

3.0 Management Zone Plan



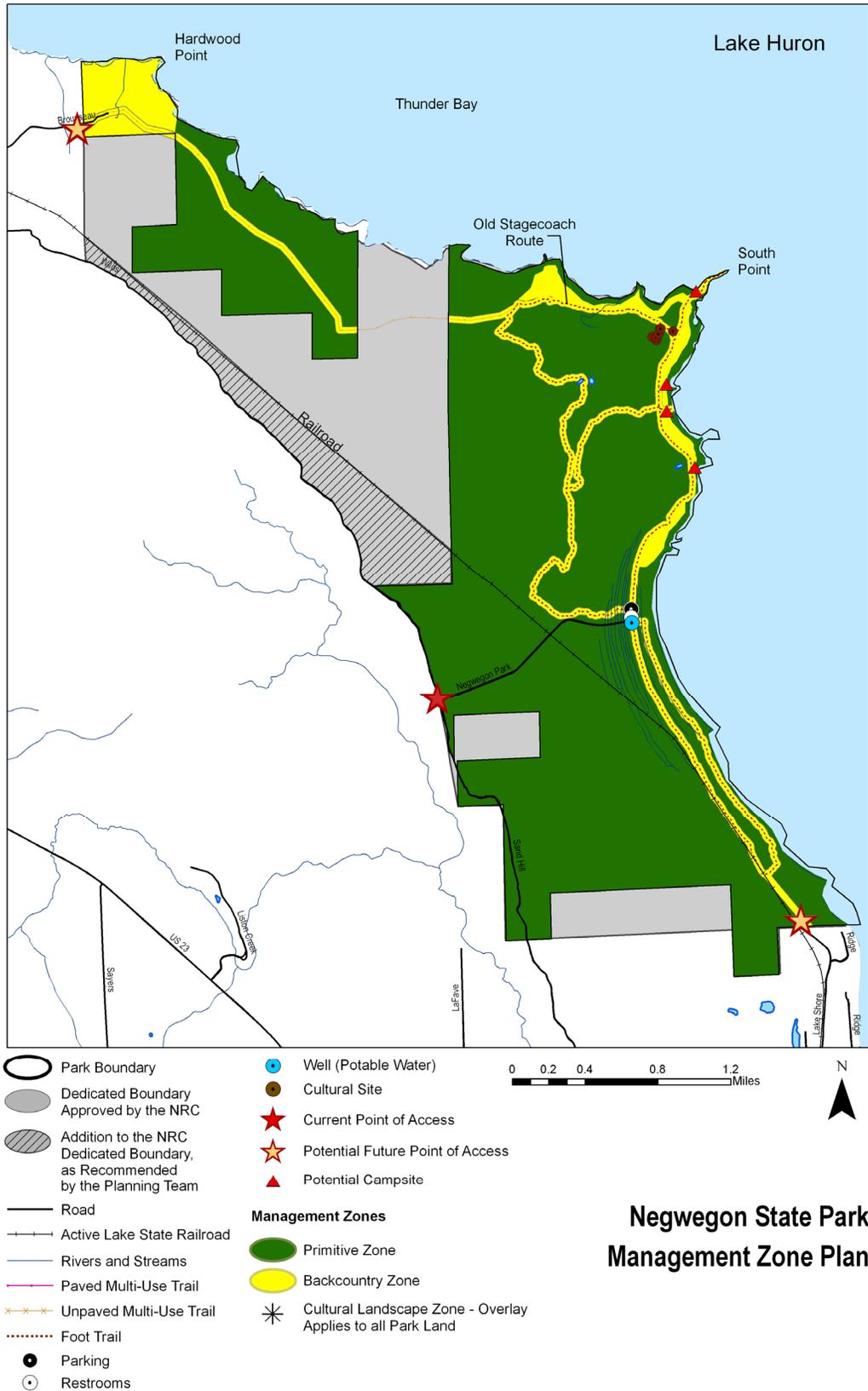
With guidance of the Planning Team and input from our stakeholders and the public, the Recreation Area “Purpose and Significance” statements were formulated. This established an identity for Negwegon State Park as: a place to be valued for the variety of undisturbed and sensitive habitats, shoreline and historic and cultural resources; a place that is part of a greater network of fishing, hunting, recreational trails and natural resources; a place where visitors may come to learn about the unique natural features; a place where visitors may experience a rustic outdoor experience through hiking, kayaking, and camping.

The Management Zone Plan, Figure 4, was developed according to the 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 3,738-acre Park was divided into the following zones:

- ◆ Primitive Zone 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.
- ◆ Backcountry Zone emphasizes resource quality over recreation, but allows for modification of the landscape to allow for moderate levels of active recreation uses. Activities that could occur in this zone include hiking trails, hunting and trapping, rustic camping, bicycling and equestrian use, and other complementary uses. The activities should allow visitors to experience nature at a variety of levels.
- ◆ Cultural Landscape Overlay Zone addresses the overall setting in which is found not only historic structures, but also non-structural evidence of the

This is Phase I of the General Management Plan for Negwegon. Phase I determines management zones (MZs) for the park land. MZs 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 plan.

Figure 4: Management Zone Plan for Negwegon State Park



traditions, beliefs, practices, lifeways, arts, crafts and social institutions of any community.

Other Plan Features and Recommendations

- ◆ Regional Consideration. As described in the Preface of this document, the planning for Negwegon State Park was performed in conjunction with the Rockport Property and Thompson's Harbor State Park. The planning effort, supported by a consensus of the Planning Team, resulted in the following concept: Rockport would be established as the central "hub" of the three sites, allowing Negwegon and Thompson's Harbor to remain in an relatively undisturbed, natural state. The concept of the hub is one in which Rockport would be identified by visitors as the first stop to exploring northeast Michigan. At Rockport, there may be an interpretive center or a similar structure where people would become oriented as to the location of each site, as well as become aware of the connecting trails, and educational and recreation opportunities available at each site. Maps, brochures and perhaps information on eco-tourism businesses would be available at this central gathering place.

Of the three sites – Negwegon State Park, the Rockport Property, and Thompson's Harbor State Park – Rockport was selected as the ideal hub for two reasons: its central location between Negwegon and Thompson's Harbor; and, it has already been the site of much disturbance in the Developed Recreation Zone. Scuba diving, a significant deep water boat access to Lake Huron, a Township Park, fossil collection, and long-range target shooting, are some of the activities that currently take place in this area. In contrast, Negwegon and Thompson's Harbor remain in a primarily undeveloped, natural state. To preserve their pristine environments, parking will remain minimal, but more dispersed to improve access. Rockport would be the advertised "central" location, and would be improved to accommodate more intense use and development. Note: should the concept of Rockport as the central hub not, modifications to the General Management Plan for Thompson's Harbor could be necessary (see Thompson's Harbor General Management Plan).

- ◆ Access and Parking. Negwegon State Park is accessible by Sand Hill Road. Sand Hill Road is an unpaved road on sandy soil, which makes travel quite difficult during certain times of year. The entrance road to Negwegon State Park, a wide, gravel surface, is a stark contrast to the natural, rustic setting one experiences along Sand Hill. Thus there are two issues of concern: 1) Difficulty accessing the Park via Sand Hill Road and 2) The jarring experience of turning from the rustic Sand Hill Road onto the Park entrance road. To address both issues, Phase I of the Management Plan recommends:

1. Improved road conditions and signage pointing to Negwegon State Park are needed for Sand Hill Road. The DNR should work with the Road Commission on providing a more stable surface that would facilitate safe travel by Park visitors. Also, developing additional points of entry that would include small, unpaved parking areas, should be considered. Potential locations determined as a result of the planning process are Brousseau Road (a northern access point) and Lake Shore Road (a southern access point that would provide a close link to the Black River community, park and boat launch).
 2. Develop a strategy to lessen the visual contrast between Sand Hill Road and the Park access road. Landscaping and/or other treatments should be designed to soften the access road. Careful engineering would be required, as the road traverses sensitive natural features.
- ◆ Camping. Potential locations for hike-in or kayak-in camping areas are identified on the Management Zone Plan. These sites are located in the Backcountry Zone. The sites would not be on the Lake Huron shoreline, but in close proximity to it.
 - ◆ Equestrian and Bicycle Use. The trails, including the Old Stagecoach Route and Potawatomie, may allow for equestrian and bicycle use, where appropriate.
 - ◆ Signage. Appropriate signage is needed to inform the public of the park location. Interpretive, directional and education signage within each park will be developed under Phase 2.
 - ◆ Future Purchases. Part of the DNR's mission is to acquire lands with unique natural, cultural and historic resources for the purposes of public recreation and education. The NRC-approved dedicated boundary for Negwegon State Park is provided in Section 2.5. Land within the dedicated boundary would be a priority purchase for the DNR, should the opportunity to purchase and funding become available. Land in the dedicated boundary is currently in private ownership, and therefore has not been designated a management zone. Major land purchases will prompt an amendment to this Plan.

3.1 Primitive Zone

The majority of the land comprising Negwegon is designated Primitive Zone. In this 2,970 acres (79% of the park) are found undisturbed habitats, wetlands, and sensitive ecosystems. Only foot traffic would be allowed in order to ensure that the natural features are not damaged or compromised by recreation. Figure 5 presents areas designated Primitive Zone. Figure 6 presents the Primitive Zones with a wetlands overlay to illustrate these impacts.

- 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, wooded dune-swale complexes, undisturbed lowlands and northern upland forest types. Preserving this land is important because:

- ◆ The land provides habitat for a diverse array of animals, including rare species such as Blanding's turtles and Bald eagles.
- ◆ The forested coast supports a great diversity of flora and fauna.
- ◆ The shoreline and coastal waters are highly valued for beach zone species composition, whitefish spawning and commercial fishing.

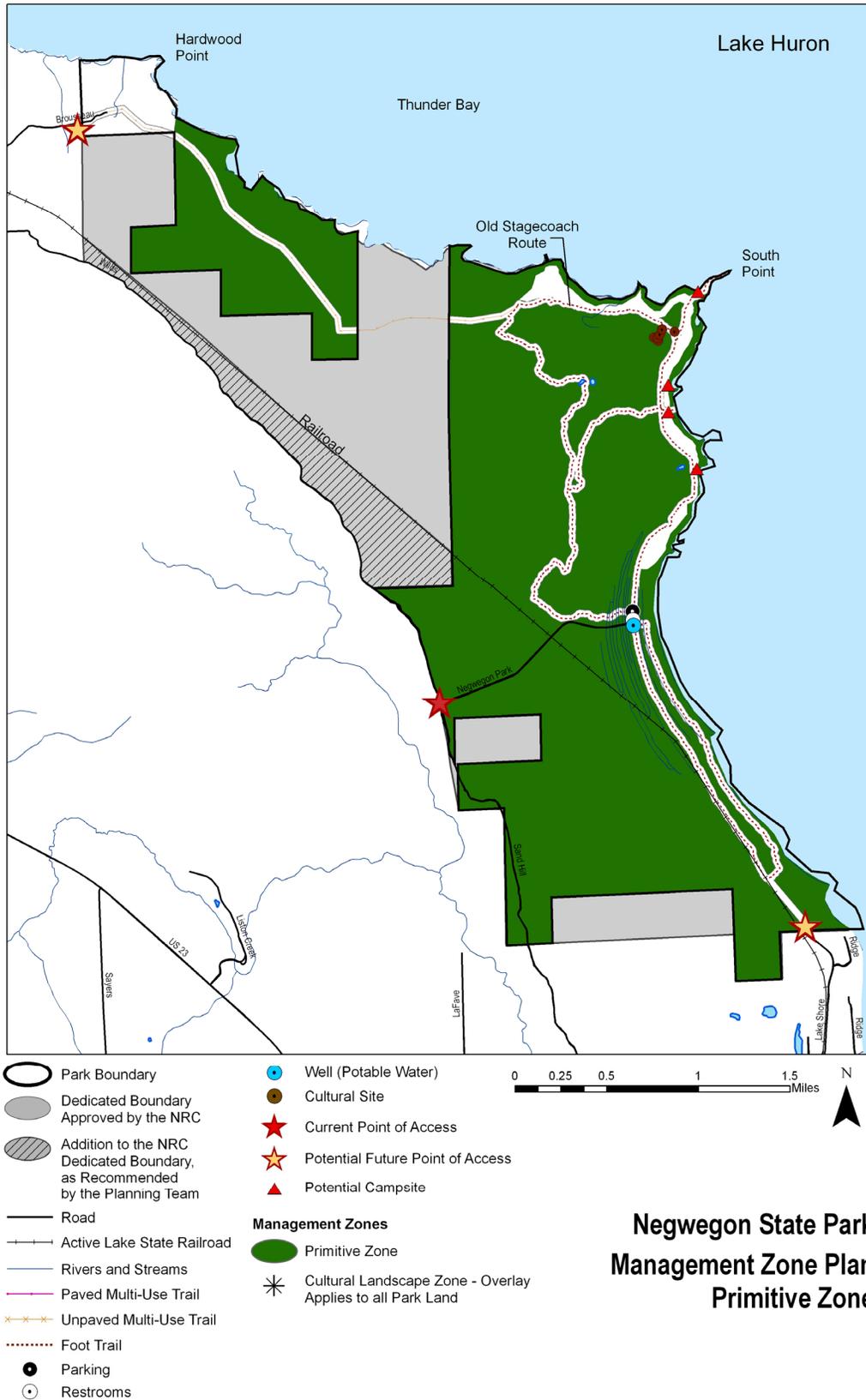
The management zone plan promotes the on-going maintenance and enhancement of these natural resources to ensure their success in the long-term. Native species and natural processes would take precedence over visitor accommodation.

- B. Historic / Cultural Resources. Native American artifacts, farmstead remnants and archeological sites are known resources located with the park's Primitive Zone. Knowing the history of the area's development – being first settled by Native Americans - it is likely that other sites may be found in this zone as well. For the protection of these resources, their identity would not be disclosed to the general public. 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,

hunting/trapping/fishing, primitive camping, cross-country skiing, nature observation.

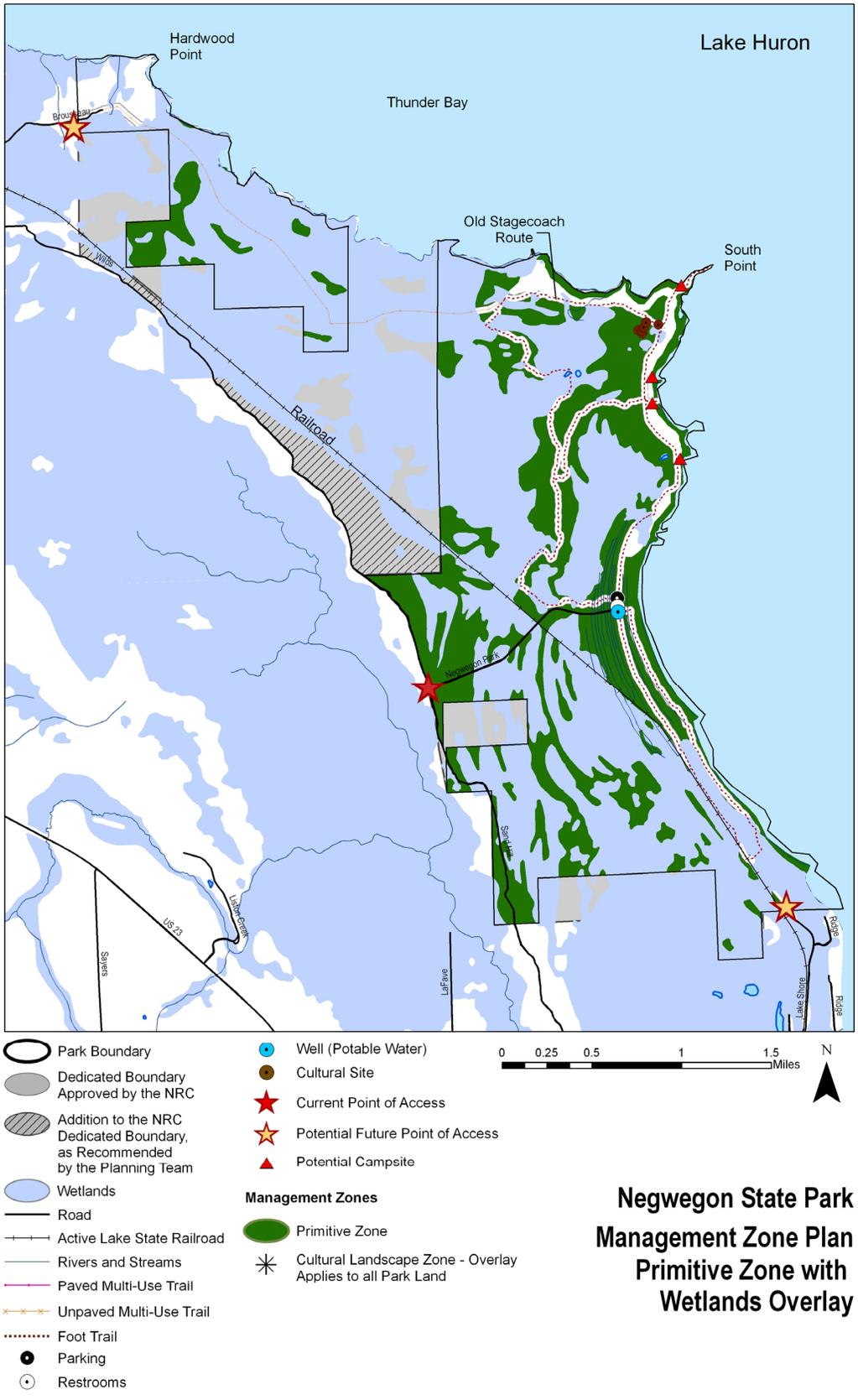
- D. Education Opportunities. The ecological significance of the resources in the park, as well as the cultural resources and historic artifacts, present a tremendous educational opportunity. Information can be relayed through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and other appropriate locations.
- 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.
- F. Management Focus. Management would focus on maintaining the low-impact character of the zone, with emphasis on natural resource quality. Routine maintenance of the existing pit toilets, and any trails or access routes 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.
- 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 educational or interpretive signage would be constructed.

Figure 5: Primitive Zone



**Negwegon State Park
Management Zone Plan
Primitive Zone**

Figure 6: Primitive Zone with Wetland Overlay



3.2 Backcountry Zone

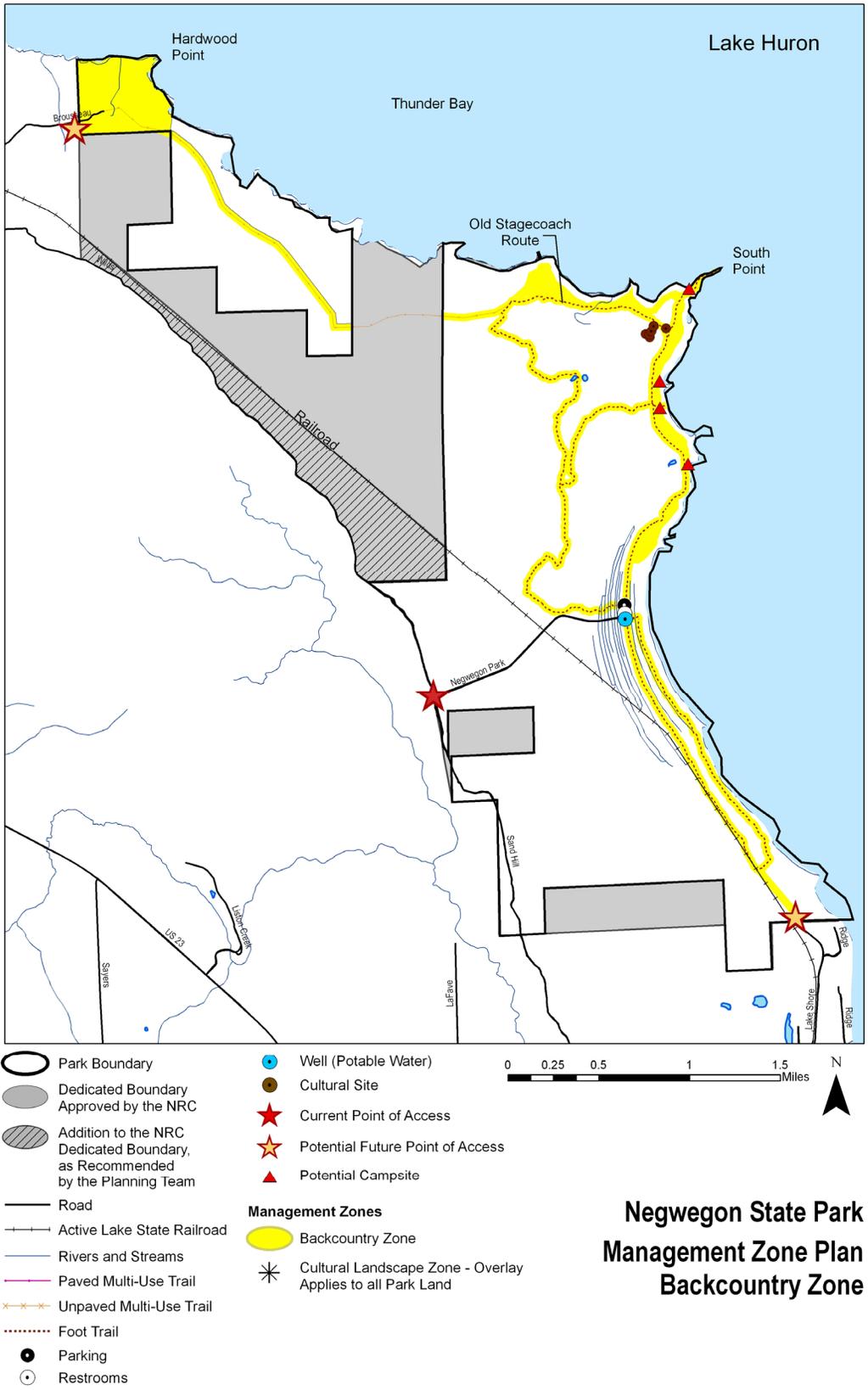
Approximately 770 acres, or 21%, of Negwegon land is zoned Backcountry. This zone includes the trails, land just behind the shoreline and the northernmost portion of the park. The natural character of land is similar to the Primitive Zone. However, Backcountry allows for an increased level recreational use and human impact. Figure 7 presents the Backcountry Zone.

- 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

Within the Backcountry Zone, natural resources may be modified slightly to support visitor use, but the tolerance for natural resource impacts is low.

- B. Historic / Cultural Resources. Remnants of a farmstead are present in the northern portion of Negwegon. While no Native American artifacts are known to exist in the Backcountry Zone at this time, it is not unreasonable that sites may be found in the future given the history of the area. 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 levels of recreation are allowed in the Backcountry Zone, provided the activities are compatible with the natural character. Non-motorized outdoor activities are permitted, such as hiking, backpacking, back-country camping, bicycling, equestrian use, canoeing, kayaking, nature observation, cross-country skiing, showshoeing and hunting/trapping/fishing.
- D. Education Opportunities. Similar to the Primitive Zone, the Backcountry Zone offers a great opportunity to communicate the park's unique and regional significance. Information can be relayed through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and other appropriate locations.
- E. Visitor Experience. A moderate level of visitor encounters can be accommodated in the Backcountry Zone. Visitors would engage in self-reliant, non-motorized outdoor activities that may require a fairly high time commitment. Low noise tolerance and low interaction with others can be expected.

Figure 7: Backcountry Zone



- F. Management Focus. Management would focus on maintaining the low-impact character of the zone, with emphasis on natural resource quality. Routine maintenance of the existing restrooms, and any trails or access routes 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.
- G. Development. A low level of development is allowed to support visitor access to activities offered in the Park. Development would be unobtrusive and blend in with the natural environment. The existing parking lot, vault toilets and water supply, and potential camping opportunities are examples of the type of development permitted.

3.3 Cultural Landscape Overlay Zone

All of Negwegon land is overlaid with the Cultural Landscape Overlay Zone. Culture refers to not only historic structures or remnants, but non-structural evidence of the traditions, beliefs and practices of the region. Negwegon has Native American artifacts, farmstead remnants, a portion of the Old Stagecoach Route, which connected Standish and Alpena City, and shipwrecks along its coastal waters. The locations for many cultural resources are known, however, given the history of the area, it is not unlikely that more would be found.

- 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 education/interpretation uses and maintaining an aesthetically appealing landscape that is sensitive to the historical resource and interpretation of the zone.
- B. Historic / Cultural Resources. Structures, remnants, ships and other landscape characteristics and features which represent the evolution of the resource, temporal change and the continuum of time would be preserved, protected and enhanced. Rehabilitation or adaptive re-use for operational or education purposes are permitted.
- C. Recreational Opportunities. Visitors could be engaged in sightseeing, recreational and education activities in a cultural setting compatible with and sensitive to the setting. Activities allowed in this zone include automobile, bike, walking or hiking tour. When resources are sensitive and require substantial preservation, the general public may not have access to the exact location of the resource.

- D. Education Opportunities. The cultural and historic resources demonstrate the uniqueness of Negwegon, but also contribute to the story of Michigan, and our nation. Information can be relayed through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and other appropriate locations. Off-site interpretation may be used as well.
- E. Visitor Experience. For resources available to public viewing and/or use, moderate visitor encounters are accommodated. Visitors engage in sightseeing, recreational, and education activities in a cultural setting. Moderate noise, time commitment and interaction with others can be expected.
- F. Management Focus. Management focuses on maintaining the cultural character of the zone, with emphasis on Natural Resource quality.
- G. Development. Non-historic development and activities that do not conflict with the cultural landscape are tolerated in this zone. Moderate levels of development and accessibility could be provided to support visitor access and use.