

# Highland Recreation Area

## PHASE 2 GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Long-range management guidance focused on the specific natural resources historic/cultural resources, recreation opportunities and education/interpretation opportunities of Highland Recreation Area.



Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation Division  
11/20/2017

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View of Bass Lake from Bass Lake Modern Lodge

This plan was prepared by:  
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Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation Division

**Plan Approvals:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Planning & Infrastructure Section

11-3-17  
Date

  
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Chief, Field Operations Section

11-16-17  
Date

  
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Chief, Parks & Recreation Division

11/20/17  
Date

**PLAN APPROVAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Park Manager – Highland Recreation Area

9-5-17  
Date

  
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Regional Field Planner

11/02/17  
Date

  
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Metro District Supervisor

9-5-17  
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Stewardship Unit Manager

10/23/17  
Date

  
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Park Management Plan Administrator

8/31/17  
Date

**FOR INFORMATION:**

PRD – SECTION CHIEFS

PRD – MANAGEMENT TEAM

MSAPC – STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

NRC – MICHIGAN STATE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL

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# 1) Introduction

A General Management Plan (GMP) develops as a result of a series of planning steps with each step building upon the previous. Action decisions focus on the mission of the Parks & Recreation Division (PRD), and the specific Purpose and Significance of the park. Phase I GMP is the first of four phases of planning. This document, Phase 2 Action Plan, is directed by the Phase 1 plan and identifies goals to be attained over the next ten years.

In this phase, the first action is to re-evaluate the Phase 1 GMP to assure that no conditions have changed that would cause a change in the overall guiding document. The Phase 1 GMP was adopted on April 14, 2011. The Planning Team has determined that no changes are required. This phase (Phase 2) of the GMP completes the required 5-year review of the Phase 1 GMP.

This second phase of management planning for Highland Recreation Area establishes long-range action goals for the park as a whole and for each of the management zones defined in the Phase 1 GMP. Action goals are recommended that address the following categories:

- Natural Resources
- Historic/Cultural Resources
- Recreation Opportunities
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities
- Management Focus
- Development

## 1.1 Plan Process Overview

The objective of the GMP is to bring together Parks and Recreation Division Staff, representatives from other DNR Divisions, stakeholders and the public into a planning process that directs management decisions and implementation strategies for the park. Stakeholder and public input was sought through the planning process to ensure the DNR is responsive to its partners and users. Stakeholders were invited to provide input early in the planning process through a workshop designed to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities at Highland Recreation Area. The Public was invited to comment at a Public Input Meeting to review the Draft Plan. The Draft plan was also available on-line and comments were accepted via Email. The Planning Team reviewed all of the comments received before recommending the final plan for adoption.

## 1.2 Planning Team

This Phase 2 General Management Plan was developed with valuable input and expertise of the planning team. Please refer to Appendix C for a summary of the planning team meetings.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DIVISION</b>
Bill Althoff	Unit Manager	Parks and Recreation Division
Debbie Jensen	Management Plan Administrator	Parks and Recreation Division
Matt Lincoln	Lands Program Manager/Plan Administrator	Parks and Recreation Division
Ray Fahlsing	Stewardship Program Manager	Parks and Recreation Division
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John Terpstra	Regional Field Planner	Parks and Recreation Division
Jeff Braunscheidel	Fisheries Biologist	Fisheries Division
Todd Szyska	Conservation Officer	Law Enforcement Division
Julie Oakes	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Division
Earl Cole	Fire Officer	Forestry Division
Janet Canode	Education Unit Manager	Marketing and Outreach Division
Peter Rose	Geologist	Minerals Management
Joe Robison	Field Operation Manager	Wildlife Division

## 1.3 Summary of Public Input

A Stakeholder Workshop was held on August 16, 2016 at the Highland Township Library. Representatives from organizations with interest in the park participants were invited to provide their input, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to the park. Two timeslots were available for convenience. A total of 25 participants represented organizations from around the region and provided input.

Strengths identified included the historical context of the park and the historical activities that occurred and originated at Highland Recreation Area. Other strengths included strong partnerships, like the Friends of Highland Recreation Area and community interest in the park. Natural features, including topography and ecological habitats, were also identified as important assets. The variety of recreation activities available at the park was also seen as a strength, as well as the park's visible location along M-59 within the Metro-Detroit region.

Weaknesses identified included lack of advertising, marketing and promotion of the park, lack of communication/collaboration between the park and the community, poor physical connections from the surrounding communities to the park, deteriorating facilities due to lack of funding, and land management conflicts between different recreational uses at the park.

Opportunities identified by the stakeholders included strengthening partnerships and collaborative efforts with the local community, both private and public. Stakeholders also identified increasing advertising and promotion of the park by leveraging community partners, promoting events at the park and promoting the recreation passport. Many recreation improvements were requested by the stakeholders. These improvements ranged from the addition of equestrian trails and a beginner’s mountain bike trail to developing modern bathrooms at the park entrance. Other improvements were specific to the Haven Hill complex and included repurposing structures for events and programming.

Threats to the park identified by the stakeholders included invasive species, safety of facilities, vandalism, lack of funding, economic health, surrounding land development and a disinterested younger generation.

A Public Input Open House was held on January 26, 2017 at the Highland Township Hall Auditorium, 205 N. John Street, from 6-8 p.m. 90 members of the public attended the meeting to learn about the Phase 2 General Management Planning process and comment on the Draft 10-Year Action Goals and proposed field trial area. The Draft Phase 2 Plan was also posted on the DNR’s website and comments were invited via Email.

Questions were answered related to the Phase 2 General Management Plan process, the proposed field trial area and equestrian use at the park. Due to the large amount in attendance, comments and questions with answers were collected and posted on the project website.



Deer in the park



Entrance to Edsel Ford lodge site



## 2) Overview of Phase 1 Plan

Highland Recreation Area lies in the northwest section of Oakland County in Southeast Michigan. The park is bordered roughly by M-59 to the north, Cooley Lake Road to the south, Ford Road to the east, and Milford and Harvey Lake Roads to the west. The park is approximately 5,900 acres in size and includes the Haven Hill Natural Area, which is approximately 721 acres in size.

The park was officially designated in 1943, incorporating the Dodge #10 Unit and the Edsel Ford Estate, resulting in unique cultural resources at the park.

Highland Recreation Area has distinctive topography due to the glacial erosion resulting in unique ecosystems. The park includes several lakes and manmade impoundments including Moore Lake, Lower Pettibone Lake, Pickerel Lake, Waterbury Lake, Grass Lake, Alderman Lake, Teeple Lake, Haven Hill Lake and Bass Lake.

Recreation opportunities at the park include hunting, fishing, rustic camping, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, hiking, swimming, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, field dog trial competition and picnicking. In addition, the park also features a model airplane field.

The Phase 1 GMP for Highland Recreation Area was completed in April, 2011 which defined the significance of the recreation area and assigned management zones to the land. Some of the statements below have been edited through the Phase 2 review to make factual corrections, while not altering the intent of the statements.

### 2.1 Significance Statements

Highland Recreation Area was determined to be significant for the following reasons:

- Provides large tracts of unfragmented resources, including prairie, woodland, wetlands, a riparian corridor, a variety of water resources as well as many *potential natural areas*, as defined by MNFI<sup>1,2</sup>.
- Includes the Haven Hill wetlands and forest complex, which is a National Natural Landmark, a Natural Resources Commission designated natural area, and a State Natural Area. (originally designated in 1952 and re-designated in 1972 under the Wilderness and Natural Areas Act)

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<sup>1</sup> Michigan Natural Features Inventory. *Oakland County Potential Conservation/Natural Areas Report*. 2004

<sup>2</sup> *Shiawassee & Huron Headwaters Resource Preservation Project*, March 2000

- Includes several unique historical and cultural resources, including the foundation of the burned out Ford Lodge, a unique sheep barn, and the original gatehouse. These structures, and others, are highly deteriorated due to damage from vandalism and the effects of age and weather.
- Offers a prime location for protection of endangered, threatened, and special concern plants and animals due to its large area of undeveloped land.
- Gives a home to a wide variety of wildlife and provides great opportunities for viewing of wildlife.
- Affords year round park activity to the most populated region in the state, Southeast Michigan.
- Serves as an important regional hub for green infrastructure in Oakland County, linking miles of park land, open space, and trails throughout Southeast Michigan.
- Supplies public access to a large area for hunting.
- Highland Recreation Area has a Natural Resources Commission (NRC) designated grounds for field trials, providing a unique opportunity for training and competition for field dog breeds.
- Adds more than \$2.5 million to the local economy in direct spending.

In addition, as part of the Phase 2 process, the planning team noted that several locations with access to fishing are significant to Highland Recreation Area.

## **2.2 Management Zones**

The Phase 1 GMP identified six management zones for Highland Recreation Area and two overlay zones. These zones define the desired level of natural resource protection with desired recreation uses at the park and provide guidance for future management and development of the park. A summary of each zone at Highland Recreation Area is described below.

Primitive Zone – The Haven Hill Natural Area and a large area west and south of Teeple Lake comprise 992 acres (17% of the park). The Haven Hill Natural Area (721 acres) represents all of southern Michigan’s principal forest types, and has remained undisturbed for the past 75 years. The Teeple Lake area (271 acres) represents prairie fen and southern wet meadow communities. Recreation use in this zone is limited to foot traffic only (no bicycle or equestrian use allowed), with developed foot trails found in the Haven Hill Natural Area. No designated trails currently exist in the Teeple Lake area. Historically, no hunting has been allowed in the Haven Hill Natural Area.

Backcountry Zone – Totaling 2,285 acres (38% of the park), this is the largest of all the zones and is spread out in four locations. These areas are ‘natural’ in character and suited for low to moderate density trail use, including bicycle and equestrian. The majority of all current trails in the park are found

in this zone. The watercourses along the west park boundary are also within this zone, which allows for canoe/kayak activities.

Field Trial Course Zone – 929 acres of the park (15%) are a Natural Resources Commission (NRC) designated Field Trial Course. Field trial courses are managed for large contiguous open fields where the dogs can run to “objectives” for purposes of flushing target birds that have been set by the field trialers. Fields are managed as open grassland, interrupted by widely scattered and clumped oak trees and thin woods.

Field trialing is not an exclusive use. However, during the active times of the year for field trials (April-June and August-November), the experience of other users will be tempered by any field trial activities that may be taking place.

Natural Resource Recreation Zone – This is the second largest zone with 1358 acres (23% of the park). This zone is utilized for active recreation, including hunting, fishing, trapping, birding, snowmobiling (only in designated areas), and trail usage (biking, hiking, equestrian, cross-country skiing, etc.) There is still an emphasis on resource quality over recreation, but in this zone, higher levels of use are allowed.

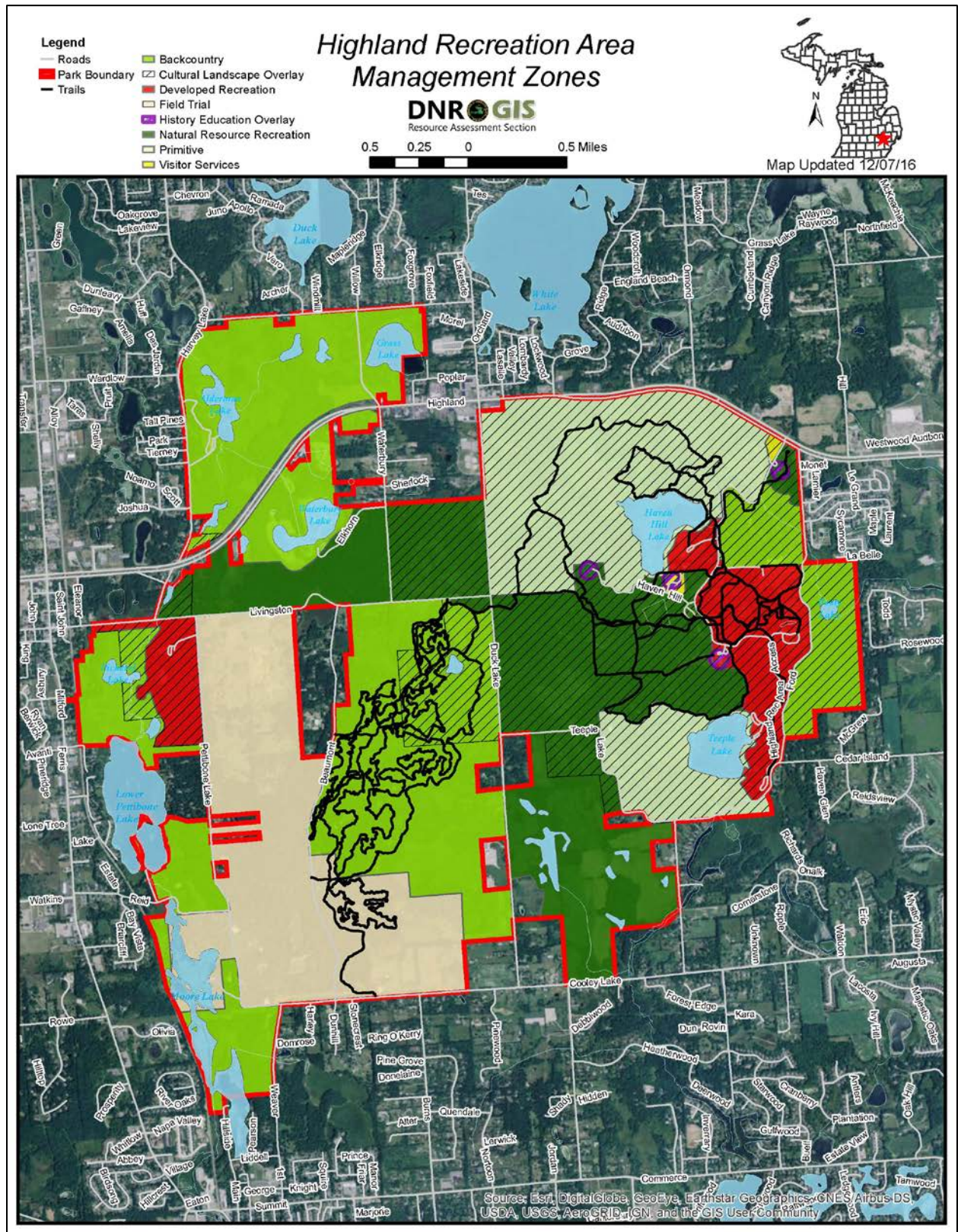
Developed Recreation Zone – This zone is spread into two primary areas totaling 383 acres (6% of the park). The largest of the two runs from Haven Hill Lake down to Teeple Lake, and takes in the current developed recreation components of the park, including day-use, campground, and horse staging areas. The second area with this zone designation is the Dodge Brothers #10 area of the park, near the west boundary. These areas are prescribed for high use allowing for overnight lodging and trail connections to adjacent communities.

Visitor Services Zone – At two locations in the park totaling 12 acres (0.2%), this 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 operating a state park or recreation area.

History Education Zone (Overlay) – This zone is mapped only as an overlay across four locations within the Natural Resources Recreation Zone: The Haven Hill Lodge, the original gatehouse, the maintenance complex and the historic sheep barn. Each of these locations is significant due to its prominence in the Ford family story.

This overlay zone recognizes unique opportunities to engage the visitor in a compelling story of our past. In managing these assets, the park staff should be sensitive to the prescribed values of the overlay as well the underlying zones.

Cultural Landscape Zone (Overlay) – This overlay zone reflects the land ownerships of the Ford family and the Dodge Brothers, as well as remnants of the early Spring Mills settlement. The purpose of this zone is to acknowledge the heritage of these past land owners and to respect those cultural impacts still evident in the park.



## 2.3 Changes Since Phase 1 Plan

### Land Acquisitions:

21 acres of land was acquired within the project boundary shortly after the Phase 1 General Management Plan was approved in 2011. The land is located on Duck Lake Road in the southern portion of the park and is recommended to be managed as part of the adjacent Natural Resource Recreation Zone.

The 2004 Natural Resources Commission Approved Project Boundary was also reviewed by the project team, with changes recommended, reflecting adjacent land uses and improved management efficiencies for the park.

### Completed Development Projects:

1. The 2.8 mile long Cedar Creek multi-use Trail was completed in 2013. The trail connects M-59 to the Teeple Lake day use area of the park. The trail is constructed of crushed limestone and popular with park visitors.
2. The old riding stable building and garage at the Dodge #10 unit of the park was demolished.
3. New concrete planks and skid piers were installed for the Lower Pettibone and Teeple Lake boating access sites.
4. Wells at the rustic campground and Goose Meadow day use area were upgraded.
5. The Alderman fishing pier was rebuilt.
6. The remains of the sheep barn, part of the former Edsel Ford estate, was stabilized after the majority of the barn was blown down during a storm.

### Projects in progress:

1. A portion of the Natural Resources Recreation Zone is in the process of being designated a Field Trail area (Old Sod Farm). This area will not be rezoned, as field trial activities are compatible with the Natural Resource Recreation Zone.



Bass Lake Modern Lodge



Edsel Ford carriage house



Threatened and Endangered Species:

Changes to the federal and state threatened and endangered species list have occurred since Phase 1 General Management Plan approval. An updated list for the park is included below.

Threatened and Endangered Animals at the Park:

**Common Name**

**State/Federal Status**

Eastern massasauga	Federal Threatened & State Special Concern
Prairie warbler	State Endangered
Cerulean warbler	State Threatened
Hooded warbler	State Special Concern
Bald eagle	State Special Concern
Blanding's turtle	State Special Concern
Tamarack tree cricket	State Special Concern
Red-legged spittlebug	State Special Concern
Rainbow (mussel)	State Special Concern

Threatened and Endangered Plants at the Park:

**Common Name**

**State/Federal Status**

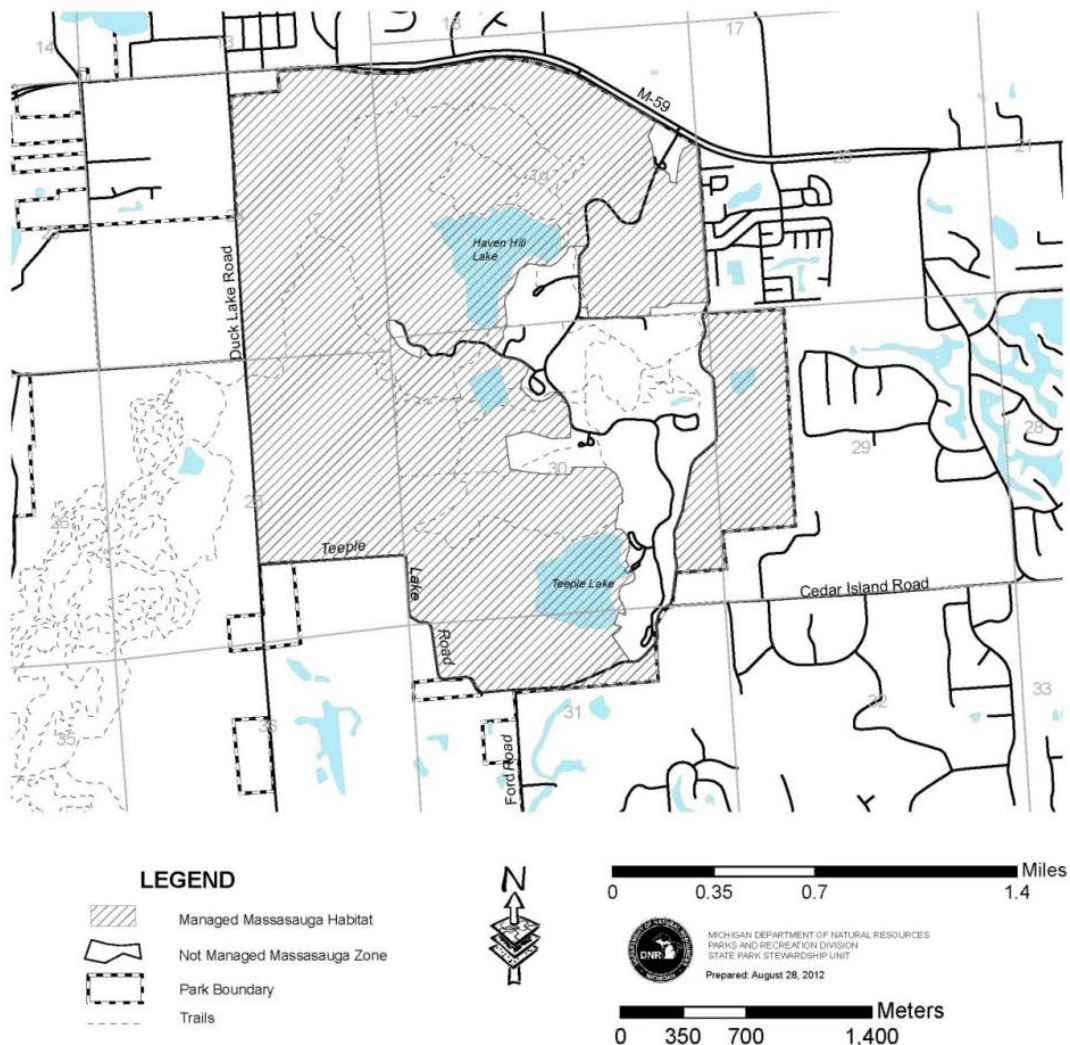
American chestnut	State Endangered
Showy orchis	State Threatened
Ginseng	State Threatened
Goldenseal	State Threatened
Hairy angelica	State Special Concern
Twinleaf	State Special Concern

Exemplary quality natural communities at the park:

Dry-mesic Southern Forest	Prairie Fen
Hardwood-Conifer Swamp	Rich Tamarack Swamp
Mesic Sand Prairie	Southern Hardwood Swamp
Mesic Southern Forest	Southern Wet Meadow

Source: Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)

In addition, the Eastern massasauga rattlesnake is now managed under the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), an agreement signed by Michigan DNR and the US Fish & Wildlife Service in 2016. This agreement dedicates specific “managed habitat” areas at Highland Recreation Area with associated management requirements that DNR must follow. In exchange for following these requirements in managed habitat, incidental (accidental) take of eastern massasauga is allowed in many circumstances without being in violation of the US Endangered Species Act. A map showing the snake’s habitat at Highland Recreation Area follows below.





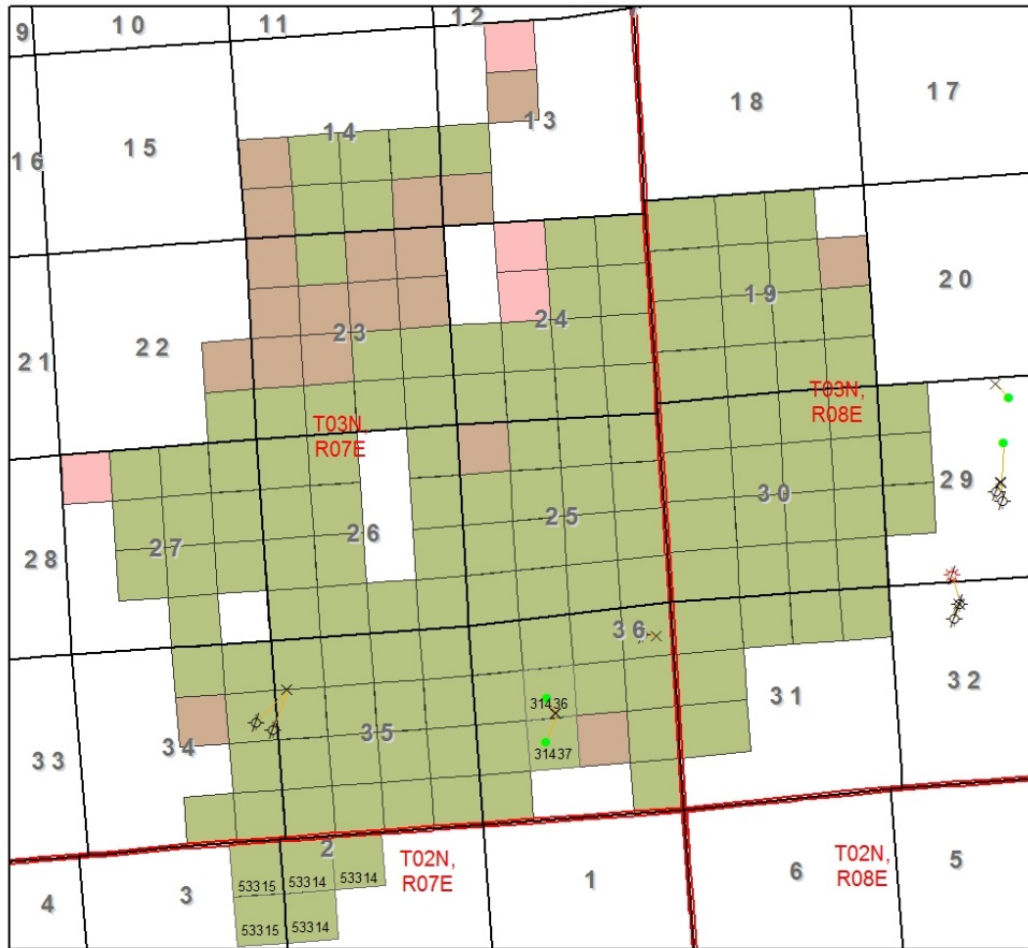
Minerals:

Additional information regarding the geology and mineral resources found at Highland Recreation Area has been provided to supplement the information in the Phase 1 GMP.

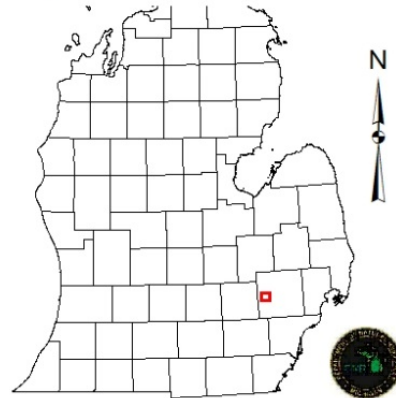
The glacial sediments are in the range of 200 to 400 feet thick in this region. The coarser glacial deposits are frequently quarried across the state for sand and gravel, primarily for use in road construction and maintenance. Bedrock underlying the glacial drift consists of the Mississippian-age Coldwater Shale.

The park lies within a trend of subsurface carbonate reefs, which are part of the Silurian Niagara Group and have proven to be rich hydrocarbon reservoirs in the Michigan Basin. There are two producing oil wells in the southern end of the park that were drilled and completed in 1992 and some plugged and abandoned wells elsewhere in the park from some exploration work in 1993. There are four active oil and gas leases within the park. Many others were recently released. The majority of the state-owned land within the park is classified as non-development, meaning there can be no use of the surface for the purpose of oil and gas exploration and development. Parcels within the Haven Hill Natural Area are currently classified as non-leasable.

## Land & Mineral Ownership and Oil & Gas Activity



- |   |                                   |  |                                  |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| / | Oil & Gas Wells Plugged Wells     | ●  | Other                            |
| ● | Oil & Gas Well Bottom Holes       | ○  | Permitted Well Location          |
| ● | Oil                               | ×  | Oil & Gas Well Surface Locations |
| ★ | Natural Gas                       | <b>Oil &amp; Gas Well Directional Drilling Lines</b> |                                  |
| ★ | Gas Condensate                    | —  | Directional                      |
| ★ | Gas Injection                     | —  | Horizontal (90 deg.)             |
| ★ | Gas Storage                       | □  | 1234 Mineral Leases              |
| ★ | Liquefied Petroleum Gas Storage   | <b>State Ownership</b>                               |                                  |
| ★ | Gas Production and Brine Disposal | ■  | Mineral and Surface              |
| ▲ | Brine Disposal                    | ■  | Surface                          |
| ○ | Dry Hole                          | ■  | Minerals                         |
| ○ | Water Injection                   | ■  | Mixed Ownership                  |
| ○ | Other Injection                   | ■  | Other Rights                     |
| ○ | Observation                       |  |                                  |



### 3) 10–Year Action Goals

The Action Goals proposed for Highland Recreation Area were developed by the Planning Team in response to stakeholder and public input and in context with the core values and guiding resources discussed in Phase 1 of this plan. Overarching priorities identified in this plan include improving promoting and advertising the park, community engagement and collaboration with local and regional partners, and increasing events and activities at the park . These priorities are supported by the recommendations of all of the major planning efforts guiding recreation in Michigan, including the Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and the Blue Ribbon Panel Report to Governor Snyder. The Governor’s Economic Prosperity Initiative is another illustration of the importance of regional planning. Highland Recreation Area is located in Economic Prosperity Region #10. Other improvements proposed will continue to maintain, improve and expand the recreation opportunities available while protecting the natural and cultural resources of the park.

The Planning Team has developed 10-Year Action Goals that it believes are necessary to guide management and development within the six designated management zones and two overlay zones in order to achieve the desired user experience. For each management zone in the plan, action goals are recommended that address the following categories:

- Natural Resources
- Historic/Cultural Resources
- Recreation Opportunities
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities
- Management Focus
- Development

Management Plans do not guarantee future PRD funding to implement them, but are intended to be realistic in terms of budget realities. PRD will seek internal funding, alternative funding sources, partnerships and other potential mechanisms for implementing the desired future conditions defined in this plan.



Group camping area



Hiking in the park

## General Action Goals

**Many of the 10-Year Action Goals for Highland Recreation Area are general in nature and apply within all of the management zones. These often deal with park-wide issues, such as invasive species control, universal access, developing Stewardship, Wildfire and Emergency plans, or marketing the park's many recreational opportunities to a wider audience of potential users. Many of the overall maintenance and operational issues of running a state park also result in the need for actions across all zone boundaries, such as law enforcement.**

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Natural Resources</b>			
Implement invasive species control, with a strong emphasis on early detection and rapid response. Monitor roads, trails, and any new development sites for possible invasive species introductions.	Ongoing	Park Manager Stewardship	Park Manager
Develop a Stewardship Plan for the park.	5-10 years	Park Manager Stewardship	Stewardship Ecologist
<b>Recreation Opportunities</b>			
Maintain and enhance opportunities for hunting/fishing/gathering/trapping/birding, including accessible facilities.	Ongoing	Stewardship Wildlife Park Manager Fisheries	Park Manager
Explore and identify potential expansion of family/youth activities in the park. (e.g. aqua park, adventure course, etc.)	1-3 years	Park Manager Recreation Programmer Marketing & Outreach Local Partners	Park Manager
Work with the Highland Trailriders Association to design and engineer an East-West Connector multi-use trail through the park, providing equestrian and multi-use trail connections to Highland, determining the most feasible route and costs of the project.	1-3 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Trail Specialist Highland Trailriders Association	Regional Planner
Determine appropriate location and develop a beginner mountain bike trail in collaboration with Motor City Mountain Bike Association	3-5 years	Park Manager Stewardship Regional Planner Local Partners	Park Manager

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Historic/Cultural Resources</b>			
Continue monitoring archaeological and cultural resources.	Ongoing	Park Manager Stewardship	Cultural Resource Analyst
Review all proposed earthwork activities for potential impact on historic/cultural resources.	Ongoing	Park Manager Stewardship Regional Planner	Cultural Resource Analyst
<b>Education/Interpretation Opportunities</b>			
Promote and market the historical context of the park via brochures, signs, kiosks, self-guided tour media, and websites.	Ongoing	Park Manager Stewardship Local Partners Marketing & Outreach	Marketing & Outreach Local Partners
Continue to provide quality interpretation and education	Ongoing	Park Manager Marketing & Outreach Recreation Programmer Local Partners	Recreation Programmer
Explore opportunities to expand programming through the Explorer Guide Program, for example.	1-3 years	Park Manager Marketing & Outreach Recreation Programmer Local Partners	Park Manager
<b>Management</b>			
Review and update Wildfire Plan and Emergency Plan.	Annually	Park Manager Stewardship Forest Resources	Park Manager
Explore opportunities for acquisition of land within the project boundary.	Ongoing	Park Manager Lands Manager	Lands Manager

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
Continue to explore and develop revenue generating opportunities that are sustainable.	Ongoing	Park Manager District Supervisor Innovations Team	Park Manager
Continue to complete and comply with annual safety inspections and plans.	Ongoing	Park Manager	Park Manager
Collaborate with the local Chambers of Commerce and communities to promote park amenities and park events.	Ongoing	Park Manager Local Partners	Park Manager
Seek local businesses for sponsorship and advertising opportunities.	Ongoing	Park Manager Local Partners	Park Manager
Collaborate with community partners by facilitating regular stakeholder meetings to support mutual goals including trail connections, friends group projects, local school events and public art.	Ongoing	Park Manager Local Partners	Park Manager Local Partners
<b>Development</b>			
Upgrade trail signage.	1-3 years	Park Manager Local Partners	Park Manager
Review park signage on M-59 and make changes to guide people to the main park entrance.	1-3 years	Park Manager MDOT	Park Manager
Prepare engineering documents for the repair of the Haven Hill Lake Dam, Moore Lake Dam and Pettibone Pond Dam and Alderman Dam removal.	1-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Lake Associations	Regional Planner
Review current and future trail systems to reduce conflicts with Chief Pontiac Trail.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner	Park Manager
Work with Highland Trailriders Association and the Oakland County Road Commission to develop an equestrian route along Cooley Lake Road to the existing trailhead located on Cooley Lake Road.	3-5 years	Park Manager Highland Trailriders Association Trail Specialist Road Commission	Trail Specialist

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
Renovate the main park road from M-59 to Teeple Lake.	5-10 years	Park Manager Regional Planner	Park Manager

MDOT = Michigan Department of Transportation  
PRD = Parks and Recreation Division

## Primitive Zone

**The Primitive Zone emphasizes the natural resources of the area. It is managed to allow only dispersed, low-frequency and low-impact recreational use in the zone. Maintaining a high-quality natural resource condition dictates the extent to which recreational improvements or users are allowed. For this reason, native species and natural processes take precedence over visitor accommodation. The following 10-Year Action Goals propose only very low levels of development, in order to protect the important habitat. Only foot traffic is allowed in this zone.**

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Natural Resources</b>			
Protect and restore extant native natural communities within the Haven Hill Natural Area.	Ongoing	Stewardship Park Manager	Stewardship
<b>Management Focus</b>			
Rescind the Natural Resources Commission's dedicated Haven Hill Nature Study Area to eliminate redundancy and minor boundary differences with the Haven Hill Natural Area dedication under Part 351 of PA 451 of 1994.	Ongoing	Park Manager Local Partners Stewardship Policy Manager	Policy Manager
Promote and market the Haven Hill Natural Area and the Haven Hill Natural National Landmark.	Ongoing	Park Manager Marketing & Outreach Stewardship	Park Manager



## Backcountry Zone

The character of the Backcountry zone is intended to be natural, with minimal evidence of human impact. While the Primitive Zone is highly restrictive for recreational use and human impact, Backcountry permits a slightly higher intensity of use. The Zone allows for increased activity, including bicycle and equestrian use, and slight modifications of the landscape (trail development) to accommodate that use where it is consistent with protection of the resource. Tolerance for natural resource impacts is low in the Backcountry zone, and the 10-year Action Goals for this zone focus primarily on improving existing facilities rather than new development.

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Recreation Opportunities</b>			
Maintain and enhance opportunities for hunting/fishing/gathering/trapping/birding.	Ongoing	Stewardship Wildlife Park Manager Fisheries	Park Manager
<b>Education/Interpretation Opportunities</b>			
Continue to communicate to visitors where trails are located within hunting zones.	Ongoing	Park Manager Marketing & Outreach	Park Manager
<b>Management Focus</b>			
Restore exemplary natural communities.	Ongoing	Stewardship	Stewardship

## Field Trial Course Zone

The character of the Field Trial Course Zone is intended to support landscape for 'championship' field trial purposes. The Zone is under active stewardship through a management agreement with user groups to restore a high-quality oak barrens ecosystem for field trialing. Management focus should be specific to natural resources that support field trial activities.

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Recreation Opportunities</b>			
Maintain and enhance opportunities for hunting/fishing/gathering/trapping/birding.	Ongoing	Stewardship Wildlife Park Manager Fisheries	Park Manager
<b>Management Focus</b>			
Update the Vegetation Management Plan every 5 years.	Ongoing	Stewardship	Stewardship

## Natural Resource Recreation Zone

**Active recreation, at medium to high density of use, conducted in a natural setting is the hallmark of the Natural Resource Recreation zone. There is still an emphasis on resource quality over recreation, but in this zone, higher levels of use are allowed. Vegetation may be managed to facilitate recreation use and to maintain an aesthetically appealing landscape, as well as to address such things as hazard trees, and to manage pests and disease. The 10-year Action goals are intended to promote moderate to high levels of recreation compatible with the natural character of the zone.**

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Recreation Opportunities</b>			
Designate the old sod farm for field trial use.	1 year	Park Manager Stewardship	Stewardship
Update the Wildlife Conservation Order to include the proposed Field Trial Area in the old sod farm.	1 year	Park Manager Stewardship	Stewardship
<b>Education/Interpretation Opportunities</b>			
In partnership with the Friends of Highland Recreation Area, define the future use and interpretation of the Haven Hill Lodge foundation site.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Friends Group	Park Manager
<b>Management Focus</b>			
Restore exemplary natural communities.	Ongoing	Stewardship	Stewardship
<b>Development</b>			
Install an enclosed shelter (possibly relocated) at the group campground.	1-3 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Local Partners	Park Manager
Evaluate the sustainability of the fishing pier at Alderman Lake and remove or replace as warranted.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner	Regional Planner
Develop parking areas and other required amenities for new field trial area in coordination with Highland Field Trial Association.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Field Trialers Stewardship	Regional Planner
Replace or renovate the fishing pier at Lower Pettibone Lake.	5-10 years	Park Manager Regional Planner	Regional Planner

## Developed Recreation Zone

**Active recreation with high density of use, conducted in areas not designated for natural resource significance, is characteristic of the Developed Recreation Zone. In this zone, recreation dominates with natural resource attributes enhanced where possible. This zone encompasses day use picnic areas, swimming beach areas, campground area, mini-cabin, and boating access sites. The 10-Year Action Goals direct management decisions and development projects designed to promote and support these diverse visitor activities.**

Action Goals	Target Completion Date	Program Input From	Responsible Program Position
<b>Historic/Cultural Resources</b>			
Work towards development for future use of the Gatehouse, Sheep Barn and Carriage House.	Ongoing	Park Manager Regional Planner Friends Group District Supervisor	District Supervisor
Perform an engineering assessment and cost estimate to provide recommendations for either the reuse or demolition of the caretaker's cabin at Dodge #10 Unit.	1 year	Park Manager Regional Planner	Park Manager
Work with the Friends of Highland Recreation Area to define the future use of the Gatehouse, Sheep Barn and Carriage House.	1-3 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Friends Group District Supervisor	District Supervisor
<b>Management Focus</b>			
Establish seasonal equestrian only use at the rustic campground to reduce conflict with non-equestrian campers.	1 year	Park Manager Policy Manager	Park Manager
Evaluate the existing equestrian staging area for improvements or relocation in collaboration with the Highland Trailriders Association.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Highland Trailriders Association	Regional Planner
Complete a cost-benefit analysis of adding electricity to some of the campsites at the rustic campground.	5-10 years	Park Manager Regional Planner Local Partners	Regional Planner
Evaluate and work to repurpose the Lakeside Shelter Day Use Area for cabins and/or yurts.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner	Regional Planner

<b>Development</b>			
<b>Action Goals</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Program Input From</b>	<b>Responsible Program Position</b>
Improve beach entrance aesthetics through collaboration with local artists.	1-3 years	Park Manager Local Partners	Park Manager
Install vault toilet at Gatehouse.	1-2 years	Park Manager Regional Planner District Supervisor	Park Manager
Develop an ADA accessible campsite at the rustic campground.	3-5 years	Park Manager Regional Planner District Supervisor	Regional Planner
Work with local partners to develop and maintain a shelter at the rustic campground.	5-10 years	Park Manager Regional Planner District Supervisor Local Partners	Park Manager

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act

# APPENDIX A – LEGAL MANDATES UPDATE

Legal mandates are identified that serve to further guide the development of the Phase 2 General Management Plan. For our planning purposes, the term “Legal Mandates” refers not only to federal and state law, but also the administrative tools of “Policy” and “Directive” of the Natural Resource Commission, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Parks and Recreation Division. Examples include Orders of the Director, Parks and Recreation Areas State Land Rules and other laws, commission orders, and rules of directives that apply to the recreation area.

Legal mandates applicable to Highland Recreation Area were identified for the Phase 1 General Management Plan (GMP). The legal mandates listed in Appendix A of the Phase 2 General Management Plan provide a supplement to those previously identified in the Phase 1 GMP and should be referred to concurrently.

## FEDERAL AND STATE STATUTE

<b>ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, 1973</b>	
This Act authorizes the determination and listing of species as endangered and threatened, and prohibits unauthorized taking, possession, sale and transport of endangered species	
<b>BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT, 1940 AND AMENDMENTS</b>	
This Act prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from "taking" bald eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The Act defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb." "Disturb" includes actions that may result in injury to the eagle, a decrease in its productivity or nest abandonment.	
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (NREPA) AND AMENDMENTS</b>	
PA 35 of 2010, Part 741 Recreation Passport	This act amended the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code to provide for a State Park and State-operated public boating access site “Recreation Passport” that a Michigan resident may obtain by paying an additional fee when registering a motor vehicle.
PA 451 of 1994, Part 761 Aboriginal Records and Antiquities	The state reserves the exclusive right and privilege to all aboriginal records and other antiquities including those found on the bottomlands of the Great Lakes.

## **LAND USE ORDERS**

### **5.16a Entry, use and occupancy of certain state parks, recreation areas and scenic sites, prohibited conduct.**

Order 5.16a (1) A person shall not do any of the following:

(a) Enter any of the following state-owned lands with a motor vehicle unless a valid Michigan recreation passport has been purchased and affixed to the vehicle:

(30) Highland RA, Oakland county.

## **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDERS**

### **State Parks and Recreation Areas**

#### **7.1 Hunting or trapping in state parks or game refuges; designating where permissible; permits; hunting or trapping in state recreation areas.**

Sec. 7.1 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter or by permit issued by the director, no person shall trap or hunt with firearms or dogs or in any other manner in any state park, state game refuge, or other lands under the control of and dedicated by the department as a game refuge or wildlife sanctuary.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, state recreation areas shall be open to hunting and trapping during established seasons.

(3) Trapping in state recreation areas, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, shall be limited to those areas at least 50 feet outside of the mowed portions of developed picnic areas, swimming beaches, parking lots, boat launches, children's playground structures, campgrounds or headquarters' areas. A duffer-type, egg-type, or similarly designed foothold trap for raccoon may be used within the exempted area only by written permission by the designated department representative.

History: Eff. Mar 31, 1989; Am. 16, 1989, Eff. Aug 1, 1989; Am. 9, 2008 Eff. Jun 6, 2008; Am. 2, 2016, Eff. April 15, 2016.

#### **7.53 Highland recreation area, hunting restriction, exception.**

Sec. 7.53 A person shall not take an animal upon those portions of the Highland recreation area, except for waterfowl hunting on Teeple lake during an open waterfowl season, described as that part of the E1/2 of section 24 lying south of highway M-59, T3N R7E; all of section 19, that part of section 30 lying west of Ford road and east of Teeple lake road, and that part of the NW1/4 of the NE1/4 of section 31 lying north and west of Teeple lake road, T3N R8E, Oakland county.

History: Am. 11, 1998, Eff. Aug 1, 1998; Am. 19, 2004, Eff. Dec 10, 2004

### **Sanctuaries, Refuges and Closures**

#### **8.18 Highland and Ionia field dog trial area, hunting restrictions.**

Sec. 8.18 Quail may be harvested only by field trial participants, as authorized by the field trial lease, in the Highland and Ionia recreation area field trial areas, as described in section 15.2, on days with authorized field trials during the open dates for quail hunting, as described in section 3.504.

History: Am. 5, 2002, Eff. Jun 1, 2002, Am. 3, 2009, Eff. Jun 4, 2009.

### **14.3 Dog training, seasons, exceptions.**

Sec. 14.3. (1) Dogs may only be trained on game which can be lawfully hunted with dogs as defined in section 6.2 during the period of July 8 of one year to April 15 of the following year, except as provided in subsections (2) and (3), sections 14.4 and 15.2, or as otherwise permitted by law.

(2) Fox may be chased from April 16 to July 8 in zone 3 on state-owned land with written authorization from the director upon an application form approved by the director.

(3) Game which can be lawfully hunted with dogs may be chased throughout the year on state-owned lands within the following portions of the designated field dog trial areas:

(a) Section 35, T7N R7W, and section 2, T6N R7W, within the Ionia recreation area.

(b) All those portions of the Highland recreation area, Holly recreation area, Lapeer state game area, and Sharonville state game area designated as field dog trial areas in section 15.2.

(4) Trainers may train their dogs from horseback on those portions of Highland and Ionia recreation areas defined in subsection (3).

History: Am. 2, 1990, Eff. Feb 19, 1990; Am. 1, 1991, Eff. Apr 1, 1991; Am. 3, 2000, Eff. Mar 10, 2000; Am. 5, 2009, Eff. Apr 3, 2009; Am. 15, 2009, July 9, 2009; Am. 3, 2014, Eff. Apr 11, 2014.

### **15.1 Director, defined.**

Sec. 15.1 For the purposes of this chapter, "director" means the director of the department of natural resources or an authorized representative of the director.

History: Am. 2, 1990, Eff. Feb 19, 1990.

### **15.2 Field dog trial, defined; designated field dog trial areas established.**

Sec. 15.2 (1) For the purposes of this chapter, "field dog trial" means a trial or meet, advertised as such and open to entry by persons whose dogs qualify, in which not less than 4 participants, with dogs, under control, are permitted to dog train in competition or contest. This definition does not apply to an individual cast within a field dog trial. There may be fewer than 4 participants with dogs in an individual cast. Dogs in a field dog trial are awarded points, trophies, or other actual honors for their performance and demonstration of hunting skills. A person or a group of persons dog training their dogs in competition but not under permit by the department are not participating in a field dog trial.

(2) Designated field dog trial areas are established on state-owned lands within the following described areas:

(a) That portion of section 26 lying west of Beaumont road; the following portions of section 35 - the south 1/2 lying east of Pettibone lake road, that portion of the NW 1/4 lying between Pettibone lake road and Beaumont road, the south 1/4 of the NE 1/4, the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the NE 1/4, and that portion of the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 lying west of Pettibone lake road; the E 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of section 34; the west 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of section 36; T3N R7E, Oakland county, within the Highland recreation area.

(b) Section 23 east of Jossman road, T5N R8E, Oakland county, within the Holly recreation area.

(c) Section 2; the NW 1/4 of section 4; that portion of section 5 lying south of Riverside drive, T6N R7W; the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of section 32; that portion of section 33 lying south of Riverside drive; that portion of the N 1/2 of section 34 lying south of Riverside drive; the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of section 34; and section 35, T7N R7W, Ionia county, within the Ionia recreation area.

(d) Sections 13 and 24 west of Five lakes road, T8N R10E, Lapeer county, within the Lapeer state game area.

(e) All of sections 24 and 25, and that portion of section 36 north of Sharon valley road, T3S R2E, Jackson county, within the Sharonville state game area.

(f) Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, T20N R2W, Gladwin county, within the Gladwin forest area of the Au Sable river state forest, which shall be known as the Gladwin field dog trial area.

History: Am. 2, 1990, Eff. Feb 19, 1990; Am. 1, 1991, Eff. Apr 1, 1991; Am. 19, 2004, Eff. Dec 10, 2004; Am. 3, 2014, Eff. Apr. 11, 2014.



### **15.3 Field dog trial, director's authority.**

Sec. 15.3 (1) A person shall not conduct a field dog trial on public land without first obtaining written authorization from the director upon an application form approved by the director.

(2) A person shall not conduct a field dog trial on private land from April 16 through July 8 without first obtaining written authorization from the director upon an application form approved by the director.

(3) It shall be unlawful for a person to make a false statement upon the application form authorized in this section.

(4) In fox and raccoon field dog trials, live fox or raccoon that are legally possessed may be used provided that such animals are not dragged, led on a leash, submerged in water, or allowed to come in contact with dogs.

(5) A person shall not shoot live birds in a field dog trial unless specifically authorized in writing by the director and shall comply with the following:

(a) It shall be unlawful to allow more than 4 persons to take live birds in a field dog trial, or to allow a person to take a bird if that person is not authorized to do so by the land administrator, or to use a kind of bird, number of birds, or source of birds other than those authorized by the director. Birds may be temporarily confined in a small portable cage for training purposes. Birds lawfully taken may be sold providing a receipt is issued by the sponsor of the field dog trial to the buyer. The receipt must be retained by the buyer until disposal of the bird carcasses.

History: Am. 2, 1990, Eff. Feb 19, 1990; Am. 3, 2011, Eff. Mar 11, 2011.

### **15.4 Field dog trial, unlawful acts.**

Sec. 15.4 (1) It shall be unlawful to conduct a field dog trial from April 16 through July 8 without maintaining a list of all trial participants at trial headquarters. The list shall be kept throughout the duration of the trial and shall be available for inspection at any time by any peace officer.

(2) Subject to section 43510, subsections (2) and (3), of Part 435, as amended, hunting and fishing licensing, MCL 324.43510, it shall be unlawful for a person to possess a firearm other than a shotgun, pistol, or revolver or ammunition other than blank cartridges while engaged in field dog trials, unless otherwise specifically authorized in writing by the director.

History: Am. 2, 1990, Eff. Feb 19, 1990; Am. 2, 2005, Eff. Mar 11, 2005; Am. 3, 2011, Eff. Mar 11, 2011.

## **STATE LAND RULES**

Parks and Recreation Areas – State Land Rules are issued by authority conferred on the Michigan DNR by Section 504 of 1994 PA 451 MCL 324.504. The rules cover entry, use and occupation of state lands and unlawful acts.

# APPENDIX B – PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Over the duration of the Phase 2 General Management Planning process, the Planning Team ensured a variety of opportunities for stakeholder and public input and feedback.

## Overview of Public Input Opportunities

- **Stakeholder Workshop** – A Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis was performed at the workshop to gather information from representatives from organizations with an interest in Highland Recreation Area and to inform them of the Phase 2 GMP process. The workshop was held on August 16, 2016 at the Highland Township Library from 2:30pm to 4:30pm or 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Stakeholders had the opportunity to attend either the afternoon session or the evening session. Below is what was recorded at the meetings and who was in attendance.

## STRENGTHS

### History

- One of the first State designated natural area and National Park Service recognized National Natural Landmark
- Edsel and Eleanor Ford Heritage story
- Girl Scouts National Round-up that occurred in 1956
- P.J. Hoffmaster/Genevieve Gillette/Jens Jensen – Founders of the State Park System
- Dodge brothers heritage and memorial
- Native American history
- Historical use of the park for the Chief Pontiac Trail Scout backpack credential high adventure hike training
  - o Trailhead moved to Highland Recreation Area in 1978
  - o 53 treks scheduled in 2016
- Early park volunteers originated the Natural Areas Advisory Committee and Program
- Shared history of SE Michigan's unique natural setting
- \$11 Recreation Passport

### Community and Partnerships

- Dedicated and skilled Friends Group are great ambassadors for the park with over 5,070 volunteer hours in 2015
- Active restoration of gatehouse and sheep barn
- Visiting artist program (Gatehouse)
- Strong local interest to be involved in the park
- Community involvement and partners both private and public

### Natural Features

- Natural area
- Large, undeveloped area helps preserve water quality

- Glacial features provide variety of natural communities
- Large expanse of land provides a safe refuge for animals
- Topography

### **Recreation and Activities**

- Field Trial grounds (1 of only 3 in the state and nationally known)
- Mountain bike trails, 16 miles, among the best in the state, very technical and difficult level
- Challenging and variety of equestrian trails
- Swimming area is very nice for families
- Lakes for fishing, canoeing and kayaking
- Diverse activities offered
- Variety of outdoor interests represented
- Group camp area
- Moosejaw annual training and demonstrations at the park
- Hunting and fishing
- Prairie restoration efforts in the field trial area
- Variety of trail use
- Cedar Creek Trail

### **Location**

- Location in SE Michigan near population
- Highly visible entrance on M-59 with excellent accessibility from major highways
- Proximity to White Lake

## **WEAKNESSES**

### **Marketing**

- Lack of communication
- Marketing
- Lack of information on what is available at the park
- Identity promotion
- Lack of advertising of events on website/social media
- Social media presence
- Lack of advertising and promotion
- Lack of signage on M-59 from the east
- Cedar Creek Trail advertising and promotion
- Lack of signage at south and west end of the park
- Lack of awareness of historical context of the park

### **Partnerships**

- Communication and mutual support between DNR and Friends Group
- Friends group participation and membership numbers
- Poor physical connections to local communities
- Overshadowed by other park systems
- Disconnect between the arts and the park
- Collaboration with other organizations

### **Facilities/Activities**

- Deteriorating facilities
  - o Haven Hill structures
  - o Mowing around Haven Hill structures
  - o Lack of water well at Gatehouse
  - o Lack of toilet facility at Gatehouse
  - o Insufficient heating at Gatehouse
- Non-native invasive plants in natural area
- Lack of enclosed shelter at existing group campsite, preventing winter use
- Closed trails still closed and were supposed to be reviewed as part of the management plan
- Lack of family/youth outreach programs and events
- Large areas of the park are inaccessible to the public
- Field trial area excludes equestrian trail use
- Equestrian trails taken away without input from trailriders
- Equestrian campground is shared with non-equestrian users
- Lack of family/youth activities at the campground
- Lack of parking for Cedar Creek Trail

#### **Internal**

- Lack of adopted Phase 2 plan and vision plan
- Insufficient financial resources

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **Partnerships**

- Opportunity to be a hub in Oakland County Trails Plan
- Continue to cultivate partnerships (land conservancies, Friends Groups)
- Pheasant Habitat Restoration
- Work with local organizations to connect park to other parks with trails and to provide economic benefits to the region.
  - o Milford, Pontiac Lake, Highland, White Lake, etc.
- Partner with schools to establish educational outreach programs at the park
- Increase community/volunteer involvement
- Use local artists to improve park signage
- Coordinate park to be included in Township and County Plans

#### **Marketing and Promotion**

- Promote Recreation Passport
- Promote and advertise free-passport day in conjunction with free-fishing day
- Reach out to families by providing fliers in school news folders
- Permanent trailer recreation passport registration options
- Use history of the park to assist with funding
- Pure Michigan
- Reach out to local businesses for sponsorship/ advertising opportunities

#### **Recreation and Facilities**

- Add more miles of equestrian trails
- Re-instate the old roadbed as a trail at Dodge #10
- Develop an enclosed shelter in group campsite for winter use

- Review closed Chief Pontiac Trail West to avoid conflicts with other trail users
- Modern bathrooms at Gatehouse for Cedar Creek Trailhead
- Bike and pedestrian access from Ford Road and Cedar Island Road
- Provide more family friendly opportunities
- Add a beginner mountain bike trail loop
- Add water source at the mountain bike trailhead to fill water bottles.
- Add 5 additional miles of single track mountain bike trail to get an EPIC rating from the IMBA.
- Add exercise stations/markers
- Add historical markers to tell story in park
- Add electric to some sites in the campground
- Add parking for Cedar Creek Trailhead
- Enlarge parking area for equestrian trailers
- Separate camping uses by season (equestrian/non-equestrian)

**Friends Group**

- Establish Gatehouse as a Visitor Center
- Improve facilities including roads, Haven Hill structures, natural areas, trails
- Share the history of the park with local, county, regional and state levels
- Broaden awareness, support and participation of state interests
- Broaden awareness, support and participation of outside interests including business community
- Establish permanent and stable source of funding for Friends Group projects
- Develop programs and facilities to support youth and family mentorship activities including Chief Pontiac Trail programs.

**THREATS**

- Invasive Species
- Vandalism
- Economy
- Funding
- Utility Company interests
- Surrounding land use development
- Detached younger generation
- Safety due to lack of maintenance of facilities

Name	Stakeholder Affiliation
Richard Russell, Jr.	Friends of Highland Recreation Area, Chief Pontiac Trail
Matt Lincoln	DNR
William Althoff	DNR
Larry Felardeau	Friends of Highland Rec Area
Lynn M. Hansford	Six Rivers Land Conservancy Highland Chapter

David W. Gerathy	Highland Conservancy
Keegan Springfield	Great Lakes Council, Boy Scouts
Jim Lloyd	Six Rivers Land Conservancy
Missy Dashevich	Highland DDA
Debbie Jensen	DNR
Jenny Frederick	Highland Township
Robert Hoffmeyer	Highland Field Trial (HFTGA)
Ryan Dividock	Oakland County Economic Development Corporation
Erin Sabo	Huron Valley Council Arts
Carly Piro	United Flying Organization
Jeff Baunscheidel	DNR
Roscoe Smith	Highland Township Historical Society
Jason Iacoangeli	White Lake Township
Rick Hammil	Highland Township
Shannon Loso	Huron Valley Schools
Bill Hermann	Motor City Mountain Bike Association
Mike Kowall	State Senator
Barb Berta	Highland Field Trial (HFTGA)
Meghan Prindle	Legacy Land Conservancy Six Rivers Land Conservancy
Kevin Petts	Motor City Mountain Bike Association
David Snyder	Highland Trail Riders Association
Walt Cook	Highland Trail Riders Association

Fred Dore	Pheasants Forever
Marge Sawruk	White Lake Historical Society
Tim	Friends of Highland Recreation Area, MBPN

- Public Input Open House January 26, 2017** – located at the Highland Township Hall Auditorium, 205 N. John Street, from 6-8 p.m. 90 members of the public attended the meeting to learn about the Phase 2 General Management Planning process and comment on the Draft 10-Year Action Goals and proposed field trial area. The Draft Phase 2 Plan was also posted on the DNR’s website and comments were invited via Email.

Questions were answered related to the Phase 2 General Management Plan process, the proposed field trial area and equestrian use at the park. Due to the large amount in attendance, comments and questions with answers were collected and posted on the project website. These comments and questions can be found in the following pages:

**Press Release:**

**DNR to hold open house Thursday, January 26, 2017 to get input on draft Phase 2 General Management Plan for Highland Recreation Area**

The Department of Natural Resources will host an open house on January 26, 2017 to invite public input on a new draft Phase 2 General Management Plan for Highland Recreation Area in Oakland County. The open house will run from 6pm to 8pm at the Highland Township Hall Auditorium, 205 N. John Street, Highland, MI 48357.

The 5,900 acre Highland Recreation Area is located in southeastern Michigan, within minutes of a large population center. The park includes the Haven Hill Natural Area, Edsel Ford Estate cultural resources, and a field trial area for training and competition dog breeds. (One of only two state parks with designated dog field trial grounds) The park also offers hunting, wildlife viewing, rustic camping, mountain biking, hiking, swimming, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and model airplane recreation opportunities.

The Phase 2 General Management Plan for Highland Recreation Area defines a long-range (10-20 year) planning and management that will assist the DNR Parks and Recreation Division in meeting its responsibilities to protect and preserve the site’s natural and cultural resources, and to provide access to land- and water-based public recreation and educational opportunities. A link to the Highland Recreation Area Phase 2 General Management Plan draft can be found at

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/highland\\_general\\_mgmt\\_plan\\_352453\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/highland_general_mgmt_plan_352453_7.pdf)

The public input meeting will begin with a short presentation of the draft plan. The meeting will also include a review of a proposed addition to Highland's designated hunting dog field trail and training area. The proposed 250–350 acre field trial area is located north of Cooley Lake Road and east of Duck Lake Road. Field trialing includes various competitions and evaluations of hunting dogs. It often involves the discharge of firearms and some trials are conducted from horseback.

Members of the public are welcome to attend at any time during the two-hour period to review the planning material, provide comments and talk to DNR staff. Comments can also be made via email until January 31, 2017 to Matt Lincoln at [lincolnm@michigan.gov](mailto:lincolnm@michigan.gov).

Additional information on the DNR's General Management Plan process is available at [www.michigan.gov/parkmanagementplans](http://www.michigan.gov/parkmanagementplans).

For more information about the public meeting or the Phase 2 General Management Plan, contact Matt Lincoln at 517-284-6111 (TTY/TDD711 Michigan Relay Center for the hearing impaired) or via email at [lincolnm@michigan.gov](mailto:lincolnm@michigan.gov). Persons with disabilities who need accommodations for the meetings should contact Lincoln at least five business days before the meeting.



**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**Highland Recreation Area Phase 2 General Management Plan**  
**Public Input Meeting**  
Thursday, January 26, 2017  
6pm-8pm, Highland Township Hall Auditorium



1. **Planning Team Introductions** (5 minutes)
  
2. **Overview of Phase 1 Plan and Presentation of Draft Phase 2 Plan** (20 minutes)
  
3. **Presentation of Proposed Field Dog Trial Area** (5 minutes)
  
4. **Open House** (1.5 hours)
  - a. Review Action Goals on boards
  - b. Post-it notes are available to add comments and post on the related Action Goal
  - c. Invitation to talk to Planning Team members
  - d. See comment sheet below to provide additional comments
  
7. **Adjournment**

**For More Information:**

**DNR Management Planning Website:** [www.michigan.gov/parkmanagementplans](http://www.michigan.gov/parkmanagementplans)

**Email:** Matt Lincoln [lincolnm@michigan.gov](mailto:lincolnm@michigan.gov)

**Phone:** 517-284-6111

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**Welcome – Please Sign In!**  
**Public Input Meeting**  
**Highland Recreation Area Phase 2 General Management Plan**  
**Thursday, January 26, 2017**

Name	Affiliation
Ian Doran	SEMI NAVHDA
Adam Lucas	SEMI NAVHDA
Dennis Hurley	HTRA
Kristina Ledesma	HTRA
Hope Hirth	NAVHDA
Tamara L. Gauthier-Cecil	Pontiac Lakes, Highland Rec
Ralph Beebe	SEMI NAVHDA
Charles Shepherd	SEMI NAVHDA
Tami Vickery	HTRA
Harry Evans	Public
Don Packard	MI Horse Council
Susan Bailo	SEMI NAVHDA
Nancy Ohlinger	HTRA
Lynn Hansford	CISMA- Oakland County
Steve Power	MSVE Volunteer
Michelh Milan	Brittany Lake
Jane Brown	HTRA
Susie Sulla	PLHA
Bill Lore	
Jan Msalvia	Highland Township Trustee
Vickie Branyash	HTRA
Varvara Workman	
Kim McVeieh	Michigan English Setter Club
Patricia A Bandy	HTRA, Rose Oak Equine Adventure
Pattie Podnar	HTRA, PLHA
David Raimer	NAVHDA
Jeff and Jayne Hefton	Resident
Roger Doyle	SEMI NAVHDA, Fort Detroit GWP Club
Shannon Loso	Huron Valley Schools
Scott Hirth	NAVHDA
Richard Hirmisen	Fort Detroit GWP Club
Mike Wiza	Highland Township Plan Comm.
Barbara Fleming	HTRA
Patti Janette	Highland Rec
Dave Jannete	Highland Rec

Donna Snyder	HTRA
David Snyder	HTRA
Danny Kellermeyer	HTRA, ROEA, OREA
Michaelle Kellermeyer	HTRA, ROEA, OREA
Christopher Winn	NAVHDA
Scott Green	Highland Planning Commission
Rich Sulla	PLHA
Mark A. Williams	NAVHDA
Doug Millard	SEMI NAVHDA
Floyd Vickery	HTRA
Rick Olt	SEMI NAVHDA
Merrie Carlock	White Lake
Wendy Golding	HTRA
Roxanne Miller	HTRA
Theresa Bigque	HTRA
Lisa Pehur	SEMI NAVHDA
Dick Dixom	HRTA
Liz Snoblen	Highland Equestrian Conservancy
Todd L Stubbs	HTRA
Burton McCandless	Michigan Brittany Club
Sally Oberg	HTRA, PLHA
Caryn Robinson	Pontiac Lake Horseman
Doug Rimatzki	Stakeholder, property adjacent
Pam Sienkiewicz	FOHRA
Thad Sienkiewicz	FOHRA
Tim Wiles	HOHRA V.P
Bill Vandermaes	SEMI NAVHDA
Rick Smallman	SEMI NAVHDA
Don Green	Milford Township Supervisor
Russell Ayers	Oak Park, MI
Jan Packard	HTRA
Jim Lloyd	Highland Parks and Rec
Cindy Kesler	HTRA
Mark Tavbe	Wolverine Retriever Club
Alicia and Mark Brown	Cooley lake to site neighbors
Tom Rogers	Wolverine Retriever Club
Dan Barrett	SEMI NAVHDA
Michele Ricksgers	HTRA
Linda Herbert	HTRA
Leah Juarez	Lelia media LC3
Tom Ventitelli	SEMI NAVHDA

Christina Purslow	HTRA
Anna Luppet DVM	
Cheis Domwner	SEMI NAVHDA
Peter Ketch	Wolverine Retriever Club
Michael Masterson	SEMI NAVHDA
Greg Seddon	Wolverine Retriever Club
Mark Brown	
Richard G. Russell, JR	
Larry Falardeau	
Jacque Keryk	
Diane Duncan	
Crystaly Houston	
Debby Dettart	
Barb Burta	HFTGA

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**Highland Recreation Area Phase 2 General Management Plan**  
**Public Input Meeting**  
Thursday, January 26, 2017  
6pm-8pm, Highland Township Hall Auditorium



90 members of the public attended the meeting to learn about the Phase 2 General Management Planning process and comment on the Draft 10-Year Action Goals and proposed field trial area. Questions were answered related to the Phase 2 General Management Plan process, the proposed field trial area and equestrian use at the park.

**Questions asked at the meeting about the public input process**

1. Can you post questions and answers online?

*Answer:* Yes, we will collect questions and comments and post them online.

**Comments made at the meeting related to the proposed field trial area**

1. Concerned about noise from the field trial area.
2. Please locate the parking lot so lights do not shine into neighbors windows
3. Highland Field Trialers will work with DNR to fund a perimeter fence for the new field trial area.

**Questions asked at the meeting about the proposed field trial area**

1. Where is the proposed parking lot going to be located?

*Answer:* The preferred location of the parking lot is east of Duck Lake Road across from the gas pipeline compressor station. The parking lot will be built here pending county approval for the driveway and funding. There are few nearby residences at this location.

2. When will the new field trial area be opened?

*Answer:* DNR explained that the area will not be opened until the driveway has county road commission approval, a Wildlife Conservation Order is approved, a perimeter fence is installed and a parking area with vault toilet is developed. This is contingent upon funding from the Highland Field Grounds Association or other sources.

3. How will noise and safety be controlled with adjacent landowners?

*Answer:* DNR explained that the new field trial area will be surrounded by a farm fence and monitored by the Highland Field Trialers, park staff and local law enforcement. The entire proposed area is open to hunting with firearms. The same safety zone standard currently in effect prohibits discharge of a firearm within 450 feet of an occupied

building. Blanks are used for most dog trial events. Most shooting during events will be near the Duck Lake Road parking area.

### **Equestrian comments made at the meeting**

1. Larger sites at the campground are needed.
2. A location needs to be provided on the south end of the park to allow for equestrians to ride into the park to the designated equestrian trails.
3. Highland Trailriders Association would like more trails in the park to ride.
4. Equestrians would like to ride into the park without having to trailer in.

### **Questions asked at the meeting about equestrian facilities in the park**

1. Why were trails closed?

*Answer:* No designated equestrian trails will be closed as result of the new field trial area. No designated equestrian trails have been closed at Highland in recent years.

The new Cedar Creek Trail that parallels the park entrance road added an additional equestrian trail from M-59 to existing equestrian trails.

In 1997 a section of undesignated trail within the Haven Hill Natural Area was closed to equestrian use. The trails were terribly mucky and unsafe for people and horses and inappropriate for the statutorily dedicated Haven Hill Natural Area. Considerable lengths of boardwalk were constructed over trail sections of old, rotting corduroy logs and railroad ballast fill. At the same time a similar length of undesignated hiking trail was formally dedicated for equestrian use.

Another 1 mile section of trail that passed through the center of the Barn Field Trial Area was closed to eliminate potential safety issues, approximately 15 years ago. The other trails that equestrians believe were closed by the current Park manager during his tenure, were either never designated equestrian trails, or were officially closed long before his arrival. Enforcing park rules and posting signs to educate the public are part of his duties.

2. Why have equestrians been ignored?

*Answer:* DNR explained that there are three goals specifically related to equestrian improvements at the park and that it was not intended for equestrians to be ignored. DNR will take all equestrian related comments into consideration when revising the plan.

Normally the proposed field trial area would have a separate public information meeting. Because the Sod Farm Field Trial Area is one of the proposed Phase II goals, it was decided for efficiency sake to combine it with the Phase II meeting. Neighbors adjacent to the proposed field trial area were sent a special invitation letter. The result

was that more time was spent providing information on the proposed field trial area than normal for a Phase II public meeting.

Due to the large attendance at the meeting, additional questions and comments were collected on sticky-notes and comment sheets at the meeting and recorded below. Answers to these questions are also recorded below.

### **Additional Questions Collected**

1. Equestrian groups will need to be involved with involved with plans for the staging areas. Where would this be relocated? (2)

*Answer:* Relocation is only a possibility and it's feasibility has not yet been determined. DNR will involve the Highland Trail Riders Association (HTRA) prior to any changes made to the staging area.

2. HTRA would like to have 8-10 miles of trails added (2). What do we have to do to get this added to the phase 2 management plan?

*Answer:* While the east-west connector trail remains a priority, we will discuss the potential for adding additional equestrian trails with the project team and make a determination on adding additional goals to the plan.

3. If MDNR has only 2 areas for field trials, why don't you locate a facility at Bald Mountain?

*Answer:* The Sod Farm at Highland was deemed the most viable and practical solution. It is of sufficient size, the landscape works well for field trialing, the geographical location is desirable, there are no conflicting federal interests in the land, there are relatively few neighbors, and it is adjacent to existing field trial grounds, with an existing grounds committee that is willing to partner on development and maintenance. Bald Mountain RA does not provide all of these things.

4. Will trapping be allowed on the field trial grounds?

*Answer:* The proposed field trial area is currently open to trapping and will remain open to trapping if dedicated as a field trial area. State Recreation Areas are open to hunting and trapping unless closed by an order of the Director of the Department of Natural Resources. Almost all of the Highland Recreation Area is currently open to hunting and trapping.

5. Should the field trial areas be spread out into other parks instead of all condensed in 2 parks?

*Answer:* Field trial areas require large acreages of open land, with limited conflicts with other recreational uses and land acquisition restrictions, etc. Maintenance of field trial

areas requires the committed involvement of a “field trial grounds committee”. This limits where field trial areas can be located.

6. We do retriever field trials where dogs are tested “equally on land & water” per the rule book. We would like to utilize the field trial area too. Could the water edges be cleared so the water could be used for the receivers? This would expand the usefulness of the field trial area immensely.

*Answer:* The Highland field trial grounds are open to use by retriever groups. MDNR has delegated the authority for scheduling events at DNR field trial grounds, including retriever trials, to the MUCC Gun Dog Committee. Scheduling follows a DNR approved procedure which allows use by all hunting dogs groups: hound groups, retrievers, as well as pointing dogs.

Improvements for water retrieving have been made in the past at Highland. The proposed Sod Farm Field Trial Area has great potential for retriever trials. Suggestions for improvements to field trial grounds should be made through the Highland Field Trial Grounds Association (Bob Hoffmeyer) or the Ionia Field Trial Grounds Association (Ron Gulembo).

7. How do you plan to manage these field trial grounds when the current two field trial grounds cannot be adequately maintained?

*Answer:* Our field trial partner organizations help us maintain the current two field trial grounds and will help us maintain the proposed grounds. The Silo Course and the Barn Course are more than adequately maintained with improvements being made each year.

8. How are you dealing with soil erosion issues on the silo course due to snowmobile use?

*Answer:* Erosion from snowmobiles is a recognized problem. Completely prohibiting snowmobile use on field trial grounds is a possible solution. However, snowmobile use could be more compatible if snowmobiles were restricted to designated routes. How to enforce these restrictions is problematic. Field trial horses cause erosion as well. We continue to work to minimize their impact on erodible slopes.

9. Why not consider using some of the sod farm for equestrian use?

*Answer:* The proposed sod farm field trail area was determined by a Department level search for additional field trial grounds. PRD endeavors to reduce conflicts between user groups. Equestrian use is not particularly compatible with field trials and dog training, especially when live ammunition is used. While the east-west connector trail remains a priority for the DNR, we will evaluate opportunities to expand equestrian use at the park as proposals are received.



10. Why do equine trails disappear but dog trails expand? Can't there be a way for equine and dog to coexist?

*Answer:* Yes. The field trial area is expanding due to the closure and use restrictions of field trial areas in Wildlife Division State Game Areas. Trails closed at Highland Recreation Area were illegal, non-designated, user-created trails that conflicted with other designated uses at the park. (See Question 1). PRD seeks to reduce conflicts between user groups. Just like bikes and horses don't mix well, horses, dogs and use of live ammunition don't mix well.

11. Why do dog trials group have a liaison (that is also DNR decision maker) and no other group does?

*Answer:* Other groups also have liaisons, including equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers and motorized trail users. They communicate with individual user groups and attend user advisory committee meetings.

12. Why can dog groups clear areas and burn/destroy trees, shrubs, etc., but on trails for horses we cannot burn/destroy/remove any?

*Answer:* Trail work can be done by volunteers under a Use Permit and according to trail maintenance standards.

For over 20 years the work of the Highland Field Trial Grounds Association has been guided by a vegetation management plan developed for the Highland field trial grounds. Each year they submit an annual work plan for approval. Each year the HFTGA donates funding and volunteer time for grounds maintenance. Prescribed fire and brush pile burning is not done by field trailers: it is only done by qualified DNR staff. DNR staff is present for most volunteer workdays to ensure our ecological restoration goals and mutual field trial area maintenance goals are met.

Equestrian, mountain bike and other trail user groups often perform trail maintenance under use permits. This is to ensure work is done to trail standards, safely, and properly. For example trimming oaks during the spring and summer can easily introduce a fatal oak disease, oak wilt

13. What equestrian groups have you met with prior to this meeting?

*Answer:* The Highland Trail Riders Association was represented at our meeting with stakeholders on August 16, 2016.

14. How many trial groups will use this area? How many members in the group?

*Answer:* The Highland Field Trial Association has a formal relationship with 14 different clubs, but other organizations may use the grounds. This year (2017) there are 49 field trial events scheduled at the Highland field trial grounds. Events may be a single day or may last for more than a week. Participation varies from a few dozen people to several

hundred. Participants are mainly from Michigan, but larger events such as championships, draw people from across the nation. In addition there is dog training by individuals and informal use by groups. The majority of field trial events are held in the spring and fall.

### **Additional Comments Collected**

1. Love the location.
2. We need bike/walk/run path around this entire park development
3. Campground needs to be redesigned to accommodate large rigs
4. Do not incorporate any big blue stem. Cannot see your pointing dog in this class type.
5. Field trial areas are currently designed for pointing breeds only. The water on the proposed FT area makes it attractive to retriever clubs.
6. Retriever trials require no fencing, only access to ponds and fields. If the edges of ponds can be trimmed to allow sight lines by clubs, Highland can greatly increase use.
7. Improve/expand campground for equestrians
8. Provide a method by which people can report location of invasive species.
9. Provide horse trail easement along roadways to allow access to horse trails.
10. East-west connector: reach out to Highland Equestrian Conservancy; we can help with volunteers and potentially with funding
11. Need dedicated horse camping area May-Oct with pull through slots for 40-50 rigs.
12. I have been training dogs at Highland for the past 25 years. This is the first addition to the training area in that time. There is a definite need for a 3<sup>rd</sup> training area.
13. The proposed/added field trial grounds are needed and the location is great.
14. Want details on east-west connector, HTRA has not been involved in those discussions.
15. Handicap access playground
16. Water access at barn (weddings)
17. Evening safety lighting (P.M. Meetings)
18. Enforce barn course rules for firearm discharging. Even better, gate the parking lot and lock it at night.
19. Beginner mountain bike trail, would like an easy 2-3 mile loop
20. Invasive Species Control: from horseback on west loop, its disturbing how many invasive plants there are... worried about trees!
21. Our club used to use Highland for field trials many years ago. The land is fine on the barn and silo courses now if the briars could be removed.
22. We need to reclaim more horse trails that have been taken away

### **COMMENT WORKSHEETS COLLECTED**

***Are there any additional actions you would like to see?***

1. Continue the Equestrian use only weekends in rustic campground
2. Equestrian trail that will get use between Livingston Road and the park trails.
3. Camping spots need to be deeper to accommodate longer rigs and trailers.
4. Easement between fence (dog trials) and road, to safely ride to park on our horses and aren't forced to ride on roads to get to equestrian trails. (2)
5. Rustic campground- update with water and electric.
6. Invasive species control- phragmites
7. Collaborate with Highland Parks and Rec to extend connector path into Highland Township (Livingston Rd).
8. Poor planting of trees in the campground (2)
9. Removing some of the posts to make pulling your trailer in easier (2)
10. It would be nice to allow riding when dog trials are not going on. Also, utilize the pine tree area for equestrians; that is across from dog trial and bike parking on Livingston.
11. Expand horse trails (3)
12. Make campground for equine only
13. Fix the road going into campground
14. I would like to see less "pro" dog trials and more "pro" equine.
15. All for using fields for hay.
16. Could you post more firework info? I had 2 times last year that someone whipped into the lot and lit off roman candles and they of course fell over because they were in a rush to leave.
17. Old field area off of W. section of Haven Hill can be removed/developed as a native plant grass land area. Currently, is being heavily shrubbed with woody invasive plants and is a seed source for garlic mustard.
18. I'd like to see the existing trails on Livingston Rd, beside the bike trail, accessible to the equestrians. It's a beautiful trail and would also benefit people that live on the other side to access the park.
19. Get trail maps updated/reprinted
20. East-West loop needs to be involved in those discussions
21. Highland Trail Riders get equal opportunity to expand trails such as other groups: mountain bikers and dog trial areas.
22. Keep the fields cut to 12", clearing brush around ponds

***Are there any proposed actions you don't think should be included? If so, please explain.***

1. The dog trial area on Livingston road should be left alone.
2. Have mountain bike proposed moved to Proud Lake or Pontiac; they (bikers) have 16 miles of trails and equine only have 11.5 miles.
3. Regional non-motorized trail plans want to connect Indian Springs Metropark, Pontiac Lakes Rec, Highland Rec and Milford Village. Concern that large amount of Field Trial land may conflict with trail plans. Suggest mapping trails before foreclosing on trail opportunities.
4. General action goal #15 please add "Local Partner" for program for "Development team"

### **Other comments**

1. I've met with members of Friends of Highland Recreation Area (FOHRA) about ways to increase sponsor (advertising) dollars from local businesses through digital and social media. I would like to work more closely with the DNR on this. Please contact me (Leah Juarez) about this!
2. Make presentation available online
3. Like field trial proposed parking lot for sod farm
4. The new walking path should have more signs where the horses should go. A lot of horse people ride on this because they just do not know.
5. At the camping area there are posts and new trees planted off the road. I cannot park there. My husband does the parking and still had to go across the road and back in where the post was in the way. We had a dented fender. You have to make sites a pull through. Most trailers are 28' to 48' long, mine is 36'. I will not camp there anymore. I would like to support Highland.
6. I would like another meeting like this BEFORE this is voted on and put into action. At this meeting it totally seems like the plan for sod farm area is already a "go" and this meeting is only a technicality.
7. The sod farm plan sounds great. As a member of NAVHDA, I can't say how many times I have showed up to a fall parking lot or had boats launched on Moore Lake when training.
8. Thank you for your service!
9. HTRA wants to work closely with the DNR and ensure all groups are getting equal consideration.
10. Meetings are not structured to allow for questions and answers
11. Review current and future trails for conflict with Chief Ron for trails.

### **SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS COLLECTED VIA E-MAIL**

1. How long and within what avenues did the dog trial groups take to obtain the land provided for their purpose? How did they obtain approval for new areas when horse trails were closed?

*Answer:* The horse trails that were closed were never designated horse trails. They were user-created and conflicted with other designated uses in the park. The manager continuously tries to eliminate the impact these user-created trails have on the park and guest safety by posting signs.

The Highland Field Trial Area has been used as a training and event area for individuals and organized sporting dog groups even prior to its official dedication in 1947, and it has been in continuous use since. The Highland Field Trial Area is one of only two field trial areas within our State Park system. The Highland Field Trail Area was established and dedicated by state statute. The Highland Field Trial Grounds Association (HFTGA) was

formed in 1948 and has assisted Parks and Recreation Division with the management of the grounds since that time. The Stewardship Unit has worked with the HFTGA at the Highland Recreation Area for over 20 years to maintain the field trial grounds and implement ecological restoration of an important oak barrens remnant (native grassland) within the Silo Course. The HFTGA has a non-exclusive lease to use and maintain the field trial grounds. The consideration for the lease is paid in dollars or in volunteer hours. A permit fee is paid to the Department for each field trial or event. The same Recreation Passport requirements apply to field trial users and event participants.

Wildlife Division closed a number of field trialing areas on state game area because of a conflict with the requirements of the federal funding (Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, AKA PR funding) that purchased the land which was the result of a federal audit finding. As a result, the capacities of the remaining field trial grounds were severely taxed. The increasing popularity of some kinds of field trial events (NAVDA events, walking trials, training events) adds to the problem.

The Department has delegated authority to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs and their "Gun Dog Committee" to serve as the umbrella organization for scheduling and conducting field trialing on all State lands. The chair of the Gun Dog Committee presented the situation to Director Creagh. Director Creagh asked that additional field trial grounds be found. A number of areas on state land (not just state parks) were considered. The Sod Farm at Highland was deemed the most viable and practical solution. It is of sufficient size, the landscape works well for field trialing, the geographical location is desirable, there are no conflicting federal interests in the land, there are relatively few neighbors, and it is adjacent to existing field trial grounds, with an existing grounds committee that is willing to partner on development and maintenance.

2. How much influence does the park manager have over what is happening at the park?

*Answer:* Our park managers take an objective approach to anything they do at the park. The most important aspect of their decision making is safety, which is why we have designated horse trails and other designated use areas at the park so that uses are separated and safety issues are minimized.

3. What is the process for decommissioning trails?

*Answer:* PA 45 of 2010 gives specific direction on how and under what circumstances the DNR may close (decommission) a DESIGNATED equestrian trail. The department must document the specific reasons for the closure and provide opportunities for public input. Although not required by statute, a similar process would be used for closure of non-equine trails. Temporary orders to close a trail may be issued in emergency situations and the reason for the closure posted at the trailhead. , the process would

start with a Work Item Proposal (WIP), submitted by the unit supervisor. This process requires several levels of DNR input and approvals. If the WIP is approved at all levels, then some manner of public input would follow. It is unlawful to ride a bike or horse in a state park or recreation area other than on a trail designated for that use: undesignated or illegal trails are closed or signed by the park manager..

4. What do we need to do to get a spot on the management plan indicating we are going to be considered for additional trails?

*Answer:* We will take your request for additional trails into consideration as we revise the Phase 2 General Management Plan for Highland Recreation Area.

5. Why was the trail known as the “Pines Trail” decommissioned?

*Answer:* This trail was never designated as a trail at the park. This was a user-created trail that in addition to improper equestrian use, also created access for illegal ORV use, dumping on State Land, and party spots created by local youth. The park staff cleaned up those areas, closed the illegal entry points, and posted signs. There was no expectation that we should consult equestrian groups about decommissioning the trail, because it was never commissioned by the Michigan DNR. It probably began as a path used by hunters, then hikers, and then eventually equestrians.

#### **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS COLLECTED VIA E-MAIL**

1. Add equestrian trails to the park, specifically the area known as “The Pines”. (4)
2. Improve the campground to allow room for larger rigs. (3)
3. Interested in the staging area improvements. Include equestrians in the planning process and make sure it’s big enough it’s going to be relocated. (2)
4. Would like to ride into the park without having to trailer in. (2)
5. It’s wonderful that the park is expanding the dog field trial area but imp concerned about fencing out the local horseback riders who access the park by riding in. Please take this into consideration when the fence gets built.
6. Please consider re-opening some of the equestrian trails. (2)
7. Please supply the Highland Field Trialers with comments from the meeting so we can address some of the issues.
8. I’d like to help start a campaign for sponsorship opportunities.
9. I’m impressed with the way the team is trying to accommodate many interests while keeping everyone safe and separated.
10. I like the idea of a beginner loop for mountain bikers and the field trial area is so unique
11. Thanks for thinking of the Model Airplane user group!
12. Please explore opening ride-in access to the park from the south for equestrians. (5)
13. Explore connecting both field trial areas so 1 hour events can be held.
14. An overlook area at the new field trial course would help sell the field trial area.
15. Fencing the Field Trial Area is important, especially around the the proposed parking lot area.

16. Let the field trial event attendees know where the local restaurants are.
17. Connect the park to other parks.
18. I like the proposed parking lot area for the proposed field dog trail area, which I am also in strong support of.
19. I like the idea of having separate months for equestrians in the campground to alleviate the conflict between non-equestrian users.
20. Please consider off-road motorcycle access in southern Michigan.
21. Perhaps a parking lot for the field trial area could be located off of Teeple Lake Road or Ford Road instead because they are gravel and speeds are slower.
22. It would be helpful to set aside months for equestrian only camping at the rustic campground.
23. The proposed field trial area will not affect equestrians. (2)
24. I'm worried that the "Pines Trail" will be given up for the mountain bike beginner trail. Please make this an equestrian trail, which could also serve as a connection to Highland.
25. Add a shelter to the campground.
26. I support the new field trial area. It may become one of the premier areas in the country.
27. Electricity would be good for some sites in the campground.
28. There is definitely a need for more field trial areas.
29. Great presentation. I like the locations of the facilities.

# APPENDIX C – PLANNING TEAM MEETING SUMMARY

Over the duration of the General Management Planning process, the Planning Team held two on-site team meetings and two virtual meetings. These meetings were critical to the development of the Phase 2 General Management Plan and particularly the creation of the 10-Year Action Goals. Additionally, the meetings were an opportunity to review input received from stakeholders and the public.

## Overview of Planning Team Meetings

- **Team Meeting #1 July 7, 2016** – Located at the Highland Township Library, the kick-off meeting was an opportunity for Planning Team members to introduce themselves to one another, review the Phase 2 General Management Plan schedule and process, review the Phase 1 General Management Plan, develop the stakeholder questionnaire and review any changes that have occurred since the Phase 1 General Management Plan was approved.
- **Team Meeting #2 September 8, 2016** – Located at Highland Recreation Area, the Planning Team reviewed stakeholder meeting feedback and began to draft the 10-year action goals for the park.
- **Team Meeting #3 Go-To-Meeting November 1, 2016** – Located at the Highland Township Library, the Planning Team reviewed the refined the 10-year action goals for the park.
- **Team Meeting #4, Go-To-Meeting March 2, 2017** – The Planning Team reviewed information gathered at the public input workshop and finalized the 10-year action goals for the park.



**Kick-off Meeting (Meeting #1)**  
**Highland Recreation Area**  
**Phase 2 General Management Plan**  
**July 7, 2016**  
**9:00am -2:00pm**  
Highland Township Library

MINUTES

- 1) In attendance: Jeff Braunscheidel, Bill Althoff, Debbie Jensen, Matt Lincoln, Ray Fahlsing, Peter Rose.
  - Discussion of the importance of team members to be in attendance at the next meeting.
- 2) Matt presented and discussed the Phase 2 planning process for Highland Recreation Area.
  - It was requested that an example of a Phase 2 plan is sent out to the team (all completed plans are on the website).
  - The Public Meeting for the management plan should be combined with the public input meeting for the proposed field trial area that will most likely line up with the schedule.
- 3) Team reviewed and discussed the Phase 1 significance statements for the park.
  - Jeff pointed out that fishing was not mentioned in the significance statements. It should say "...hunting and SEVERAL LOCATIONS WITH ACCESS TO FISHING."
  - Ray discussed the various designations in place at the Haven Hill Natural Area. The Natural Area is dedicated through statute (Part 351). The area is also a National Natural Landmark, which has no legal implications, and an NRC dedicated Nature Reservation (Nature Study Area and Natural Area Preserve). Ray also suggested that we discuss rescinding the NRC designations in the Phase 2 plan since it is a Dedicated Natural Area now.
- 4) Team reviewed and discussed the project boundary for the park.
  - Land that has been acquired since Phase 1 was identified.
  - Land that has been disposed of since Phase 1 was identified.
- 5) Team reviewed and discussed the Zoning Map and Management Zones.
  - Team concurred that additional land acquired since Phase 1 should be zoned "Natural Resources Recreation", which is the adjacent zoning.
  - The current proposal create a new field trial area within the Natural Resources Recreation Zone and that this zone can support such an action was discussed.
  - Maps should be updated to show the new trail, park boundary and better clarity of zones.
- 6) Team reviewed and discussed the Supporting Analysis. The following items will be included in the Phase 2 Plan.
  - Jeff will write a paragraph on fishing
  - Additions to the timeline as identified by Bill.
  - Ray will update the threatened and endangered species list.

- Peter noted that the majority of the Recreation Area is under non-development mineral lease and this should be noted in the Phase 2 plan. Any updated maps produced will be included as part of the Phase 2 plan.
- 7) Team reviewed the list of changes/clarifications of the legal mandates
    - The new Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for the Eastern massasagua needs to be added to the list. A map showing the area covered by the agreement should also be included in the Phase 2 plan.
    - The National Historic Preservation Act item can be removed.
    - Wildlife Conservation Order number 7.53 needs to be updated when the new field trial area is designated.
  - 8) Team reviewed significant changes/developments that have occurred since Phase 1
    - Cedar Creek Trail is most significant addition
    - Wells were replaced/upgraded
    - Alderman fishing pier reconstructed
    - Sheep barn stabilized
    - Horse concession has been closed
    - Highland Oaks is a new Oakland County Park in the vicinity
  - 9) Upcoming issues and opportunities:
    - Caretakers Cabin discussion
    - East-West Connector Trail connecting to Highland
    - Road repaving cost and current state of the road
    - Old sod farm area may provide additional field trial space
    - Rustic Campground – equestrian/non-equestrian use discussion
    - Team reviewed the 2015 Master List of projects for the park
    - Wildlife Conservation Order number 7.53 needs to be updated when the new field trial area is designated to restrict bird hunting during field trial events.
  - 10) Team identified stakeholders for the input workshop
    - Matt to send out the list so that the team can fill in the blanks
    - Maximum of 3 representatives per stakeholder will be invited to the meeting
  - 11) Team reviewed stakeholder workshop agenda and discussed possible dates.
    - Doodle poll will be sent out for select dates the weeks of August 14 and 22.
    - An afternoon and evening session was proposed.
    - Once dates have been narrowed down, Bill will look into room availability.
  - 12) Those team members that were not familiar with the park toured the park, specifically visiting Haven Hill and the Gatehouse (after the meeting), and the rustic campground and the beach (prior to the meeting).

**Team Meeting #2  
Highland Recreation Area  
Phase 2 General Management Plan  
September 8, 2016  
9am – 1pm  
Highland Recreation Area Teeple Lake Beach Shelter**

MINUTES

- 1) In attendance: Jeff Braunscheidel, Bill Althoff, Debbie Jensen, Matt Lincoln, Peter Rose, Earl Cole
  - a. Discussion on the importance of team members being present at the next meeting to finalize action goals.
  
- 2) Team reviewed Meeting #1 minutes.
  - a. Debbie highlighted some grammatical changes that need to be addressed in the minutes.
  - b. Clarifications of the Wildlife Conservation Order comments were provided by team members.
  - c. Discussion about issues and opportunities recorded in the minutes and which items should be addressed as an action goal. A decision needs to be made at the next meeting with regards to the Road Repaving project, the Caretakers Cabin and the repurposing of the Haven Hill structures.
  - d. Discussion about East-West Connector Trail and determination that funding for engineering needs to be sought. Matt identified the trail as part of the Highland Township Non-motorized plan running along Livingston Road. Ray sent comments to the team regarding Eastern Massasauga habitat in this area.
  
- 3) Review Stakeholder Workshop feedback/ Action Goal Development: The team reviewed each stakeholder workshop feedback comment and recorded action goals that reflected them as appropriate.
  - a. Discussion on Marketing and Outreach items led to questions that need to be vetted through the Marketing and Outreach Division in order to refine the goal.
  - b. Discussion on development projects led to questions that need to be vetted through the field planner and district supervisor in order to refine the goal.
  - c. Discussions about nearby PRD parks and how they affect recreation opportunities at Highland Recreation Area. Team will research use numbers and compare recreation opportunities.
  
- 4) Matt will type up the initial action goals and send them out to the team for review prior to the next meeting so that team members can come prepared.

**Team Meeting #3**  
**Highland Recreation Area**  
**Phase 2 General Management Plan**  
**November 1, 2016**  
**1pm – 4pm**  
**Highland Township Library**

MINUTES

- 1) In attendance: Jeff Braunscheidel, Bill Althoff, Matt Lincoln, John Terpstra, Mike Terrell
- 2) Team reviewed Meeting #2 minutes
  - a. Matt noted some items from the minutes that are still pending including Marketing and Outreach Division review
- 3) Team reviewed draft action goals together and made changes as necessary to reflect realistic timelines and staff assignments
  - a. Concluded that the Stewardship related goals will need to be reviewed by Stewardship staff prior to public meeting
  - b. Concluded that the Marketing and Outreach related goals will need to be reviewed by Marketing and Outreach Division staff prior to public meeting
- 4) Public Input meeting will be scheduled upon review by Section Chiefs and absent team members

**Team Meeting #4  
Highland Recreation Area  
Phase 2 General Management Plan  
March 2, 2017  
9pm – 11am  
Highland Township Hall**

MINUTES

- 1) In attendance: Matt Lincoln, Bill Althoff, John Terpstra, Mike Terrell
  
- 2) Team reviewed public input collected at the public meeting and via e-mail. Action goals were confirmed that addressed comments and changes/additions to the action goals were made as warranted. Specific items the team discussed were as follows:
  - a. The addition of what is known as the “Pines Trail” identified by the equestrians. This trail may become part of the East-West Multi-use Trail Connector which needs to be designed before proceeding with any equestrian components of the trail.
  - b. The comments associated with invasive species control and natural community management were discussed. Team determined that the general action goals associated with these comments address this ongoing effort. Matt will follow up with the Stewardship Unit on this.
  - c. Potential for improving the vehicular maneuverability in the rustic campground and was discussed and determined that a plan needs to be developed to determine feasibility and cost.
  - d. Team discussed the addition of a “ride-in” access for equestrians from the south end of the park along Cooley Lake Road and it was proposed that PRD will work with the road commission to develop an equestrian route along Cooley Lake Road to the existing equestrian trailhead.
  - e. Several field trial detail comments were discussed and team determined that these comments were addressed with existing action goals.
  - f. Many comments were operational in nature and Bill confirmed that these can be handled independently of the plan.
  - g. Team discussed the addition of a playground and determined that it is not a priority, but DNR would support a local effort to add one.
  - h. Team discussed the addition of a shelter at the rustic campground and determined that this may be feasible but needs to be explored.
  
- 3) Team reviewed the 2004 project boundary and discussed modifications to the boundary to eliminate confusion with prior maps. Team concluded to review with Stewardship Unit prior to moving forward with recommended modifications as part of the Phase 2 plan.

- 4) The draft plan will be revised and sent to the team for final review prior to initiating the approval process for signatures.