



Fuller Woods State Game Area

Master Plan



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WILDLIFE DIVISION

MARK MILLS

12 DECEMBER 2015

Intended Purpose and General Management Direction

The Fuller Woods State Game Area (FWSGA) was originally acquired by the Department of Natural Resources (then Department of Conservation) in 1930 and increased in size through land acquisition in 1949. Originally, it was part of the State Forest system but management was transferred to the Wildlife Division in 2006. FWSGA is located in the Southwest Region of the Lower Peninsula in Arlington Township, Van Buren County (Figure 1). In all, FWSGA encompasses 85 acres of primarily wooded habitat managed primarily for wild turkeys and white-tailed deer.

Background

At a local level, this plan helps fulfill goals and objectives of other higher level Department and Wildlife Division plans and initiatives. The Department goals (protect natural resources, sustainable recreation, strong natural resource-based economies, and strong relationships and partnerships), the Wildlife Division's Guiding Principles and Strategies (Goal 2-Manage habitat for sustainable wildlife populations, Goal 4-Increase public participation in hunting and trapping), More Bang For Your Buck concepts (outstanding turkey hunting, and the challenge of small game hunting), the Division's Southwest Regional Operational Plan, Southwest Region Habitat Guidance documents, and the Southwest Region Land Management Plan are all reflected in this master plan.

Wildlife Species

True to the intended purpose of the game area when it was dedicated in 2006, the Wildlife Division of the Department of Natural Resources will continue to focus our efforts on species and habitats that help meet our goals to provide quality hunting opportunities and our other public trust responsibilities. There are no known threatened or endangered species at FWSGA.

Table 1. A list of species or projects to be worked on during this planning period, reflecting opportunities for habitat or recreational management.

| <i>Common Name</i> | <i>Featured Species</i> | <i>T&E, SC Species</i> | <i>Climate Change Vulnerable</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Wild Turkey | <i>X</i> | | | <i>Roosting areas, mast production</i> |

Existing Conditions

FWSGA consists primarily of deciduous forest land with small portions of wetland. Compared to other southern Michigan game areas, the FWSGA is very small – providing a limited area for hunting and other forms of recreation. There are no known unique plant communities located at FWSGA.

Recreational Use

FWSGA provides limited recreational use. Hunting is the most common use of the property followed by hiking and wildlife viewing. State game areas in southern Michigan are under continual pressure for other uses, however under Federal and State regulations, recreational and commercial uses on the area that are not incidental to our management for the purposes described above are generally not allowed. Some of these uses can be allowed, under the following circumstances:

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

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

Impacts on the Local Economy

Economic impacts of FWSGA are most likely minimal. The most common economic impacts on larger SGA's are hunting (hunters using local businesses), timber harvest, and sharecrop farming. Of these three, only hunting exists on the property.

Management Direction

The desired future condition for the SGA for the Fuller Woods State Game Area is outlined in Table 4.

Table 2. Desired future condition of cover types and habitat issue direction on the Fuller Woods SGA.

| Cover type and Habitat Issues | Desired Future Condition |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Northern Hardwoods | Maintain |
| Mixed Upland Deciduous | Maintain |

Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions

What follows is the strategic direction for the Fuller Woods SGA, to be implemented during this planning cycle. This plan describes the **goals** or desired future condition for the area, the **objectives** under each goal, and the **actions** associated with each objective. Goals come mostly from the featured species and habitat issues relevant to FCSGA.

Goal I provide public hunting property with habitat management favoring Wild Turkeys

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

Metrics: staff observation

Objective A. Complete a Forest Inventory (MIFI) by 2020.

Action 1. Have local staff complete or outsource to Michigan Natural Features Inventory if funding/time is available.

Objective B. Evaluate current forest habitat and make management recommendations by 2021

Action 1. Using MIFI, identify any timber treatments necessary to properly manage oak stands on FWSGA

Objective C. Manage forest as recommended by 2026

Action1. Use timber sale to complete management recommendations from Objective B.

Objective D. Annually evaluate for invasive species and control as needed.

Fuller Woods State Game Area

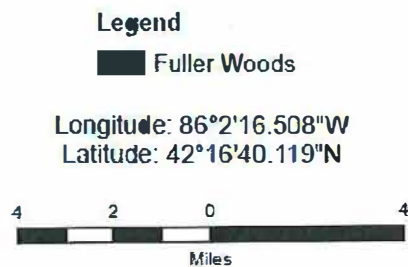
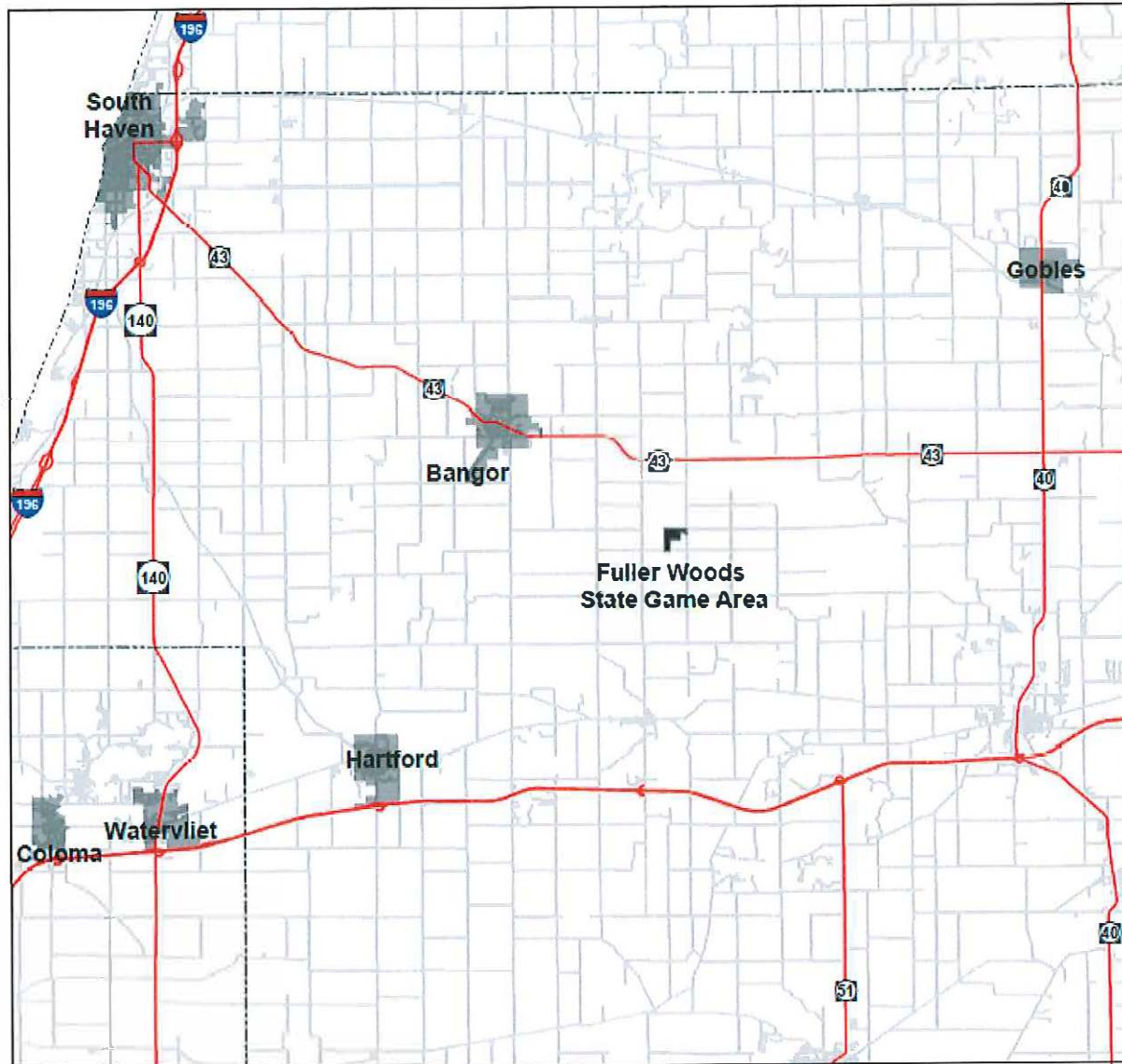


Figure 1. Location of Fuller Woods SGA.

Fuller Woods State Game Area

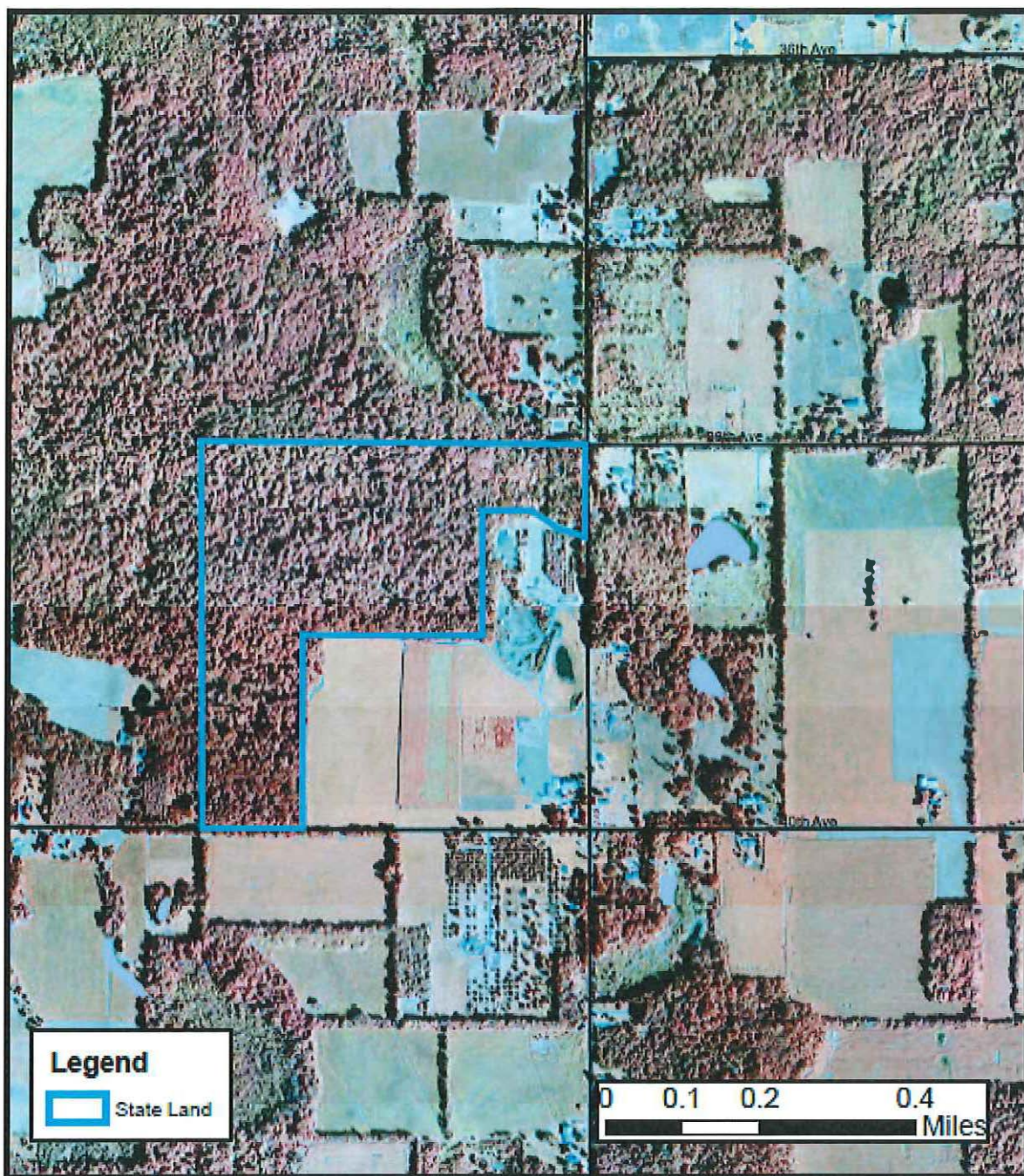


Figure 2. Fuller Woods SGA boundaries.



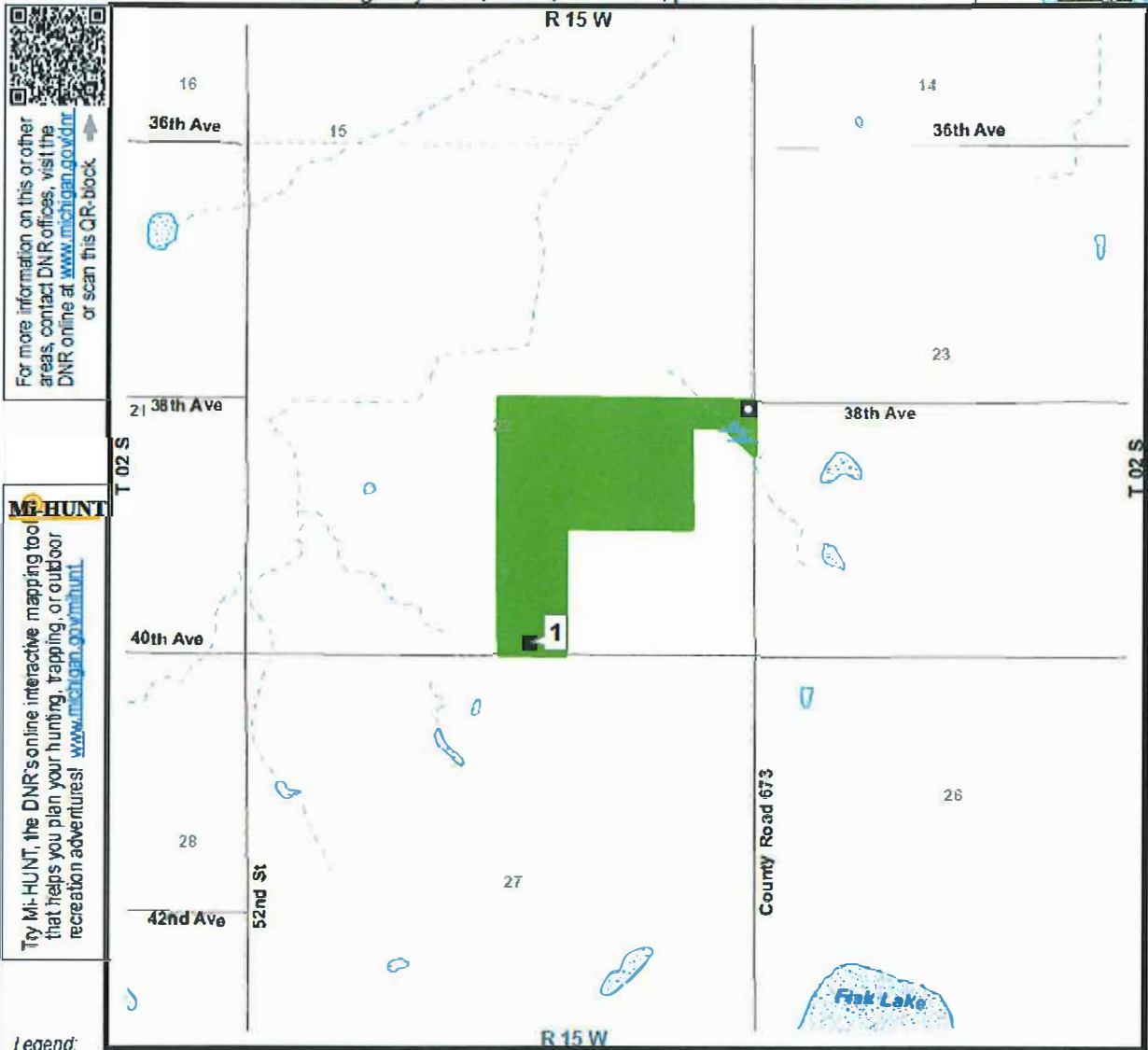
STATE OF MICHIGAN - DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FULLER WOODS STATE GAME AREA

- General Map -

Van Buren County

Area headquarters: Crane Pond DNR Wildlife Office
60887 Highway M-40, Jones, MI 49061 ; phone 269-244-5928



Legend:

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| State Land: | Wildlife/Game Area | | |
| Parking: | Prepared Lots | | Rustic or Shoulder-side Parking |
| Boating: | Prepared Ramp | | Marsh in Area |
| Roads: | Highways or Paved | | Gravel or Dirt Roads, Two-Tracks, Trails |
| Water: | Lakes/Ponds | | Rivers, Streams |
| Political: | Town-Range Section Lines | | Seas, Streams, Drains |
- Installed 136, near center of block

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Important! 150 yards or 450 feet Safety Zones (No Shooting!) are enforced around all buildings and structures at all times. **Be Safe!**
Always be careful around water and ditch/dikes for deep water!

Look for Watchable Wildlife viewing area signs in this area, for locations and more information about trails or features.



**Hunter Monies Help
Make This Area
Possible**



Map Revised 09/01/2015 - Wildlife Div./MLS

GPS coordinates at flagged point (white box near point):
[1] Side-street Parking, north side of 40th Ave. at 42°16'22"N, Long 86°02'30"W
Use care when parking off side of road; be off the road, but do not drive into the area.

Figure 3. Fuller Woods SGA map.

Acquisition and Disposal of Land

The land strategy for FWSGA is to keep the property but not to pursue acquisitions that would add to the area. Instead, acquisitions in Van Buren County will be focused on adding to Cornish State Game Area and Keeler State Game Area, both to the south of FWSGA.

Public Input

This plan was available for public review and comment on the DNR website between January 6, 2016 and February 9, 2016. During this period 5 comments were received and considered before finalizing this plan. The final plan was approved on February 18, 2016 and will be reviewed within 10 years of the approved date

Approvals

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|---|---|
|  |  |
| (Mark Sargent), Field Operations Manager | Date |
|  |  |
| (John Nieuwonder), Regional Supervisor | Date |