

2.0 Core Values



2.1 Mission Statements

Guidance for the General Management Plan stems from the Mission Statements of the Department and its Recreation 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 Grand Mere State Park, and subsequently reflected in any shorter range action plans:

DNRE Mission Statement

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment is committed to the conservation, protection, management, accessible use and enjoyment of the State's environment, natural resources, and related economic interests for current and future generations.

RD Mission Statement

The Recreation Division's Mission is to acquire, protect, and preserve the natural and cultural features of Michigan's unique resources, and to provide access to land and water based public recreation and educational opportunities.

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

2.2 Park Purpose

Statements of purpose for Grand Mere State Park are based on park legislation, legislative history, special designations and DNRE policies. These statements reaffirm the reasons for which Grand Mere was identified as part of the State Park system. The purposes of Grand Mere are:

1. An additional adjacent 40-acre tract, a former sand mine reclaimed with significant restoration efforts, will be deeded to the State within the year.

2. To preserve and protect the park's unique natural resources for current and future generations.
3. To provide educational and interpretive opportunities for the public that reflect the mission of the DNRE and the unique qualities of Grand Mere State Park.
4. To provide opportunities for recreational uses and experiences that are unique to Grand Mere and compatible with the park's resource(s) base.

2.3 Park Significance

Park significance statements capture the essence of its importance to carry out the core values of our RD Mission. They recognize the natural and cultural heritage values of the park and the recreational and educational opportunities afforded. These statements describe the distinctiveness of Grand Mere State Park. Understanding these distinctions helps managers make decisions that preserve those special resources and values necessary to accomplish the park's purposes. Grand Mere is significant because of many factors, including but not limited to those stated below.

1. A 1,200-acre tract, most of which is now Grand Mere State Park, was designated a National Natural Landmark in April 1968. The park was created as a 393-acre parcel in 1973. Approximately 500 acres were added in 1986. The area was identified as a Critical Dune Area by the State of Michigan under the Sand Dunes Protection Act of 1978.
2. The high-relief dunes in Grand Mere were formed approximately 12,000 years ago during the recession of glacial lakes. Located between Lake Michigan and several inland lakes and unique wetlands, the park presents an array of natural features that are, together, quite unique.
3. The lakes and wetlands provide a unique ecological area that encompasses the full range of natural communities, from open water aquatic to closed forest terrestrial communities. The park contains a rare example of a wet mesic lakeplain prairie.
4. The site contains four low areas created during the evolution of postglacial ancestors of Lake Michigan, providing a unique ecological area documenting the evolution of aquatic to terrestrial communities.
5. The park's remote natural atmosphere is perfect for nature study. Notable plant and tree species include black oak, red oak, hemlock and white pine, wafer Ash and starflower. Within the inland lakes area, the fragrant water lily, yellow water lily, pickerel weed and various pond weeds can be found. South Lake contains wild rice, pitcher plant and humped bladderwort. The park also features a high-quality dry mesic southern forest.

6. From the 1890's to 1912, South Lake contained cranberry bogs from which berries were harvested and sent to Midwestern cities.
7. The wetlands and lakes are significant waterfowl and songbird migrating areas. The park lies within a migration flyway where birds including hawks, common loons, cormorants, warblers, herons and songbirds are seen.
8. A hemlock swamp lies south of the lakes, representing hemlock-white pine-Northern hardwood forest type that extends south just into Berrien County. Because of the very dense canopy of hemlock, the conditions in that swamp are moist and cool, providing habitat for starflowers (*Trientalis borealis*), bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), goldthread (*Coptis trifolia*), purple avens (*Geum rivale*), and twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*). The park contains a disjunct northern forest community.
9. The 40-acre sand mine parcel adjacent to the southern park boundary was mined off and on between 1965 and 2003. Restoration efforts have been ongoing since mining ceased. The Sand Mine Restoration Plan for the parcel calls for replanting with a variety of natural vegetation that replicates the natural ecosystem found within Grand Mere State Park. The sand mining industry, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the community will be able to use this plan as a model for effective and significant restoration efforts in other disturbed Great Lakes dune areas.
10. Grand Mere State Park is a relatively undeveloped area. Its natural setting provides unique recreational opportunities. It features 4.5 miles of hiking trails, including approximately .25-mile of paved trail. Lake Michigan access is provided within the park, which contains one mile of shoreline.
11. Grand Mere State Park provides unique and important hunting opportunities for waterfowl in southwest Michigan.
12. North & Middle Lakes support populations of bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, black crappie, largemouth bass and northern pike. These lakes offer an opportunity to educate and entertain young anglers.

2.4 Legal Mandates

For all park General Management Plans, legal mandates are identified and 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 Recreation Division. Specific to Grand Mere, the following legal mandates have been identified.

1. PA 451 of 1994, Part 741 – State Park System – Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act. This act is the re-codification 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:

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

2. Restrictions of Land Purchase Funding Sources. Funds used to purchase recreation land can come with stipulations as to how the land can or cannot be used. The following are descriptions of the impacts of known funding sources.

- Michigan Land & Trust Fund (MLTF): Seventeen parcels totaling 558.68 acres were funded by the sale of oil, gas, and mineral leases on certain State land. Two additional parcels were purchased with MLTF totaling 16.89 acres and granted driveway easements. These are to be used for park purposes. The State Constitution was amended in 1984 to provide for a "Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund" which was implemented in 1985. Most rentals, royalties, and other revenues derived from mineral, coal, oil, and gas interests on State-owned land are credited to the fund. Public Act 451 of 1994 redirected a portion (\$10 million per year) of these revenues previously committed to this fund, to the Michigan State Parks Endowment Fund. Appropriations are used to fund grants to local units of government as well as State agencies to acquire or develop outdoor public recreation facilities.
- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF): Four parcels totaling 16.80 acres came from money spent annually to purchase land for resource protection, public outdoor recreation and to develop outdoor recreational facilities across the state. The trust fund was established in 1976 to provide a source of funding for public acquisition of lands for resource protection and public outdoor recreation. Funding is derived from royalties on the sale and lease of state-owned mineral rights. It is utilized for general program purposes.

- ❑ Special Legislation: Five parcels totaling 382.87 acres were acquired by this fund. Roughly one-third of the total park acreage has been acquired with this source. It is utilized for general program purposes
 - ❑ Gift – One parcel of the park were acquired by gift from the Federal Government totaling 0.86 acres. These properties were provided to the state as a donation from private individuals or entities. They are used for general program purposes unless a specific deed restriction would otherwise dictate.
 - ❑ Other: Seven parcels totaling 16.94 acres have been acquired without documentation in the Land Ownership Tracking System (LOTS).
 - ❑ Recreation Bond Fund – One parcel was purchased with this fund, totaling 10.29 acres. These parcels were Water Access Sites acquired under Old Recreation Bond Fund. Act 257, PA 1968.
3. Public Act 451 of 1994, Part 303 – Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act – Wetlands Protection. Wetlands are under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Section 324.30305 prescribes activities not requiring a permit under the Act and uses allowed without a permit. This section reads:
- (A) Activities that require a permit under part 325 or part 301 or a discharge that is authorized by a discharge permit under section 3112 or 3113 do not require a permit under this part.
 - (B) The following uses are allowed in a wetland without a permit subject to other laws of this state and the owner's regulation:
 - (1) Fishing, trapping, or hunting.
 - (2) Swimming or boating.
 - (3) Hiking.
 - (4) Grazing of animals.
 - (5) Farming, horticulture, silviculture, lumbering, and ranching activities, including plowing, irrigation, irrigation ditching, seeding, cultivating, minor drainage, harvesting for the production of food, fiber, and forest products, or upland soil and water conservation practices. Wetland altered under this subdivision shall not be used for a purpose other than a purpose described in this subsection without a permit from the department.
 - (6) Maintenance or operation of serviceable structures in existence on October 1, 1980 or constructed pursuant to this part or former 1979 PA 203.
 - (7) Construction or maintenance of farm or stock ponds.
 - (8) Maintenance, operation, or improvement which includes straightening, widening, or deepening of the following which is necessary for the production or harvesting of agricultural products:
 - (a) An existing private agricultural drain.
 - (b) That portion of a drain legally established pursuant to the drain code of 1956, 1956 PA 40, MCL 280.1 to 280.630, which has

- been constructed or improved for drainage purposes.
- (c) A drain constructed pursuant to other provisions of this part or former 1979 PA 203.
 - (9) Construction or maintenance of farm roads, forest roads, or temporary roads for moving mining or forestry equipment, if the roads are constructed and maintained in a manner to assure that any adverse effect on the wetland will be otherwise minimized.
 - (10) Drainage necessary for the production and harvesting of agricultural products if the wetland is owned by a person who is engaged in commercial farming and the land is to be used for the production and harvesting of agricultural products. Except as otherwise provided in this part, wetland improved under this subdivision after October 1, 1980 shall not be used for nonfarming purposes without a permit from the department. This subdivision does not apply to a wetland that is contiguous to a lake or stream, or to a tributary of a lake or stream, or to a wetland that the department has determined by clear and convincing evidence to be a wetland that is necessary to be preserved for the public interest, in which case a permit is required.
 - (11) Maintenance or improvement of public streets, highways, or roads, within the right-of-way and in such a manner as to assure that any adverse effect on the wetland will be otherwise minimized. Maintenance or improvement does not include adding extra lanes, increasing the right-of-way, or deviating from the existing location of the street, highway, or road.
 - (12) Maintenance, repair, or operation of gas or oil pipelines and construction of gas or oil pipelines having a diameter of 6 inches or less, if the pipelines are constructed, maintained, or repaired in a manner to assure that any adverse effect on the wetland will be otherwise minimized.
 - (13) Maintenance, repair, or operation of electric transmission and distribution power lines and construction of distribution power lines, if the distribution power lines are constructed, maintained, or repaired in a manner to assure that any adverse effect on the wetland will be otherwise minimized.
 - (14) Operation or maintenance, including reconstruction of recently damaged parts, of serviceable dikes and levees in existence on October 1, 1980 or constructed pursuant to this part or former 1979 PA 203.
 - (15) Construction of iron and copper mining tailings basins and water storage areas.
 - (16) Until 3 years after the effective date of the amendatory act that added this subdivision, removal of vegetation as authorized under section 32516.
- (C) An activity in a wetland that was effectively drained for farming before October 1, 1980 and that on and after October 1, 1980 has continued to be effectively drained as part of an ongoing farming operation is not subject to regulation under this part.

- (D) A wetland that is incidentally created as a result of 1 or more of the following activities is not subject to regulation under this part:
- (1) Excavation for mineral or sand mining, if the area was not a wetland before excavation. This exemption does not include a wetland on or adjacent to a water body of 1 acre or more in size.
 - (2) Construction and operation of a water treatment pond or lagoon in compliance with the requirements of state or federal water pollution control regulations.
 - (3) A diked area associated with a landfill if the landfill complies with the terms of the landfill construction permit and if the diked area was not a wetland before diking.

4. Public Act 451 of 1994, Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act Part 323, Shorelands Protection and Management, The key state statute providing consumer protection from the natural hazards of coastal erosion and flooding as well as environmental protection of the State of Michigan's fragile coastal areas.
5. Public Act 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 foot "Safety zone" is established around all occupied dwellings (which includes campgrounds). Under the State Land Rules, the Department also has the authority to expand the application of this 450 foot "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.
6. Public Act 451 of 1994, Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act (Excerpt) – 324.76102. Aboriginal records and antiquities; right to explore, survey, excavate, and regulate reserved to state; possessory right or title to abandoned property. Sec. 76102 (1) The state reserves to itself the exclusive right and privilege, except as provided in this part, of exploring, surveying, excavating, and regulating through its authorized officers, agents, and employees, all aboriginal records and other antiquities, including mounds, earthworks, forts, burial and village sites, mines or other relics, and abandoned property of historical or recreational value found upon or within any of the lands owned by or under the control of the state. (2) The state reserves to itself a possessory right or title superior to that of a finder to abandoned property of historical or recreational value found on the state owned bottomlands of the Great Lakes. This property shall belong to this state with administration and protection jointly vested in the department and the department of history, arts, and libraries.

7. Public Act 451 of 1994, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act Part 353 – Sand Dunes Protection and Management. Regulations to protect the critical dune areas of this state, allowing local units of government to exercise the primary role in protecting and managing critical dune areas in accordance with this part. The benefits derived from alteration, industrial, residential, commercial, agricultural, silvicultural, and the recreational use of critical dune areas shall occur only when the protection of the environment and the ecology of the critical dune areas for the benefit of the present and future generations is assured.
8. Prohibited Uses – From MCL 324.504 Order 5.1. A person shall not do any of the following in any state park or recreation area:
 - (A) Possess or use fireworks in a manner prohibited by section 243a of Act No. 328 of the Public Acts of 1931, being § 750.243a of the Michigan Compiled Laws.
 - (B) Without first obtaining proper written permission, peddle or systematically solicit business of any nature; distribute handbills or other advertising matter; post signs on any lands, waters, structures or property; or use any portion of a state park or recreation area for commercial operations.
 - (C) From R299.922, Unlawful Acts, (v) To ride or lead a horse, pack animal, or other riding animal, or any animal-driven vehicle on any area except on roads that are open to the use of motor vehicles, trails, bridle-paths and campgrounds designated for such use by the department and on state forest lands not posted closed to such use or entry.

2.5 Other Designations

National Natural Landmark Status- Defined by the National Parks Service. This designation results from a cooperative agreement between the NPS and public/private landowners. A NNL is a national significant natural area that has been designated by the Secretary of the Interior. To be nationally significant, a site must be one of the best examples of a type of biotic community or geologic feature in its physiographic province. The goal of the program is to recognize and encourage the protection of sites containing the best examples of geological and ecological components of the nation's landscape.

2.6 Land Acquisition

Imbedded in its mission statement and core values is the acquiring of land with unique resources, or natural, historic, and cultural features. Land is to be acquired for the direct purposes of preserving and protecting natural and historical / cultural features and providing public recreation and educational opportunities.