

3.0 Management Zone Plan



With guidance of the Planning Team and input from our stakeholders and the public, the park's "Purpose and Significance" statements were formulated. This established an identity for Grand Mere State Park as a place to be valued for its unique ecological features, Lake Michigan shoreline, recreational trails, and opportunity for natural resources education.

The Management Zone Plan, Figure 1, was developed in keeping with the park's unique Identity. Similar to the Purpose and Significance statements, the Management Zone Plan was also drafted with Planning Team, stakeholder and public support. The Management Zone Plan seeks to preserve and protect the resources, while creating low-intensity recreational uses, and educational and interpretation opportunities. To achieve this, the 1,127-acre Park was divided into the following zones:

- ❑ Primitive Zone comprises 1,029 acres (91%) and reflects a desired condition that emphasizes the natural resources. Land is managed to only allow dispersed and low frequency use for low impact recreational purposes. Attaining and maintaining a high quality natural resource condition dictates the extent to which recreational improvements or uses are allowed
- ❑ Scenic Zone (overlay) comprises 51 acres (5%) and recognizes that there are aesthetic qualities to be preserved and protected in the park. The lakeshore at Grand Mere is prized for its unique views.
- ❑ Natural Resource Recreation Zone comprises 99 acres (9%) and permits active recreation with moderate to high density of use conducted in a natural setting. There is still an emphasis on resource quality over recreation, but higher levels of uses are allowed
- ❑ Proposed Future Expansion: The Planning Team recommends acquisition of those properties within the 2004 NRC Boundary as shown on the map.

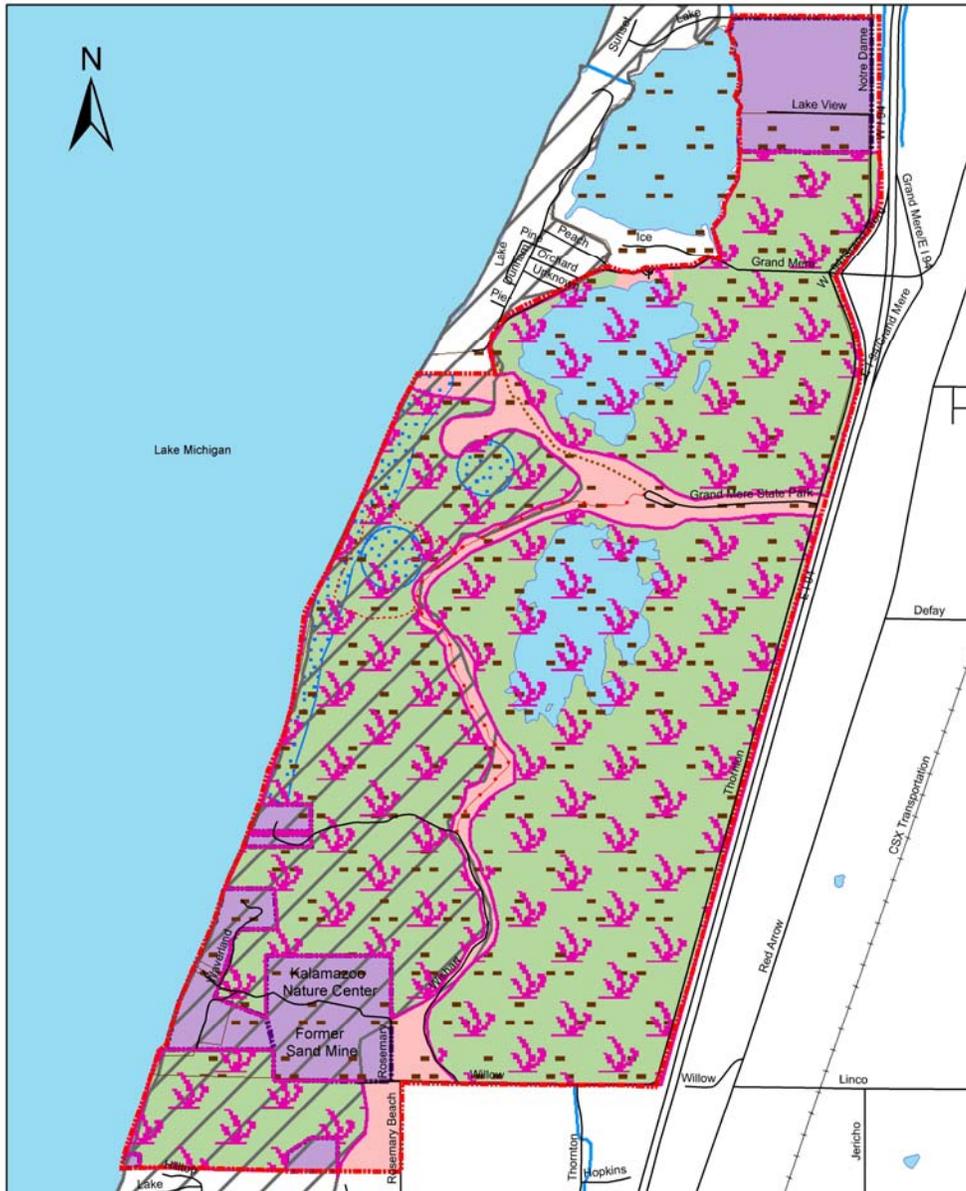
This is Phase I of the General Management Plan for Grand Mere State Park. Phase I determines management zones for the park land. Management zones describe a variety of activities that **may be** appropriate within that zone. Identifying specific activities that **will occur** is a function of Phase 2 general management planning, and not a component of this phase.

Other Plan Features and Recommendations

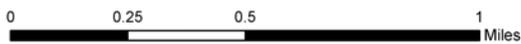
Natural Area Designation: A majority of the park is proposed to be designated as a Natural Area as defined in State Law 351 of Act 454 (1994). Mechanized vehicles for any other use than management are prohibited and no easements or rights-of-way are permitted. Grand Mere State Park is found to meet the following required characteristics:

- ❑ The park has retained or reestablished its natural character, or has unusual flora and fauna or biotic, geologic, scenic or other similar features of educational or scientific value
- ❑ Features have been identified and verified through research and study by qualified observers

Grand Mere State Park Management Zones



- Dedicated NRC Boundary
- Proposed Future Acquisition
- Proposed Natural Area
- National Natural Landmark
- Scenic Overlay Zone
- Natural Resource Recreation Zone
- Primitive Zone
- Critical Dune Area



Sources: MDNR, Michigan Geographic Data Library

3.1 Primitive Zone

The majority of the land comprising Grand Mere State Park is designated Primitive Zone (91%). About 1/3 of the park contains regulated Critical Dune Areas and there is additional significant acreage of open water and regulated wetlands. Almost the entire park is a designated National Natural Landmark. Only foot traffic would be allowed in this zone to ensure that the natural features are not damaged or compromised by recreation.

A. Natural Resources. This zone will reflect natural processes, with vegetative management only allowed to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removing of invasive species), to address hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease. Land would be managed to preserve and protect the wetlands, open water aquatic and closed forest terrestrial communities, and wet mesic lakeplain prairie. Preserving this land is important because:

- ❑ The high-relief dunes in Grand Mere are a unique natural phenomenon not found anywhere else in the world.
- ❑ The diversity of natural communities supports a great diversity of flora and fauna.
- ❑ The four low areas within the park demonstrate the evolution of aquatic to terrestrial communities, perhaps among the very last sites on all the Great Lakes.

The management zone plan promotes the on-going maintenance and enhancement of these natural resources to ensure their success in the long-term. Native species and natural processes would take precedence over visitor accommodation.

B. Historic / Cultural Resources. Resources in this zone would be preserved, removed or allowed to waste away.

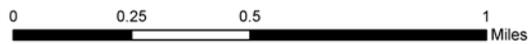
C. Recreational Opportunities. With the focus of this zone being preservation, protection and enhancement of the natural communities present within the zone, recreational opportunities are limited to low-intensity uses. Any uses must be dispersed, low intensity, off-trail or trail, self-reliant, outdoor activities. Activities that could occur in this zone are hiking, back-packing, primitive camping, cross-country skiing, nature observation. Opportunities for hunting, trapping and fishing are key to the significance of this park.

D. Education Opportunities. The ecological significance of the resources in the park presents a tremendous educational opportunity. Information can be relayed through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and other appropriate locations.

Grand Mere State Park Primitive Zones



-  Dedicated NRC Boundary
-  Proposed Future Acquisition
-  National Natural Landmark
-  Primitive Zone
-  Critical Dune Area



Sources: MDNR, Michigan Geographic Data Library



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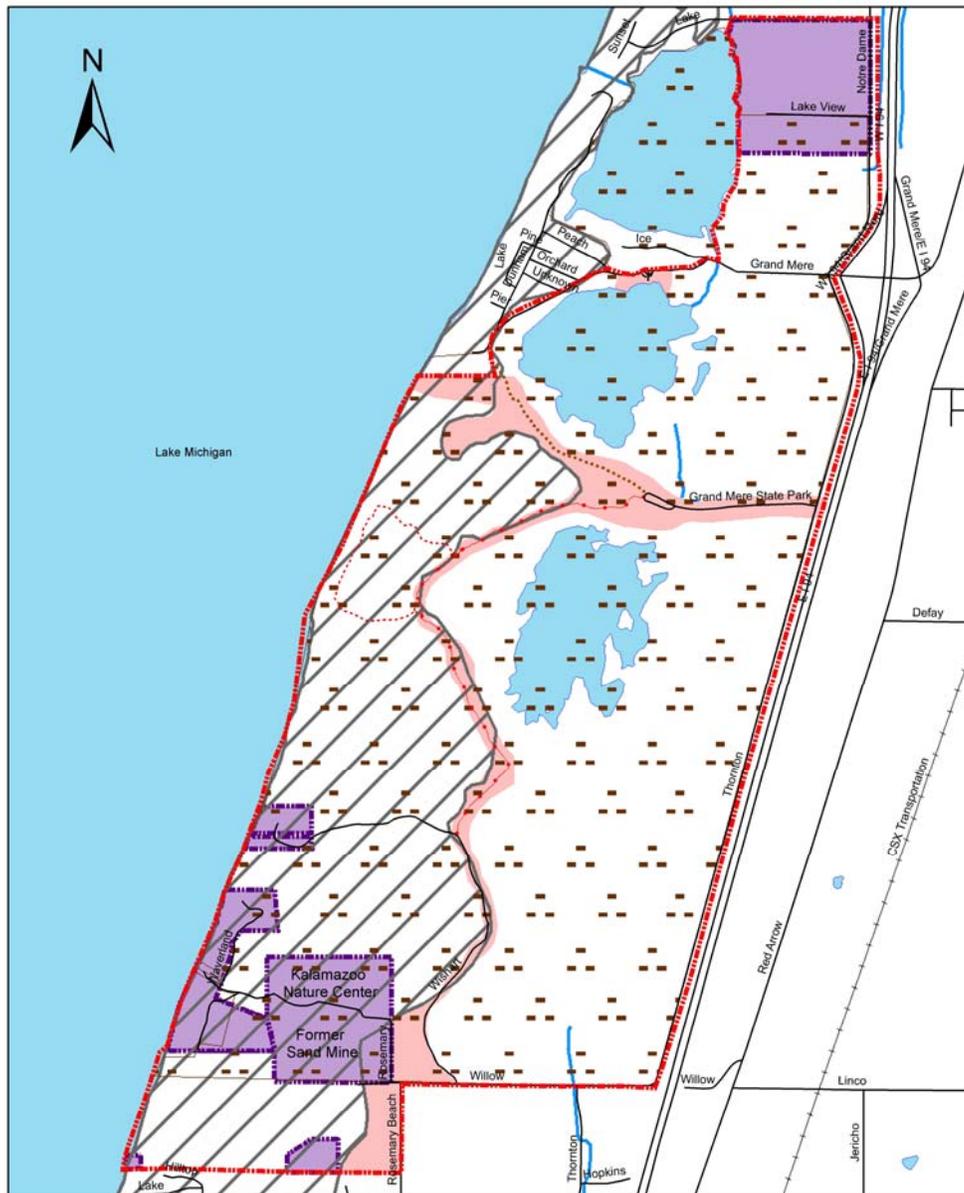
- E. Visitor Experience. Visitor experience would reflect a high degree of natural feel: a significant sense of solitude, and a lack of man-made improvements. There would be low interaction with others. Phase II of the planning process will consider how to minimize user conflicts such as noise and safety between hunters and other visitors.
- F. Management Focus. Management would focus on maintaining the low-impact character of the zone, with emphasis on natural resource quality. Routine maintenance would be provided. Care would be taken to eliminate any detrimental impacts such as erosion, sedimentation or incursion of invasive species. Other management strategies would be based on recommendations in a future Stewardship Plan, including designation under the Natural Areas Act.
- G. Development. The focus is to maintain as little evidence of human activity as possible. Only trail improvements, which can include boardwalks and/or overlooks, and resource restoration measures will occur.

3.2 Natural Resource Recreation Zone

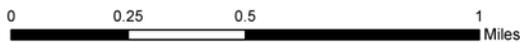
Approximately 9% of Grand Mere State Park is Natural Resource Recreation (NRR). This zone encompasses the existing entry drive and hiking trails. The corridor, an old road bed, was designated NRR to allow for improved barrier-free access within the park.

- A. Natural Resources. This zone will reflect natural processes, with vegetative management only allowed to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removing of invasive species), to address hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease. Vegetation may also be managed to facilitate recreational use and maintaining an aesthetically appealing landscape.
- B. Historic / Cultural Resources. Resources in this zone could be preserved, rehabilitated, removed or allowed to waste away. Historic structures could be adaptively used for operational uses or educational purposes.
- C. Recreational Opportunities. Moderate to high levels of recreation will be permitted in this zone only. This will accommodate visitors engaged in diverse land and water activities and will allow rustic camping and hunting/trapping/fishing in designated areas. Only non-motorized uses will be permitted on trails.
- D. Education Opportunities. Information can be relayed through the use of kiosks or interpretive signage at trailheads, along trails or overlooks.
- E. Visitor Experience. Moderate to high visitor encounters are accommodated in the Natural Resource Recreation Zone. Activities for visitors to engage in could offer a variable time commitment, challenge and adventure. Moderate noise tolerance and moderate interaction with others can be expected.

Grand Mere State Park Natural Resource Recreation Zones



-  Dedicated NRC Boundary
-  Proposed Future Acquisition
-  National Natural Landmark
-  Natural Resource Recreation Zone
-  Critical Dune Area



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Sources: MDNR, Michigan Geographic Data Library

- F. Management Focus. Management focuses on maintaining the use of the zone appropriate to the RD's mission. Public safety, protection of resources, and universal access are management priorities.
- G. Development. A moderate level of development of facilities for support of visitor activities is permitted in this zone. Examples of development include restrooms, concrete/asphalt/gravel walkways and parking, trails, benches, picnic tables, rustic campsites, cabins and shelters for recreation and educational opportunities. Site hardening is allowed as necessary to facilitate activities and protect natural resources

3.3 Scenic Zone

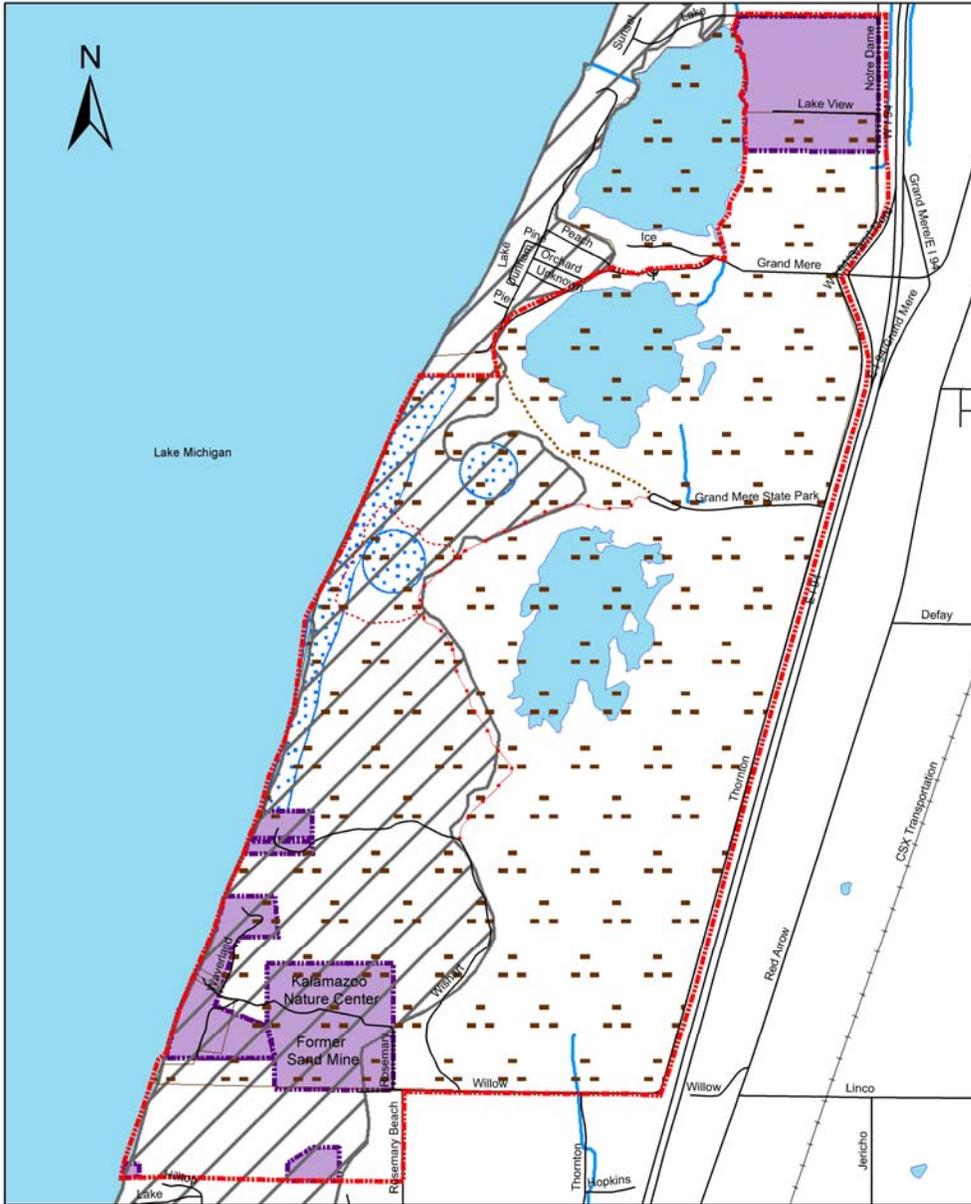
The Scenic Zone (overlay) is established for scenic viewscales. While there are many in Grand Mere State Park, those identified during the plan process total approximately 5% and are noted on the plan within the Primitive zone, accessible by trails designated NRR (above): the park's entire Lake Michigan shoreline and two high spots within the dunes at the north end of the park.

- A. Natural Resources. This zone will reflect natural processes, with vegetative management only allowed to restore and maintain natural ecological structure and processes (such as removing of invasive species), to address hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease. Vegetation may also be managed to enhance the viewscales of the zone
- B. Historic / Cultural Resources. Cultural resources would be preserved, rehabilitated or removed. Historic structures could be adaptively used for operational uses or educational purposes.
- C. Recreational Opportunities. Moderate levels of recreation would be allowed, compatible with the Primitive zone. Non-motorized activity only would be allowed on the trail and observation point; motorized activity would be allowed only on designated roads.
- D. Education Opportunities. Interpretive signage may be used at key viewing points, trailheads, overlooks or the parking area. There may be opportunities for off-site interpretation as well.
- E. Visitor Experience. High encounters can occur in Scenic Zones, where appropriate with the underlying zone. Visitors would be engaged in sightseeing activities by hiking or bicycle. A moderate time commitment, off-site interpretation and noise tolerance would be expected.
- F. Management Focus. Management focuses on maintaining the quality of the viewscape. Public safety, and ensuring that other activities and/or development

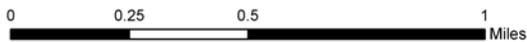
within the Scenic Zone are compatible with the overriding purpose of the view quality are other management concerns.

- G. Development. A moderate level of development is expected to support visitor access, interpretive activities and sightseeing, provided they are compatible with the Primitive Zone.

Grand Mere State Park Scenic Overlay Zones



-  Dedicated NRC Boundary
-  Proposed Future Acquisition
-  National Natural Landmark
-  Scenic Overlay Zone
-  Critical Dune Area



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