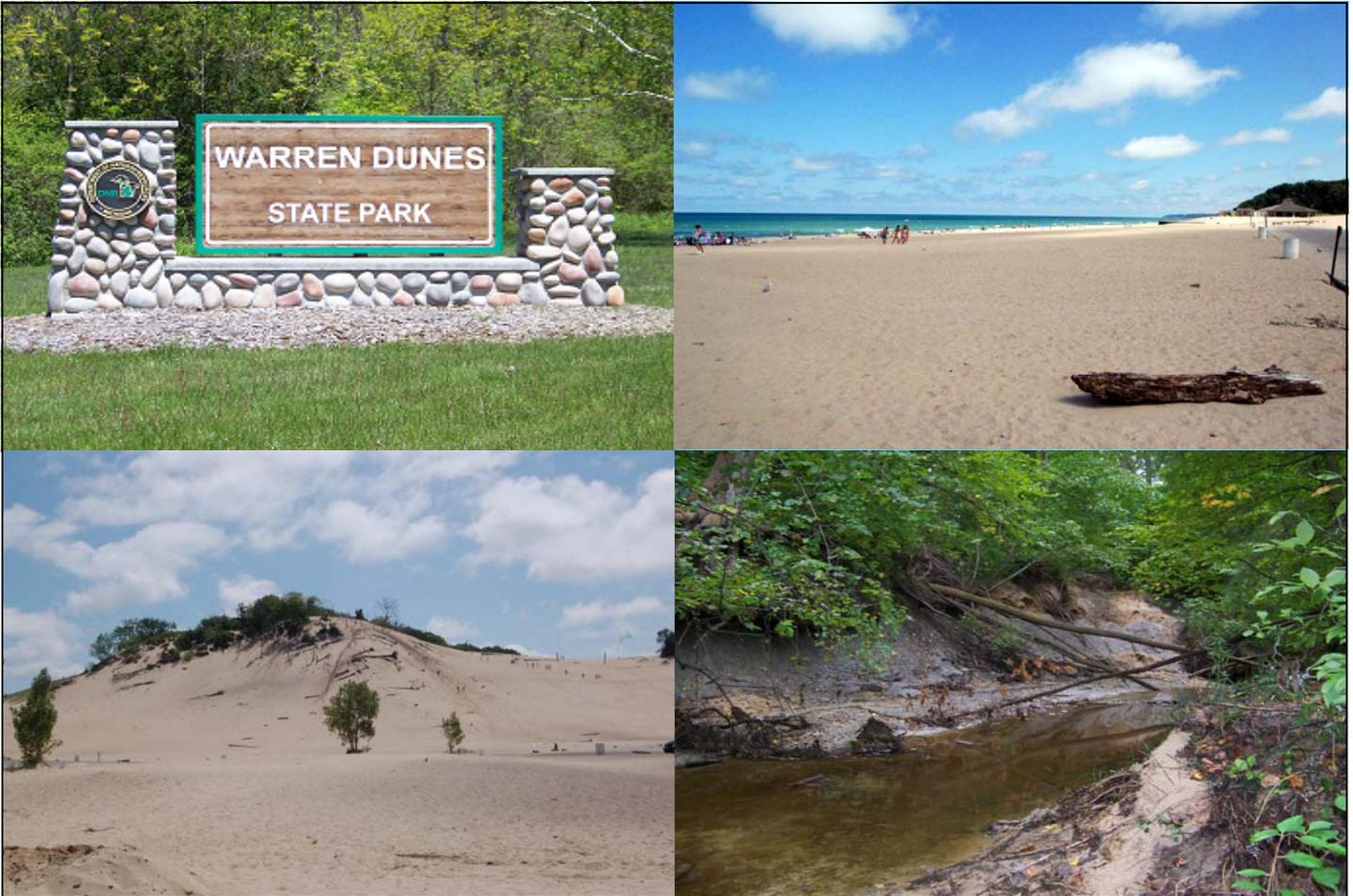


# Warren Dunes State Park

## General Management Plan

### Phase 1



Approved March 29, 2010



# General Management Plan

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

## Warren Dunes State Park



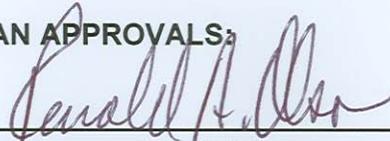
This project was funded, in part, by the Michigan Coastal Management Program, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce.

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

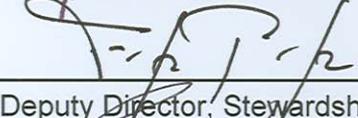


**DNRE**

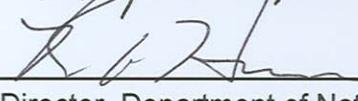
### PLAN APPROVALS:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Recreation Division

3/15/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Director, Stewardship

3/23/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Department of Natural Resources and Environment

3/29/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**RESOLUTION NO. 12-2009-04**

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

**ADOPTED DECEMBER 9, 2009**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Motioned by: Mary Pitcher  
Seconded by: Chris Graham

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

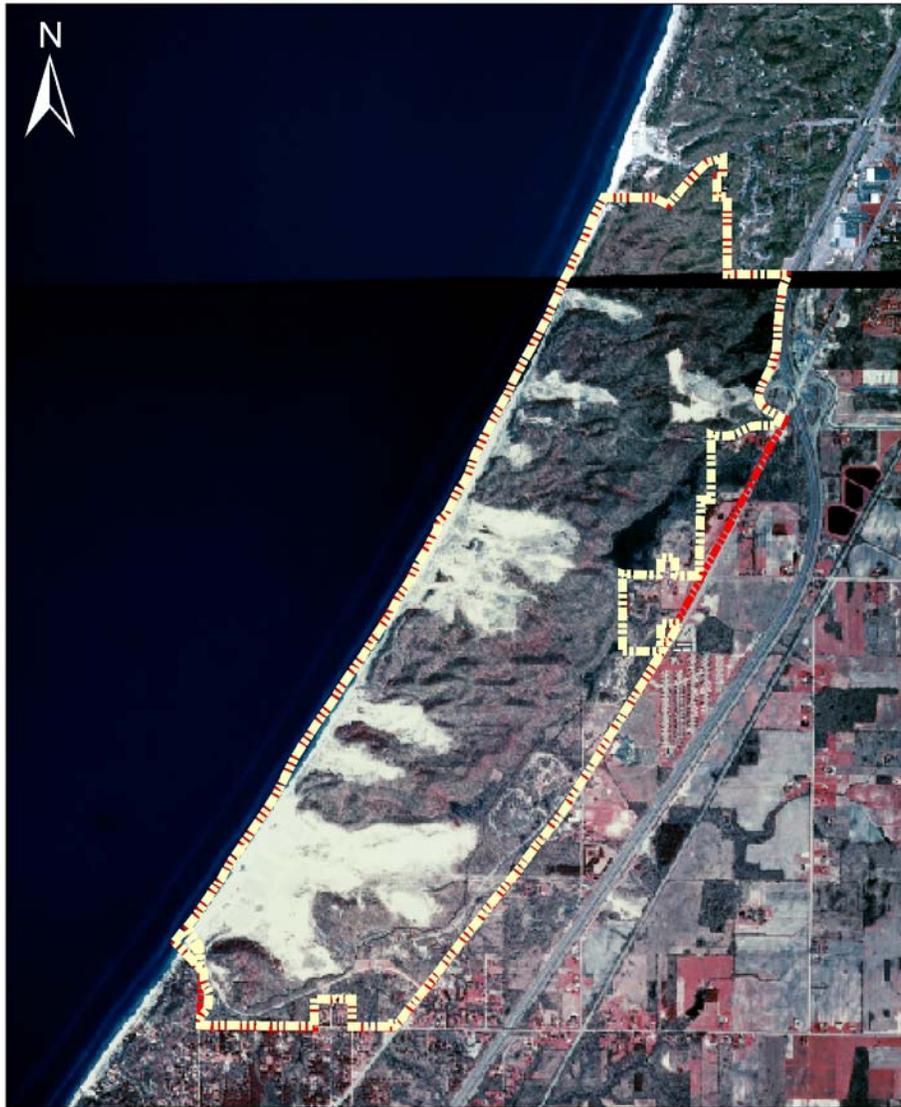
**This Resolution was adopted by the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks on December 9, 2009.**

## **RESOLUTION NO. 12-2009-04**

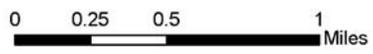
### **“WARREN DUNES STATE PARK – PHASE I – GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN” SPECIFIC PROVISIONS**

- That all suggested zone designations are accepted, except for the two northerly, small “Developed Recreation Zones” along Red Arrow Highway, which will be changed to reflect “Natural Resource Recreation Zones” to limit any future development.
- That the DNR proceed with the recommended Natural Area Designations as proposed in the plan.
- That any necessary language improvements may be made by DNR Parks and Recreation staff prior to submitting the plan to the DNR Director for approval.
- That the DNR give high priority to in-holdings and other land acquisitions as proposed in the plan.
- That upon the DNR Director’s approval, the approved plan be transmitted to local recreation partners and providers.

# Warren Dunes State Park



-  Park Boundary
-  Dedicated NRC Boundary



BIRCHLER ARROYO  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

Sources: MDNR, Michigan Geographic Data Library

# Table of Contents



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

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

## Executive Summary

### 1.0 Plan Process Overview

- 1.1 Planning Objectives
- 1.2 Planning Team
- 1.3 Management Plan Process

### 2.0 Core Values

- 2.1 Mission Statements
- 2.2 Statements of Purpose
- 2.3 Statements of Significance
- 2.4 Legal Mandates
- 2.5 Land Acquisitions

### 3.0 Management Zone Plan

- 3.1 Primitive Zone
- 3.2 Natural Resource Recreation Zone
- 3.3 Scenic Overlay Zone
- 3.4 Developed Recreation Zone
- 3.5 Visitor Services Zone

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- A Supporting Analysis
- B Public Participation Program Results
- C Planning Team Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- D Edward K. Warren Foundation Lease to State of Michigan

# Executive Summary

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

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

Warren Dunes State Park (WDSP) is a 1,439 acre state park, located along the shore of Lake Michigan in southern Berrien County. The Phase I General Management Plan (GMP) process for Warren Dunes State Park was made possible, in part, by funding provided by the Michigan Coastal Management Program. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) Recreation Division (RD) oversaw the planning process. The endeavor represents a new planning philosophy of the RD. “Management Planning,” a comprehensive, resource-based process, is the RD’s adaptation of National Park Service planning methodology. During Phase 1, the GMP focuses on the four principles of the RD Mission Statement: to acquire, preserve and protect; (1) natural resources, (2) cultural resources, (3) provide public recreation, and (4) provide educational opportunities. The process includes a thorough inventory of Warren Dunes State Park’s natural and historic/cultural resources, recreational opportunities and educational and interpretation opportunities.

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

1. Warren Dunes State Park offers the public 2.5 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline along with a variety of outdoor recreational activities.
2. Warren Dunes State Park attracts nearly 1 million visitors annually. Revenues from this park are a significant resource for the State of Michigan park system.

3. Warren Dunes State Park is a gateway to the State of Michigan Park system from the west. Approximately 92% of visitors come from outside the state, most of those from Indiana and Illinois.
4. Most of Warren Dunes State Park lies within a designated critical dune area.
5. A significant portion of the park is a dedicated natural area and includes both active, dunes, part of a complicated mosaic of stabilized dunes from former lake levels.
6. Warren Dunes State Park currently supports an extensive network of richly forested dunes, large open dunes, and interdunal wetlands.
7. There are important natural communities found in the park, including elements of many forest types.
8. As a stopover location on a bird migration route, Warren Dunes State Park features significant bird diversity.
9. Warren Dunes State Park offers unique recreational opportunities for people of all ages.

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

- ❑ Primitive Zone reflects a desired condition that emphasizes the natural resources. About 1,013 acres, or 70% of Warren Dunes State Park, most of the designated Critical Dunes area, will be Primitive Zone and will be managed to only allow dispersed and low frequency use for low impact recreational purposes.
- ❑ Natural Resource Recreation Zone permits active recreation with moderate to high density of use conducted in a natural setting. The Natural Resource Recreation (NRR) Zone comprises approximately 13 acres (1%) of Warren Dunes State Park, along the Painterville Creek, recognizing the unique opportunities for a higher intensity of use while maintaining natural resources.
- ❑ Scenic Zone recognizes that there are aesthetic qualities to be preserved and protected in the Park. While there are many, those identified during the planning process, and noted on the management zone plan, are along the

2.5 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and at Mt. Randall, comprising 220 acres, or 15% of the park.

- ❑ Developed Recreation Zone. Allows active recreation with high density of use conducted in areas not designated for natural resource significance. In this zone, recreation dominates with natural resource attributes enhanced as possible. The campground areas will be in the DR zone as will the beach and heavily used southern dune area surrounding Mt. Randall, comprising 364 acres or 25% of the park.
  
- ❑ Visitor Services Zone. This zone encompasses the developed areas required for program administration and operations, about 49 acres or 4% of the park area. Typically it will include offices, contact stations, maintenance facilities and all related land base required to conduct the business of running a state park or recreation area. The current administrative offices for the park will be in the Visitor Services Zone.



## 1.0 Plan Process Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ◆ Visitor experience
- ◆ Management focus
- ◆ Development

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

## **1.1 Planning Objectives**

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

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

## 1.2 Planning Team

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

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

### DNRE – Coastal Zone Management Program

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lynda Krupansky | CZM – Coastal Management Program |
|--|----------------------------------|

### **Planning Consultants**

- David C. Birchler      Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc.
- Jill Bahm              Birchler Arroyo Associates, Inc.

### **1.3 Management Plan Planning Process**

Previous plans for Warren Dunes State Park include an Invasive Species Control Plan, which was submitted in 2003. This document includes surveys on invasive species and recommends controlling such species by a prioritized system of ranking species and site quality.

In 2002, a Michigan Natural Features Inventory was completed and includes element-specific recommendations.