

## Introduction

### Planning Process Overview

The Management Planning Process develops a series of planning steps, each built upon the previous, that keep all planning and action decisions focused on (1) the mission of the Parks and Recreation Division, 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 is the **General Management Plan**, the first step in our planning process. In this phase of planning, we are defining what the park will look like in twenty years, and answering critical questions like: What will be the condition of flora and fauna? How will we address historic and cultural resources? What recreational opportunities will 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?

A key tool of this plan is the identification of "Management Zones" which define specific characteristics of the land, addressing management for:

- ◆ Natural features
- ◆ Historic/cultural features
- ◆ Education/interpretation, and
- ◆ Recreational opportunities.

These four elements represent the primary goals of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) Mission Statement, and provide guidance for both planning and management decisions. Within the parameters of this guidance, "Purpose" and "Significance" statements are developed for the park that establishes its unique identity and focus. No two parks are the same and this emphasis is directed at ensuring that the differences found from park to park are acknowledged, highlighted and celebrated.

### Planning Objectives

The objective of this General Management Plan is to bring together PRD Department staff, impacted and impacting stakeholders, and the public who use the park in a planning process that will define and clarify the unique "Purpose" and "Significance" of Wetzel State Recreation Area (SRA). Collectively, we will reinforce those attributes 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.

**Planning Team**

Accomplishment of our planning objectives was and is dependent upon the valuable input provided by all members of the 'Planning Team'. Following are the names of those critical participants in this planning process:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Paul N. Curtis	MDNR-PRD, Management Plan Administrator
Steve Pondo	MDNR-PRD, Park Manager
Ray Fahlsing	MDNR-PRD, Stewardship Program Manager
Luba Sitar	MDNR-PRD, Pontiac District Supervisor
Kristen Bennett	MDNR-PRD, District Planner
Ernie Kafckas	MDNR, Wildlife
Jim Francis	MDNR, Fisheries
Larry Pederson	MDNR, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management
Bruce Miller	MDNR, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management
Peggy Ruby	MDNR, Law Enforcement
Janet Canode	MDNR, Office of Communications
Ed Meadows	MDNR, Office of Land and Facilities - Land
Denise Gruben	MDNR, Office of Land and Facilities - Engineering
John P. Gardner	Lenox Township Supervisor
Jeanette Ventimiglia	Lenox Township, Assistant to the Supervisor
Karol Ottenbacher	Lenox Township, Treasurer
David C. Birchler	Birchler Arroyo Associates, President
Amy Golke	Birchler Arroyo Associates, Senior Planner

**Planning Process**

The General Management Plan is the product of a collective planning effort. The Wetzel State Recreation Area planning process began in early 2005 with conversations between Lenox Township and the Department of Natural Resources. Later that year, an agreement was reached to begin the planning process, with the assistance from Planning Consultants. In January of 2006, the Planning Team, comprised of DNR, Township representatives and consultants met for the first of many monthly meetings toward the completion of the Plan.

The first step was to determine where we are, which was developed from baseline information (Appendix A, Supporting Analyses). This inventory and analysis of existing conditions was reviewed by the Planning Team, and included the regional setting, population characteristics and natural resources and features. An evaluation of the economic impacts of the Recreation Area was also conducted.

Upon completion of the supporting analyses, the Planning Team considered the Recreation Area's purpose and significance, identified legal mandates and drafted a management zone plan. The Team then reached out to the public for input by holding a stakeholder workshop, and public participation workshop and on-line survey (Appendix B). Representatives from a variety of interests within the community came together to discuss the planning of Wetzel . Throughout the process, an internet web page kept the community current regarding the progress of the General Management Plan.

Taking account of existing conditions, public opinion, and the experience of Township and DNR officials, a final draft of the plan was prepared and adopted by the Department of Natural Resources on <insert date>. Minutes from the Planning Team meetings are provided in Appendix C.