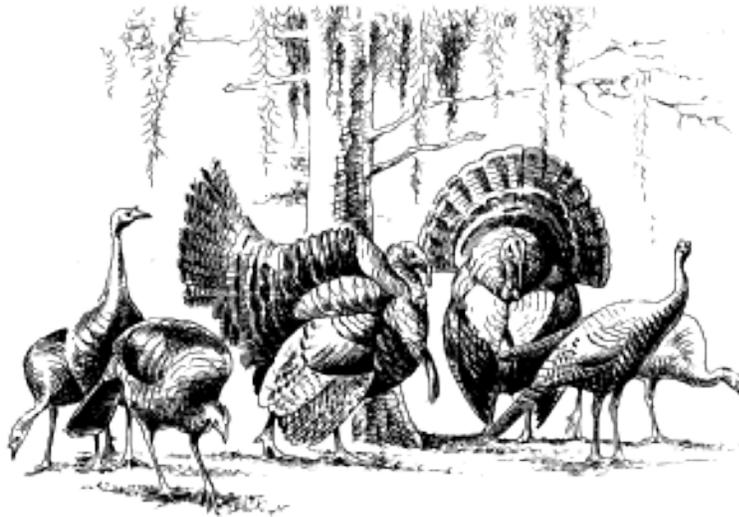




# Rogue River State Game Area Master Plan



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**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**WILDLIFE DIVISION**

## **Open for Comment:**

Open Comment Period: May 1-31, 2015

Comments to: Nik Kalejs, kalejsg@michigan.gov

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Natural Resources Commission dedicated the Rogue River State Game Area (RRSGA) on July 10, 1951 for game (wildlife) management, and began the land acquisition process. The lands have been purchased with a variety of funding sources, but most of the acreage was purchased with Game and Fish Protection Funds, Pittman-Robertson Funds, and Recreation Bond Funds. The RRSGA is located in the South West Region (SWR) of the Lower Peninsula in northwest Kent County. The SGA is primarily a forested area and has been managed for forest wildlife species and the related recreation opportunities they provide.

The RRSGA has expanded to 6202 acres (Figure 1) and is managed to provide habitat and recreation opportunities for the following Featured Species: wild turkey, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, cottontail rabbit, pileated woodpecker, and also other wildlife.

The Rogue River State Game Area plan derives landscape level direction and regional habitat issues for state game areas for goals and objectives identified in the South West Region (SWR) public land plan, and it shares many of the same goals and objectives as other local state game areas (Flat River SGA, Muskegon SGA) and wildlife lands. It supports other DNR and Wildlife Division plans and objectives including Guiding Principles and Strategies (GPS) for species (0.1.1) and habitat management (0.2.1) and More Bang for the Buck objectives to increase early succession forest habitat and oak habitat for deer and grouse, and provide quality cottontail rabbit and wild turkey hunting opportunities.

The RRSGA consists of smooth, outwash plains with gently rolling, mostly forested land. The second growth upland forests include oak, aspen, and natural pine stands and the lowland forests along the Rogue River, Spring Creek, and Duke Creek floodplains are dominated by maple, ash, and tamarack. Agricultural fields, planted pine stands, and small forest openings complete the landscape.

Most of the RRSGA is located as one unit in northern Kent County, but a secondary unit (the Rogue River State Game Area Extension) consisting of 266 acres in Algoma Township is found approximately five miles south-east of the main area. The extension includes 90 acres managed as agriculture fields (Figure 2). Based on the IFMAP habitat mapping process, Table 1 provides an overview of RRSGA habitat types.

Figure 1. Rogue River SGA boundaries-Main area.



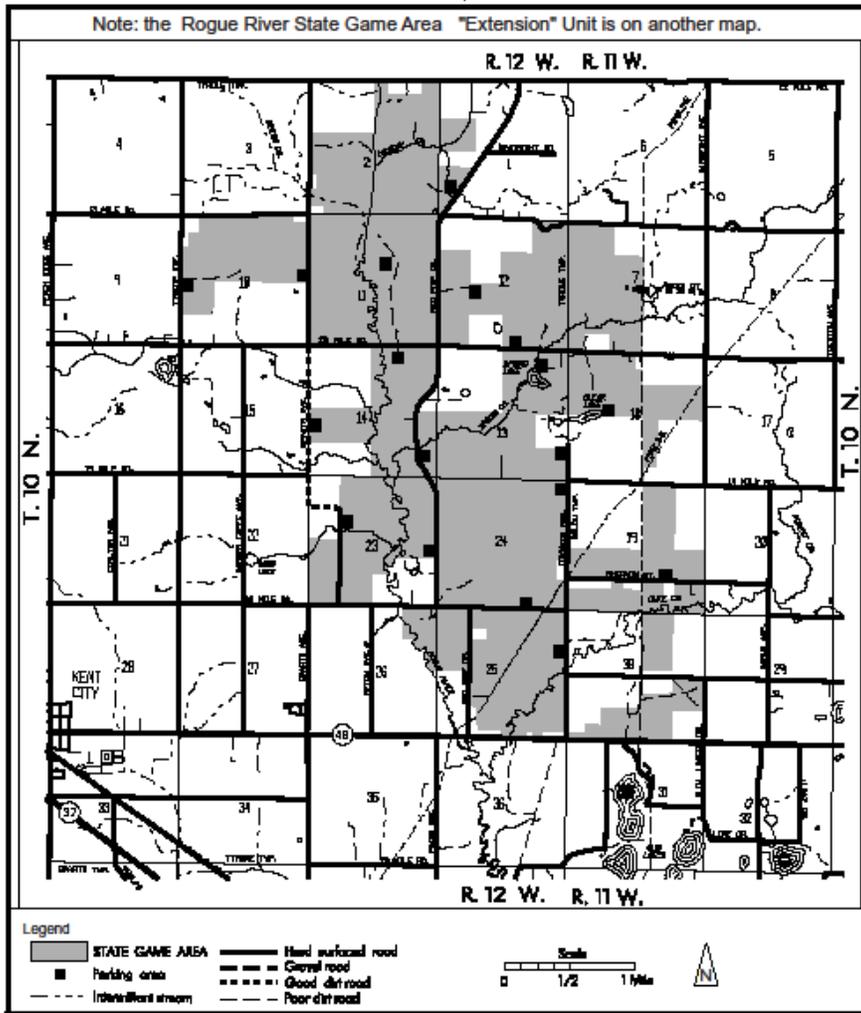
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# ROGUE RIVER STATE GAME AREA

MAIN UNIT MAP  
("EXTENSION" UNIT IS LOCATED SOUTHEAST OF MAIN UNIT)

KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN



Hunter Monies Made This Area Possible

DNR Wildlife Map 410201 (was 0919) Rev. 9/2006-MLS



Figure 2. Rogue River SGA boundaries-Extension.



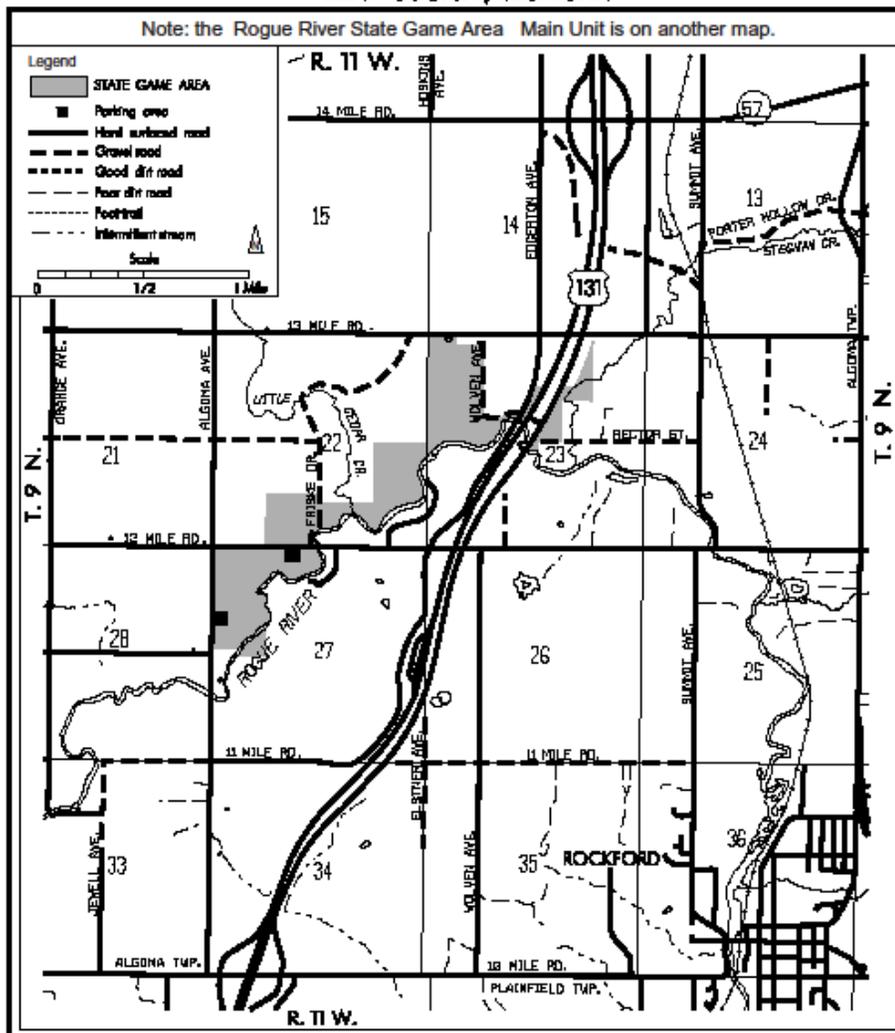
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# ROGUE RIVER STATE GAME AREA "Extension"

EXTENSION UNIT - LOCATED SOUTHEAST OF MAIN UNIT

KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN



Hunter Monies Made This Area Possible

DNR Wildlife Map 410202 (was 0918) Rev. 8/2006 -MLS



| <b>Table 1. Habitat Type</b> | <b>Acres</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Cropland                     | 197          |
| Herbaceous openland          | 140          |
| Low-density trees            | 191          |
| Lowland coniferous forest    | 147          |
| Lowland deciduous forest     | 957          |
| Lowland mixed forest         | 26           |
| Lowland shrub                | 284          |
| Mixed upland conifers        | 5            |
| Natural pines                | 194          |
| Planted pines                | 253          |
| Mixed upland deciduous       | 672          |
| Northern hardwood            | 241          |
| Oak types                    | 2015         |
| Other upland deciduous       | 12           |
| Upland mixed forest          | 32           |
| Aspen types                  | 620          |
| Upland shrub                 | 173          |
| Emergent wetland             | 25           |
| Water                        | 18           |
| <b>Totals</b>                | <b>6202</b>  |

What follows is the strategic direction for the Rogue River SGA. This plan describes **goals** or desired future conditions for the area, the **objectives** under each goal, and the **actions** associated with each objective. Goals come mostly from featured species and habitat issues relevant to the SGA, but can also include recreational infrastructure needs or natural community issues. For the purpose of the master plan, the following definitions will be used:

**Goal** – A desired future condition of the area.

**Objective** – A management approach or strategy that the best science suggests can be used to move toward the goal. An objective is a quantifiable input to be completed within a defined timeframe that contributes toward accomplishing the goal.

**Action** – An operational means to accomplish an objective. An action is a step needed to complete an objective and is described in sufficient detail to inform implementation in operational and annual work plans. It is expected to take approximately ten years to complete all the objectives.

### **Goals/Objectives/Action (listed as highest priority to lowest)**

**Goal I:** sustainable populations of wild turkey on the Rogue River SGA (main unit and extension).

**Rationale:** wild turkeys are highly desirable game species and managing for their habitat, especially the oak component of the forest, benefits numerous other wildlife species. White-tailed deer will also benefit from Actions taken under this Goal.

**Metrics:** staff observations, surveys, hunter feedback, and assessment of habitat management trends across time within IFMAP.

**Objective A.** Maintain the current oak cover type acreage (~2000 acres) on the SGA, and begin balancing the age class distribution.

**Action 1.** Develop and begin implementation of an adaptive oak management strategy by 2020.

**Action 2.** Harvest approximately 350 acres of oak during the next decade.

**Objective B.** Increase the oak component in non-oak stands.

**Action 1.** When managing other forested cover types, especially red pine plantations, identify opportunities for increasing the oak component.

**Objective C.** Maintain and supplement high-energy winter food sources through a food plot program.

**Action 1.** Maintain 25 to 35 acres of small grains and corn through state share of sharecrop program.

**Goal II:** sustainable populations of ruffed grouse and woodcock on the main unit of the RRSQA.

**Rationale:** grouse and woodcock are highly desirable game species and managing for their habitat benefits numerous other wildlife species. White-tailed deer will also benefit from Actions taken under this Goal.

**Metrics:** staff observations, surveys, hunter feedback, assessment of aspen trends across time, and number of suitable wildlife openings.

**Objective A.** Increase the aspen cover type on the main unit by approximately 50% and work toward balancing age classes, based on a 40 year aspen rotation.

**Action 1.** Establish an aspen harvest regime of approximately 200 acres every decade (by 2025) that will expand and improve the aspen type and optimize age classes.

**Objective B.** Provide suitable forest openings (1-10 acres in size) for breeding and roosting habitat within aspen stands.

**Action 1.** Maintain and create small herbaceous openings at appropriate locations (approximately 10% of cover) throughout the aspen types.

**Goal III:** sustainable populations of cottontail rabbits at RRSGA.

**Rationale:** rabbits are popular with small game hunters, an introductory species for young hunters, and managing for their habitat benefits numerous other wildlife species.

**Metrics:** staff observations, surveys, and feedback from hunters.

**Objective A.** Provide suitable escape cover by creating a minimum of five additional brush piles per year.

**Action 1.** Use DNR staff and/or volunteers to build at least five brush piles each year.

**Action 2.** During timber harvest operation years, require loggers to create one brush pile for every acre harvested.

**Goal IV:** sustainable populations of Featured Non-Game Species like the pileated woodpecker on the RRSGA.

**Rationale:** pileated woodpeckers are wary, uncommon birds that use the larger tracts of the lowland deciduous forests on the RRSGA. Their uncommon status makes them popular with many non-consumptive users (birders). Protecting the riparian corridors along the Rogue River, Spring Creek, and Duke Creek benefit the pileated woodpeckers and a variety of game and non-game wildlife species. These forested corridors also protect the water quality of these streams.

**Metrics:** staff observations, surveys, birder reports, and ongoing assessments of lowland forest types.

**Objective A.** Maintain the current extent (~1000 acres) of lowland forest type on the SGA.

**Action 1.** Do not implement forest management activities in lowland forest stands adjacent to the Rogue River, Spring Creek, and Duke Creek.

**Action 2.** Restrict forest management activities in upland stands within 100 feet of the Rogue River, Spring and Duke Creeks.

## ***Recreational and Commercial Uses***

Recreational and commercial uses on the area that are not incidental to our management for the purposes described above are generally not allowed. These uses can be allowed, however, under the following circumstances:

1. The uses must not interfere or conflict with the wildlife conservation purposes of the area described above.
2. The DNR has no obligations to determine if requested uses would conflict or interfere; the burden of determining must remain with those requesting the uses.
3. The requested uses cannot be exclusive of other allowable uses and must not result in the DNR losing management control of any portion of the area.
4. A lack of a specific prohibition in rules and regulations for the area does not constitute approval of the activity.
5. The DNR always reserves the ability to disallow activities previously allowed as wildlife conservation needs dictate.

Additionally, the DNR will continue to monitor any existing commercial and recreational uses for interference with the intended purposes of the area as described in this plan.

## ***Acquisition and Disposal of Land***

Since the RRSGA is located in southern Michigan and close to the City of Grand Rapids, the land acquisition strategy for the RRSGA is to fill in state ownership by acquiring available blocks located within and among current state ownership, and to expand the area by acquiring appropriate parcels that are outside the current ownership, but within the dedicated, acquisition boundary. Parcels will be evaluated as they become available, and will be acquired on a willing seller basis only.

## ***Review and Approval***

This plan is available for public comment for May 1-31, 2015. Comments can be submitted to Nik Kalejs at [kalejsg@michigan.gov](mailto:kalejsg@michigan.gov)