

The following chapter details recommended actions for the Ottawa County park system as a whole and for each individual park or open space site. Actions that relate to the park system as a whole or to all individual sites in general are provided first, with more detailed information following.

System-wide items and issues are divided into the following categories:

- **General Land Acquisition Goals and Strategies**
- **General Planning, Design, and Operational Issues**

More specific land acquisition, park improvement and park planning needs are identified next, with recommended actions divided by regional greenway initiative areas as follows:

- **Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway**
- **Grand River Greenway**
- **Pigeon River Greenway**
- **Macatawa River Greenway**
- **General Parks, Open Space Lands and Trails**

Where applicable, issues related to each park and open space site are further described in terms of the following subcategories:

- **Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities**
- **Planning Strategies**
- **Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements**
- **Operational Issues**

It is recognized that many of these recommendations will need to be prioritized as opportunities and funding issues become evident over time. Specifically, realistic projections of proposed funding will narrow the scope of efforts and improvements considered to be prudent and feasible. Chapter 11 - Park System Financing and Capital Improvement Schedule outlines the current financial projections and their impact on proposed capital improvements for the next five years.

Additionally, it should be noted that the Parks Commission seeks to be proactive in identifying new issues and concerns and to be responsive to those needs. Therefore, efforts of the Parks Commission will go beyond the recommended actions identified herein to address new issues as they arise.

GENERAL LAND ACQUISITION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

As presented in Chapter 8 - Parks and Open Space Analysis, even with the recent slowdown in

the economy, recent growth in Ottawa County has had a lasting effect on the county's landscape, resulting in the loss of natural lands and open space. It is also anticipated that Ottawa County will continue to grow at a rate higher than surrounding areas and the state as a whole. As presented previously in this plan, the county park system is seeking to acquire key waterfront lands and other properties with high quality natural features. These are the same lands under the most pressure for residential development. Ottawa County Parks must continue to acquire key lands and greenway connector properties while opportunities are available and in advance of development.

Although significant progress has been made in recent years toward setting aside key lands to meet present and future park and open space needs, additional land acquisition is still necessary. The previously adopted minimum acreage guideline of 20 acres of park and open space land per 1,000 population has been met for conservative population projections to the year 2030 (approx. 6100 acres for 306,500 projected population); however, other considerations will require additional acquisitions to meet plan goals.

Specifically, several sites such as Crockery Creek and the Bend Area require additional acreage to reach their full potential in terms of natural resource protection and recreational space. In addition, most greenway areas will require additional properties to link existing parkland sites together and to other points of interest, and to provide a location for greenway trails. The focus on linkages will become increasingly important as planning and improvement work at stand-alone park sites is completed. It should be noted that linkages will certainly be made via fee simple purchases, but other means such as conservation and trail easements would be desirable in many locations to make efficient use of available funds.

Given this context, the 2011 plan recommends expanding the current county park system by approximately 900 acres over the next five years, and to be open to the addition of over 2200 acres of additional land in the more distant future to fully optimize existing parks and greenway corridors. A breakdown of these recommended and potential acquisitions was discussed at Parks Commission Retreats and is included in **Appendix G**.

GENERAL PLANNING, DESIGN, & OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Although each park site and facility has its own unique set of concerns, several issues applicable to all county parks properties and activities will be addressed in the next few years and beyond.

A. Maintain Up-to-date Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plans

The Parks Commission recognizes that the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is an evolving document which must be updated on a regular basis to reflect changing needs and opportunities. The Commission will monitor the plan and prepare updates as needed.

B. High Quality Maintenance and Operations

The importance of providing the highest quality maintenance and operations has been a top goal of the Parks Commission since its establishment. The challenge to maintain high standards in an expanding park system is particularly difficult. Special funding sources

available for capital outlay expenses are not available for operational costs and the tendency is to fall behind in operational capacity. Through this strategy, the Parks Commission recognizes the difficulty in maintaining high operational standards and identifies the need to properly plan for operational support before proceeding with development.

C. Security

Maintaining a safe, family atmosphere within the County Park System is an important concern of the Parks Commission. The Parks and Recreation Commission receives excellent support and cooperation from the Ottawa County Sheriff Department on all issues related to enforcement in the county park system. Although park user surveys, comment cards and records of incidents within the parks do not suggest a significant problem with security, the Commission would like to be proactive in addressing security-related issues.

Park rules and regulations were updated in 1994, with more changes pending in 2011, which increase the ability of law enforcement officials to address problems within the parks. The new rules also permit selected park staff to write appearance tickets for park rule infractions.

Ongoing efforts should be made to analyze and address security-related issues within the County Park System. The Parks Commission will continue to actively seek advice and input from the Ottawa County Sheriff Department, the Ottawa County Prosecuting Attorney and other law enforcement officials regarding methods for maintaining a high level of security within the Park System.

D. Land Management Plan Development and Implementation

In order to be good stewards of parks-managed properties, the Parks Commission and staff will develop and begin implementing a comprehensive Land Management Plan. This plan will be science-based and will be reviewed periodically by area resource people that are experts in different areas of land management. The Land Management Plan will include, but is not limited, to the following strategies.

Forest Management: Along with district foresters, Parks has conducted forest inventories on several key properties. This inventory will be continued. The plan will make recommendations on various forest management options that focus on the protection and management of the diversity of flora and fauna in parks forests.

Wildlife Management: In addition to continuing the ongoing collection of data on the diversity and distribution of wildlife in the parks system, the plan will address any perceived wildlife problems and make recommendations to address these problems. The plan will also make recommendations on managing for specific species.

Invasive Species: Invasive plant and animals are a serious threat and problem for Ottawa County Parks. Parks staff has been targeting selected exotic species since 2000, primarily garlic mustard, purple loosestrife and spotted knapweed. This plan will address the growing list of invasive species and make recommendations on how best to control them.

In addition to invasives that are already present, parks must be prepared for looming problems including beech bark disease and emerald ash borer.

Natural Feature Inventories: In order to provide meaningful management strategies, it is important to continue to conduct accurate natural feature inventories of parks properties, especially flora. All listed species should be protected.

Restoration: The restoration of natural communities on parks property is becoming more frequent. Examples are the native grassland restoration at Grand River Park, Hager Creek restoration and wetland restoration at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area. This plan will identify areas that would benefit from restoration in the park system.

Monitoring: Monitoring is necessary to evaluate the success of many land management requirements. When applicable, monitoring will be built into various projects and programs.

E. Regional Trails and Non-Motorized Pathways

The Parks Commission assisted the Ottawa County Planning Commission in funding and overseeing the development of the *Ottawa County Non-Motorized Pathways Study*, completed in April of 2002 (see Executive Summary in **Appendix K**). The purpose of the study was to create a plan to assist local governments in Ottawa County in developing an interconnected countywide non-motorized pathway system.

Since that time Ottawa County Parks has been a participant in several non-motorized trail project efforts including widened road shoulders along Lakeshore Drive, planning for the extension of the Musketawa Trail, and funding portions of the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail in addition to sending a representative to meetings of the North Bank Trail Committee and the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition. These efforts focus on trails that abut or may impact park facilities or have significant regional importance. The Parks Commission, as demonstrated through the above-referenced projects and its strong support for and involvement in the operation and management of the Musketawa Trail, is highly supportive of expanding non-motorized pathways in Ottawa County.

Because of their regional significance, the Parks Commission also recognizes the importance of taking a lead role in the establishment of non-motorized trails along and within the greenway corridors, specifically for the Grand and Macatawa Rivers. It will seek to partner with local units of government and other groups in the development of these non-motorized greenway trails.

F. Low Environmental Impact and Sustainable Design

The Parks Commission was founded with the goal of protecting and preserving significant natural lands in Ottawa County. This ideal has and will continue to guide all aspects of park planning including acquisition priorities, planning, and park facility implementation. Specifically, park facilities are to be constructed in ways that limit disturbance to natural features and, if possible, enhance or restore them. Park facilities and amenities will be implemented utilizing best practices and with a consideration for the long-term

sustainability of the constructed element and its surrounding environment. Use of local, recycled, and renewable materials will be encouraged. Although LEED certification likely will not be sought for all future improvements, the recent completion of the Nature Education Center as LEED gold certified shows the Commission's commitment to this goal and serves as a model for future improvements.

G. Accessibility Improvements/Universal Design

Chapter 7 identifies accessibility improvements required within the county park system to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other desired improvements related to accessibility of park facilities. A comprehensive list of proposed improvements is shown in **Figure 7.2** at the end of that chapter.

The Commission also recognizes the need to go beyond the minimum requirements of the law to seek what has been defined as "universal design" - the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Although many sites within the park system create significant obstacles to meeting this goal (e.g., the steep and high slopes of dune environments), the Parks Commission is committed to making a good-faith effort to serve users of all physical abilities at all park sites. Therefore, principles of universal design will be considered for all future new construction and renovations.

H. Visibility and Public Relations

Visibility, name recognition, and public awareness of county park facilities and programs is an important aspect to the overall management and success of Ottawa County Parks. Surveys and other research have shown a general lack of awareness of the recreational opportunities available in the County Parks among County residents. While residents usually are aware of the parks in their immediate locale, they less frequently take advantage of opportunities available outside their communities.

In terms of name recognition, past research has shown that the public is often unclear as to what unit of government is providing a particular facility. County Parks are sometimes confused with state or local parks. The need to develop a stronger identity for the Park System was first noted in the 1989 plan and still exists today.

Measures instituted to promote awareness and a strong identity for the county park system include the following:

- Uniform park entrance signs featuring the Commission's logo.
- Established high operational standards to develop a reputation for clean, well-maintained parks.
- Providing an up-to-date and attractive parks brochure showing locations of all parks and open space lands and describing the facilities offered. An updated parks brochure is scheduled to be complete in early 2011.
- Expanded distribution of the Commission's newsletter called *Outdoors Ottawa County* via mail and electronically. As of November 2010, the newsletter mailing list was over 5,200.

- Improved signs directing people to the parks. Parks staff has worked with both the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Ottawa County Road Commission to install directional signs on state and county roads.
- Expand and improve trailheads and trail signs in the parks. New trailheads, with park information and trail maps, and color trail intersection maps along the trails have been installed at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, Mt. Pisgah, and North Ottawa Dunes. Efforts to provide marked trails at several additional open space sites were initiated in 2010.
- Continued improvement of the parks website, along with use of social networking sites such as Facebook.
- Expanded outdoor education programs and activities within the parks (see Interpretation of Natural Features for more information). While the benefits of Commission outdoor programs extend far beyond promotion of the parks, their value in that regard is significant. In addition to attracting new users to the parks, programs result in publicity that raises the level of public awareness of park facilities.

LAKE MICHIGAN COASTAL GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The Parks Commission recognizes Lake Michigan beaches are the county's top recreation attraction and the coastal dunes are one of its most unique natural resources. With the acquisition of the Olive Shores property in 2008, the Commission also realizes that the opportunities for acquisition of additional shoreline of sufficient size (recognizing a general guideline of 500 feet minimum frontage) are essentially non-existent outside of a unique and unforeseeable course of events. However, it will continue to seek opportunities to acquire additional Lake Michigan access as per Commission goals, through expansion of existing Lake Michigan park sites and by exploring other possible means of expanding lake access.

Planning Strategies: The Parks Commission will continue efforts to study the coastal corridor to better identify opportunities for habitat protection, public access to shoreline, trail linkages and to achieve other greenway goals.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: The Parks Commission will work with local governments, the Road Commission and other entities to improve and expand trail connections between greenway park sites. Further expansion of a widened road shoulder along Lakeshore Drive similar to what was completed in 2004 would be an example of a desirable project to meet this objective.

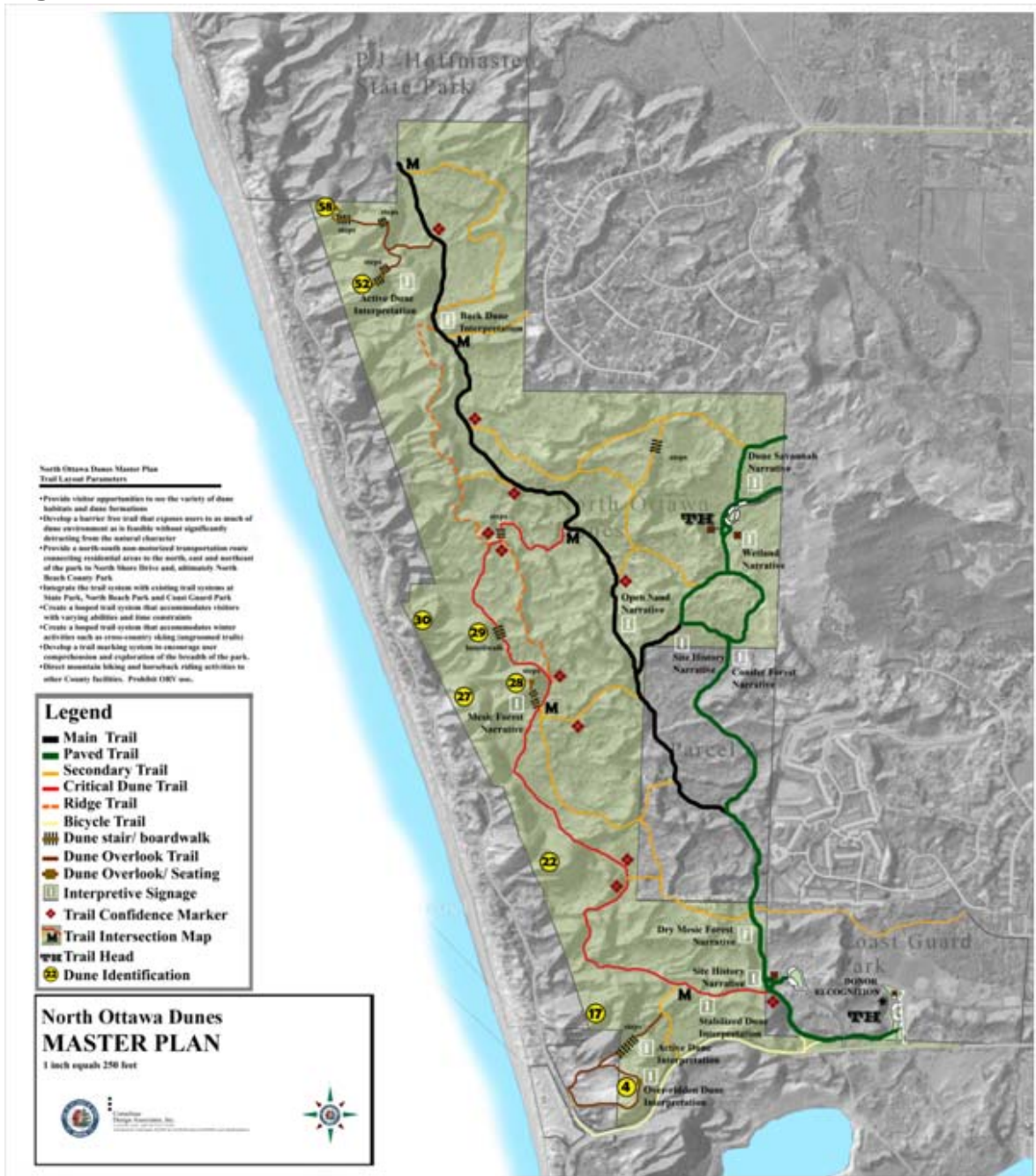
B. North Ottawa Dunes

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: At the time of initial acquisition and through the master planning of this 500-acre site, the idea of expanding the site by adding a key 80-acre inholding on the eastern edge of the property through a land trade and donation from Spring Lake Township has been an important priority. Ottawa County Parks should continue to pursue this property in cooperation with the township or separately

with the property owner as necessary. In addition, the Commission should be open to other opportunities to expand the site into adjacent undeveloped lands, some of which are already in public ownership.

Planning Strategies: Funded with assistance from the Coastal Management Program through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, a comprehensive master plan process was completed for this site in 2007 (**Figure 10.1**). The process included extensive public input and resulted in a detailed plan that balances public use and natural resource preservation. Some additional work has also been completed to evaluate possible trail connections to City of Grand Haven Dune property and the Kitchell-Lindquist Dunes to the south. The Commission should continue to monitor land ownership and

Figure 10.1 - North Ottawa Dunes Master Plan



development plans in those areas to take advantage of opportunities to create new connections.

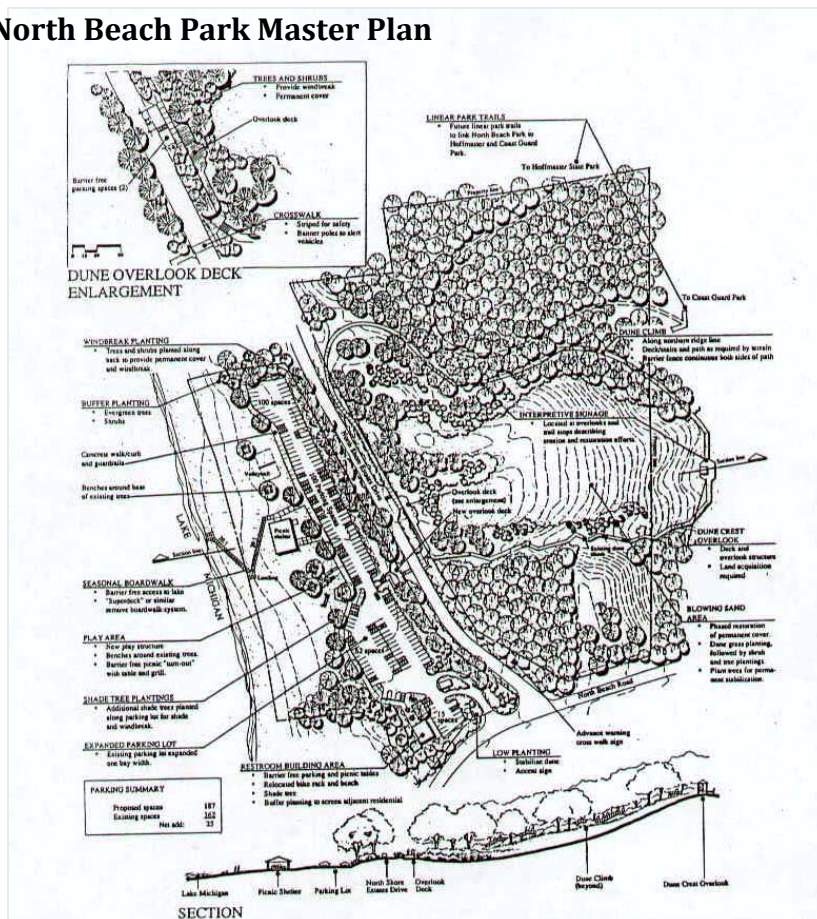
Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: A comprehensive system of natural surface trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, linking P.J. Hoffmaster State Park to North Beach Park, Coast Guard Park and Spring Lake Township property, was implemented in 2008. The project included trail signage, a trailhead constructed in cooperation with the city of Ferrysburg in Coast Guard Park, and an extensive system of stairs and boardwalks connecting to North Beach Park. Additional improvements as called for in the master plan, including paved trails along North Shore Drive and extending along the eastern border of the site as well as a new northern vehicle access point, should be developed as the final disposition of additional park land is determined.

Operational Issues: Efforts to stabilize the large moving dune adjacent to and formerly part of North Beach Park need to be monitored for effectiveness and needed corrective action.

C. North Beach Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although bordered by cottages and homes with limited and expensive expansion opportunities, the Parks Commission will be alert for opportunities to add valuable lakefront and acreage to the park. With the addition of the adjacent North Ottawa Dunes property, North Beach Park has in essence been expanded substantially to include trails, boardwalks, and overlooks in the nearby dunes.

Figure 10.2 - North Beach Park Master Plan



Planning Strategies: Recent improvements to North Beach Park including those in the adjacent North Ottawa Dunes substantially complete the master plan for this park (**Figure 10.2**). Master Plan updates should be completed if and when conditions at the site require significant adjustments.

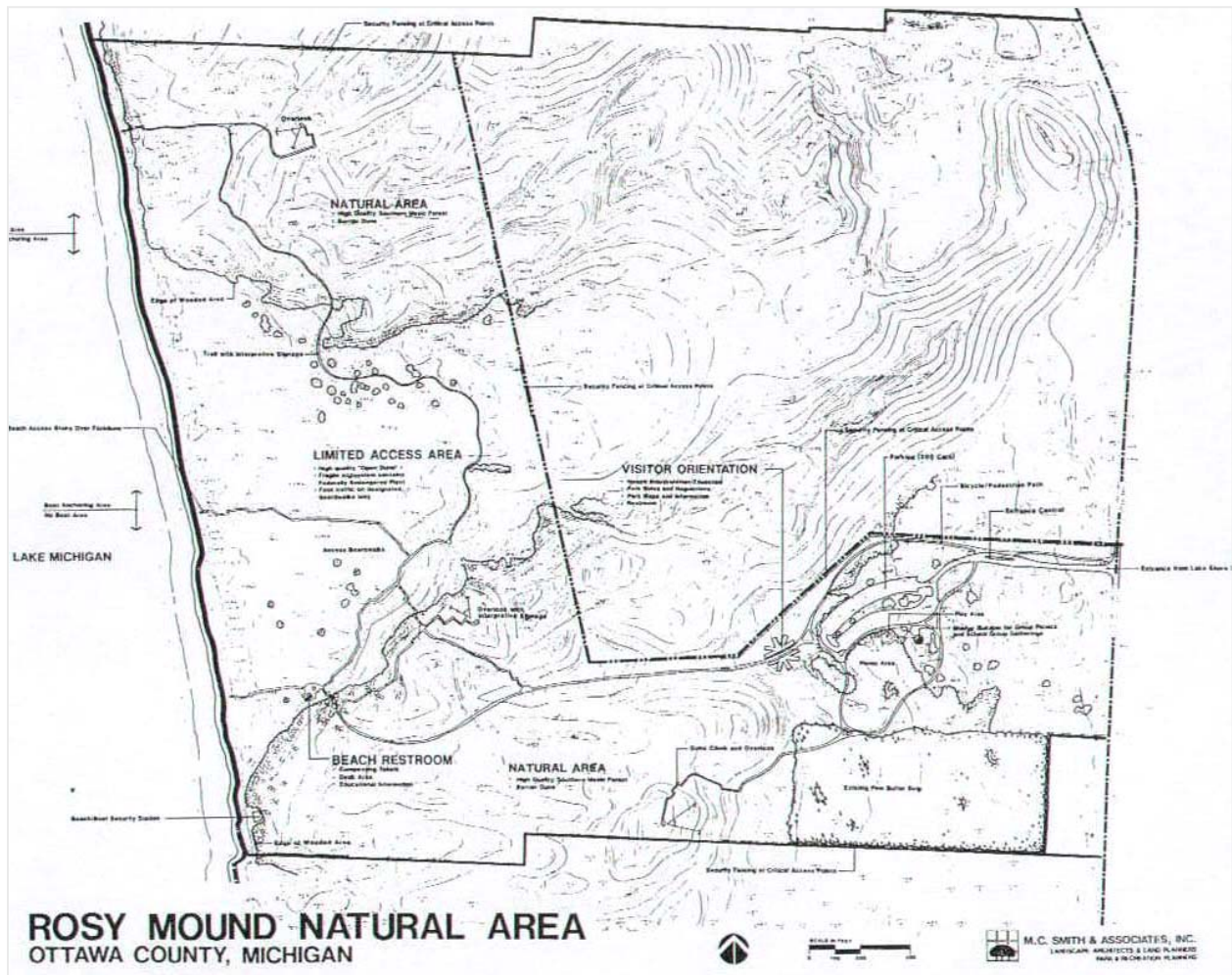
Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Major improvements have been completed. Ottawa County Parks should continue to evaluate use patterns and trends for possible desired or needed facilities.

D. Rosy Mound Natural Area

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The Parks Commission should seek to expand the site where opportunities exist to acquire adjacent high quality dune property. Recent contact with private landowners about possible land donation to the south should continue to be pursued. The Commission should also seek to acquire adjacent reclaimed property to the north following the completion of sand-mining activities.

Planning Strategies: An up-to-date park master plan needs be maintained for this site. See current plan (**Figure 10.3**).

Figure 10.3 - Rosy Mound Natural Area Master Plan



Park and Open Space Improvements: Basic park improvements were completed in 2004 with State grant assistance, including the majority of work called for in the long-range park master plan. In addition, a portion of stairway was added in 2009 to improve a particularly steep and potentially hazardous area of trail. Additional park improvements to be completed in the future include additional trails on the northwest area of the site as identified in the park master plan.

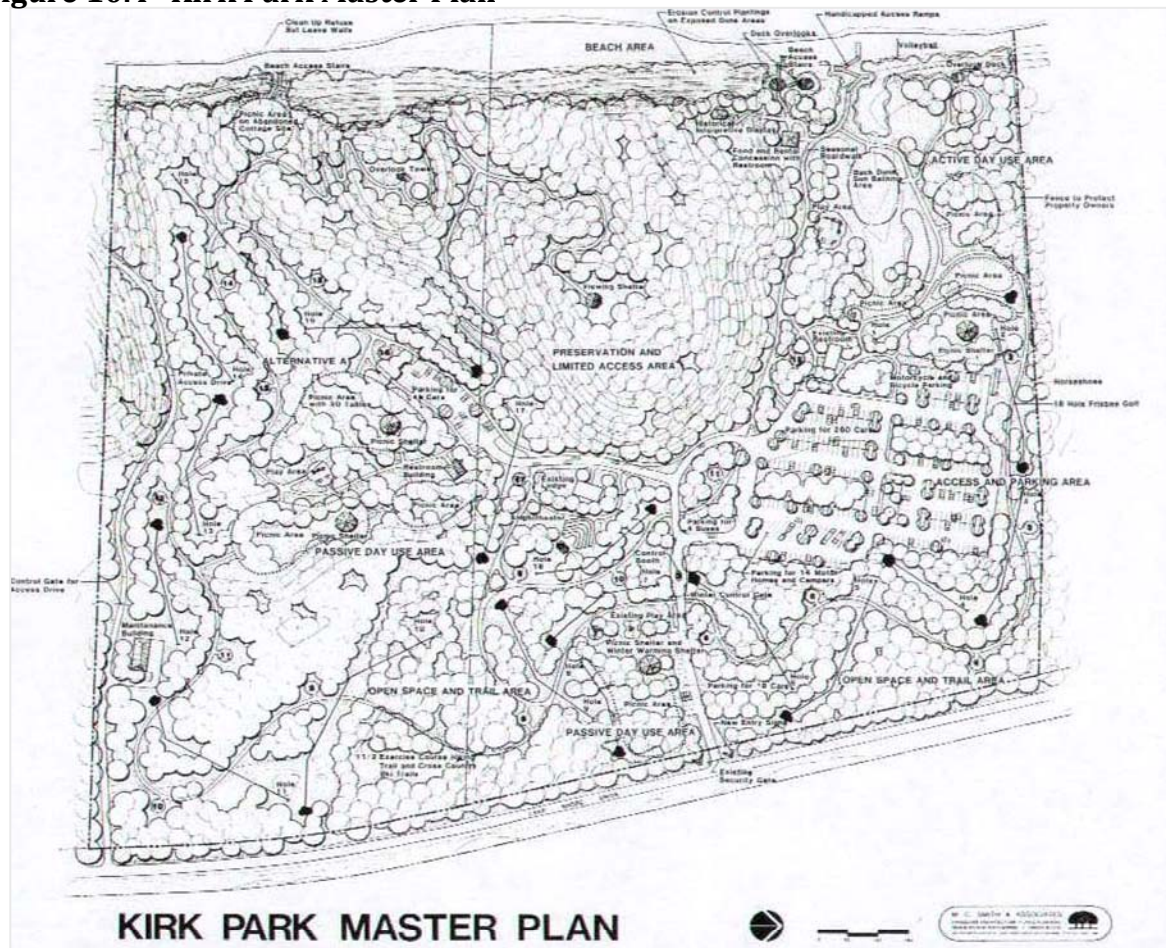
E. Kirk Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although bordered by cottages and homes with limited expansion opportunities, the Parks Commission will be alert for opportunities to add valuable acreage to the park.

Planning Strategies: There is a need to update the Kirk Park master plan as shown in **Figure 10.4**, as several elements are no longer considered desirable. Consideration should also be given to timeframes for improving an existing pedestrian easement linking Kirk Park to the Hiawatha Forest Open Space land, located east of the park.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Improvements to the trail system including the addition of on-grade stairs in steep portions of the dunes and a beach stairway at the southern boundary of the site were added in 2006. The current trail map system

Figure 10.4 - Kirk Park Master Plan



should be replaced and upgraded. Consideration will also be given to replacing or modifying the Kirk Park Lodge to enhance accessibility.

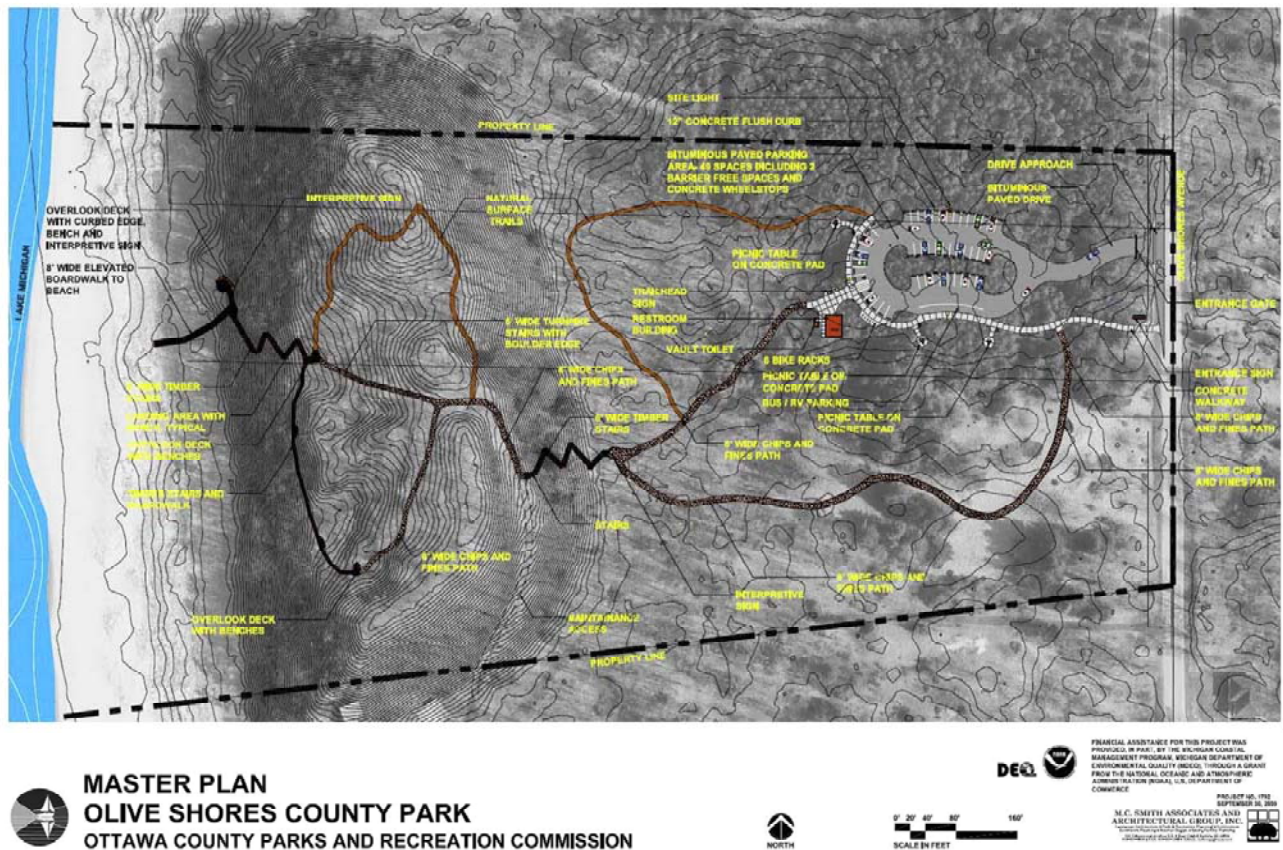
F. Olive Shores

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although this site has limited expansion opportunities, the Parks Commission will be alert for opportunities to add acreage to the park if it becomes available.

Planning Strategies: A master plan for the site was completed in 2009 (**Figure 10.5**) showing all proposed public-access improvements. Work to link the park site to the bike trail on Lakeshore Drive would be desirable.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Development of park facilities should be completed as funding becomes available. A grant application has been submitted to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. If successful, this grant would assist in funding a project that will construct all major improvements as shown on the master plan.

Figure 10.5 - Olive Shores Master Plan



G. Tunnel Park

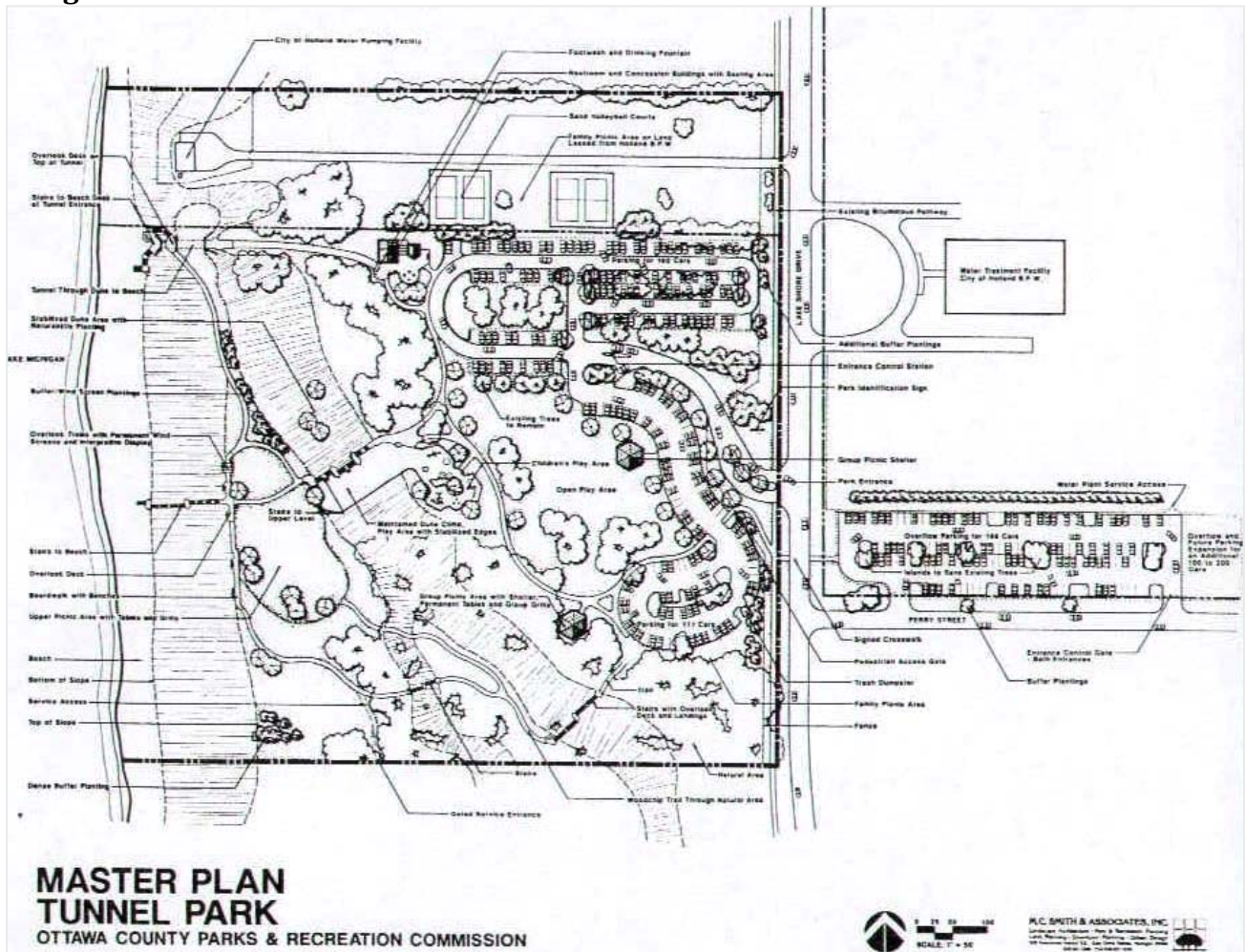
Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: This site is surrounded by residential development and the local water plant. Additions to the park are therefore unlikely. The Parks Commission completed an extension of its lease agreement with Holland Board of Public Works for 200 feet of Lake Michigan frontage in 2009. This lease should be maintained as long as needed for park purposes.

Planning Strategies: The Parks Commission will maintain an up-to-date master plan for the park. See current plan graphic in **Figure 10.6**.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Restroom improvements including the addition of changing rooms were completed 2006 and replacement of the two main dune stairways in 2010. Consideration should be given to upgrading play equipment as per park master plan.

Operational Issues: Since most original improvements to this park are now almost 20 years old, facilities should be carefully monitored for needed renovations.

Figure 10.6 - Tunnel Park Master Plan



H. Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (Park 12)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Limited acquisition of key small parcels may be desirable to maximize the potential of the park master plan, especially with regard to parking and vehicle circulation issues related to Mt. Pisgah and Holland State Park. It may also be desirable to seek the purchase of the remaining private parcel at the Parkside Marina.

Planning Strategies: The current park master plan (see Figures 10.7 and 10.8) was completed in March 2004 following extensive public review and comment. In August of 2005, the 20th Circuit Court approved an agreement (Stipulation and Order) between Ottawa County and the West Michigan Park Association (WMPA), which cleared the way for implementation of the master plan.

Figure 10.7 - Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (all Park 12 parcels) Conceptual Master Plan



Figure 10.8 - Historic Ottawa Beach Parks (waterfront area) Conceptual Master Plan



Figure 11.8

More detailed planning for the waterfront area should be completed to determine the desired final disposition of the Parkside Marina area and its connections to recent improvements. In addition, detailed planning for the pumphouse building should be completed. County Parks has participated in recent efforts by Park Township to address concerns about congestion along the Ottawa Beach Road corridor. This participation should continue.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Significant progress has been made in implementing the park master plan. These projects include the Black Lake Boardwalk waterfront improvements, the Ottawa Beach Road Bike Path, the Mt. Pisgah Dune Protection Project, various improvements to parking and walkways in the cottage areas, and the Holland Harbor Fishing Access Project currently under construction. The Parks Commission should seek to complete the waterfront walkway and other improvements along the Lake Macatawa shoreline as called for in the master plan.

Operational Issues: Coordination with Holland State Park and the West Michigan Park Association will continue to be critical to the overall success of this area.

GRAND RIVER GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: As indicated in Chapter 9, acquisition of land and easements is vital to implementation of the Grand River Greenway. The Parks Commission recognizes that the Grand River corridor is the largest greenway corridor in Ottawa County and has greatest potential for land acquisition. Ottawa County Parks will seek to expand the greenway through protection of key natural and recreational lands as identified in the greenway concept plan.

Planning/Operational Strategies: When future land-acquisition efforts have succeeded in establishing a solid base for the greenway, a detailed Grand River greenway master plan should be developed which identifies trail linkages and unifies the overall greenway corridor. No specific timeframes are identified for undertaking the plan, which will be contingent upon land-acquisition efforts. See current greenway concept plan (**Figure 8.1**). The planning process will incorporate the recently implemented Grand River Heritage Water Trail, a system of canoe/kayak trails and access points within the river corridor.

Park and Open Space Improvements: The concept for the Grand River Greenway calls for establishment of parking, picnic areas, trails (land and water), viewing decks and other park facilities on county-owned lands acquired for the greenway. In addition, a greenway non-motorized paved pathway is envisioned, linking parks and open spaces located along the entire greenway. Although completion of the all greenway trails is not feasible in the 5-year timeframe outlined in this plan, funds are earmarked for construction of initial trail segments.

B. Connor Bayou

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The Parks Commission will seek to expand the Connor Bayou site if opportunities arise to acquire high quality natural or other undeveloped land bordering the park. Efforts to assist Robinson Township to purchase and remove flood-prone structures in the Van Lopik and Limberlost subdivisions east of Connor Bayou were unsuccessful when significant numbers of property owners were not willing to participate in the FEMA program; however, the Commission should be willing to consider future opportunities in this area if available.

Planning Strategies: A park master plan process was begun in 2010 (**Figures 10.9 and 10.10**).

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Initial improvements to permit public access are scheduled for 2011, including parking, trails, and possibly improvements to the existing cabin to make it suitable for use by groups on a reservation basis.

Figure 10.9 - Connor Bayou - West Master Plan

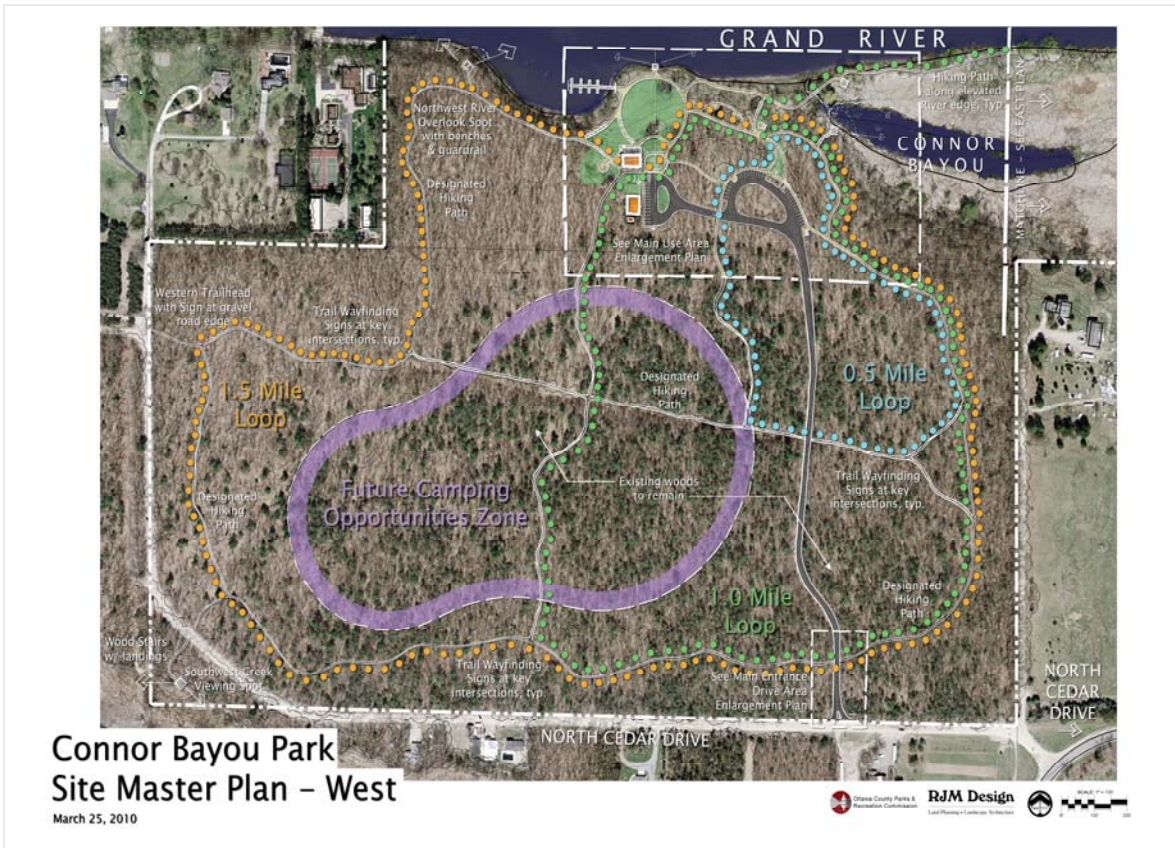
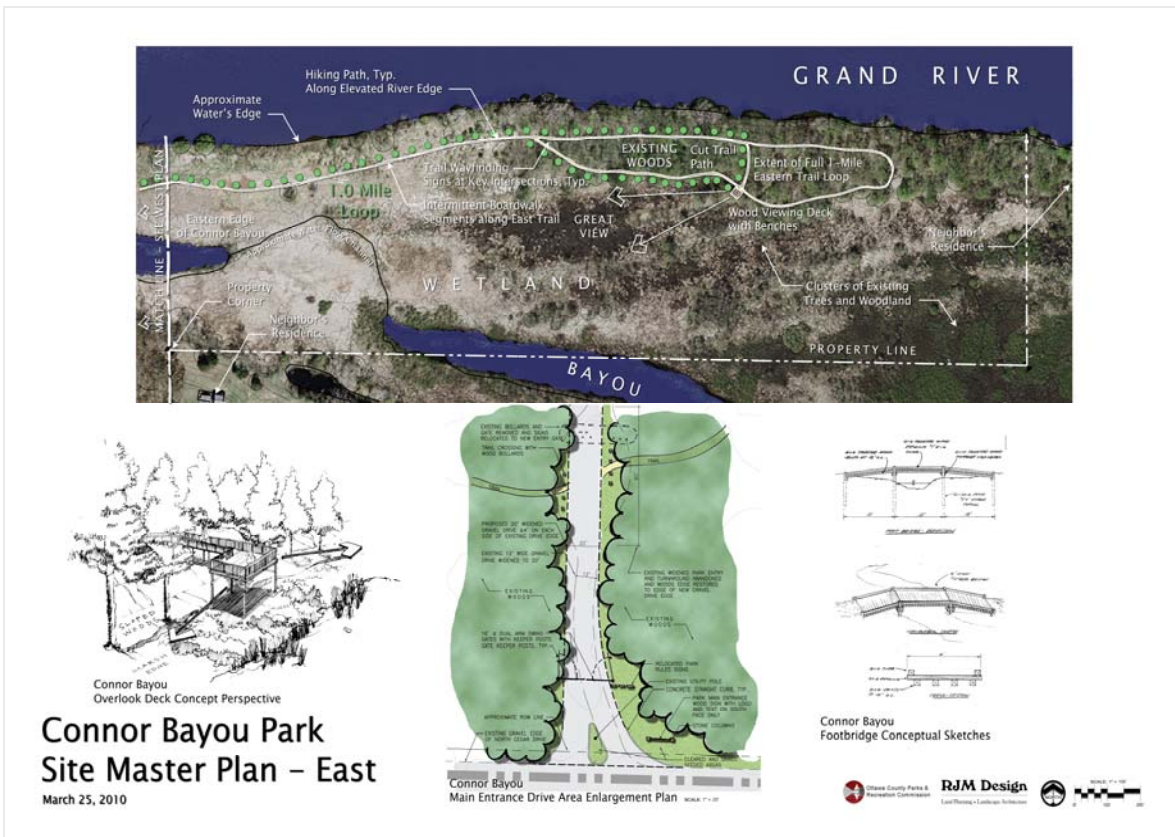


Figure 10.10 - Connor Bayou - East Master Plan



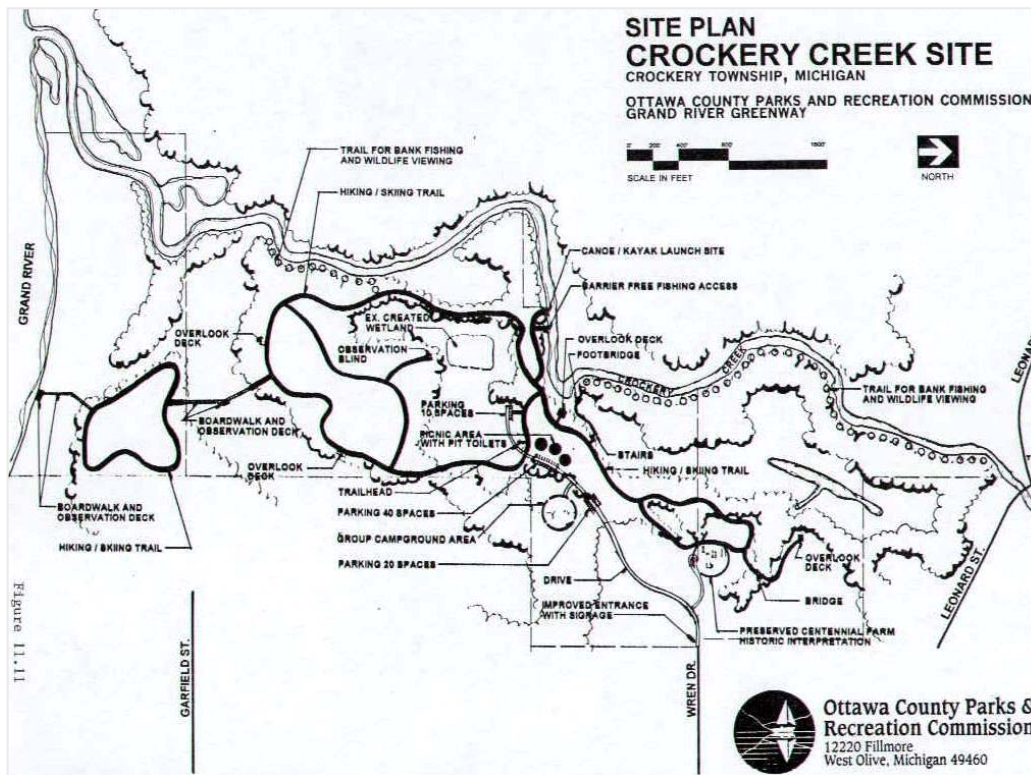
C. Crockery Creek Natural Area

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: A significant amount of prime natural land exists surrounding the 306-acre Crockery Creek Site. A concerted effort should be made to acquire additional land to expand this outstanding natural area. The Crockery Creek site is one of very few sites remaining in Ottawa County where lands adjacent to the existing park include high quality natural features combined with relatively large parcels.

Planning/Operational Strategies: Development of a park master plan for the Crockery Creek site should be undertaken when acquisition efforts to expand the site have been completed. A copy of the current site concept plan is shown in **Figure 10.11**. A detailed natural features inventory was completed in 2003, which is an important first step in the planning process. As with all park master plans, strong emphasis should be placed on obtaining public input into the planning process. Preliminary plans identified when the property was acquired called for possible canoe/kayak access to the Crockery Creek, trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, fishing access, archery deer-hunting opportunities (currently being provided), picnicking, historic interpretation, and other possible uses.

Park and Open Space Improvements: A basic trail system consisting of two loops totaling 1.5 miles was implemented in 2006. The system originates at the existing road end and includes a trail head kiosk, thereby providing visitors a better chance to discover and enjoy the area prior to further improvements. The existing historic farmhouse, barn and outbuildings should be stabilized and preserved (roofs, paint and basic repairs) at least until their value for historic interpretive use has been evaluated in the master planning process. Improvements consistent with the future master plan should be considered over the next 5-6 years.

Figure 10.11 - Crockery Creek Natural Area Concept Plan



D. Jubb Bayou Property

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The Parks Commission should seek to expand the Jubb Bayou site if opportunities arise to acquire high-quality natural land bordering the park, especially if a connection could be made to connect to the nearby Crockery Creek Natural Area.

Planning Strategies: No long-range plans currently exist for the site. Plans will be developed as planning for the Grand River Greenway corridor moves forward. An existing barn will be evaluated for historic importance and possibly retained or relocated.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: An existing house has been removed and a small parking area and kiosk have been installed to provide basic access and information. Marked trails will be added in the near future to encourage more public use. Minimal additional improvements are scheduled until greenway planning work is finalized.

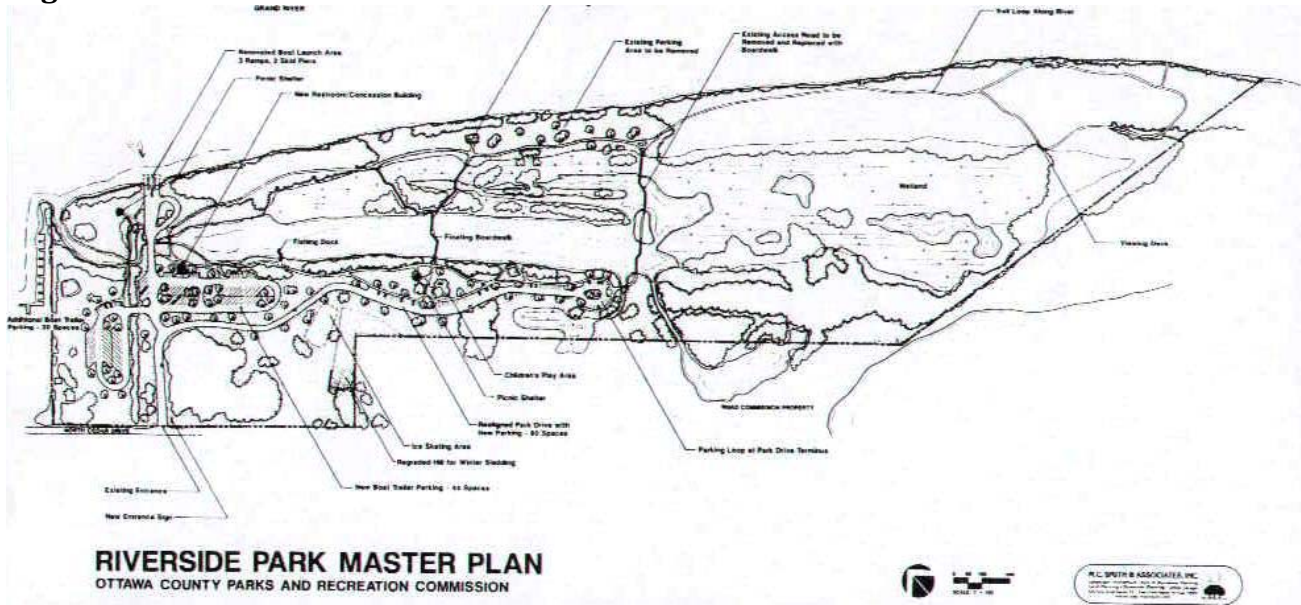
E. Riverside Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The Parks Commission should seek to expand Riverside Park if opportunities arise to acquire contiguous lands. Although opportunities appear limited, adjacent land currently owned by the Ottawa County Road Commission, including the lowland northeast of North Cedar Drive and possibly even the road end itself along with adjacent natural land, should be considered. A recent long-term lease agreement with the State of Michigan to allow use and management of the riverfront peninsula extending east of the park in the Bass River Recreation area has been completed, allowing public access to this area from Riverside Park.

Planning Strategies: The master plan (**Figure 10.12**) for this site should be updated to include the trail system going onto State land and to reflect the decision by the Parks Commission to continue a vehicular crossing of the wetland area to allow parking near the river. Good communication with State Park planning officials regarding planning and future uses of the Bass River Recreation Area should be maintained.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Recent improvements to the park include a new parking area, picnic sites, and barrier-free paths in the previously underutilized western section of the park, and the renovation of the riverfront parking area and shelter. This project was implemented in 2007. As use increases, further improvements consistent with the master plan should be pursued, including additional picnic and playground facilities.

Figure 10.12 - Riverside Park Master Plan



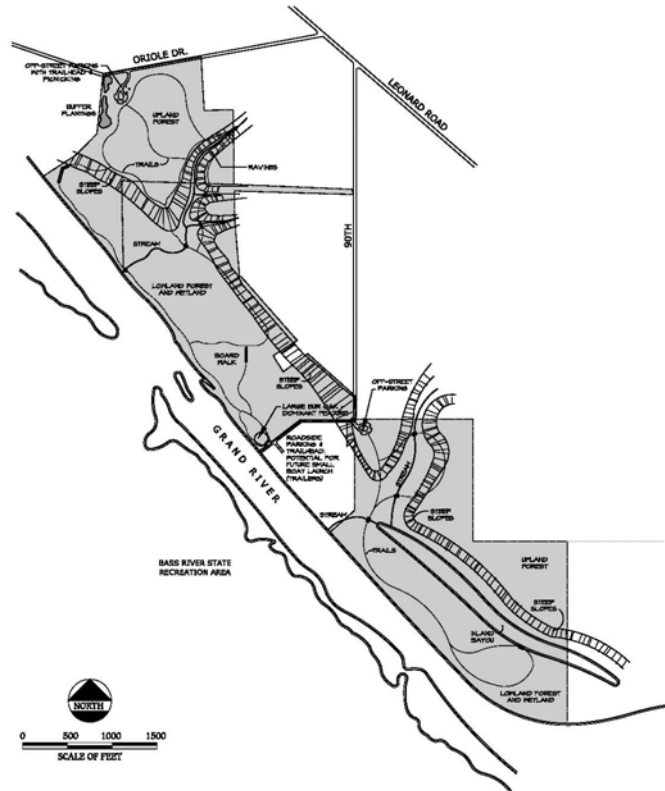
F. Bur Oak Landing

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Parcels with natural features similar to existing property exist to the east of Bur Oak Landing and in between the east and west portions of this site. The Parks Commission should keep alert to opportunities for expansion in these areas.

Planning Strategies: Further work to determine optimal trail locations needs to be completed to plan for provide better access to interior areas of the site. A conceptual plan (see **Figure 10.13**) has been prepared showing trails and basic amenities. More detailed planning should be completed when acquisitions are completed.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Gravel parking areas and information kiosks have been installed at three locations to provide access to this site. Trail improvements are scheduled to be implemented in 2011.

Figure 10.13 - Bur Oak Landing Preliminary Site Development Plan



Preliminary Site Development Plan
Bur Oak Landing
 Polkton Township, Ottawa County, Michigan
 JULY 2008



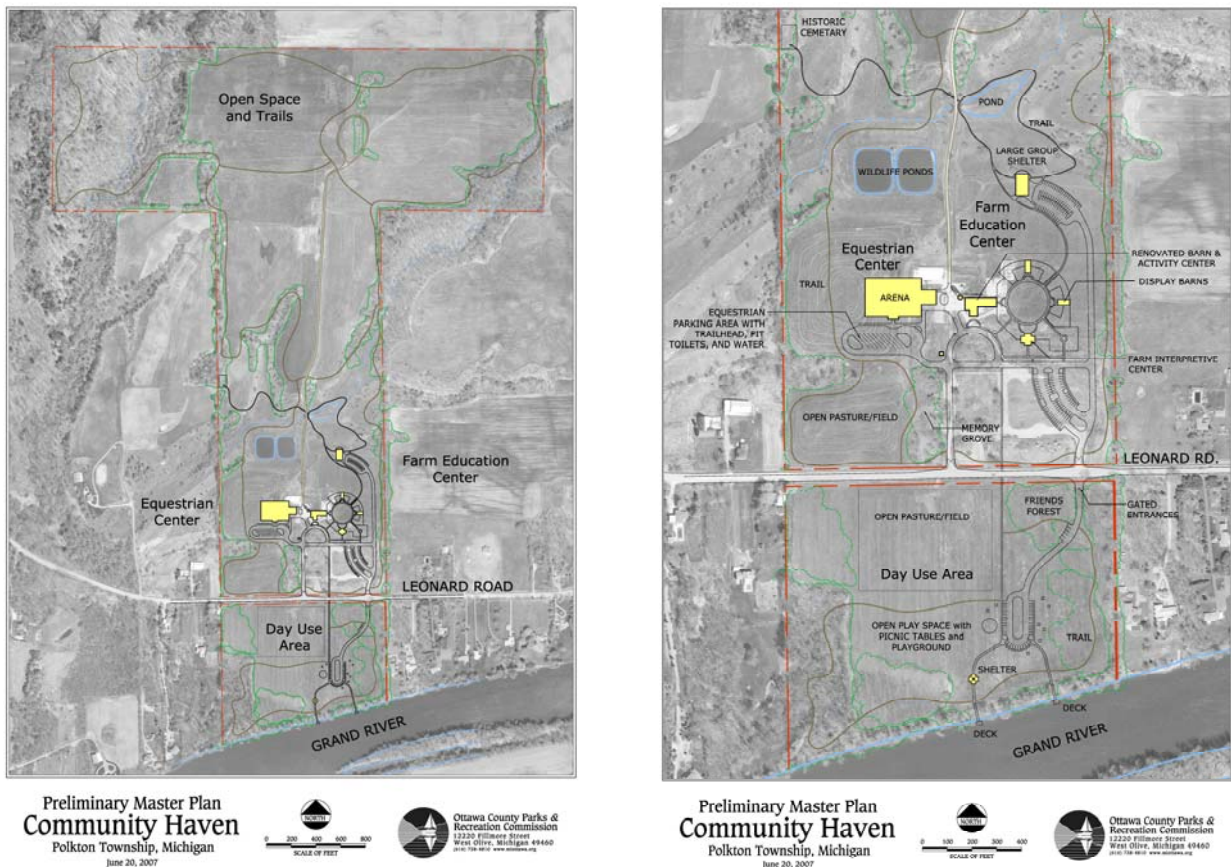
G. Eastmanville Farm (formerly Community Haven)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The Parks Commission should remain open to possibilities of park expansion, especially if those acquisitions could expand and enhance the existing equestrian and hiking trail system.

Planning Strategies: Parks staff conducted a park master planning process in 2007 including public input sessions resulting in a plan that shows the development of an educational farm, equestrian facilities, large-group picnic facilities and other related activities. The current plan (see **Figure 10.14**) is still conceptual in nature but provides a good basis for future more detailed design decisions, including development of a Farm Education Center.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Recent improvements at the site include barn repairs, a new entrance with signage, gravel parking, and equestrian trails and support facilities. In addition, the historic poor farm cemetery was restored and dedicated in 2010, providing a new point of interest for park visitors. Additional improvements to be considered in the near future include the “Memory Grove,” an interpretive area highlighting the historic use of the site as a home for indigent county residents, and additional improvements to the barn as required to facilitate more public use. Additional construction in conjunction with the proposed farm education center may also be required.

Figure 10.14 - Eastmanville Farm (Community Haven) Preliminary Master Plan



Operational Issues: A lease of a significant portion of the site to a non-profit farm education group is being developed. This group will seek to begin use of these areas for agricultural purposes. As plans for the farm education center proceed, much more discussion about maintenance and operational issues will need to take place to assure complementary use of the site by a greater number and more diverse set of park visitors.

H. Eastmanville Bayou

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: With the purchase of 28 acres in late 2008, connections have been completed between the previously acquired east and west portions of this site and with the Bass River State Recreation Area. Additional properties conducive to enhancing the site's natural values should continue to be evaluated, and properties to the east should be analyzed for their potential to provide connections for the greenway trail.

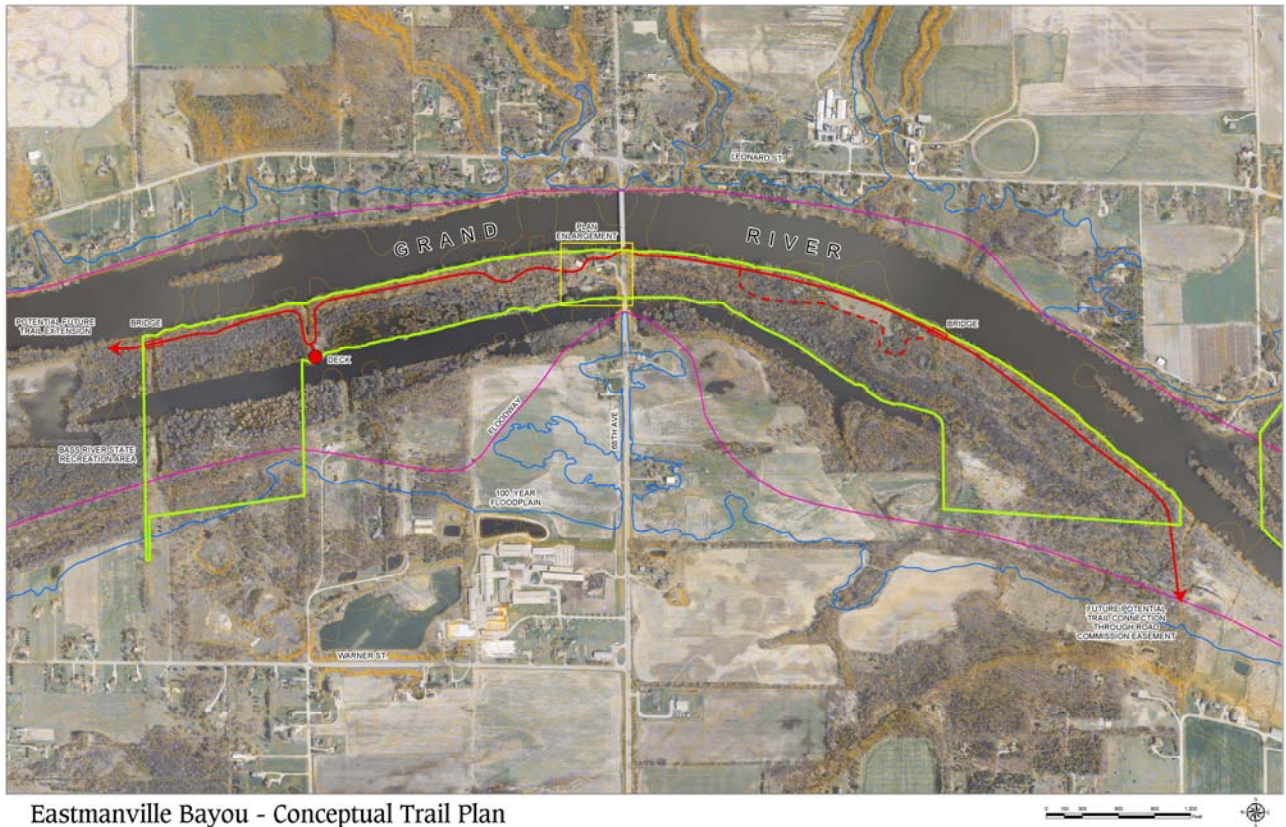
Planning Strategies: Site master planning efforts were completed in 2010 (See Figure 10.15) detailing public access improvements and general trail locations (Figure 10.16). Additional efforts to determine trail connections on either end of this property will need to continue. Ottawa County Parks recognizes the unique potential in this area to provide the public an opportunity to enjoy a large expanse of publicly owned shoreline along the Grand River. With Riverside Park located adjacent to the Bass River Recreation Area, this area provides 6 miles of contiguous public shoreline, presenting tremendous opportunities for natural resource protection and expanded public recreation opportunities. Efforts to

Figure 10.15 - Eastmanville Bayou Master Plan



include the greenway trail in Michigan State Park's management and use zone planning for the Bass River area have been initiated and should be continued.

Figure 10.16 - Eastmanville Bayou Conceptual Trail Plan



Park and Open Space Improvements: Park improvements just west of 68th Avenue are scheduled to be completed in 2011. These improvements will provide access to the bayou, the Grand River and to a riverfront trail system which could eventually be part of the Grand River Greenway paved trail.

Operational Issues: Concerns from neighbors expressed during the planning process, including off-hours use, trash, and overuse of the resource, need to be monitored and appropriate actions implemented. The presence of a large colony of rare Virginia Bluebells in the eastern portion of the site must be a consideration when trails or other improvements are implemented.

I. Ripps Bayou / Deer Creek Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: A land trade in 2008 achieved the long desired goal of connecting Ripps Bayou with Deer Creek Park and creating a continuous 1.5 mile stretch of Grand River frontage. Opportunities to expand the parkland to the east appear feasible, as much of this riverfront land is natural and undeveloped. Eastern expansion could also provide connections to the residential areas of Lamont to provide new recreational opportunities for local walkers and hikers.

Planning Strategies: Despite the land trade, pedestrian access from Deer Creek Park to the Ripps Bayou site is prohibited by the mouth of Deer Creek. An engineering study to determine the feasibility of crossing Deer Creek was completed in 2009. Although feasible, significant costs to implement the project appear to prohibit development at this time. Additional research should be conducted to see if other options (e.g. a ferry) might make this crossing economically viable. Formal master planning for the entire site will await completion of land acquisition efforts.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Short-term plans call for Ripps Bayou to remain unimproved, pending expanded access. Improvements to Deer Creek Park should await resolution of the Deer Creek crossing issue.

Operational Issues: Ripps Bayou is currently only accessible via the Grand River. Current efforts will focus on property signing and management to ensure existing users, including anglers, kayakers and archery hunters, respect adjacent private properties and do not negatively impact the natural features of the site.

J. Kuits Bayou

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Purchased in 2009, this 80-acre site with almost 6200 linear feet of Grand River frontage offers a significant stretch of natural land along the Grand River and initiates efforts to secure land for the future Grand River Greenway trail connections in Allendale Township. Efforts need to be made to evaluate additional properties on either side of Kuits Bayou to create necessary linkages for the trail.

Planning Strategies: Planning for this site will be conducted in coordination with other nearby sites and planning for the Grand River Greenway Trail.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Public access is currently limited to visitors accessing the site by boat from the Grand River. Short-term plans call for the site to remain unimproved pending expanded access.

Operational Issues: Current efforts will focus on property signing and management to ensure existing users, including anglers, kayakers and archery hunters, respect adjacent private properties and do not negatively impact the natural features of the site.

K. Grand River Green Space (formerly the Bolthouse Property)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Ottawa County purchased this 111-acre property in early 2010. Working with the property owner and the USDA, a conservation easement was placed on most of the property prior to its purchase. The Parks Commission then acquired the remaining property rights. Potential expansion into the undeveloped and/or previously mined sites south and east of the current property should be considered if opportunities are available.

Planning Strategies: Planning for this site should be conducted to develop a usable trail system. A natural features inventory for this site should also be considered, as well as a land and wildlife management plan.

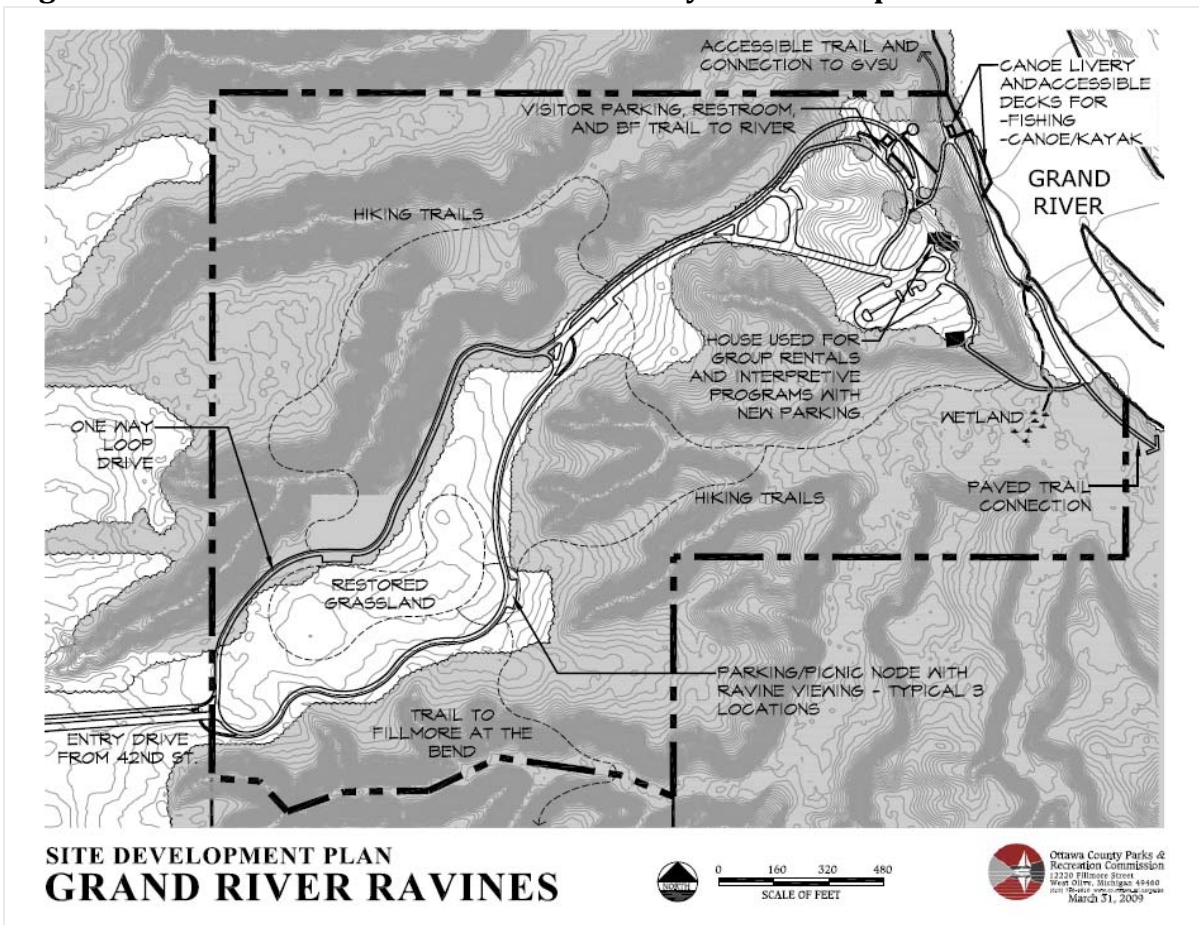
Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Extensive floodplain forest restoration plantings were completed in early 2010 including 15,000 trees and shrubs. Short-term development plans call for the site to remain primarily unimproved, with the exception of a small parking area along the existing gravel drive and hiking trails.

Operational Issues: Current efforts will focus on property signing and management to ensure existing users, including anglers, kayakers and archery hunters, respect adjacent private properties and do not negatively impact the natural features of the site. Management efforts will also focus on weed control for a two- to three-year period to aid establishment of the newly planted trees and shrubs.

L. Grand River Ravines/Fillmore at the Bend

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: A 68-acre property now known as Fillmore at the Bend was acquired in 1999 in anticipation of acquiring an adjoining approximate 100-acre property with Grand River frontage. The 100-acre property, which has dramatic ravines and high quality natural communities, is identified as one of Ottawa County’s highest quality natural areas in the Natural Features Inventory of Ottawa County (1988). The property also links to an extensive natural ravine system owned by Grand Valley State University (GVSU), and preliminary plans called for a partnership with GVSU to offer a linked trail system through the area. Grant funds were requested and committed from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for the 100-acre property, with the hopes of completing the purchase

Figure 10.17 - Grand River Ravines Preliminary Site Development Plan



by the end of 2010. Further trail expansion is also envisioned, with the goal of linking to the Bend Area and ultimately to Kent County trails and other recreation areas.

Planning Strategies: A preliminary concept plan for the site is included in **Figure 10.17**. A complete master plan for both properties will be undertaken when property acquisition is completed.

Park and Open Space Improvements: The existing 68-acre site is open for archery hunting. A house and several outbuildings were removed from the site and a small parking area and kiosk installed. A historic barn is being retained for possible use on this site or relocation to another park property – possibly Eastmanville Farm, for use with the proposed educational farm. The site is managed as an open space with archery hunting allowed. Other improvements should be initiated after master planning.

Operational Issues: Care and use of the house will need to be determined soon after acquisition.

M. Grand River Park

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The potential exists to expand this 162-acre park to add high-quality natural land, buffer existing natural features within the park, and link the park via easements or direct ownership upstream to the Bend Area or downstream to the Grand River Ravines site and GVSU. Given the population growth in the immediate area and high quality natural riverfront lands adjacent to the park, an effort should be made to expand the park and create linkages to other greenway sites.

Planning/Operational Strategies: A full master plan has not been developed for Grand River Park since acquiring the park from Georgetown Township in 1999. At that time consideration was given to improving the 12-acre water body within the park to offer swimming. Recognizing the greater potential of the Bend Area for large-scale water-based recreation activities, a decision was made to delay master planning for Grand River Park until the goals of the site are better defined. Considering that the park is functioning well as currently designed, this plan recommends, as in previous plans, to delay work on a full master plan until the Parks Commission can progress further with the Bend Area Park and can better assess other nearby greenway opportunities. Continued cooperation and communication with Georgetown Township should be pursued to maximize opportunities for connections to be considered in public planning and private development approvals.

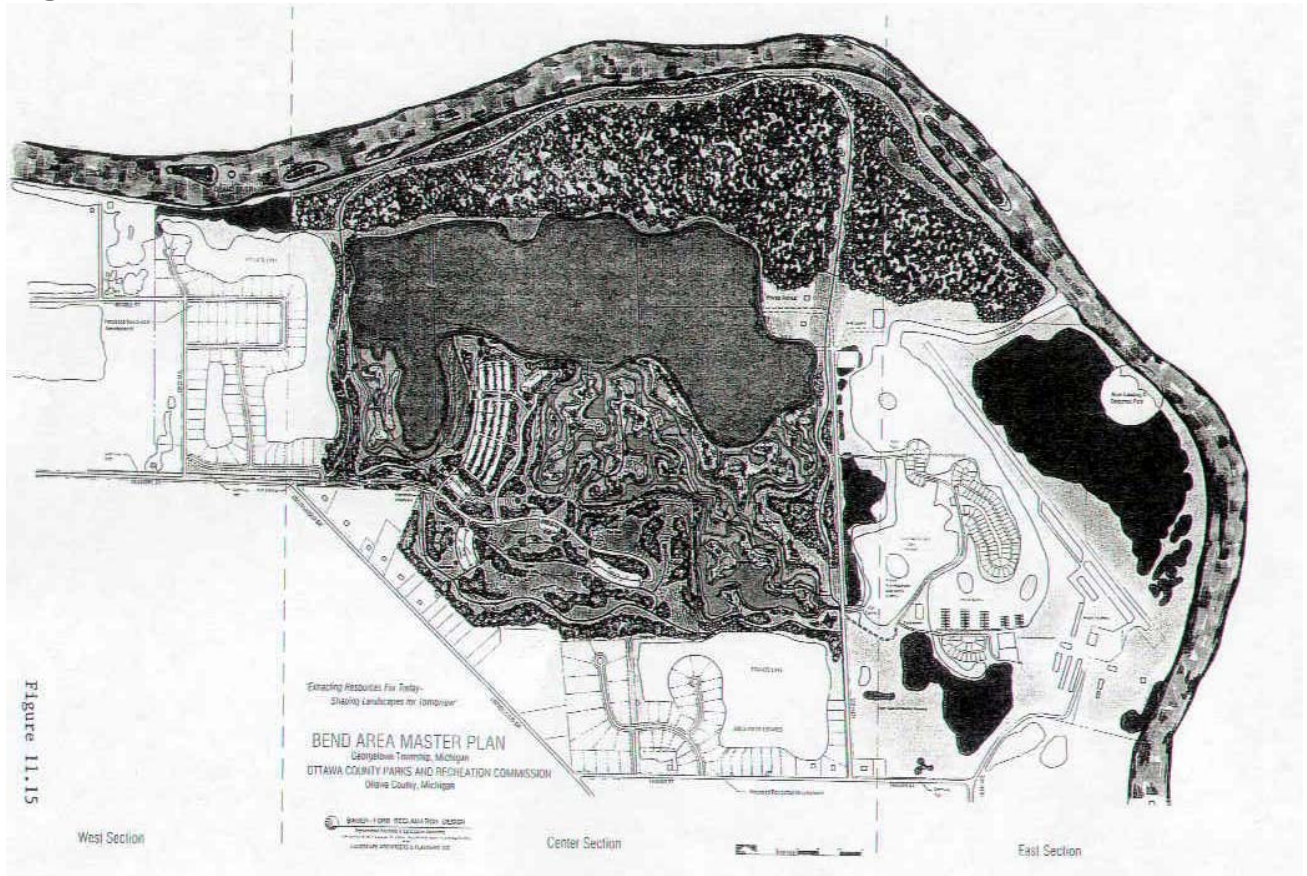
Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: The park functions well following basic site improvements by parks staff in 1999. Path replacement and repairs, including the addition of barrier-free picnic sites, were completed in 2010, as well as significant renovations of the wet portions of the existing trail system. Renovation of the existing boat launch is proposed for 2011. Continued high-quality maintenance and general site improvements for other areas of the site should continue until further direction is obtained from a future park master plan.

N. Bend Area / Eastern Inland Water Facility

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: Unique in its development, this project exists primarily as a master plan now, with Ottawa County completing its first 188-acre purchase in the master plan area in 2007. The Parks Commission, with a goal to provide swimming and other water-based recreation opportunities in eastern Ottawa County plus expand the greenway, contacted the landowners, primarily gravel-mining operations, and obtained agreement to work with the owners to develop a master plan for the site. The goal was to develop a plan which would result in a county park as the end use and serve as the mine reclamation plan for the entire site. Negotiations with the two main landholders in the master plan area as well as with adjacent property owners should continue.

Planning/Operational Strategies: The Bend Area Master Plan was completed in September 2000 and the plan graphic is shown in **Figure 10.18**. Additional planning work was completed in 2010 to update the plan based on actual site conditions and better understanding of the status and likely extent of mining operations. The conceptual plan produced by this process is shown in **Figure 10.19**. Additional planning and coordination will be needed to finalize a new master plan that better identifies specific locations of proposed improvements.

Figure 10.18 - Bend Area Master Plan



Park and Open Space Improvements: Two old buildings were removed and a gravel parking area constructed at the end of 12th Avenue in 2009, providing access to the new park parcels. As other properties are acquired or purchase agreements put in place, an

early focus should be on site restoration and establishment of wetlands in previously mined areas as called for in the master plan. A system of marked trails will be added in 2011 or 2012 to encourage public use. Major facility development will wait until the acquisition of key properties is completed.

Figure 10.19 - Bend Area Preliminary Master Plan Update



PIGEON RIVER GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The Parks Commission should seek to expand the greenway through protection of key natural and recreational lands as identified in the greenway concept plan. The Pigeon River is unique relative to the other greenway initiatives in that it is smaller in scope overall and the majority of desirable greenway expansion property is held by just a few very large private owners.

Consumers Energy owns nearly all riverfront land downstream of Pine Bend. Consumers currently cooperates with Ottawa County by leasing a small portion of its right-of-way to help facilitate trail connections at Pine Bend. Ottawa County has sought and will continue to seek further partnership opportunities with Consumers Energy. As described in the park master plan, the potential exists to provide trails along Consumers' one and one-half mile stretch of natural riverfront land located between Pine Bend and Lakeshore Drive. If successful with Consumers Energy, the Parks Commission will also need to develop a cooperative arrangement with Port Sheldon Township through their Sheldon Landing Park

located on Lakeshore Drive to connect land trails and canoe/kayak trails via the river. Even longer-range efforts to extend greenway public access beyond Lakeshore Drive to the Consumers Energy Pier Walkway is a goal that would provide a unique and highly attractive greenway trail experience of statewide significance.

Long-range potential also exists to work with the large landowner located upstream of Hemlock Crossing to provide a future greenway connection to Pigeon Creek Park. This tremendous expanse of natural land is being maintained in its natural state by current landowners, and Ottawa County should be ready to step forward to ensure long-range protection of the greenway corridor if the opportunity arises. Donation of a small (8-acre) parcel immediately upstream of Hemlock Crossing (east of US-31) occurred in early 2005 with an additional 22-acre donation completed in 2006. Additional acquisition should be considered to ensure the future opportunity to link to the larger landholdings, should the opportunity arise.

Planning Strategies: The existing master plan for the Pigeon River Greenway should be evaluated periodically and kept up to date. Control of many of Consumers Energy's right-of-ways has been transferred to ITC, a management company. Ottawa County Parks should pursue and develop a good working relationship with this new controlling company.

B. Pigeon Creek Park (and adjacent Open Space land)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: As identified in the greenway concept plan, Pigeon Creek Park should be expanded if adjacent high-quality natural land becomes available. Although the park has more miles of trail (10) than any other county park, the addition of adjacent riverfront land to expand trail distance would be of great benefit to all key user groups including hikers, cross-country skiers, equestrians, and mountain bikers.

Planning Strategies: The current plan has been substantially completed. The Parks Commission should maintain an up-to-date park master plan as new needs arise.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Expansion of the equestrian parking area was completed in 2008. This work also provides overflow parking for busy winter recreation days. No other immediate needs currently exist; the Parks Commission should continue to upgrade trails and facilities as necessary. Expansion of the lodge to meet space needs during peak demand periods on winter weekends is under consideration.

Operational Issues: Thinning of red pine areas of the park was completed in 2008, and damaged trails were re-established after this work was completed. Efforts to enhance the reestablishment of native vegetation is underway through tree planting projects by volunteer groups.

C. Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: As indicated above, efforts to expand the greenway with additional riverfront both upstream and downstream via lease, easement or acquisition should occur to maximize the potential of this unique natural resource area.

Planning Strategies: The current plan has been substantially completed. The Parks Commission should maintain an up-to-date park master plan as new needs arise. Communication should be maintained with Consumers Energy and adjacent landowners.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Since the 2006 plan, two major capital improvement projects have been implemented. First, restoration and expansion of the historic Weaver House at Pine Bend was completed in 2006. The building is now suitable for a wide range of events including corporate retreats, family gatherings and other uses desiring a unique and attractive setting. Additional site work near the house, including renovation of an existing small building, should be completed to enhance the site for weddings and other larger outdoor events. Second, a new Nature Education Center including parking and grassland restoration was completed in 2009. As use of this facility grows, modifications to existing facilities may be desirable to best facilitate use of the entire developed area of Hemlock Crossing.

MACATAWA RIVER GREENWAY

A. General Greenway

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: As indicated in Chapter 9, acquisition of land and easements is key to implementation of the Macatawa River Greenway. Ottawa County Parks will seek to further expand the greenway through protection of key natural and recreational lands as identified in the greenway concept plan.

Planning/Operational Strategies: Ottawa County Parks will continue to partner with the Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway and local units of government in the development of long-range greenway plans. Further study is needed to analyze natural resource features along the river corridor and assess land acquisition potential. The potential for new county park sites and trails linking greenway sites will be evaluated.

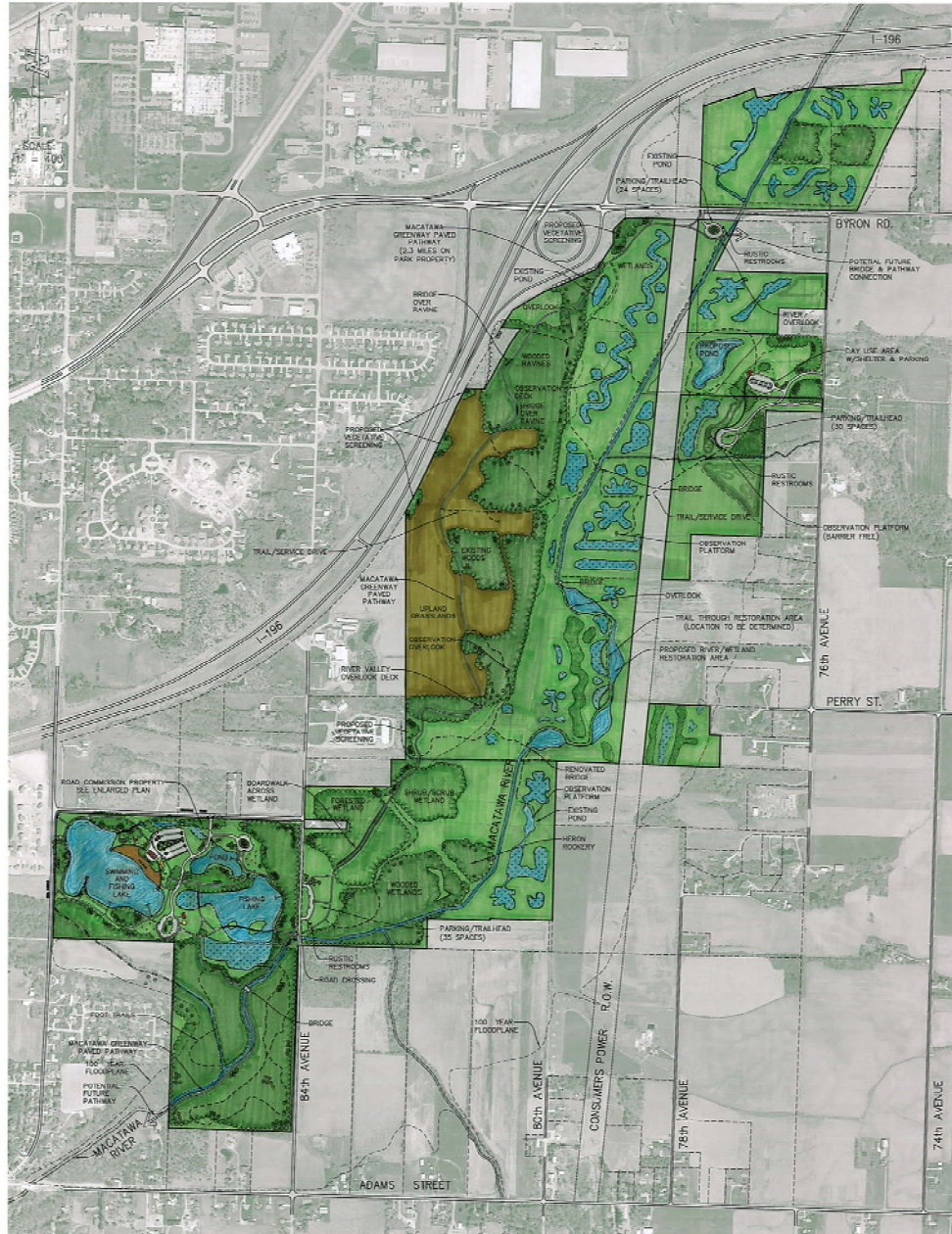
Park and Open Space Improvements: The concept for the Macatawa River Greenway is to preserve key blocks of land and establish trails, picnic areas, and other park facilities to provide access to the river corridor. In addition, a greenway non-motorized paved pathway is envisioned, linking parks and open spaces within the greenway corridor. Although completion of the entire greenway trail is likely not feasible in the 5-year timeframe outlined in this plan, funds are earmarked for the initial trail segment in the Upper Macatawa Conservation Area. Note that the review and discussion of the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks county park property with frontage on both Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan, is included in this plan under the Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway.

B. Upper Macatawa Natural Area

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The potential exists to expand the Upper Macatawa Conservation Area from its existing 612 acres to over 700 acres. The resulting park would be one of the largest in the county park system, offering valuable resource protection and public recreation benefits in a rapidly urbanizing area. Lands targeted for acquisition are shown on the greenway concept plan and include an approximate 80-acre Road Commission parcel plus additional riverfront and floodplain property.

Planning/Operational Strategies: A comprehensive park master plan was completed in early 2006 (**Figure 10.20**). The approved plan seeks to accomplish four basic goals, including: 1) expand park and open space land and outdoor recreation opportunities, 2) improve water quality, 3) expand flood storage, and 4) preserve, expand and enhance wildlife habitat. More detailed planning to determine the location of the proposed paved greenway trail was completed in 2008 and submitted to MDOT for possible Transportation Enhancement Act Funding. Although initially denied, park staff was encouraged by grant coordinators to resubmit after completion of the adjacent Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail.

Figure 10.20 - Upper Macatawa Natural Area Master Plan



P.M. BLOUND, INC. AND PFDL, INC.

UPPER MACATAWA CONSERVATION AREA MASTER PLAN
 OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

DRAFT 12-15-09

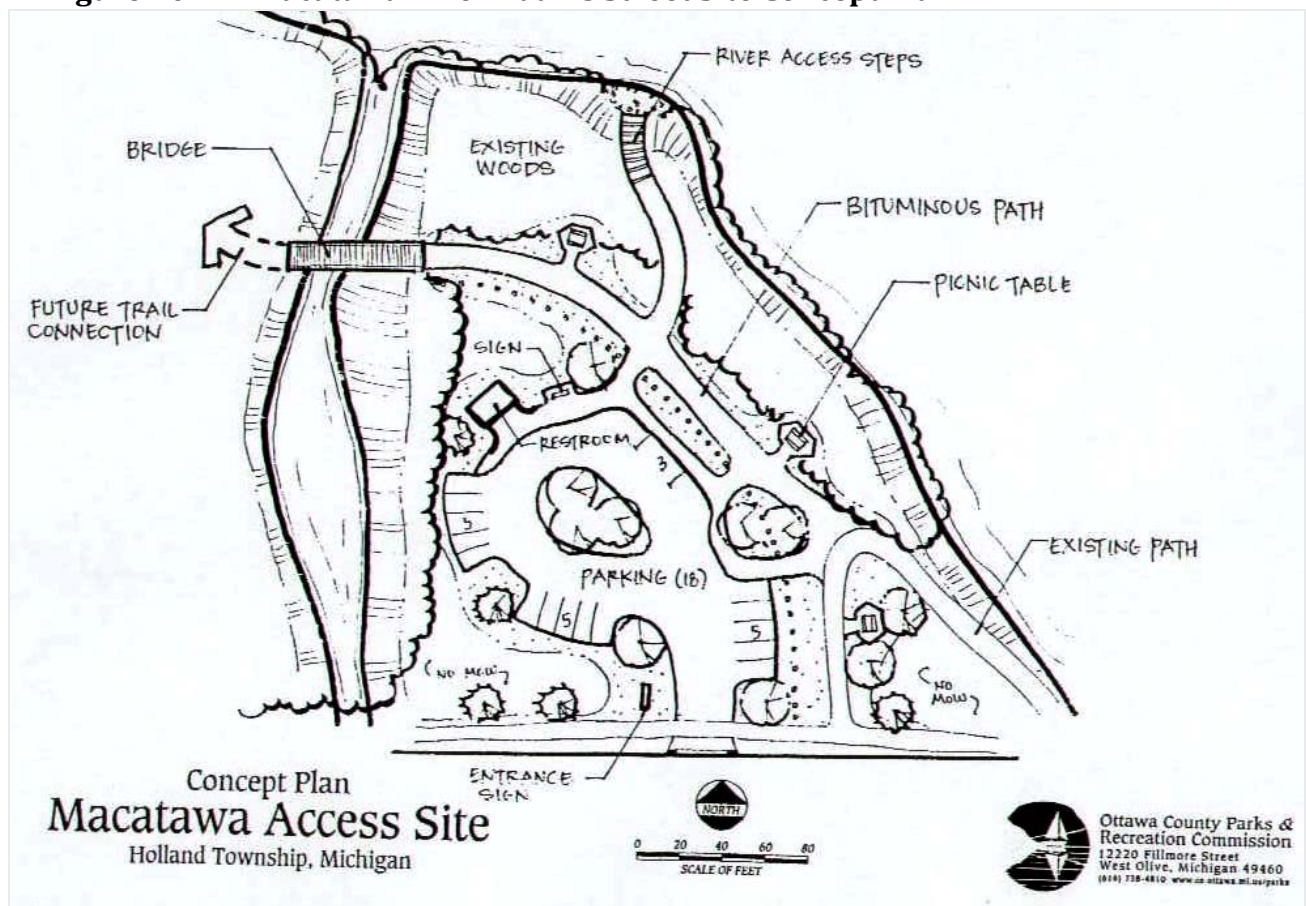
Park and Open Space Improvements: Significant restoration work has been completed at the Upper Macatawa properties from 2003-2010. Native grasslands and shallow water wetlands have been installed in almost all areas of previously farmed floodplain. Initial public access improvements to the site in the form of parking areas and trails were completed in 2007. Expansion and improvement of the trail system should be considered as well as improvements to facilitate group use of the site such as shelters.

C. Adams Street Landing

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The Parks Commission will seek to expand this 10-acre site through the acquisition of adjacent natural riverfront land. Special emphasis should be placed on making a connection via purchase or easements to the newly purchased Holland Country Club site to the northwest.

Planning/Operational Strategies: A conceptual plan for the site was developed in 2005 (Figure 10.21). The site is envisioned as a river access point for anglers and kayakers and as a staging area for bicyclists riding the future greenway trail. Some limited opportunities for picnicking will also be provided. Additional planning will need to be undertaken when land acquisition and trail connections are completed. Other planning and development work in the greenway including work on the adjacent church property south of Adams Street and the Macatawa River Green Space (see below) need to be considered to determine what future facilities best complement other projects and serve greenway users.

Figure 10.21 - Macatawa River Adams Street Site Concept Plan



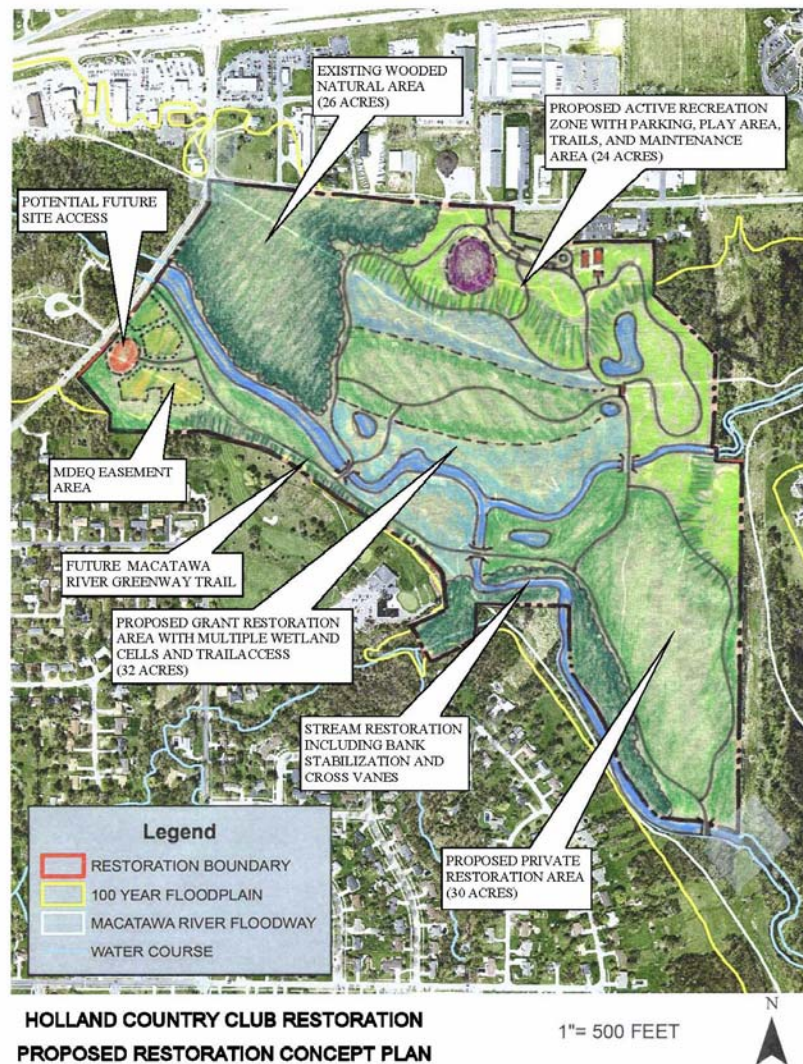
Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Development of a parking and river access point was completed 2006. Additional improvements including a bridge, restrooms and information signage are also shown on the concept. These facilities would probably be developed in conjunction with construction of the greenway trail.

D. Macatawa River Green Space (former Holland Country Club)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The Parks Commission will seek to expand this 122-acre site through the acquisition of adjacent natural or undeveloped riverfront land. Connections to Adams Street Landing and nearby neighborhoods should be high priorities.

Planning Strategies: A master plan is scheduled to be produced in early 2011. Currently, changes to the site are guided by a restoration concept plan (Figure 10.22) prepared as part of a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant application. The site is envisioned to serve three main purposes. First, a large portion of the floodplain area is to be restored to wetland and other native habitats. Second, the relatively higher northeast portion of the site is to provide space for more active recreational uses (a play area and disc golf course have been suggested as well as a trail system). Finally, all plans will facilitate the future

Figure 10.22 - Macatawa River Green Space (Holland CC) Restoration Concept Plan



development of the paved Macatawa Greenway trail traversing the length of the site from Paw Paw drive to the south property line.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Restoration work started in 2010 on over 20 acres of floodplain. This work was made possible through an agreement with Request Foods, Inc. that allows them to use this area as mitigation for wetlands destroyed as part of their plant expansion in Holland Township. Development of parking area and other basic support facilities as determined by the master planning process is scheduled for 2011, as well as restoration on an additional 32 acres of floodplain. This restoration is to be funded by a USEPA grant secured in 2010.

GENERAL PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

A. General Parks and Open Space Lands

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: In addition to its focus on the coastal and river-based greenways, the Parks Commission is interested in acquiring additional land for park and open space purposes where suitable natural resource features exist in the county.

Planning and Operational Strategies: Park master plans for non-greenway parks should be kept up to date as guides for expansion and improvements. Other studies (e.g., Natural Features Inventory of Ottawa County) as well as other sources of information should be utilized to seek out properties with unique natural resource features suited for inclusion in the county park and open space system.

B. Grose Park

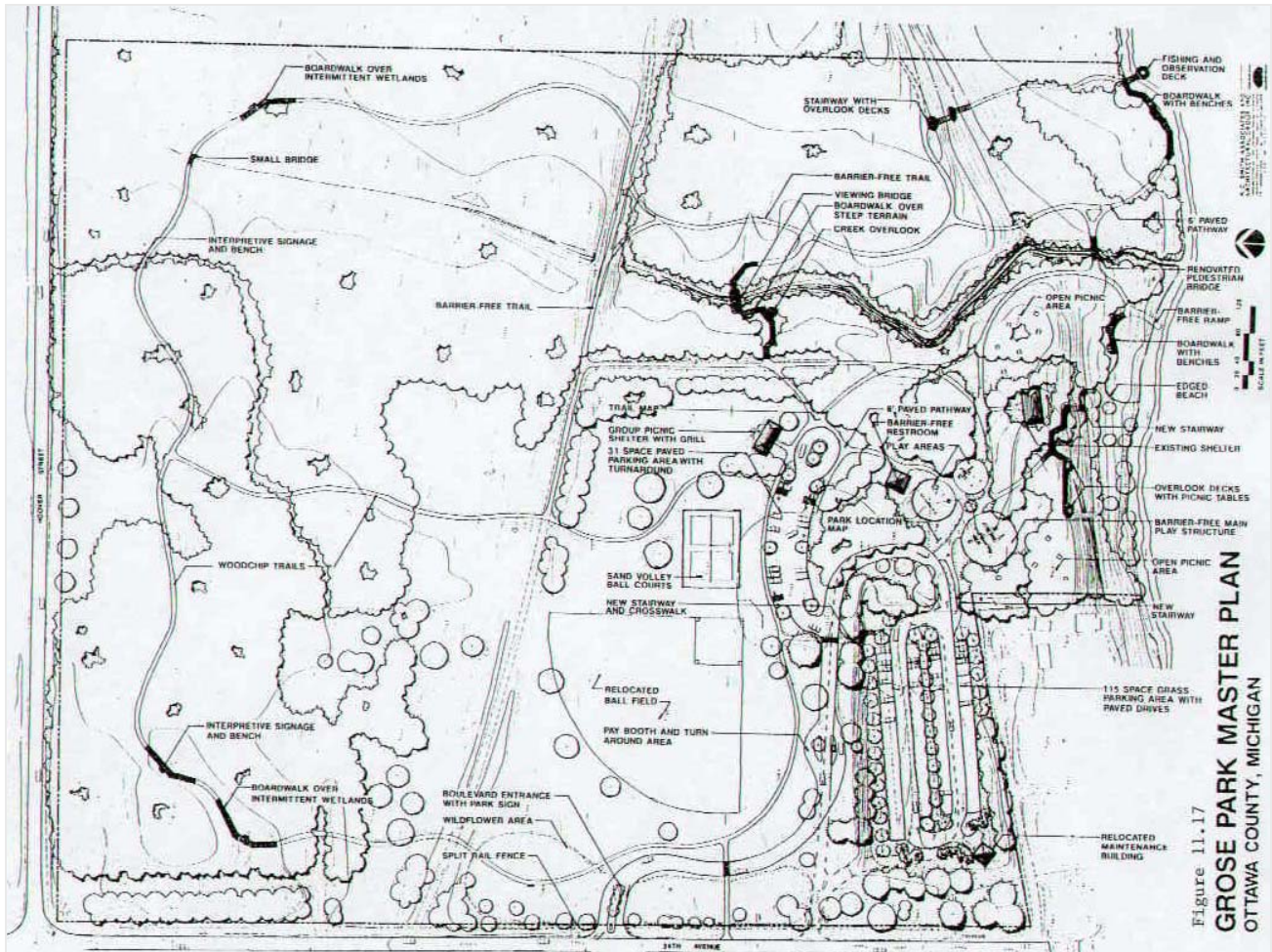
Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Although opportunities have diminished due to development near the park's easterly boundary, the expansion of Grose Park through the acquisition of adjacent natural land should continue to be explored.

Planning Strategies: An up-to-date park master plan should be maintained for the park (current park master plan approved in 1994 – see **Figure 10.23**).

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Major park improvements as called for in the master plan have been completed. In addition, a major renovation to the beach area to make it more accessible and to address erosion issues was completed in 2007. Additional work to provide access and seating areas on the bluff overlooking the lake were also started in late 2010.

Operational Issues: Sand movement along the beach continues to be a maintenance issue. Long-term management techniques should be investigated and implemented if possible.

Figure 10.23 - Grose Park Master Plan



C. Musketawa Trail

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: The approximate 10-mile segment of the Musketawa Trail located in Ottawa County is owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and managed by Ottawa County Parks through an operating agreement approved in 2002. Ottawa County Parks owns an 8-acre parcel, acquired via donation, located adjacent to the trail in Wright Township. Consideration should be given to purchase of other key parcels along the trail corridor which would preserve key natural lands and enhance the experience of trail users. A good example is the Marne Bog (see next page) which has potential to both preserve unique land and provide an interesting and educational outlet for users of the trail.

Planning Strategies: Spurred by federal funds secured by Kent County, an effort is ongoing to complete a trail connection between the Musketawa Trail and the White Pines Trail in Comstock Park. The Kent County Road Commission is responsible for implementing the trail, and the State of Michigan is taking a lead role in addressing concerns raised by adjacent landowners and the County Board of Commissioners about potential impacts to existing agricultural operations. Ottawa County Parks should participate as needed to find an appropriate resolution to these concerns so that the trail connection can be made. In addition, the Musketawa Trail corridor in Ottawa County should be studied to identify key natural lands for possible acquisition.

Operational Issues: An issue requiring further study is the deterioration of the asphalt trail surface. Currently the trail surface is being degraded by the carbide snowmobile studs used during periods of inadequate snow depths, growth of vegetation along the edges, and woodchucks undermining the rail bed. The damage to the trail surface will soon begin to limit use by rollerbladers, and eventually bikes, if a solution to the problem is not found. Efforts to restrict snowmobile use to periods with adequate snow base have had limited success. Regardless, resurfacing of the entire trail may be necessary in the relatively near future to ensure the popularity of the trail. Bridge decking and structural supports are also a maintenance concern.

D. Marne Bog

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The current 40-acre bog property was acquired via donation and has no public access. Efforts should focus on acquisition of land or an easement to provide public access to existing public land, acquisition of the remainder of the bog, and acquisition of buffer land around the bog.

Planning/Operational Strategies: Any master planning will follow the completion of land acquisition efforts. Planning efforts should be coordinated with the Musketawa Trail, given the proximity of the two park sites.

Park and Open Space Improvements: Any site improvements will follow the completion of land acquisition and site planning. The Parks Commission recognizes the key value of this site is to preserve it as a natural area and envisions future improvements to be limited to possible trail/boardwalk, viewing platform and interpretive displays.

E. Spring Grove Park

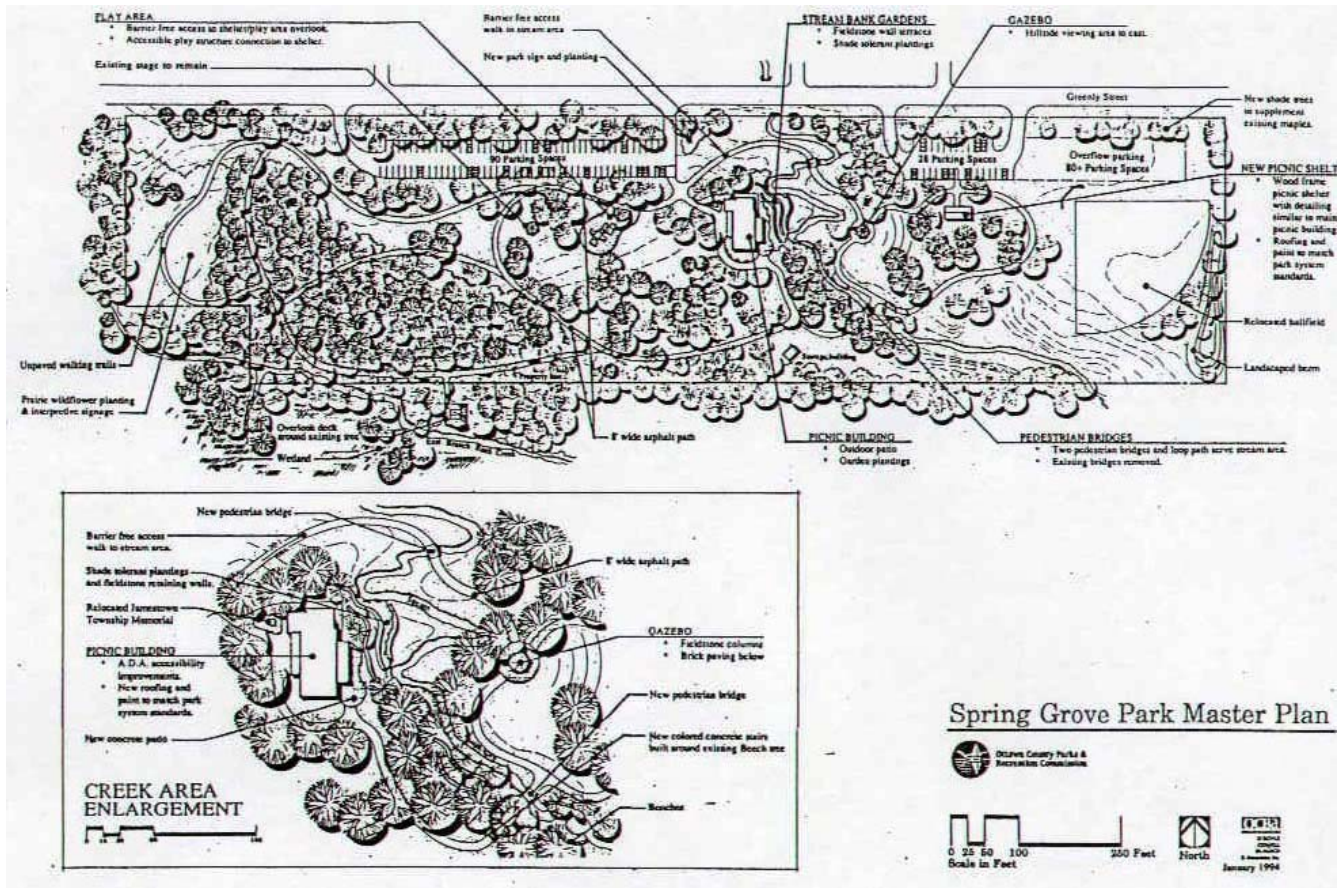
Land Acquisition/Park Expansion: The area surrounding Spring Grove Park continues to suburbanize, and potential park expansion opportunities are diminishing. The Spring Grove Park master plan identifies the desirability of acquiring approximately 30 acres of wetlands and uplands adjacent to the park. The acquisition would protect the integrity of the wetlands as an important natural feature, expand open space land in Ottawa County, and permit interpretation of the resource to park visitors. Additional upstream lands should also be considered as required to implement a strategy to control stormwater flows in the creek that often prove damaging to the water features in the park.

Planning Strategies: An up-to-date park master plan should be maintained for the park (current park master plan approved in 1994). Evaluation of possible flood control measures should be initiated.

Park and Open Space Improvements: The Spring Grove Park Phase II improvement project should continue to be evaluated as it relates to current uses and needs. This project would continue with development items identified in the 1994 park master plan as shown in **Figure 10.24**. The focus of improvements would be expanded recreation opportunities in the east half of the park which currently receives little use. A new parking lot would be constructed along with a new picnic shelter. Other improvements would include ballfield

improvements and development of trails and interpretive facilities. The project would significantly expand picnic opportunities in an area of high demand.

Figure 10.24 - Spring Grove Park Master Plan



F. Hager Park

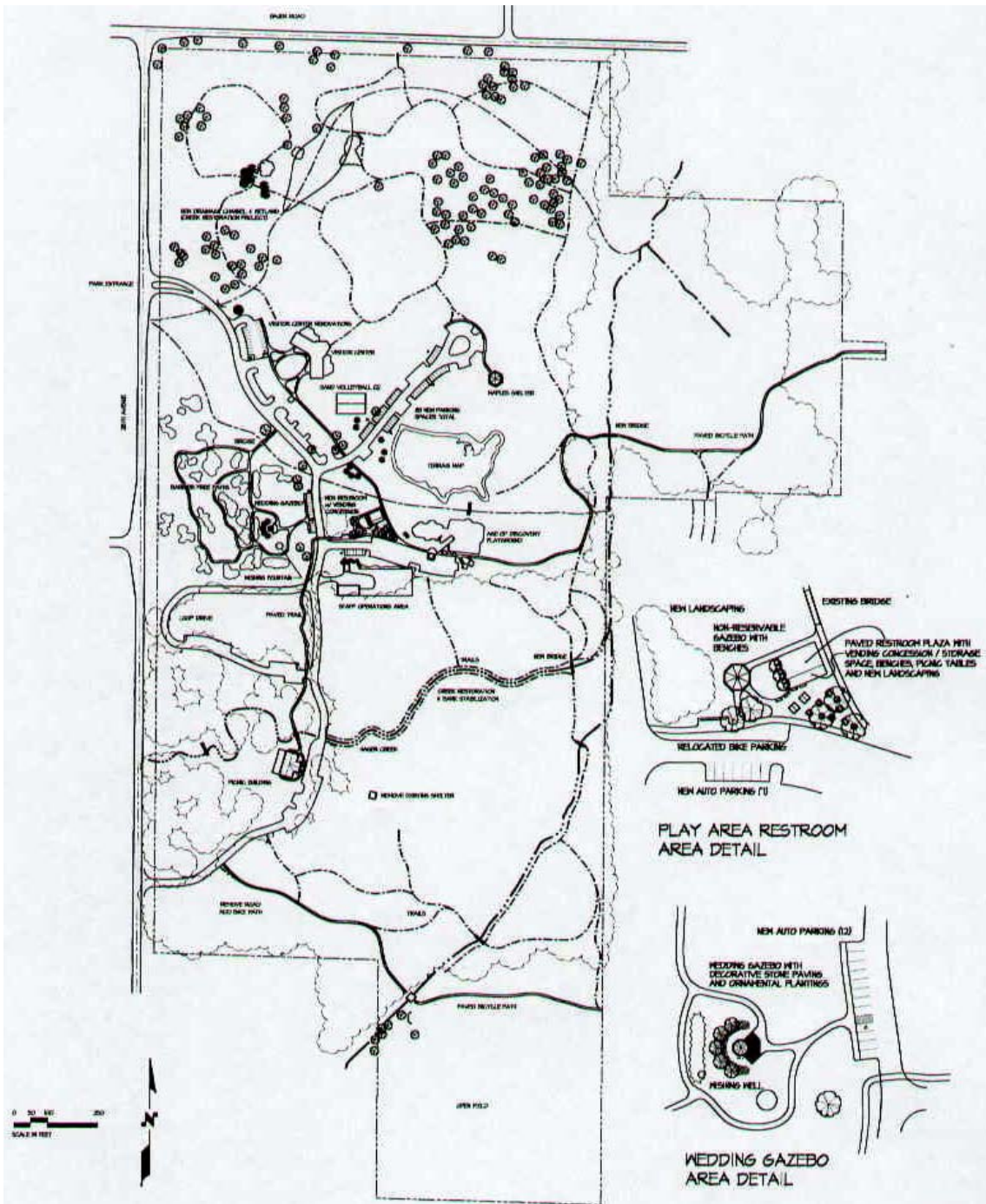
Land Acquisition/Park Expansion priorities: With subdivisions now nearly surrounding the park, opportunities for park expansion appear limited. The Parks Commission should, however, remain alert to opportunities to expand the park boundaries, given the high use and popularity of Hager Park. Opportunities may still exist to provide a greenway linkage to the north connecting all the way to Grand River Park.

Planning Strategies: The current Hager Park Master Plan, updated in 2002, is included in **Figure 10.25**. The plan should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Recent improvements at Hager Park include renovation of a wing of the previous park visitor center into the DeVries Room, now a popular rental facility, and the installation of barrier fencing along the restored creek in areas of high public use. Future improvements should focus on projects identified in the park master plan including trail improvements and establishment of a trailhead(s) within the park to better orient visitors to park trails, establishment of a wedding gazebo with related hard-surface trails, and other improvements identified in the plan.

Operational Issues: Restoration measures installed at Hager Creek, a small stream running through the park, should also be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis to help ensure long-term success in controlling bank erosion and protecting water quality.

Figure 10.25 - Hager Park Master Plan



HAGER PARK MASTER PLAN
JUNE 2002

Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission 

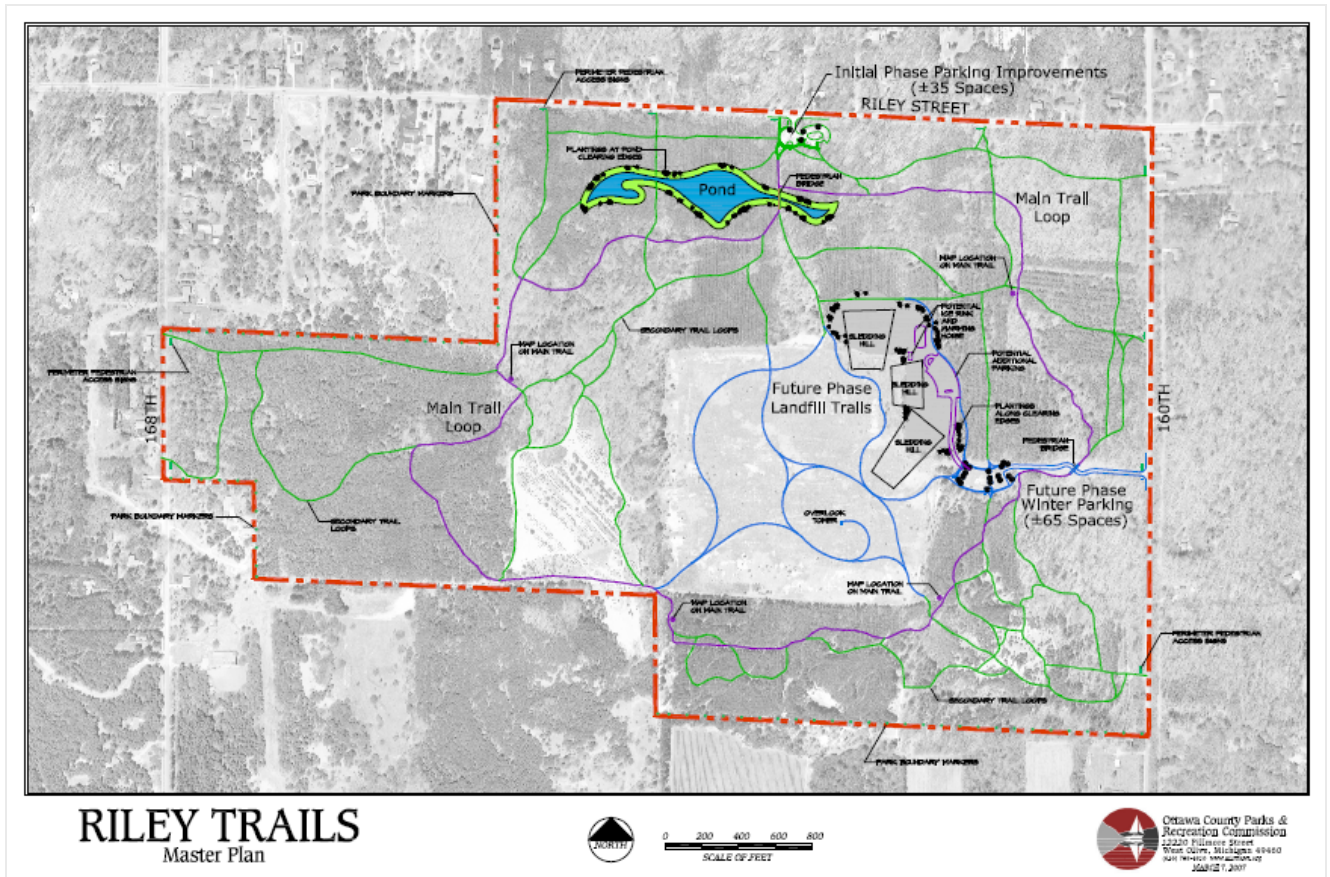
G. Riley Trails (formerly Park Township Landfill Site)

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion priorities: Riley Trails abuts roads and residential development on its north, west, and east boundaries. Therefore, few opportunities exist for expansion in those areas. The Parks Commission should, however, remain alert to opportunities to expand the park boundaries to the south as opportunities to acquire undeveloped parcels become available.

Planning Strategies: Following extensive construction work to recap the landfill (under management of the Ottawa County Road Commission Utilities Engineers) including excavation of a 2-acre pond, a comprehensive master plan for the site was prepared in 2007. This plan recommended improvements both to the currently used areas of the site as well as the portion of the site occupied by the former Southwest Ottawa County Landfill which is currently closed to the public (see Figure 10.26).

Park and Open Space Improvements: Initial improvements to the main access point on Riley Street were completed in 2008. These improvements included a bridge over the pond, renovated gravel parking, rustic toilets, information kiosk, and other amenities including trail signage. Additional improvements as shown on the master plan will be considered when the landfill area is opened to public use.

Figure 10.26 - Riley Trails Master Plan



H. Open Space Lands

In addition to Open Space Lands previously identified and discussed as part of the Grand River Greenway (i.e., Ripps Bayou, Eastmanville Bayou site and Timmer Farm), Ottawa County Parks manages six (6) additional inland sites not located within the identified greenway corridors. They are listed below and include a total of 1185 acres. Further information is available in the Recreation Inventory - Chapter 4.

Robinson Forest: 80 acres, Robinson Township

Johnson Street Wildlife Management Area: 50 acres, Robinson Township

Hiawatha Forest: 365 acres, Grand Haven Township

Port Sheldon Natural Area: 440 acres, Port Sheldon Township

Van Buren Street Dunes: 120 acres, Port Sheldon Township

Pigeon Creek Forest: 130 acres, Olive Township

Land Acquisition/Park Expansion Priorities: Each site should be studied to determine if opportunities exist to acquire adjacent lands or inholdings consisting of good quality natural lands or connections to other resources.

Planning Strategies: Management of the extensive red pine plantations on many of these sites consisting of selective thinning has recently been implemented at almost all open space sites. Because the Parks Commission's overall goal is to promote the natural character and diversity of each site, the Commission should work to develop broader natural resource management plans for each property and take steps to enhance the habitat value of each site in accordance with these plans. Planning for trails and other low impact visitor facilities should be continue to be evaluated as use patterns are better understood.

Proposed Park and Open Space Improvements: Relative to recreational use, the Parks Commission's primary goal with these properties is to provide the public opportunity for access to less structured outdoor recreation environments. The Commission also recognizes that growth and development of lands surrounding Open Space Lands puts pressure on these sites to accommodate additional public use. Guidelines developed in the original Open Space Management Plan state that improvements should promote "safe non-intensive recreation uses with an emphasis on activities that require minimal facility development and have limited impact on the natural character of the land."

Basic access improvements including gravel roadside parking areas and information kiosks were installed at each of these sites in 2006. The current goal is to construct and mark a simple trail loop at each site to provide suitable access for more users, many of whom are not comfortable traversing a site without a trail and guidance. Loops at Van Buren Dunes, Port Sheldon Natural Area, and Hiawatha Forest were implemented in late 2010. Trails at remaining sites should be installed, and additions to existing trails should be considered as the extent of use becomes known.

