

Grand Mere State Park

General Management Plan

Phase 1



Approved March 29, 2010



General Management Plan

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

Grand Mere State Park

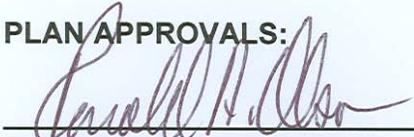


This project was funded, in part, by the Michigan Coastal Management Program, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce

The project was directed by Paul N. Curtis, Management Plan Administrator, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Recreation Division with assistance from Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc. and Jeff Johnson, Student Assistant.



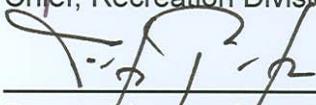
PLAN APPROVALS:



 Chief, Recreation Division

3/15/10

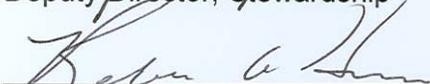
 Date



 Deputy Director, Stewardship

3/23/10

 Date



 Director, Department of Natural Resources and Environment

3/29/10

 Date



RESOLUTION NO. 12-2009-01

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR MICHIGAN STATE PARKS (CCMSP)
TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE
“GRAND MERE STATE PARK – PHASE I – GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN”**

ADOPTED DECEMBER 9, 2009

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Parks and Recreation Division has completed Phase I of the General Management Plan for Grand Mere State Park; and

WHEREAS, the planning process reflects sensitivity to natural resource values, historic and cultural resource values, recreation and education opportunities, and is inclusive of all DNR programs and representative of eco-management; and

WHEREAS, the planning process was further inclusive of stakeholder, constituent, and public input; and

WHEREAS, the General Management Plan represents sound guidance for future planning phases that will be consistent with the mission of the DNR and the Parks and Recreation Division, and reflective of the purpose and significance of Grand Mere State Park; and

WHEREAS, the General Management Plan has been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Parks and Recreation Division’s Management Team and the CCMSP Stewardship Subcommittee.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks approves the Phase I – General Management Plan for Grand Mere State Park; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks recommends and approves of the “Specific Provisions” attached hereto; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks recommends approval of the Phase I – General Management Plan for Grand Mere State Park by the DNR Director; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon DNR Director approval of the Phase I – General Management Plan for Grand Mere State Park, the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks approves of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division initiating planning efforts for the Phase II – Long Range Action Plan for Grand Mere State Park.

Submitted by: Ron Olson, Chief, DNR-Parks and Recreation, via the
Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks

Motioned by: Mary Pitcher
Seconded by: Chris Graham

Yeas:	8
Nays:	0
Abstained:	0
Absent:	6

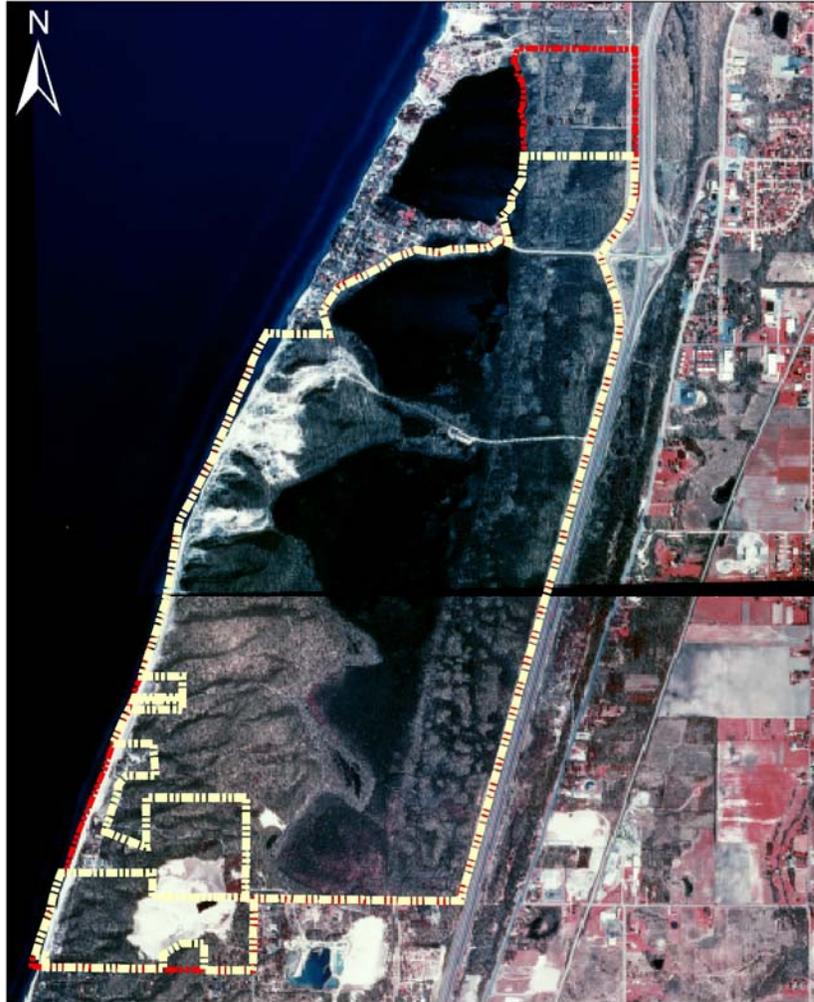
This Resolution was adopted by the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks at their meeting held on December 9, 2009.

RESOLUTION NO. 12-2009-01

**“GRAND MERE STATE PARK – PHASE I – GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN”
SPECIFIC PROVISIONS**

- That any necessary language improvements may be made by DNR Parks and Recreation staff prior to submitting the plan to the DNR Director for approval.
- That the DNR proceed with the recommended Natural Area Designation as proposed in the plan.
- That the DNR give high priority to in-holdings and other land acquisitions as proposed in the plan.
- That upon the DNR Director’s approval, the approved plan be transmitted to local recreation partners and providers.

Grand Mere State Park



-  Park Boundary
-  Dedicated NRC Boundary

0 0.125 0.25 0.5
Miles



Sources: MDNR, Michigan Geographic Data Library



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Note: During the development process for this General Management Plan, the State of Michigan combined the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality, forming the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE).

Every effort has been made to insert the new department name into this document. Note that the extensive mapping created from then-DNR data will be available from the DNRE and is fully intended to represent the future general management plans for the DNRE.

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Executive Summary



Management Planning is a defined strategic process within the RD Strategic Plan (2009), reflecting the following Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1, Objective 1.2: “Strengthen, update, and implement Management Plans.”
- Goal 3, Objective 3.1: “Perform landscape level assessment of recreation opportunities in decision making.”
- Goal 8, Objective 8.1: “Continue to use the CCMSP, MSWC, NRC, SWC, and Ecoregion Teams and partners to advise in RD planning, policy development, and issue resolution.”

Grand Mere State Park is a 1,127-acre State-owned property on Lake Michigan, located in Berrien County. The Phase I General Management Plan (GMP) process for Grand Mere State Park was made possible, in part, by funding provided by the Michigan Coastal Management Program. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) Recreation Division (RD) oversaw the planning process. The endeavor represents a new planning philosophy of the RD. “Management Planning,” a comprehensive, resource-based process, is the RD’s adaptation of National Park Service planning methodology. During Phase 1, the GMP focuses on the four principles of the RD Mission Statement: to acquire, preserve and protect; (1) natural resources, (2) cultural resources, (3) provide public recreation, and (4) provide educational opportunities. The process includes a thorough inventory of Grand Mere’s natural and historic/cultural resources, recreational opportunities and educational and interpretation opportunities.

With this base of knowledge and input of the Planning Team (made up of DNRE Department staff, government officials, stakeholders and the public), the Core Values for Grand Mere were developed. Grand Mere was determined to be significant for the following reasons:

1. The park has existed for 40 years and continues to grow. The area was identified as a Critical Dune Area by the State of Michigan under the Sand Dunes Protection Act of 1978.
2. The park contains magnificent high-relief dunes formed approximately 12,000 years ago and are a natural phenomenon found few other places in the world.

3. The lakes and wetlands provide the full range of natural communities, from open water aquatic to closed forest terrestrial communities.
4. The site contains a unique ecological area documenting the evolution of aquatic to terrestrial communities.
5. The park's remote natural atmosphere is perfect for nature study, due to the unique flora and fauna.
6. From the 1890's to 1912, South Lake contained cranberry bogs from which berries were harvested and sent to Midwestern cities.
7. The wetlands and lakes are significant waterfowl and songbird migration stopovers.
8. A hemlock swamp lies south of the lakes, representing hemlock-white pine-Northern hardwood forest that provides a unique habitat.
9. The Sand Mine Restoration Plan for the adjacent parcel, which will become part of Grand Mere, is a model for effective and significant restoration efforts in the Great Lakes dunes.
10. Grand Mere State Park is a relatively undeveloped area that provides unique recreational opportunities.
11. Grand Mere State Park provides unique hunting opportunities for waterfowl in southwest Michigan.
12. The inland lakes offer an opportunity to educate and entertain young anglers.

Considering the identity and significance of Grand Mere State Park, the Planning Team, with stakeholder and public input, established appropriate Management Zones and their extent of influence on the property. From a palette of nine standard zones, three were applied to Grand Mere State Park. The Management Zone map and a thorough review of each Management Zone are found in Section 3 of this Plan. A condensed review of the Management Zones is as follows:

- ❑ Primitive Zone comprises 1,028 acres (91%) and reflects a desired condition that emphasizes the natural resources. Most of Grand Mere State Park is a designated National Natural Landmark. A dedicated State Natural Area is proposed to better regulate uses and development within the park. A Primitive Zone would be managed to only allow dispersed and low frequency use for low impact recreational purposes.
- ❑ Natural Resource Recreation Zone comprises 99 acres (9%) and permits active recreation with moderate to high density of use conducted in a natural setting. The Natural Resource Recreation (NRR) Zone comprises a small amount of

Grand Mere State Park. The designation was applied to improve trails to for a variety of users and to allow for other uses compatible in this zone, such as rustic camping.

- ❑ Scenic Zone (overlay) comprises 51 acres (5%) and recognizes that there are aesthetic qualities to be preserved and protected in the Park. While there are many, those identified during the planning process, and noted on the management zone plan, are along Lake Michigan and at two high points of the dunes.

1.0 Plan Process Overview



A General Management Plan (GMP) guides the management of resources, visitor use, and general development at Grand Mere State Park over a 20-year horizon. The GMP provides the foundation for protecting park resources while providing for meaningful visitor experiences. The long-range vision and management objectives for the Park are derived from applicable legal directives, the purpose of the park, and the park's significant resources.

The GMP process for Grand Mere State Park was made possible, in part, by funding provided by the Michigan Coastal Management Program, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Recreation Division (RD) oversaw the process and development of the Plan for the Park. A major component of the planning process was to ensure that extensive input was sought from DNRE professionals, community groups, stakeholders and the general public throughout the development of the plan.

GMPs develop as a result of a series of planning steps. Each step builds upon the previous, and action decisions focus on (1) the mission of the Recreation Division (RD), and (2) the specific Purpose and Significance of the park. There are four phases of planning, implemented in the following order:

- ◆ **Phase 1.** General Management Plan (GMP) that presents long-range (20-year) goals.
- ◆ **Phase 2.** Long-range Action Plan that identifies long range (10-year) goals to attain the GMP (requires review of Phase 1)
- ◆ **Phase 3.** Five-Year Action Plan, which outlines specific actions to implement (requires review of Phase 1 and Phase 2)
- ◆ **Phase 4.** Annual Action Plan and Progress Report to answer what will be done this year, and what progress was made on last year's plan.

This Plan represents **Phase I**. In this phase of planning, a 20-year vision for the park is defined, and critical questions are answered, such as: What will be the condition of flora and fauna? How will we address historic and cultural resources? What recreational opportunities could be provided? What education and interpretation efforts will meet the visitor? What will guide the manager's operational decisions? What will be the visitor's overall experience?

Phase I determines management zones, and describes a variety of activities that may be appropriate within that zone. Phase I does not determine specific uses. Identifying specific uses within each management zone is a function of Phase 2. Management Plans do not guarantee future RD funding to achieve them. RD will seek internal funding, alternative funding sources, partnerships and other potential mechanisms for implementing the desired future conditions defined in this plan.

The tool used by this plan is the designation of “Management zones.” Management zones define specific characteristics of the land, addressing management for:

- ◆ Natural features
- ◆ Historic/cultural features
- ◆ Education/interpretation
- ◆ Recreational opportunities

These four elements represent the primary goals of the RD Mission Statement, and provide guidance for both planning and management decisions. Appendix A presents a detailed account of each of these elements. In addition, management zones prescribe values for:

- ◆ Visitor experience
- ◆ Management Focus
- ◆ Development

Within the parameters of this guidance, “Purpose” and “Significance” statements are developed for the park that establish its unique identity and focus. No two parks are the same and emphasis is directed at ensuring that the differences found from park to park are acknowledged, highlighted and celebrated.

1.1 Planning Objectives

The objective of this General Management Plan was to bring together RD Department staff, stakeholders, and the public who use the park into a planning process that will define and clarify the unique “Purpose” and “Significance” of Grand Mere State Park. Collectively, those attributes will be reinforced in the planning and management decisions that impact the park through the implementation of the Management Zone Plan. Future action plans, whether focused on a development proposal, a resource improvement initiative, an interpretive program, or day-to-day management of the park will be guided by this General Management Plan.

Extensive input was sought throughout the planning process. The Planning Team met several times to review and comment on the plan elements (see Section 1.2). In addition, the DNRE hosted a stakeholder workshop and two public participation workshops. Both the stakeholder and public participation workshops involved solicited written and verbal comments. The draft plan was available for review on a website and

the public was invited to email, call or mail questions or comments concerning this initiative. The results of the public participation program are provided in Attachment B.

1.2 Planning Team

Accomplishment of our planning objectives was and is dependent upon the valuable input provided by all members of the “Planning Team”. The names of listed below are those who were critical participants in this planning process. Agendas, meeting minutes and attendance at Planning Team meetings is provided in Appendix C.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mike Terrell	RD - Unit Manager (Warren Dunes, Warren Woods & Grand Mere)
<input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Montgomery	RD - Unit Supervisor (Warren Dunes, Warren Woods & Grand Mere)
<input type="checkbox"/> Kurt Maxwell	RD – Supervisor 2 (Saugatuck Dunes)
<input type="checkbox"/> Joyce Rhodes	RD – Unit Supervisor (Holland)
<input type="checkbox"/> Sherri Owsiak	RD – Supervisor 2 (Holland)
<input type="checkbox"/> Rollie Johnson	RD – Plainwell District Supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Paul Curtis	RD - Park Management Plan Administrator
<input type="checkbox"/> Paul Yauk	RD - Lands Manager
<input type="checkbox"/> Ray Fahlsing	RD – Stewardship Unit Manager
<input type="checkbox"/> Joe Strach	RD – Plainwell/Rose Lake District(s) Planner
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Johnson	RD – Student Intern (Management Planning)
<input type="checkbox"/> Carol Skillings	RD – Grants Coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Kim Dufresne	FMD – Forest Fire Supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Cross	FMD – Forest Fire
<input type="checkbox"/> Tom Hoane	FMD – Minerals
<input type="checkbox"/> David Price	FMD - Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> David Vansumeren	LED – Plainwell District Lieutenant
<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Gunderman	FD – Biologist
<input type="checkbox"/> Kregg Smith	FD – Biologist
<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Chadwick	WLD – Acting Unit Supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Mark MacKay	WLD – Planner
<input type="checkbox"/> John Lerg	WLD – Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan Coord.
<input type="checkbox"/> Janet Canode	OMET – Education and Outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Rob Corbett	OLAF – Lands

DNRE – Coastal Zone Management Program

<input type="checkbox"/> Lynda Krupansky	CZM – Coastal Management Program
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Planning Consultants

<input type="checkbox"/> David C. Birchler	Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Jill Bahm	Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc.

1.3 Management Plan Planning Process

Long-range planning for Grand Mere State Park includes a master plan for Grand Mere State Park, approved in 1986 that cited “sand dune preservation” as the primary management objective for the park.

The parcel south of Grand Mere State Park was intensely used for sand mining for many years. In 2000, as mining activities came to a close and the mining company prepared to turn the property over to the State, a Sand Mine Restoration Plan for Grand Mere State Park was prepared. This restoration plan, which has become a model for the sand mining industry, outlines management activities that will restore a diverse ecosystem at the former sand mine that replicates the surrounding natural ecosystem within Grand Mere State Park.

By 2003, TechniSand completed all mining by this date, as specified in a court agreement. All reclamation of the site by TechniSand was completed, meeting DNRE standards, in 2005. The State Park Stewardship Program (SPSP) continues restoration and management of the site indefinitely (with cooperation and volunteer assistance from TechniSand).

In 2007, Recreation Division of the received a federal grant from the Coastal Zone Management Program of the DNRE for the purpose of developing individual long-range Management Plans for Grand Mere State Park, Warren Dunes State Park, Holland State Park and Saugatuck Dunes State Park. Without the CZM grant, insufficient resources in staff or funding would have precluded these planning efforts.