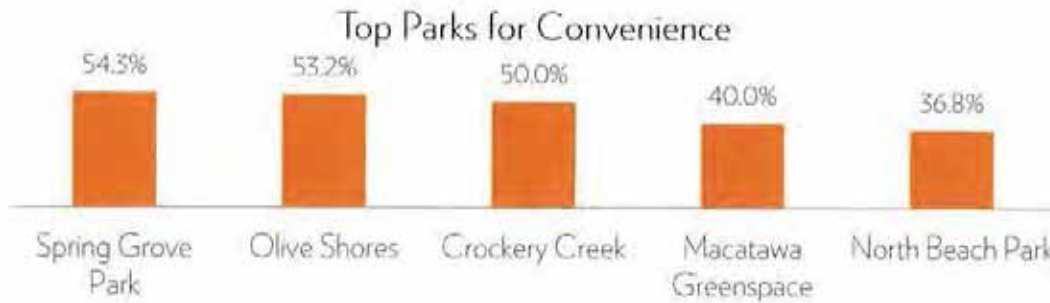


Most Enjoy by Park

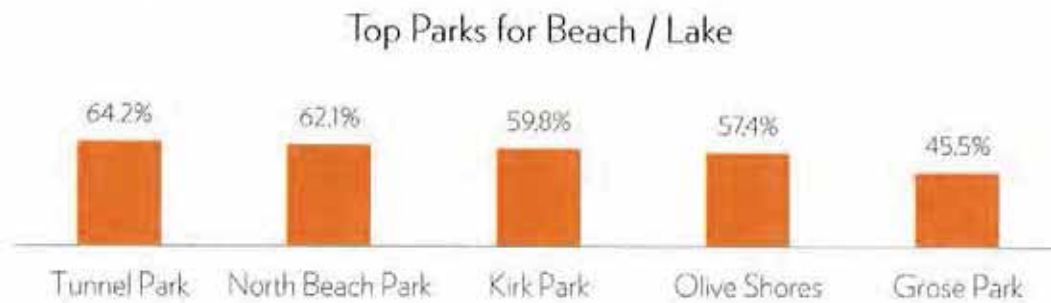
More than fifty percent (53.2%) of respondents surveyed at Olive Shores most enjoyed the park's cleanliness.



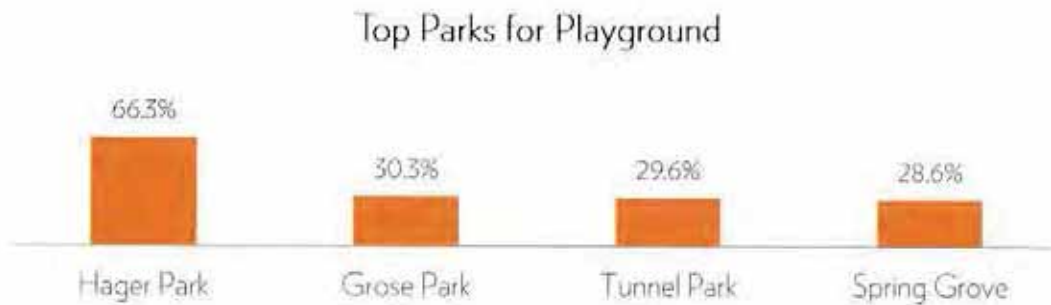
More than half of visitors to Spring Grove Park (54.3%) and Olive Shores (53.2%) indicated they most liked the convenience of these parks.



Data suggests that Tunnel Park, North Beach and Kirk Park are most popular for the beach and lake access. Nearly sixty-five percent (64.2%) of Tunnel Park visitors indicated the beach / lake was what they liked most about the park.



More than sixty-five percent (66.3%) of visitors to Hager Park most value the park's playground. This percentage is significantly higher than the subsequently ranked parks of Grose, Tunnel and Spring Grove.

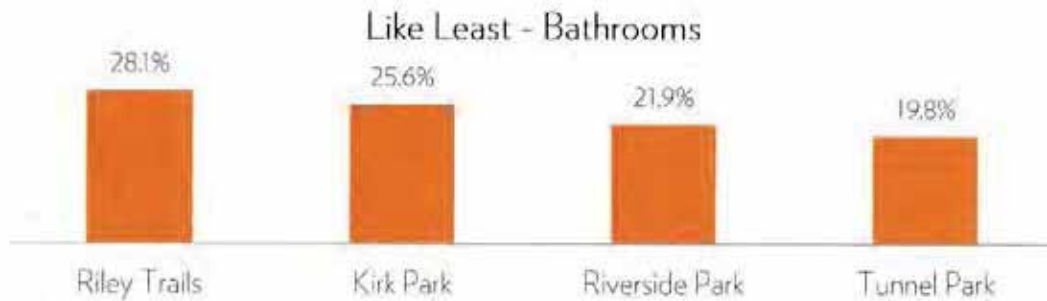


Almost nine in ten park goers most liked the trails at Riley Trails. Hemlock Crossings followed with 80% and Upper Macatawa Natural Area with 68% of visitors reporting they most liked the park's trails.



Like Least by Park

Twenty-eight percent (28.1%) of visitors to Riley Trails most disliked the park's bathrooms; 25% of Kirk Park's visitors indicated this is the park's feature they like least.



Grose Park had the largest percentage of visitors (18.2%) who least liked the parking at the park. North Beach Park, Spring Grove, and Tunnel Park followed with approximately nine percent (9%) of visitors identifying parking as what they disliked most about the park.



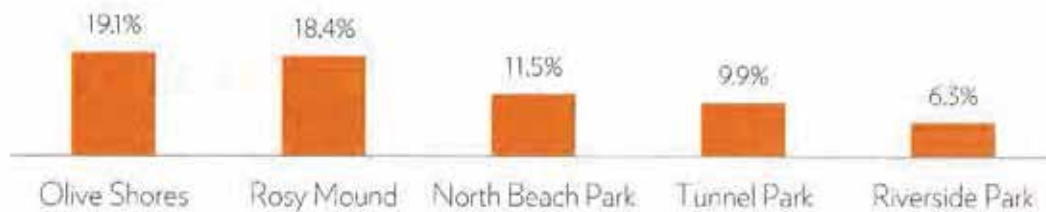
Pigeon Creek had the largest proportion of visitors (12.6%) who most disliked the park's crowds. As the majority of the surveys for this park were collected during February and March, this is most relevant to wintertime activities.

Like Least - Crowded



Olive Shores had the highest percentage (19.1%) of visitors who most disliked the cost of entrance. Rosy Mound follows with 18.4% of visitors most disliking this aspect of the park.

Like Least - Cost



Large percentages of park visitors are very satisfied. Grand Ravine South has the largest proportion of visitors (85.2%) that did not identify anything they disliked about the park.

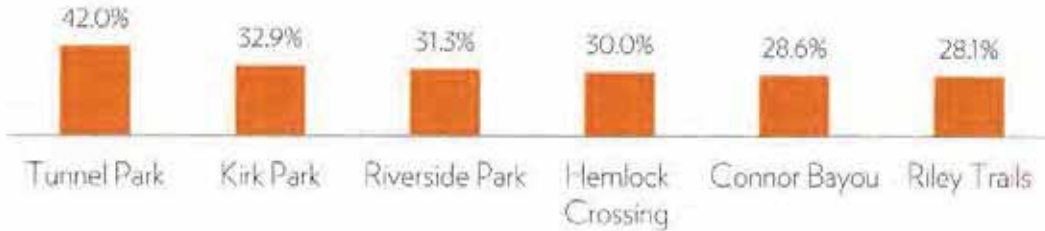
Like Least - Nothing



Improvement by Park

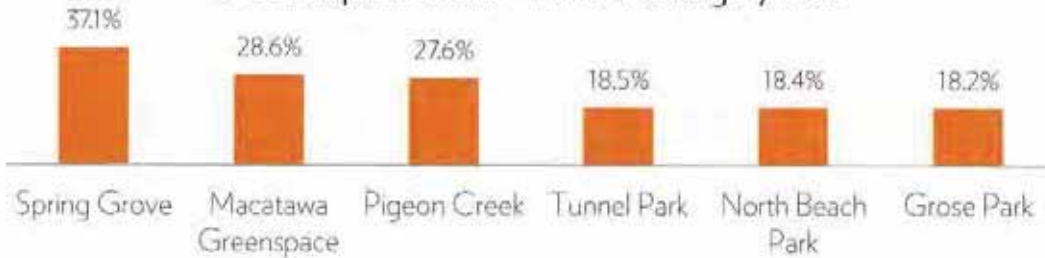
The largest proportion of visitors to Tunnel Park identified bathrooms as the park amenity most needing improvement.

Most Improvement - Bathrooms by Park



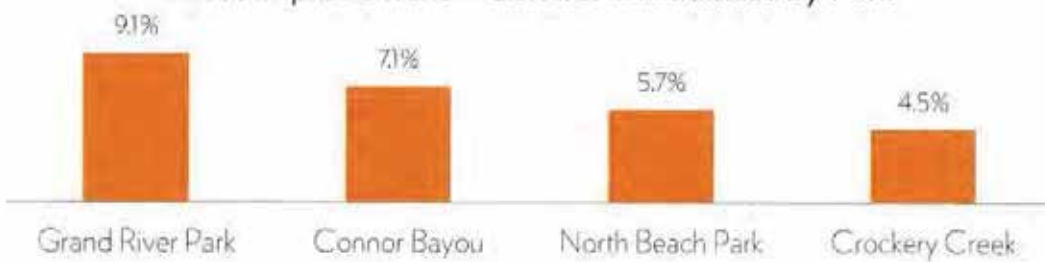
Thirty-seven percent (37.1%) of visitors to Spring Grove Park felt that more parking was the area in need of most improvement.

Most Improvement - More Parking by Park



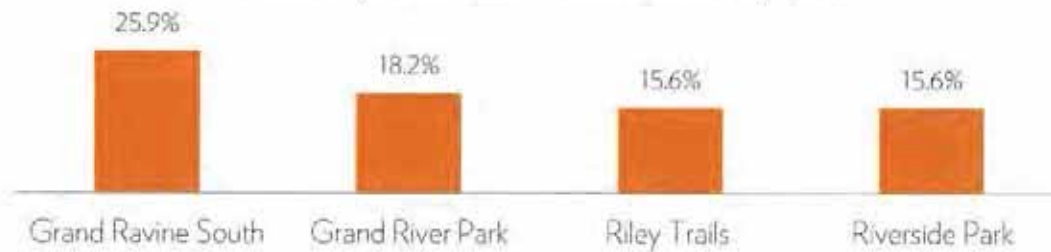
Most survey respondents did not feel improvements in general cleanliness was a priority area. However, nine percent (9.1%) of visitors to Grand River Park ranked cleanliness as needing most improvement.

Most Improvement - General Cleanliness by Park



More than a quarter (25.9%) of visitors to Grand Ravine South felt the park's picnic areas needed most improvement. Grand River Park follows with 18% of visitors identifying this amenity as needing improvement.

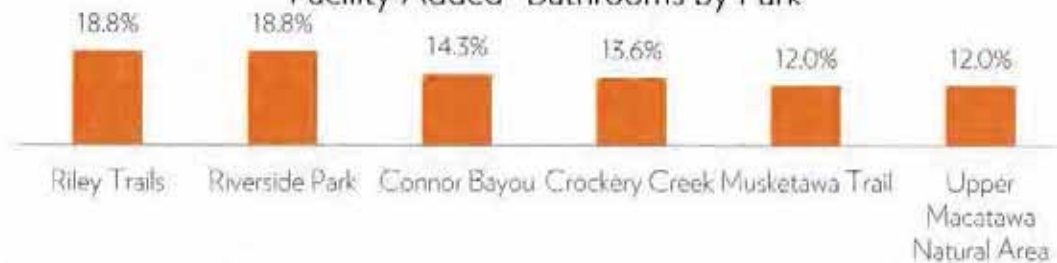
Most Improvement - Picnic Areas by Park



Facility Added by Park

Nearly one-fifth (18.8%) of survey respondents from Riley Trails and Riverside Park felt bathrooms should be added to these parks.

Facility Added- Bathrooms by Park

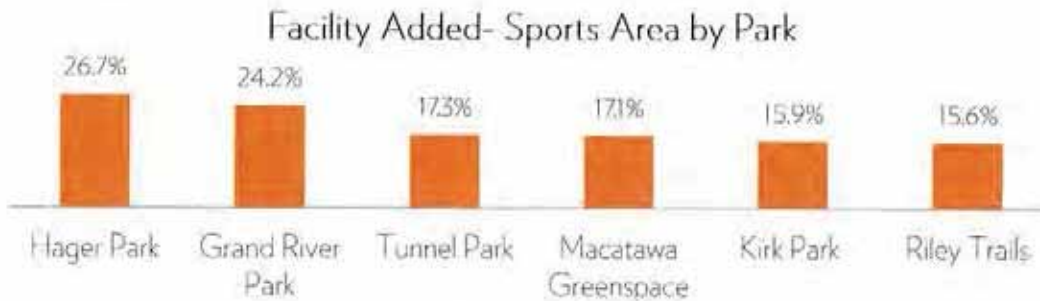


Connor Bayou (21.4%) and Olive Shores (19.1%) have the largest percentages of visitors who feel a playground should be added to the park.

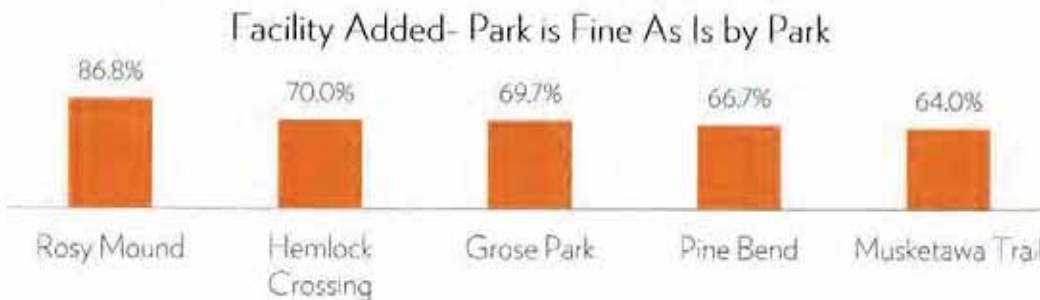
Facility Added- Playground by Park



Hager Park has the largest proportion (26.7%) of park visitors that felt a sports area should be added to the park.



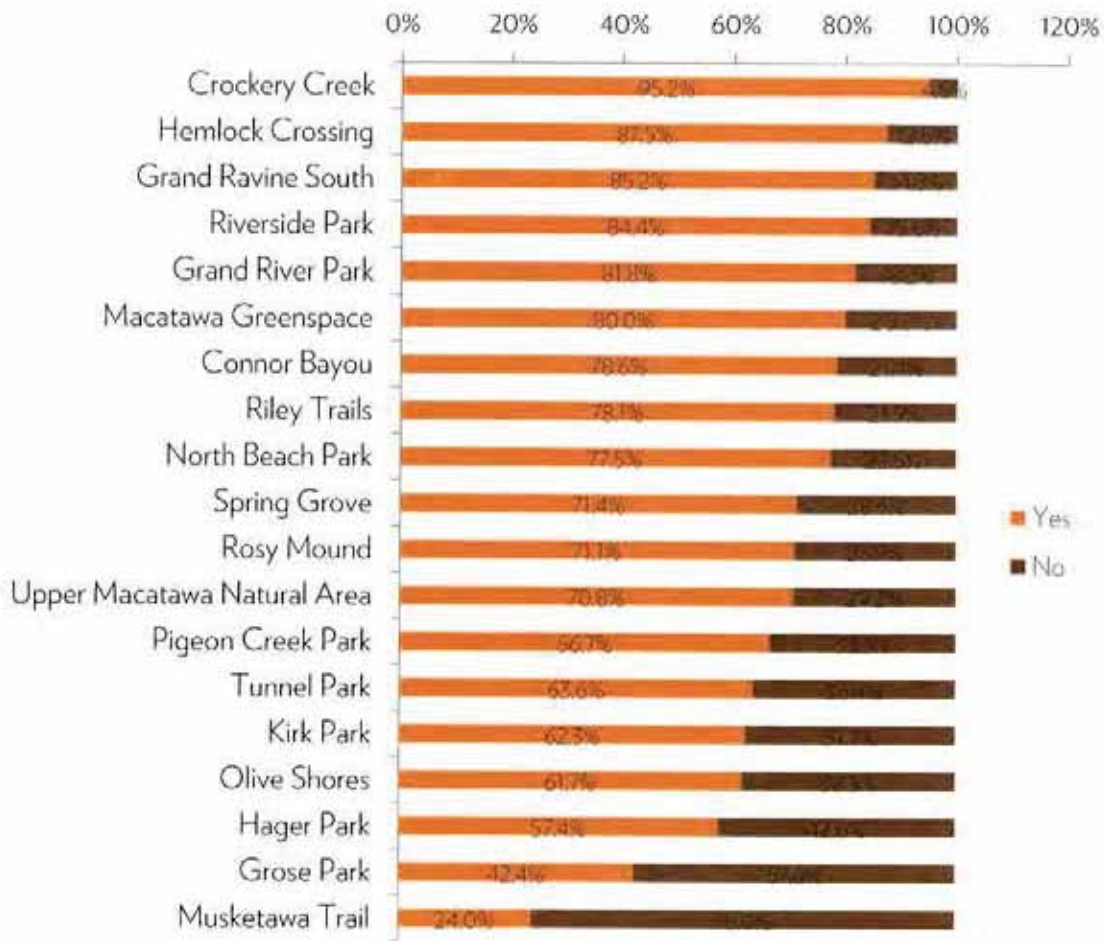
More than eighty-five percent (86.8%) of Rosy Mound visitors felt the park does not need any additional facilities added. Visitors to Hemlock Crossings were also satisfied with park amenities as 70% of respondents felt the park was "fine as is."



Are you a Resident of Ottawa County?

Visitor demographics varied widely between parks. Crockery Creek, Hemlock Crossings, and Grand Ravines South had the largest percentages of Ottawa County residents visiting the parks. Musketawa Trail, Grose Park and Hager Park had the smallest percentages of Ottawa County Residents in the parks.

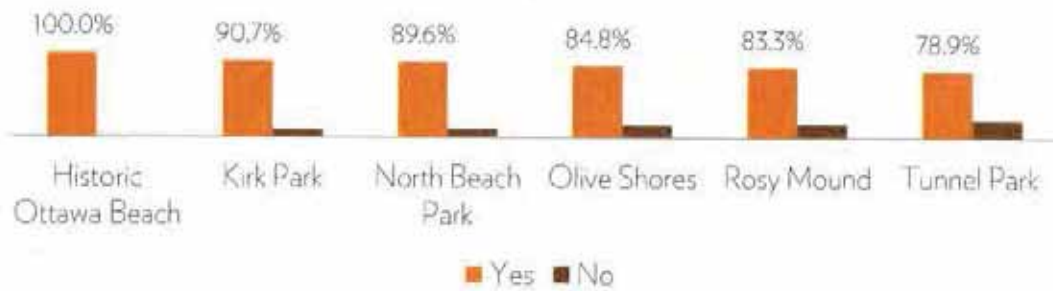
Are you a Resident of Ottawa County?



Fee Reasonable by Lakeshore Park

The majority of respondents at lakeshore parks feel the entrance fee is reasonable. All respondents at Historic Ottawa Beach and over 90% at Kirk Park feel the charge is fair. Tunnel Park visitors were least likely to feel the fee was reasonable with 21% of respondents answering this way.

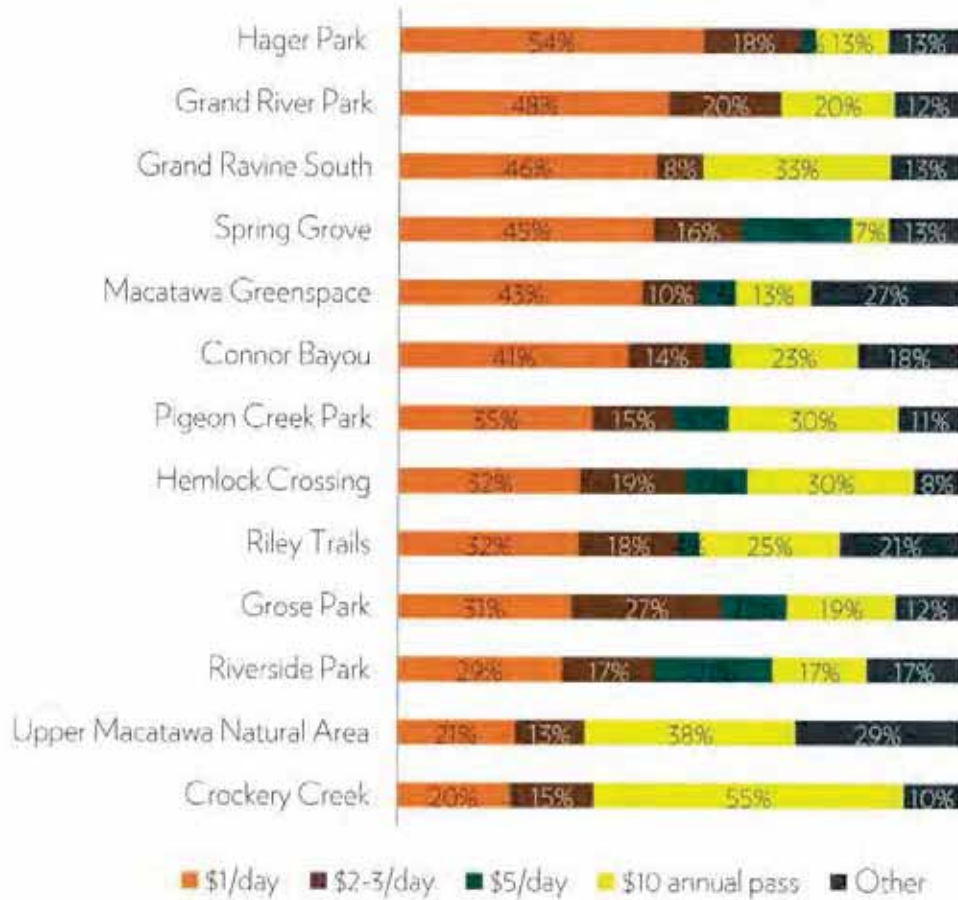
Do you feel that the current fee to use the Park is Reasonable by Lakeshore Park



How Much Willing to Pay by Non Lakeshore Park

Park visitors are willing to pay varied entrance fees depending on the park. More than half (54%) of park users at Hager Park are willing to pay \$1 a day for park entrance. Approximately twenty percent of respondents are willing to pay a steeper price of \$5 a day at parks such as Spring Grove and Riverside Park whereas visitors to other parks showed less willingness to pay a higher fee.

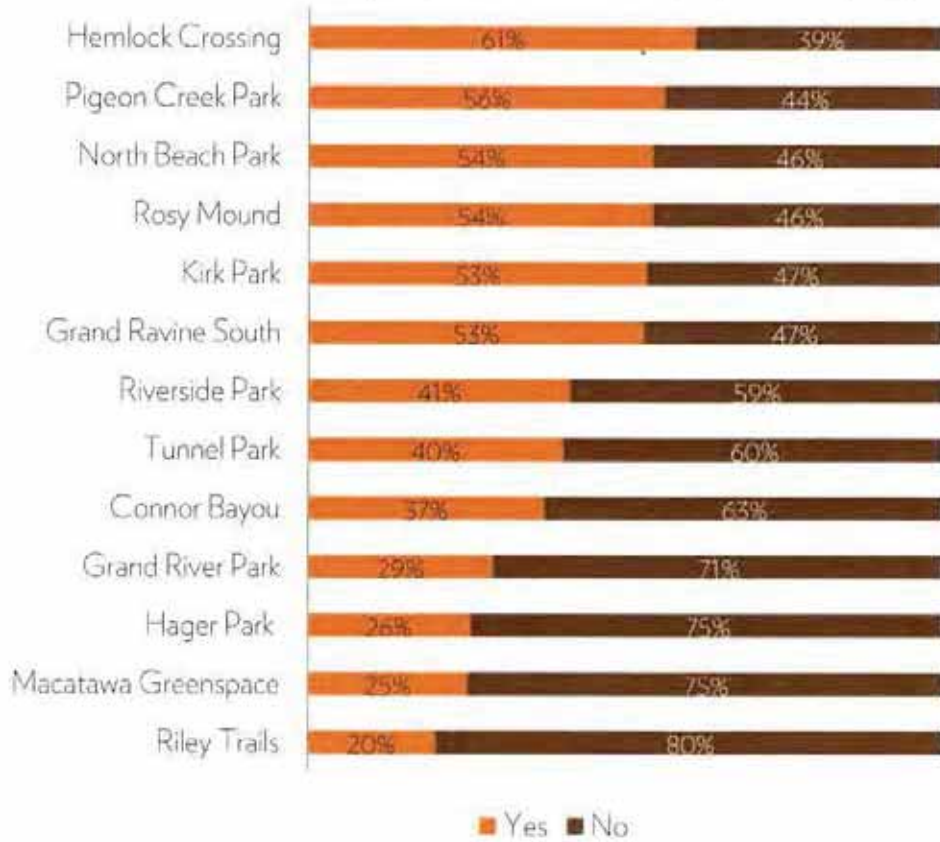
If there were to be an entrance fee for this park, how much would you be willing to pay?



Ottawa County Residents – Awareness of Millage by Park

Visitors to Hemlock Crossings were most aware (60%) of the millage passed to support Ottawa County Parks. Only one fifth (20%) of visitors to Riley Trails were aware of this millage.

Are you aware a special millage was passed to support and expand the Ottawa County Parks System?



Conclusion

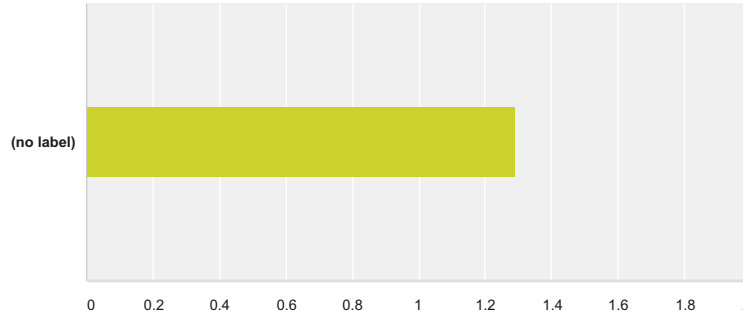
Ottawa County Parks User Survey captured data from more than 1000 park visitors in 27 parks. These visitors are primarily from Ottawa County and are diverse in terms of ages and size of groups. Park visitors use the parks for a variety of different activities and purposes with many reporting frequent park visits.

Visitors to Ottawa County Parks are overall satisfied with park spaces and facilities. Overall data is positive with minimal proportions of park users indicating a dislike for any aspects of the parks or identifying items that need improvement. Users are mostly supportive of existing park fees but are opposed to paying for entrance to parks that currently do not charge.

Aggregated data demonstrates an overall satisfaction of Ottawa County park users. However, user opinions differ by park and clear trends emerge when analyzing park-specific data. This data is vital to gaining park-level understanding and instrumental to future planning.

Q1 How would you rate the job being done by Ottawa County Parks in providing recreational spaces to the citizens of Ottawa County?

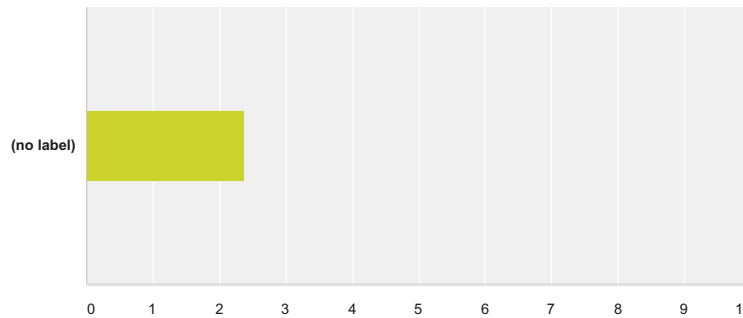
Answered: 470 Skipped: 0



	Excellent	Pretty Good	Only Fair	Poor	Undecided/Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	72.77% 342	26.17% 123	0.64% 3	0.00% 0	0.43% 2	470	1.29

Q2 How would you rate the job being done by Ottawa County Parks in providing educational programs to the citizens of Ottawa County?

Answered: 470 Skipped: 0



	Excellent	Pretty Good	Only Fair	Poor	Undecided/Don't know	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	35.11% 165	37.02% 174	4.68% 22	0.43% 2	22.77% 107	470	2.39

Q3 What one specific Ottawa County Parks program or service do you think provides the MOST value in exchange for what is paid in taxes to fund that service?

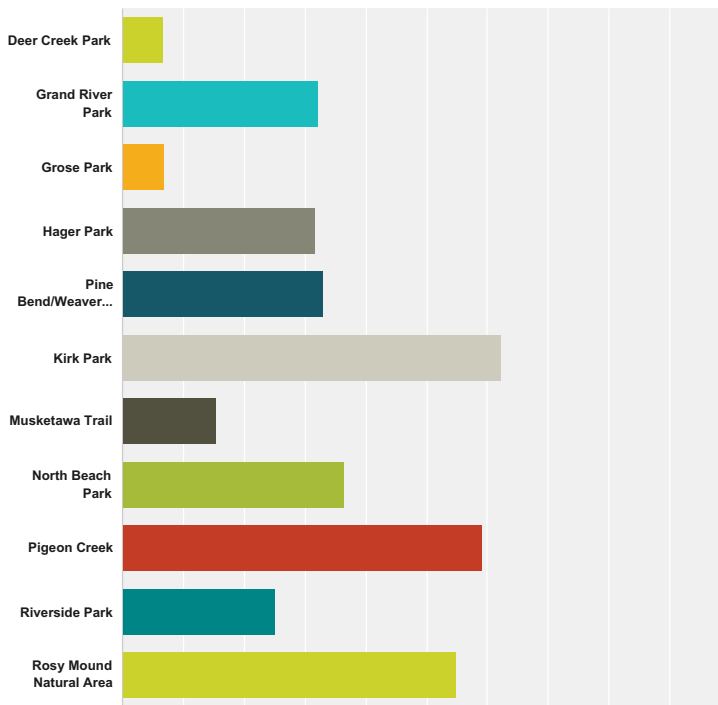
Answered: 336 Skipped: 134

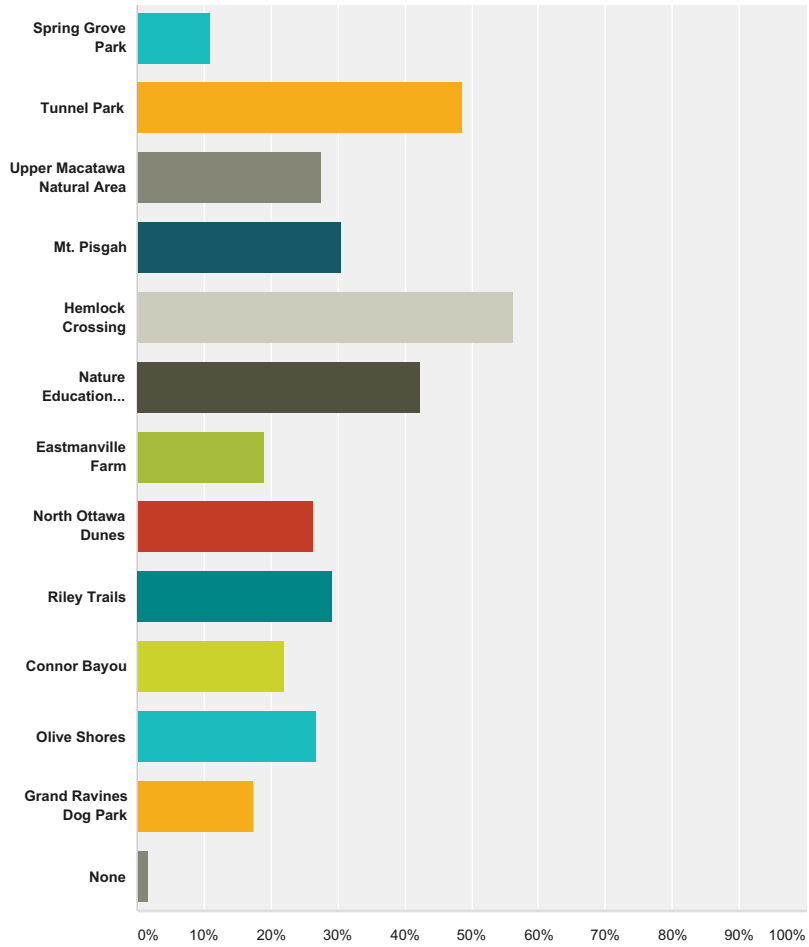
Q4 What one specific Ottawa County Parks program or service do you think provides the LEAST value in exchange for what is paid in taxes to fund that service?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 231

Q5 In the past year, have you or anyone else in your household visited any Ottawa County parks or recreational areas? If so, which ones?

Answered: 464 Skipped: 6



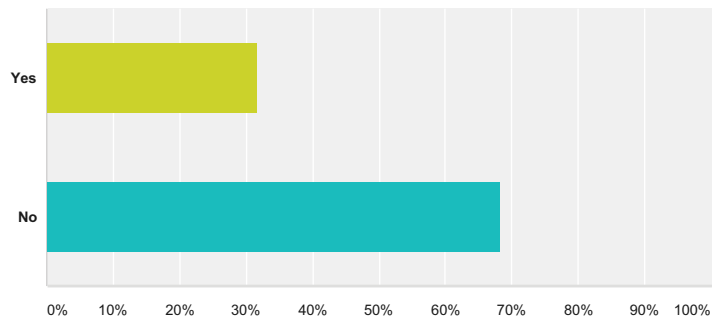


Answer Choices	Responses
Deer Creek Park	6.68% 31
Grand River Park	32.11% 149
Grose Park	6.90% 32
Hager Park	31.68% 147
Pine Bend/Weaver House	32.97% 153
Kirk Park	62.28% 289
Musketawa Trail	15.52% 72
North Beach Park	36.64% 170
Pigeon Creek	59.05% 274

Riverside Park	25.00%	116
Rosy Mound Natural Area	54.96%	255
Spring Grove Park	10.78%	50
Tunnel Park	48.71%	226
Upper Macatawa Natural Area	27.59%	128
Mt. Pisgah	30.39%	141
Hemlock Crossing	56.25%	261
Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing	42.46%	197
Eastmanville Farm	18.97%	88
North Ottawa Dunes	26.29%	122
Riley Trails	29.31%	136
Connor Bayou	21.98%	102
Olive Shores	26.72%	124
Grand Ravines Dog Park	17.24%	80
None	1.72%	8
Total Respondents: 464		

Q6 Have you participated in a program at the Nature Education Center or other park site?

Answered: 464 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	31.68%	147
No	68.32%	317
Total		464

Q7 Do you agree or disagree with the following

Answered: 442 Skipped: 28

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither/Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Ottawa County Parks should support a regional trail system linking different communities for walkers, bicyclists, and roller-bladers.	58.28% 257	26.53% 117	11.56% 51	2.72% 12	0.91% 4	441
Parks should acquire additional park land for future public use.	53.64% 236	27.05% 119	14.55% 64	3.86% 17	0.91% 4	440
The County should consider the needs of tourists when planning future park facilities.	23.86% 105	42.27% 186	22.27% 98	9.77% 43	1.82% 8	440
Overnight camping opportunities should be provided in the park system.	19.95% 88	31.52% 139	29.93% 132	13.83% 61	4.76% 21	441
Revenue-producing facilities such as campgrounds or marinas to help finance the park system should be developed.	20.63% 91	35.60% 157	28.34% 125	10.88% 48	4.54% 20	441
Hunting should be allowed in unimproved portions of county parks and open space lands.	13.12% 58	20.36% 90	23.76% 105	17.42% 77	25.34% 112	442
Deer numbers should be reduced as necessary to protect vegetation in high quality natural areas.	22.78% 100	31.44% 138	28.47% 125	10.02% 44	7.29% 32	439

Q8 The following are facilities and programs Ottawa County Parks offers or is currently offering; tell us if there is enough or too much of the following:

Answered: 442 Skipped: 28

	Much more needed	More needed	Enough	Too much	Undecided/Don't Know	Total
County beach parks	9.98% 43	34.34% 148	50.35% 217	0.23% 1	5.10% 22	431
Water play areas or a splash parks	5.73% 25	28.21% 123	40.83% 178	2.98% 13	22.25% 97	436
Paved paths for biking and roller blading	14.65% 64	44.62% 195	32.72% 143	2.06% 9	5.95% 26	437
Canoeing and kayaking sites	12.76% 56	46.24% 203	29.16% 128	0.68% 3	11.16% 49	439
Boat launches	3.90% 17	24.54% 107	50.46% 220	2.75% 12	18.35% 80	436
Public marinas	3.92% 17	16.59% 72	45.85% 199	4.84% 21	28.80% 125	434
Picnic facilities	3.88% 17	29.45% 129	58.45% 256	1.14% 5	7.08% 31	438
Camping facilities	11.32% 49	32.56% 141	32.33% 140	4.62% 20	19.17% 83	433
Nature education programs	6.86% 30	39.36% 172	36.38% 159	2.06% 9	15.33% 67	437
Sledding runs	7.76% 34	42.47% 186	32.19% 141	1.37% 6	16.21% 71	438
Cross-country skiing	10.50% 46	39.73% 174	35.62% 156	0.91% 4	13.24% 58	438
Hiking trails	18.49% 81	44.98% 197	31.28% 137	0.46% 2	4.79% 21	438
Snowmobile areas	3.92% 17	7.14% 31	38.48% 167	19.59% 85	30.88% 134	434
Hunting areas	6.47% 28	15.47% 67	32.33% 140	18.01% 78	27.71% 120	433
Mountain bike trails	10.47% 45	29.07% 125	33.26% 143	6.28% 27	20.93% 90	430
Nature centers	6.22% 27	32.72% 142	47.70% 207	1.61% 7	11.75% 51	434

Fishing sites	9.09% 39	29.60% 127	40.09% 172	1.86% 8	19.35% 83	429
Horseback riding trails	6.65% 29	17.43% 76	43.35% 189	5.28% 23	27.29% 119	436
Dog parks	8.53% 37	26.04% 113	39.40% 171	8.06% 35	17.97% 78	434
Disc or Frisbee golf facilities	5.54% 24	22.17% 96	41.57% 180	6.47% 28	24.25% 105	433

Q9 What other park facilities and/or recreational programming opportunities do you believe Ottawa County Parks should offer?

Answered: 150 Skipped: 320

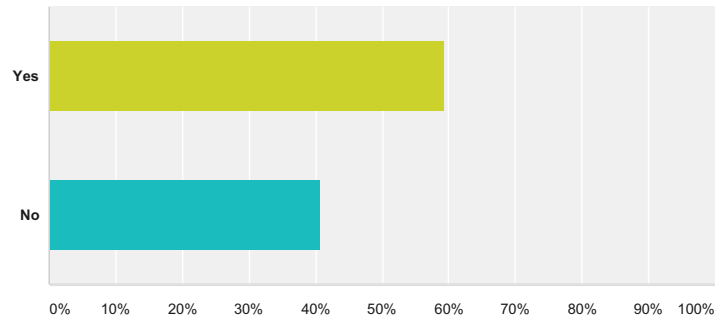
Q10 Do you agree or disagree with Ottawa County acquiring the following types of land?

Answered: 442 Skipped: 28

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither/Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Land and easements for trails and bike paths?	51.02% 225	36.28% 160	9.98% 44	0.91% 4	1.81% 8	441
Unique environmental areas such as wetlands, sand dunes, mature woodlands, and wildlife areas?	58.41% 257	27.73% 122	11.14% 49	2.27% 10	0.45% 2	440
Land along major rivers and streams?	57.60% 254	30.84% 136	9.75% 43	0.91% 4	0.91% 4	441
Historic sites?	40.50% 177	32.04% 140	21.51% 94	4.58% 20	1.37% 6	437

Q11 Are you aware that there is currently a special millage, passed in 2006 that is dedicated specifically to help fund Ottawa County Parks?

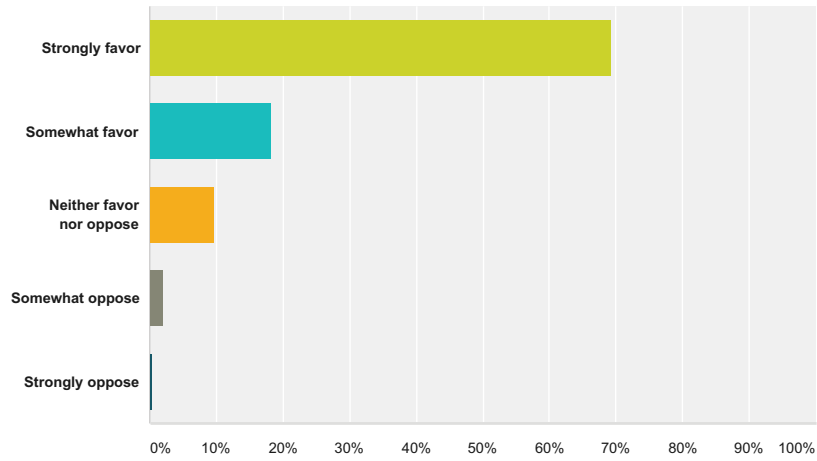
Answered: 439 Skipped: 31



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	59.23% 260
No	40.77% 179
Total	439

Q12 This 1/3 of a mill amounts to \$25.00 per year for a house valued at \$150,000 with a taxable value of \$75,000. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose the current parks millage?

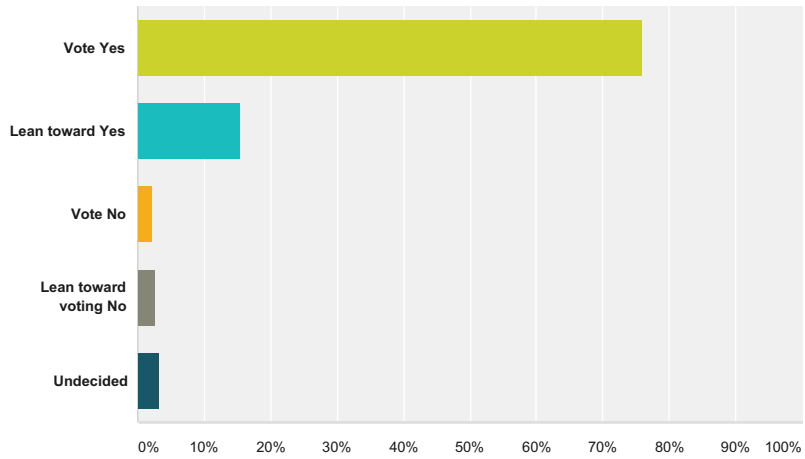
Answered: 439 Skipped: 31



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly favor	69.25%	304
Somewhat favor	18.45%	81
Neither favor nor oppose	9.79%	43
Somewhat oppose	2.05%	9
Strongly oppose	0.46%	2
Total		439

Q13 If Ottawa County placed a renewal of the 1/3 of a mill on a future election ballot, which amounts to \$25.00 per year for a house valued at \$150,000 with a taxable value of \$75,000, and the election were being held today, would you vote YES to renew the dedicated Parks and Recreation millage, or would you vote NO to oppose it?

Answered: 439 Skipped: 31



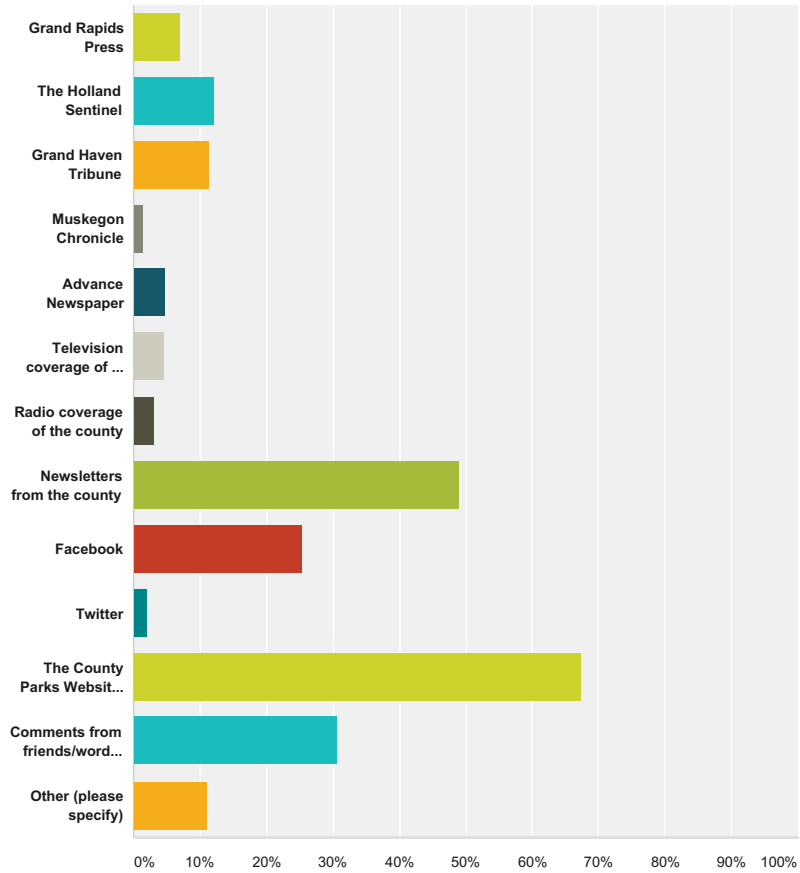
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Vote Yes	76.08%	334
Lean toward Yes	15.49%	68
Vote No	2.28%	10
Lean toward voting No	2.73%	12
Undecided	3.42%	15
Total		439

Q14 What is the main reason why you would vote NO to oppose the proposal?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 452

Q15 Where would you say you get most of your information about the activities of Ottawa County Parks?

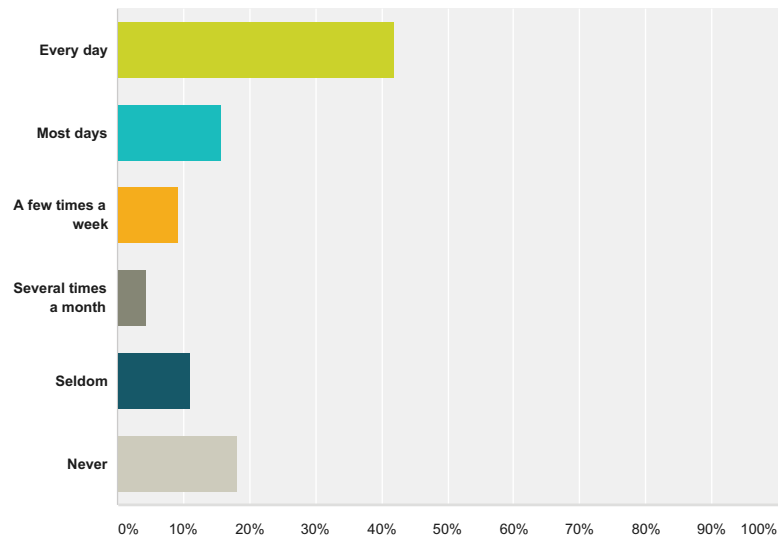
Answered: 437 Skipped: 33



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Grand Rapids Press	7.09%	31
The Holland Sentinel	12.13%	53
Grand Haven Tribune	11.44%	50
Muskegon Chronicle	1.37%	6
Advance Newspaper	4.81%	21
Television coverage of the county	4.58%	20
Radio coverage of the county	3.20%	14
Newsletters from the county	48.97%	214
Facebook	25.40%	111
Twitter	2.06%	9
The County Parks Website – www.miOttawa.org/parks	67.51%	295
Comments from friends/word of mouth	30.66%	134
Other (please specify)	10.98%	48
Total Respondents: 437		

Q16 How often do you use social media websites such as Twitter or Facebook?

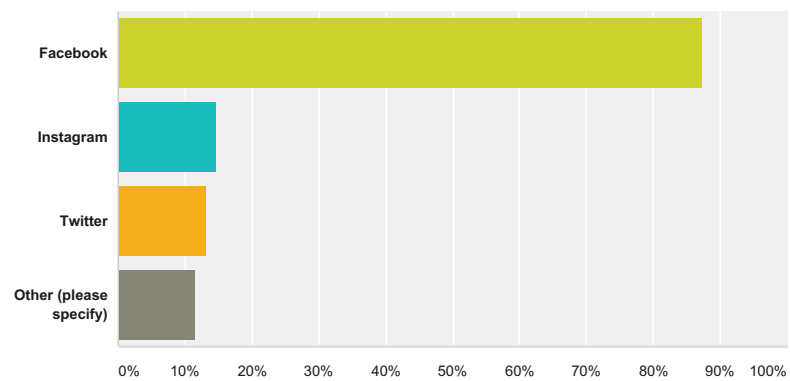
Answered: 437 Skipped: 33



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Every day	41.88%	183
Most days	15.56%	68
A few times a week	9.15%	40
Several times a month	4.35%	19
Seldom	10.98%	48
Never	18.08%	79
Total		437

Q17 Which social media sites do you use frequently?

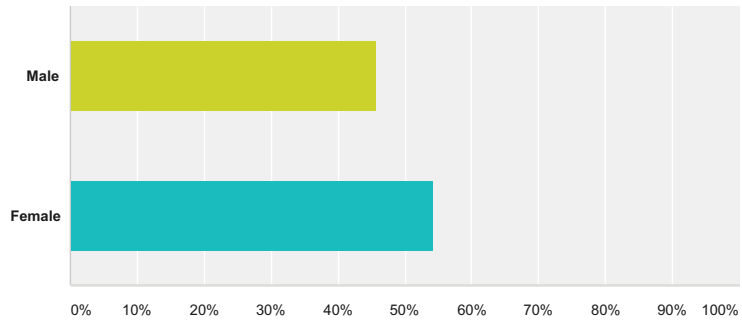
Answered: 348 Skipped: 122



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Facebook	87.36%	304
Instagram	14.66%	51
Twitter	13.22%	46
Other (please specify)	11.49%	40
Total Respondents: 348		

Q18 What is your gender?

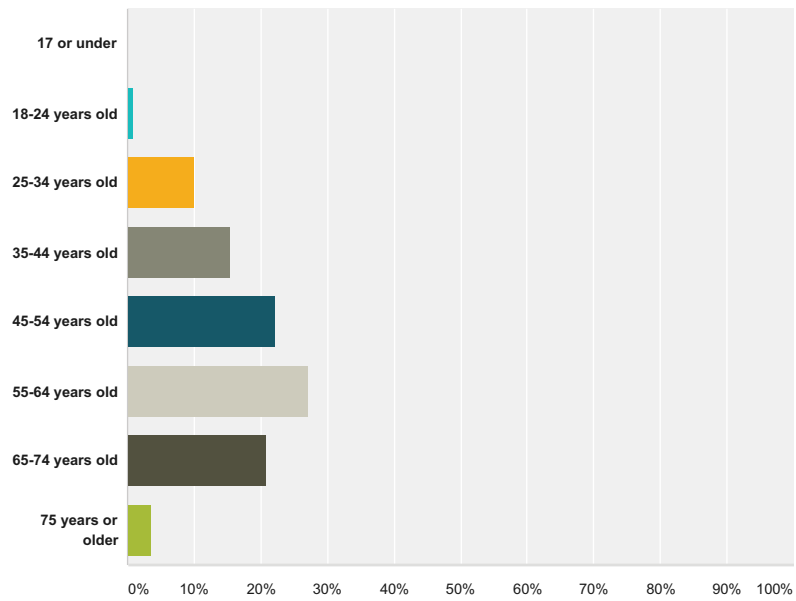
Answered: 433 Skipped: 37



Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	45.73%	198
Female	54.27%	235
Total		433

Q19 What is your age

Answered: 431 Skipped: 39



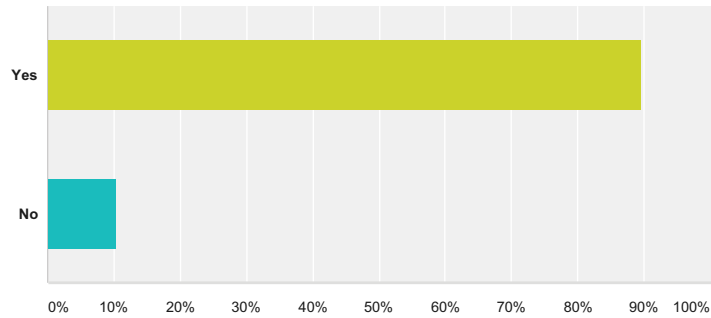
Answer Choices	Responses	
17 or under	0.00%	0
18-24 years old	0.93%	4
25-34 years old	9.98%	43
35-44 years old	15.55%	67
45-54 years old	22.04%	95
55-64 years old	27.15%	117
65-74 years old	20.88%	90
75 years or older	3.48%	15
Total		431

Q20 Are you a resident of Ottawa County?

Answered: 434 Skipped: 36

Ottawa County Parks Survey 2015

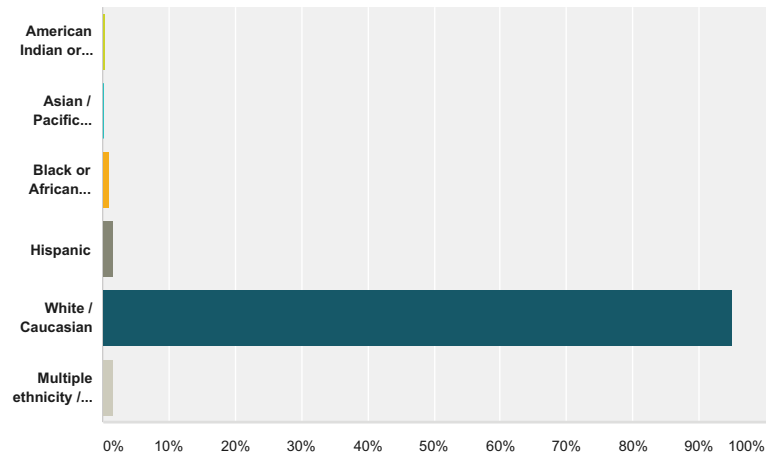
SurveyMonkey



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	89.63%	389
No	10.37%	45
Total		434

Q21 Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

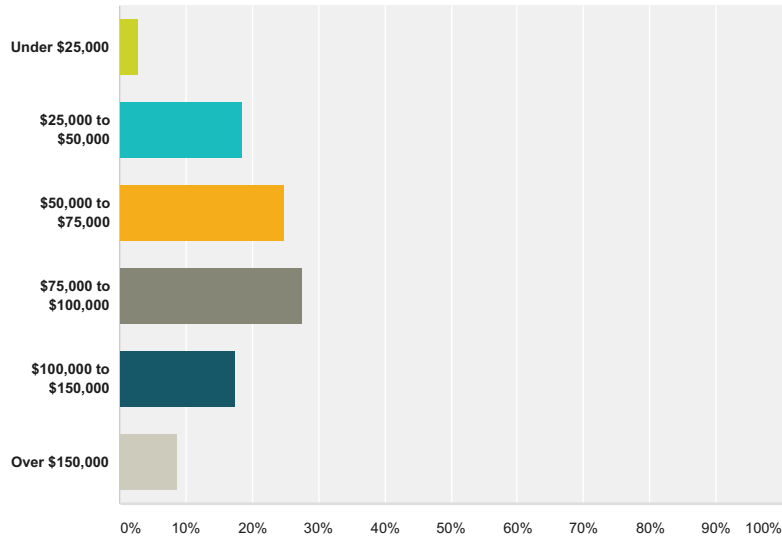
Answered: 422 Skipped: 48



Answer Choices	Responses	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.47%	2
Asian / Pacific Islander	0.24%	1
Black or African American	0.95%	4
Hispanic	1.66%	7
White / Caucasian	95.02%	401
Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)	1.66%	7
Total		422

Q22 What is the total annual income of the HOUSEHOLD in which you live?

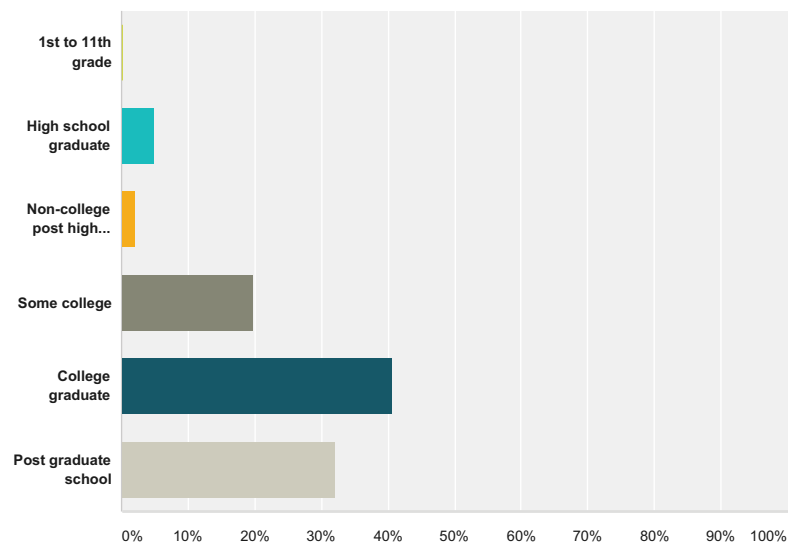
Answered: 384 Skipped: 86



Answer Choices	Responses	
Under \$25,000	2.86%	11
\$25,000 to \$50,000	18.49%	71
\$50,000 to \$75,000	24.74%	95
\$75,000 to \$100,000	27.60%	106
\$100,000 to \$150,000	17.45%	67
Over \$150,000	8.85%	34
Total		384

Q23 What is the last grade or level of schooling you completed?

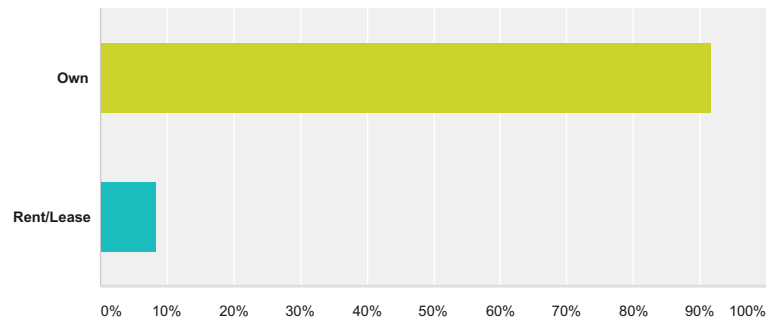
Answered: 427 Skipped: 43



Answer Choices	Responses
1st to 11th grade	0.23% 1
High school graduate	4.92% 21
Non-college post high school (technical training)	2.11% 9
Some college	19.91% 85
College graduate	40.75% 174
Post graduate school	32.08% 137
Total	427

Q24 Do you own your home, or do you rent or lease your primary residence?

Answered: 426 Skipped: 44



Ottawa County Parks Survey 2015

SurveyMonkey

Answer Choices	Responses
Own	91.55% 390
Rent/Lease	8.45% 36
Total	426

Q25 How many people, including yourself, are currently living in your household?

Answered: 421 Skipped: 49

Q26 How many children, age 18 years or younger, are currently living in your household?

Answered: 421 Skipped: 49

Q27 Do you have any other comments or feedback regarding Ottawa County Parks facilities, programs, and/or activities?

Answered: 242 Skipped: 228

Special Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Proposed Minutes

- Date:** November 20, 2013
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Nature Education Center, Hemlock Crossing Park
- Present:** Bobbi Jones Sabine, David VanGinhoven, Phil Kuyers, Roger Jonas, Ray Statema, Jim Miedema, Tom Werkman, Joe Bush and Tom Elhart
- Absent:** James Holtvluwer
- Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning; Kyle Roffey, Administrative Secretary; Scott Stinebower, Park Manager; Kristen Hintz, Coordinator of Interpretive Services; Shannon Felgner, Communications Manager
- Guests:** None

Items Discussed:

President Sabine called the meeting to order. She then asked for additions or deletions to the agenda; there were none. President Sabine welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Scholtz. Scholtz outlined the purpose of the meeting, and with assistance from TerHaar, he outlined several topics for discussion.

Review Mission, Goals and Objectives: Scholtz presented a brief review of the current organizational mission, goals, objectives, and performance measures. He asked for suggestions for changes and the consensus was they still are accurate and reflect the direction of the Parks Commission

Accomplishments Since Last Millage Vote: Scholtz presented slides reviewing achievements since the last millage vote in 2006. The presentation reviewed each goal set in the millage campaign brochure and updated Commission members on progress made toward that goal. Scholtz stated that most of the goals set forth have been accomplished. One exception is land acquisition. We have acquired 1,062 acres toward a goal of 1,800. We still have three years to make progress, but we are behind. However, we have acquired many key properties including Grand River Ravines, land on Lake Michigan, etc. Jonas asked if the reason might be that property values are higher now than they were in 2006. Elhart stated that values were actually higher back then before the recession than they are today. Werkman stated it is acceptable to be behind in land purchases as we wait for the appropriate properties. Jonas felt the Parks Commission has done a good job of keeping up with the outdoor activity trends with projects

such as the kayak launches and disc golf. VanGinhoven stated we are doing a great job overall and we just need to continue doing what we are doing.

Review Draft Time Line: TerHaar reviewed a five-year timeline for projects leading up to the millage vote. The time line showed the timing of the five year parks plan update which would be completed in time to serve as the basis for the millage campaign. It also showed how surveys of both park users and county residents would be completed as part of the long-range parks plan. They could also be valuable tools in gauging public opinion toward the millage. Felgner suggested we target registered voters for the county resident survey and Jonas and Kuyers agreed. According to the time line, the marina project at Historic Ottawa Beach would be addressed following the millage vote in August of 2016. Jonas commented that there are key parks spread throughout the county, and one way to promote the millage would be to promote one park a month leading up to the millage vote.

Review of Proposed and Potential Park Acquisition and Development Projects: TerHaar presented a slide show which reviewed proposed development projects and proposed acquisition projects in the long-range budget. Commission members had a detailed list of projects sent to them in advance of the meeting. TerHaar explained which projects were included in current funding plans and which are shown as future goals with hopes of including them in a next millage budget. Scholtz explained the projects to be included in the next millage budget will be determined when we put together our next long-range parks plan in advance of the vote (i.e. 2015).

Discussion of Selected Issues: Discussion of selected key issues followed a break for dinner and the following items were discussed briefly:

Potential For Parks Foundation: Scholtz reviewed the options available in regard to either creating a Parks Foundation or using a Community Foundation. The Parks Commission has determined it will consider forming a Parks Foundation if there are people willing to step up and get involved. Scholtz gave the information that he felt should be included in a promotional piece to prospective Parks Foundation board members, and he asked the Commission for input. Statema asked if a Parks Foundation chairperson would be required to have a background in working with a foundation. Scholtz did not believe that would be necessary. Scholtz stated that he had been informed that a good foundation board should consist of one-third of its members being well-connected in the community, one-third park enthusiasts, and one-third worker-bees. The status of funding for the Grand River Ravines project was discussed and Scholtz stated that the Grand River Ravines Project Fund with Allendale Community Foundation has been authorized through the Board process. This project cannot wait for formation of a Parks Foundation which, if successful, is at least a year away.

Collaboration with Local Units and Partners on Greenways: Scholtz stated the trend for government funding has been to focus on collaboration with local units and partnerships. Scholtz stated that within the Grand River Greenway Trail, the only parks along the greenway at this time are County-owned. Scholtz had met with the Robinson Township Board and asked for their contribution to the greenway trail to be set at \$300,000. The Township had asked how the contribution was formulated, and Scholtz explained it was not based on a set formula.

VanGinhoven suggested meeting with the townships supervisors to come up with a formula. Kuyers suggested a discussion with Ken Rizzio from Ottawa County Economic Development Office because he has a formula used for similar applications. Werkman stated that we should collaborate with Kent County to promote the Grand River Greenway since the dam in Grand Rapids will be removed, making kayak trips from Grand Rapids to Lake Michigan a new possibility. Werkman also stated we should take advantage of the pool of resources that will be generated towards projects to improve the Grand River.

Scholtz stated the Macatawa Greenway effort is more based on partnerships than the Grand River Greenway is at this point in time. Scholtz explained that he wrestles with the proper role for the Parks Commission relative to each greenway. In some ways it makes sense for the Parks Commission to accept a larger role with the Grand River Greenway since it is a more regional resource than the Macatawa. The existence of partners also provides less identity for the Commission on the Macatawa Greenway project. Scholtz stated the City Manager of Holland has requested that Ottawa County Parks take over ownership and operation of Paw Paw Park. Scholtz was asked if it would be a sale to the County and Scholtz commented that he has presumed it would be a gift if it were to occur. Hintz stated that Paw Paw Park is near Holland Heights, where students are currently not able to access the Nature Education Center. Hintz stated this would allow programs to be at a park near the school, making it much more economical for the school to participate in NEC programming. Hintz stated this would encourage families to take ownership of the park. Scholtz explained it might make some sense to take over Paw Paw Park because it would show the county's willingness to collaborate and potentially quiet the talk that Ottawa County Parks does not adequately serve the City of Holland with its parks millage projects. It would also allow us to consolidate our efforts on the Macatawa and provide a clear rationale for not investing in Windmill Island projects. Scholtz explained the question always exists as to which entities will construct and operate future Macatawa Greenway trail. Scholtz suggested one scenario might be Ottawa County building and operating trail through the Upper Macatawa (currently planned for 2014); Ottawa County accepting the role of acquiring easement and building/operating trail from Adams Street Landing to Macatawa Greenspace/Paw Paw Park, and greenway partners taking on construction and operation of other segments of trail.

Historic Ottawa Beach Marina: Plans for a marina were briefly discussed. Parkside Marina's lease ends in October of 2017. The Parks Commission needs to bid out the opportunity to construct and operate a marina at this location with a goal of providing expanded public access. The current time line calls for the project to be bid in the fall of 2016. A successful bidder would have time to get funding and plans together for construction in fall/winter of 2017/2018 to be ready for marina operations in the spring of 2018.

Grand River Ravines Improvements Funding Scenarios: Scholtz reviewed options for funding the Grand River Ravines improvements if we do not receive the grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Jonas commented that the pending project would be a good enticement for voters to support the next millage. Statema and others felt that the project would benefit the next millage campaign if voters could see some progress on the project in order to get them excited and on board. Commission members agreed to wait until results from the Trust Fund

grants are announced next week before considering possibly reallocating funds from other projects to Grand River Ravines.

Pigeon Lake Boat Launch: Kuyers asked where we stand relative to possible taking over ownership and management of the DNR's Pigeon Lake boat launch. Scholtz stated that the DNR informed him it would require dredging every seven years. Scholtz also explained it is his understanding that the sediment needs to be taken to a Type 2 landfill at an estimated cost of \$100,000 per dredging. This could make the management of the launch a losing proposition from a financial perspective. He explained the topic will be discussed again in December at a meeting with DNR officials on various collaboration topics.

Storyboard Exercise: Shannon Felgner facilitated a storyboard exercise on the topic "What are the elements of a successful millage vote in 2016?" Results of the exercise are attached to these minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION STORYBOARD

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL MILLAGE VOTE IN 2016?

14 Marketing Communication	6 Education	Good marketing materials	Communicating the values of a good park system (social and economic)	Public education	Effectively and convincingly communicating a clear long-term vision	Targeting the right voters
	1 Strong public relations program on-going (not just for the millage campaign)	Need Speakers Bureau to take message to voters in all areas of the County	Photograph contest of parks within a particular greenway	Public recognition of importance of continued high quality maintenance	Right wording	Ability to sell message that maintaining park system is worth voting for
	3 Improve County Park recognition	Provide OCP staff, volunteers updated millage facts/information that can be shared through informal conversations with public	Brochures & mailings highlighting what their tax dollars have done	Involve volunteers and staff in communicating the importance of continuing the funding source	People need an emotional connection to the parks	Social media to get the word out
	Nature Education Center show room of park improvements, future plans	Publicize our parks with our name (make better connections)				
7 Strategizing	7 Good campaign committee	1 Campaign committee leadership	Track record of success	What has been accomplished	Publicize accomplishments	Start P.R. campaign 2 years in advance of primary
	2 SWOT analysis	Good campaign leadership	Identify park users by geography. Target these areas.	Campaign chairman (or co-chairman) must be willing & capable of taking message to voters and highly respect members of the county	Watch for any sign of "no" vote campaign. Counter immediately.	Good campaign committee
	1 Avoidance (stay away from negative issues)	Survey park users of their knowledge of/about Ottawa County Parks	Identify previous voters in primary election, target them	Energetic campaign chair	Show what we have done in the last 10 years	Timing (i.e. campaign must be timed)
	1 Get more "yes" votes than "no" votes	Getting supporters to vote	Finding champions to tell story	Continued high quality maintenance of all parks		

OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION STORYBOARD

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL MILLAGE VOTE IN 2016?

4 Economic Factors	<u>5</u> Showing the public that their tax dollars were well-spent	<u>2</u> Money	<u>1</u> Pointing out that what we spend helps us leverage large amounts of grant money	Value of parks to tourism	Selling the public on buying 3,000 more acres. Also the townships etc for removing 3000 acres from tax roles	Inform people the amount of money per week it would cost to support the millage
	<u>2</u> Public must understand/make connection between the millage & what it is for (i.e. county parks)	<u>1</u> The last millage passed after several years of great economic times. We will need to understand and adjust to a new mindset of the public.	Big return on small investment	Promote value of parks from different viewpoints - conservation, health, recreation, education, etc.	Show how much it cost to operate & maintain parks	Public must be convinced of the value of what they are getting
4 Vision	<u>4</u> What will we do for the next 10 years	Some new, exciting projects promised for future	Promotion of new uses - disc golf, dog beach, mt. biking	Completed Grand River Ravines 1st phase	Show what we still need to accomplish	Future needs for public welfare
1 Group Buy-in	<u>2</u> Appealing to non-park users (who are voters too!)	Get buy in from business groups	Get buy in from local units of government	Connecting parks to good science education	Um - getting more "yes" votes than "no" votes (duh!)	Involve schools in publicizing PR Program
	<u>2</u> Meet with opposition groups	Strong support from County Board and Administration	Appeal to all, not specific projects or groups	Giving community leaders tour of parks	Township support	Giving community leaders tour of parks
	<u>2</u> Trust (renewals are based on trust)	Community meetings	Presentations to key groups	Inspiring parks supporters to get out and vote	Use Adopt-A-Park for P.R.	

PRIORITY LEGEND

Dark Yellow
MOST SELECTED

Light Yellow
FEW SELECTED

No Highlight
NONE SELECTED

2016 Ottawa County Parks and Open Space Plan Public Planning Workshop

**Public Input Meeting
Ottawa County Fillmore Complex
7:00 pm, November 17, 2015**

Attendees: Approximately 30 members of the general public attended the meeting:

Mark Bryson, Holland, MI
Laird Schaefer, Grand Haven, MI
Larry & Dianne Bekius, Zeeland, MI
Brian Stauffer, Holland, MI
Carol Smith, West Olive, MI
Georgia Meyer, Grand Haven, MI
Bob & Chris Gamble, Holland, MI
Nancy Willey, Holland, MI
Cher & Dave Beute, Zeeland, MI
Will & Mary Jane Byker, Hudsonville, MI
Kim Beukema, Zeeland, MI
Jim & Sherry Robinson, Holland, MI
Jeff Cobb, Zeeland, MI
Lisa Casler, Coopersville, MI
Alice Hoban, Hudsonville, MI
Stephanie Roelofs, Zeeland, MI
Matthew DeJong, Holland, MI
Eric Lemke, Zeeland, MI
Jack Huisinigh, Holland, MI
Josh Marzolf
Gary Scholten, Zeeland, MI
Caleb Whitmer, Holland Sentinel staff

Park Staff and Commissioners:

John Scholtz	Parks Director
Curt TerHaar	Coordinator of Park Planning & Development
Kyle Roffey	Administrative Assistant
Bobbi Sabine	Parks Commissioner
Phil Kuyers	Parks Commissioner
Roger Jonas	Parks Commissioner
Ray Statema	Parks Commissioner
Matthew Fenske	Parks Commissioner
David VanGinhoven	Parks Commissioner
Tom Werkman	Parks Commissioner
James Holtvluwer	Parks Commissioner
Joe Bush	Parks Commissioner

Scholtz explained the importance of the Parks Plan and summarized how it is used by the Parks Commission as a tool for decision making and then reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Using PowerPoint slides, TerHaar provided an overview of projects since the 2011 Plan, highlighting the land acquisitions, new parks, facility improvements, renovations, trail connections, historical resources, and special uses.

Next, Scholtz reviewed key research efforts that were undertaken during this process. Completed research in 2015 included a park user survey, the County Resident survey, and an on-line, non-scientific park user survey. Scholtz stated that additional research includes a review of all local recreation plans, an assessment of the top ten Michigan county park systems, and analysis of national trends. The bulk of time was spent on the county resident survey, conducted by EPIC-MRA of Lansing. Copies of the preliminary results were distributed to interested persons.

Scholtz then discussed the Parks Commission's role in providing particular natural resource based recreational activities and facilities. Using the results of the survey, Scholtz listed the top activities as interpretive and programs, picnicking, camping, beaches/swimming, canoeing/kayaking, cross-country skiing/sledding, fishing and hunting. Using PowerPoint slides, Scholtz reviewed the County's role in each target activity. Scholtz stated potential future activities could include zip lines/adventure courses, climbing walls, golf, ice skating, and archery.

Key comments from attendees included the following:

- Maintain quality – plan enough funds for maintenance and renovations
- Keep invasive species management a top priority
- Increase fees for non-residents in light of high non-resident use
- Partner with Pure Michigan especially for winter operations
- Create an awareness campaign – too many Ottawa County residents are not aware of the parks available and their amenities; make the connection between millage and all that parks offer – such as Pigeon Creek cross-county skiing, connect the value of parks to the quality of life; remind people of the millage with every public relations output with a tag “supported by a dedicated parks millage”.
- Make sure future logging projects have defined expectations and results; not happy with the way Riley Trails was logged during the thinning of red pines.
- Find other mountain bike trail sites
- Keep water trails open and free from obstacles
- Maintain walking trails – especially clay areas
- Be sustainable with travel time between projects – regionalize resources
- Take a look at the big picture for Ottawa County – visitors use the parks as a stopping point between Chicago and northern vacation sites and generate revenue for dining, overnights for the county, and return on investment

Scholtz stated the potential 10-year priorities include development of Crockery Creek Natural Area and the Bend Area Open Space, adding features to Paw Paw Park, developing trails and east access to North Ottawa Dunes, a winter sports facility at Riley Trails, and renovation of the barn at Eastmanville Farm for rentals and other special events.

TerHaar next reviewed the schedule for preparation and approval of the parks plan, concluding with plan approval by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in April of 2016.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Appendix H

Appendix H

Appendix H

Appendix H

Appendix H

Appendix H

ACTIVITY MATRIX

TOP MICHIGAN PARK SYSTEMS

	Number of Sites	Total Acreage	Picnic Facilities	Open Picnic Shelter	Enclosed Picnic Building	Playground	Water/Splash Play	Swimming	Sports Fields	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	In-line Hockey	Horseshoes	Shuffleboard	Volleyball	Golf	Disc Golf	Dog Parks	Geocaching	X-country Skiing (groomed)	Skiing	Ice Skating (outdoor)	Downhill Skiing	Fishing	Hunting	Archery	Shooting Range	Marina	Boat Launch	Kayak/Canoe Launch	Hiking	Bicycle Trails (paved)	Mountain Biking	Equestrian Trails	Modern Camping	Rustic Camping	Group Camping	Shelter Rental	Wedding Site Rental	Historic Facility Rental	Other Group Rental Facility	Boat Rental	Nature Center	Nature Programs	Sports Programs	Other Recreation/Leisure Programs				
Ottawa County	38	6445	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Alegan County	9	700	X	X				X												X			X																											
Benon County	5	365+	X	X	X	X		X							X		X		X				X																									X		
Genesee County	21	11000+	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Grand Traverse County	9	1509	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				X					X		X																												
Ingham County	9	1400	X	X		X	X	X			X		X					X		X	X																													
Kalamazoo County	6	1052	X	X		X	X	X					X		X		X	X		X																														X
Kent County	38	6701	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X				X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Muskegon County	13	770	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X									X					X																					
Oakland County	13	6700	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
St. Clair County	5	961	X	X		X	X	X												X	X	X		X	X																									
Washtenaw County	28	1800	X	X	X	X	X				X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Wayne County	12	5604	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X				X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

NOTES/COMMENTS

Alegan County	Alegan State Game Area - 50,000 acres 3 campgrounds in Game Area - memo of understanding Heritage Trail (122 miles auto with guidebook) 55 miles of equestrian trails	Ingham County	"Exceptional in Nature" Zoo, band shell, stocked fishing ponds, nature day camp, game rental, kayak trips Disc golf fee - \$4 Tubing Hill	Oakland County	Skatepark, cabin rentals, BMX, bike rental, mini-golf, platform tennis, mobile recreation program, water Award winning website, managed deer hunts Banquet catering
Benon County	Skita fees, disc golf fees, biking club, endowment fund Skita rental, lighted skita fees Fat tire bikes with rental Disc Golf fee - \$4	Kalamazoo County	Historic mill, fairgrounds Small campgrounds (25-40 sites) Corporate campground sponsor Big soccer complex	St. Clair County	BMX, gardens, radio-controlled airplane field Historic buildings, Lighthouse history museum 0.5 mile prop tax - 25% back to local governments
Genesee County	"Get Away, Right Away" Large Pavilion - 300 people Crossroad Village/Huckleberry Railroad, Paddlewheel boat rental, Carousel, Ferris wheel ORV Area, Equestrian Area, Snowmobiling, BMX Cater to film making	Kent County	Ski boats of groomed X-country skita fees Seven enclosed picnic buildings Millennium Park Reservable picnic areas	Washtenaw County	Badminton, Indoor Recreation Facility Community and ornamental gardens Many other providers for dog parks 39,000 acres of state land B2B TRAIL connection Rent tubes, Natural Areas Preservation Program
Grand Traverse County	Ice rink/arena, indoor pool Overnight bldg - 200 people No dogs off leash anywhere	Muskegon County	Rental Cottages Muskegon Wastewater site - 11,700 acres	Wayne County	Light show
Shading indicates new items of note since the 2011 review					

VISITOR COMMENTS

The Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission values your opinion. Please make comments or suggestions regarding your park visit/experience below.

Park Name _____

Write your comment/suggestion below or email us: parks&rec@miottawa.org

Are you an Ottawa County Resident? ___ Yes ___ No

Would you like to receive the Ottawa County Parks Newsletter? ___ Yes ___ No

Optional Information

Name _____ Phone # _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email Address _____

Thank you for your comments!
Please mail this self-addressed card or return to Parks staff.

Please
Affix
Postage



John Scholtz, Director
Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission
12220 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460

Executive Summary

Ottawa County is growing fast. From 1990, the county's population grew from 187,000 to 238,000, making it the fourth fastest-growing county in the state in terms of population. Much of the development is suburban expansion of the Grand Rapids area. An important asset in any community is recreational opportunities, including bicycle and walking paths. Recreational opportunities are equally important in Ottawa County because of tourism, which generates nearly \$80 million annually. As the county expands and there is increased pressure to improve roads to carry more traffic, and as residences and businesses develop in rural areas, the ability to develop safe bicycle and walking paths will be constrained. The Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathways Plan has been developed to provide a vision for a countywide non-motorized pathway system that will benefit residents, tourists, and the businesses in this community.

If this non-motorized pathway system was in place, Ottawa County would have one of the most sophisticated non-motorized pathway networks in the state. This system, combined with Lake Michigan, can make Ottawa County a "destination location."

The goal of the Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathways Study is to provide information that will assist local units of government to develop an interconnected non-motorized transportation network throughout the county. This network will be accessed and used by children on bicycles, recreational and family-oriented users, walkers and joggers, rollerbladers, and more serious touring and competitive cyclists. People will use the network for work and recreation. The network will support people wanting to commute to work and help reduce dependence on use of the automobile. Ultimately, this vision can help realize an enhanced quality of life for residents of Ottawa County and visitors to the county.



Local units of government in Ottawa County have developed bike lanes and separated pathways in communities such as Grand Haven (above), Spring Lake, Coopersville, Allendale, Hudsonville, Georgetown Township, and Holland.



As people move outside the towns and cities, the shoulders of county roads become recreational pathways. Many of the road shoulders are not paved and are not suitable for bicycling.

Non-motorized pathways (also commonly referred to as bikepaths, trails, and rail-trails) generally refer to a physical facility such as a separated path that can be used by pedestrians, cyclists, joggers, and rollerbladers; widened road shoulders for use by cyclists; and, greenway trails along natural features such as rivers.

Currently, separated pathways along roadways are the most common types of non-motorized pathways in Ottawa County. These can be found in Holland, Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Coopersville, Allendale, Georgetown Township, and Hudsonville. The Musketawa Rail-Trail in the northern part of the county is a rail trail that was developed in the late 1990s by the State of Michigan along an abandoned railroad line. There are also signed bike lanes, which can be found in Grand Haven and a limited number of paved road shoulders.

A key reason for conducting this study is the strong support expressed by the public for bicycle and non-motorized trails in surveys conducted by the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission. In a 1999 County Resident Survey conducted by Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission, "paths for biking and rollerblading" were identified as one of the most desirable of a range of recreational resources and opportunities trailing only picnicking and beaches and "tied" with nature centers and programs and hiking. At a general level, the demand for these facilities can be assessed by observing high levels of use on existing trails and summer events in the county focusing on bicycling, rollerblading, and other trail activities. Meeting the demand for expansion and development of new trails must address three particular user groups:

- Those persons who use the trails as functional linkages between two points
- Those persons who use the trails for fitness, health and general enjoyment reasons
- Those persons who may use the trails as a recreation destination

Each user group has its own needs, but the non-motorized pathway concept can support the demands and needs of the people in all three groups. In addition, the development of an enhanced non-motorized network can increase the county's attractiveness for tourism and provide additional opportunities for tourists already coming to the area for its beaches and parks.

Improving development of non-motorized pathways in Ottawa County will best be accomplished by a cooperative effort involving all levels of government. Most trails in existence today have been initiated by local units of government and funded primarily by local millages. Ottawa County can provide support to the local units of government by providing leadership, expertise, and coordination in the development and expansion of the non-motorized pathway network.



The Musketawa Rail-Trail in northeastern Ottawa County was developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and is maintained by Ottawa County.

The conceptual non-motorized pathway system identified in this report (Figure S-1) focuses primarily on development of regional linkages in Ottawa County that connect the existing pathways. The conceptual network includes paved road shoulders and off-street pathways, representing 178 miles of new facilities. Paved road shoulders identified as part of the network will be a minimum four-foot width consistent with nationally accepted standards while separated pathways are recommended to be from eight- to 14- feet wide, depending on anticipated usage. The widened paved road shoulders identified in the plan should be considered for signing and striping as bike lanes.



Bicycling in Ottawa County provides opportunities for recreation and exercise for residents and tourists.

The Conceptual Network

Tables S-1 and S-2 present the conceptual pathway system. Table S-1 presents the conceptual improvements suggested for each area of the county as well as the cost and priority as defined in this plan. Table S-2 separates the new pathways by local unit of government.

The total construction cost for the Ottawa County non-motorized pathway network is approximately \$23 million. Engineering costs, including contingency, are typically 15 to 20 percent over and above the total project construction cost. Right-of-way acquisition can range from 0 percent to 10 percent over and above the total project construction cost.

As noted above, Table S-1 identifies a prioritization for each conceptual pathway. This prioritization was based on:

- Connections to activity centers
- Scenic/recreational opportunities
- Provides linkage to a gap in the network
- Capacity
- Cost/ease of implementation

The intent of prioritizing each conceptual pathway is to identify those paths whose completion would provide immediate community benefits. A local unit of government can certainly elevate a "long-range" priority project in its jurisdiction to a higher priority.

Table S-1
Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathway Study
Conceptual Pathway Summary

Pathway Description	Length (miles)	Construction Cost ¹	Priority ²
Lakeshore Avenue Paved Shoulder	19.05	\$ 1,042,500	Mid-range
Riley Street Paved Shoulder	11.5	\$ 1,150,000	Long-range
Chicago Drive Paved Shoulder	7.75	\$ 775,000	Mid-range
Macatawa River Greenway/ Byron Road Connector	18.5	\$ 2,930,400	Short-range
Stanton/Taylor/Bauer Separated Pathway	18.75	\$ 2,970,000	Short-range
96th Avenue Separated Pathway	15	\$ 2,376,000	Mid-range
Grand River Greenway	26.3	\$ 4,165,920	Short-range
Luce Street Separated Pathway	5	\$ 792,000	Mid-range
Leonard/Cleveland Street East-West Separated Pathway	14.75	\$ 2,336,400	Mid-range
Leonard Street Paved Shoulder	25.35	\$ 2,535,000	Short-range
Segment 1 - Grand Haven Trail Linkage	0.4	\$ 63,360	Short-range
Segment 2 - Mercury Drive Connector	1.6	\$ 253,440	Mid-range
Segment 3 - Olive Shore Avenue Paved Shoulder	1	\$ 100,000	Long-range
Segment 4 - Greenly Street Separated Pathway	0.5	\$ 79,200	Mid-range
Segment 5 - Angling Road/ Barry Street Connector Separated Pathway	3.5	\$ 554,400	Long-range
Segment 6 - Lake Michigan Drive Paved Shoulder	2	\$ 200,000	Short-range
Segment 7 - T20th Avenue Connector	1	\$ 158,400	Long-range
Segment 8 - Musketawa Rail-Trail Connector	1.75	\$ 277,200	Short-range
Segment 9 - Tyler Street Connector Paved Shoulder	0.25	\$ 25,000	Mid-range
Segment 10 - 32nd Street Paved Shoulder	2	\$ 200,000	Mid-range
Segment 11 - Port Sheldon Street/ 28th Avenue Separated Pathway	2	\$ 316,800	Mid-range
TOTAL	177.95	\$ 23,301,020	

¹ Engineering and contingency costs typically range from 15 percent to 20 percent over and above construction costs. Right-of-way acquisition can range from 0 percent to 10 percent over and above total construction costs.

² Short-range projects would be programmed and/or built in the first five years of the plan; mid-range projects in years 5-10; and long-range projects in 10+ years.

Source: The Corradino Group

Table S-2
Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathway Study
Conceptual Pathway System By Local Unit of Government

Unit of Government	Length of Pathway (miles)		Construction Cost ²
	4-Foot Paved Shoulder	Multi-Use Separated	
Chester Township			\$ -
Ferrysburg			\$ -
Spring Lake Village	1.6		\$ 160,000
Spring Lake Township	2.5		\$ 250,000
Crockery Township	7		\$ 700,000
Crockery Township		8	\$ 1,267,200
Polkton Township	7		\$ 700,000
Polkton Township		3.5	\$ 554,400
Coopersville		0.75	\$ 118,800
Wright Township		5	\$ 792,000
City of Grand Haven		2	\$ 316,800
Grand Haven Charter Township	9		\$ 375,000
Robinson Township		12.8	\$ 2,027,520
Allendale Township		11.5	\$ 1,821,600
Tailmadge Township	7.25		\$ 725,000
Tailmadge Township		5.25	\$ 831,600
Port Sheldon Township	7.75		\$ 437,500
Port Sheldon Township		4	\$ 633,600
Olive Township		6	\$ 950,400
Blendon Township		12.5	\$ 1,980,000
Georgetown Township	1		\$ 100,000
Georgetown Township		15	\$ 2,376,000
City of Hudsonville	2		\$ 200,000
City of Hudsonville		0.25	\$ 39,600
Jamestown Township		5	\$ 792,000
Jamestown Township	0.75		\$ 75,000
Subtotal	45.85	91.55	\$ 18,224,020
MACC¹			
Park Township	8.8		\$ 880,000
Holland Charter Township		5.5	\$ 871,200
Holland Charter Township	6		\$ 600,000
City of Holland		1	\$ 158,400
City of Zeeland	0.25		\$ 25,000
Zeeland Charter Township	8		\$ 800,000
Zeeland Charter Township		11	\$ 1,742,400
Subtotal	23.05	17.5	\$ 5,077,000
TOTAL	68.9	109.05	\$ 23,301,020

¹ The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) is conducting its own non-motorized pathways study. The information presented in this report is intended only to provide a vision for the entire county.

² Engineering and contingency costs typically range from 15 percent to 20 percent over and above construction costs. Right-of-way acquisition can range from 0 percent to 10 percent over and above total construction costs.

Source: The Corradino Group

Implementation

The goal of this plan is to provide an interconnected non-motorized network in Ottawa County. Coordinating the efforts of local units of government will be key. A countywide committee such as "Friends of Ottawa County Bikepaths" or a more formal entity such as an authority are options. A funding base that can be used by local units of government to build and maintain regional pathways and leverage additional grant funds should be identified. One option would be a countywide millage with funds appropriated to building and maintaining the regional network.

Economic Benefit

The economic effects of a comprehensive non-motorized pathway system will principally be associated with expenditures by residents and tourists connected to their use of the system. And, while, admittedly, the data available upon which to measure these economic effects are limited, indications are that the trail/pathway system that currently exists in Ottawa County, is generating \$1.7 to \$6.8 million per year in direct, indirect and induced economic effects. Today, the amount of economic stimulus of tourists' use of the current trail system is considered quite limited. However, if the system as now proposed is completed, the additional annual economic effect associated with it could range from \$2 million to \$4 million per year (direct, indirect and induced effects). The latter could stimulate 20 to 40 net new jobs in the economy. And, while the tax revenues generated locally from these tourist-related activities are unknown, it is clear that generating \$2 million to \$4 million per year in new economic activity over the life of the trailway system (10 years before major rebuilding) would be a boost that allows the trailway system to be recognized as not only a quality-of-life enhancer but an economically viable public works project.

Recommendations of the Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathways Study

The following initial recommendations have been developed to support the realization of the Non-Motorized Pathways Plan.

- An organizational mechanism should be formed. This should be developed as a "Friends" group to work with local government.
- Coordination with bicycle store owners, bicycle and jogging clubs, tourist organizations, etc. should be facilitated to generate support for the plan.
- A countywide non-motorized millage should be considered to create a funding base that can be used to build, maintain, and replace regional pathways and also to leverage government grants and funds from foundations.
- The non-motorized plan being developed by the Macatawa Area Coordination Council (MACC) for the Holland-Zeeland area should be incorporated into the County plan.
- The Ottawa County Road Commission and County Transportation Planner should be encouraged to add paved shoulders on all new construction in the county.
- The Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathway Plan and the existing and future network should be considered as an integral element of the county transportation network. The transit systems in Holland and Grand Haven should be encouraged to explore acquisition of bike racks for their buses. Grants should be sought on the basis of the non-motorized network to have congestion-mitigation and air quality benefits. As the non-motorized network is developed and marketed, its applicability as a commuter system as well as a recreational system should be emphasized.

- All local, county and state projects, particularly those on roads identified in this plan as having four-foot paved shoulders, should be reviewed for the possibility of including non-motorized considerations.
- It is important that as the non-motorized network is developed, the following issues are addressed:
 - Connecting the urbanized areas in the western part of the county with the urbanized areas in the east, including Grand Valley State University;
 - Developing where possible in natural commuter corridors (for example, along Chicago Drive from Hudsonville to the Holland/Zealand area);
 - Working to make Ottawa County a showplace for bicycle and pedestrian activity.
- Minimum design standards should be established. These include:
 - Paved shoulders should be a minimum of four feet in width if they are designated as pathways in the conceptual plan. Those shoulders identified as pathways in the plan should be considered for signing and striping as bike lanes.
 - Separated pathways should be designed to range from 8 to 12 or even 14 feet in width depending on the project use, available right-of-way, and the design of connecting trails.
- Staging areas should be identified as the non-motorized system is developed. Formal staging areas would be developed at major trailheads on the major separated pathways. Along the separated pathways, particularly destination facilities such as the Musketawa Trail, there should be restrooms and drinking water every three to five miles, parking and information every five to ten miles, signage from the roadway network to the staging areas, and telephone, covered shelters, benches and other amenities where desirable.
- Signage for the non-motorized pathway system should be consistent with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices Guidance for bicycle operation on roadways and shared use paths. In addition, it is important that signage directing people to major destination trails be placed on major entry points into Ottawa County.
- Maintenance activities will typically be the responsibility of the local unit of government. As the countywide multi-jurisdictional network expands, it will be important to develop a coordinated approach to maintaining, repaving and replacement of the pathway network. This would be a good focal point for the "Friends" organization in the near-term.
- Local units of government should be encouraged to consider development of separated pathways and/or paved shoulders as opposed to sidewalks in ordinances regarding new development in suburban areas. Sidewalks would be appropriate for areas that are primarily residential but non-motorized pathways would be better suited for commercial and retail areas.

The Seven Principals of Universal Design

Principle 1: Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

- 1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- 1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- 1c. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- 1d. Make the design appealing to all users.

Principle 2: Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

- 2a. Provide choice in methods of use.
- 2b. Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- 2c. Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- 2d. Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Guidelines:

- 3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- 3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- 3c. Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- 3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- 3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

Principle 4: Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

- 4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- 4b. Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- 4c. Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- 4d. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- 4e. Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

Principle 5: Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

- 5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- 5b. Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- 5c. Provide fail safe features.
- 5d. Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

Principle 6: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines:

- 6a. Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- 6b. Use reasonable operating forces.
- 6c. Minimize repetitive actions.
- 6d. Minimize sustained physical effort.

Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

- 7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- 7b. Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- 7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- 7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

ID	Greenway	Park	Project Type	Project Description	Priority	Year	Parks Fund Amount	Other Funds (additional)	Source
A01	Grand	General	Acquisition	Grand River Greenway Bend Area Acquisitions. This item includes purchase of all lands identified for the Bend Area including Boynton and Grand Rapids Gravel properties	1	2017	\$ 881,000.00	\$729,000	MNRTF Grant
A02	Lake Michigan	NOD	Acquisition	NOD Addition (80 acres). This wooded property was planned as part of the park master planning process. Acquisition is contingent on property trade with Spring Lake Township and proposed private development.	1	2017	\$360,000		
A03	Grand	Eastmanville Farm	Acquisition	Eastmanville Farm (40 acres). Two additions of mostly natural land would allow for expansion of the equestrian trail system.	2a		\$200,000	\$100,000	Private Donations
A04	Lake Michigan	Rosy Mound	Acquisition	Rosy Mound Addition. Acquisition of this recently closed sand-mining property directly adjacent to existing property would be very desirable.	2a		\$400,000	\$1,000,000	MNRTF Grant Private Donations
A06	Grand	Ripps Bayou	Acquisition	Ripps Bayou Linkage (20 acres). Purchase of adjacent natural riverfront land could provide pedestrian access from the Village of Lamont.	3		\$150,000		
A07	Other	Riley Trails	Acquisition	Riley Addition (66 acres). This site is currently listed as contaminated, but pending delisting would add a significant amount of desirable natural land to the site.	3		\$0		Donation
A08	Grand	Bur Oak	Acquisition	Bur Oak Landing Additions (23/20 acres). Riverfront expansion would secure the end of an inland bayou and allow a trail loop (23 acres). Possible purchase of 20 acres including several homes along the Grand River would remove inholdings from center of site.	4				FEMA
A09	Grand	Connor	Acquisition	Connor Bayou Addition (60 acres). Park expansion including undeveloped upland and additional frontage on the south side of the bayou is possible. A large portion of upland is pine and Christmas tree plantation.	4				Grant
A10	Grand	Eastmanville Bayou	Acquisition	Eastmanville Bayou Additions (110/58 acres). Main acquisition of 110 acres would be of quality natural land along the south side of the bayou. An addition 58 acres may be required as an alternate route around hunting lands of the Bass River Recreation Area if proposed trail route is not approved by the State.	4				
A11	Macatawa	UMNA	Acquisition	UMNA additions (59 acres). Several smaller purchases of adjacent property would be desirable.	4				
A12	Other	Groose Park	Acquisition	Groose Park Addition (30 acres). Adjacent natural land acquisition would be desirable including the east end of Crockery Lake.	4				
A13	Other	Marne Bog	Acquisition	Marne Bog Addition (32 acres). Additions to this property would secure the entire bog feature.	4				
A14	Other	Spring Grove	Acquisition	Spring Grove Park Addition (12 acres). This purchase would buffer the park from future development and provide space for flood control structures	4				
A15	Grand	Crockery Creek	Acquisition	Crockery Creek Additions (140/203 acres). Outstanding natural feature land in single ownership (140 acres) would be very desirable to expand the park, although recent negotiations were unsuccessful. Other smaller parcels totaling 203 acres from multiple owners on park perimeter are also desirable for their natural features.	5B				
A16	Grand	Deer Creek	Acquisition	Deer Creek Park Addition (3 acres). Purchase of an adjacent home would provide upland for park development. Recent negotiation for a portion of this property was unsuccessful.	5				
A17	Grand	GR Open Space	Acquisition	Grand River Open Space Additions (11/45 acres). Recent negotiation for an in-holding with residence was unsuccessful (1 acre). Upland access route to proposed purchase (10 acres) is very desirable. Additional natural land riverfront (45 acres) purchase is possible.	5B				
A18	Grand	Grand Ravines	Acquisition	Grand Ravines Addition (30 acres). Additional adjacent high quality natural land is desirable.	5B				

ID	Greenway	Park	Project Type	Project Description	Priority	Year	Parks Fund Amount	Other Funds (additional)	Source
A19	Grand	Jubb Bayou	Acquisition	Jubb Bayou Linkage (40 acres). Riverfront property expansion would connect Jubb Bayou to the Crockery Creek Natural Area.	4				
A20	Grand	Riverside	Acquisition	Riverside Park Addition (31 acres). Acquisition of wooded upland owned by the Ottawa County Road Commission would secure both sides of roadway and cul-de-sac overlook of the Bass River Recreation Area. A separate private residence purchase would also be needed to maximize the potential of this addition.	5s				
A21	Lake Michigan	NOD	Acquisition	NOD South Connector (105 acres). This property would connect North Ottawa Dunes south across North Shore Drive to public property to the south including the Kitchell Lindquist Dunes Preserve.	5s				
A22	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Acquisition	Parkside Marina. Acquisition of this small waterfront lot with a two-unit residence would open this area for marina improvements and public access.	5s				
A23	Lake Michigan	Rosy Mound	Acquisition	Rosy Mound Additions. Several smaller parcels of adjacent natural land would also be desirable additions.	5s				
A24	Macatawa	UMNA	Acquisition	UMNA Road Commission addition (80 acres). This property was included as part of the park master planning process. Acquisition would occur after aggregate mining is completed by the Road Commission.	5s				
A25	Pigeon	General	Acquisition	Pigeon River Addition (1100 acres). Large areas of undeveloped and high quality natural land along the Pigeon River would connect Pigeon Creek Park with Hemlock Crossing. Much of this land is in single ownership.	5s				
A26	Pigeon	Hemlock Crossing	Acquisition	Hemlock Crossing West Linkage (160 acres). Current Consumers Energy and Township property would link current park to Lakeshore Drive.	5s				
A27	Macatawa	General	Acquisition	Middle Macatawa Purchase. Collaboration purchase of DeJong property adjacent to Hawthorne Pond from ODCMG	1	2017	\$35,000		
A28	Other	Port Sheldon Natural Area	Acquisition	Port Sheldon Natural Area Addition . Acquisition of adjacent prime natural areas and buffers	3		\$20,000		
A5	Macatawa	Adams Street	Acquisition	Adams Street Landing Linkage (40 acres). Purchase of this mostly natural riverfront land would connect Adams Street Landing with Macatawa Greenspace and provide a route for greenway trail.	2	2021	\$225,000		
D01	Grand	General	Development	Grand River Greenway Trail – Phase 1. This project would be the first segment of trail constructed as part of the greenway initiative composed of a trail segment through Robinson Township between Connor Bayou and Riverside Park including connection to the new M-231 by-pass.	1	2016	\$0	\$ 1,761,000	TAP Grant 2016 Budgeted funds Robinson Township
D02	Grand	General	Development	Grand River Greenway (Phases 1 through 4). This project would finish Phase 1 and construct the remaining three segments (28 miles total) of the Grand River Greenway paved non-motorized trail from Grand Haven Township on the west to the Kent County line on the east including purchase of 441 additional acres (does not include Bend Area purchases of 345 acres).	1	2017-26	\$1,600,000	\$ 11,350,000.00	Georgetown Township Private Donations Misc. Grants State of Michigan
D03	Grand	Grand Ravines	Development	Grand River Ravines Phase 2. Additional improvements beyond 2015 budget including modern restrooms, expanded and paved parking areas, and additional dog park amenities.	1	2016		\$700,000	2016 Budget Funds
D04	Grand	Grand River Park	Development	Grand River Park Greenway Support facilities. Assuming development of the Grand River Greenway trail along the Grand River shoreline, this project would improve and connect existing park facilities to the new trail.	1	2020	\$150,000		

ID	Greenway	Park	Project Type	Project Description	Priority	Year	Parks Fund Amount	Other Funds (additional)	Source
D05	Lake Michigan	NOD	Development	NOD Northeast access and trail connection. In accordance with the park master plan, this project would provide parking and visitor amenities. The project is dependent on property acquisition or residential development on the east to provide access to the edge of the park property.	1	2018	\$0	\$850,000	Private Donations
D06	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Development	HOB Marina Development. Improvements to the existing marina including new docks and extensive public access improvements on the shoreline are included in this work. Funding would come from county sources and/or a private marina operator lease.	1	2018	\$300,000	\$950,000	Private Development MNRTF Grant CZM Grant Park Township
D07	Grand	Bend Area	Development	Bend Area Restoration. Significant areas of current Bend Area properties would benefit from work to improve habitat. This work could include earthwork, plantings, and other improvements to create a more diverse and healthy ecosystem.	2a		\$100,000		
D8a	Grand	Bend Area	Development	Bend Area (Phase 1). After necessary acquisitions, this project would implement initial portions of the park master plan including parking, trails, and other amenities.	2	2023	\$300,000	\$300,000	Grant
D8b	Grand	Bend Area	Development	Bend Area Beach (Phase 2). This project would complete remaining major portions of the park master plan including a new public beach on the lake, parking, boating facilities, rental facilities and other amenities.	5s				
D09	Grand	Crockery Creek	Development	Crockery Creek Day Use. After completion of the park master plan, this project would construct visitor amenities including parking, restrooms, trails, bridges, boardwalks, and other support facilities.	2	2020	\$300,000	\$200,000	MNRTF Grant Private Donations
D10	Grand	Eastmanville Farm	Development	Eastmanville Farm Barn and site. Renovation of the large historic barn is required to make it suitable as a venue for public events. Issues such as fire-suppression, barrier-free access, restrooms, and parking would be addressed.	2a		\$500,000	\$250,000	Private Donations
D11	Grand	GR Open Space	Development	Grand River Open Space Trails. This project would connect the new access improvements to the riverfront.	2a		\$25,000		
D12	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Development	Pumphouse - Phase 2. Add modern restroom and finish floor in building	2	2017	\$150,000		
D13	Macatawa	Paw Paw	Development	Paw Paw Park (east) – Drinking Fountain. Add drinking fountain at east parking area to serve disc golfers, walkers, and others.	2a		\$10,000		
D14	Macatawa	Paw Paw	Development	Macatawa Greenway Trail. This project involves the construction of a paved non-motorized greenway trail (approx. 2 miles) from Adams Street Landing through the Macatawa Greenspace including two large bridges over the Macatawa River.	2	2023	\$200,000	\$800,000	TAP Grant MNRTF Grant
D15	Macatawa	UMNA	Development	UMNA 84th Ave. Modern Restroom This project would construct a new modern restroom at this popular access point. Special consideration will be needed to address floodplain issues.	2	2018	\$175,000		
D16	Other	Hager Park	Development	Hager Park Wedding Area. Some relatively minor improvements could create a very desirable venue for outdoor weddings. The existing DeVries and Vanderlaan rooms provide reception space so that we could offer “full service” wedding accommodations.	2a		\$60,000		
D17	Other	Riley Trails	Development	Riley Lake Fishing Pier. Construction of fishing dock into lake including accessible connecting walk.	2a		\$25,000	\$25,000	
D18	Pigeon	General	Development	Sheldon Landing Development The possibility exists to take over management of this area from Port Sheldon Township and to develop new facilities.	2	2024	\$150,000	\$150,000	Port Sheldon Township/Grant
D19	Grand	Bur Oak	Development	Bur Oak Landing Improvements (trails). These funds will be used to construct trails and boardwalks through the low areas of this site.	3		\$25,000		
D20	Grand	Grand Ravines	Development	Grand River Ravines Phase 3. Suspension Bridge and other minor improvements	2	2019	\$75,000	\$400,000	Private Donations

A01	Grand	General	Acquisition	Grand River Greenway Bend Area Acquisitions (345 acres). This item includes purchase of all lands identified for the Bend Area including Boynton and Grand Rapids Gravel properties	1	2017	\$ 881,000.00	\$729,000	MNRTF Grant
D20	Grand	Grand Ravines	Development	Grand River Ravines Phase 3. Suspension Bridge and other minor improvements	2	2019	\$75,000	\$400,000	Private Donations
D21	Grand	Grand Ravines	Development	Outdoor Wedding Facilities Includes electrical and expanded parking.	3		\$50,000		
D22	Macatawa	Adams Street	Development	Adams Street Landing Improvements. This small project would pave the existing gravel parking area and add amenities such as a vault toilet.	3		\$100,000		
D23	Macatawa	Paw Paw	Development	Paw Paw Park (east) – Phase 2. Work for this project includes completion of the park master plan with additional parking, a modern restroom, and nature play area.	3		\$125,000	\$125,000	MNRTF Grant
D24	Other	General	Development	NW Ottawa County Mountain Biking Facility	3				
D25	Other	Marne Bog	Development	Marne Bog Access Walk. Public access to this interesting natural feature requires development of boardwalks and an observation deck connecting from the Musketawa Trail.	3		\$250,000		
D26	Other	Riley Trails	Development	Modern Restroom. At 84th St. Entrance	3		\$150,000		
D27	Pigeon	Pigeon Creek	Development	Pigeon Creek South Trail Expansion. This project extends trails for hiking and skiing south across the Pigeon River on previously underutilized land. A large boardwalk will be required to traverse significant wetlands.	3		\$75,000		
D28	Grand	Crockery Creek	Development	Crockery Creek Farm Improvements. This project involves the restoration and upgrading of the historic Kirkby farm including restoration of the farmhouse to be suitable for historic interpretation and tours.	4				Donations
D29	Grand	Eastmanville Farm	Development	Eastmanville Farm Riverfront. Improvements in this area would include parking, river access, shelters, and a playground in accordance with the park master plan.	4				
D30	Grand	Ripps Bayou	Development	Ripps Bayou/Deer Creek Improvements. This project includes the construction of a stream crossing or bridge over Deer Creek to connect these two park sites.	4				
D31	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Development	Mt. Pisgah Stairs. Add inclinator to provide barrier free access	4				
D32	Macatawa	UMNA	Development	UMNA Multipurpose Building. As per the master plan, this project would construct a building and parking area off from the 76 th Ave. park entrance drive. The building would be suitable for group rentals.	4				
D33	Other	Spring Grove	Development	Spring Grove East Side Improvements. In accordance with the master plan, this project would add parking and a shelter to the less developed eastern portion of the park.	4				
D34	Other	Spring Grove	Development	Spring Grove Flood Control. Responding to damage to the stream and waterfall features at the core of the park caused by flood waters, this project would develop detention and diversion structures to protect these elements. Land acquisition would be required.	4				
D35	Grand	Connor	Development	Connor Bayou – Phase 2. In anticipation of the paving of North Cedar Drive at the front entry to the park, this project would pave the long park entrance drive and add a barrier free walk loop.	5				
D36	Grand	Eastmanville Farm	Development	Farm Education Center. In cooperation with a non-profit group, this project would develop major interpretive facilities.	5				
D37	Lake Michigan	Rosy Mound	Development	Ottawa County Parks Campground. This project was put on hold pending determination or acquisition of an appropriate site. A promising site would be an expanded Rosy Mound site.	5				
D38	Macatawa	UMNA	Development	UMNA West Activity Area. After acquisition of the 80 acres currently owned by the Ottawa County Road Commission, this large project would develop this site in accordance with the park master plan including a new inland swimming area, support facilities, and trails.	5				

ID	Greenway	Park	Project Type	Project Description	Priority	Year	Parks Fund Amount	Other Funds (additional)	Source
D39	Other	Riley Trails	Development	Riley Trails Landfill Area Improvements. Pending opening of the landfill top, this project would develop facilities utilizing the landfill for winter activities including skiing, sledding, tubing, and ice-skating. Parking and a lodge would be included.	5s				
D40	Lake Michigan	Rosy Mound	Development	NW Trails. Development of trails, boardwalks, stairs, and overlooks to access this portion of the site.	4				
D41	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Development	Accessible Kayak Launch. Installation of new floating launch as part of Macatawa and Lake Michigan water trails	2	2020	\$30,000	\$30,000	CZM Grant
P01	Grand	Bend Area	Planning	Bend Area Master Plan update. This project would update and revise the existing plan to reflect current conditions and thinking based on final land acquisition.	2	2021	\$0		
P02	Grand	Crockery Creek	Planning	Crockery Creek Master Plan. Crockery Creek is our only large park site without a master plan.	2	2019	\$0		In-house
P03	Grand	Grand River Park	Planning	Grand River Park Master Plan update. This project would update and revise the existing plan to reflect current conditions and thinking about renovations and improvements.	2	2023	\$0		In-house
P04	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Planning	Kirk Park Master Plan update This project would update and revise the existing plan prepared in 1986 to reflect current conditions and thinking about renovations and improvements.	2	2020	\$0		
P05	Grand	Riverside	Planning	Riverside Park Master Plan. Update to show current configurations and plans for greenway trail connections	2	2021	\$0		In-house
R01	General	All	Renovation	Minor Renovations. Misc. minor renovations to existing facilities (\$20,000/year)	0	2017-26	\$200,000		
R02	General	All	Renovation	Pit Toilet Renovations. Misc. minor renovations to existing facilities (\$5,000/year)	0	2017-26	\$50,000		
R03	General	All	Renovation	Trail Improvements. Misc. repairs, gravel, etc. (\$5,000/year)	0	2017-26	\$50,000		
R04	General	All	Renovation	Tree Plantings. Misc. replacements, etc. (\$5,000/year)	0	2017-26	\$30,000	\$20,000	Exp: DNR, DTE Grants
R05	General	All	Renovation	Accessibility improvements. Misc. renovations and improvements (\$5,000/year)	0	2017-26	\$50,000		
R06	Grand	Connor	Renovation	Cabin Renovation. Windows, furnace, water heater, gas fire place, and misc.	0	2020	\$53,000		
R07	Grand	Crockery Creek	Renovation	Barn Restoration. Miscellaneous structural repairs.	0	2020	\$47,000		
R08	Grand	Deer Creek	Renovation	Minor Renovations. Replace entry sign and wood wall a launch	0	2020	\$13,000		
R09	Grand	Eastmanville Bayou	Renovation	Eastmanville Bayou Paving Crack Sealing. This project consists of sealing cracks in the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas.	0	2026	\$5,200		
R10	Grand	Eastmanville Farm	Renovation	North Operations Shop. Construct new operations workshop.	0	2017	\$156,000		
R11	Grand	Eastmanville Farm	Renovation	Barn Repairs. Roof, doors, gutters, debris.	0	2017	\$10,500		
R12	Grand	Grand River Park	Renovation	Grand River Renovation. This project consists of reconstructing existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas and miscellaneous other improvements.	0	2017	\$110,000	\$40,000	Recreation Passport Grant
R13	Grand	Grand River Park	Renovation	Fishing Deck Renovations). This project would upgrade the existing boardwalk with new decking and railings.	0	2017	\$31,200		
R14	Grand	Grand River Park	Renovation	Picnic Building Renovation. This project general improvements to the building including restrooms, heating, etc.	0	2020	\$47,000		
R15	Grand	Grand River Park	Renovation	Play Area Update. General improvements to the existing play area.	0	2020	\$35,000		
R16	Grand	Riverside	Renovation	Shelter Renovation. This project consists of the renovation of the existing wood shelter including roof, woodpecker damage, and rotted posts. Includes repair of concrete around edge.	0	2017	\$12,500		
R17	Grand	Riverside	Renovation	Riverside Paving Reconstruction. This project consists of the renovation and reconstruction of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas. Includes re-establishing barrier free connection to fishing boardwalk/deck.	0	2018	\$171,000		

ID	Greenway	Park	Project Type	Project Description	Priority	Year	Parks Fund Amount	Other Funds (additional)	Source
R18	Grand	Riverside	Renovation	Riverside Renovations. Includes entrance sign and fishing deck, and pavement renovation.	0	2022	\$64,000		
R19	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Renovation	Kirk Park Lodge Roof. This project consists of the renovation or relocation of the existing aging play equipment in the picnic area.	0	2018	\$6,500		
R20	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Renovation	2021 Restroom Reconstruction (\$245,000).	0	2021	\$45,000	\$200,000	MNRTF Grant
R21	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Renovation	Kirk Park Play Improvements. This project consists of the renovation or relocation of the existing aging play equipment in the picnic area.	0	2021	\$122,000		
R22	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Renovation	Deck Reconstruction. This project consists of the renovation/reconstruction of the existing interpretive deck overlooking Lake Michigan, north stairway and dune stairs with overlook	0	2021	\$70,000	\$70,000	CZM Grant
R23	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Renovation	Dune Stairs and Overlook reconstruction. Major renovation of raised stairs and boardwalk along dune bluff.	0	2025	\$70,000	\$70,000	CZM Grant
R24	Lake Michigan	Kirk Park	Renovation	Pavement reconstruction.	0	2026	\$490,000		
R25	Lake Michigan	NOD	Renovation	Paving Crack Sealing. This project consists sealing cracks in the existing bituminous paving at the Coast Guard Park parking area access.	0	2023	\$2,500		
R26	Lake Michigan	North Beach	Renovation	North Beach Paving Renovation. This project consists of crack sealing and minor repairs of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas and replacing broken concrete walkways.	0	2017	\$15,500		
R27	Lake Michigan	North Beach	Renovation	North Beach parking connector stairs. This project would reconstruct the deteriorating wooden stairways connecting the parking area to the dune climb trail to the east across North Shore Estates Drive.	0	2019	\$23,000	\$23,000	Recreation Passport Grant
R28	Lake Michigan	North Beach	Renovation	North Beach Restroom Renovation. Plumbing, floor, general.	0	2020	\$18,750		
R29	Lake Michigan	Olive Shoes	Renovation	Paving Crack Sealing. This project consists of sealing cracks in the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas.	0	2025	\$7,100		
R30	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Renovation	Black Lake West Paving Crack Sealing. This project consists sealing cracks in the existing bituminous paved parking area.	0	2019	\$3,000		
R31	Lake Michigan	Ottawa Beach	Renovation	Cottage Area Improvements. Walls, concrete walks, and boardwalks in ROWs.	0	2017-23	\$396,000		WMPA?
R32	Lake Michigan	Rosy Mound	Renovation	Rosy Mound Paving Renovation. This project consists of crack sealing and minor repairs of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas.	0	2018	\$6,500		
R33	Lake Michigan	Tunnel Park	Renovation	South Shelter Roof.	0	2017	\$6,250		
R34	Lake Michigan	Tunnel Park	Renovation	Restroom Renovation. Plumbing in old portion of building.	0	2017	\$41,600		
R35	Lake Michigan	Tunnel Park	Renovation	Parking Paving Renovation. This project consists of the renovation of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive, parking areas, and walkways at Tunnel Park.	0	2017	\$13,600		
R36	Lake Michigan	Tunnel Park	Renovation	Tunnel Deck & Stairway Reconstruction. This project consists of the renovation of the tunnel deck and south stairways and other general improvements.	0	2022	\$57,000	\$55,000	CZM Grant
R37	Macatawa	Paw Paw	Renovation	Paw Paw West Paving Renovation. This project consists of crack sealing and repairs of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas.	0	2018	\$50,000		
R38	Other	Groose Park	Renovation	Restroom Renovations. General.	0	2018	\$10,800		
R39	Other	Groose Park	Renovation	Groose Park Paving Renovation. This project consists of crack sealing and minor repairs of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas. It also includes reconstruction of the existing bituminous trail paving near the beach damaged by roots.	0	2018	\$17,000		
R40	Other	Groose Park	Renovation	Groose Park Stream Bank Restoration. Repair and stabilization of stream banks.	0	2020	\$17,500		
R41	Other	Groose Park	Renovation	Lake Shelter Renovations. New roof.	0	2025	\$8,500		
R42	Other	Groose Park	Renovation	Playground renovation. General improvements.	0	2025	\$107,000		

ID	Greenway	Park	Project Type	Project Description	Priority	Year	Parks Fund Amount	Other Funds (additional)	Source
R43	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	Storm Overflow structure modifications.	0	2017	\$5,200		
R44	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	East Stream erosion control project. In conjunction with replacement of bridges.	0	2017	\$10,400		Water Resources Commission
R45	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	DeVries/Vanderlaan roof structure.	0	2017	\$78,000		
R46	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	2018 Hager Paving Reconstruction and general improvements . This project consists of the renovation of the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas. Also repair of uneven concrete.	0	2018	\$147,000		
R47	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	Picnic Building Renovation. Plumbing, sinks, countertops.	0	2018	\$5,400		
R48	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	Operations Building Addition/Renovation.	0	2018	\$108,000		
R49	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	Hager Park Age of Discover Updates. Improvements and renovations to the existing large wood playground structure.	0	2019	\$11,250		
R50	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	Hager Park South Play Equipment. Replacement of old play equipment and installation of new surfacing to meet current standards.	0	2020	\$117,000		
R51	Other	Hager Park	Renovation	Age of Discovery Restroom Renovation.	0	2023	\$26,500		
R52	Other	Riley Trails	Renovation	Bridge renovations. Minor repairs and redecking	0	2022	\$6,300		
R53	Other	Spring Grove	Renovation	Spring Grove Paving Reconstruction. This project consists of reconstructing the existing bituminous paving on the parking areas.	0	2018	\$77,000		
R54	Other	Spring Grove	Renovation	Spring Park Picnic Building Renovation. Air-conditioning?	0	2020	\$11,700		
R55	Other	Spring Grove	Renovation	Playground Upgrade.	0	2022	\$38,000		
R56	Other	Spring Grove	Renovation	Trellis Upgrade.	0	2022	\$9,500		
R57	Pigeon	Hemlock Crossing	Renovation	NEC Wildlife Viewing Area improvements .	0	2017	\$5,200		
R58	Pigeon	Hemlock Crossing	Renovation	Hemlock Paving Renovation. This project consists of sealing cracks in the existing bituminous paving on the entrance drive and parking areas.	0	2018	\$26,000		
R59	Pigeon	Hemlock Crossing	Renovation	Restroom Renovation. General.	0	2018	\$16,200		
R60	Pigeon	Hemlock Crossing	Renovation	Weaver House exterior repairs. Siding, etc.	0	2025	\$14,250		
R61	Pigeon	Pigeon Creek	Renovation	Lodge Renovations . Mechanicals, roof.	0	2021	\$73,000		
R62	Pigeon	PR Open Space	Renovation	Highway Sign update. New graphics on existing sign base and panel.	0	2025	\$3,000		
R63	Macatawa	Paw Paw	Renovation	Paw Paw Park Improvements. Renovations to existing park facilities to improve function and raise it to County standards.	1	2016		\$125,000	2016 Budget Funds
R64	Lake Michigan	North Beach	Renovation	North Beach Entrance Reconfiguration This project would revise the existing vehicular entrance to better handle large vehicles.	3		\$50,000		
R65	General	All	Renovation	Native Landscape Restoration. Misc. restorations as determined by natural resource manager (\$7,500/year)	0	2017-26	\$75,000		
				PRIORITY RATING DESCRIPTIONS					
				Needed Renovation Projects	0				
				Projects already planned with commitment to complete	1				
				Intentional priorities for next mileage period	2				
				Desired projects for future - some effort by parks staff appropriate	3				
				Valuable but currently not likely to be economically feasible in mileage period	4				
				Projects that depend primarily on factors outside of OCPRC	5*				
				*Although highly unlikely, projects rated 5s would become high priorities if opportunities became available and would require special funding and implementation efforts					

Ottawa County Parks and Open Spaces					
Acreage Acquisition Goals					
Budgeted 2016-27		Parks and Open Spaces	Potential Additions		
Base	Linkage		Planned	Desirable	Possible?
		Grand River Greenway			
	1	Miscellaneous			
		Connor Bayou		60	
		Crockery Creek Natural Area		311	32
		Jubb Bayou (Open Space)			40
	13	Riverside Park			31
		Bur Oak Landing (Open Space)		23	20
		Eastmanville Farm		40	
		Eastmanville Bayou			168
		Deer Creek Park		3	
		Ripps Bayou (Open Space)		20	
		Kuits Bayou (All of Alenda Township)		214	
		Grand River Open Space		11	45
	23	Grand River Ravines		30	
	80	Grand River Park			
345	110	Bend Area (Open Space)			76
345	227	Subtotal	0	712	412
		Pigeon River Greenway			
		Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend			160
		Pigeon River Open Space			
		Pigeon Creek Park			1100
		Pigeon Creek Forest (Open Space)			
0	0	Subtotal	0	0	1260
		Macatawa River Greenway			
		Paw Paw Park			
	40	Adam's Street Landing			
	6	Hawathorn Pond			
		Upper Macatawa Natural Area	80	59	
0	46	Subtotal	80	59	0
		Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway			
80		North Ottawa Dunes			105
		North Beach Park			
		Rosy Mound Natural Area		128	52
		Kirk Park			
		Oliver Shores			
		Tunnel Park			
		Historic Ottawa Beach Parks			
80	0	Subtotal	0	128	157
		General Parks, Open Space and Trails			
		Musketawa Trail			
		Unnamed Site - Wright Township			
		Grose Park		30	
		Mame Bog		32	
		Robinson Forest (Open Space)			
		Johnson Street Forest (Open Space)			
		Hawatha Forest (Open Space)			
		Hager Park			
8		Port She Hon Natural Area (Open Space)		100	52
		Van Buren Street Dunes (Open Space)			
		Spring Grove Park		12	
		Riley Trails			66
8	0	Subtotal	0	174	118
433	273	SUBTOTAL	80	1073	1947
706		GRAND TOTAL		3100	