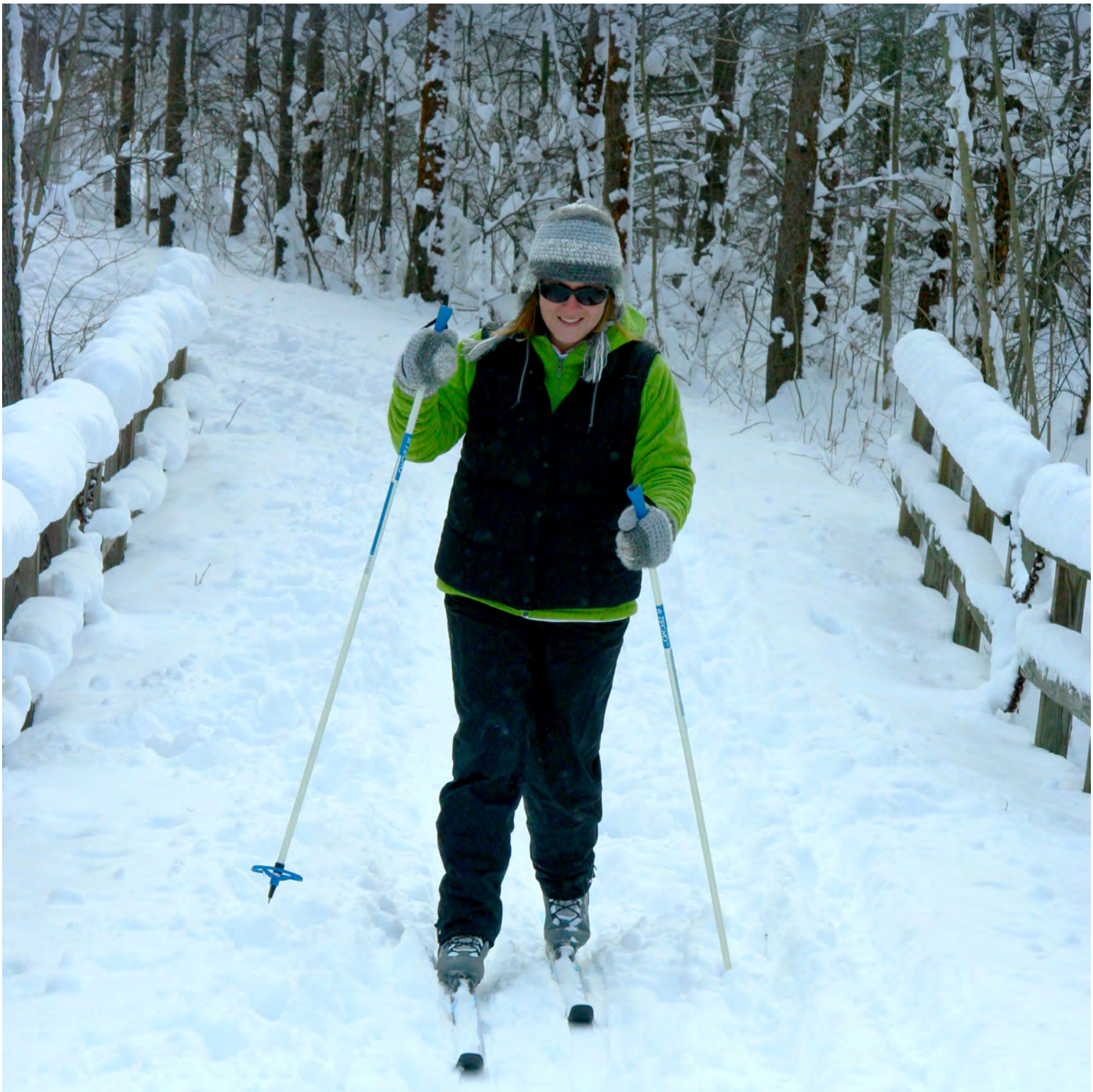
METROPARKS™

INDIAN SPRINGS MASTER PLAN



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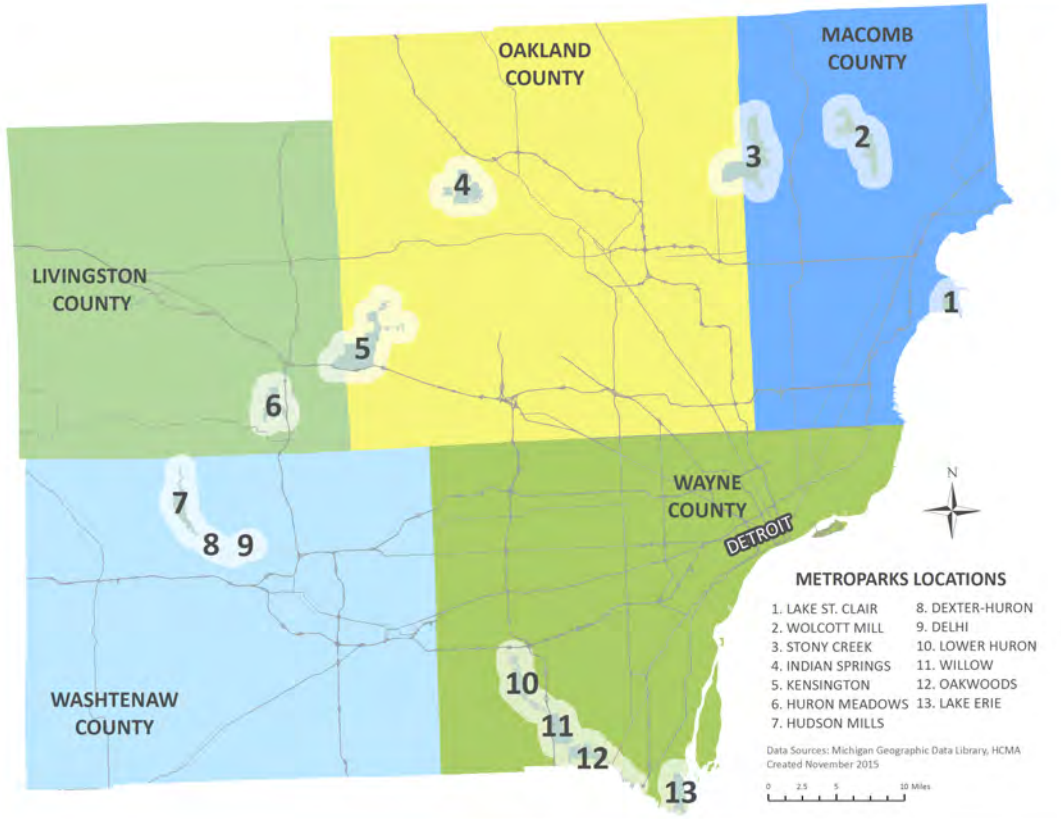
INTRODUCTION

About the Metroparks

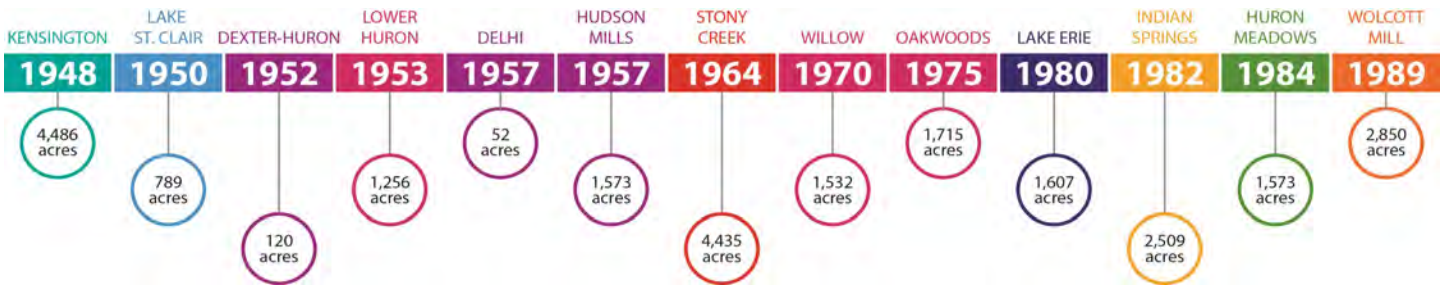


The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was sanctioned by the Michigan State Legislature in Act No. 147 of the Public Acts of 1939. Named after the two longest rivers within its boundaries, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional park agency consisting of 13 Metroparks encompassing approximately 25,000 acres of land within a five county area in southeast Michigan.

Much credit can be given to Henry S. Curtis and Harlow O. Whittemore for making the Metroparks a reality. The 1937 vision for a park system proposed a series of parks connected by a long parkway extending from Lake St. Clair along the Clinton and Huron rivers to Lake Erie below the mouth of the Detroit River.

Funding of the parks began in 1942 with a property tax levy, limited to one-quarter of one mill. The rate today has been adjusted to .2140 mills.

PARK DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



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Administration & Operations

Board of Commissioners

A seven-member Board of Commissioners governs the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. The Board of Commissioners meets the second Thursday of each month, where they make policy decisions for the Authority, including approving expenditures, acquiring land, planning of new parks and facilities, approving fees and charges, awarding contracts through competitive bidding, and other matters necessary to provide regional recreation. The Board appoints staff officers for the Metroparks.

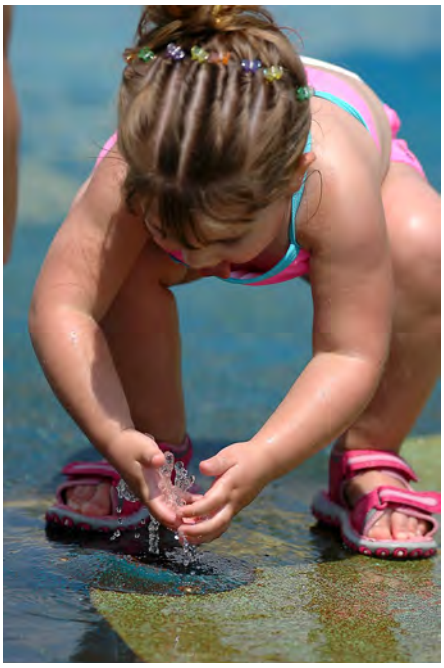
Two commissioners, appointed by the Governor of Michigan for a term of four years, serve as representatives at large. Five commissioners, one each to represent the counties of Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston and Washtenaw, are appointed for a term of six years by the board of commissioners of the above-named counties.

Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Metroparks, provides leadership and executive oversight of all administrative and operational activities.

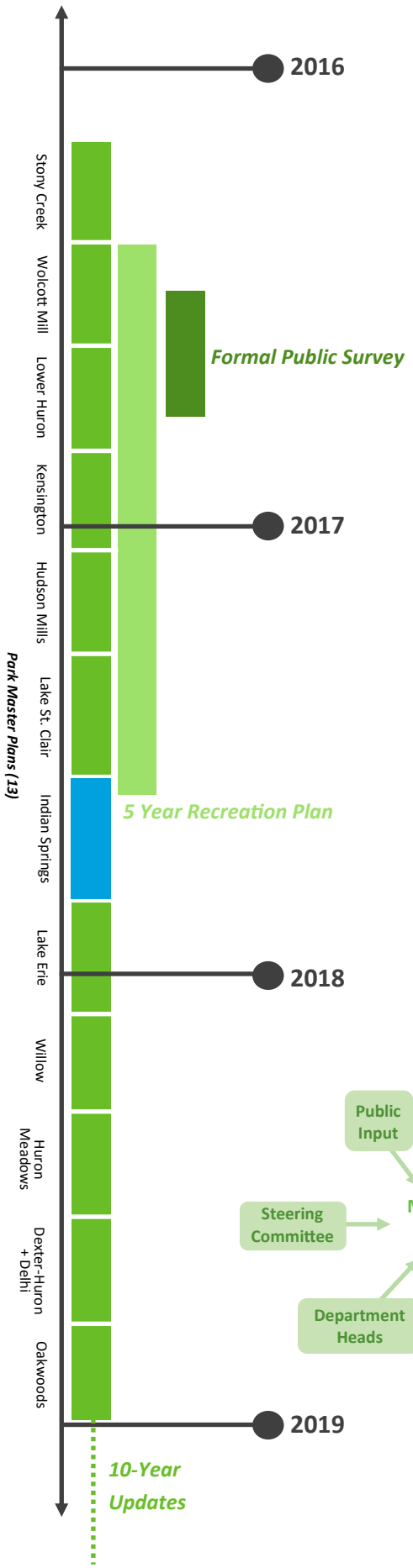
Administrative Departments provide administrative support to operations, and guide the organization towards its mission.

Operational Departments facilitate the day-to-day operations of the parks, making sure patrons have enjoyable and educational visits. They include Maintenance and Interpretive Services.

Metroparks Police ensure that everyone can enjoy the parks in a safe and secure environment.



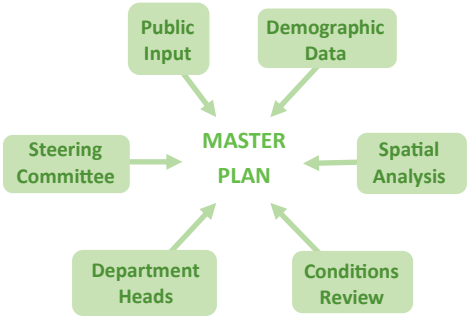
Planning Process



Several factors contribute to the recommendations that will be proposed for Indian Springs in the master plan. One of the most important is the public input collected through meetings, questionnaires, and online comments. This reveals the public's hopes and expectations for the park and significantly influences plan recommendations. A master plan steering committee was formed to include park employees with exceptional knowledge of Indian Springs and the surrounding community, who along with the experienced Metroparks department heads provide their professional opinions.

In 2016, the Metroparks Planning Department scheduled an aggressive timeline for completing all 13 park master plans in three years. Each park will be given a planning window of six months, with overlap between parks. Some master plan timelines may be extended or delayed if the Board of Commissioner's recommend further public input following their review of the draft plan. The order of the parks in the planning process was determined by staff based on current and planned park projects, planning need, geography, and park popularity.

The Planning Department collects demographic and spatial data to inform master plan recommendations. Demographic data looks at the density, age, race, income, language, and other factors of the regional population. Spatial data, usually analyzed through Geographic Information System software, looks at the physical location of the parks in relation to other recreation opportunities, transportation facilities, population centers, important natural resources, and more. Finally, the Planning Department conducts a review of park conditions to identify areas needing improvement and areas experiencing success.



The master plans are intended to be living documents, modified as needed to reflect changing conditions in the parks. However, they focus on park developments over the following ten years, and will be updated every decade through a formal planning process similar to the current one.

Public input gathered at the Indian Springs Master Plan Open House on 9/16/2017

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INDIAN SPRINGS TODAY

Character

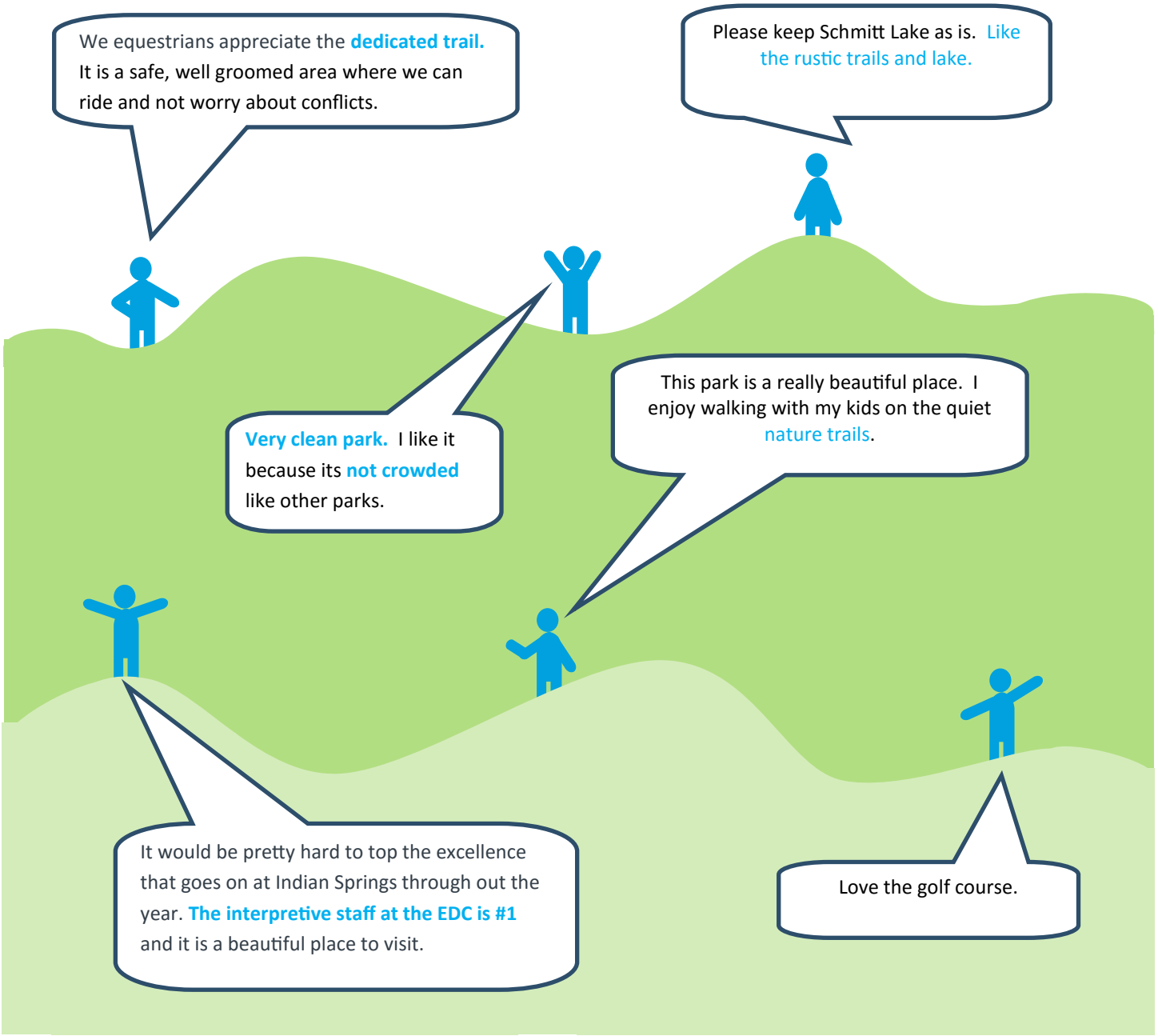
The following responses to our questionnaire highlight the many facets of Indian Springs that form a unique experience. Visitors appreciate the wide range of recreational activities available at the park, especially those related to the lake, wildlife, and trails. They see it as contributing to the surrounding community.

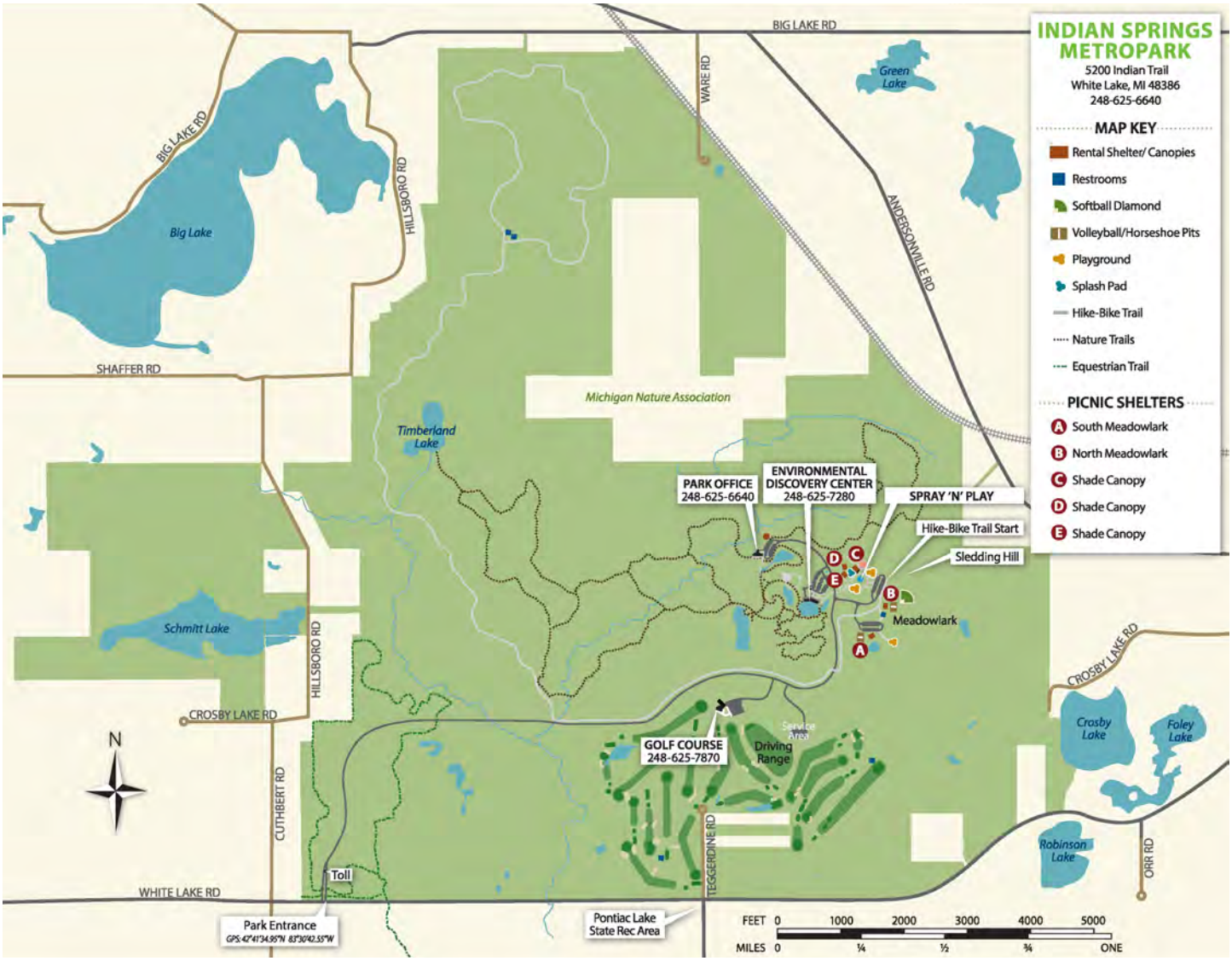
NEEDS

Continue to draw diverse range of visitors to the park

Build on park character to attract new visitors

OPPORTUNITIES




INDIAN SPRINGS METROPARK
5200 Indian Trail
White Lake, MI 48386
248-625-6640
MAP KEY
Rental Shelter/ Canopies
Restrooms
Softball Diamond
Volleyball/Horseshoe Pits
Playground
Splash Pad
Hike-Bike Trail
Nature Trails
Equestrian Trail
PICNIC SHELTERS
A South Meadowlark
B North Meadowlark
C Shade Canopy
D Shade Canopy
E Shade Canopy
BIG LAKE RD
WARE RD
ANDERSONVILLE RD
HILLSBORO RD
SHAFFER RD
CROSBY LAKE RD
CUTHBERT RD
WHITE LAKE RD
TEGGERDINE RD
ORR RD
Big Lake
Green Lake
Timberland Lake
Schmitt Lake
Crosby Lake
Foley Lake
Robinson Lake
Michigan Nature Association
PARK OFFICE
248-625-6640
ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER
248-625-7280
SPRAY 'N' PLAY
Hike-Bike Trail Start
Sledding Hill
Meadowlark
GOLF COURSE
248-625-7870
Service Area
Driving Range
Toll
Park Entrance
GPS: 42°41'34.95"N 83°30'42.55"W
Pontiac Lake State Rec Area
N
FEET 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000
MILES 0 ¼ ½ ¾ ONE

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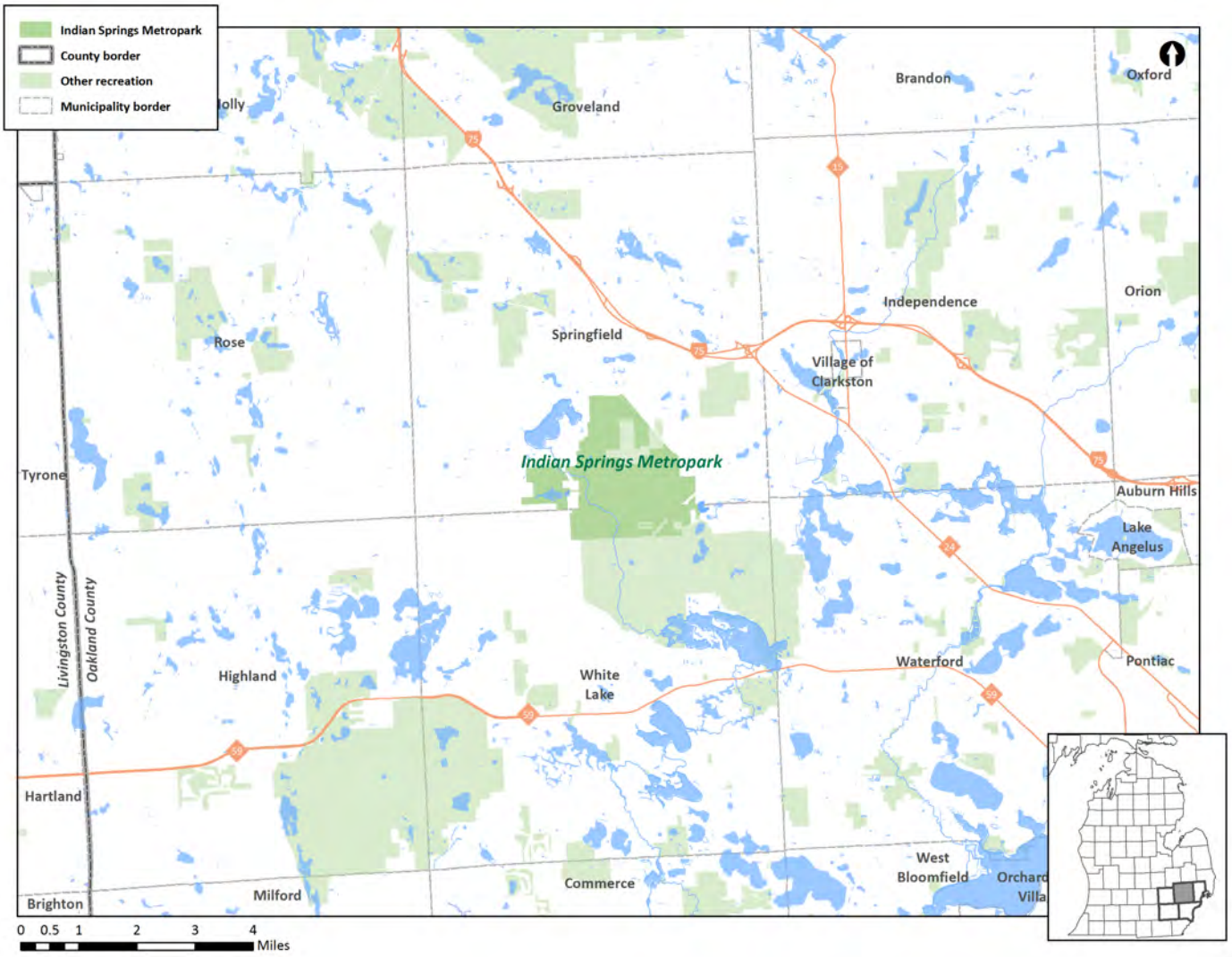
Location

Indian Springs Metropark is located in the western half of Oakland County, at the headwaters of the Huron River. Most of the park is within Springfield Township with the southern portion extending into White Lake Township.

At its northernmost extent, Indian Springs nearly reaches Big Lake Road. To the east it runs along the railroad line and reaches Crosby lake, to the west it extends beyond Hillsboro Road, and its southern boundary is White Lake Road and Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area.



NEEDS

Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features

Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park

OPPORTUNITIES

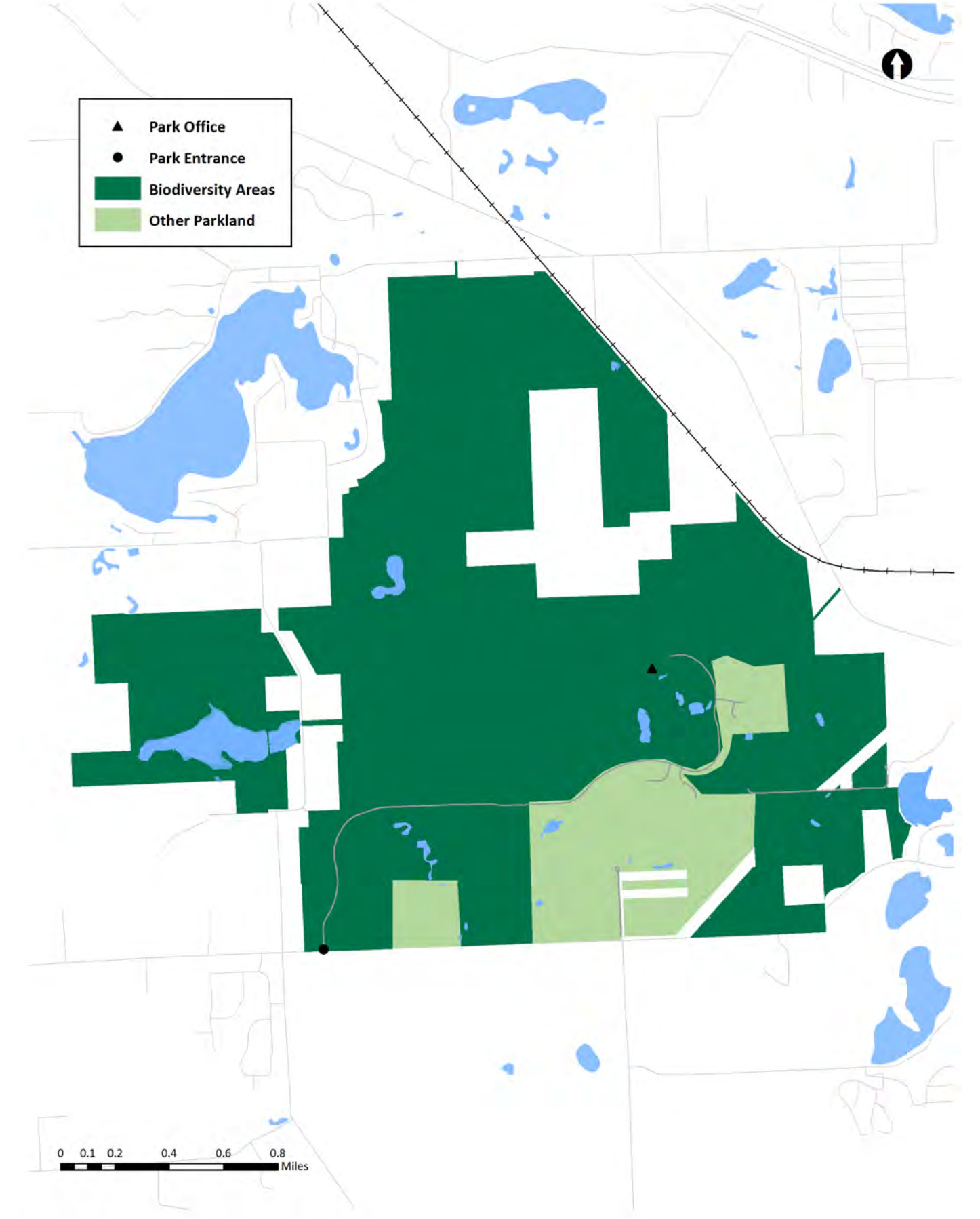
Biodiversity refers to the variety of life present in a given area, often measured by number and distribution of species. It is important to preserve because it provides humans with ecological services such as clean water and oxygen, leads to greater resistance and resilience during natural and human-caused disturbances, and reduces the risk of disease.

Biodiversity Areas

Identifying biodiversity areas can help inform the development of current and future park amenities, allowing the Metroparks to fulfill its mandate and mission statement of protecting the natural resources of the communities it serves. Development within biodiversity areas is carefully reviewed to minimize unnecessary disruption.

The following criteria for determining biodiversity areas were adapted from a matrix that the Natural Resources Department uses to determine work priorities throughout the park system. The following page shows a map of proposed biodiversity areas in Indian Springs.

Metric	What	Why	Metric	What	Why
Elemental Occurrence	the presence of a species under legal protection, or of a complete system recognized as in condition similar to pre-settlement	statutory, occurrences protected by law from intentional take	**Percent Invasive Species Cover**	percentage of total acreage with invasive plant coverage	areas with few invasive species require less work, have greater return on investment
FQA (Floristic Quality Assessment)	presence of plant species likely to occur in conditions similar to pre-settlement	determines the ecological value of a system based on its floral assemblage	**Community Ranking**	rank assigned by the state due to natural community rarity or rate of decline	assesses the vulnerability of each natural community within the state
FQI Connectivity	the presence of a quality habitat (greater than 35 FQI) within 100 feet of another	connected habitats provide diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness	**Wetlands**	the presence of wetlands	wetlands tend to have greatest diversity, and are also critical to promote healthy water resources
Size	acreage of the habitat in question	large habitats provide more diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness, resilience	**Habitat Connectivity**	the presence of a complementary habitat within 100 feet of another	connected wetlands promote genetic diversity conservation and water quality


Park Office
Park Entrance
Biodiversity Areas
Other Parkland
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8
Miles

NEEDS

Better educate the importance of preserving important cultural features

Draw new visitors with programming/education based on history of park

OPPORTUNITIES

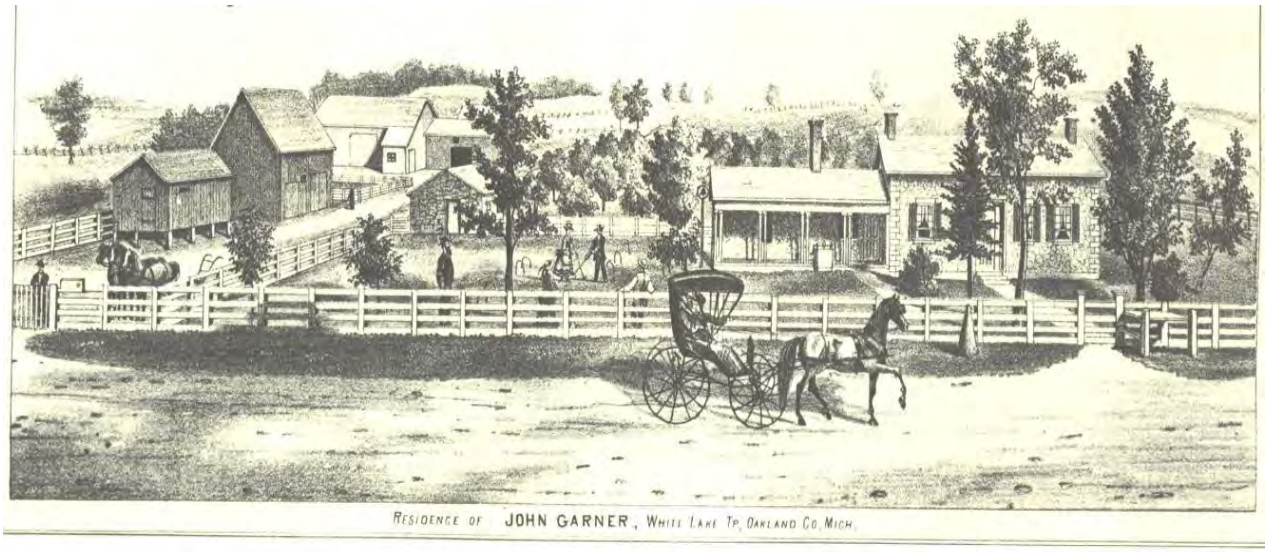
Early European settlers farmed the land around Indian Springs.

Cultural History

Foot trails across the prairies

About 12,000 years ago, Native Americans were the first to walk the land around Indian Springs Metropark, creating foot trails through what is now Oakland County. During the 1800s, European settlers arrived to find land rich with rivers, lakes, prairies, and dense white pine forests– perfect for farms, new homes and settlements. The foot trails became roads while prairies became farms. Pine forests were cut and non-native plants and animals were introduced, changing the character of the land.

In 1833, the Garner brothers from New York traveled the foot trails from Pontiac, slept outside overnight, and likely built a temporary shelter on the way to their new property. They were one of the first families to settle in this area. The railroad (originally the Detroit and Milwaukee, now owned by Canadian National) abuts the eastern boundary of the park and was a major impetus to growth for both the population and the local economy. Agriculture was the mainstay of the local economy, and the trains allowed the farmers to ship and receive produce, livestock, and supplies.



John Garner's residence was one of the first settlers to build a home where Indian Springs is located today.

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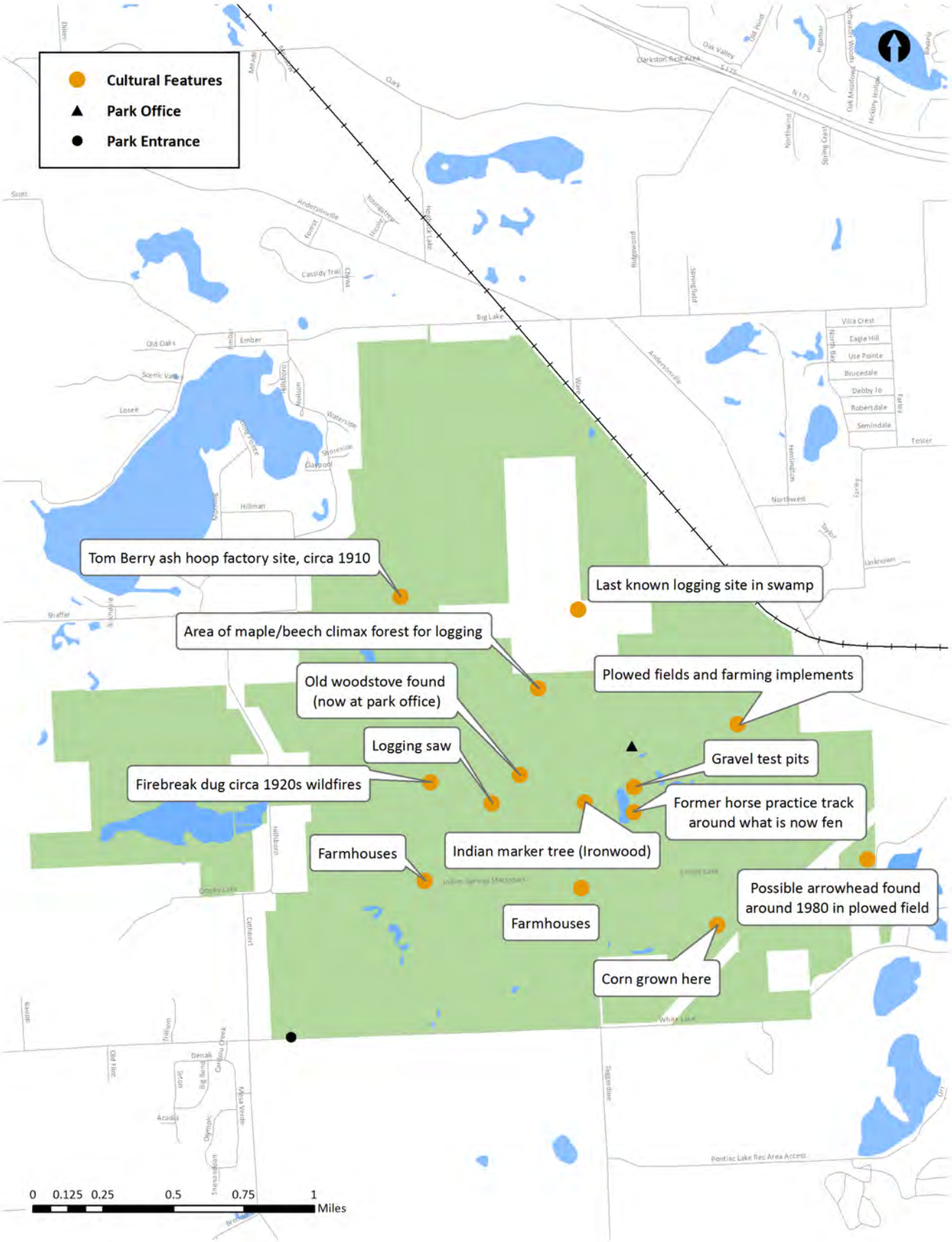
Cultural Features
Park Office
Park Entrance
Tom Berry ash hoop factory site, circa 1910
Last known logging site in swamp
Area of maple/beech climax forest for logging
Old woodstove found (now at park office)
Plowed fields and farming implements
Logging saw
Gravel test pits
Firebreak dug circa 1920s wildfires
Former horse practice track around what is now fen
Indian marker tree (Ironwood)
Farmhouses
Possible arrowhead found around 1980 in plowed field
Farmhouses
Corn grown here
0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Miles

Infrastructure

In order to serve the varied needs of park visitors, Indian Springs contains a number of buildings, surfaces, facilities, and activity areas. Many of these were constructed years or decades ago, meaning that they may need to be repaired or replaced in the near future.

The infrastructure necessary to maintain the activities available in Indian Springs includes roads, parking lots, piers, trails, pipes, utilities, picnic shelters, and much more. Since maintaining infrastructure is costly, it is important going forward to avoid overbuilding and collocate facilities to minimize paving, pipes, and other materials. Although Indian Springs Metropark is relatively isolated from other large recreation areas, a goal in the planning process is to ensure that the facilities and infrastructure in the park complement and do not duplicate those nearby.

NEEDS

Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure

Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment

OPPORTUNITIES

Indian Springs Infrastructure	
Public bldgs / avg age	3 / 24
Service bldgs / avg age	5 / 32
Comfort stations / avg age	1 / 21
Road miles	3.44
Parking lot acreage	4.73
Playgrounds	2
Percent of park mowed	2.7
Picnic shelters	5
Sand volleyball courts	2
Baseball fields	1
Fishing platforms	0
Tennis courts	0
Ice skating rinks	0
Basketball courts	0
Public canoe/kayak launches	0

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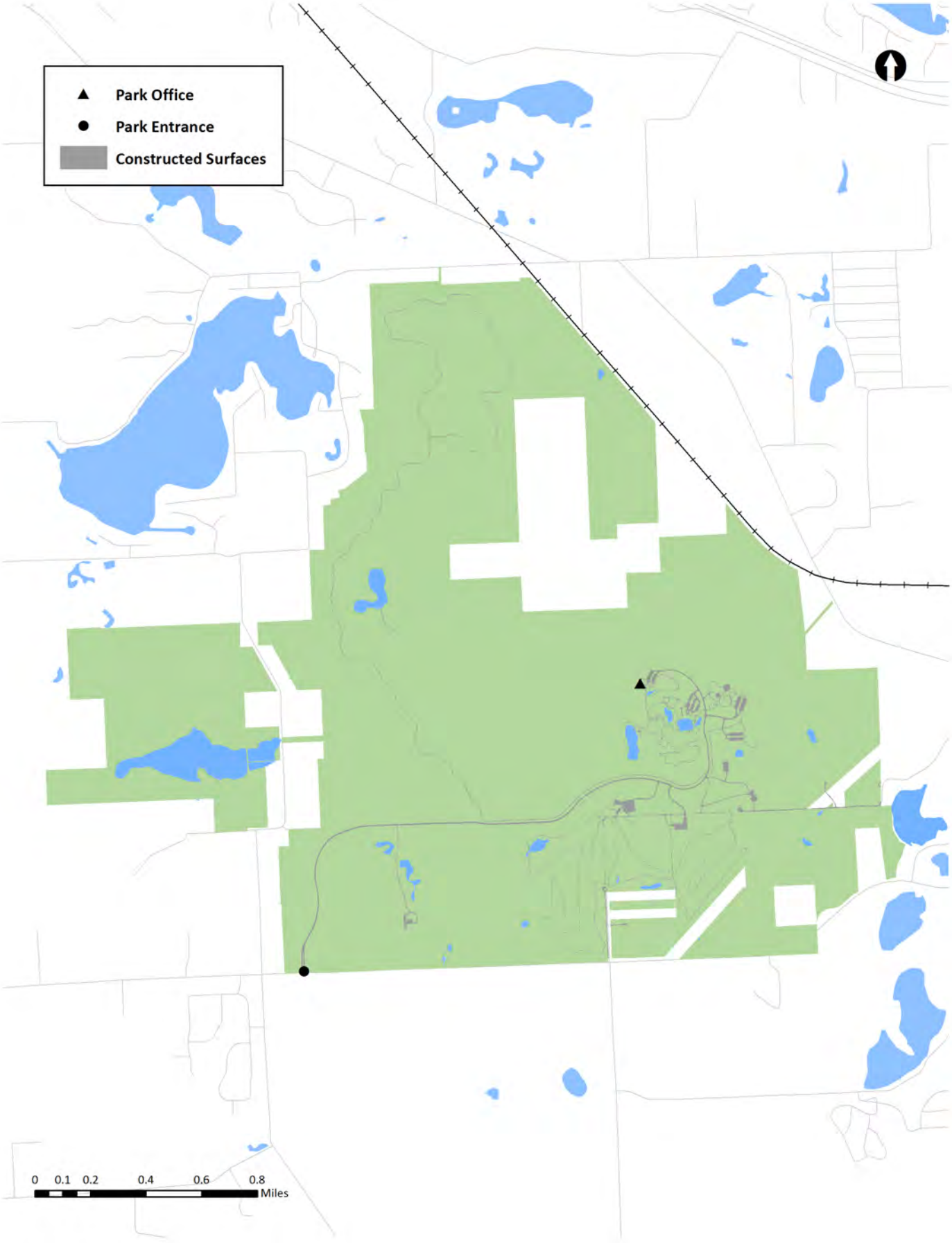
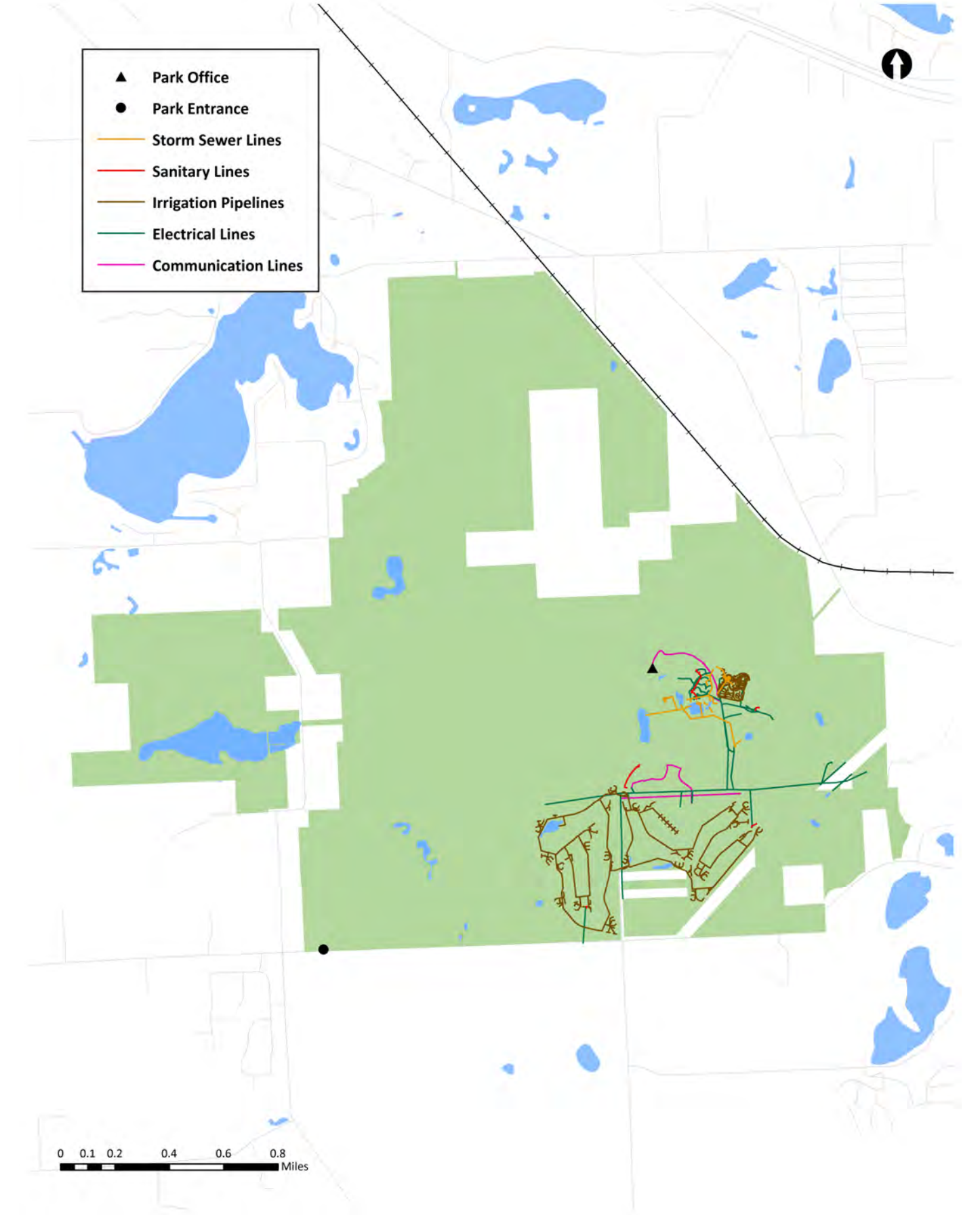
Constructed Surfaces Map




Park Office
Park Entrance
Storm Sewer Lines
Sanitary Lines
Irrigation Pipelines
Electrical Lines
Communication Lines
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8
Miles

Facilities & Centers

Indian Springs features a number of facilities that define its character and enhance the recreational experience of visitors. Some of these either require an admission fee, are available for rentals, or sell concessions, supplementing park revenue. As with all park infrastructure, it is a priority to keep the facilities well-maintained and replace them when no longer functional.

Spray 'N' Play

Indian Springs Metropark offers a variety of children's attractions for family enjoyment. The Spray 'N' Play Area includes the Adventure Maze, rock-climbing wall, playground, and splash pad.

Golf Course

This par 71 course is one of the most beautiful and challenging courses in Southeast Michigan. Combining well-manicured fairways, pristine tee boxes and undulating greens, the 13th hole is a 602 yard, par 5 that challenges even the longest hitters.

Environmental Discovery Center

The Environmental Discovery Center (EDC) offers a gateway into the complexity and beauty of unique natural resources, including prairies, wetlands, and woodlands. The EDC facility is a well-used resource for education and interpretation for the public to study, enjoy and appreciate.

The award-winning EDC building contains classrooms, a biology lab, and a 200-person event room used for a variety of public programs including school and scout groups. Catering is also available for weddings and other special events. The EDC features 60 acres of restored native prairie ecosystems and a pond that can be viewed underwater from a viewing room below-the-water.

Park Office

The Park Office which includes public restrooms is used as a trailhead to the nature trails which include the native plant gardens and sundial. Furthermore, environmental displays and programming are offered at the facility for educational opportunities.

Indian Springs Today

The Metroparks are moving towards a more data-driven approach to developing facilities. In order to best serve the residents of southeast Michigan and use resources wisely, the Planning Department has identified the location of similar facilities and programs. The goal for future development is to avoid duplication and instead offer unique facilities that fill recreation voids in the geographic area where the park is located.

The map below shows the location of aquatic facilities, golf and disc golf, neighborhood sports facilities, and interpretive programs that compete with those offered at Indian Springs. Relatively few of these facilities and programs available in the five-mile radius can be built upon the park's unique and significant features. This may present opportunities for Indian Springs to meet the recreational needs of the area in new ways distinct from other recreational opportunities moving forward.

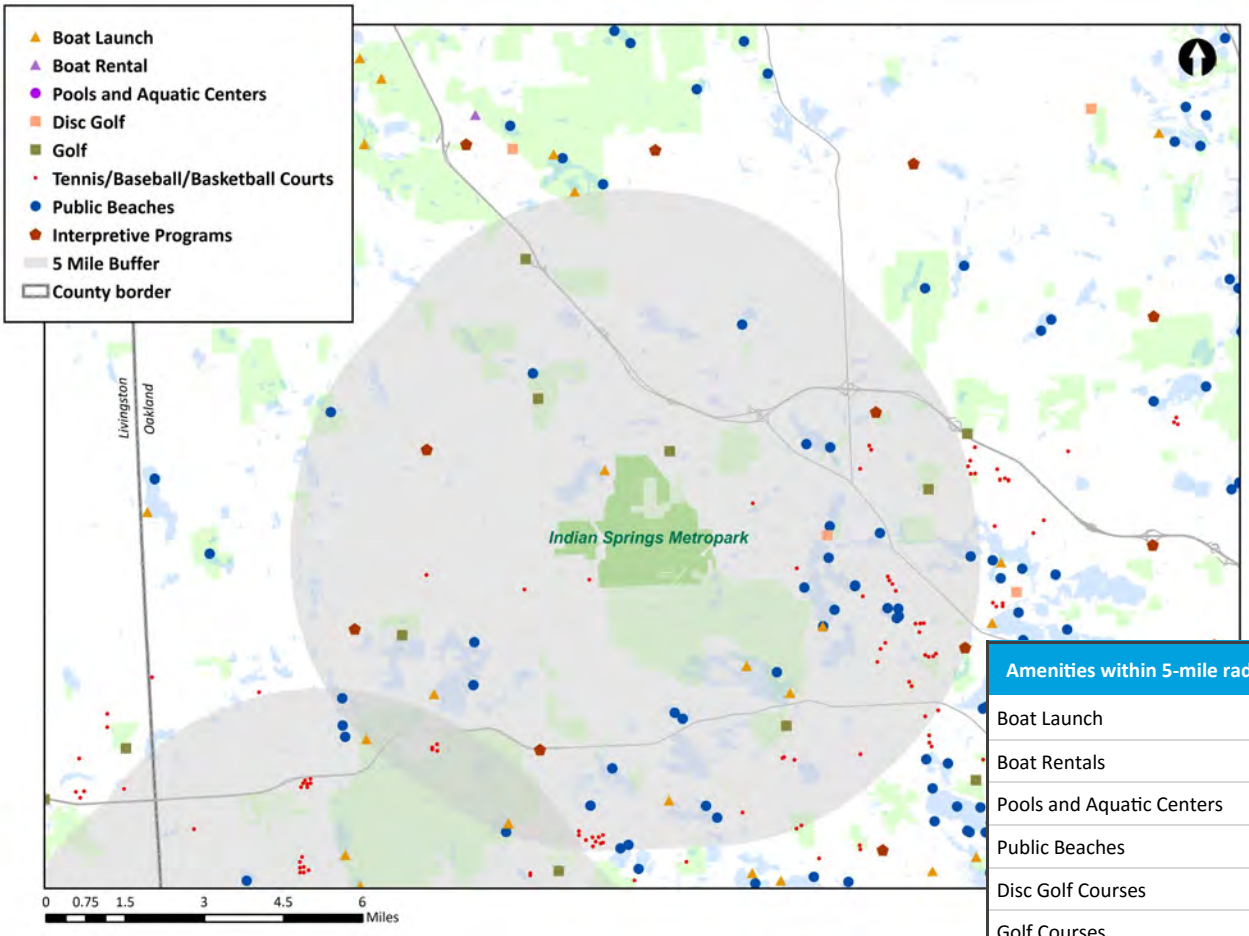
NEEDS

Identify areas of facility duplication for repurposing and consolidation

Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region

OPPORTUNITIES

NEARBY FACILIITES



Amenities within 5-mile radius of park	
Boat Launch	8
Boat Rentals	0
Pools and Aquatic Centers	0
Public Beaches	31
Disc Golf Courses	1
Golf Courses	7
Campgrounds	2
Tennis / Baseball / Basketball Courts	48
Interpretive Programs	5

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Indian Springs Today

Land

NEEDS

Work with county and local communities to address any park boundary issues

Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations

OPPORTUNITIES

Grants

Over its history Indian Springs has received two grants from the DNR for land acquisition, trail development, and more. The land specified as the project area of those grants was encumbered in perpetuity—meaning it may never be converted into a private or non-recreational use. Approximately 34% of Indian Springs is encumbered, as shown on the following page.

The generous grants from the DNR and other sources have allowed Indian Springs Metropark to develop the high-quality recreation it offers to the public today.

Encroachments

The Planning Department has worked with Indian Springs park staff to identify external encroachments on park boundaries. These include private development on park property, dumping waste, and breaking through fence lines. Together with a new combined map of county parcels in relation to historic HCMA-created parcels, this will help staff resolve existing property issues.

Since Indian Springs abuts several residential areas, it is important to work with neighbors to discourage illegal paths into the park and identify areas where a formal pedestrian entry point may be necessary to serve a neighborhood.

Informal Access Points

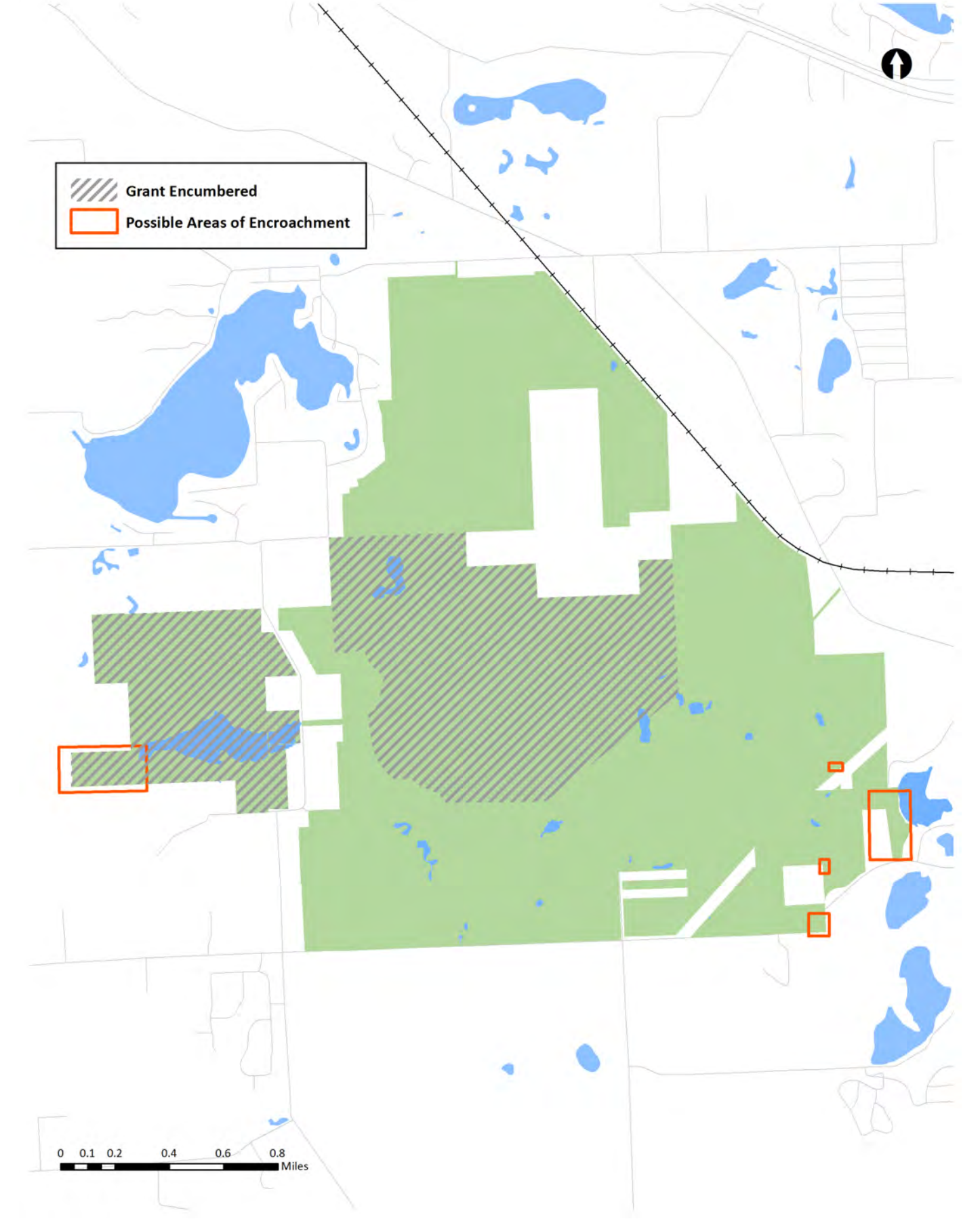
Certain spots on the park border are open to pedestrian access but not formally designated as an entrance. These must be monitored and considered in the planning process. Individuals may park on adjacent streets and enter the park on foot, affecting the tolling revenue of the park and potentially causing negative traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Easements

Indian Springs contains various utility easements, meaning that utility providers are allowed to use certain sections of land to run power lines or other equipment, in order to provide service to the surrounding area. In the future, the Metroparks will collaborate with surrounding municipalities and agencies to link into existing utilities rather than building park-specific utilities—thus furthering the vision of a lean, efficient park system.

Adjacent Property Uses

Surrounding the park is predominantly single family residential. The eastern boundary includes areas of agricultural and vacant land while south of the park is mostly bordered by recreational use, Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area.


Grant Encumbered
Possible Areas of Encroachment
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8
Miles

Wayfinding

Vehicular Wayfinding

Standardization

Currently Metroparks include signage installed at various times with various standards and designs. This does not reinforce the parks working together as a system and can be confusing for visitors. As older signs reach the end of their lives, they will be replaced with new, standardized signs.

Simplicity

In many parks, including Indian Springs, an abundance of signage is not necessarily useful for directing visitors. Minimizing duplication of signs and expressing sign information simply will make navigation easier for users of the park.

Symbols

Symbols are useful for expressing information in a small amount of space, and also make park facilities more accessible for visitors who have trouble reading or speaking English. A standard set of symbols has been developed to be used in wayfinding signage.

Trail Wayfinding

Standardization

Trail types present in the Metroparks include shared use, mountain bike, ski, nature and rustic, and equestrian. Despite their different functions, these trails together create a complete recreation system, so signage will be based on a uniform template.

Flexibility

In order to serve the differing needs of users on these various trail types, the signage template will allow for removable panels and be customized to fit the needs of that user group.

Legibility

For many people, the easiest way to orient oneself in a new environment is through use of a map. For greater ease of use, all new trail wayfinding signs will include a map marked with a “you are here” symbols and the location of important park features and amenities.

NEEDS

Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs

Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence

OPPORTUNITIES

Trails

As part of the master planning process, staff have categorized and defined the various types of trails in the park, inventoried the miles, and specified the uses and design of each. This formal listing allows for assessment of availability of trails for various users in comparison to user group demand. It will also lead to more standardized maintenance and rule enforcement processes.

Trail Type	Miles in park	Allowed Uses	Prohibited Uses	Surface
Shared-Use Trail (Hike-Bike Trail)	5.08	Non-motorized traffic and pets.	Horses and motorized vehicles such as golf carts, scooters and hover -boards.	10' wide, typically asphalt, some small sections may be concrete or boardwalk.
Equestrian Trail	2.81	Horses and Pedestrians; cross-country skiing is permitted in the winter on designated trails only.	Motorized vehicles, bikes.	Width and material vary, often dirt trails.
Nature Trail	7.27	Pedestrian use only; hiking and walking. Snowshoeing is permitted on all Nature Trails except those designated for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing is permitted on designated trails only.	Motorized vehicles, running, jogging, pets, bikes and horses.	Trail surfaces vary and include asphalt, aggregate, mulch and compacted earth. Portions of these trails are accessible, but most are not ADA-compliant.
Cross-Country Ski Trail	11.49	Cross-country skiing only. Many are used for other activities during the summer.	Motorized vehicles, snowshoes, hiking, bikes, horses and pets.	Snow covered.

Indian Springs includes over 26 miles of trails. Located in the headwaters of the Huron River, the trails include a diverse series of loops that meander through a variety of landscapes, from parts of swamp, across meadows and fields and through woodlands with trail facilities open year-round. Located just east of the park entrance, the equestrian trail which is also open to hikers connects under White Lake Road via a tunnel to the Pontiac Lake Equestrian Trail, which extends for 17 miles through the Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area.

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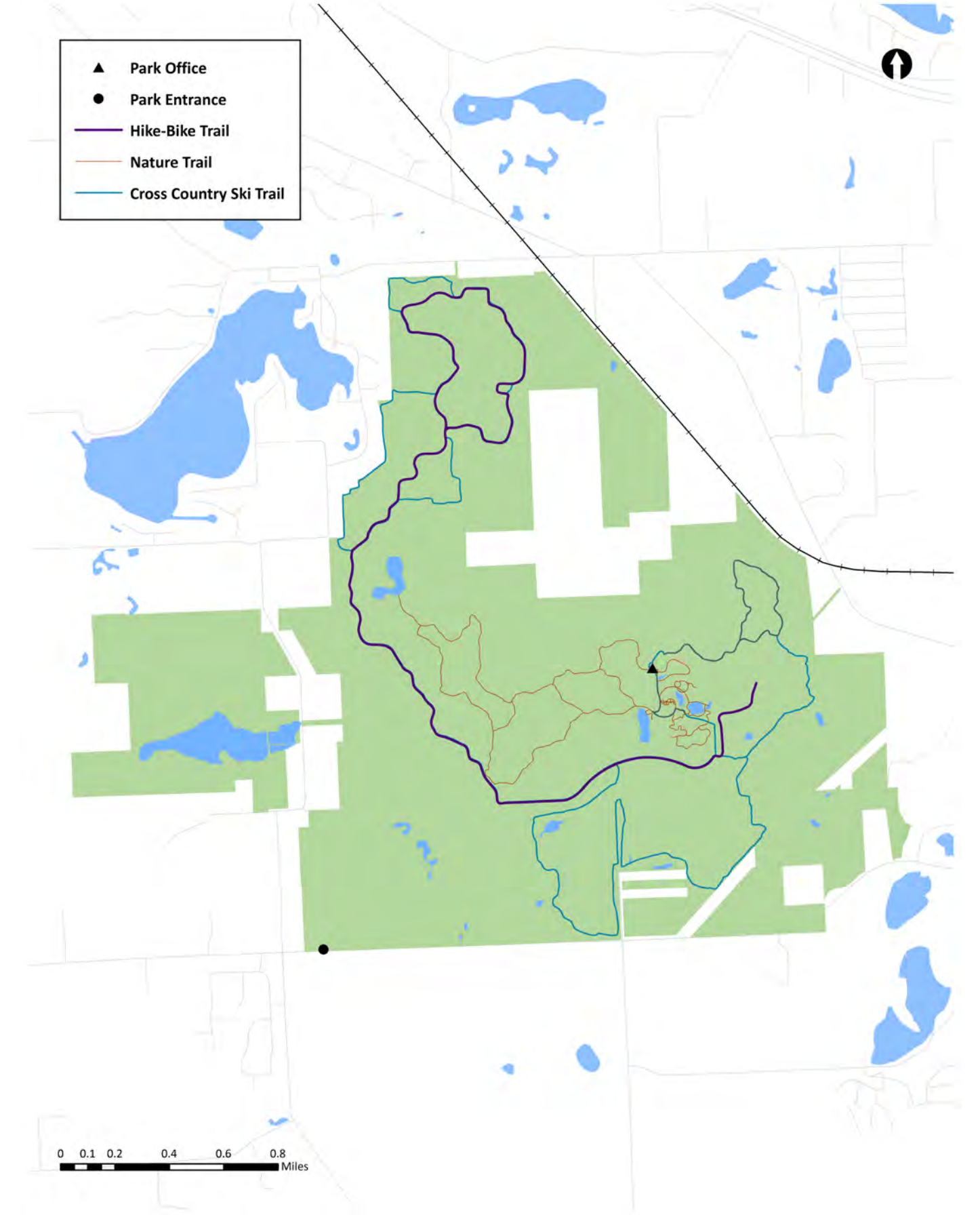
Park Office
Park Entrance
Hike-Bike Trail
Nature Trail
Cross Country Ski Trail
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8
Miles

Accessibility

NEEDS

Pursue improvements to park accessibility

Ensure that users of all abilities feel empowered to take full advantage of the park

OPPORTUNITIES

To remain compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Metroparks are responsible for ensuring that park space is accessible to all members of the public. In the development of this master plan, planning staff has taken an active role in locating the less accessible park amenities, so that all guest can enjoy the park. A survey of several areas has resulted in a list of accessibility issues present at Indian Springs Metropark. These areas are highlighted below and shown on the map on the following page.

Area	ID #	Description
Restrooms	1	Restrooms need to be updated for accessibility.
Nature Trails	2	Nature trail surface needs to be improved to meet ADA standards.
Park Office	3	Restrooms need to be updated for accessibility.
Shade Canopies(3)	4	Accessible walk needed to canopies.
Picnic Shelters(2)	5	Consider accessibility as part of overall Meadowlark redevelopment strategy.
Baseball field	6	The baseball field at Meadowlark does not have accessible walks.

By working with the ADA Checklist provided by the ADA National Network and the Institute for Human Centered Design, the Metroparks are able to prioritize accessibility improvements of park entrances, services, public restrooms, and other park amenities. The areas mentioned, in addition to others, were identified using the recommended methods for all HCMA parks.

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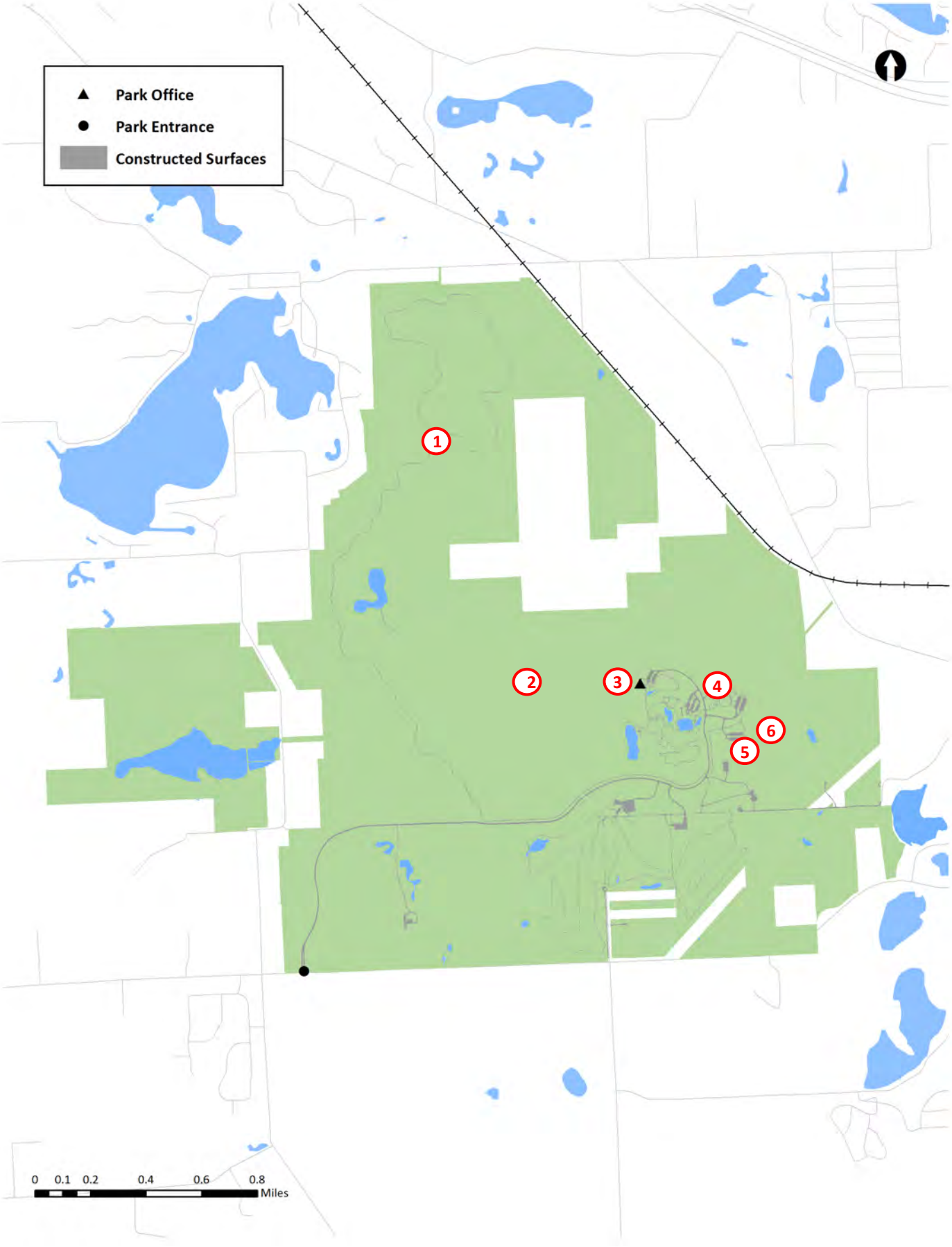

Park Office
Park Entrance
Constructed Surfaces
1
2
3
4
5
6
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8
Miles

REVENUE

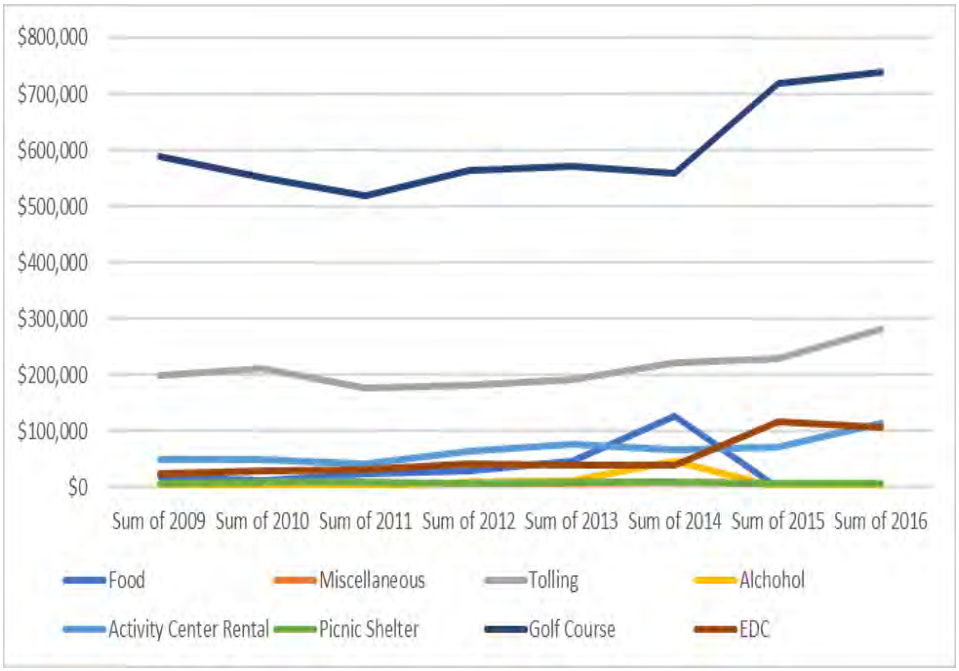
Revenue Sources

NEEDS

Diversify sources of revenue

Offer new and exciting activities/ programs to visitors to both boost tolling and gather user fees

OPPORTUNITIES



The Metroparks 2016 General Fund revenue equaled $50,531,202. Indian Springs 2016 operations revenue was approximately $1,248,302, comprising 2.5% of all Metroparks revenue.

Indian Springs budgeted 2017 operations revenues are $1,191,978, while estimated 2017 operations expenses are $2,060,649. Property tax and other revenue is estimated to subsidize 42% ($868,671) of the Indian Springs operating budget.

As the chart illustrates, the vast majority of revenue (approximately 59%) comes from the golf course.

2016 Operations Revenue

Revenue Source	2016 Total	% of Revenue
Golf Course	737,696	59
Tolling	282,308	23
Activity Center Rental	113,716	9
EDC	105,767	8.5
Picnic Shelter	7,050	1
Miscellaneous	1,765	0.1

TOTAL: 1,248,302

Visitors

Indian Springs Metropark is a regional park and can draw from the approximately 3,600,538 Michigan residents that live within a 30 mile radius (approximately a 45-minute drive) of the park. Certain events and activities may draw visitors from greater distances.

Vehicle entries to Indian Springs Metropark have hovered between 93,000 and 105,000 since 2009, fluctuating through the years but experiencing a slight decline overall. Weather often plays a role in attendance to the park; activity areas greatly affected by weather are the trails, nature center and golf course. This may explain the dips in attendance visible in 2011 and 2015.

Consolidation of statistical information is needed to better assess vehicle entries, park users, event attendance, event participants and activity participation within the park. This information will help with marketing of events, activities and future analysis of the park.

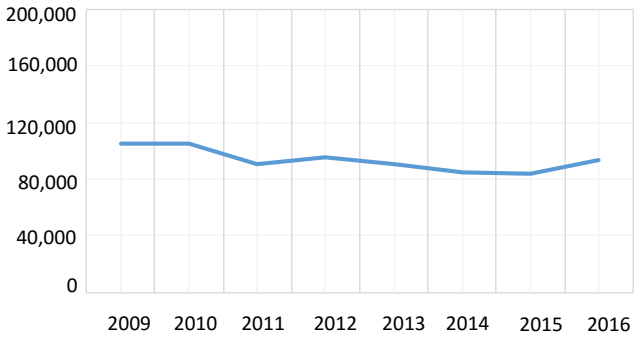
NEEDS

Target market strategy

Take advantage of proximity to urban population to grow revenue and system awareness

OPPORTUNITIES

Vehicle Entries Year 2009-2016



Indian Springs Metropark 30-Mile radius

Programs & Events

Great Pumpkin Hunt

Easter Egg Scramble

Learning Kits

NEEDS

Increase revenue and visitation

Build on enthusiasm of Indian Springs visitors with exciting, engaging programs and events

OPPORTUNITIES

Indian Springs hosts dozens of events each year, organized either by park staff or outside groups. Many of these are interpretive programs for both children and adults to explore the natural and cultural assets of the park. Some promote artistic enrichment, and others encourage physical activity or advocate for a cause. The Environmental Discovery Center (EDC) hosts a full schedule of programs throughout the year achieved with countless hours donated by volunteers. Currently interpretive programs take place inside the EDC facility and around the native prairies and on the nature trails. A series of popular events that offer a unique experience include the Art in the Park series and the Summer Camps.

Other Recent events include:

- Hoots and Haunts Halloween
- Sci-Fi Lab Day
- Pond Animals
- Fireflies of July
- Stormy Science
- Take a Walk Wednesdays
- Geocache Treasure Hunt
- Prairie Adventure Hike
- Snake Seekers
- Invasive Shrub Removal
- EDC Homeschool Series
- Fabulous Fungi
- Great Pumpkin Hunt
- Easter Egg Scramble
- Family Nature Club
- Snacks with Santa
- Winter Day Camps

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COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

Population

NEEDS

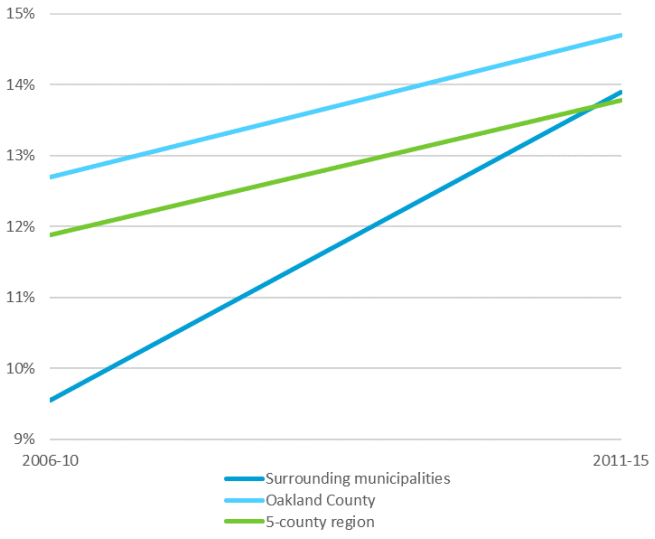
Address changing needs of new population demographics

Draw new users with a connected, accessible, welcoming and safe park environment

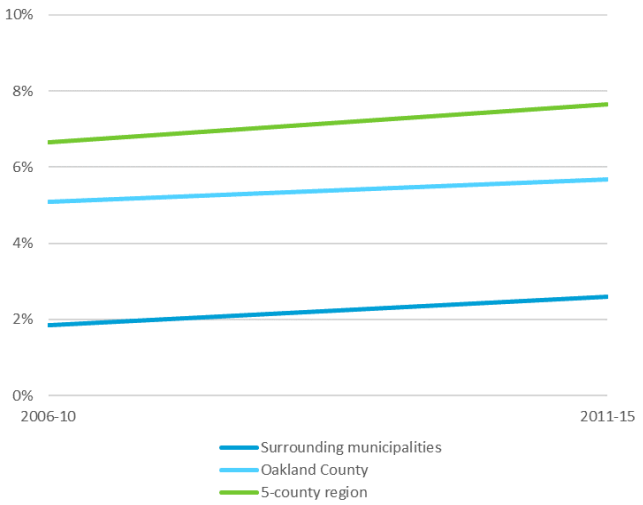
OPPORTUNITIES

The population of the communities surrounding Indian Springs is aging rapidly and changing in mobility. The percentage of households without access to an automobile is gradually rising in the region, Oakland County, and the municipalities directly surrounding Indian Springs. The Metroparks were created at the time of the auto boom, when it was assumed that every family would have a car to take out to the countryside on the weekends. Since habits and lifestyles are changing, the Metroparks must look into innovative ways to provide access to the parks for all.

The percentage of individuals over 65 years of age is rising quickly in the region, in Oakland County, and most dramatically in communities surrounding the park. Older adults have distinct needs, often requiring accommodations for mobility and accessibility of park features such as trails and buildings. This is important to keep in mind when planning the future of a park serving an older population.



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF POPULATION OVER 65 YEARS, FROM 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



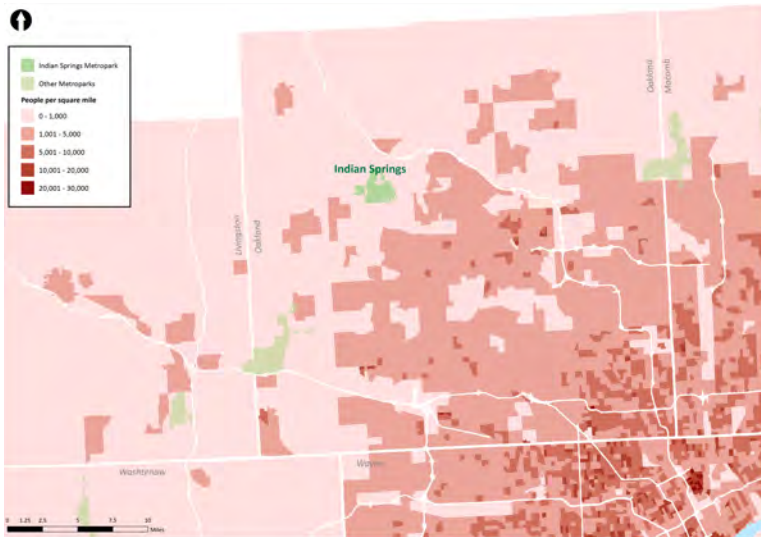
CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CARS AVAILABLE, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

Community Influences

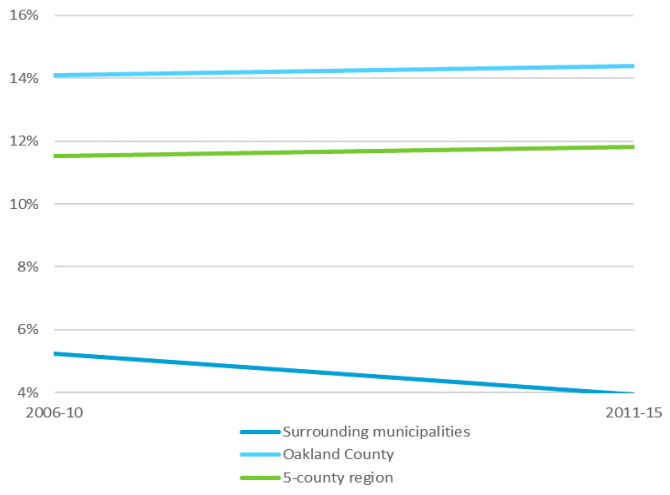
As shown below, Indian Springs is located in a lower residential density area than many other Metroparks, with the majority of land use characterized as single family residential. The areas directly bordering the park have an average population between 0 and 1,000 people per square mile. Residential development in the area is limited by factors including the recreational and conservation lands which also include sensitive natural features surrounding Indian Springs.

While on average the 5-county region is falling in population density, the population density in both Oakland County and the surrounding municipalities has risen slightly , creating increased demand for recreation in the area. The estimated population of both White Lake and Springfield Townships have increased 3.5% and 3%, respectively, from 2006-2010 to 2011-2015.

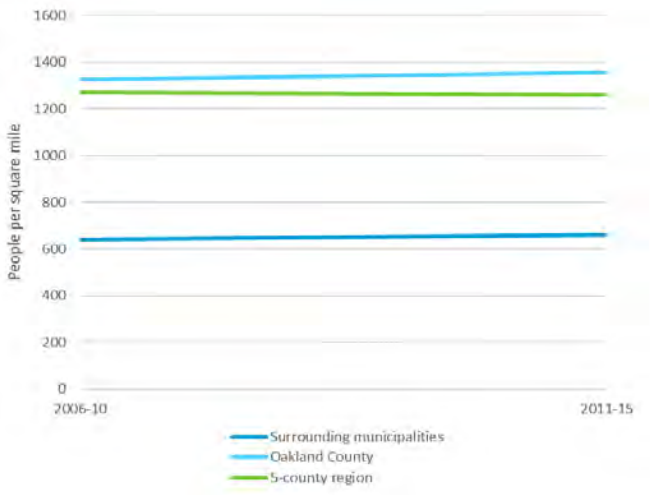
Although most households in the area still speak English as their first language, Oakland County and the region at large are seeing a slight increase in households speaking languages other than English at home. Because of this growing linguistic diversity the Metroparks are working towards more universal signage design, with a focus on easily understandable symbols. Both White Lake and Springfield Townships do not follow this trend, having decreased numbers of speakers of other languages.



POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010-14



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPEAKING LANGAGE BESIDES ENGLISH AT HOME, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

Community Influences

NEEDS

Improve connectivity within the park and with the community

Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities

OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding the goals and plans of municipalities bordering and/or containing Indian Springs is essential for a collaborative, comprehensive planning process. Planning staff researched the published master plans and recreation plans of surrounding municipalities, counties, and regional agencies. These provided a basic idea of the direction planned for each, especially regarding land use, development, and recreation.

Springfield Township

- Planned low density residential land use
- Maintain the traditional small cottage lot lakefront medium density for the nearby area surrounding Big Lake, extending to Andersonville Road, and in the area abutting the Huron Swamp.

White Lake Township

- Develop a centrally-located community recreation center, perhaps in conjunction with a town center
- Develop a system of pathways in the Township that can connect residential neighborhoods to each other and with shopping areas.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation

- Land acquisition strategies that focus on opportunities to protect and restore natural areas, protect water quality, and increase or establish trail and green infrastructure continue to be a priority.

Multi-Jurisdictional "The Headwaters Project"

- The Shiawassee and Huron Headwaters Resource Preservation Project (referred to as "The Headwaters Project") completed in 2000 identified and ranked important natural resources within the park and surrounding communities. The project contracted with the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) and established opportunities and protective mechanisms for threats to the significant natural areas including:
  - Maintain closed canopy of southern mesic forest and swamp.
  - Conduct annual monitoring for exotic invasive plants.
  - Maintain old fields as grasslands to provide habitat for grassland nesting birds.
  - Private lands surrounding the Huron Swamp Complex should be encouraged to provide a native plant buffer between high use areas and the swamp.

Projects/Initiatives

MUNICIPALITY MAP

Community Influences

Relevant Planning Documents

Oakland County Trails Master Plan, 2008

Springfield Township Master Plan, 2016

"The largest wetland system within the Township is Huron Swamp, located in Indian Springs Metropark….These resources are significant for their wildlife habitat, water filtration, and ground water recharge capacities." pg. 145

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2013-2017

White Lake Township Master Plan, 2010-2011

"White Lake lives up to its slogan as a 'Four Seasons Playground,' with a variety of public and private recreation opportunities available all year-round." pg. 11

SEMCOG Green Infrastructure Vision, 2014

"Public accessibility to the green infrastructure network is paramount, including access to parks, trails, water, and ensuring public spaces are designed for all residents." pg. 1

Since the development and land use decisions of bordering communities and other governmental agencies directly impact the park, these neighbor master plans were reviewed and taken into account when creating this document. The opinions and ideas expressed by residents and leaders in these municipalities give Indian Springs a wider context and in many cases underscore the importance of the park's resources to citizens.

Indian Springs Metropark is part of a broader system of recreation and green space that includes other Metroparks as well as local, county, and state parks and greenways. Due to this, recreation and green infrastructure plans were also considered in creating the Indian Springs Master Plan. Many communities are currently advancing their non-motorized networks, seeking grant funding to create greenways and paths, and cooperating to provide linked green and recreation spaces to their constituents.

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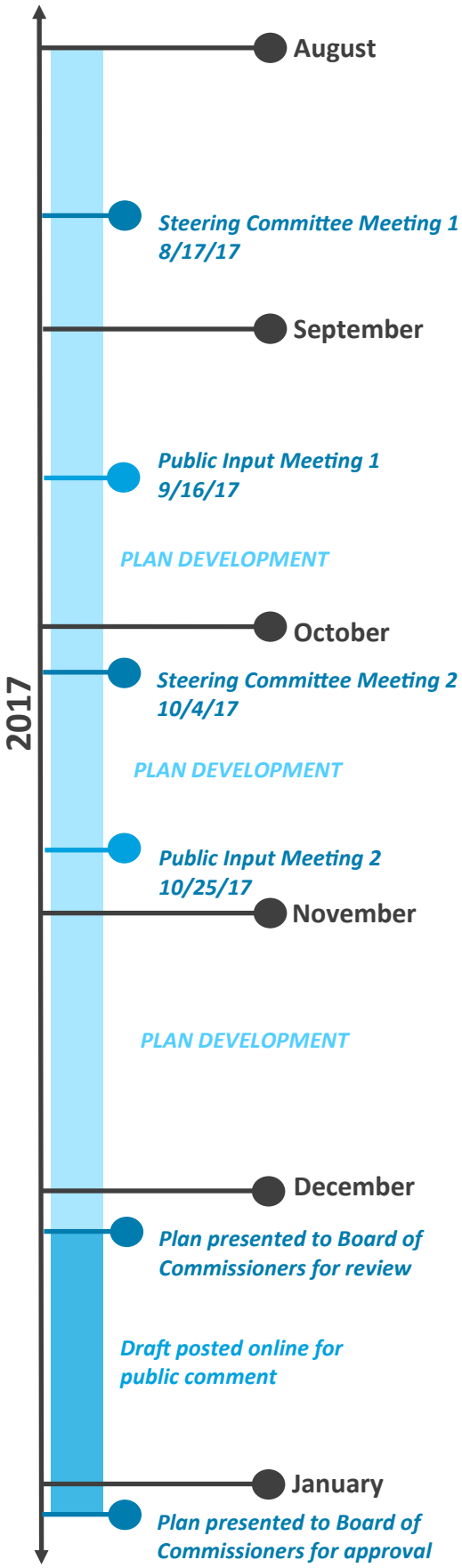
PUBLIC INPUT

Outreach Process



Since this park belongs to the people of southeast Michigan, the Planning Department aimed to include the public in multiple stages of the planning process.

The planning process began with a meeting of the steering committee, which identified organizations and individuals with significant investment in the park for targeted invitations to the public meeting. A strategy for soliciting general participation in the public meeting was also discussed.

The next step was a public meeting with community members to gather initial ideas about the direction of the park. A general park feedback survey was posted online and advertised by Metroparks social media.

These ideas were taken into account, along with staff feedback and other data, in developing initial recommendations. These were then presented to the public at a second meeting, and feedback was collected, analyzed, and incorporated into a draft Master Plan document.

This document was posted online in December 2017 for final public comment, which influenced the final Master Plan sent to the Board of Commissioners for approval in January 2018.

Public Meeting 1 - 9/16/17

- Explanation of and timeline for the planning process
- General park information and map
- Regional map on which participants placed stars to indicate their place of residence in relation to the park
- Exercise in which participants placed pom-poms representing resources in jars representing activities, expressing their opinion on where investments should be made
- Opportunity to fill out survey in person

Public Meeting 2 - 10/25/17

- Short presentation on survey results, community influences, and intended projects
- Opportunity for participants to write down feedback on intended projects

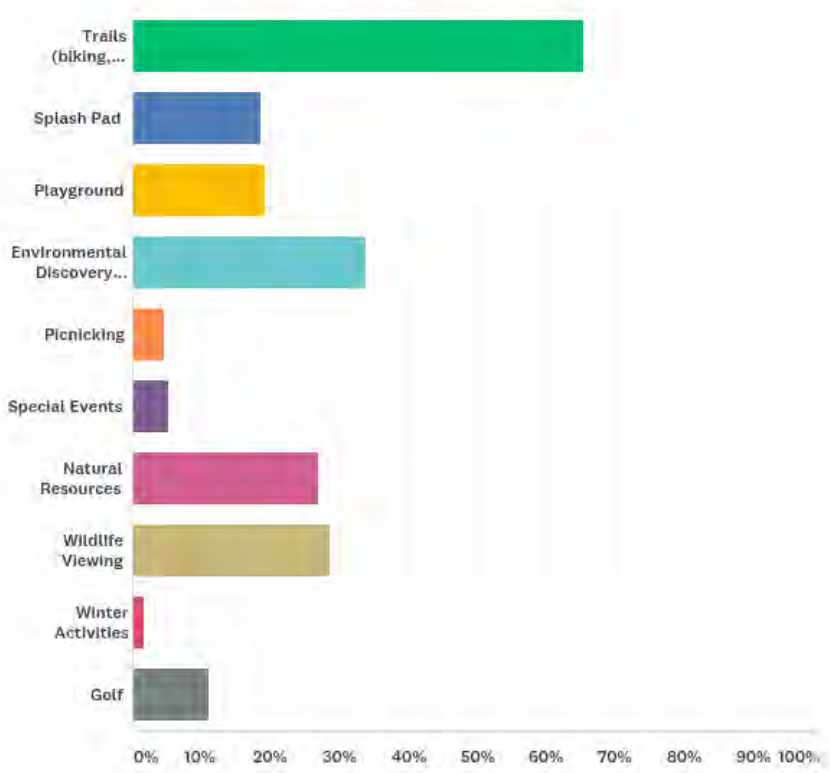
Results

Indian Springs Metropark is home to a diverse set of natural communities unique to the region. Protection of the native ecosystems providing habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species was a common theme gathered throughout all public participation efforts. However, respondents also acknowledged a willingness for park improvements that can continue to balance natural preservation at the park with enhancements to the visitor experiences.

Overall, the most frequent comments indicated a favorable response to both expansion of the hike-bike trail along with continued accessibility improvements and amenities. In the pom-pom investment activity, trails led all categories followed by the Environmental Discovery Center (EDC), wildlife viewing, and natural resources. Special events, picnicking, and winter activities received the fewest votes.

In addition, open suggestions often discussed park user access at Schmitt Lake. Comments included consideration for kayaking and wildlife viewing while improving the habitat with invasive plant management and keeping the trails rustic in this area of the park. A separate facility for park users with dogs was often mentioned in the survey and at the second public meeting. Planning staff discussed the possible consideration of including on-leash dog activities. In addition, adaptive reuse strategies for the park office were discussed with the public.

Q6: What is your favorite part of the park or activity within Indian Springs Metropark? (Choose up to 3.)



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Public Input

Planning Department staff also spent two days performing intercept surveys at both the Great Pumpkin Hunt event at the park and the Springfield Township library. Respondents who were familiar with the park offered suggestions for the maintenance of the pond viewing room along with new programming and events at the EDC, and better connectivity with trails for user accessibility and park experiences on trails.

Questionnaire Response Topics

Trails

- Extend bike path
- Extend nature trails
- Add shade trees
- Parking area near trail
- Mile markers
- Mountain bike trails
- Connection to other parks
- Cross country trail improvements
- Widen trail
- Separate biking trail
- Additional equestrian trails

Environment

- Sustainability
- Keep the park natural
- Wildlife viewing
- Invasive plant management
- Remove the LED sign

Maintenance

- Clean Park
- Less mowing
- Well maintained
- Mow around EDC
- Trails in winter
- Stricter on littering
- Geese droppings
- Fix water pump on hike-bike path
- Clean pond window

Special Events/Programs

- Add special events
- New programs at EDC
- Great staff/classroom activities
- Training on natural pond health
- Advertise events and activities
- Special events for toddlers
- Interactive nature trails for kids
- Grant programs
- Family fun activities (corn maze)
- Wildlife viewing guides

Facilities

- Leverage underground level at EDC
- Enjoy children maze
- Improve playground
- Swimming pool
- Zip line
- Soccer field
- Fix splash pad
- Park office improvements
- Dog park
- Tennis courts

Safety/Signage

- Improve enforcement of rules
- Signage at Schmitt Lake
- Separate trail for dogs
- More trails along roads
- Make trails feel safer

Access

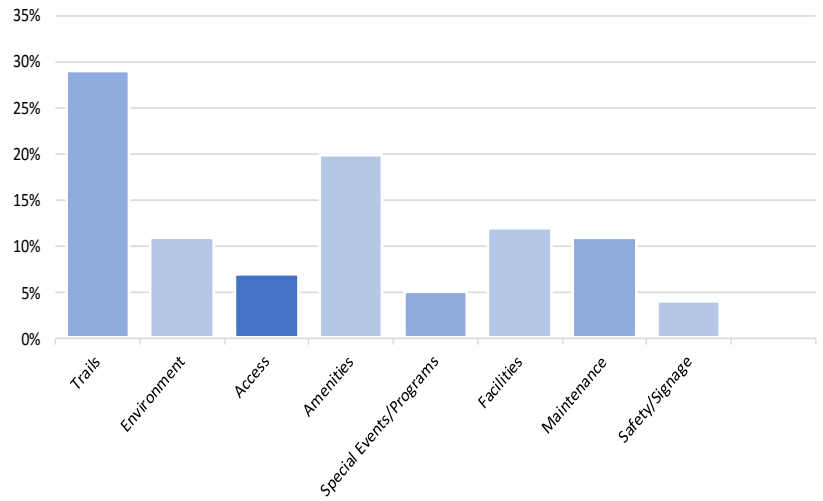
- Better access to Schmitt Lake
- Access for Equestrian trails
- Omit tolling for golfers/trails
- Accessible parking near Playground
- Access from Big Lake Road
- Remove the toll booth
- Hike-bike path at entrance
- Allow shared parking pass
- Hunting

Amenities

- Bathrooms and showers
- Trail concessions
- Enjoy the amenities
- Golf course investments
- Allow event concessions
- Equestrian
- Shade trees by spray n' play
- Warming shelter
- Picnic shelters with power amp
- More climbing equipment
- Parking at Schmitt Lake

This chart shows the distribution of questionnaire response topics, as categorized by planning staff. Some responses fell into more than one category, so they add up to more than 100%.

*Uncategorized responses lacked specific suggestions or consisted of only positive remarks.



Public Input

Participation

The Indian Springs Master Plan online and hard copy questionnaire received 221 responses and 20 individuals attended the two public meetings. As shown below, the questionnaire drew responses from the entire southeastern metropolitan Detroit five region and beyond.

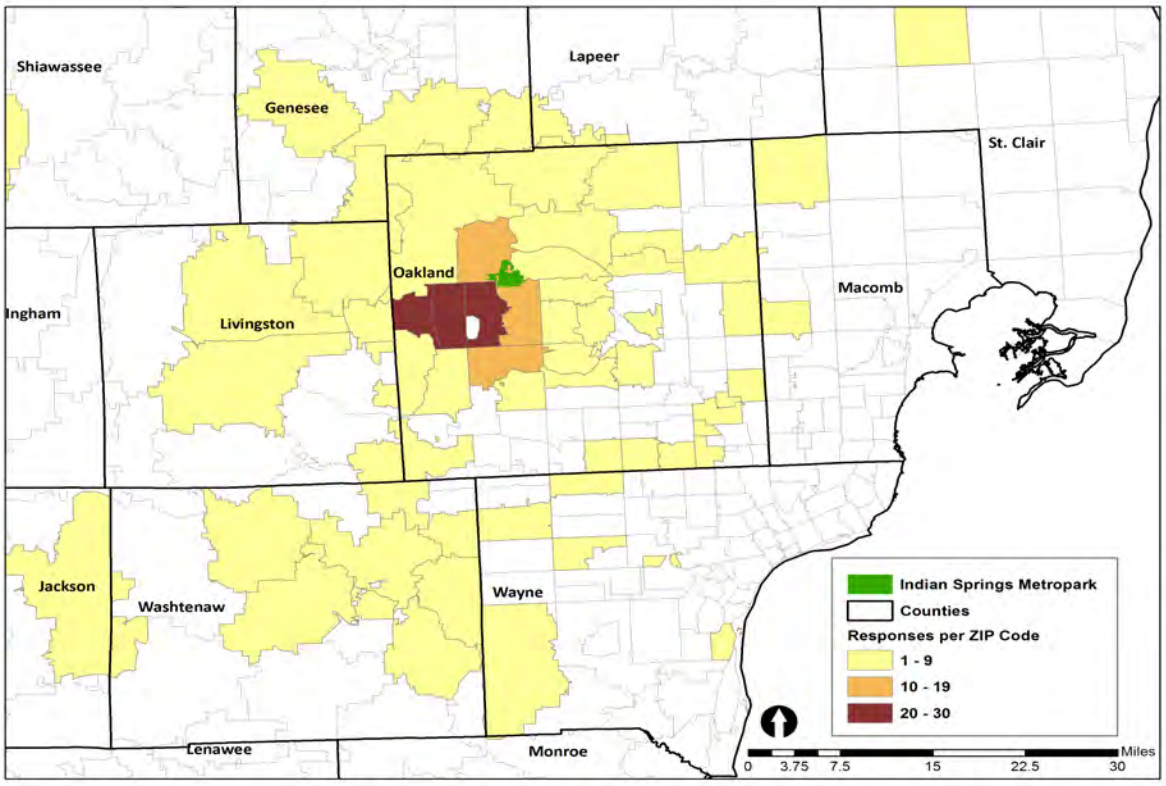
NEEDS

Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan

OPPORTUNITIES

Create vibrant park through robust, transparent public outreach

Survey Response Zip Code Map



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Action Plan

Needs & Opportunities

Based on the assessment of park conditions, demographic research and spatial analysis, public input, and staff input, the needs and opportunities listed throughout this document were developed.

Needs

- Continue to draw diverse range of visitors to the park
- Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features
- Better educate the importance of preserving important cultural features
- Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure
- Identify areas of facility duplication for repurposing and consolidation
- Work with county and local communities to address any park boundary issues
- Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs
- Pursue improvements to park accessibility
- Diversify sources of revenue
- Target market strategies
- Increase revenue and visitation
- Address changing needs of new population demographics
- Improve connectivity within the park and with the community
- Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan

Opportunities

- Build on park character to attract new visitors
- Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park
- Draw new visitors with programming/education based on history of park
- Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment
- Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region
- Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations
- Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence
- Ensure that users of all abilities feel empowered to take full advantage of the park
- Offer new and exciting activities/programs to visitors of the park to both boost tolling and gather user fees
- Take advantage of proximity to urban population to grow revenue and system awareness
- Build on enthusiasm of Indian Springs visitors with exciting, engaging programs and events
- Draw new users with a connected, accessible, welcoming and safe park environment
- Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities
- Create vibrant park through robust, transparent public outreach

With these in mind, the following list of projects, plans, and studies was developed. Major and minor projects have been identified as priorities and assigned a timeline, and the accompanying studies have been listed. These pages should serve as a blueprint for the future of the park over the next ten years.

Large Facilities

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2018-2022)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Implement Park Office building use strategy	Operations	Engineering, Planning	Contractors	TBD	x		
Implement new maintenance building development strategy	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	TBD		x	x
Implement EDC selective redevelopment strategy	Engineering	Planning, Interpretive,	Contractors	TBD		x	

Infrastructure / Small Facilities

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2018-2022)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Pavement projects (list developed annually, as needed)	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	various	x	x	x
Accessibility improvements, including interiors and walkways - parkwide	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	various	x	x	
Replace underground with above-ground fuel storage at Golf Course	Engineering	Operations, Maintenance	Contractors	$120,000.00	x		
Develop short tees at Golf Course to increase play (e.g. "Short Tee Tuesdays")	Operations	Maintenance	Contractors	TBD	x		
Hike-bike trail connectivity improvements: create loop system, develop spur to Timberland Lake	Engineering	Planning, Operations, Maintenance	Contractors	TBD		x	
Implement Meadowlark playground removal plan, on-leash dog friendly facility	Engineering	Planning, Operations, Maintenance	Contractors	TBD		x	
Implement Adventure playground selective redevelopment plan	Engineering	Planning, Operations, Maintenance	Contractors	TBD	x	x	
Implement Schmitt Lake concept plan	Engineering	Planning, NR, Operations, Maintenance		TBD	x		
Implement outdoor art initiative	Interpretive	Planning, Operations, Maintenance	Foundation	TBD	x	x	

Natural Resources

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2018-2022)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Vegetation and invasive species	NR	Planning,	Contractors	$30,000.00	x	x	x
Sustainability initiatives	NR	Planning, Engineering,	Contractors	$3,500.00	x	x	x
Hazardous waste removal (annual)	NR			$1,000.00	x	x	x
Early detection rapid response. Invasive species surveys and control in high	NR	Interpretive	MDNR	$10,000.00	x	x	x
Deer cull to maintain deer at roughly 15/	NR	Police,	MDNR	Staff time	x	x	x
Geese and Swan Management	NR	Operations,	MDNR, USDA	$5,000.00	x	x	x
Conduct prescribed fire in fire adapted	NR		Contractors	$4,000.00	x	x	x
Oak wilt control and prevention	NR	Operations,	MDNR	$4,500.00	x	x	x
Wetland complex restoration	NR		MDNR, NGOs	$40,000.00	x	x	x
Low-Impact Schmitt Lake Access Feasibility Study	NR	Planning	MDNR	TBD	x		
Rustic trail development	NR	Planning		$3,000.00	x		

Signage

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2018-2022)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Trail wayfinding signage improvements	Planning	Maintenance, Interpretive,		$5,000.00	x		
Interpretive signage improvements - nature trails and EMR managed lands	Interpretive	Planning, Maintenance,		$5,000.00	x		

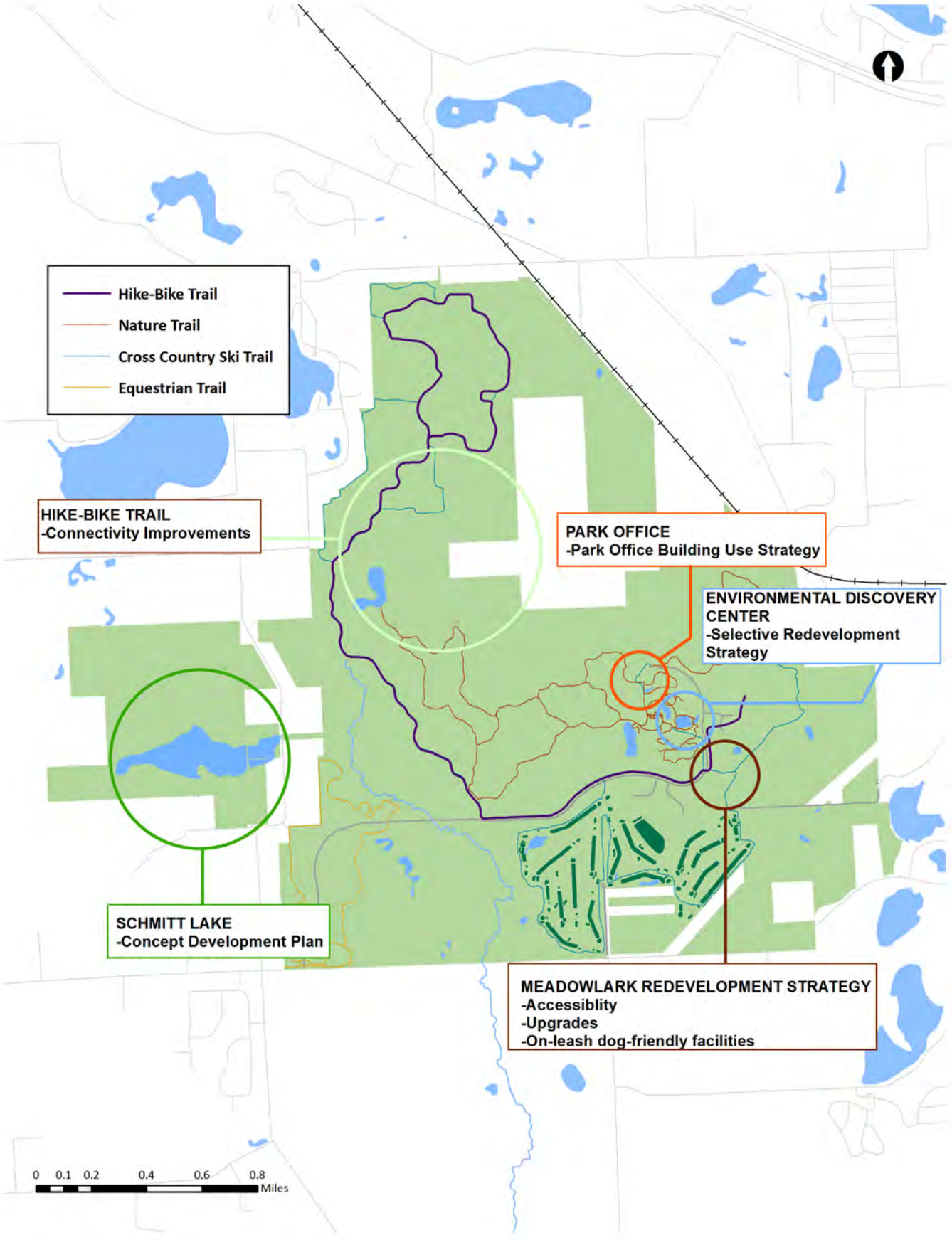
Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives

After identifying the need for changes or improvements based on user feedback and staff research, in-depth evaluation and planning must be carried out to gain a detailed understanding of problems and opportunities and determine the best strategies based on existing conditions and resources. Sometimes a process to formally monitor facility usage and gauge popularity is necessary. These studies often result in a scope of work, a work plan, and in some cases a site plan that give staff a roadmap for planned changes. Recommended studies are listed below:

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2018-2022)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Update trail maps to show opportunities for walking/hiking/trail running/pets	Graphics	Planning		staff time	x		
Establish comprehensive Oak Wilt monitoring and treatment protocol	NR	Operations	MDNR	$10,000.00	x		
Establish Invasive Species Control Tracking Website	NR	IT	MNFI, MISIN	staff time	x		
Comprehensive wildlife surveys and mapping (birds, insects, freshwater mussels)	NR	Interpretive	NGOs, Consultants, MNFI	$35,000.00	x		x
New maintenance building strategy: consolidation of maintenance activities to one site	Planning	Engineering, Operations, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Park office building strategy: identify opportunities for maximizing use. Determine renovations necessary to incorporate existing and any new uses.	Operations	Planning, Engineering, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Meadowlark picnic area site plan: remove playground equipment, improve access and site amenities	Planning	Engineering, Operations, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Spray 'N' Play area selective redevelopment plan: remove maze, install large play structure, develop restroom building to serve playground and Spray 'n' Play, improve accessibility	Planning	Engineering, Operations, Maintenance		staff time	x		

Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives (cont'd)

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2018-2022)	Mid-Term (2023-2027)	Long-Term (10+ years)
EDC selective redevelopment plan: improve pond dome and indoor viewing area, enhance exhibits, enhance event room lighting and storage, improve surrounding landscaping	Planning	Engineering, Operations, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Outdoor art initiative: develop environmentally-themed art installation initiative to enhance park character	Interpretive	Planning, Operations, Maintenance	Consultant, Foundation	TBD	x		
Skate skiing feasibility study: investigate the possibility of grooming cross country ski trails for skate skiing	Planning	Operations, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Schmitt Lake concept plan: formalize access and connectivity, identified preferred uses	Planning	Operations, NR, Engineering, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake population assessment and habitat improvements	NR	Int.	Consultants	$55,000.00	x		
Fisheries feasibility assessment throughout park	NR	Operations, Planning	MDNR	TBD	x		
Grassland Management Plan (biennial review)	NR	Operations, Interpretive		TBD	x	x	x
Deer program evaluation (vegetation study)	NR	Interpretive	Contractors	$30,000.00	x		x
Partnerships for recreation and educational programming	Operations	Interpretive	community partners	Staff time, TBD	x	x	x


Hike-Bike Trail
Nature Trail
Cross Country Ski Trail
Equestrian Trail
HIKE-BIKE TRAIL
-Connectivity Improvements
PARK OFFICE
-Park Office Building Use Strategy
ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER
-Selective Redevelopment Strategy
SCHMITT LAKE
-Concept Development Plan
MEADOWLARK REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
-Accessiblity
-Upgrades
-On-leash dog-friendly facilities
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8
Miles

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Key Projects

Hike-Bike Trail Connectivity Improvements 2018-2022

The hike-bike trail is five miles of paved trail that extends north of Timberland Lake to total an eight mile round trip. By extending the trail to Timberland Lake and also eastward into the park, a loop system will be created. Improvements for accessibility will be made and the development of restroom facilities will be evaluated. Trail heads and access to hike-bike trail closer to park entrance will also be evaluated and improved.

Needs:

- Connectivity to significant resources
- Accessibility
- Expansion throughout park

Solutions:

- Trail extension to Timberland Lake
- Provide trail users with bathrooms and meet accessibility standards
- Carry out trail extensions for easier access and trail usage

Park Office Building Use Strategy 2018-2022

The park office will be studied for potential adaptive reuse strategies with consideration for accessibility. The building was formerly used as the park nature center prior to the EDC being built. The building currently holds both the park office and meeting rooms for staff while the surrounding area outside the building includes a demonstration native planting garden and nature trails.

Needs:

- Underutilized
- Accessibility
- Modernization

Solutions:

- Consider new attractions and uses
- Improve restroom access and public gathering place
- Updates to facility

EDC Selective Redevelopment Strategy 2023-2027

The EDC features a number of classrooms, including an underwater pond viewing room and caters to special events including wedding receptions. The event room is a stunning venue for parties, banquets, and formal meeting space. The 200-capacity room overlooks the pond and open meadows. The facility is highlighted by 60 acres of restored native prairie ecosystems as part of the overall park.

Needs:

- Storage capacity
- Maintenance
- Special events

Solutions:

- Accessory Structures
- Invasive species removal and pond dome cleaning
- Marketing

Schmitt Lake Concept Plan 2018-2022

In 2009, the property which includes Schmitt Lake was purchased with a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. A plan to enable greater access to the lake and rustic trails will be needed over the next few years. A concept plan will be developed balancing the need for access with the restoration of natural features.

Needs:

- Connect park with new property
- Removal of invasive species
- Water access

Solutions:

- Former trail connector
- Parking lot/trail head
- Vegetation management

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Action Plan

South Meadowlark Playground Removal and Spray 'N' Play Selective Redevelopment Plan

2023-2027

The South Meadowlark Playground is a 25 year old wooden structure slated for demolition in 2021. The relocation of this play area to the adjacent Spray 'N' Play area at North Meadowlark will be explored. The removal of the fence maze is being considered to make room for a large 5-12 play structure adjacent to the existing 2-5 play area. Other strategies to activate this area include the possible addition of a new restroom facility, improved sidewalk connections to existing shelters and restrooms, construction of a trail connector to the Farmland Nature Trail, and construction of a trailhead structure for the hike-bike trail, nature trails, and cross country ski trail within the park. A swing and slide at South Meadowlark may replace the wooden play structure that will be removed. Staff will also be considering potential on-leash dog friendly facilities.

Needs:

- Enhanced playground and splash pad experience
- Improved restroom and picnic shelter access
- ADA compliant facilities
- Improved trail access
- Improved signage and wayfinding
- Desire to have dog friendly park facilities

Solutions:

- South Meadowlark playground removal/relocation
- Accessible pathway construction to restrooms and shelters
- Installation of new trailhead structure and wayfinding signs
- Addition of on-leash dog friendly facilities

Natural Resources Management

2018-2022

Limited development and recreation is allowed in the high quality protected natural resource areas of the park. Continued as top priorities in the park, efforts including sustainability initiatives, vegetation and invasive species management, and habitat restoration will be performed by the Natural Resources staff.

Needs:

- Continue maintaining and restoring high quality natural resource conditions
- Natural systems take precedence over visitor accommodation
- Protect important habitat

Solutions:

- Continue vegetation and invasive species management
- Sustainability initiatives
- Wetland complex restoration

Other Projects

- **Underground Storage Tank Replacement with Aboveground Storage Tank at Golf Course**

  The continued efforts for closure of underground fuel storage tanks and replacement with aboveground storage tanks in line with regulatory compliance.
- **Outdoor Art Initiative**

  The park will pursue developing an environmentally-themed art installation initiative. Consideration for place making with art will be evaluated throughout the entire park. Opportunities may exist with the Detroit Insitute of Art's Inside/ Out program.
- **Population and Habitat Assessment of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake**

  The Natural Resources Department's near-term project focus will include the population and habitat assessment for the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, a federally designated threatened species.
- **Fisheries feasibility assessment throughout park**

  The park will evaluate fisheries in the park including habitat, fish barriers, and maintenance of the ecological integrity of land based activities.
- **Wetland Complex Restoration**

  Work with non government organizations and Michigan Department of Natural Resources on restoration efforts of wooded and prairie wetlands within the park.
- **Vegetation and invasive species management**

  The park will continue to manage vegetation (both woody and non-woody) following park guidelines to assist in the maintenance or increase of native vegetation diversity while controlling invasive species.
- **Interpretive signage improvements– nature trails and EMR managed lands**
- **Trail wayfinding signage improvements**
- **Comprehensive wildlife surveys and mapping (birds, insects, freshwater mussels)**
- **New maintenance building strategy: consolidation of maintenance activities to one site**

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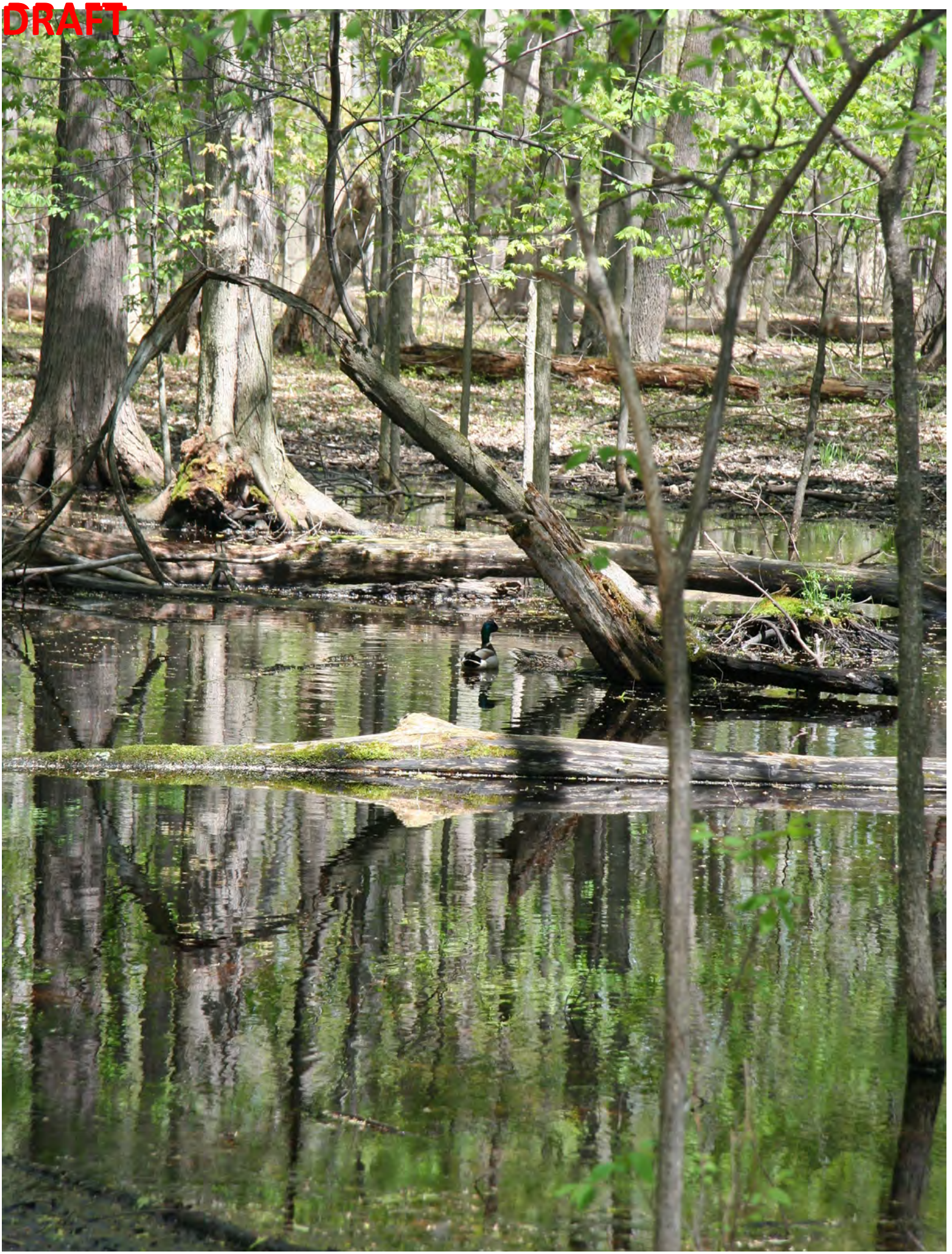

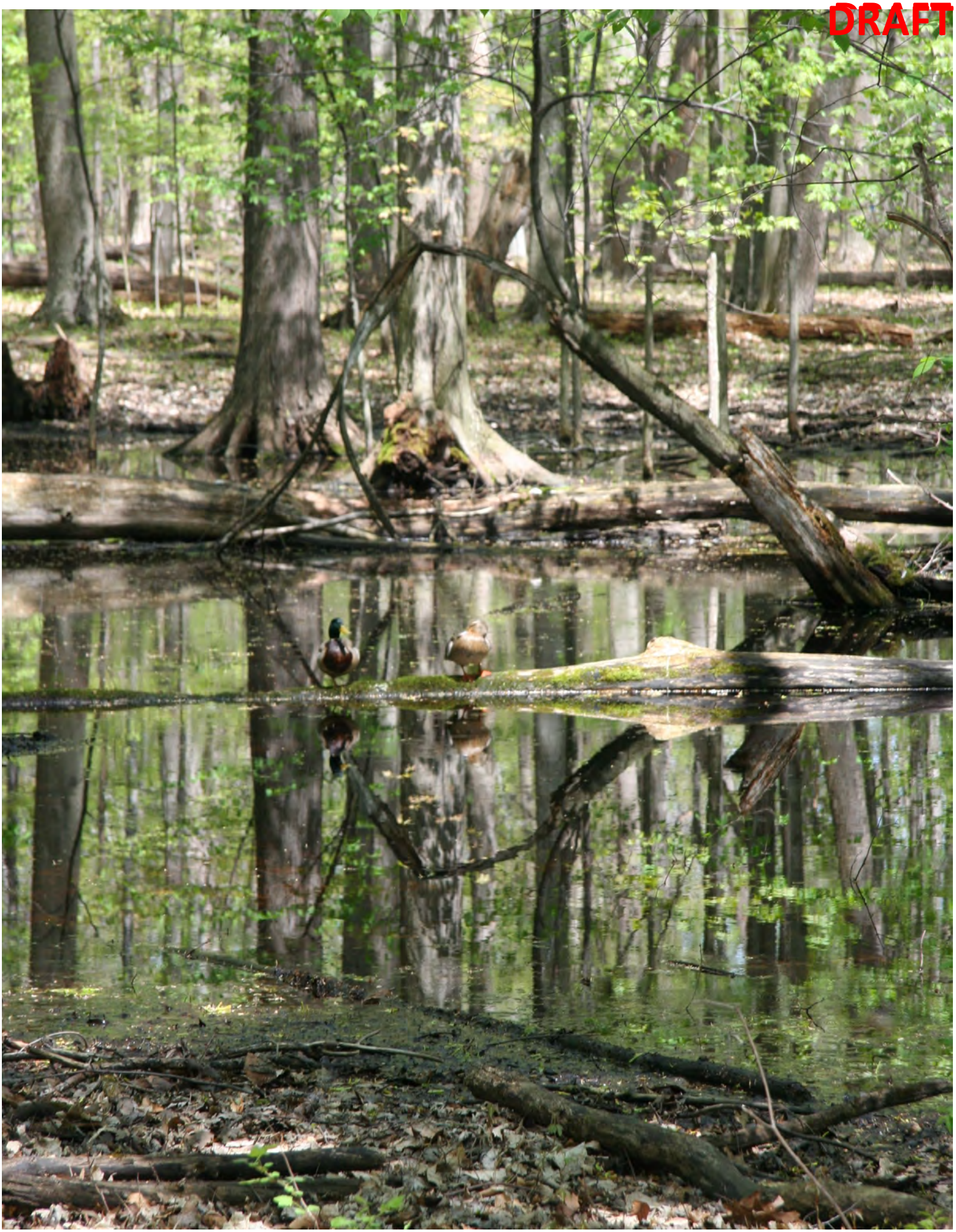

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