



1.0 Plan Process Overview

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

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

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

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

This Plan represents Phase I. In this phase of planning, what Rockport will look like in 20 years is defined, and critical questions are answered, such as: What will be the condition of flora and fauna? How will we address historic and cultural resources? What recreational opportunities could be provided? What education

and interpretation efforts will meet the visitor? What will guide the manager's operational decisions? What will be the visitor's overall experience?

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

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

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

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

- ◆ Visitor experience
- ◆ Management Focus, and
- ◆ Development.

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

1.1 Planning Objectives

The objective of this General Management Plan is to bring together all DNR programs staff, stakeholders, and the public who use Rockport into a planning process that will define and clarify the unique "Purpose" and "Significance" of Rockport. Collectively, we will reinforce those attributes in the planning and management decisions that impact the property 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 Rockport will be guided by this General Management Plan.

Extensive input was sought throughout the planning process. The Planning Team met several times to review and comment on the plan elements (see Section 1.2). In addition, the DNR hosted a stakeholder workshop and two public participation workshops. Both the stakeholder and public participation workshops involved surveys and receiving of verbal comments. The draft plan was available for review on the website and anyone was invited to email, call or mail questions or comments concerning this initiative. The results of the public participation program is provided in Appendix B.

1.2 Planning Team

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

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Paul N. Curtis	DNR-PRD
Keith Cheli	DNR-PRD
Gary Ellenwood	DNR-PRD
Dan Mullen	DNR-PRD
Glenn Palmgren	DNR-PRD
Tom Paquin	DNR-PRD
Troy Rife	DNR-PRD
Anna Sylvester	DNR-PRD
Dave Borgeson	DNR-FD
Tim Cwalinski	DNR-FD
Steve Sendek	DNR-FD
James Johnson	DNR-FD
Laurie Marzolo	DNR-FMFMD
Bill O'Neil	DNR-FMFMD
John Pilon	DNR-FMFMD
Richard Stevenson	DNR-FMFMD
Chris Morris	DNR-LED
Jon Spieles	DNR-OC
Elaine Carlson	DNR-WD
Keith Kintigh	DNR-WD
Kevin Boyat	Chair, Alcona County Board of Commissioners
Beverly Bodem	Senator Stamas Office
Roger Carlin	Supervisor, Alcona Township
Kammie Dennis	Director, Tourism Council, Presque Isle County
Kenneth Gauthier	Supervisor, Sanborn Township
John Gilmet	Mayor, City of Alpena

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Chris Graham	Citizen's Committee for Michigan State Parks
Jeff Gray	Manager, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Tom Ferguson	Sunrise Side Travel Association and Citizen's Committee for Michigan State Parks
Beach Hall	Mayor, Rogers City
Mary Ann Heidemann	Michigan State University Extension
Laura Ingles	Senior Planner, NEMCOG
Patrick Labadie	Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Stephen Lang	Presque Isle County Commissioner, District 5
Sue Maxwell	Alpena County League of Women Voters
David Nadolsky	Rogers City
Peter Pettalia	Supervisor, Presque Isle Township
Brandon Schroeder	District Sea Grant Extension Educator, Michigan State University Extension
Mark Slown	City Manager, Rogers City
Matt Smar	DEQ Coastal Management Program
Jeff Thorton	Coordinator, Alpena County
Ken Timm	Commissioner, Alcona County
Marie Twite	Supervisor, Alpena Township
David C. Birchler	President, Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc.
Amy Golke	Senior Planner, Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc.

1.3 Management Plan Process

Of the total 4,237 acres, the majority of the Rockport property (3,641 acres) was acquired from Consumers Energy in 1997, and was placed under the management of Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division (FMFMD). A PRD Boating Access Site already existed at the harbor within the property, and a small parcel of that land was leased to Alpena Township to develop and operate as a local park.

The DNR-Northern Lower Peninsula Ecoregion Team (representatives of all divisions and programs of the DNR) made a recommendation in 2006 to transfer administration of the Rockport property from Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division (FMFMD) to Parks and Recreation Division (PRD). In September of 2006, the Citizen's Committee for Michigan State Parks (a legislatively established advisory body for DNR-Parks and Recreation Division) held a Public Information Meeting in Alpena to gather public input before making their recommendation for the proposed transfer.

The results of that meeting was to put on hold any action until further assessment of the Rockport property could be completed through the Management Planning process of Parks and Recreation Division. They supported the regional planning grant proposal that PRD was pursuing through the Coastal Zone Management

Program to conduct Management Planning for Negwegon and Thompson's Harbor State Parks and to include the Rockport property. Additionally, they recommended the establishment of a Citizen's Advisory Committee to interact with the DNR on a long-term basis in the management of Rockport as well as Negwegon SP and Thompson's Harbor SP.

A Regional Approach to Management Planning

Between September of 2005 and May of 2007, the Northeast Michigan Integrated Assessment (NEMIA) planning project was conducted. This regional planning effort was led by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) and Michigan Sea Grant, a program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Through a thoughtful and deliberate process that brought in local units of government, stakeholders and public input, the NEMIA planning team developed this vision statement...

"Visioning a Sustainable Future for Northeast Michigan: Connecting Great Lakes Coastal Access, Tourism, and Economic Development"

...and policy question:

"How can coastal access be designed, in a regional context, for sustainable tourism that stimulates economic development while maintaining the integrity of natural and cultural resources, and quality of life?"

Part of the answer to that policy question lies in the role of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), with several coastal State Parks and other lands of significant frontage and unique natural resource values along the coastline of Lake Huron.

In April of 2006, Parks and Recreation Division of the DNR submitted an application for a federal grant from the Coastal Zone Management Program of NOAA for the purpose of developing individual long-range Management Plans for Negwegon State Park, the Rockport property, and Thompson's Harbor State Park. This planning effort would also look at these three significant coastal properties in a regional context, in sync with the vision of the NEMIA process and sensitive to the NEMIA policy question.

The NEMIA planning effort helped guide the DNR to this regional perspective, and the Sea Grant and NEMCOG letters of support for the CZM grant helped to secure the funding necessary to accomplish the planning. Without the grant, we did not have the resources in staff or funding to take on all three properties at the same time or to explore their regional context.