

# **PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION STANDARD MANAGEMENT ZONE DESCRIPTION**

July 2020

## **Introduction**

Critical to the management planning process for state park and recreation areas is the identification and delineation of Management Zones. These are areas with defined characteristics and qualities, for which there are related user expectations, management guidance, and defined levels of development.

The parks and recreation division (PRD) has developed a palette of nine standard management zones. In the order presented, these zones reflect a progression from the Ecologically Sensitive Zone, which is highly restrictive for use and focused on attaining and maintaining a pristine natural resource environment, to the other end of the spectrum where the Developed Recreation Zone reflects conditions focused on development and visitor use, with the natural resources still important, but secondary.

Incorporated in each zone description is direct guidance as to how the four primary components of PRD's mission statement are addressed. Those components are:

- Natural resources
- Cultural resources
- Recreation opportunities
- Educational opportunities

Additionally, for each zone, there are descriptions of:

- Visitor experience
- Management focus
- Development guidance

A complete description of each standard zone follows. Special zones may also be developed for unique situations that cannot be accommodated by the nine standard zones, using the same seven components listed above.

The general language found within these descriptions will be used to establish the zones of the park. Once established, these zone descriptions will then be written in the General Management Plan to be specific to the park and sensitive to the park's significance, unique attributes, and qualities.

State parks are closed to hunting and trapping unless open by a Land Use Order of the Director and state recreation areas are open to hunting and trapping unless closed by a Land Use Order of the Director. Hunting is subject to statutory safety zones and location specific Wildlife Conservation Orders and may or may not be open in all management zones.

Management zones direct PRD management decisions within state parks. However, they are not legally binding. Where stronger protections are required, other tools exist such as Land Use Orders of the Director or the designation of Natural Areas under the state Wilderness and Natural Areas Act.

## **ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONE**

The purpose of this zone is enhancement and protection of native communities and natural processes over and above any other uses (including recreational). For example, the Ecologically Sensitive Zone may be used to protect imperiled ecosystems (e.g. prairie fen), or federally and state protected species (e.g. dwarf lake iris or the Hine's emerald dragonfly). This zone is highly restrictive for public use and development.

There are instances where this zone can be "seasonal". For example, to protect a heron rookery, where restrictions would be in place for a portion of the year while the rookery is active. When the birds vacate the area, use could revert to that allowed in the surrounding zone.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Native species and natural processes predominate.
- The overall character is pristine.
- Native Michigan natural communities/ecosystem components and processes are maintained, restored and protected.
- Natural hydrology is maintained or restored.
- Human-caused habitat fragmentation and impacts of recreational use are eliminated.
- Non-native species are controlled or eliminated.
- Vegetative management is only allowed to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removal of invasive species), and to manage pests and disease.
- Prescribed fire is allowed to mimic natural disturbance or control invasive species.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Archaeological resources are preserved.
- Ethnographic resources (landscapes, objects, plants and animals, or sites and structures that are important to a people's sense of purpose or way of life) are protected.
- Extant historic structures may be preserved, but more often are removed or allowed to molder in place.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Very limited, unless classified as a seasonal zone.
- Trails are non-existent or very low density.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- No interpretation on-site.
- Off-site interpretation focused on natural and cultural resource.
- Researchers/scientists may be allowed access by permit.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- Highly restricted visitor use.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Protection of the resource and monitoring.
- Some ecological research may be allowed.

### **7. Development:**

- No development except as needed for resource protection.
- Very little evidence of human activity.

## **PRIMITIVE ZONE**

The primary purpose of the Primitive Zone is the protection of natural resources and natural processes. The zone is managed for low-impact recreational experiences in a primitive, natural landscape. Only dispersed, self-reliant, and low-frequency use is allowed. Attaining and maintaining a high-quality natural resource condition dictates the extent to which recreational improvements or uses are allowed.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Native species and natural processes take precedence over visitor accommodation.
- Native Michigan natural communities/ecosystem components and processes are maintained, restored and protected.
- Human-caused habitat fragmentation is eliminated.
- Non-native species are controlled or eliminated.
- Natural hydrology is maintained or restored.
- Vegetative management is only allowed to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removal of invasive species), and to manage pests and disease.
- Where agricultural fields currently exist, a strategy should be developed to bring these areas into compliance with the intent (nature/character) of the zone.
- New agricultural fields may be allowed but only as a specific and limited phase of an Ecological Restoration Plan or as a critical component of a plan for managing species of greatest conservation need.
- Haying may be used as a short-term vegetation management treatment.
- Prescribed fire is allowed to mimic natural disturbance or control invasive species.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Archaeological resources are preserved.
- Ethnographic resources are protected.
- Extant historic structures may be preserved, but more often are removed or allowed to molder in place.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Recreation is dispersed.
- Self-reliant, non-mechanized (no bicycle, horse, or motorized use) outdoor activities (e.g. hiking, backpacking, primitive camping, cross-country skiing, hunting/trapping/fishing, nature observation).
- Trail density is low. Trail routes are point to point and not sinuous in design. Trails are single track and natural surface (except as needed to protect the resource), although existing two-tracks may be allowed to remain.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Primarily off-site.
- Interpretive signage is allowed at trail heads and at overlooks.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- Low visitor to visitor encounters.
- Visitors are engaged in high solitude, off-trail or trailed, self-reliant outdoor activities.
- High time commitment.
- High challenge and adventure.
- Discovery area with minimal on-site interpretation.
- Low noise tolerance.
- Low interaction with DNR staff.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain low-impact character of the zone, with emphasis on natural resource quality.

### **7. Development:**

- Very low level for visitor accommodation (e.g. foot trails).
- Site hardening only allowed to protect sensitive resources (e.g. boardwalk).
- Little evidence of human activity.

## **BACKCOUNTRY ZONE**

The character of this zone is natural, with minimal evidence of human impact through recreational use. While the Primitive Zone is highly restrictive for recreational use and human impact, this zone allows for slightly increased use, including bicycle and equestrian use, and modifications of the landscape (e.g. trail development) to accommodate that use.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Natural resources may be modified slightly to support visitor use, but tolerance for natural resource impacts for visitor accommodations is low.
- Native Michigan natural communities/ ecosystem components and processes are maintained, restored and protected.
- Human-caused habitat fragmentation is minimized.
- Non-native species are controlled or eliminated.
- Natural hydrology is maintained or restored.
- Vegetative management is only allowed to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removal of invasive species), and to manage pests and disease.
- Where agricultural fields currently exist, a strategy should be developed to bring these areas into compliance with the intent (nature/character) of the zone.
- New agricultural fields may be allowed but only as a specific and limited phase of an Ecological Restoration Plan or as a critical component of a plan for managing species of greatest conservation need.
- Haying may be used as a short- or long-term vegetation management treatment but the goal is native ecosystems.
- Prescribed fire is allowed to mimic natural disturbance or control invasive species.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Archaeological resources are preserved.
- Ethnographic resources protected.
- Extant historic resources are preserved, rehabilitated, removed, or allowed to molder in place.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Moderate levels of recreation compatible with the natural character of the zone.
- Visitors engaged in non-motorized outdoor activities in diverse land and water natural settings (e.g. hiking, backpacking, backcountry camping, bicycling, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting/trapping, nature observation, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing).
- Trails are more point to point than sinuous in design. Trail purpose is viewing and access more than challenge.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Interpretive signage at trail heads, on the trail, and at overlooks is allowed.
- Moderate off-site interpretation.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- Moderate visitor to visitor encounters.
- Visitors engaged in non-motorized outdoor activities in diverse land and water natural settings.
- High time commitment.
- Moderate challenge and adventure.
- Discovery area with minimal on-site interpretation.
- Low noise tolerance.
- Low interaction with DNR staff.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain low-impact character of the zone, with emphasis on natural resource quality.

**7. Development:**

- Low level of development to support visitor access to outdoor activities (e.g. trails, trailhead parking, marked routes, designated backcountry campsites, vault toilets, water pumps) and educational opportunities.
- Development shall be unobtrusive and blend with natural environment.
- Site hardening (e.g. boardwalks, fencing, pedestrian paths) may be necessary to protect sensitive resources.

## **CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ZONE**

This zone addresses the overall cultural setting of a site, including historic structures and ethnographic sites. For example, a location associated with a particular cultural resource, such as an abandoned mine townsite representative of a bygone era, would qualify as a Cultural Landscape Zone.

The Cultural Landscape Zone can be an overlay (sub-set) of one of the management zones, and as such, the guidance for that zone will also apply.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- This zone will reflect natural processes, with vegetative management focused to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removing of invasive species), to address hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease.
- Vegetation may also be managed to enhance education/interpretation. This may include non-native (non-invasive) species specific to the era and/or location and maintaining an aesthetically appealing landscape that is sensitive to the cultural resource.
- Where agricultural fields are part of the cultural history, a strategy should be developed to preserve them.
- If the Cultural Landscape Zone is applied as an overlay, natural resource management should generally be in accordance with underlying zone

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Resources may include historic buildings, structures, and other landscape characteristics and features which represent the evolution of the cultural resource, temporal change, and the continuum of time.
- Cultural resources are preserved or rehabilitated for visitor understanding and/or for compatible adaptive use by DNR or partners.
- Historic structures may be adaptively used for operational uses or educational purposes or preserved simply for their historic value.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Visitors engaged in sightseeing, recreational, and educational activities in a cultural setting (e.g. automobile, bicycle, walking, hiking tour), compatible with and sensitive to the setting.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Interpretive signage may be used at trail heads, on the trail, overlooks, and other points of interest.
- Moderate off-site interpretation.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- Moderate visitor to visitor encounters accommodated.
- Visitors engaged in sightseeing, recreational, and educational activities in a cultural setting.
- Moderate time commitment.
- Moderate noise tolerance.
- Moderate interaction with DNR staff.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain cultural character of the zone, and if a sub-set of a resource zone, maintain emphasis on natural resource quality.
- Keep development consistent with the zone.

### **7. Development:**

- Non-historic development and activities that do not conflict with the cultural landscape are tolerated.
- Moderate level of development to support visitor access and use (e.g. interpretive media, walks, trails, small picnic areas, and restrooms).

## **HISTORY EDUCATION ZONE**

The emphasis of this zone is education. Historic resources are restored and interpreted for visitor understanding. A high level of development is allowed in this zone for the management/control of people and traffic, protection of the resources, and historical interpretation.

The History Education Zone can be an overlay (sub-set) of one of the management zones, and as such, the guidance for that zone will also apply.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Natural resources that have been identified as important to the historic landscape are managed to perpetuate those qualities. This can include non-native (non-invasive) species specific to the era and/or location and maintaining an aesthetically appealing landscape compatible with the historical resource and interpretation of the zone.
- Other areas of this zone will reflect natural processes, with vegetative management focused to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removal of invasive species), to address hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Cultural and natural resources (including historic buildings, structures, and landscapes) may be restored to specific time period(s) if essential for the visitor understanding or rehabilitated to support visitor and staff activities for in-depth interpretation.
- Some historic resources may be allowed to molder in place.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Visitors engaged in sightseeing and educational activities in a cultural setting.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Structured interpretive/educational activities related to the historic resources (e.g. guided, brochure or audio tape tours, in-depth history exhibits, media, and programs).
- Interpretive signage at trail heads, on the trail, overlooks and other points of interest.
- Low off-site interpretation.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- High visitor to visitor encounters accommodated.
- Visitors engaged in structured interpretive/educational activities related to the historic resources.
- Moderate time commitment.
- Low exertion.
- Moderate noise tolerance.
- High interaction with DNR staff.
- High level of accessibility where feasible given the historic resource.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain historic/cultural integrity of the zone, and if a sub-set of a resource zone, maintain emphasis on natural resource quality.
- Keep development consistent with the zone.
- Strive for quality visitor experience of historic interests.

### **7. Development:**

- Developments necessary for visitor understanding and/or staff support are compatible with the historic period(s) or are accommodated off-site.
- Restored or rehabilitated area includes necessary protection, security and HVAC (heating and cooling) systems, and visitor/staff support uses, such as restrooms and offices.
- Development, including interpretive media, consistent with historic period(s).

## **SCENIC ZONE**

The Scenic Zone recognizes that there are aesthetic qualities to be preserved and protected in our state park and recreation areas. Examples of this zone include scenic viewsapes, such as the overlook escarpment at the Lake of the Clouds in Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, or linear components such as a scenic road or a scenic river. A designated Natural River would fall into this category.

The Scenic Zone can be an overlay (sub-set) of one of the management zones, and as such, the guidance for that zone will also apply.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Natural resources may be modified slightly to support visitor use and viewing, but tolerance for natural resource impacts is low.
- Human-caused habitat fragmentation is minimized.
- This zone will reflect natural processes, with vegetative management to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removal of invasive species), and to manage pests and disease. Vegetation may also be managed to enhance observation of the viewsapes of the zone.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Archaeological resources are preserved.
- Ethnographic resources are protected.
- With the scenic values in mind, extant historic resources may be preserved, restored, allowed to molder in place, or adaptively re-used for operational or educational purposes. Non-historic structures that do not contribute to the Scenic Zone may be removed.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Moderate levels of recreation compatible with the purpose of viewing.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Interpretive signage at key viewing points, trail heads, overlooks, and parking areas.
- Moderate off-site interpretation.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- High visitor to visitor encounters accommodated.
- Visitors engaged in transit or sightseeing activities by foot, car, bicycle, watercraft, or other conveyance.
- Moderate time commitment.
- Moderate noise tolerance.
- Variable interaction with DNR staff.
- High level of accessibility at vantage points.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain the quality of the viewsapes on which the zone is based.
- Public safety.
- Ensure all activities or developments in this zone are compatible with the overriding purpose of view quality.

### **7. Development:**

- Moderate level of development to support visitor access, transit, interpretive activities, and sightseeing (e.g. roads, trails, parking, restrooms, overlooks, small picnic areas, interpretive media).
- Development blends with the natural and cultural environment.
- Site hardening (e.g. boardwalks, barriers, fencing, surfaced pedestrian paths) to protect sensitive resources and provide accessibility.



## **NATURAL RESOURCE RECREATION ZONE**

The Natural Resource Recreation zone supports active recreation conducted in a natural setting with medium to high-density use. There is an emphasis on resource quality over recreation, but moderate to high levels of use may be accommodated.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Natural resources support visitor activities with only moderate impacts.
- Natural resources are managed or modified to support visitor activities but protected to the degree possible and appear natural.
- Human-caused habitat fragmentation is minimized.
- Non-native species are controlled or eliminated.
- Natural hydrology is maintained or restored.
- This zone will reflect native Michigan natural communities/ecosystems and natural processes, with vegetative management to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removing of invasive species), to address hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease. Vegetation may also be managed to facilitate recreational use and maintaining an aesthetically appealing landscape.
- Where agricultural fields currently exist, a strategy should be developed to bring these areas into compliance with the intent (nature/character) of the zone.
- New agricultural fields may be allowed in the zone but only as a specific and limited phase of an 'Ecological Restoration Plan' or as a critical component of a plan for managing species of greatest conservation need.
- Agricultural haying may be used as a long-term vegetation management treatment.

### **2. Historic/Cultural Resources:**

- Archaeological resources are preserved.
- Ethnographic resources are protected.
- Extant historic resources may be preserved, restored, allowed to molder in place, or adaptively used for operational or educational purposes.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- Moderate to high levels of recreation compatible with the natural character of the zone.
- Visitors engaged in outdoor activities in diverse land and water natural settings (e.g. hiking, backpacking, backcountry and rustic camping, bicycling, horseback riding, boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting/trapping, nature observation, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling).
- Except in areas with Exemplary Natural Communities, trails may be sinuous to provide for recreational challenge. Multi-use linear trails may be permitted in this zone.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Interpretive signage may be provided at trail heads, on the trail, at overlooks and in campgrounds.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- Moderate to high visitor to visitor encounters accommodated.
- Visitors engaged in outdoor activities in diverse land and water natural settings for recreation and education.
- Variable time commitment.
- Variable challenge and adventure.
- Moderate noise tolerance.
- Moderate interaction with DNR staff.
- Moderate accessibility.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain use of zone in accordance with PRD's mission.
- Public safety.
- Protection of resources.

**7. Development:**

- Moderate level of development of facilities for support of visitor activities (e.g. vault toilets, concrete/asphalt/gravel walkways and parking, trails, benches, picnic tables, rustic campsites, rustic cabins and shelters) for recreation and educational opportunities.
- Site hardening (e.g. boardwalks, fencing, surfaced pedestrian paths) as necessary to protect sensitive resources and provide accessibility.

## **DEVELOPED RECREATION ZONE**

The Developed Recreation Zone supports active recreation with high-density of use conducted in areas not designated for natural resource significance. In this zone, recreation dominates with natural resource attributes enhanced as possible. Examples of this zone include modern campgrounds, day-use recreation areas, disk golf, boating facilities, and highly developed mountain bike trail areas.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Natural resources may be actively managed and modified to support visitor activities.
- Water quality is maintained or restored.
- Vegetative management will address hazard trees, invasive species, and pests and disease, and will also be allowed to facilitate development, recreational use, and to maintain an aesthetically appealing landscape. Native vegetation is still emphasized. PRD's tree planting standards should be followed in this zone.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Archaeological resources are preserved.
- Ethnographic resources are protected.
- Extant historic resources may be preserved, restored, or adaptively used to support visitor activities, operational or educational purposes.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- High levels of recreation activity in a highly structured environment.
- Visitors engaged in activities in diverse natural and modified land and water settings (e.g. hiking, modern and semi-modern camping, bicycling, horseback riding, boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting/trapping, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, day-use beach, swimming, picnicking, disc golf, and other day-use activities where people congregate).
- Except in areas with Exemplary Natural Communities, trails may be sinuous to provide for recreational challenge. Multi-use linear trails are allowed in this zone.

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Interpretive signage may be provided at campgrounds, day-use facilities, boating facilities, registration buildings, trail heads, on the trail, and at overlooks.
- Active programming at campgrounds and other areas where people congregate.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- High visitor to visitor encounters accommodated.
- Visitors engaged in activities in diverse land and water settings for recreation and education.
- Variable time commitment.
- Variable challenge and adventure.
- Variable level of exertion.
- High noise tolerance.
- High interaction with DNR staff.
- High accessibility.

### **6. Management Focus:**

- Maintain use of zone in accordance with PRD's mission.
- Management of people.
- Public safety.
- Protection of resources.
- Public accessibility.

### **7. Development:**

- High level of development of facilities for support of visitor activities (e.g. modern restrooms, walkways and parking, trails, benches, picnic tables, picnic shelters, modern and semi-modern campgrounds, modern cabins and shelters) for recreation and educational opportunities.
- Site hardening (e.g. boardwalks, fencing, surfaced pedestrian paths) as necessary to protect sensitive resources and provide accessibility.
- Strive for universal access in all new developments.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ZONE**

This zone encompasses the developed areas required for program administration and operations. Typically, it will include offices, contact stations, maintenance facilities and all related land base required to conduct the business of running a state park or recreation area.

### **1. Natural Resources:**

- Natural resources may be actively managed and modified to support administrative and support activities.
- Vegetative management (primarily tree removal for safety) is allowed.

### **2. Cultural Resources:**

- Cultural resources and structures are preserved, adapted, or rehabilitated to support administrative activities.
- Historic structures should be re-purposed before new construction where possible.
- Non-utilized or non-stabilized structures may be removed.

### **3. Recreation Opportunities:**

- None

### **4. Education Opportunities:**

- Person to person contact at park headquarters for general information, both verbally and written (brochures, maps, etc.).
- Informational kiosk.

### **5. Visitor Experience:**

- Business and information only.
- High noise tolerance.
- High accessibility.

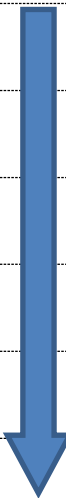
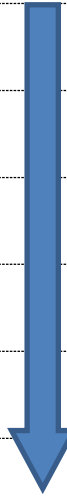

### **6. Management Focus:**

- The business of running a park.
- Appropriate facilities for staff, equipment and materials.
- Employee safety.
- Public access to office.

### **7. Development:**

- High level of development of facilities for support of administrative activities (e.g. office space, meeting rooms, employee locker room, employee eating area, shop space, storage space and related)
- Provide maximum level of accessibility for public.

## *Management Zone Progression*

<i>Management Zone</i>	<i>Resource Condition</i>	<i>Visitor Experience</i>	<i>Development Level</i>
<i>Ecologically Sensitive</i>	<i>Pristine</i>	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Primitive</i>			
<i>Backcountry</i>			
<i>Cultural Landscape</i>			
<i>History Education</i>			
<i>Scenic</i>			
<i>Natural Resource Recreation</i>			
<i>Developed Recreation</i>			
<i>Administrative Services (formerly Visitor Services)</i>			