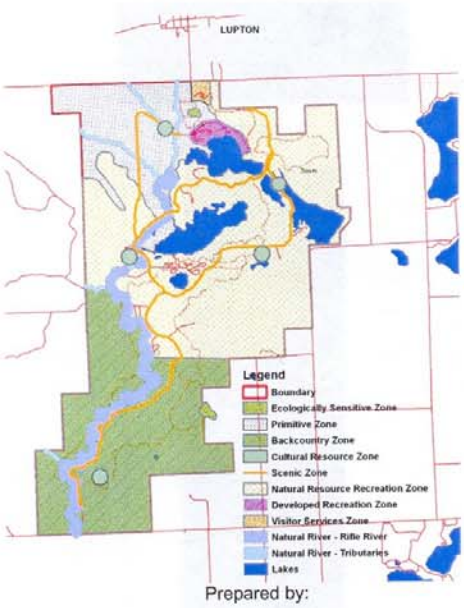
April, 2007

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Long-range management guidance focused on the specific natural resources, historic-cultural resources, recreation opportunities, and the education-interpretation opportunities of…

Rifle River Recreation Area



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PLAN APPROVALS:

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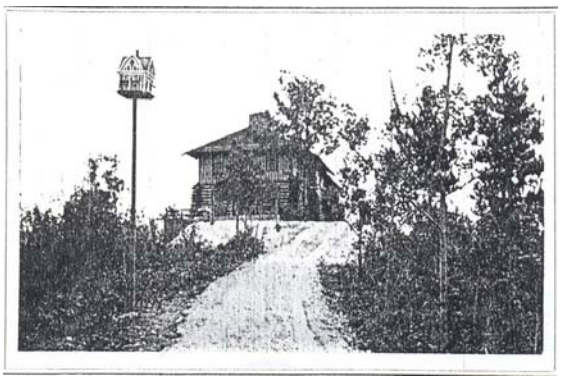
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Long-range planning for Rifle River Recreation Area (RA) began in August of 2003 as one of four parks statewide where a new planning philosophy was implemented. "Management Planning", a comprehensive, resource based process, is Parks and Recreation Division's (PRD) adaptation of National Park Service planning methodology. In our iteration of this process, we focus our attention on the four principles of the PRD Mission Statement. To that end we thoroughly inventory the (1) natural resource values of the park, establish its (2) historic/cultural resources, identify the (3) recreational opportunities and develop the (4) educational and interpretation opportunities of the park.

With this base of knowledge and with input of the "Planning Team" (made up of Department resource staff, stakeholders and public), we established an 'identity' for the park. The key significance of Rifle River RA is:

Initially developed as "Grousehaven Game Farm" by H. M. Jewett, an automotive industrialist, this property was actively managed for game, including upland game species and trout. Remnants of this historic occupation and use exist today and are an important cultural element of the park.



Rifle River RA was acquired by the Department in 1944 for purposes of fish and wildlife management. The transfer of management in 1963 to Parks Division was recognition of the value of this land for all types of recreation. The recreation area contains 4,449 acres with 7 lakes, 3 ponds, and 7 miles of trout streams. Over 4,100 acres of the RA are open to hunting of grouse, turkey, woodcock, and deer. The surrounding land use is primarily undeveloped and very similar to that within the park. Some scattered residential development can be found east of the park boundary.

The headwaters of the Rifle River are found in the RA, and in these largely undeveloped conditions of the park (and beyond), the Rifle River holds the designation as a 'Natural River' and is protected as such under the Natural Rivers Act.

The RA contains two ecologically sensitive northern fens and an extensive high quality floodplain forest. This wilderness habitat of water and forest has proven attractive to the protected bald eagle, loon, and red-shouldered hawk, as well as deer, bear, turkey, grouse and other game and non-game species.

In concert with this analysis of the park, the Planning Team also established the appropriate Management Zones and their extent of influence on the park. From a pallet of nine standard zones, we utilized eight for Rifle River RA. We also created an additional 'non-standard' "Natural River Zone" to address specific management requirements of this protected river corridor. The Management Zone Plan is found on page 15, and a thorough review of all zones accompanies that graphic. A condensed review of the zones applied at Rifle River RA is as follows: (Note…acreages given are approximate)

- Ecologically Sensitive Zone – exists as a sub-set of both the Backcountry Zone and the Primitive Zone. Totaling ten (10) acres, this designation protects two ecologically sensitive northern fens, Pintail Pond and Lost Lake. Except for an existing interpretive boardwalk trail at Pintail Pond, public entry into these zone locations will be restricted to protect the resource.

- Primitive Zone – located in the Northwest corner of the park, this zone is characterized by wetland conditions of cedar swamp. It represents 670 acres of the park. Vegetative management will not be allowed except to address hazard trees, invasive species, and pests and disease.

- Backcountry Zone – is comprised of 1,400 acres of park land characterized principally by lowland hardwood vegetation and proximity to the Rifle River and contributing tributaries. In this zone, use will be limited to activities such as hiking, biking on trails, and dispersed recreation for hunting, mushrooming, birding, and other low impact uses. Vegetative management will not be allowed except to address hazard trees, invasive species, and pests and disease.

- Cultural Landscape Zone – no acreage is designated for this zone. It is established to recognize the historic impact of the "Grousehaven Game Farm" on the land. The locations identified highlight remnants from the farm and the homesteads from that time period.

- Scenic Zone – no acreage is designated for this zone. It is defined by the lakes and rivers within the park, the road system that meanders through diverse habitat and terrain, and the Grousehaven Lodge Observation Tower, which offers stunning views of the entire RA.

- Natural Resource Recreation Zone – is 2,255 acres of park land that forms the middle half of the park. This land is characterized by rolling wooded terrain and the cluster of seven small lakes that are actively managed by Fisheries Division. In this zone, more active recreation takes place with rustic camping, trail use, hunting, and boating and fishing on the lakes. Vegetative management can be allowed in this zone.

- Developed Recreation Zone – this 45 acre zone is located at the north end of the park. It incorporates the modern campgrounds, day-use area and boat launch, all consolidated on Grousehaven Lake. Vegetative management will not be allowed except to address hazard trees, invasive species, and pests and disease.

- Visitor Services Zone – is located at the entrance to the park and takes in the headquarters, shop, campground office, and storage area. It totals just over 20 acres of land.

- Natural River Zone – this 'non-standard' zone has been established to focus on the specific management requirements of the "Rifle River Natural River Plan" (see Appendix). In general, the river corridor (400' wide) and the designated tributary corridors (200' wide) will be managed in a natural condition, with specific limitations on man-made intrusions and specific goals of maintaining natural vegetative cover and high water quality.

The rugged, natural, wilderness-like conditions of the park ecosystem extends beyond the historic boundaries of the park. As properties are acquired within the new boundaries (and/or with expansion of boundaries), the appropriate zoning will have to be determined and applied.

INTRODUCTION

Planning Process Overview – The Management Planning Process develops a series of planning steps, each built upon the previous, that keep all planning and action decisions focused on (1) the mission of the Parks and Recreation Division, and (2) the specific Purpose and Significance of the park.

There are four stages of planning, implemented in the following order:

- General Management Plan (GMP) - 20-year long-range goals
- 10-Year Action Plan - long range action goals to attain the GMP
- 5-Year Action Plan – specific actions to implement
- Annual Action Plan and Progress Report – what will be done this year and what progress was made on last year's plan

This is the **General Management Plan**, the first step in our planning process. In this stage of planning, we are defining what the park will look like in twenty years. What will be the condition of flora and fauna? How will we address historic and cultural resources? What recreational opportunities will be provided? What education and interpretation efforts will meet the visitor? What will guide the manager's operational decisions? What will be the visitor's overall experience?

A key tool of this plan is the identification of "Management Zones" ("Management Zone Definitions") which define specific characteristics of the land, addressing management for:

- Natural features
- Historic/cultural features
- Education/interpretation
- Recreational opportunities

These four elements represent the primary elements of the PRD Mission Statement, and provide the primary guidance for both planning and management decisions. Within the parameters of this guidance, "Purpose" and "Significance" statements are developed for the park that establishes its unique identity and focus. No two parks are the same and this emphasis is directed at ensuring that the differences found from park to park are acknowledged, highlighted and celebrated.

Planning Objectives - The objective of this General Management Plan is to bring together Department staff, impacted and impacting stakeholders, and the public who use the park in a planning process that will define and clarify the unique "Purpose" and "Significance" of the Rifle River Recreation Area.

Collectively, we will reinforce those attributes in the planning and management decisions that impact the park through the implementation of the Management Zone Plan. Future action plans, whether focused on a development proposal, a resource improvement initiative, an interpretive program, or day-to-day management of the park will be guided by this General Management Plan.

PLANNING TEAM

Accomplishment of our planning objectives was and is dependent upon the valuable input provided by all members of the 'Planning Team'. Following are the names of those critical participants in this planning process:

Name	**Representing**
Paul N. Curtis, Chair	PRD (Parks and Recreation Division)
Ray Fahlsing	PRD
Dan Lord	PRD
George Cameron	PRD
Anna Sylvester	PRD
Steve Krantz	PRD
Lori Ruff	PRD
Troy Rife	PRD
Matt Tonello	CGI/SIRC (Center for Geographic Imaging/Spatial Information Resource Center)
Glen Mathews	WLD (Wildlife Division)
Mark Boersen	WLD
Doug Pavlovich	WLD
Kathrin Schrouder	FD (Fisheries Division)
Matt Fry	FD
Roger Mech	FMFMD (Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management Division)
Don Torchia	FMFMD
Steve Andersen	FMFMD
Gerald Thayer	LED (Law Enforcement Division)
Jon Spieles	OC (Office of Communications)

CORE VALUES

Guidance for the General Management Plan stems from the Mission Statements of the Department and the Division, and the Purpose and Significance Statements that have evolved through the planning process. The core values found in these statements must be reflected in this long-range General Management Plan for Rifle River Recreation Area and subsequently reflected in any shorter range action plans:

DNR Mission Statement - *"The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the State's natural resources for current and future generations."*

PRD Mission Statement - "*Acquire, protect, and preserve the natural, historic, and cultural features of Michigan's unique resources and provide public recreation and educational opportunities."*

The core values derived from these statements are that PRD will acquire, preserve and protect; (1) natural resources, (2) cultural resources, (3) provide public recreation, and (4) provide educational opportunities.

Park Purpose - Park purpose statements are based on park legislation, legislative history, special designations and DNR policies. These statements reaffirm the reasons for which Rifle River Recreation Area was identified as part of the State Park system.

- 4,277 acres of the 7,500 acre "Grousehaven Game Farm", held by Harry M. (H.M.) Jewett, was acquired by the Department of Conservation on July 8, 1944 for purposes of conserving a truly unique and special block of land and continuing wildlife and fisheries management.

  Those purposes continued until in 1963 when the property was dedicated as the Rifle River Recreation Area under the administration of Parks Division. In so doing, the Department recognized the value and purpose of this unique acreage as not only for management of the natural resources, but also for all types of recreation.

- To preserve and protect the park's unique natural resources for current and future generations

- To preserve and protect the park's historic/cultural resources

- To provide opportunities for recreational uses and experiences that are compatible with the park's resource(s) base.

- Provide educational and interpretive opportunities for the public that reflect the mission of the DNR and the unique qualities of Rifle River Recreation Area.

Park Significance - Park significance statements capture the essence of the park's importance to our state's natural and cultural heritage. These statements describe the distinctiveness of Rifle River Recreation Area. Understanding these distinctions help managers make decisions that preserve those special resources and values necessary to accomplish the park's purposes.

- Except for a meandering park road system that was part of the original Grousehaven development, and the campground and day-use improvements to serve users, this tract of land is largely intact and devoid of manmade intrusions. The "feel" is that of a UP wilderness area, with excellent hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities.

- Rifle River Recreation Area contains 4,449 acres with 7 lakes, 3 ponds, and 7 miles of trout streams. 4,100 acres of the RA are open to hunting. Sustaining a viable fisheries and wildlife population and maintaining scenic beauty is important to both sportspersons and viewers.

- The headwaters of the Rifle River, a high-quality trout stream, are found in the RA. This river is protected under the Natural Rivers Act.

- This recreation area contains two ecologically sensitive northern fens and an extensive high quality floodplain forest. It provides suitable habitat to host a variety of rare species of plant and animal life.

- Rifle River Recreation Area provides year round recreational opportunities within its scenic interior. Camping, picnicking, swimming, hiking, biking, canoeing, hunting, fishing and sightseeing are the most popular activities enjoyed by our visitors.

- Rifle River Recreation Area contains cultural resources in the form of foundation remnants of early homesteads, and remnants of the Jewett family impact on the land, including a fish rearing raceway.

- Rifle River Recreation Area offers excellent opportunities for research, education and interpretation in the areas of:

    - The unique ecological northern fen systems.
    - Wildlife, forest, and fisheries management.
    - Cultural aspects of the Grousehaven Game Farm and the early homesteaders of the area.
    - Rare plant and animal species.

Legal Mandates - For all park General Management Plans, all legal mandates will be identified and will serve to further guide the development of the General Management Plan and subsequent Action Plans. For our planning purposes, the term "Legal Mandates" refers to not only state law, but also the administrative tools of "Policy" and "Directive" of the Natural Resource Commission, the Department, and Parks and Recreation Division. Specific to Rifle River Recreation Area, the following legal mandates have been identified:

- PA 451 OF 1994, PART 741 - STATE PARK SYSTEM - NATURAL RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT - This act is the recodification of law that established the Michigan State Park System and defined the powers and duties of same. Notable in this law is Section 324.74102 which identifies the duties of the department and reinforces those core values cited above.

  This section reads:

  (1) "The legislature finds:
  - (a) Michigan State Parks preserve and protect Michigan's significant natural and historic resources.
  - (b) Michigan State Parks are appropriate and uniquely suited to provide opportunities to learn about protection and management of Michigan's natural resources.
  - (c) Michigan State Parks are an important component of Michigan's tourism industry and vital to local economies.

  (2) The department shall create, maintain, operate, promote, and make available for public use and enjoyment a system of state parks to preserve and protect Michigan's significant natural resources and areas of natural beauty or historic significance, to provide open space for public recreation, and to provide an opportunity to understand Michigan's natural resources and need to protect and manage those resources."

- PA 451 OF 1994, PART 305 – NATURAL RIVERS - NATURAL RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT
  Section 324.30502 of this Act states in part… "The department, in the interest of the people of the state and future generations, may designate a river or portion of a river as a natural river area for the purpose of preserving and enhancing its values for water conservation, its free flowing condition, and its fish, wildlife, boating, scenic, aesthetic, floodplain, ecologic, historic, and recreational values and uses".

  It further states…"The Department shall prepare and adopt a long-range comprehensive plan for a designated natural river area that sets forth the purposes of the designation, proposed uses of the lands and waters, and management measures designed to accomplish the purposes." The

Department prepared such a plan and the "Rifle River Natural River Plan of May 1980 (revised March 12, 2002) " shall direct all activities influenced by the designation.

- PA 368 OF 1978, ARTICLE 12 - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, PART 125 – CAMPGROUNDS – This Act was established to protect and promote the public health by establishing health code requirements specifically addressing campgrounds. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division is the administering agency that is responsible for the promulgation of the Administrative Rules for Campgrounds.

  All public (including DNR) and private campgrounds must meet these DEQ regulations.

- CONSUMERS ENERGY UTILITY EASEMENT - Parallel to and immediately south of Rose City Road, this electrical distribution easement is of unspecified width (currently cleared to approximately 80') and crosses the north boundary of the Recreation Area. The easement allows for access to and maintenance of their service.

- RIFLE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION COMMITTEE – With DNR support, this group applied for and was issued a DEQ permit for installation of a sediment trap along Gamble Creek, just south of Rose City Road. A construction and maintenance road will be built with access from Rose City Road, along the old Grousehaven railroad bed that runs parallel to the creek. Access to the sediment trap for construction and long-term maintenance (removal of sediment out of the park) will be required.

- DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR – FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS) – The USFWS conducts sea lamprey control on all rivers and tributaries in the park. Chemical treatments are utilized. Coordination is required with park staff and Fisheries Division.

- CARL'S CANOE RENTAL – This private concessionaire located just outside the park has a Use Permit for the launching (at the Grousehaven BAS) and retrieving (at the Rifle River Canoe Landing at the south end of the park) of canoes and kayaks.

- WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN – This 'five year' plan was written as a collaborative effort between Parks Division and Wildlife Division in 1994. It identified areas of the park for forest treatments for purposes of vegetative regeneration, primarily targeting aspen. The plan preceded this management planning effort and is no longer applicable. Current contract obligations will be met, but any remaining plan elements will be deferred.

- JEWETT LAKE RESEARCH – Jewett Lake has been the subject of continuous fisheries research by 'The Institute for Fisheries Research' since 1945. For purposes of the research, fishing on the lake is by permit only. It allows use of only artificial baits on a catch-and-release basis.

- NESTING OF RED-SHOULDERED HAWK AND BALD EAGLES – A nesting pair of bald eagles is located at the east end of Devoe Lake. This location has been utilized for several years. A red-shouldered hawk nest was identified along the Rifle River floodplain, west of Lost Lake, in 1997. The habitat of the lowland hardwoods found in the southern part of the park is preferred by the hawk.

  For both the red-shouldered hawk and the bald eagle, there is specific management guidance that protects the nesting location, wherever it is. The document titled "Management Guidelines for Red-shouldered Hawks on State-owned Lands in Michigan" will serve as our guidance for both species.

- LOST LAKE – Lost Lake, like Pintail Pond, is a Northern Fen and a relatively rare occurrence. The Nature Conservancy owns approximately half of the lake and land surrounding the lake. There are some operational differences between the Nature Conservancy and the DNR regarding land use. Hunting is not allowed on the Nature Conservancy property.

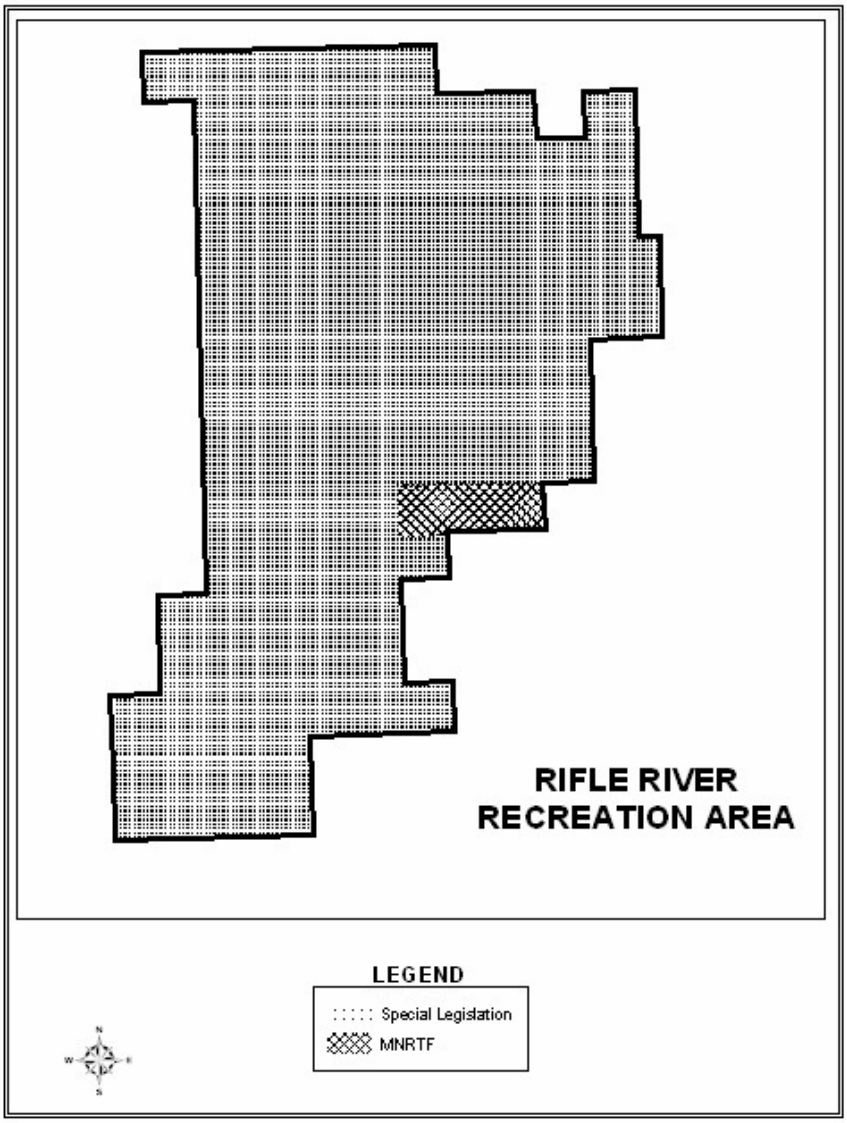
- LAND OWNERSHIP

  - Special Legislation – The vast majority (4,289 acres) of the total park acreage has been acquired with this source. It is utilized for general program purposes.

  - Tax Reverted – a 40 acre parcel in the northwest corner of the park was acquired by tax reversion in 1927, and was incorporated into the park at the time of the Jewett acquisition.

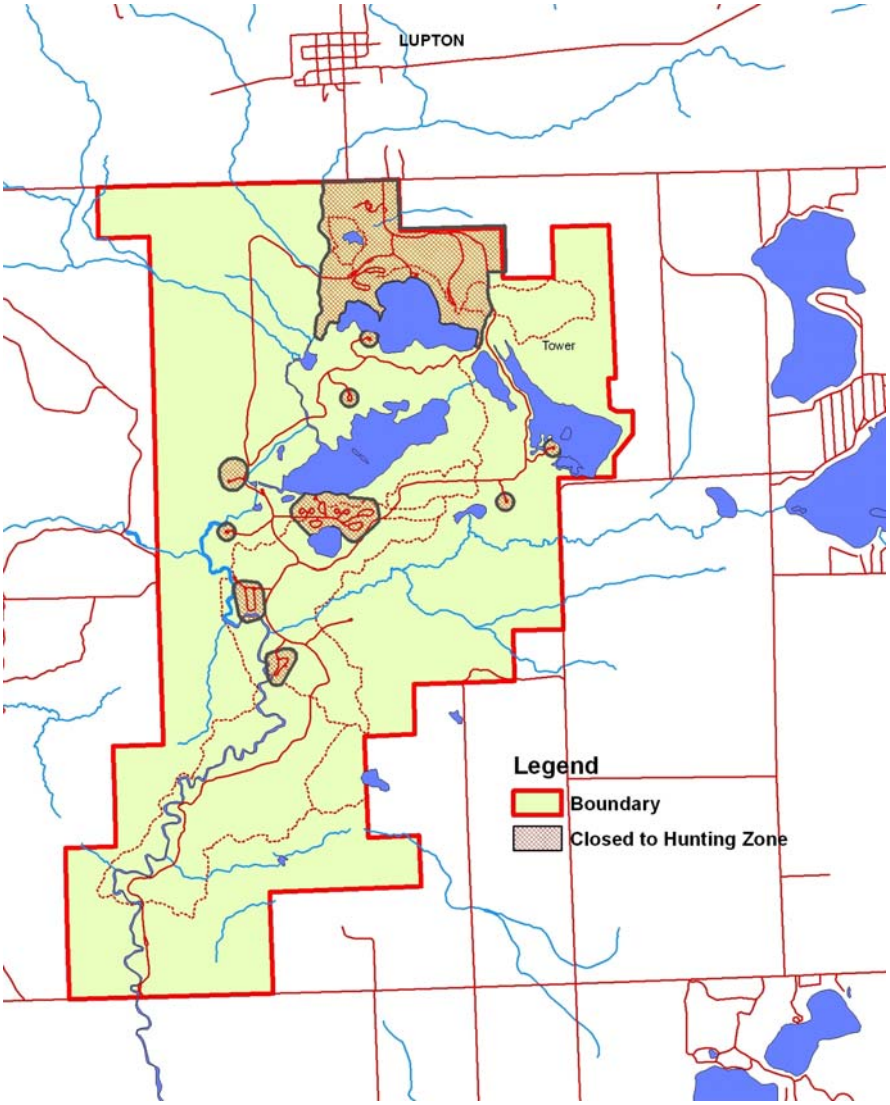
  - Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) – 120 acres of the park were acquired with this funding source which is utilized for general program purposes.

LAND ACQUISITION FUNDING SOURCES



- PA 451 OF 1994, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT) – 324.41901 Regulation and prohibitions in certain areas; powers of department; area closures; hearings, investigations, studies, and statement of facts; regulations. – This part of PA 451 establishes the powers of the Department to establish safety zones for hunting. In accordance with the Administrative Rules established by Wildlife Division for hunting safety, a 450' "Safety Zone" is established around all occupied dwellings (which includes campgrounds and cabins). Under the State Land Rules, the Department also has the authority to expand the application of this 450' "Safety Zone" to encompass "Day-Use Areas" such as beaches, picnic areas, boat launches, and parking areas, should the need arise. This is determined on a case-by-case basis. At Rifle River RA, the Hunting Safety Zones are represented below:

Hunting Safety Zones



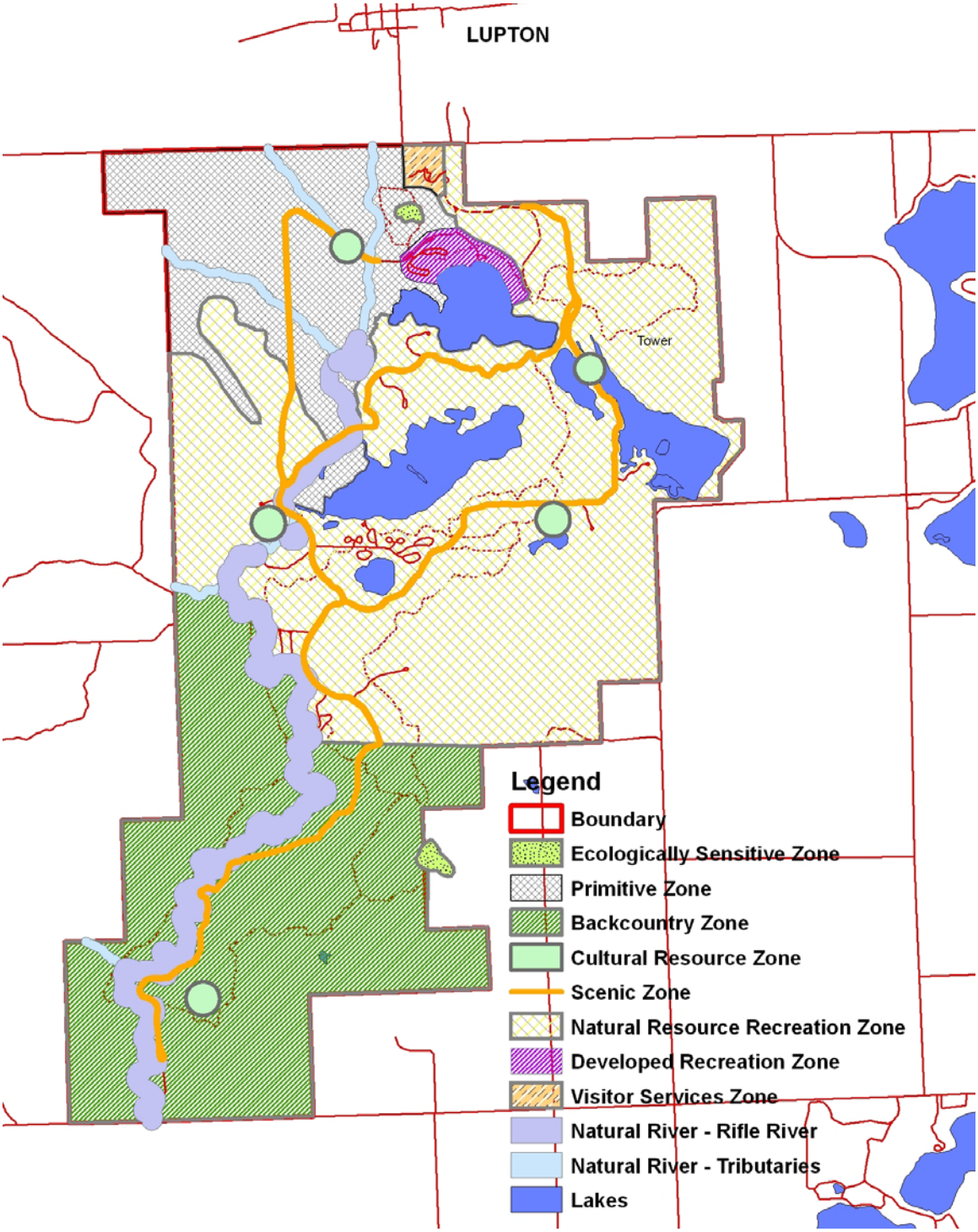
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

With guidance of the Rifle River RA Planning Team (inclusive Department participation) and input from our stakeholders and the public, the park "Purpose and Significance Statements" were drafted and adopted. This established an identity for Rifle River Recreation Area that highlights; the unique physical and historic qualities of the land, from its inception as "Grousehaven Game Farm" (1930's), to the designation of the Rifle River as a 'Natural River', to the ecological importance and rarity of the Northern Fen, and the opportunities for educational interpretation, trail use, camping, wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing.

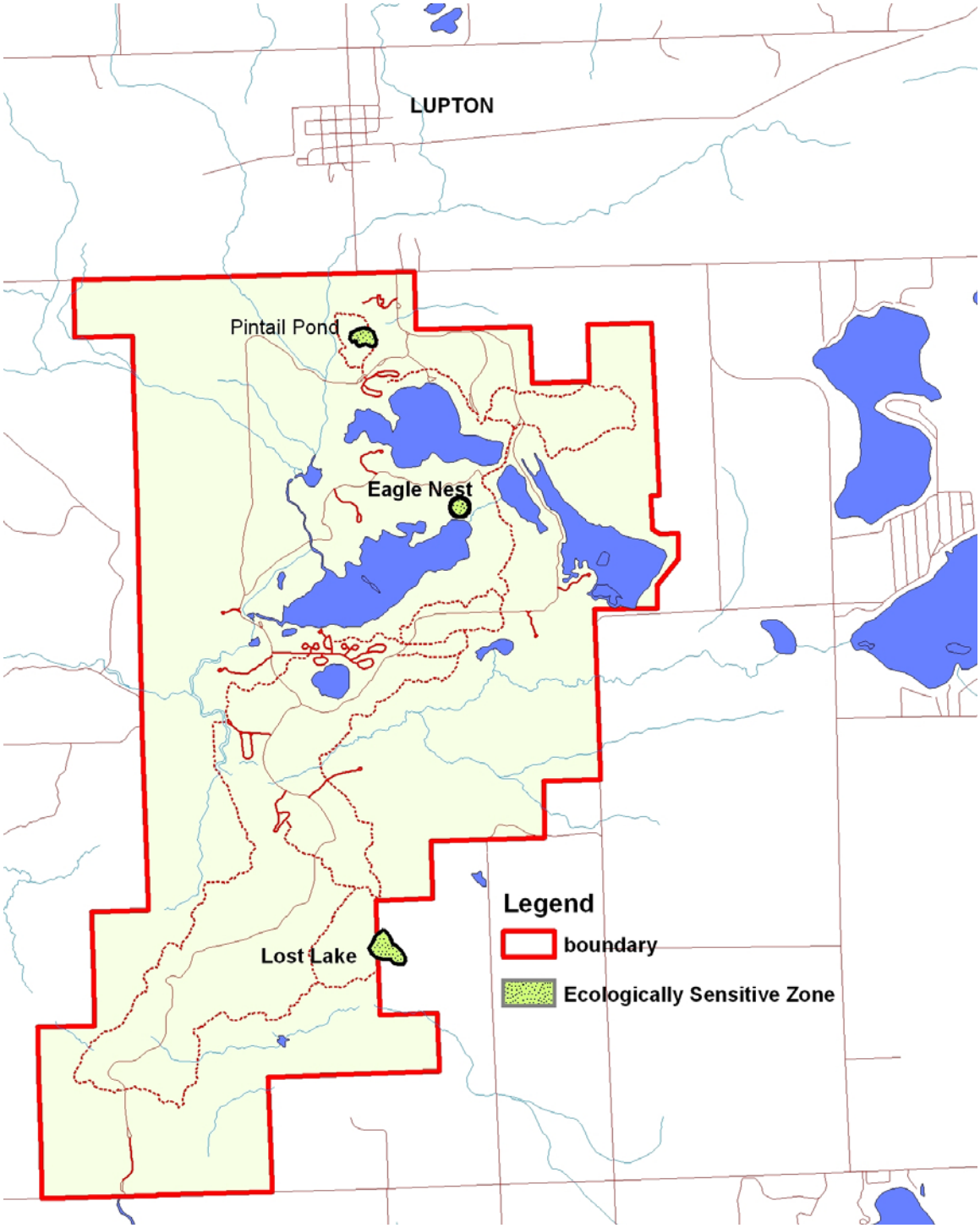
Based on this 'identity' for the park, a "Management Zone Plan" was developed with stakeholder support and public input. The Management Zone Definitions apply to each zone used, with special considerations highlighted in the following descriptive narratives of management guidance for each zone of the park:

Rifle River Recreation Area

MANAGEMENT ZONE PLAN



ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONE



This zone exists as sub-sets of the Primitive Zone and Backcountry Zone. Totaling approximately ten (10) acres, this designation protects two relatively rare examples of northern fens; 'Pintail Pond' in the Primitive Zone, and Lost Lake in the Backcountry Zone. Except for an existing interpretive boardwalk trail at Pintail Pond, public entry into these zone locations will be restricted to protect the resource.

Not included in any graphic representation or acreage designation are occurrences of nesting locations for protected species, as follows:

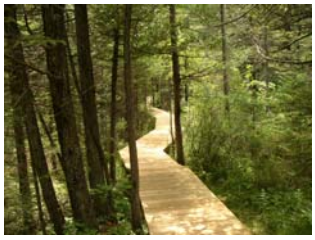
At the east end of Devoe Lake, in the Natural Resource Recreation Zone, is a bald eagle nest that has been active for several years. In 1997, a nesting pair of red-shouldered hawks was documented along the Rifle River, west of Lost Lake. The common loon nests on lakes within the Recreation Area, and Trumpeter Swans reside on the lakes (primarily Grebe Lake) during the summer. Department staff will survey the park annually to identify nesting locations of all protected species. This zone designation carries with it a 'Seasonal' condition that protects the bald eagle, red-shoulder hawk, common loon, and swan habitats during active nesting (February 1 to July 15). The zone protection will apply to wherever the protected species nest.

All of the values of the Primitive Zone, Backcountry Zone, and Natural Resource Recreation Zone apply to the respective fen areas and that of any other habitat locations of protected species. Additionally, the following values will be attained:

Natural Resources – **Maintaining the integrity of the natural habitat of the relatively rare northern fen and the nesting locations of protected species is the purpose of this designation.** These sites will remain in their natural state, with only vegetative management allowed for hazard trees (at Pintail Pond) and invasive species control.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – Designated (but not shown graphically) is the old railroad grade that forms a good portion of the Pintail Pond Trail, and parallels Gamble Creek out to Rose City Road. These resources will be protected and interpreted in the plan. No other known historic or cultural resources exist in this zone.

- Recreation Opportunities – Except for the Interpretive Trail at Pintail Pond and hiking/skiing the old railroad grade, public entry into this zone will not be allowed. Public access to the interpretive trail and railroad grade is from a small parking lot off Ranch Road, opposite the entrance to Grousehaven Lake Campground.



(Pintail Pond Interpretive Trail)

In areas seasonally designated (nesting locations), no entry will be allowed during the 'Zone Season' of February 1 – July 15.

- Education Opportunities – Interpretation of the northern fen can be presented through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and at other locations.

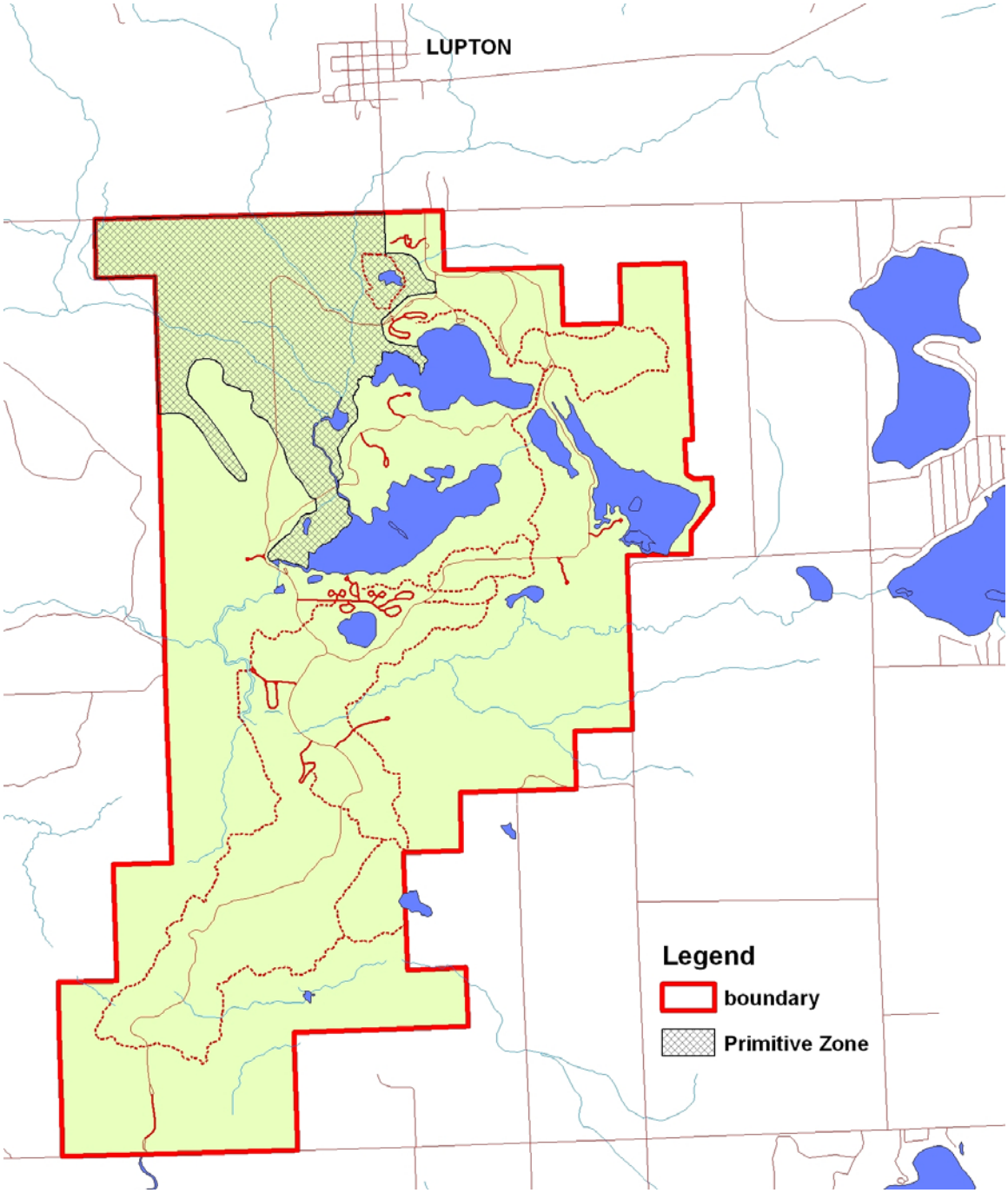
- Visitor Experience – This will reflect the high degree of 'natural' feel of the zone, a significant sense of solitude, and except for the Interpretive Trail at Pintail Pond, a lack of man-made improvements.

- Management Focus – Management of this zone will be focused on maintaining the low-impact character of the zone, and most significantly, maintaining the quality of the northern fen by controlling human disturbances. Maintenance of the existing trails (on the old railroad grade and the interpretive trail) is allowed.

  In areas seasonally designated (nesting locations), no entry will be allowed during the 'Zone Season' of February 1 – July 15. For these areas, a 450' buffer will be set to mark and protect the 'Zone' from human disturbance during the designated season.

- Development - Only trail improvements (can include boardwalks, observation overlooks/platforms, and bridges) and educational or interpretive signage will be the evidence of man-made elements in this zone. For the Pintail Pond Trail, any improvements needed for resource protection or public safety, shall be 'natural' in character. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

PRIMITIVE ZONE



This 670 acre zone (15% of the park) represents a significant wetland complex of lowland cedar. It is suitable for only dispersed, low-impact recreation such as hunting, trapping, and birding.

The Zone is defined by Rose City Road along its north boundary. Also along the north boundary is a Consumers Energy utility easement. It is located approximately 300' south of Rose City Road (centerline to centerline) and the company maintains an 80' clear zone. Following are the values to be attained in this zone:

- Natural Resources – In general, no vegetative management will be allowed except for control of invasive species, disease or pests, or hazard tree removal. Timber cutting for wildlife management will not be allowed. Within this zone is Pintail Pond, a northern fen that is designated as an Ecologically Sensitive Zone.

  In 2005 a black bear sow successfully reared three cubs in this zone.

  The 'Natural River Zone' that provides protective measures for the Rifle River, Gamble Creek, Vaughn Creek, and Oyster Creek also lies within this zone. The Rifle River, Gamble Creek, and Oyster Creek are managed by Fisheries Division as Trout Streams providing excellent habitat for the spawning and nursery of brown trout.

  Beaver activity in this zone has been identified as a problem. Fisheries Division has been pro-active in water quality control measures to reduce sediment loading of the streams and implement water temperature control measures.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – No known archaeological resources exist in this zone. The remnants of the Grousehaven Fish-rearing Raceways do still exist and are designated in this plan as part of the Cultural Resource Zone. Also designated (but not shown graphically) is the old railroad grade that forms a good portion of the Pintail Pond Trail, and parallels Gamble Creek out to Rose City Road. These resources will be protected and interpreted in the plan.

- Recreational Opportunities – With the focus of this zone being to maintain the current habitat condition, only dispersed low-impact recreation will be allowed in this zone for hunting, trapping, birding, hiking and other low-impact uses. No bicycle, equestrian, 'All Terrain Vehicle' (ATV), 'Off-Road Vehicle (ORV), snowmobile, or any other non-human form of conveyance is allowed in this zone.

  The existing Pintail Pond Interpretive Trail is a 0.8 mile loop trail around Pintail Pond, providing the public a great opportunity to experience this sensitive environment.

- Education Opportunities – Educational materials can be presented through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails

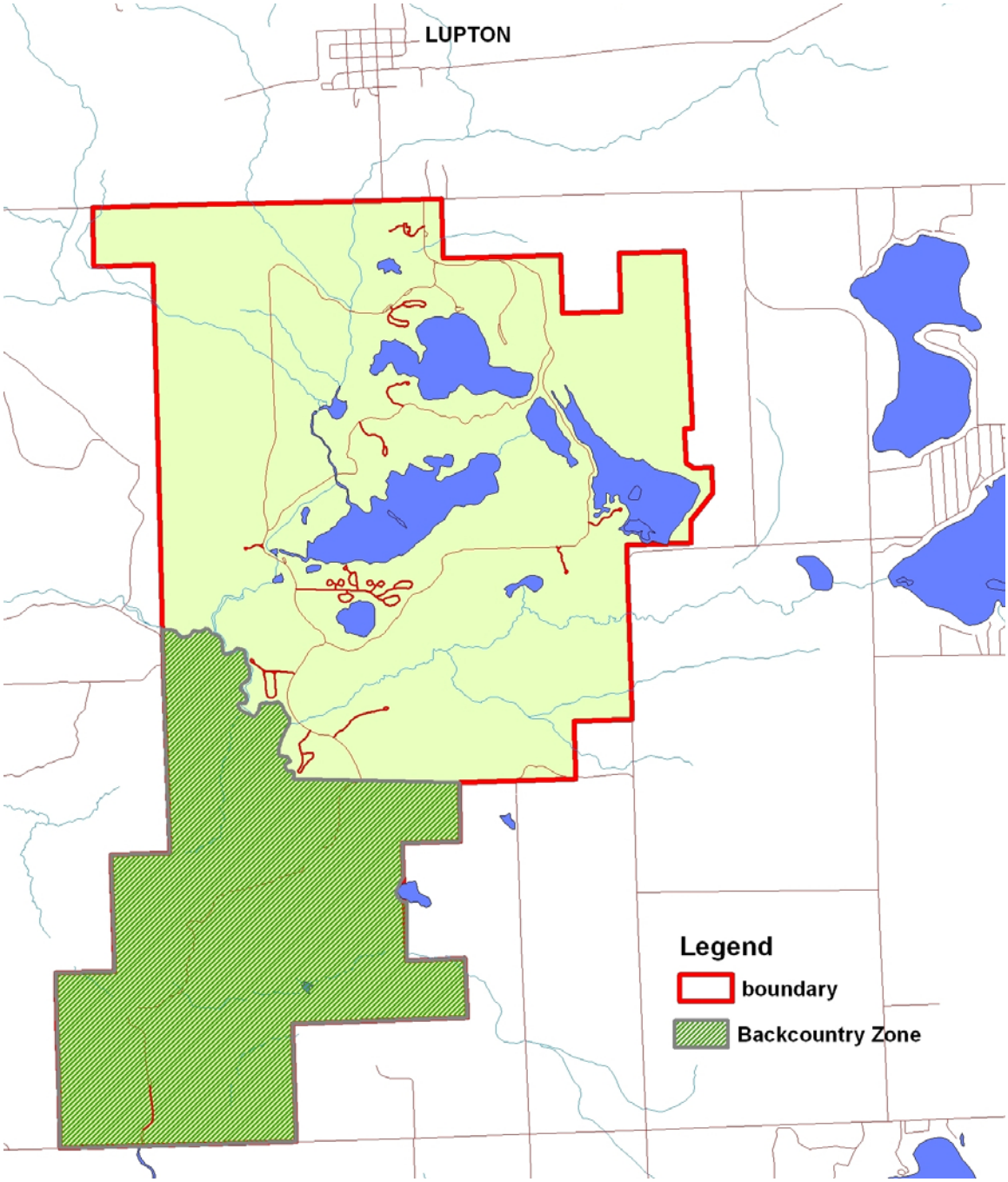
and at other locations. Specific planning recommendations for education and interpretation will require input from the Office of Communications (OC) and others.

- Visitor Experience – This will reflect the high degree of 'natural' feel of the zone, a significant sense of solitude, and a lack of man-made improvements.

- Management Focus – Management of this zone will be focused on maintaining the low-impact character of the zone. In this zone there is only limited trail development permitted, with no mechanized or equestrian uses allowed. Mark and maintain clear boundaries of state ownership.

- Development - Only trail improvements (which can include boardwalks, observation overlooks/platforms, and bridges) and educational or interpretive signage will be the evidence of man-made elements in this zone. Any improvements needed for resource protection, such as erosion control, shall be 'natural' in character. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

BACKCOUNTRY ZONE



This zone is comprised of 1,400 acres of park land characterized principally by lowland hardwood vegetation and proximity to the Rifle River. In this zone, use will be limited to low-impact activities such as hiking and bicycle trail use, hunting, fishing, mushrooming, birding, trapping, and other dispersed-use activities.

In this zone that represents approximately one third of the total park acreage, the following values will be attained:

- Natural Resources – Maintaining the natural wooded lowland habitat is a primary purpose of this designation. This zone will be maintained in a natural state, with only vegetative management allowed to address hazard trees, invasive species, and pests and disease.

  The 'Natural River Zone' that provides protective measures for the Rifle River, Houghton Creek, and Clear Creek also lies within this zone. The Rifle River and Houghton Creek are managed by Fisheries Division as 'Trout Streams' providing excellent habitat for the spawning and nursery of brown trout.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – A known homestead site exists in the southern third of this zone, east of the Rifle River and the park road. It is included in the 'Cultural Resource Zone' and will be protected and preserved.

- Recreation Opportunities – In this zone, more use is allowed that includes low-impact activities such as hiking and bicycle trail use, hunting, fishing, mushrooming, birding, and other dispersed-use activities. No snowmobile, ORV, or ATV use is allowed in the zone except that the park road will be opened for snowmobile use strictly as a 'designated route' of travel in the winter.

  The river is popular for canoe and kayak use, and for fishing.

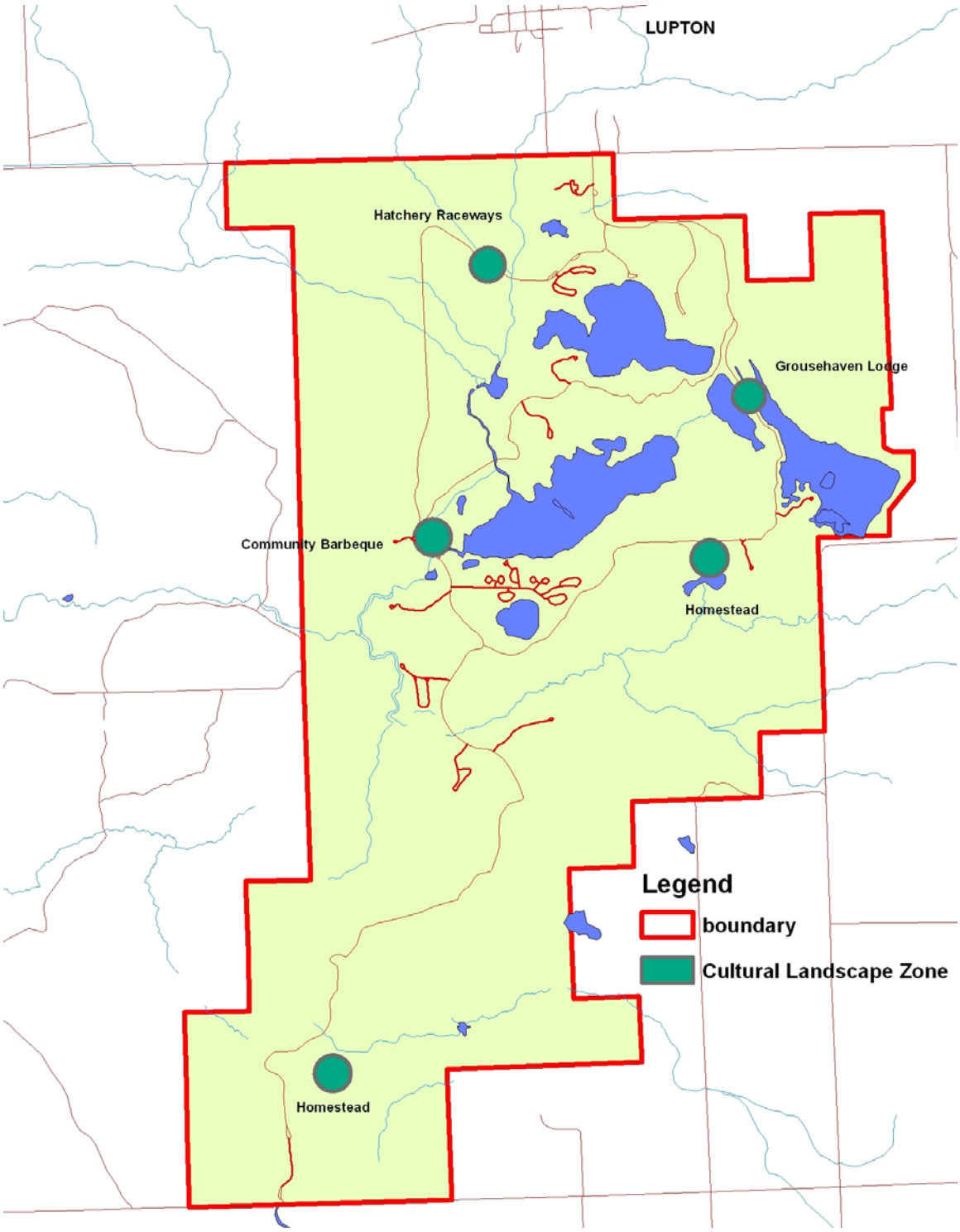
- Education Opportunities – Interpretation of the zone and its characteristics and qualities can be presented through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and at other locations.

- Visitor Experience – There is a high degree of 'natural' feel of the zone, but with more opportunity for contact with others along trails and particularly along the park road which serves as a primary scenic viewing route for visitors.

- Management Focus – Management of this zone will be focused on maintaining the relatively low-impact character of the zone. Mark and maintain clear boundaries of state ownership.

- Development – Improvements can include boardwalks, observation overlooks/platforms, and bridges and educational or interpretive signage. Parking and road improvements will also be allowed in this zone. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ZONE



This zone identifies known cultural resources within Rifle River RA. These resources are scattered throughout the park, and are remnants of the occupation of this land by early settlers and the Jewett family in their operation of "Grousehaven".

- Natural Resources – In general, the natural resources can be modified to support visitor activities, provided it does not interfere with the cultural values identified.

  These cultural sites impact both the Primitive Zone, the Backcountry Zone, and the Natural Resource Recreation Zone, and as such, the guidance for these zones will apply to the Cultural Landscape elements found within them.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by the Stewardship Program staff of PRD.** The resources identified include: Fish Rearing Raceways, Community Barbeque, Grousehaven Lodge, and two homestead locations, and the old railroad grade (near Pintail Pond).

- Recreation Opportunities – This zone is established to highlight the historic and cultural qualities of times past. The recreation opportunities afforded in this zone will not interfere with nor hinder the appreciation of the cultural landscape being preserved. Pintail Pond Interpretive Trail is on the old railroad grade. The railroad grade is also used for a groomed cross-country ski trail in the winter.

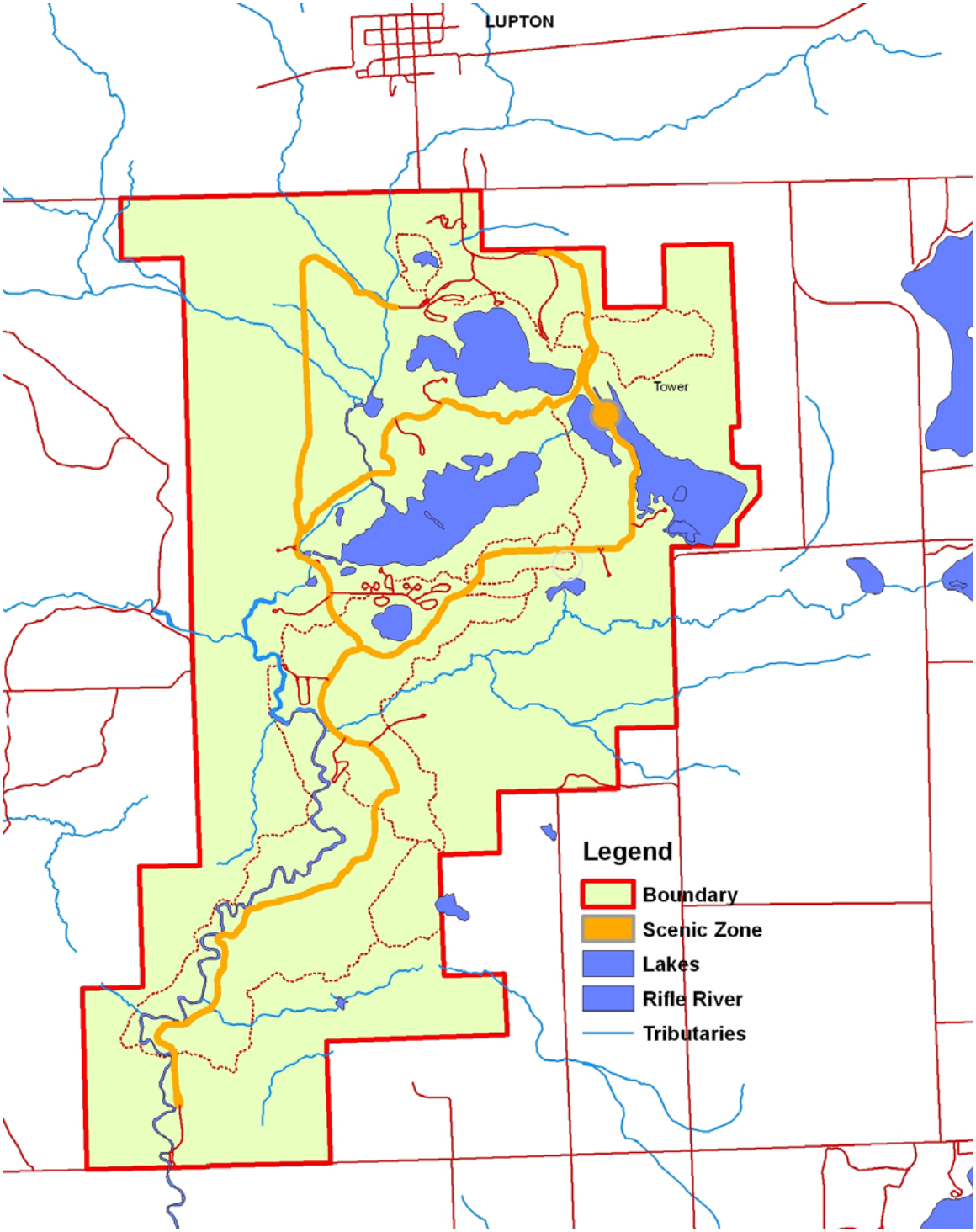
- Education Opportunities – Information regarding the key elements in this zone can be made available at the individual sites, and fortified through educational opportunities in the Developed Recreation Zone as well. The placement of informational kiosks is appropriate.

- Visitor Experience – The cultural features highlighted in this zone are representative of the early settlement of this land. This rich heritage will be appreciated by visitors with an interest in history. The visitor can expect encounters with other park visitors engaged in other activities.

- Management Focus – Preserve the historic integrity of the zone elements identified, incorporate "Universal Access" (including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements), and implement educational efforts. Maintain trail surfaces on the old railroad grade.

- Development – Development activity will focus on any identified restoration/preservation needs, incorporating "Universal Access" (including ADA requirements) for visitor access to the features, and meeting educational/interpretation needs.

SCENIC ZONE


LUPTON
Tower
Legend
Boundary
Scenic Zone
Lakes
Rifle River
Tributaries

The Rifle River flows through a pristine natural setting for over four miles within the park, offering unspoiled views for kayakers, canoeists, or wading fishermen. Similar experiences are found on the lakes within the park. Driving the park road system is a popular activity with visitors, for viewing of the park scenery and wildlife. Finally, the observation tower located at the site of the Grousehaven Lodge offers panoramic views of the entire park.

- Natural Resources –In general, the natural resources can be modified to support visitor activities, provided it does not hinder the scenic opportunities provided. The exception to this is that a portion of the 'Scenic Zone' is the Rifle River corridor, which is protected as the Natural River Zone. Along this corridor, natural resources will not be modified except to address hazard trees, invasive species, or resource protection.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – The Observation Tower is at the site of the Grousehaven Lodge and the Rifle River flows past the 'Community Barbeque' site. Ranch Road, as it crosses Gamble Creek (going west), passes the 'Fish Rearing Raceways' along Vaughn Creek (visible from the road). All of these sites are in the Cultural Landscape Zone.

- Recreation Opportunities – The water-based portions of the zone provide opportunities for boating experiences by kayak, canoe, and boat. There are no motors allowed on any lakes or streams in the park. The Rifle River offers exemplary viewing opportunities of unspoiled river settings. The trail system crosses the Rifle River for hikers and bicyclists to view the river.

  Finally, the passive activity of viewing from a car is popular with visitors who appreciate the park by taking an 'Auto Tour'. This is currently an informal activity, with park staff directing new visitors to view the various features of the park.

- Education Opportunities – There is a great opportunity for interpretive signage at staging areas for the trails, access points to the river, along the trails, and at the Observation Tower. Educational themes can be expanded to include information on the history of the park (as "Grousehaven"), the 'Natural River' designation of the Rifle River, and wildlife and fisheries management. The 'Auto Tour' is another opportunity for expanding the education/interpretation efforts.

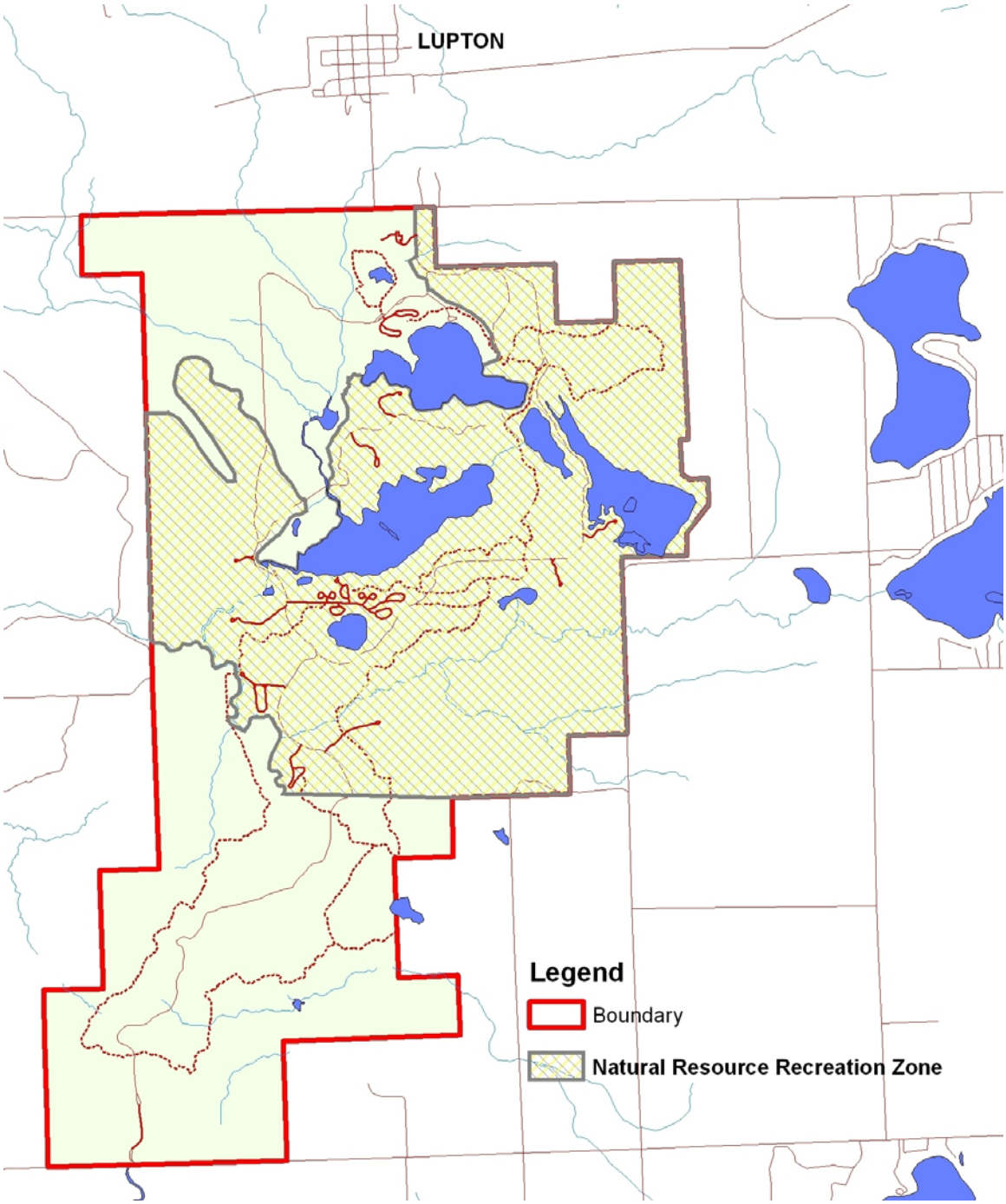
- Visitor Experience – The scenic viewing within the park is a popular activity, and visitors will encounter others enjoying the views.

- Management Focus – Management must focus on maintenance of the views, and protection of the resource. The Auto Tour will be more

formalized and promoted as part of the scenic viewing opportunities in the park.

- Development – Any development in this zone must compliment the viewing opportunities. Educational kiosks and improvements to augment educational opportunities are desirable actions. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

NATURAL RESOURCE RECREATION ZONE



This zone is approximately 50% of the park with 2,255 acres of land found in the middle half. The land is characterized by rolling wooded terrain, wetland areas, tributary streams, and a cluster of small lakes. In this zone, more active recreation takes place with rustic camping campgrounds and cabins, and boating and fishing on the lakes.

The purpose of this designation is to recognize the more intensive public use of the area for general recreational purposes, including hunting; fishing, boating, trapping, birding, and trail use for hiking, bicycling, and cross-country skiing. Snowmobile use is allowed only on the park roads. The Natural Resource Recreation Zone is described as follows:

- Natural Resources – In general, the natural resources can be modified to support visitor activities. The primary long-term goal for this zone is eco-system management that promotes the diversity of native (natural) communities. Active vegetative management for the benefit of natural communities is allowed, as is control of invasive species, disease, pests, and hazard tree removal.

  The 'Natural River Zone' that provides protective measures for the Rifle River and Houghton Creek lies within this zone. The Rifle River and Houghton Creek are managed by Fisheries Division as 'Trout Streams' providing excellent habitat for the spawning and nursery of brown trout. Skunk Creek (not part of the Natural River Zone) is also managed as a 'Trout Stream', but opportunities are limited because of water temperature issues.

  Grousehaven and Devoe Lakes are managed as 'Trout Lakes'. Brown and Rainbow trout are found in deep water, and bass and panfish in the shallower waters. Jewett Lake has been a research lake for over sixty years (1945). Fishing in this lake is by permit and only for catch and release.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – The three sites identified in this zone will be preserved and protected. They are:

  - The old Grousehaven Lodge (foundation)
  - A homestead site near Scaup Lake
  - The 'Barbeque Site' near the Organization Campground

- Recreation Opportunities – General recreation takes place in this zone. The river and lakes are popular for canoe, kayak, and boat use, fishing, and swimming. There are no motors allowed on any lakes or streams in the park. The uplands support hunting, birding, and extensive trail use for hiking and biking.

There are three rustic campgrounds in this zone and an organization area. The rustic campgrounds are Devoe Lake CG with 58 sites, the Ranch CG near the Rifle River with 25 sites, and Spruce CG with 16 sites. The organization area is located near the intersection of Ranch Road and Weir Road. It can accommodate groups up to 100 people for group day-use and camping activities.

Also in this zone are the five rustic cabins that offer a more solitary camping experience with access to the lakes and streams of the park. Each cabin can accommodate six people.

Snowmobile use is only allowed on designated park roads as a 'route of travel' in the winter.

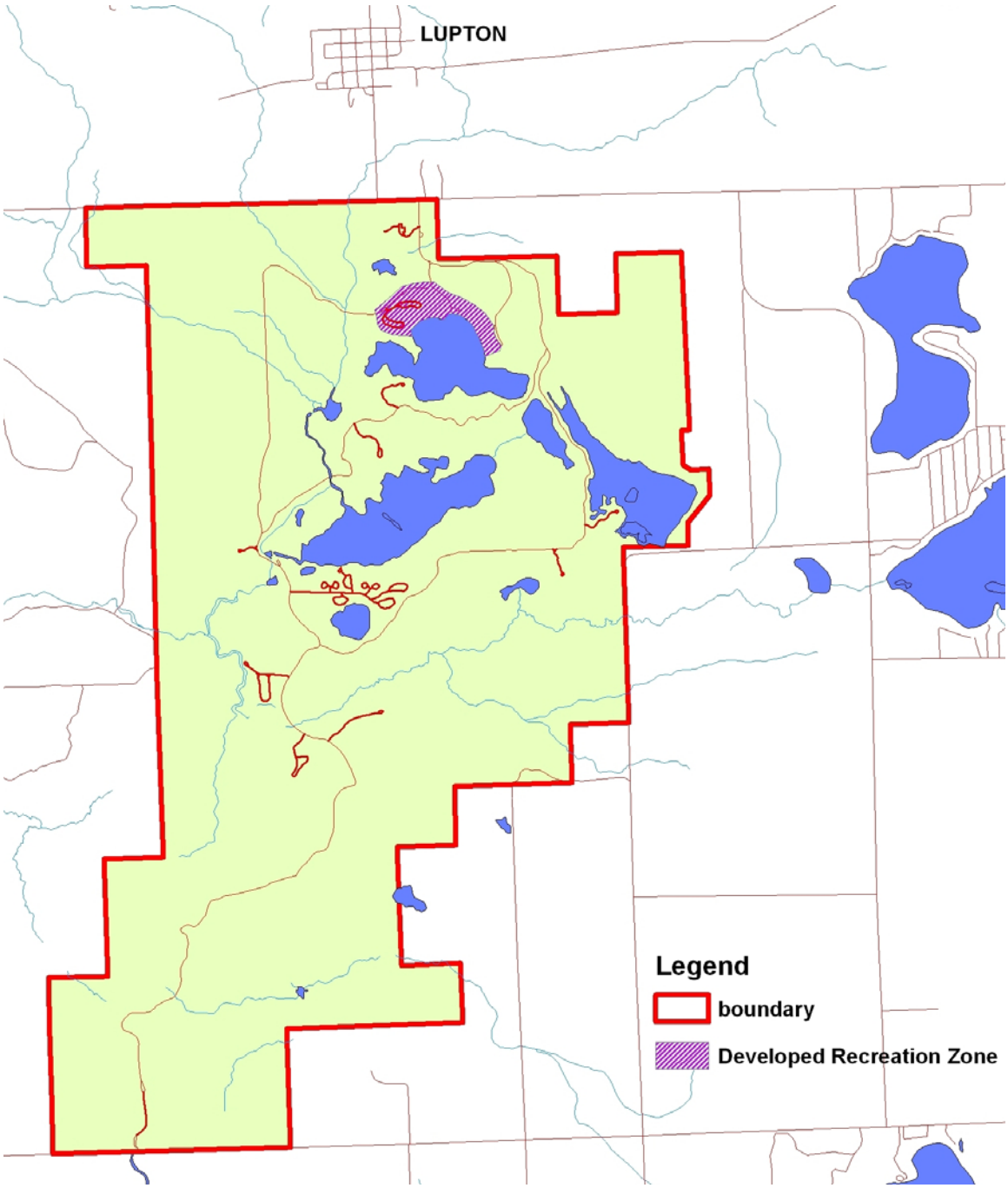
- Education Opportunities – The primary means of user access is by the various trails that extend throughout the zone. Informational kiosks at campgrounds, trail heads, and along the trails at critical locations are appropriate. Potential themes for educational messages include: vegetative management techniques (ie. clear-cuts, aspen, etc.) and the cultural resources of the park.

- Visitor Experience – The visitor can expect encounters with other park visitors any time of the year. The trails are a popular component and are used in all seasons. General use of this zone for hunting, fishing, and other dispersed activities can be expected.

- Management Focus – Maintain public awareness of the educational opportunities in this zone, and develop/maintain universal access to same. Provide/maintain signage for the hunting 'Safety Zone(s)'. Preserve and protect the identified cultural resources in this area. Mark and maintain clear boundaries of state ownership.

- Development – Development activity will focus on complimenting the educational efforts to interpret the natural and cultural resources. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

DEVELOPED RECREATION ZONE



Comprised of 45 acres, the 'Developed Recreation' components of the park are consolidated on Grousehaven Lake. It includes the Grousehaven Lake Modern Campground, Picnic Area and Beach, and Boating Access Site.

- Natural Resources – In this zone, active recreation dominates with natural resource attributes enhanced as possible. This area is not designated for natural resource significance. Hazard trees in 'target zones' will be identified and removed.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – There are no known Historic/Cultural Resources in this zone.

- Recreation Opportunities – This is the focus of this zone. Camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, trail use, and general day-use activities are accommodated and encouraged. Grousehaven Lake Campground provides fully modern camping for 75 sites.

- Education Opportunities – In this most populated and visited of zones in the park is found the most opportunity for guidance on education and interpretation of the entire park. The 'State Park Explorer Program' takes advantage of this in recruiting interest from campers for their interpretive programming, and this can be expanded upon.

  This program to date has focused on natural communities (flora and fauna). The opportunity exists for an expanded educational focus in this zone on the history of the park (as "Grousehaven"), the 'Natural River' designation of the Rifle River, and wildlife and fisheries management.

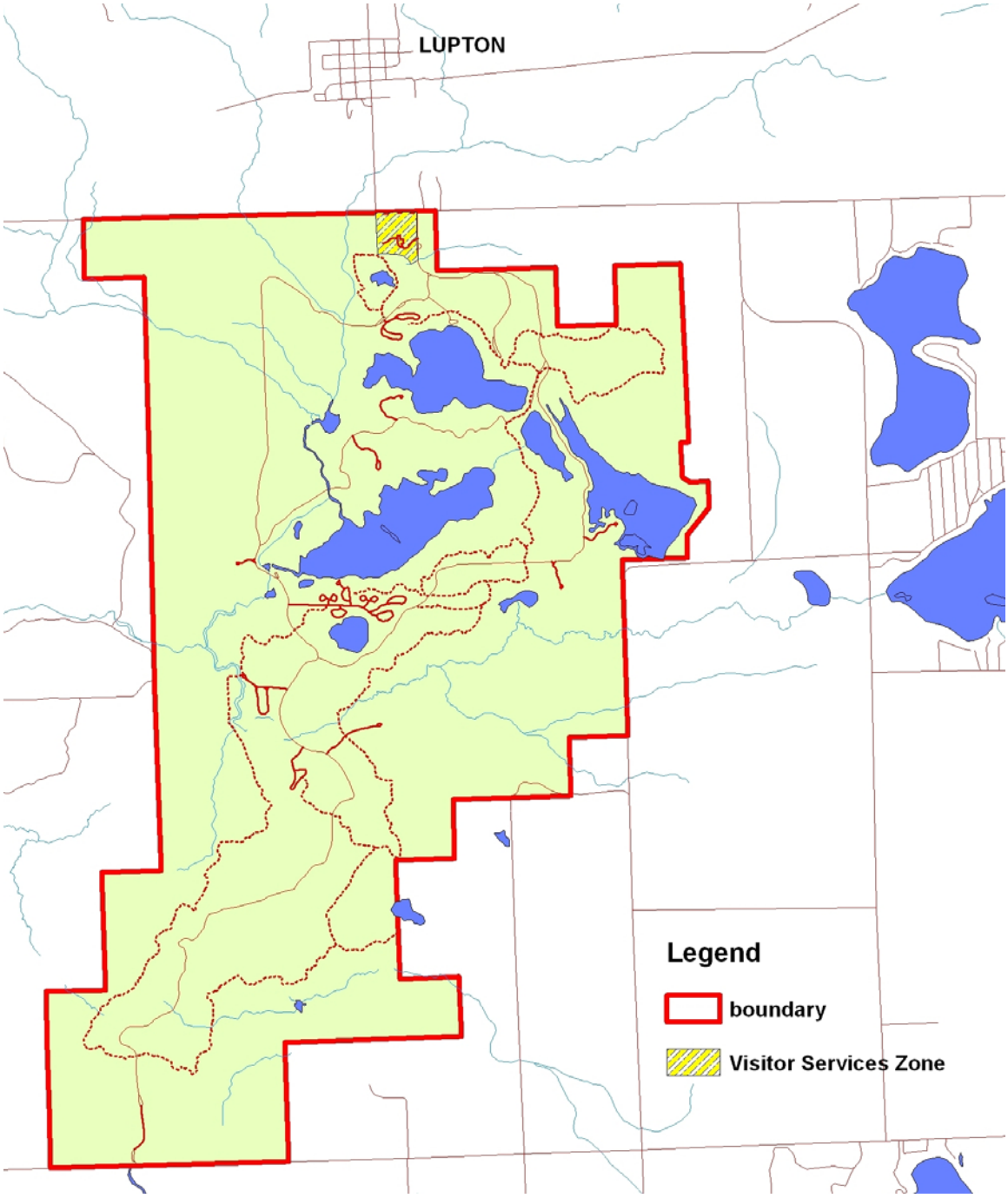
  The park is lacking facilities for group education, or a common or centralized location for educational purposes.

- Visitor Experience – With the focus of this zone being the developed campgrounds and other attributes, the visitor will experience a high level of encounters with other park visitors during the summer months. Contrary to many parks, Rifle River RA shows significant use in May (for trout fishing) and again in October (for hunters). **Hunting is not allowed within this zone.**

- Management Focus – Maintain the infrastructure that serves the intense public uses of this zone. Provide educational opportunities in the zone for the entire park, develop/maintain 'universal access' in the zone, and maintain public safety and good hospitality practices.

- Development – Provide 'universal access' improvements as needed to attain 'program' accessibility. Improve facilities to compliment education. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

VISITOR SERVICES ZONE



This zone is well defined, located at the entrance to the park. It has 20 acres, just less than 0.5% of the park.

The 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. At Rifle River RA, additional land immediately north of the current office/shop area has been included in this zone for purposes of future expansion or relocation.

- Natural Resources – In general, the natural resources can be modified to support the needs for administration of the park.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – There are no known H/C Resources in this zone.

- Recreation Opportunities – Limited. All of this zone is closed to hunting and trapping.

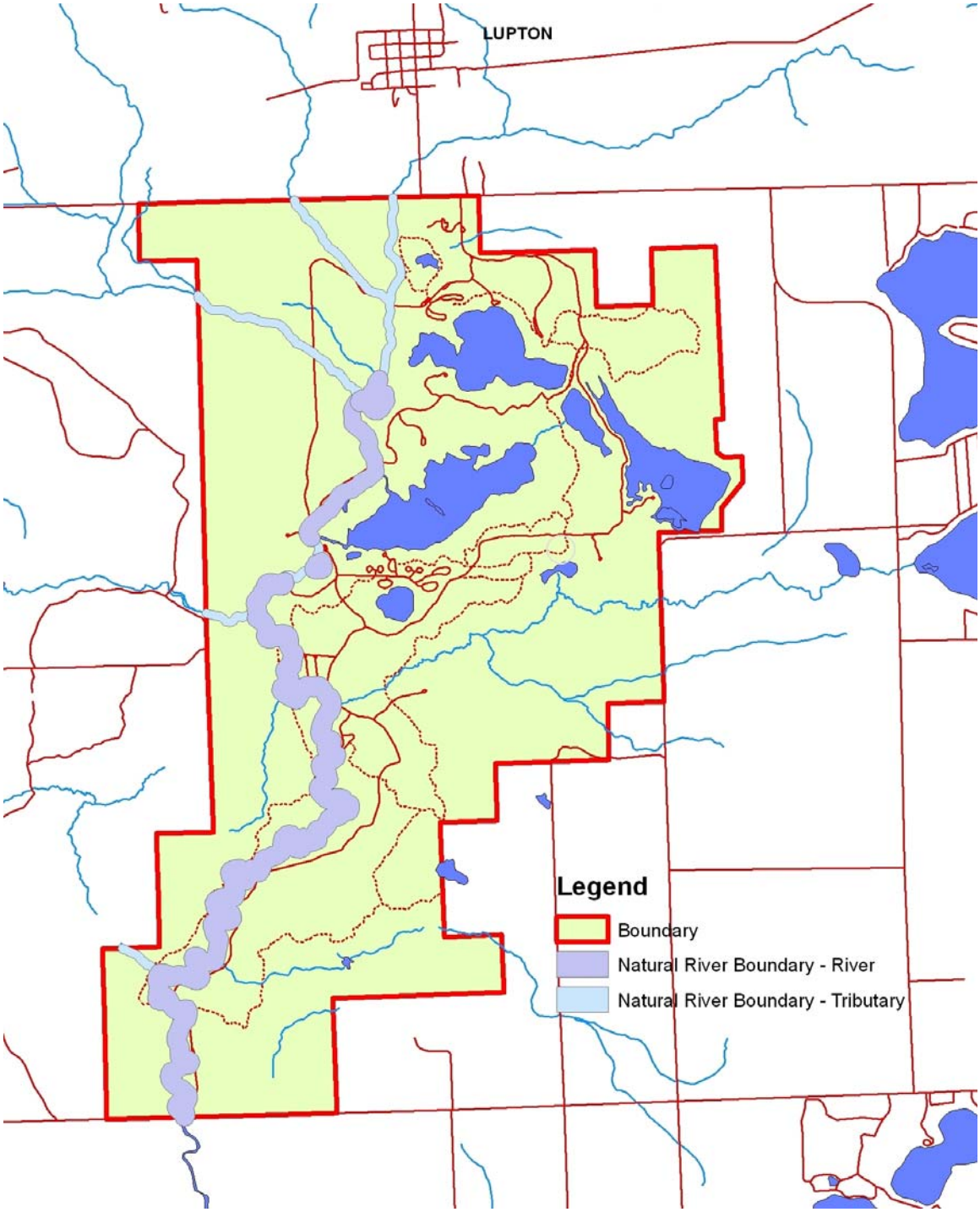
- Education Opportunities – Educational materials can be made available in the office 'public space', and office staff can provide verbal information. There is a great opportunity to direct visitors to other informational locations in the park.

- Visitor Experience – Visitor access at the office is limited to informational purposes.

- Management Focus – Provide public and employee 'universal access' (meet or exceed ADA requirements) to the contact station and office from the parking lot, and 'universal access' within the building. Assure security of offices, facilities and equipment. Provide a safe working environment for staff. Mark and maintain clear boundaries of state ownership.

- Development – Development in this zone will be for purposes of complimenting the administrative needs of the park, and meeting the needs for 'universal access' compliance. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

NATURAL RIVER ZONE



Natural River Zone – This 'non-standard' zone has been established to focus on the specific management requirements of the "Rifle River Natural River Plan". In general, the river corridor (400' wide) and the designated tributary corridors (200' wide) will be managed in a natural condition, with specific limitations on man-made intrusions and specific goals of maintaining (from the Act) "…a free-flowing condition, and its fish, wildlife, boating, aesthetic, floodplain, ecologic, historic, and recreational values and uses."

The following stream segments are protected under this law:

- Rifle River
- Gamble Creek
- Vaughn Creek
- Oyster Creek
- Houghton Creek
- Clear Creek

- Natural Resources – **Maintaining the integrity of the natural habitat of the river corridor and water quality are the primary purposes of this designation.** These streams will be managed to comply with the Natural Rivers Act. Vegetative Management will be allowed for hazard trees, invasive species control, and pests and disease. The protected red-shouldered hawk has been known to nest in this zone.

  Currently (initiated in 2005) there is a cooperative effort to construct a sediment trap on Gamble Creek to reduce sediment loads entering the Rifle River system.

- Historic/Cultural Resources – The 'Community Barbeque' is a cultural artifact from the Grousehaven Game Farm that is located near the banks of the Rifle River near the Organization Campground. The site will be protected. Additionally, the Fish Rearing Raceways along Vaughn Creek will be protected.

- Recreation Opportunities – The Rifle River is popular for canoe and kayak activity. The impact of these activities must be carefully monitored to retain a quality water experience on the river. As a high-quality trout stream the Rifle River and its tributaries offer excellent angling opportunities. Trails can enter and exit the zone for short durations. The natural conditions of these corridors will also provide opportunities for birders, and other low-impact recreation.

- Education Opportunities – Interpretation of the river, streams, and the Natural River Act can be presented through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and at other locations. There is also an opportunity to interpret the described cultural resources.

- Visitor Experience – This will reflect the high degree of ‘natural’ feel of the zone and limited exposure to man-made improvements.

- Management Focus – Management of this zone will be focused on; maintaining the ‘natural’ quality of the vegetation, the water quality for trout habitat, and controlling human disturbances and impacts.

  The Department prepared the “Rifle River Natural River Plan of May 1980 (revised March 12, 2002) “ which shall direct all activities influenced by the designation. All management actions in this zone must comply with the Act and may require permits.

  Where compatible with the Natural River requirements, it will be a management focus to develop ‘universal access’ to the river for fishing and viewing.

- Development - Only trail improvements and educational or interpretive signage will be the evidence of man-made elements in this zone. All proposed developments must be reviewed and approved by the Natural Rivers Program of Fisheries Division.

  Where compatible with the Natural River requirements, ‘universal access’ to the river for fishing and viewing will be developed.

FUTURE PLAN INSERTS

10-Year Action Plan (LONG-RANGE ACTION GOALS TO ATTAIN GMP) - Phase-2 of the Management Planning Process

5-Year Action Plan (SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT) - Phase-3 of the Management Planning Process

Annual Action Plan and Progress Report - Phase-4 of the Management Planning Process

Operational/Management Resources - The following categories are established as a guide for the park manager to use to supplement this working document. Other categories can be added as needed.

- Annual Work Plan (NOTE…this should reflect the values and emphasis of the Zones established for the park and tie-in with Phase 4 – Annual Report of Management Planning)
- Staffing
- Budget
- Equipment
- Training
- Public Relations / Marketing / Outreach
- Programming (ie. special events, MCCC, volunteers, etc.)
- Public Health, Safety, and Welfare
  - Water system
  - Wastewater system
  - Electrical system
  - Law enforcement
  - Emergency access plans
  - Wildfire plan
- CRS
- FOIA
- Infrastructure Inventory
- Raster Image Index
- Raster Images of historic park plans
- Other…

SUPPORTING ANALYSIS

<u>Park Setting</u> -

- <u>LOCATION AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITY</u> – Rifle River Recreation Area is located in central Ogemaw County, approximately four miles east of Rose City. The park is primarily within Cumming Township, with 120 acres of the park in Hill Township. The park is accessed by County Road F-28 (Rose City Road), a two-lane paved road.

Ogemaw County takes its name from 'Ogemaw-Ke-Ke-To', the chief speaker of the Chippewas. In Chippewa it is pronounced "Ogema".

Ogemaw County is located in the northeastern section of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The terrain is very hilly and holds scenic features with many small lakes and streams, including the Rifle River, a designated "Natural River".

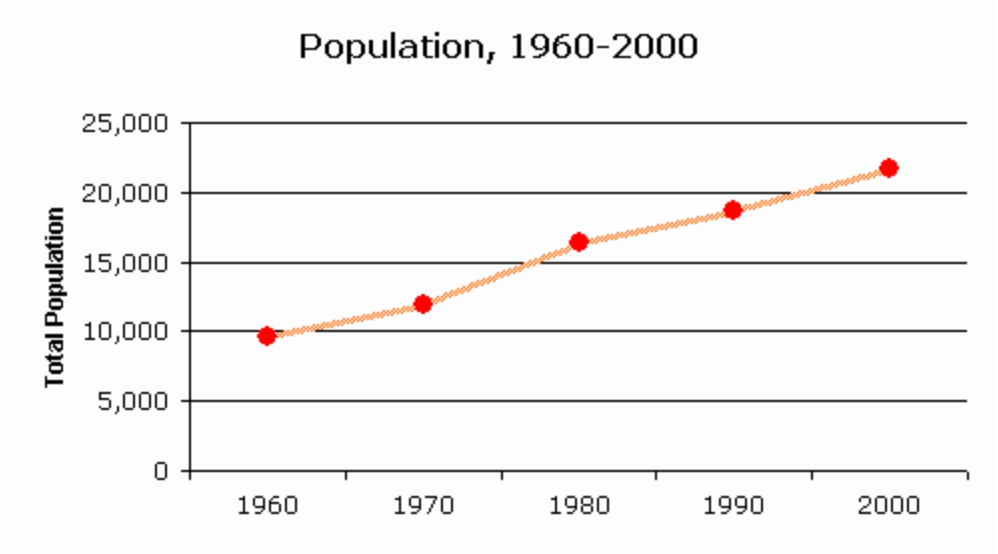
The land was originally platted in 1840. The county was organized in 1875, when the first settlers arrived near Ogemaw Springs and set up a lumber mill, about five miles from West Branch, the county seat and largest city in the county.

The economy of the county comes from tourism, auto-industry related production, plastics manufacturing and agriculture. Oil production can also be found in the southwest corner of the county

- DEMOGRAPHICS – The city of Rose City, to the west of the park, has a 2000 Census population of 721. The city of West Branch, approximately 20 miles to the south and west of the park, has a 2000 Census population of 1,926. The 2000 Census population of Ogemaw County is 21,645, which reflects a 15.9% increase over the 1990 Census figures. The relative density of the county at 38.4 persons per square mile (p/sm), is less than 22% of the state average of 175 p/sm, and is reflective of the generally rural character of this county.

Ogemaw County

POPULATION GROWTH



Source: Census 2000 analyzed by the Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN).

JOB DISTRIBUTION IN OGEMAW COUNTY

Employment in the county is 85% in the private sector, with 'Retail Trade', 'Services', and 'Manufacturing' accounting for nearly 75% of those jobs.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (Number of Jobs)				
Components by Type	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**
Total Employment	8,621	8,579	9,255	9,557
Wage and Salary Employment	6,405	6,465	7,086	7,343
Proprietor's employment	2,216	2,114	2,169	2,214
Farm Employment	430	418	433	422
Non-Farm Employment	8,191	8,161	8,822	9,135
Components by Industry	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**
Private	6,819	6,806	7,440	7,687
Ag. serv., forestry, fishing, and other	109	122	126	129
Mining	74	67	61	58
Construction	465	478	497	512
Manufacturing	997	995	1,077	1,065
Transportation and public utilities	442	411	356	343
Wholesale trade	270	271	281	318
Retail trade	2,266	2,221	2,692	2,799
Finance, insurance, and real estate	543	591	646	691
Services	1,653	1,650	1,704	1,772
Government and government enterprises	1,372	1,355	1,382	1,448
Federal, civilian	56	57	62	80
Military	45	42	42	42
State and local	1,271	1,256	1,278	1,326

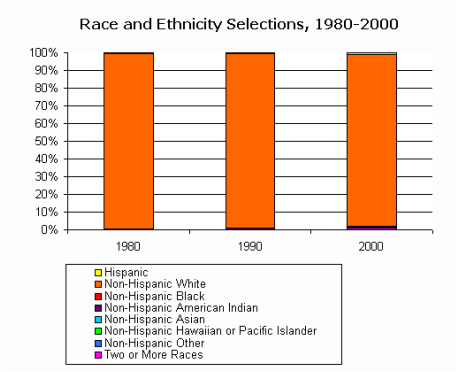
Source:U.S. Department of Commerce - Economics and Statistics Administration - Bureau of Economic Analysis, Issued May 2002

Ogemaw County does not display a wide range of diversity, with 97.5% of the population of the county White. The following illustrations depict the population of Ogemaw County based on 2004 data:

Ogemaw County, Michigan Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts.

People QuickFacts	Ogemaw County	Michigan
Population, 2005 estimate	21,905	10,120,860
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1,	1.2%	1.8%
Population, 2000	21,645	9,938,444
Population, percent change, 1990 to 2000	15.9%	6.9%
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2004	4.8%	6.4%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2004	21.4%	25.1%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2004	19.9%	12.3%
Female persons, percent, 2004	50.5%	50.9%
White persons, percent, 2004 (a)	97.5%	81.4%
Black persons, percent, 2004 (a)	0.4%	14.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2004 (a)	0.6%	0.6%
Asian persons, percent, 2004 (a)	0.5%	2.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2004 (a)	0.0%	0.0%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2004	1.1%	1.4%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2004 (b)	1.3%	3.7%
White persons, not Hispanic, percent, 2004	96.3%	78.1%

POPULATION BY RACE Source: **Census 2000 analyzed by the Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN).**



Hispanic Population and Race Distribution for Non-Hispanic Population

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	16,436	100.00%	18,681	100.00%	21,645	100.00%
Total Hispanics	53	0.32%	104	0.56%	252	1.16%
White*	16,288	99.10%	18,405	98.52%	20,906	96.59%
Black*	9	0.05%	18	0.10%	28	0.13%
American Indian and Eskimo*	63	0.38%	134	0.72%	121	0.56%
Asian*	16	0.10%	17	0.09%	81	0.37%
Hawaiian and Pacific Islander*	-	-	-	-	7	0.03%
Other*	7	0.04%	3	0.02%	3	0.01%
Two or More Races*	-	-	-	-	247	1.14%

* Non-Hispanic only; in 1980 and 1990 "Asians" includes Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

Source: Census 2000 analyzed by the Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN).

- GENERAL HISTORY OF THE PARK – The history of this park starts with the story of Mr. H. M. Jewett, an automobile manufacturer from Detroit. Mr. Jewett was an avid outdoorsman, who in 1925 acquired 7,360 acres of land in Ogemaw County. This property included rugged wooded terrain, small lakes, trout streams and the headwaters of the Rifle River. H. M. Jewett established “Grousehaven Game Farm”, and intensively managed it for upland species and fish. It was operated as a shooting preserve, which also included excellent fishing opportunities on the lakes and trout streams.

  In the operation of the game farm, Mr. Jewett spent thousands of dollars locally for labor and supplies, and each September, held an annual party to recognize the local farmers and residents of the area. It is estimated that between four and six hundred people attended these parties, which included a barbeque, conservation lectures with ‘moving pictures’, and a dance.

  The land was managed and operated in this fashion until the death of Mr. Jewett in 1933.

  In March of 1944, the Department of Conservation was notified that the property was for sale, with an asking price of $80,000 for 4,277.84 acres of land. It was an attractive offering to the Department, because of the potential for public access to trout streams and lakes that in the northeast part of the state were primarily in private ownership. In April and again in May of 1944, the Department inspected the property to assess its qualities and to make a recommendation for purchase.

These evaluations determined the following: (excerpt from a Fish Division report dated June 27, 1946, titled "History of the Rifle River Area (Grousehaven)")

> *"While the scenic value of the Jewett property is high, the opposite is true for agricultural use. It is quite hilly and cut up by swamps of varying size. More than one half of the area is covered with poplar and white birch of one to six inches in diameter. There is very little merchantable timber except in small patches. About 430 acres has a cover of alder-willow type; 400 acres of oak, 240 acres of cleared unused land, 80 acres of swamp hardwood, 40 acres of white and Norway pine and 60 acres of various types of muck land….*
>
> *There are ten lakes on the property having an area of 343 acres. Three of these lakes, totaling 242 acres, contain trout or can support trout, while the others support warm water fish ranging from northern pike to bluegills and largemouth black bass. In addition, the area embraces six trout streams, of a total length of approximately six and one half miles. Rifle River and Houghton Creek are the largest and most important and provide fishing for brown, brook and rainbow trout. The other small streams afford a limited amount of brook trout fishing. Rifle River has its source in Devoe Lake on the property.*
>
> *From this, it was determined, that while of great scenic value, the property lacked the major essentials for a State park development and the existing buildings and other improvements were not adapted for such use.*
>
> *From a game standpoint, the area offered excellent opportunities for controlled public hunting and research on deer, partridge, woodcock, and ducks. Some bear, coyotes and wildcats are also found on the premises. Squirrels and rabbits are sparse. Because the Huron National Forest, Ogemaw State Forest and three State-owned deer yards are within six miles of the property, the need for additional public hunting territory in that immediate area, while desirable, was not acute.*
>
> *From a fisheries standpoint, the property offered the greatest possibilities. Public ownership would restore public access to a considerable amount of lake and trout water which had largely been closed to public fishing for nearly twenty years. Another great value was the opportunity of carrying on fisheries research under controlled public fishing which heretofore had been difficult or impossible because of a lack of complete State ownership on suitable waters. Grousehaven offered in single ownership, within a close area, a wide variety of lake and stream conditions ranging from trout to warm water fish in both lakes and streams…*

…The opportunity (Grousehaven) for fish and game research under controlled conditions, public hunting and fishing, boating, swimming, and other recreational uses enhanced its value for public ownership. Again, all sections of the state would benefit from the results of the research on fish and game problems which State ownership of the property would allow. A similar opportunity probably would not present itself again for some time if ever, or at a lesser cost.

Considering all phases of the matter, the Conservation Commission on July 8, 1944 approved the purchase of the property at a cost of $75,000. Deed was recorded March 21, 1945. Two thirds of the purchase price was paid from the 40 Cent Fish Fund and one third from the $1.50 Deer Fund of the Game Division…."

The Department renamed the area "Rifle River Area (Grousehaven)" and managed it with staff from the Hunt Creek Fisheries Experiment Station for it's dominate purpose of fisheries research. Wildlife research efforts were also conducted. Access to the area was controlled through the single entrance into the area from the north and written permits were issued showing the purpose of the visit. All fishing, hunting, and trapping takes were reported upon leaving the area. During this time no camping was allowed because of the lack of facilities to support it and a concern for fire. These purposes continued until in 1963 when the property was dedicated as the Rifle River Recreation Area under the administration of Parks Division. With the transfer, the Game and Fish Fund was reimbursed with General Funds. In so doing, the Department recognized the value and purpose of this unique acreage as not only for management of the natural resources, but also for <u>all</u> types of recreation.

- <u>LAND OWNERSHIP AND ISSUES</u> – The majority of the park is represented by the original purchase from the Jewett Estate. Since that acquisition in 1944, approximately 120 additional acres have been purchased with Trust Fund dollars, bringing the total acreage of the park to approximately 4,449.

  - <u>Special Legislation</u> – The vast majority (4,277 acres) of the total park acreage has been acquired with this source. It is utilized for general program purposes.

  - <u>Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)</u> – Is utilized for general program purposes. Three 40 acre parcels totaling 120 acres were purchased with Trust Fund dollars.

- Tax Reverted – Land that is tax reverted goes back to the State of Michigan, and is placed under the administration of the Department of Natural Resources. At Rifle River RA, a 40 acre parcel in the northwest corner of the park was acquired by this means in 1927. With acquisition of the Jewett lands in 1944, this forty was included in the overall park lands.

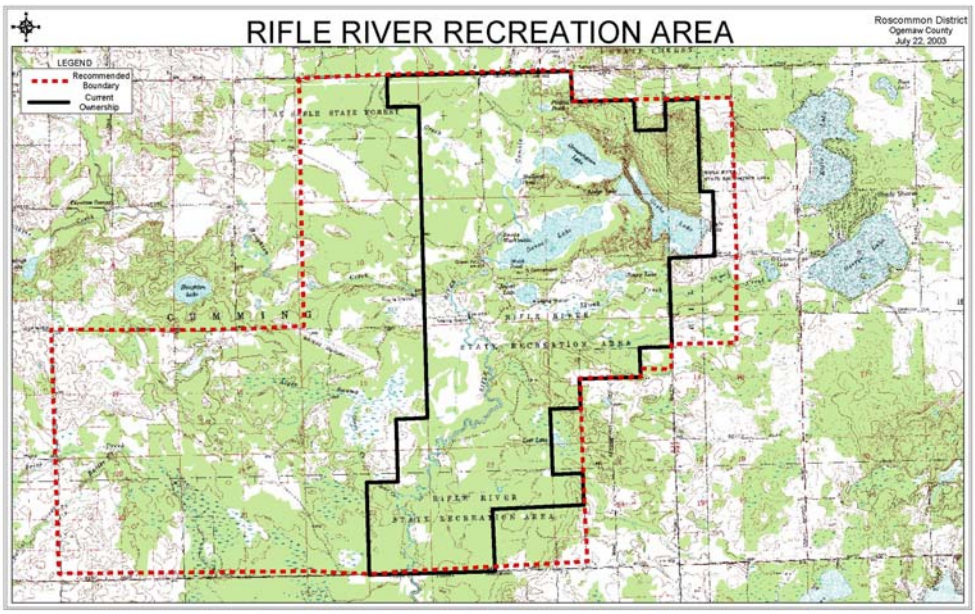
- Pa 451 of 1994, Part 305 – Natural Rivers - Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act. Significant to Rifle River Recreation Area is the designation of the Rifle River as a "Natural River" under Section 324.30502 of this Act, which states in part… "The department, in the interest of the people of the state and future generations, may designate a river or portion of a river as a natural river area for the purpose of preserving and enhancing its values for water conservation, its free flowing condition, and its fish, wildlife, boating, scenic, aesthetic, floodplain, ecologic, historic, and recreational values and uses".

  Management of the land 200' either side of the banks of the designated river and 100' either side of the designated tributaries falls under the specific guidance of the act.

- Consumers Energy Utility Easement - Parallel to and immediately south of Rose City Road, this easement for electrical distribution crosses the north boundary of the Recreation Area. The easement allows for access to and maintenance of their service.

- New Park Boundary. The unique natural resource conditions found in Rifle River Recreation Area are not confined to the historic park boundaries. Those same qualities extend to the west. The Natural Resources Commission has approved revised park boundaries that now include these lands, and lands to the east for not only reducing fragmentation of habitat, but also to 'clean-up' boundary lines to manageable limits, such as existing roads.

NEW PARK BOUNDARY



- <u>RELATIONSHIP OF RIFLE RIVER RA TO OTHER PARK RESOURCES</u>
  In Ogemaw County, there is significant public land ownership by the state with over 88,000 acres of State Forest land. The Roscommon Forest Management Unit (previously referred to as the AuSable State Forest) takes in nearly the entire NW quadrant of the county, with the remainder of the forest to the south and to the east of RRRA. North of RRRA, there is over 30,000 acres of the Huron National Forest found in the county.

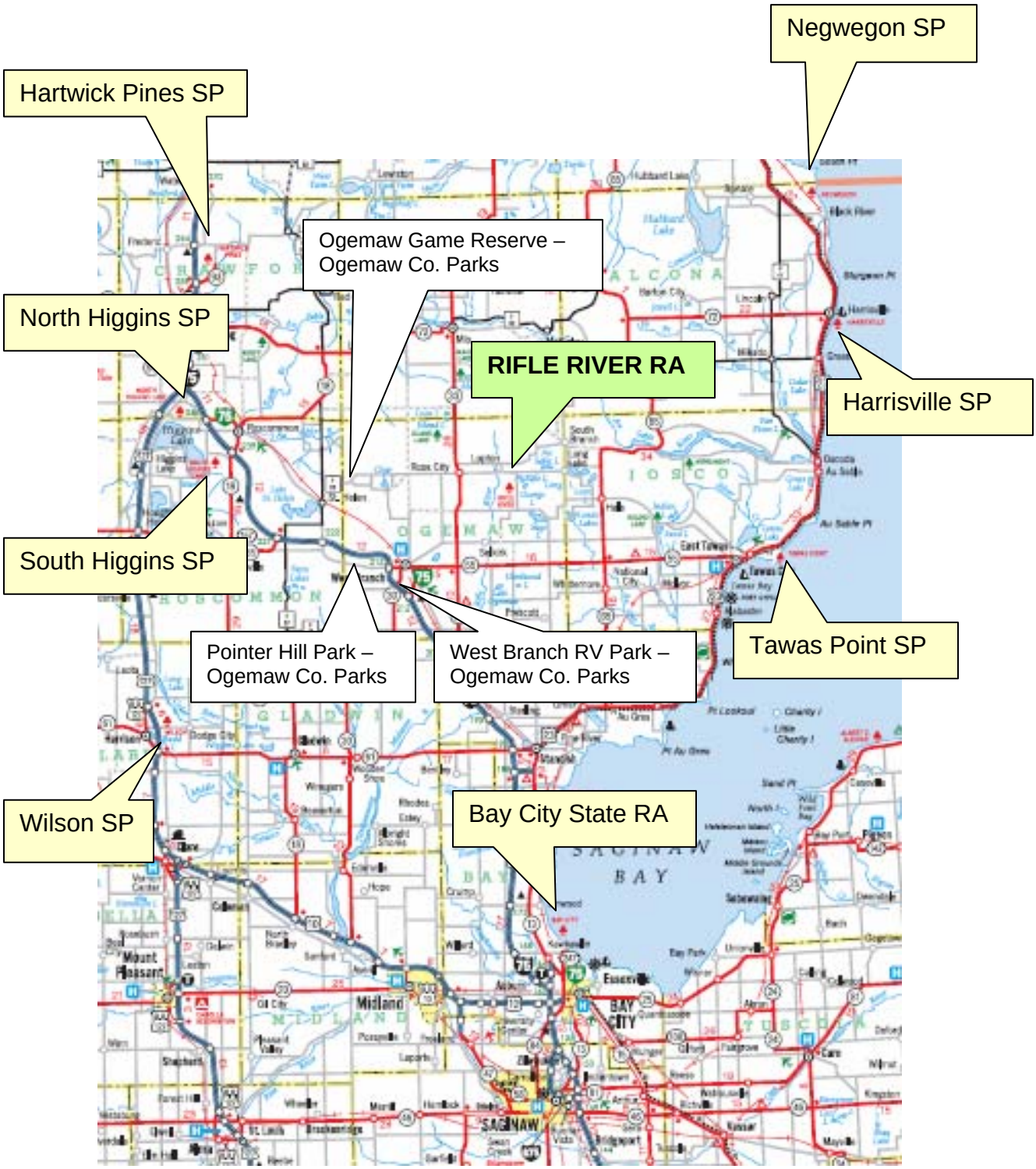
  The Roscommon Forest Management Unit of Forest, Minerals and Fire Management Division (FMFM) administers 'Ogemaw Hills', a State Forest Pathway of over 13 miles of trails, and Ambrose Lake State Forest Campground, providing 19 campsites, carry-down boat access to the lake, and access to Off-Road-Vehicle trails.

  Ogemaw County has a Parks and Recreation Commission with oversight of three county parks. Pointer Hill Park is a roadside park on old M-55. The West Branch Trailer Park is a small campground on the I-75 Business Route, and this park is the source of revenue to support the county park system. The Ogemaw Game Refuge is the last county park, which is operated by contract by the Ten Lakes Sportsman Club. It is located in Foster Township, west of Rose City.

  There are twenty one 'Boating Access Sites' in the county, all administered by the DNR. Five of these are in the RRRA.

OTHER PARK RESOURCES

(Within 50 mile radius)



CURRENT LAND USE – Rifle River Recreation Area is considered a multi-use park with recreational opportunities that include camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, hunting, trapping, boating and multi-use trails for hikers, bicyclists, and cross-country skiing. Snowmobile use is permitted only on designated park roads as a route of access through the park. Early spring park use increases noticeably with the opening of trout fishing, and again in the fall coinciding with upland game hunting for grouse, woodcock, and deer.

The developed land uses are principally located in the north end of the park, leaving vast expanses of acreage in a natural condition and setting. The park is noted as a 'Wildlife Viewing Park' in part because of this, and a popular land use is scenic viewing. This is accomplished by land and sea whether by touring the park roads by car, hiking/biking the trails, or exploring the many lakes and the Rifle River by boat, canoe, or kayak.

Outlying land use is rural. The lands immediately adjacent to the park reflect similar characteristics as the park, and are largely undeveloped. While Ogemaw County is the 'Gateway to the North' and has seen steady growth over the years, that population impact is not being seen near the park.

Natural Resources – The following information is taken either directly or paraphrased from the Michigan Natural Features Inventory Report for Rifle River Recreation Area, titled "Inventory and Management Recommendations for Rifle River State Recreation Area's Natural Communities, Rare Plants, and Rare Wildlife" (March 7, 2001)

- ECOREGIONAL CONTEXT –"The Rifle River Recreation Area is located in Ogemaw County, at the edge of the High Plains, in Sub-subsection VII. 2.2 (Albert 1995). The Grayling Outwash Plains sub-subsection is characterized by a broad, relatively high-elevation plateau (typically 1,000 to 3,000 feet) with the most severe climate in Lower Michigan. The growing season is short (80-130 days) and there is extreme danger of frost throughout the growing season (Albert 1995). The recreation area contains a broad outwash channel with several kettle lakes, with steep, irregular moraine ridges in the northeast and rolling to flat topography in the southeast (Farrand 1982). The recreation area consists largely of excessively drained and well-drained sandy outwash deposits, with poorly drained conditions along the Rifle River. Very droughty outwash and ice contact topography are located to the west of the recreation area and poorly drained clay lakeplain is located not far to the south and east in Sub-subsection VII.1.1."

Figure 1. Regional Landscape Ecosystems of Michigan (Albert 1995). Rifle River State Recreation Area is located in the Grayling Outwash Plain sub-subsection of the Highplains subsection.

- <u>WATER RESOURCES</u> – Rifle River Recreation Area contains the headwaters of the Rifle River, a designated "Natural River". Starting with the outflow from Devoe Lake, the river forms just west of the lake with additional inputs from Gamble Creek, Oyster Creek, and Vaughn Creek from the north. As the river flows south through the park, there are four more streams that feed into the river. Associated with the river and streams are significant areas of wetlands and floodings created by beaver activity.

  The recreation area has 7 lakes and 3 ponds, concentrated in the north end of the park. Devoe Lake is the largest with 130 surface acres and a maximum depth of 45'. This lake is managed by Fisheries Division for

trout. Grousehaven Lake, north of Devoe, has 95 surface acres and a maximum depth of 54'. It too is managed for trout. Grebe Lake is the third largest lake with 72 surface acres, but with a maximum depth of 24', is subject to winterkills. The lake is popular for pike, bass, and panfish angling.

Lodge Lake is adjacent to Grebe Lake and is small, with only 16 surface acres. Like Grebe Lake, it is shallow (20' depth) and is popular for panfish angling. Jewett Lake is a Fisheries Research Lake, having been studied continuously since 1945. Fishing is by permit only, with artificial baits, on a catch-and-release basis.

All four of these lakes have Boating Access Sites. Also, there are three canoe sites on the Rifle River…one at the Devoe Lake Dam, one at the Ranch Campground, and one at the south end of the park, off of Sage Lake Road (F-26).

The remaining lakes and ponds are all small. Of particular significance is Pintail Pond and Lost Lake. These ponds are components of Northern Fens, a relatively rare ecosystem.

- CLIMATE – The table below provides information developed by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for Ogemaw County:

CLIMATE		
MONTH	**AVG. MIN TEMP**	**AVG. MAX TEMP.**
January	9F./-13C.	26F./-3C.
July	55F./13C.	81F./27C
PRECIPITATION	**RAINFALL**	**SNOWFALL**
Average Annual	29in./74cm.	57in./145cm.
GROWING SEASON	**DAYS ABOVE 90F/32C**	**DAYS BELOW 0F/-18C**
126	6	21
		Source: NOAA Climate Summary, 1995

- GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY – The surface geology of Michigan is made up of glacial deposits. From the "Regional Landscape Ecosystems of Michigan" (Albert 1995) and cited in the MNFI Report for this park:

The Rifle River Recreation Area is located in Ogemaw County, at the edge of the High Plains, in Sub-subsection VII.2.2. The Grayling Outwash Plains Sub-subsection is characterized by a broad, relatively high elevation plateau (typically 1,000 to 1,300 feet). There is no exposed

bedrock; glacial drift is 250 to 800 feet thick, some of the thickest in the State.

The Recreation Area contains a broad outwash channel with several kettle lakes, with steep, irregular moraine ridges in the northeast and rolling to flat topography in the southeast (Farrand 1982).

- SOILS – The recreation area consists largely of excessively drained and well-drained sandy outwash and ice contact topography are located to the west of the recreation area and poorly drained clay lakeplain is located not far to the south and east in Sub-subsection VII.1.1. (MNFI Report)

- FLORA – Rifle River Recreation Area has greatly modified vegetative cover from that of pre-settlement times. At the time of European settlement, there were two primary types of vegetation. Extensive cedar and mixed conifer swamps grew along the Rifle River and hemlock-white pine forests dominated the uplands. (See map below)

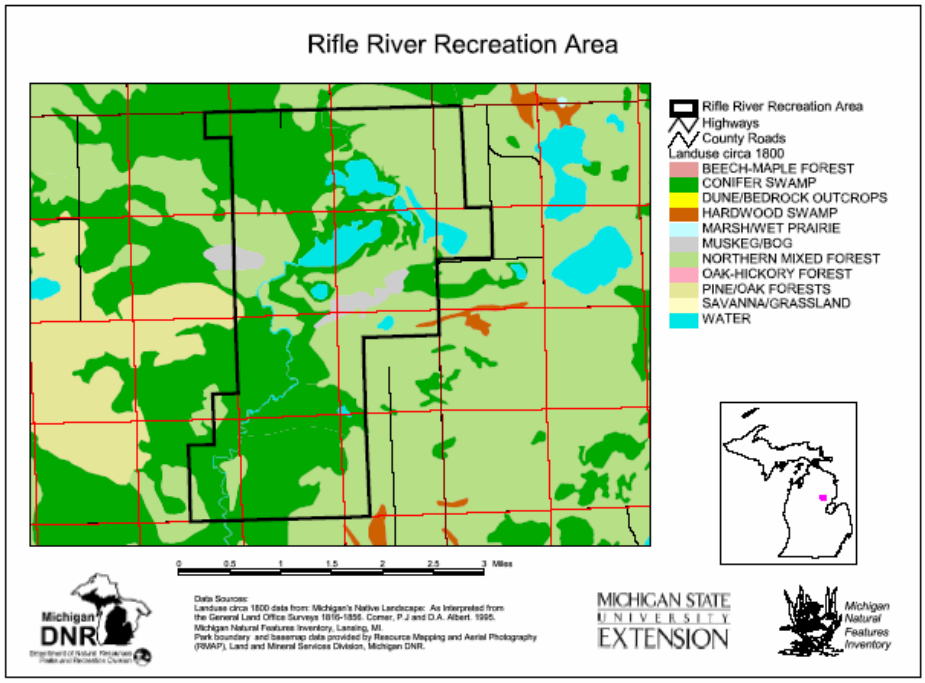


Figure 2. Pre-European settlement vegetation cover for Rifle River State Recreation Area (circa 1800).

From the Michigan Natural Resources Inventory (MNFI) report, the landcover of the uplands of Rifle River RA today represents a highly fragmented condition. The pre-settlement vegetative cover has been severely altered and fragmented, due to past management of the area as a game preserve which emphasized creation and maintenance of early

succesional habitat and habitat edge. This was accomplished by clear-cutting intolerant species such as aspen.

Current landcover is characterized as follows; the most intact natural community remaining in the recreation area is the extensive cedar swamp and other wetlands along the Rifle River and the tributaries that feed into it. The uplands, however, are highly modified and highly fragmented. Large areas of upland are dominated by aspen, with big tooth aspen in the dryer portions and trembling aspen in the wetter portions. (See map below)

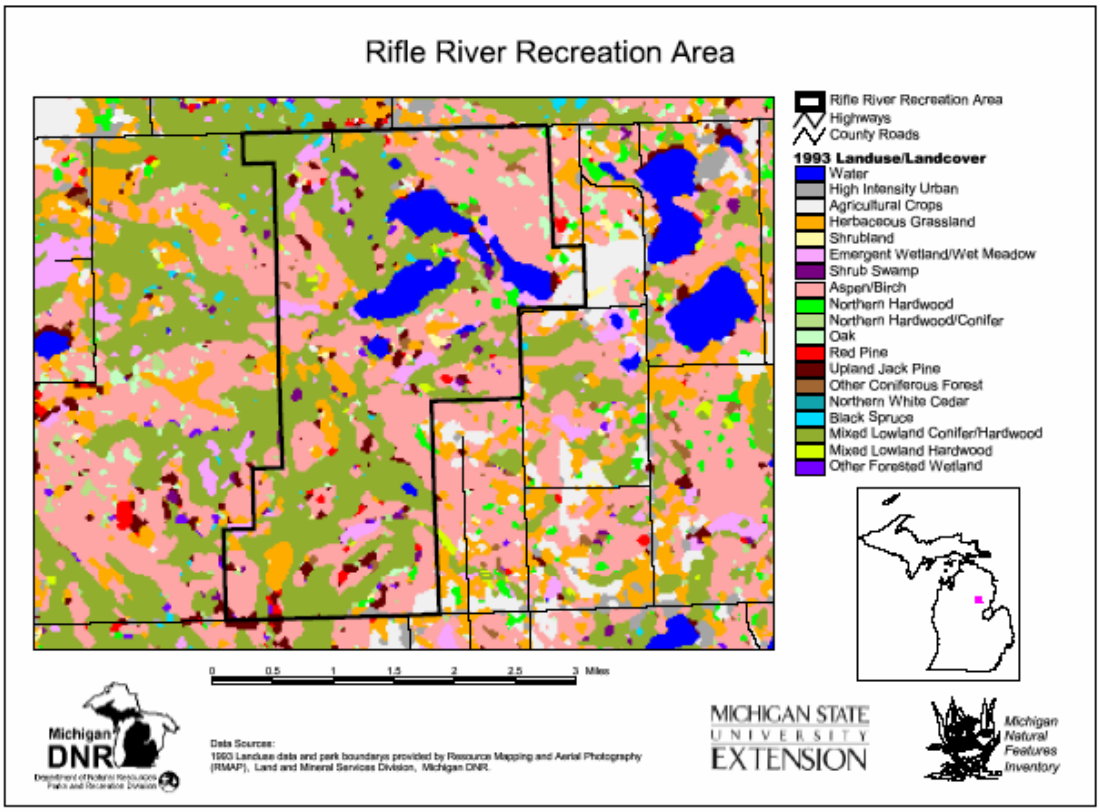


Figure 3. 1993 Land-Use for Rifle River State Recreation Area.

No rare plants were identified by MNFI survey work of Rifle River RA, however, there is a high quality northern fen surrounding Pintail Pond at the north end of the park, and at Lost Lake at the southeast edge of the park. The MNFI report cites these two locations and the extensive conifer swamp as having potential habitat for several protected species.

- FAUNA – Mammals commonly found at Rifle River Recreation Area include white-tailed deer, black bear, gray and fox squirrels, eastern chipmunk, eastern cottontail and snowshoe hare, woodchuck, muskrat, beaver, otter, mink, weasel, bobcat, and coyote.

A variety of birds, including downy woodpeckers, red-eyed vireos, black-capped chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, northern cardinals, a variety of hawks and owls, bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, warblers, roughed grouse, woodcock, wild turkey, and Jackson snipe frequent the park. Also finding home at RRRA are waterfowl, including Canada geese, Trumpeter swan, Common Loon, and a variety of duck species.

Reptiles include the bluetail skink (not a common occurrence in Michigan) and a variety of upland snakes and turtles, with the Blanding's turtle (State Special Concern species) having been sighted by park staff. Amphibians include a wide variety of frogs, toads, and water-based snakes, lizards, and turtles. The lakes and river/streams are home to a variety of warm water fish species, and coldwater species of brook trout and brown trout.

Rare wildlife species identified in the MNFI Report and by park staff include the following:

- Bald eagle (State Threatened) – a nesting pair have been located at the northeast end of Devoe Lake.

- Red-shouldered hawk (State Threatened) - a nest was identified (MNFI) last in 1997, along the Rifle River, west of Lost Lake.

- Common loon (State Threatened) - currently nests on Scaup Lake, Grebe Lake, and Devoe Lake.

- Trumpeter swan (State Threatened) – While nesting hasn't yet been documented in the park, the Trumpeter swan has been a frequent visitor, primarily on Grebe Lake.

- Of interest is that in the past, there have been Great-blue heron rookeries located in the park.

Historic/Cultural Resources

- PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT – There are limited remnants of the earlier occupation of this land by early settlers and the Jewett's operation of the Grousehaven Ranch. Remaining indicators of the homesteads are old foundations and landscape plants. More clearly defined are the remnants of Grousehaven, with the foundation of the lodge in place, the community barbeque still standing, and indicators of the fish raceways still visible today.

  CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT – There are no known indicators of Native American occupation in the park, but this part of the state was influenced

by the tribes. From the web site (http://www.rosecitymi.net/history/chief_ogemaw.html) comes “The Story of Chief Ogemaw” describing the man for whom the county is named.

“*Ogemaw County is named after the Indian title "chief" which in Chippewa is pronounced: "Ogema." The name of the chief was ‘Ogemaw-Ke-Ke-To’, who was Chief Speaker of the Chippewas.*

Born in 1794, he was elected Chief in 1815, spoke at the Treaty in 1819 and spoke before Congress in 1837. He died in 1840.

Ogemaw-Ke-Ke-To, now known as Chief Ogemaw, is described as having been a man over six feet in height, graceful and handsome. Undoubtedly, he was the most outstanding Indian in this section of the country during his lifetime.

The undisputed ways he had over the various Chippewa tribes included not only his ability to ably administer the tribal affairs, but also the brilliant eloquence that was his.

He was chief speaker at the Treaty Conferences of 1819. (Though not a chief of blood, Chief Ogemaw had been elevated to chiefdom by his tribe members).

In a speech that lasted two hours, he held the Indians spellbound. He opposed the proposition of General Cass with all the powers at his command. Chief Ogemaw was chief of the Tittabawassee band, to which he belonged. He married an Indian girl, whose name was Ozaw-woh-nogua. He was the father of four sons and three daughters.

Chief Ogemaw ruled the Chippewas until 1840, when death stepped in and robbed the dusky nation of its wisest, most eloquent and bravest member. He died at Salsburg, now Bay City, Michigan, and was buried in a colonel’s uniform which he received from the President of the United States. He also wore upon his breast a superb government medal, given to him by President Martin Van Buren, in commemoration of his speech before Congress in 1837.

Millie Miller’s impression of Chief Ogemaw was accepted as the official insignia of Ogemaw County by the Board of Supervisors in 1964. An oil painting of Chief Ogemaw decorates the wall of the Court House. He appears on the official maps of the county, as well as on the atlas and the plat book. Chief Ogemaw also appears on the official seal of the Circuit Court of Ogemaw County. The hand-carved Ceremonial Shovel for the ground breaking of the Court House also bears the likeness of the Chief. You will also find Chief Ogemaw in a watermark in both and city and

county stationery. Millie also designed and created the official County Flag which was adopted in June, 1974. Chief Ogemaw appears on a white arrowhead against a spruce green background."

Early European settlement occurred in the late 1800's when settlers attempted to farm the land. Scant remnants of those failed farmsteads remain today.

- ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES – There are no known archaeological resources in the park.

- BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES – The only structures found in the park are the previously mentioned 'Community Barbeque' and the retaining wall/foundation of the old Grousehaven Lodge.

- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE – Some remnants of the farmsteads exist today with evidence of landscape plantings near the foundations. Evidence of the fish rearing raceways can still be seen along Vaughn Creek.

Education and Interpretation

- 'EXPLORER GUIDE' - This statewide program is administered by the DNR - Office of Communications. It places interpretive staff in our state parks for purposes of interacting with park visitors and introducing them to a variety of educational information. At RRRA, the Explorer Guide is available from Tuesday – Saturday each week during the camping season. There is a group campfire ring near the Grousehaven Boating Access Site that is the designated gathering place for programming.

  The Explorer Guide conducts educational presentations and hikes, focusing on the natural resources of Rifle River RA. The park augments this by making available, the variety of DNR posters and other literature for distribution to the campers.

- INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING AND DISPLAYS – Interpretive signage and informational kiosks have been developed by the Office of Communications, targeting the unique and special resources found in the park.

  Here at RRRA, the auto-tour of the park is very popular, and interpretive signage has been developed and placed to highlight various features of the park for those on tour. This includes some interpretation of the former use of the land as 'Grousehaven.'

Additionally, where land management has included clear cuts for aspen regeneration, interpretive signage has been placed to explain what has occurred and why.

Pintail Pond, at the north end of the park, is a relatively rare and special northern fen. At Pintail Pond, an interpretive hiking trail exists with numbered locations of interest along the trail keyed into an interpretive brochure. A recent improvement to this trail is the construction of approximately 600' of boardwalk that protects the fragile ecology of the fen and allows safe passage of curious visitors.

Park staff have developed a PowerPoint presentation that provides a nice overview of Rifle River Recreation Area, including its history, natural features, and recreational opportunities. This will be used for presentation to groups.

- VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS – Rifle River RA is very popular with the 'Campground Host Program' whereby volunteers, often retirees, stay at a campground and provide visitor services for the campers. They greet campers, provide information on campground rules and regulations, promote educational and interpretive opportunities in the park, and offer a social gathering (coffee hour) once a week.

  Every year, volunteers come to the park to assist in the capture and tagging of woodcock.

- RESEARCH – A variety of on-going research activities take place in the park, including the following:

  - Fisheries Division - continuing study of Jewett Lake.
  - Michigan State University - survey for the eastern massasauga rattlesnake.
  - Michigan Technological University - survey for EAB (Emerald Ash Borer).
  - Wildlife Division conducts research on woodcock, utilizing volunteers to trap/band the birds.

Recreational Resources

- DEVELOPED OPPORTUNITIES – Rifle River Recreation Area offers a diverse array of recreational opportunities with both day-use activities and camping. Following are the developed recreational features of this park:

  - Camping – There are five campgrounds in the park, ranging in level of development from modern to rustic. Camping is only allowed in

designated camp sites, there is no dispersed camping allowed. Following is a description of each campground:

Modern Campground	Description
- Grousehaven Lake CG	Located on the north shore of Grousehaven Lake is a modern camping facility served by a flush-type toilet/shower building. There are (75) sites, two of which meet requirements for universal access. All sites have electrical pedestals with 20 and 30 amp service, fire rings, and picnic tables. All campgrounds in the park are served by a Sanitation Station located near the entrance to this campground. Also serving the campground is a 'Host Site', a campers beach, and play equipment for children. Access is from Ranch Road. Thirty (30) sites in this campground are plowed for winter camping.

Rustic Campgrounds	Description
- Devoe Lake CG	A campground with (58) sites, vault toilet facilities, water (by hand pump), fire rings, and picnic tables. This campground also has a boat launch site and a campers beach. Access is off of Ranch Road.
- Spruce CG	A campground with (16) sites, vault toilet facilities, water (by hand pump), fire rings, and picnic tables.
- Ranch CG	A campground with (25) sites, vault toilet facilities, water (by hand pump), fire rings, and picnic tables. This campground is located along the Rifle River. Access is from Ranch Road.

-	Organization Area	Located off of Ranch Road , this area can accommodate groups up to (100) people for day-use activities, organization camps, and group camping. It is served by a hand pump for water, vault toilets, fire rings, and picnic tables.

- Cabins – There are five cabins in the park, providing access to an array of settings. Each cabin can accommodate six people, and is served by a hand pump for water, a vault toilet, a fire ring, and a picnic table. The cabins are available year-round and are identified as follows:

	Cabin	Location
-	Pines	South shore of Grousehaven Lake, access off of Weir Road.
-	Devoe	North shore of Devoe Lake, access off of Weir Road.
-	Grebe	Southwest shore of Grebe Lake, access off of Ridge Road.
-	Scaup Lake	East end of Scaup Lake, access off of Ridge Road.
-	Birch	Along the Rifle River, access off of Ranch Road.

- Day-use Picnic Area and Shelter – Immediately south and east of the Grousehaven Lake Modern CG are day-use facilities to serve large group picnic and shelter needs as well as those of individuals. The shelter is popular on weekends during the summer, and individual tables and grills are available for smaller groups. The day-use beach at this location provides for swimming in Grousehaven Lake.

- Boating – Within the recreation area, there are five boating access sites, described as follows:

	Waterbody	Site Description
-	Grousehaven Lk.	Concrete ramp, parking for 10 car/trailer units, and vault toilets.
-	Devoe Lk.	Concrete ramp, parking for 10 car/trailer units, and vault toilets.
-	Grebe Lk.	Gravel ramp, parking for 2 car/trailer units.
-	Lodge Lk.	Concrete ramp, parking for 5 car/trailer units.
-	Jewett Lk.	Gravel ramp, parking for 3 car/trailer units.
-	Rifle River	There are three canoe sites along the river within the recreation area. Starting at the upstream location, there is a site at the bridge of Ranch Road over the river, just west of Devoe Lake. The second site is at the Ranch Campground. The last site is located at the far southerly boundary of the park along Sage Lake Road.

- Hunting and Trapping – During the fall and winter seasons, from September 14 to April 1, Rifle River Recreation Area is open for hunting of small and big game species. Special hunting seasons do impact the park, and include seasons for early goose and turkey hunting. These special hunting seasons can change and the park should be contacted to confirm dates. Small game hunting is primarily for rabbit, squirrel, and upland birds. Big game hunting is for deer and bear. Waterfowl hunting takes place on the many lakes in the park. Some trapping activity takes place in the marsh areas associated with the lakes and streams, and specifically it is promoted for beaver removal in the interest of maintaining water quality for trout habitat in the Rifle River and connecting streams.

- Fishing – The Rifle River is well known for excellent trout fishing, with access primarily by wading at various locations within the park. The boat launch sites allow fishing opportunities in Grousehaven, Devoe, Grebe, Jewett and Lodge Lakes. Fishing in Jewett Lake is by permit only as it is a 'Study Lake' for long-term Fisheries research. Additionally, there are fishing piers for fishing access to Grebe Lake. These are very popular, but are in need of upgrading or replacement.

- Trails – There are two defined trails in the park, totaling 14 miles in length. The "Pintail Pond Trail" is a short (0.8 mile) loop trail around the pond, providing an educational experience of the 'Northern Fen' environment. This trail is open for cross-country skiing and hiking.

  The majority of trail system in the park runs from the Grousehaven Modern Campground and with a variety of loop segments, takes the user nearly to the southern end of the park. This trail is open for cross-country skiing, hiking, and mountain biking. No equestrian use is permitted in the park.

  In the winter months, snowmobile use is allowed only on designated park roads for purposes of traversing the park to connect with other snowmobile trails to the north and south of the park.

- Open field - an open area is maintained along River Road for field games.

- Park Headquarters – This administrative area for park operations and maintenance is located immediately inside the entrance to the park from Rose City Road. It includes the main office, shop and storage areas. The office is open to the public during normal working hours for information needs.

- AREAS OF CONFLICT – With diverse use for multiple interests comes the potential for conflict betweens users and/or between users and the natural resource or historic/cultural values of the park. Rifle River Recreation Area is no exception. Following are the identified conflict issues for this park:

  - Hunters and Safety Zones – some difficulty with hunters crossing into cabin and campground safety zones.

  - Trespass – illegal intrusions onto park land by ORV's, and hunters setting up illegal shooting lanes and blinds.

- River use – (potential) conflict between canoe livery customers and anglers on the river. Currently this is not a problem because of the operational times for the livery. However, if a new concessionaire should come into play, the potential exists for conflict.

Park Use Statistics and Economic Impacts - 2005 data

- PARK USE – Rifle River RA is within 1 ½ hour's drive of Saginaw/Bay City/Midland, and 2-3 hours from greater metropolitan Detroit and 42% of the population of Michigan. Its close proximity to the I-75 corridor helps to account for why there were more than 111,343 visits to the park in 2005. Of these, 69% were campers and 31% were day-users. Total revenues (Motor Vehicle Permits and Camping Fees) generated by the park in 2005 exceeded $528,000.

  Characterization of park use is described as follows: (based on MDNR-Park Attendance Statistics)

  - Summer Use Season – This is defined as the three month period of June through August, when schools are not in session. 66% of all camping and 46% of all day-use takes place during these months. 43% of cabin use takes place in this period.

  - Fall Use Season – At Rifle River RA, the fall season is defined by the months of September through November. September and October are the highest use months of this season that accounts for 23% of all camping activity in the park. The same is true of day-use, with 28% of all day-use taking place in primarily the first two months of this season. October is the busiest fall month for day-use with increased hunting activity. During this time period, cabin use is at 30%.

  - Winter Use Season – December through March marks a significant decline in park camping activity, accounting for only 1% of camping use. Day-use activity and cabin use is relatively strong, with 11% of day-use and 14% cabin use.

  - Spring Use Season – April through May shows increasing park use in all categories. Camping use is at 10%, day-use is at 15%, and cabin use is at 13%. In this season, use continually increases as the weather warms up in May. May is the busiest spring month for day-use with increased fishing activity.

From “MI CRS Statistics 2004“ report by Spherix (most recent report), the state contractor that administers the Campground Reservation System (CRS), Rifle River RA was the sixth highest ranking park in the Northern Michigan Region of Michigan with 6,003 campground reservations in 2004. South Higgins SP was first of the fourteen parks in the region with 11,725, and Fisherman’s Island SP was last with 2,202.

From the same source, the following statistics (2004 data) are attributable to Rifle River RA:

- The top ten (10) cities for reservations at Rifle River RA are all along or near to the I-75 corridor. Half of these are in the Bay City/Saginaw area, and include Saginaw, Auburn, Freeland, Linwood, and Hemlock. The remaining half are from the Detroit metropolitan area, and include Warren, Waterford, Flushing, Howell, and Royal Oak.

- Rifle River RA had gross revenues from camping in 2004 of $212,491. Of this amount, $140,718 (67%) came from the Grousehaven Lake Campground, $43,639 (20%) from the Devoe Lake Campground, $13,703 (6.5%) from the Ranch Campground, $12,949 (6%) from the Spruce Campground, and $1,482 (0.5%) from the Organization Camp.

- The average amount paid per reservation at Rifle River RA was $32.00, less than the state average of $56.60. The high in the state system was $105.55 at Grand Haven SP on Lake Michigan, and the low was $22.39 at Newaygo State Park.

- The average number of people per reservation was 2.93, exceeding the state average of 2.83.

- The average length of stay was 2.34 days, slightly less than the state average of 2.44 days. The high in the state was Grand Haven SP with 4.32 days and the low was Highland RA with 1.58 days.

- <u>ECONOMIC IMPACTS</u> - Michigan State University (Dr. Dan Stynes) developed an economic analysis model known as “MGM2”. This model is an update of the MGM model developed by Dr. Ken Hornback for the National Park System in 1995. The purpose of the updated MGM2 model is to estimate the impact of park visitor spending on the local economy. These economic impacts are reflected in terms of sales, income, employment, and value added.

  This analysis tool, like others, relies on three primary factors in the common equation:

Economic Impact of Tourism Spending = Number of Tourists (x) Average Spending per Visitor (x) Multiplier (to estimate extended effects of direct spending).

For our purposes of conducting a very basic review of impacts, we have utilized the "MGM2-Short Form" version of the program, which simplifies the extent of analysis required for input, and utilizes more generalized multipliers for spending outputs. For the non-economist, this provides an excellent tool for establishing a baseline assessment of the economic impacts of our parks.

Economic impacts of Rifle River RA to the local community are significant. Ogemaw County is a low density county relative to its metropolitan neighbors, with approximately 60% of the county in forested land. The area around Rifle River Recreation Area is characterized as rural. With Rifle River Recreation Area drawing the great majority of users from outside the county, local business benefits from the influx of this 'new' money to the local economy.

Following are the relative economic impacts (based on 2005 data) of Rifle River RA to the economy of Ogemaw County: ("MGM2-Short Form" for Rifle River RA)

- DIRECT ECONOMIC EFFECTS TO THE COMMUNITY

  - Direct spending attributable to Rifle River RA visitors totaled $3,666,000, of which $328,380 came from Day-Use, and $3,337,860 from Camping (includes Cabin use).

  - Jobs totaled 115, with 10 related to Day-Use activity and 105 to Camping. (Note…jobs are not full-time equivalent. They include part-time and seasonal positions.)

  - Personal Income total is $1,247,000, with $111,680 associated with Day-Use of the park and $1,135,160 associated with Camping.

  - Value added (total income plus business taxes) totaled $1,882,000. Day-Use accounted for $168,600 and Camping accounted for $1,713,790.

- TOTAL ECONOMIC EFFECTS TO THE COMMUNITY (NOTE…this reflects 'Direct Effects' plus the 'Secondary Effects' of visitor spending on the local economy. Secondary Effects (sometimes called 'Multiplier Effects') capture economic activity that results from the re-circulation of money spent by the park visitors in the community.

- Total spending = $4,847,000 (32% over direct spending)

- Jobs = 135 (17% over direct job impacts)

- Personal Income = $1,640,000 (32% over direct spending)

- Value added = $2,610,000 (39% over direct value added)

NOTE….for purposes of updating economic values, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is often used to adjust values over time. Through the following link, [http://www.bls.gov/home.htm] a CPI Inflation Calculator is located in the category of "Inflation and Consumer Spending".

Stakeholder Input

- DNR PROGRAMS – Rifle River RA has a long history of cooperative management with other Department programs, as follows:

  - Wildlife Division – RRRA has been co-managed for wildlife production based on a joint 'Wildlife Management Plan' authored in 1994. That management direction was a primary focus in this planning effort.

  - Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management Division – administered the timber harvest contracts resulting from the actions implemented in the Wildlife Management Plan. They also have an active interest in forest health issues and any wildfire control issues that may impact the park

  - Fisheries Division – Designation of the Rifle River under the Natural Rivers Program falls under this division. Fisheries Division is active in trout management for the Rifle River, Grousehaven Lake, and Devoe Lake. They have also been involved with the continuous warm water species fish research on Jewett Lake since 1945.

  - Law Enforcement Division – plays an important role in this park, particularly with regards to enforcement of hunter safety zones.

  - Office of Communications - Another DNR program with a stake in Rifle River RA is the 'Office of Communications' (OC). Rifle River RA is one of many parks where an "Explorer Guide" is located. This person conducts educational programming for park visitors, tailored to the unique resources of the park. In addition to this hands-on educational approach, OC also contributes to

educational opportunities with the development and placement of information kiosks and bulletin boards.

Input from these programs has been critical to the development of this plan.

- FEDERAL PROGRAMS – the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has an active program of lamprey control in the Rifle River, and its tributaries within (and outside) the park.

- PRIVATE SECTOR – Carl's Canoe Rental and Parkview Acres is a business located near the entrance to the park. The canoe/kayak concession for access to the river in the park is held by Carl's Canoe Rental. Parkview Acres is a gas station and convenience store, which also offers game activities for fee, and has a small campground.

- SPECIAL INTERESTS – The following are use groups that impact the park:

  - The Michigan Nature Conservancy owns 80 acres around Lost Lake and manages it in cooperation with the park.

  - The Bay Area Runners Club held a half-marathon run on the trails in September of 2005. September of 2006 will be the second running of this event.

  - Woodcock banders (volunteers for Wildlife Division) net and band woodcock for research purposes. This has been going on for over 30 years.

  - The Rifle River Watershed Council is active in projects that improve the water quality of the river. Currently they are working on installation of a sediment trap on Gamble Creek.

  - Ducks Unlimited is active in the park for waterfowl hunting opportunities.

  - Trout Unlimited is active in trout management of the lakes and river.

- PUBLIC – Many of the 111,340 +/- park visitors who come to Rifle River RA each year are repeat customers. This is true system wide. From the Public Policy Associates 1997 "Michigan State Parks Study", approximately 2/3 of visitors to State Parks in the Northern Lower Peninsula are "Likely" to return to the park within twelve months. From the same study, the likelihood of a park visitor 'recommending' a particular

park to others was also high with a range of 88% to 91% saying that they would recommend visiting the park.

APPENDIX

REPORTS

- Michigan Natural Features Inventory (access through Stewardship)
- Phase 1 Archaeological Study (access through Stewardship)
- "Rifle River Natural River Plan"
- "Wildlife Management Plan (January 1994)"
- Economic Impact Analysis
- "Management Guidelines for Red-shouldered Hawks on State Owned Lands in Michigan"
- "Operation Plan for Devoe Lake Dam"
- "Trout Stream Best Management Plan"
- Consumers Power Easement
- Ogemaw County Road Commission Easement
- "Camp Grounds" – Public Act and Rules Governing Campgrounds

MEETINGS

- 8/13/2003 Scoping Meeting
- 9/18/2003 Start-up Meeting
- 10/2/2003 GIS Mapping Meeting
- 10/30/2003 Planning Team Meeting
- 12/16/2003 Planning Team Meeting
- 9/15/2004 Public Input Meeting