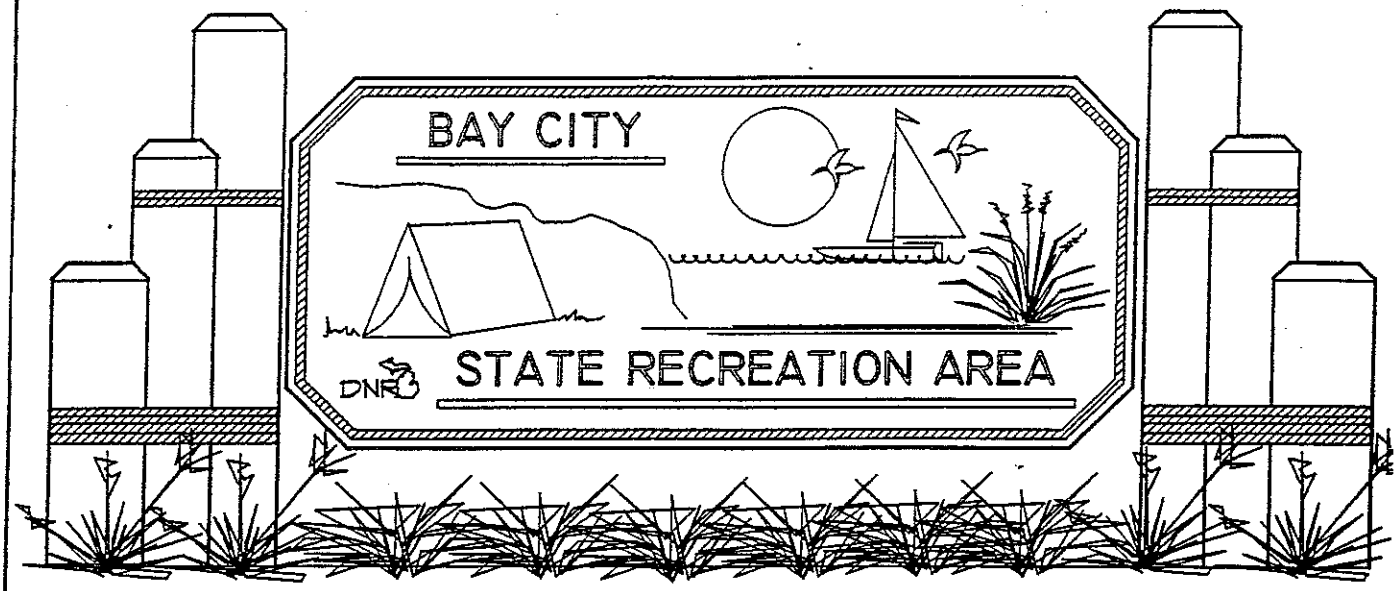

A Master Plan Proposal.....

BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA
(FORMER BAY CITY STATE PARK)

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

REPORT PRESENTED BY:

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FALL, 1994

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COMMITTEE CHARGE

THE CHARGE FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: TO DRAFT A MASTER PLAN BAY CITY STATE PARK

October 1993

This Advisory Committee was established to assist the Parks & Recreation Division, Department of Natural Resources, with the preparation of a master plan for Bay City State Park. The master planning process for Bay City should include: numerous opportunities for citizen involvement; recognition of the positive economic impact that this project can create in this Region; innovative ideas and approaches to providing a variety of opportunities for active outdoor recreation and environmental education; and the protection of the sensitive natural resources, as well as historic cultural resources.

Parks and Recreation Division further directs the Advisory Committee to include in their study and planning recommendations those lands suitable for inclusion within the boundary dedicated for Bay City State Park.

An inventory of existing natural and physical features has been conducted by the Department. This will be followed by the development of a zoning plan for the entire project including recreation, natural and general zones. The zoning plan will serve as a foundation for the development of the master plan which will follow.

Both local government and public input should be solicited throughout the Committee's deliberation. Recommendations should be consistent with existing laws and policies for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and state park operation.

A public information meeting, or hearing, on the final draft should be held in the local area by leadership of the Advisory Committee for public review and input before the draft master plan is submitted to the Chief of Parks and Recreation Division, DNR.

The end result of the Committee's efforts should be a recommended draft master plan for Bay City State Park with accompanied written narrative that will be submitted to the Chief of Parks and Recreation Division, DNR.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BAY CITY RECREATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following individuals/groups were selected to participate in the review and planning of the Master Plan for the Bay City State Recreation Area (previously Bay City State Park) and adjacent DNR lands.

Jim Baker	Fisheries Division, DNR
Jim Bredin	Office of the Great Lakes, DNR
Joe Carland	Bangor Township Supervisor, Bay County
Dave Cozad	Environmental Affairs & Community Development, Bay County
Jim De Clerck	Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Sue Fortune	East Central Michigan Planners & Development Region
Diane Gosler	Real Estate Division, DNR
Lucius Greve	Citizen at Large
John Halsey	Bureau of Michigan History, Department of State
Dan Hatton, PhD	Friends of Bay City State Park
Elli Hennessy	Surface Water Quality Division, DNR
Ron McGillivrey	Bay County Growth Alliance
Larry Miller	Parks & Recreation Division, DNR
Terry Miller	Lone Tree Council
Paul Petersen	Parks & Recreation Division, DNR
Doug Reeves	Wildlife Division, DNR
Robert Reszka	Geological Survey Division, DNR
Joseph Rivet	(Chairperson) Bay Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
Peggy Rowley	Jennison Natural Center Advisory Board
Terry Sheehan	Bay City State Park

BAY CITY RECREATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
continued

Mary Shorkey	Tobico Audubon Society
Gary Stanley	Bay County Planner
Jack Werner	Citizen at Large
Robert Zbiciak	Land & Water Mgmt. Division, DNR
Mike Brandow	City of Bay City

PROJECT PURPOSE

NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION
JERRY C. BARTNIK
LARRY DEVUYST
PAUL EISELE
JAMES P. HILL
DAVID HOLLI
JOEY M. SPANO
JORDAN B. TATTER

STATE OF MICHIGAN

JOHN ENGLER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Stevens T. Mason Building, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, MI 48909

ROLAND HARMES, Director

September 21, 1993

TO: Natural Resources Commission

SUBJECT: Preparation of a New Master Plan for Bay City State Park - Bay County
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Discussion and Background:

At its regular meeting on August 10, 1956, the Natural Resources Commission (then the Department of Conservation) approved the master plan for Bay City State Park. Now, 37 years later, it is time to once again evaluate the existing resources, as well as the recreation needs for the park. The need for a new master plan is evident when analyzing the changing recreation demands, as well as the changing natural resources found in and around Bay City.

At this time, the local community is very supportive of a master planning effort for the park and they will be encouraged to participate throughout the planning process. The master planning process for the park will include using a citizen advisory committee to provide recommendations for the development of the new master plan. This planning process is expected to be completed within the calendar year of 1994.

Based on the existing resources and recreation demands, the park theme is anticipated to focus on natural resource education involving Saginaw Bay and Tobico Marsh, with more traditional types of active recreation facilities, including camping, fishing, picnicking, and swimming supporting this theme.

Recommendation:

This memorandum is being submitted for information only. Following the preparation of the master plan, and based on recommendations of the advisory committee, the Master Plan for Bay City State Park will be submitted to the Director for review and approval.

O. J. Scherschligt, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

Michael D. Moore
Deputy Director

I approve the staff recommendation.

Roland Harmes
Director

Date Approved

1/93

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

The areas involved, including the State Park and the State Game Area will continue to operate under similar management programs which they are currently operating. However, instead of the area being administered as two separate management units, it is recommended that the entire area be administered by Parks and Recreation Division. The general daily operation, including clean-up, maintenance and enforcement of the Department Rules and Regulations would be undertaken by the park staff. The overall management goals, including wildlife, fisheries and recreation will continue to be a joint effort between the divisions responsible for those respective programs.

The general management objectives for the entire state ownership in question is as follows:

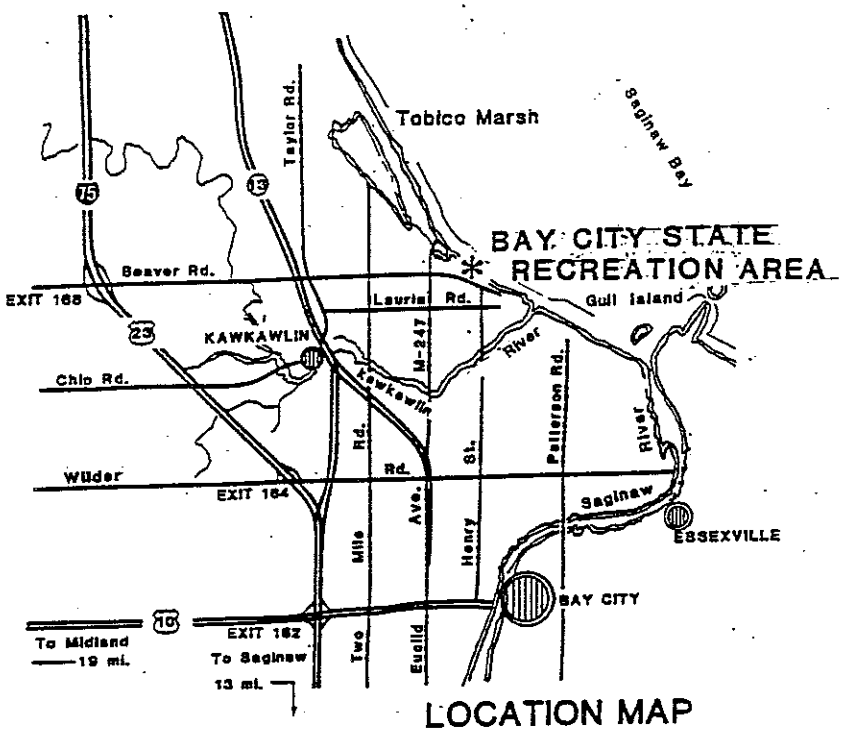
- Improve the quality of the recreation programs/activities and related facilities
- Continue to upgrade the management practices for waterfowl and wetland dependent wildlife species
- Continue to improve the marsh for spawning and as a nursery area
- Protect the outstanding natural resources that are available on the site

A more detailed management plan for Wildlife and Fisheries can be found in the appendix of this report.

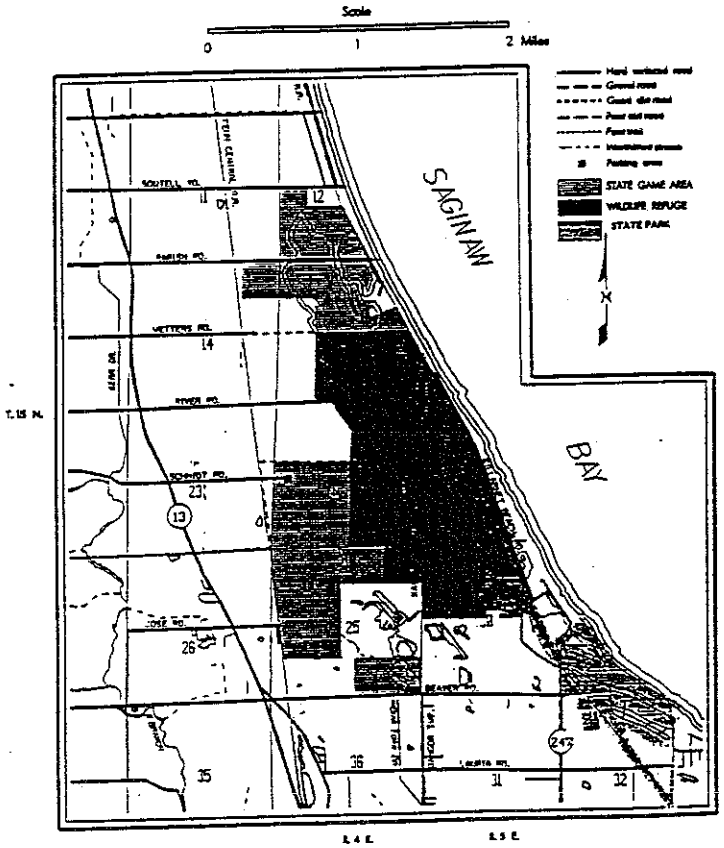
LOCATION

BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN



LOCATION MAP



LOCATION

Bay City State Recreation Area (Bay City State Park/Tobico Marsh State Game Area) is located in Bangor and Kawkawlin Townships, Bay County, Michigan. The area fronts on Saginaw Bay and is only four miles from Bay City and 17 miles from Saginaw. Other nearby population centers include Midland, 15 miles; Mt. Pleasant, 44 miles; and Flint, 47 miles. The collective population of these major communities is approximately 200,000 people. This recreation area lies within the Saginaw Bay focus area and is easily accessible from Highways I-75 and US-10.

LAND OWNERSHIP

MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Scale

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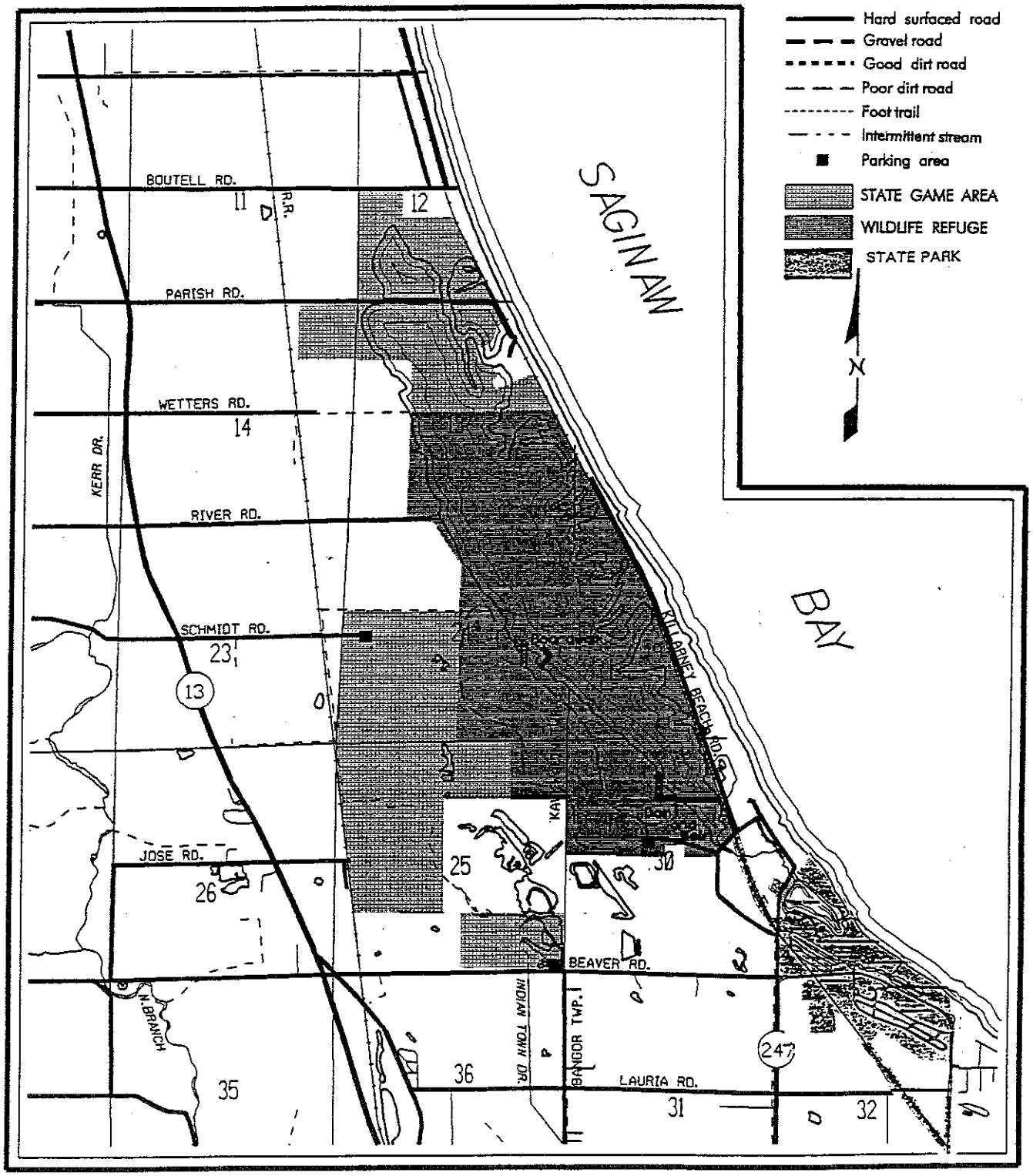


T. 15 N.

R. 4 E. R. 5 E.

LAND OWNERSHIP

HISTORY

HISTORY

At the present time, archaeological concerns in the park appear to be minimal because of the extensive surface modifications over the years.

The only structure that is of historic concern in the park, is the Jennison Nature Center building. The Jennison Nature Center, dating from 1949, is a larger building whose design appears to reflect very strongly the National Park Service's rustic aesthetic and high design standards seen in state park system buildings built under federal (CCC and WPA) sponsorship in the 1930's. The massive cut stone chimney stack, wide-exposure wood siding, banded treatment of the wood shingle roof, and exposed rafter ends all reflect the Nations Park Service and Michigan State Park system aesthetics of the period.

This building appears a good candidate for the national register and worthy of careful efforts to preserve its historic character.

The archaeological sites so far discovered in Tobico Marsh are predominantly small, intact, single component sites dating from late in the prehistoric period, ca. AD 1000-1500. The sites are valuable scientifically because they represent discrete episodes of occupation unmixed with later occupations. They represent a historical resource comparable in value to natural resources present within the marsh. The sites also tend to be small and shallow, lying just below the sod or even within it. Such sites are extremely vulnerable to soil disturbance and subsequent erosion. In the case of Tobico Marsh, the most immediate source of nondeliberate disturbance is creating or allowing the development of trails along the crests of the numerous fossil dune/beach ridges. Expansion of the trail network, widening or making more permanent the existing trails will destroy or severely damage sites lying under or adjacent to them. The same thing holds true for the development of parking areas. Serious consideration must be given to protecting threatened sites or mitigative excavations of they cannot be protected.

BACKGROUND & EXISTING CONDITIONS

PARK BACKGROUND (As of June 1994)

In late 1922 the City of Bay City donated 76 acres west of the waterworks to the state for use as a public park. This park was named the Bay City State Park and over the next seventy years its size increased several times until it reached the present 258 acres.

Development of the park by the state began in 1923. In that same year a fish hatchery was established for the propagation of walleyed pike, a commercial food fish then of considerable economic importance. This hatchery became a park landmark and was operated until 1945 when it was closed due to obsolescence and a decline in the fish population. The building was razed in 1952.

Park development continued during the 1920's and was accelerated during the 1930's as a result of several federal programs. The most significant of these programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Between 1933 and 1936 the CCC excavated a fresh water lagoon at the outlet of Tobico Marsh. The CCC also built and improved park roads and parking lots, constructed park buildings, and planted trees and shrubs.

World War II slowed park development, but in 1947, Mrs. George Birney Jennison offered $40,000.00 for the construction and operation of a trailside museum "for the study of native and migratory birds". This museum, dedicated to the memory of George Birney Jennison, was constructed in 1949.

During the 1950's and 1960's many improvements were made in park facilities and services. Picnic area parking lots were improved and expanded. The campground was expanded to a capacity of 283 sites with electrial hook-ups installed. Improvements were also made to the campground's buildings and roads. The interpretive program which was instituted at the museum upon completion of that structure, was expanded during this period and in 1969, the permanent position of Park Interpreter was created in order to expand the scope of interpretive service still further.

This permanent position remained at the park until budget crunches of the early 80's caused the state to close the Nature Center early in 1981. It remained closed until the spring of 1984. At that time The Jennison Center was reopened under a unique plan that involved the Department of Natural Resources, Delta College and Saginaw Valley State College. Under a partnership arrangement, the two colleges assumed the responsibility of reopening the center and establishing environmental education programs. This partnership continued until January of 1992, when the Department of Natural Resources once again took over the running of the Jennison Nature Center.

Swimming was always a popular activity along the shores of the beautiful Saginaw Bay. However in the late 1950's a problem began to develop. Muck began to collect along the shoreline at Bay City State Park. This problem fluctuated from year to year depending on the water level. Between the late 50's and the early 80's, the muck levels gradually increased

making it increasingly difficult for park personnel to keep the shoreline free of accumulated muck for the swimmers. In the early 80's, high water level resulted in a relatively clean shoreline and the day use greatly increased. On many weekends the lots were filled to capacity, making it necessary to close the parking lots to incoming vehicles. However, in the later 80's water levels receded, and the muck problem became more than park personnel could handle. It was about this same time that wetland restrictions became very prominent, which also hampered any attempts by park personnel to solve the muck problem. The year 1992 saw the swimming area of Bay City State Park in deplorable condition. Needless to say this caused a great decrease in both camping and day use attendance. Late in 1992, the park received the necessary permits to again begin muck removal on the north swimming beach. During the summer of 1993 the park once more, had a useable swimming area.

The year of 1977 saw the starting of several new buildings within the park. At that time a new bathhouse & concession complex were added in the day use area and two new toilet shower buildings in the campground. In 1982, the park was connected into the county sewer system. In 1984, all park roads which had previously been chip and sealed were resufaced with bituminous surfacing. What a great new addition to the campground. In 1986, the park added the first of the picnic shelters; a double shelter with fireplace and attached restrooms. This was followed by a single pavilion and another double pavilion between 1987 and 1991, all of which were great additions to the day use area. In 1989, the entire electrical system of the park was revamped, allowing better electrical service to the campers. In 1990 the park office was completely remodelled. During the summer of 1993, two mini-cabins were constructed to again increase the facilities and add to the enjoyment of campers.

In 1985, a 180 foot sluice pipe which extended out into the Bay, was removed. This sluice pipe, a hollow concrete wall, was used to channel discharge from the old water works plant out into the Bay. It was believed that the sluice contributed to the muck build up along the Park shoreline.

Several new land purchases have been made in recent years. In 1989, the small amusement park which had been at the park entrance became part of the park. This added acreage and two new buildings; a residence and storage building to the park inventory. In 1990, the abandoned railroad property from State Park Drive over to the Tobico Marsh Area were added the park. A portion of this property had already been developed into a hiking-biking trail and dedicated to Frank Andersen, the original donor of the Tobico Marsh Property. In 1992, the old roller skating rink and miniature golf course at the west entrance to the park were also added.

The winter of 1993 brought out large numbers of ice fishermen. The parking lots were as full as they usually are on very busy summer days. It wa great seeing everyone out. All of them of course were after the evasive walleyes.

PARK USE PATTERNS

Bay City State Park is among one of the parks that have been designed to be open year round for public use. The park is used on a regular basis all year through. Only on summer holidays could use be considered intense.

The Jennison Nature Center is open all year, Wednesday through Sunday. During May, June September and October many school groups come to the Center for nature study and guided hikes. Between November and April the use at the Center drops off and is mainly just visitors to the displays and those using the bird observation area. The summer months see use by campers and other day users that happen upon the Center. At the present time, the center is not a drawing card by itself. The Center is staffed by two part-time student assistants with a total of 40 hours per week. These assistants give free hikes and also campfire programs. New displays have been constructed and are now in place. There is a good chance that the Nature Center will be expanded to more than twice its present size in the near future.

Camping the mainstay at bay City State Park with fair use starting in mid March going through mid November. The campground fills during the three summer holiday weekends. Weekdays will see about one third of the campsites fill during July and August with weekends being two thirds full. Bay City is not a destination campground, the bulk of the camp permits are written for one or two nights. During the spring and fall a good number of retiree campers stay a week or more. The campground is well wooded with good grass cover. The lots are large by state park standards. Each have a picnic table, fire pit, and electrical outlet. Two of the three campground buildings were constructed in the late 1970's. They have hot water and are handicapped accessible. The third campground building was constructed in 1953 and can be heated. One mini-cabin has been constructed.

Swimming and sunbathing were once very popular activities at Bay City. But in the 1950's, muck began appearing on the swimming beach and these activities began to lessen. Today even though the beach is in reasonable shape, use has not yet picked up to where it should be. One area that is demonstrating an increase is off shore anchoring of boats.

The five picnic shelters are very popular. In 1992, they were rented 61 times. Family reunions and company picnics are the majority of the shelter users. The single family picnic can still be noted. However, this use seems to be in decline.

The lagoon was once a popular fishing area year round, but has diminished as it has filled with sediment and weeds.

Hiking and walking are both steady activities in the park. There is a nucleus of older people that enjoy the park each day from March to November. Many are recovering heart attach patients. The Andersen Nature Trail has variety of users each month. Walkers, bird watchers, bikers and skaters use the trail with little conflict.

One bright area of activity is the ice fishing that takes place in Saginaw Bay off the park. In the 1993, the park saw eight good weeks of fishing during January, February and March. The ice was thick and the walleye fishing was excellent. On most Saturdays and Sundays, approximately 350 vehicles could be counted in the lots and on the ice. This is the sport that has seen the most growth in the past few years.

TOBICO MARSH BACKGROUND

Project Location

Tobico Marsh State Game Area, includes 1,848 acres in Kawkawlin and Bangor Townships adjacent to Saginaw Bay. The marsh lies within the Saginaw Bay focus area of the Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Basin Joint Venture region, designated in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. It is particularly important to migrant waterfowl, but it will become an increasingly important breeding area as well.

Project History and Land Use

Derived from the native American term "Pe To be goong" meaning the little lake by the big lake, Tobico Marsh has a rich wildlife and human history. The book entitled "Tobico Marsh", A Story of The Land and The People: (1987, Jennison Nature Center, Bay City, Michigan) provides ample description of geologic, archaeological and pre-public ownership history. State ownership began in 1955 with the acquisition by the Wildlife Division of 869.9 acres that had been the nucleus of the Tobico Hunt Club. Funds utilized for the purchase were from the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Program (Pittman-Robertson). the Tobico Hunt Club and Mr. Frank Andersen have donated to the State $40,000 which was the cost of a newly installed fence on the property. Additional funds from the same source have been used to acquire the remainder of the area.

Most of the present state game area was palustrine/lacustrine wetland prior to white settlement and has remained, but portions of the southwest section of the area were agricultural lands. Although the marsh provided hunting recreation during private ownership and the initial intent was for the area to be designated refuge for just five years following state purchase, much of the state game area (approximately 1,000 acres) has been a refuge closed to hunting throughout public ownership. Those areas open to public hunting have very limited value to waterfowl and waterfowl hunters because of shallow water and dense cattail stands, although some small game and deer hunting is provided. The primary value of the area in recent years has been for breeding and resting by waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife species.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Geology, Soil Topography

Situated in the lake plain of Lake Huron, Tobico Marsh exists today primarily as a result of beach formation. Several forested low beach ridges can be seen in the area with small wetlands occurring between them. Soils are predominantly sandy, although organic deposits occur in the lowest areas. There is less than ten feet of relief over the entire state game area.

Climate, Water Table

The climate at Tobico Marsh is moderated somewhat because of Saginaw Bay. Mean annual rainfall is 27 inches and snowfall exceeds 40 inches.

Being in the Lake Huron coastal plain there are sometimes very wide swings in surface water elevation between one year and the next. A recent period of extemely high lake water levels has given way to a drier period with the result that record high and below average lake levels have occurred within the last four years. Water level fluctuations have historically affected the condition of the marsh by providing periods when the emergent plant communities opened up and later grew more dense. A flood control gate placed along the roadway into Little Killarney Beach now prevents water recharge into the marsh from Saginaw Bay. The result is that water losses to evaporation and irrigation can only be replaced though rainfall and watershed drainage. During a "typical" year this means that water flow from the marsh is eliminated for much of the growing season and the water level in the marsh is lower than it might otherwise be. As a result, emergent plant communities in the marsh are tending to become more robust and over grown, especially in the northern one-third of the wetland.

Plant Communities, Fish, and Wildlife Resources

Emergent and submergent wetland plants, including some wet prairie, shrub and forest species as well as the cattail marsh complex cover approximately 1,300 acres. The remaining 550 plus acres is primarily oak (Quercus sp.) and oak/aspen (Populus sp.)/white pine (Pinus strobus) forest. Mature oaks in the uplands within the refuge provide nesting cavities and mast for wildlife. Most aspen and pine are quite small, being in the sapling and pole size classes.

Wetlands wildlife species are most common on the area with species richness being greatest for birds. Early autumn populations consist primarily of dabbling ducks (Anatini) while diving ducks (Aythyini), mergansers (Mergini) and Canada geese (Branta canadensis) are more numerous late in the season. Diving ducks are abundant throughout the spring migration period.

Many wetland dependent nongame bird species also utilize Tobico Marsh for breeding and resting. Yellow-headed blackbird (Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus) which are uncommon nesters in Michigan formerly nested here and continue to nest at the nearby Nayanquing Point Wildlife Area. However, none wee detected during field work in spring, 1990. Other special wetland dependent nongame species that utilize the area include: American bittern (Botaurus lentiginsus, least bittern (Ixobrychus exilis), northern harrier (Circus cyaneus) and black tern (Childonias niger), all of which were on the 1987 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service list of Migratory Nongame Birds of Management concern in this region. King rail (Rallus elegans) have also been spotted on the area and might nest there. During field work done in the 1980's Mary Rabe was unable to locate King rails on the area although habitat appeared suitable. (Michigan listed endangered).

Many terrestrial bird species utilize the wooded upland portion of the area. Large numbers of warblers are seen in the area during migration, possibly because the mature oak forest is

relatively isolated from other undisturbed stands along the lake shore migration route. Some passerine bird species that require extensive forests (area sensitive forest interior species) for breeding occur on the area. These include scarlet tanager (Piranga olicacea), veery (Hylocichla quttata), yellow-throated vireo (Vireo flaviforns) and ovenbird (Seiurus aurocapillus) as well as several other species that show area sensitivity to a lesser degree (e.g. woodthrush (Hylocichla mustelina), red-eyed vireo (Vireo olivaceus) and American redstart (Setophaga ruticilla). Apparently the block of forest in the refuge area is sufficient to maintain breeding populations of these species.

Mammalian species found at Tobico Marsh are typical for the central part of lower Michigan with muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus) being the most numerous mammal in the wetlands. Other species common to Tobico Marsh State Game Area include white-tailed deer (Odocoileus viginia), raccoon (Procyon lotor), fox squirrel (Sciurus niger), eastern chipmunk (Tamlas striatus), meadow vole (Microtus pennsylvanicus), cottontail rabbit (Sylvilaqus floridanus), white-footed mouse (Peromyscus sp.), opossum (Didelphus virginiana), and beaver (Castor canadensis). Historically Tobico Marsh provided spawning areas for northern pike (Esox lucious) and walleye (Stizostedion vitreum). Additionally, yellow perch (Perca flavescens) and large-mouth bass (Micropterus salmoides) have been common. Recently carp (Cyprinus caprio) and bowfin (Amia calva) have become abundant. Fisheries biologists believe the marsh has the potential to become a major spawning and nursery area for pike, if fish passage were provided.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

As previously stated, approximately 1,000 acres of the 1,848 acre Tobico Marsh State Game Area, is designated refuge year-round, under Natural Resources Administrative Rules R299.661 - 299.666.

Although hunting has not been allowed in the refuge portion of the State Game Area, outdoor education and wildlife viewing have been provided along pedestrian trails, observation towers, and marsh walkways, that were built and are maintained by parks Division (original construction Fy 1975-76). A Memorandum of Understanding between the two divisions explains basically that Parks Division is responsible for maintaining interpretive facilities, scheduling interpretive events, and control of the access gate. Wildlife Division controls wildlife planning and development of the area, including maintenance of boundary markers and signs. Further jurisdictional interaction includes, annual use permits to Delta and Saginaw Valley State Colleges providing access to the refuge area in conjunction with environmental education through the Jennison Nature Center. These permits allow the staff at the Nature Center to provide access to the refuge area for individuals and groups who wish to take nature walks or tours.

The main portion of the Tobico Marsh was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1976 based on its size, semi-marsh condition, and "lack of man-made intrusions". The designation recognized the wetland complex as "one of the finest freshwater marshes in this part of the country". Designation was not intended to limit wildlife management options. Unfortunately the ecosystem was designated "damaged" in 1983 by the Nation Park Service after contaminants from a nearby landfill were found in ground and surface water.

A specially recognized plant community is also found on a small part of the Tobico Marsh State Game Area. A Michigan Natural areas registry Agreement between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Wildlife Division and The Nature Conservancy addresses special concerns of the specific protected area. Any management activities in the designated area must also be for the benefit of the special communities and be accomplished within the objectives of the Department's Natural Heritage Program.

Recently Tobico Marsh was recognized as a nationally important migrational habitat for waterfowl. It is in the Saginaw Bay focus area of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

SUMMARY OF:
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations put forth by the Bay City State Park Advisory Committee as a part of the Master Plan Proposal:

* The entire area (property currently being administered by Wildlife and Parks and Recreation Divisions) shall be administered by Parks and Recreation Division.

* To enlarge the park from its current size of 258 acres to more than 2,800 acres and broaden the recreational opportunities to include hunting, fishing, camping, swimming, picnicking, hiking and nature study. The project boundary shall be expanded to encompass existing state-owned lands (approximately 2,150 acres) plus other lands determined necessary (approximately 650 acres) to complete the future master plan.

* The name shall be changed to Bay City State Recreation Area, from Bay City State Park.

* Parks and Recreation Division will work with the Bay County Road Commission to accomplish the following:

  - Provide a safe pedestrian crossing between the campground and day use area.

  - Reduce vehicular speeds along State Park Drive as it passes through the park.

  - Establish a policy to retain the existing character and function of State Park Drive.

* Nearly all the coastal area shall be reverted to a swimming beach. The exception being a wetland demonstration area, to be located in an appropriate location, and limited to 15% of coastal area.

* The DNR (Parks and Recreation Division) shall continue to secure the permits necessary to allow for ongoing maintenance of the majority of the beach north-west of the lagoon outlet, as well as, all other beach areas as they are approved.

* The completion of the development of the prototype (Muck Machine), including the necessary data required to develop a commercial system be actively pursued by the Parks and Recreation Division in consort with local interested citizens.

* To dredge a portion of the lagoon to a depth of fifteen feet (15') shall be implemented by the Parks and Recreation Division. In addition to the two fishing piers that will be constructed as a part of this plan, a boardwalk will cross the southeast end of the lagoon.

* To develop wooden park signs, necessary for visitor information, and similar in character to each other.

* Two new entrances shall be developed to serve the two use areas. This includes a new contact station and turn-around, servicing the day use area and new campground office, sanitation station and turn-around, serving the campground.

* The entire headquarters complex shall be relocated, and the park office will be separated from the park maintenance headquarters.

* To upgrade the entire campground. Improvements would include a new entrance into the campground, and full service (sewer, water, and electric), fill material and new drainage system. Also, increased size of each individual campsite.

* Several barrier-free campsites shall be developed.

* A tile drainage system shall be installed throughout the picnic area.

* A large play structure.

* An aquatic center, which will include a water slide, a children's shallow water play area with a waterfall, fountains and play elements, plus a calm-water beach pool which ranges in depth from zero to four feet. Also, a lap-excerise pool.

* A minimum of six beach volleyball courts.

* A sun deck/pavilion in the day use area located near the south end of the swimming beach.

* A portable pier which will extend out into Saginaw Bay.

* A "wetland bank" shall be developed as a part of the ongoing land acquisition program for future beach mitigation projects.

* No fewer than three, but no more than six, cabins with housekeeping opportunities, shall be located in the areas indicated on the master plan.

* A hard-surfaced boardwalk shall be developed adjacent to the beach.

* The Andersen Trail shall be continued from its origin at the Nature Center, southeasterly towards the community of Bay City.

* Bay City and the State of Michigan shall join forces to create a trail "link-up" in the future.

* A cultural trail for the park will serve as the interior park trail network.

ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS

PARK NAME CHANGE

The name, Bay City State Park was selected in 1923, at the time the park was established. The original site, patterned after a "typical state park", was 196 acres in size, and offered limited recreation opportunities, consist of picnicking, camping and swimming. This park, deriving its name from the nearby city (Bay City) offered one major natural attraction. That attraction was a beautiful beach on Saginaw Bay.

The recommendation to enlarge the park from its current size of 258 acres to more than 2,100 acres and broadening the recreation opportunities to include hunting, hiking, nature study, etc., places Bay City in the category of a State Recreation Area.

A State Recreation Area is typically a large area (1,000 plus acres), convenient to centers of dense population, with a diversity of natural features and impressive natural beauty. They are suitable for many types of intensive and extensive recreation including, swimming, picnicking, camping, boating, fishing, hiking, nature study, enjoyment of scenery and hunting.

With this expansion potential in mind, the advisory committee is recommending that the name Bay City State Park be changed to Bay City State Recreation Area. This new name would better reflect the typical state recreation area found within the existing state park system and would still retain the identity to Bay City.

PROPOSED PROJECT BOUNDARY

Background

A project boundary for a state park is a described line encompassing a given land area usually indicated by a line drawn on a land ownership map and/or a master plan. The primary purpose of a project boundary is to define the total area of interest to the Department, including both public and private ownerships. This boundary then represents the ultimate state land acquisition goal.

A project boundary is necessary in order to outline or describe the future total limits of the project. It also greatly assists the administration with the establishment of a meaningful priority list for requesting future land acquisition funds.

The project boundary for Bay City encompasses only those lands felt necessary and /or desirable to ultimately complete the project.

It is important to note that although the project boundary is a great administrative tool, it has virtually no effect on the private property owner whose land is located within the boundary limits.

Existing State Properties

The state ownership that is involved in the proposed boundary includes both Bay City State Park (258 acres) as well as the entire Tobico Marsh State Game Area (1,848 acres).

The Tobico Marsh and the Bay City State Park are currently administrated by two separate Division's (Wildlife Management Division and Parks and Recreation Division) within the Department of Natural Resources. However, the state land areas in question are located adjacent to each other and provide common outdoor education/recreation programs to the visiting public. Therefore, it is considered desirable to operate the entire area as one management unit.

Potential Future Property Needs

Those properties that are considered desirable for possible future acquisition, in order to become a part of the Bay City Recreation Area, have been included in this boundary for the area and consist of 650 total acres.

Committee Recommendation

The Advisory Committee recommends that the project boundary be expanded to encompass existing state-owned lands plus other lands determined necessary to complete the future master plan for Bay City State Recreation Area.

The proposed boundary is described as follows:

(REFER TO APPENDIX)

The private properties within the park boundary are considered necessary to the project for the following reasons:

- To provide additional lands for hunting
- To provide a sound and sight buffer to the proposed nature study area
- To protect various natural features
- To gain access to existing public lands
- To develop support facilities for various recreation activities
- To block in public ownership for ease of administration

The project boundary location, as described, following existing pubic roads or property lines and other legal boundaries, as well as natural boundaries such as shoreline in order to simplify the boundary description.

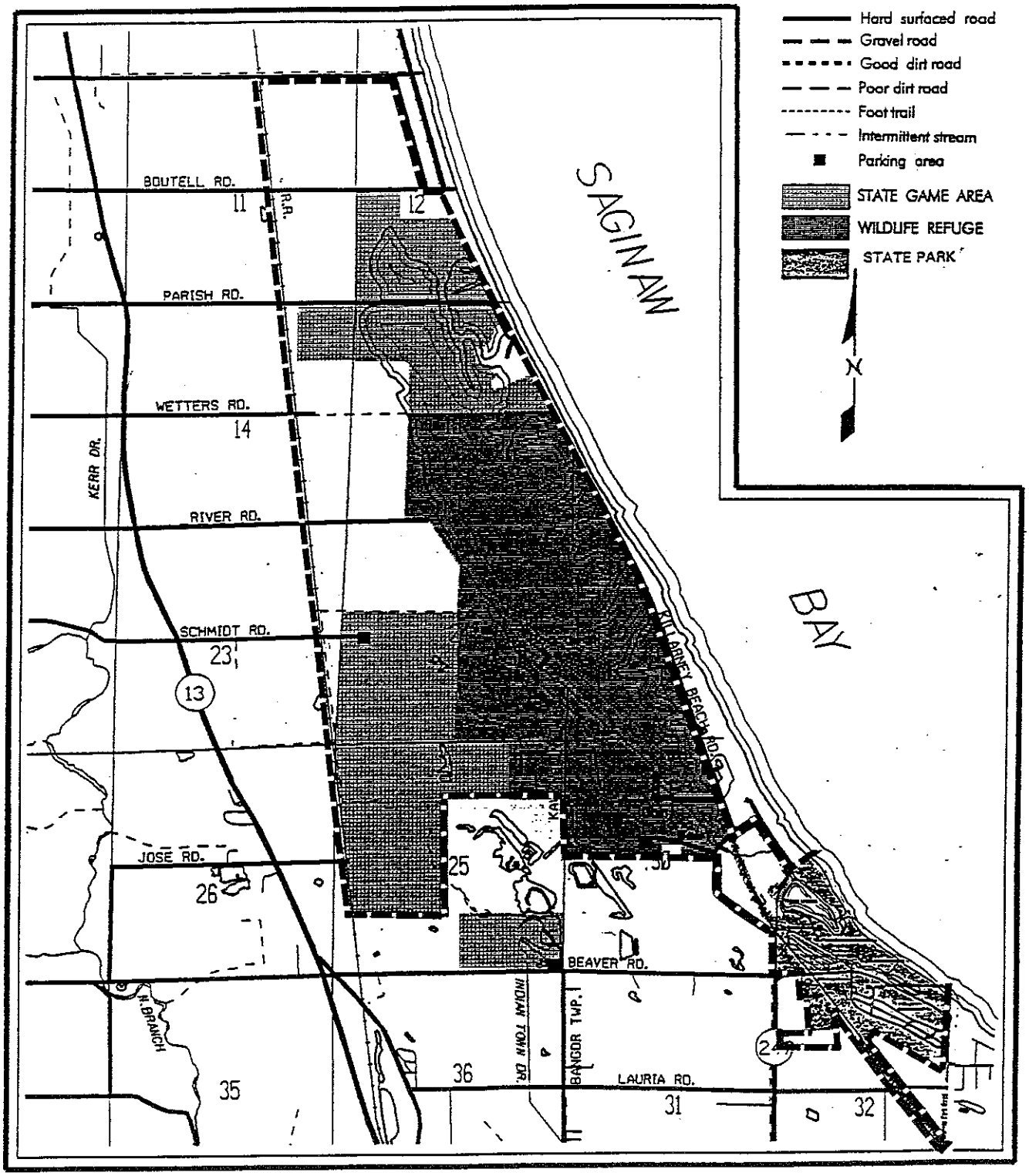
MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Scale

0 1 2 Miles



PROPOSED PROJECT BOUNDARY

STATE PARK DRIVE

A Bay County road named State Park Drive passes through Bay City State Park, dividing the park into two separate parcels, and making it necessary for the park to man and maintain two (2) separate park entrances. It also separates the campground from the remainder of the park, including the beach. This creates safety problems as well as an inconvenience to the campers that travel on foot, back and forth across the road, pursuing a variety of recreation activities.

The Advisory Committee deliberated a considerable amount of time over this issue because of its impact on the future of the park. The committee felt very strongly that State Park Drive should be closed as it passes through the park. This matter of possible road closure was formally submitted to the Bay City Road Commission for their review.

The Bay County Road Commission recently took formal action opposing future closure of State Park Drive as it passes through the park. In addition, several local businesses and individuals objected to the road being abandoned through the park.

The future park development, park operation plan and park user satisfaction and safety rests with the decision made concerning the future of this road.

Based on this concern, the Advisory Committee recommends that Parks and Recreation Division work with the Bay County Road Commission to accomplish the following.

1. Provide for a safe pedestrian crossing between the campground and day use area. Formally request the placement of a full traffic signal near the existing vehicular access drives. If this signal does not meet the required warrants as determined by the Road Commission, then work with the Road Commission to implement other traffic control devices to attain this goal.

2. Reduce vehicular speeds along State Park Drive as it passes through the park, Develop solutions to effectively reduce speeds with a combination of traffic control and selective enforcement methods.

3. Establish a policy to retain the existing character and function of State Park Drive. Improvements to the roadway should only be made for purposes of operations and maintenance. Expansion efforts should be limited to shoulder widening to provide for a safe non-motorized facility.

BEACH FRONTAGE ON SAGINAW BAY

The beach fronting on Saginaw Bay, and currently in State Ownership, consists of approximately 4,700 feet. Of this total, approximately 1,800 feet of beach is located north-west of the Tobico Lagoon outlet and is currently being maintained by permit. The remainder of the beach located south-east of the lagoon outlet has reverted to a wetland condition and now requires a permit from both the DNR and the Corps of Engineers in order to reclaim any part of it for future recreation purposes. The future direction of the day use activities rest with the decisions made concerning the future of this beach.

Because of the importance of the beach to the future of the park, the Advisory Committee has spent a great deal of time and effort deliberating over this issue.

As was previously stated, the beach restoration, including elimination of a "wetland" condition requires a permit from both the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers. This is a very difficult concept to understand when realizing that just a few years ago, the entire stretch of beach consisted of beautiful sand and not wetlands.

In order to convert a portion of this shoreline back to its original sandy condition, it is necessary to select an area located on Saginaw Bay, equal, larger size and create a new wetland. This new area will then be exchanged for the existing area. Several areas were explored as possible mitigation sites before it was finally determined by the Corps of Engineers, that the mitigation area has to be located on Saginaw Bay, just north of the outlet of the Tobico Lagoon. It was the belief of the committee that this area can serve as a part of the nature education program for the park, as it will be in close proximity to the Saginaw Bay Visitor Center.

The committee understands that laws involved and the respective positions maintained by the DNR and the Corps of Engineers on this issue. However, it is the position of the Committee that the Bay City State Park Beach is a critical recreational and economic asset to Bay county and the State Of Michigan. Therefore, in order to maximize its value and effectiveness as an attractive place to visit, it is recommended by the Committee that nearly all the coastal area be reverted to a swimming beach. The exception being a wetland demonstration area to be located in an appropriate location and limited to 15% of coastal area.

It is also recommended that the DNR (Parks and Recreation Division) continue to secure the permits necessary to allow for ongoing maintenance of the majority of the beach north-west of the lagoon outlet, as well as, all other beach areas as they are approved.

PIER ON SAGINAW BAY

The Advisory Committee analyzed the feasibility of a pier which would extend a considerable distance (approximately 1,000 feet) into Saginaw Bay. The purpose of such a pier would attract the public to walk out onto it for viewing the shoreline and Saginaw Bay.

A major concern for such a structure built on pilings, is that it is unprotected and therefore, very vulnerable to storm and ice damage. As a result, this pier concept was rejected by the Committee. However, a structure of lesser magnitude is being proposed in conjunction with the sundeck/pavilion, which will be discussed in greater detail in the "Facility Requirements" section of this report.

WATER QUALITY PROJECT (Muck Machine)

The project consists of developing prototype equipment for the removal of the green algae and small pieces of plants that are being washed ashore on Lake Huron in the Saginaw Bay at the park. This plant material was developing into "mucky" material that was deteriorating on the shore, reducing the quality of the beach for recreational purposes.

The Agricultural Engineering Department, (Michigan State University) embarked on the project with two main objectives:

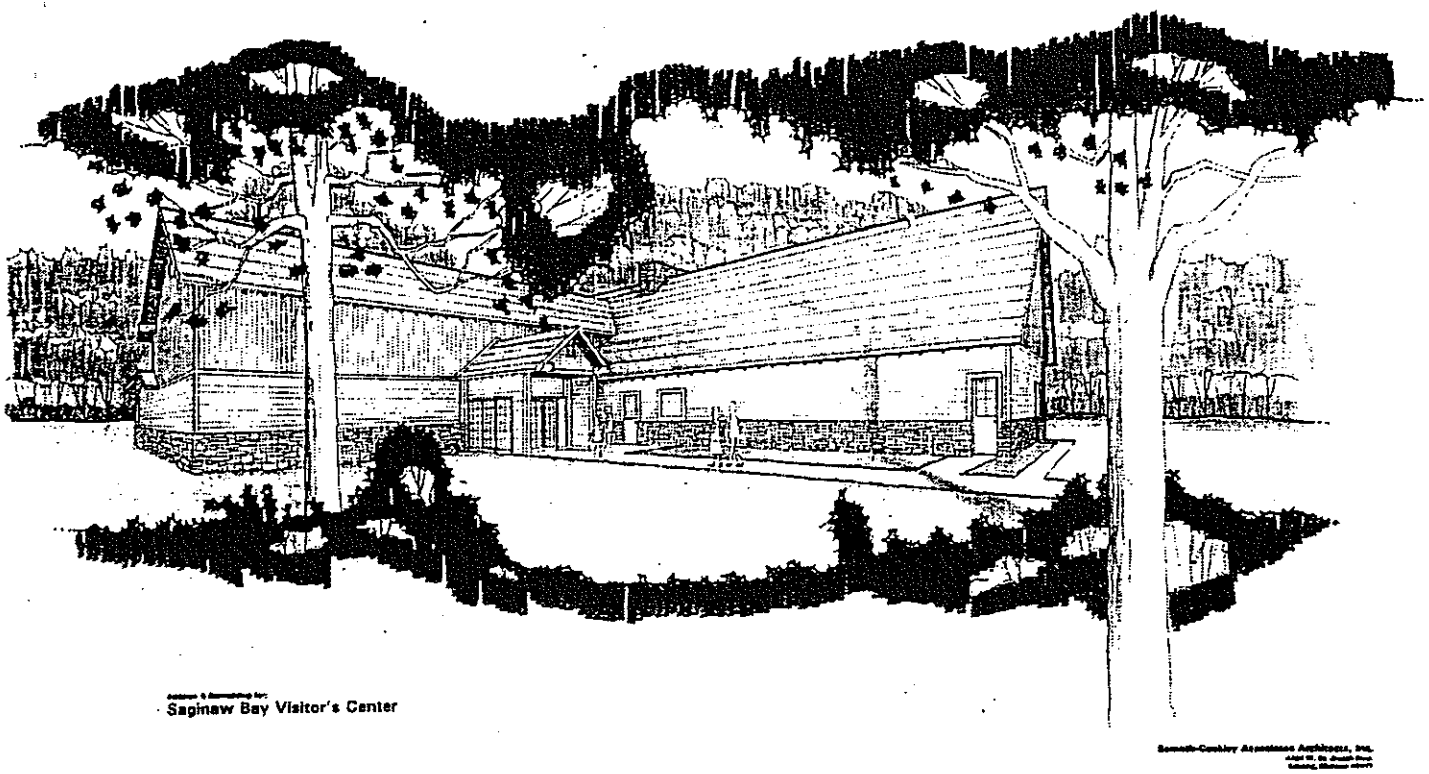
1. To design, fabricate, and test a laboratory scale model of a "Muck" removal system.

2. To recommend the construction of a commercial system by providing data and information with experience gained at the site.

In order to complete the project it is necessary to do more equipment development and obtain additional data for the design of a functional commercially built "Muck Machine".

It is therefore recommended that the completion of the development of the prototype, including the necessary data required to develop a commercial system be actively pursued by the Parks and Recreation Division in consort with local interested citizens.

FACILITY REQUIREMENTS



JENNISON NATURE CENTER
(SAGINAW BAY VISITOR CENTER)

A major building expansion program for the Jennison Nature Center will soon begin. The new theme for this center will be broadened in scope to include all of the major environmental issues related to the quality of Saginaw Bay and will serve as a focal point for environmental education/information for Bay Area communities. Influences in the decision to expand this facility include the high degree of interest in the facility throughout the region, as well as the commitment of Wildlife Division to this type of facility in a metropolitan area. The relationship of this facility to both Saginaw Bay and Tobico Marsh provides an excellent opportunity for a wide variety of interpretive and environmental educational experiences.

The primary purpose of the expansion of this project is to improve interpretive facilities and provide additional toilets for the building. The new wing, when added, will include an auditorium for presentations, office-workroom, small meeting room, office-gift shop and necessary mechanical areas. A second (new) wing will include toilets for men and women and an information lobby area. This area will act as the main entrance to the facility and allow the toilets to be open for trail users at times when the rest of the building is closed.

Renovation of the existing building will realign rooms and uses without destroying the structural integrity of the building. The new addition will be similar in design and will use the same building materials in order to retain the character of the existing structure.

The exhibit area will be renamed the **JENNISON EXHIBIT HALL** following completion of the building renovation. Also at this time the new facility will be renamed the **SAGINAW BAY VISITOR CENTER.**

TOBICO LAGOON

The Tobico Lagoon is one of the natural features found at Bay City State Park which in the past has been a very popular fishing spot.

The lagoon also serves as a settling basin at the outlet of the Tobico Marsh. A variety of uses take place around the perimeter of this lagoon including picnicking, nature trails, pier and bank fishing, and it serves as a focal point/outdoor laboratory for the Jennison Nature Center.

Over the years, since its creation, the lagoon has been slowly filling in with sedimentation. The Advisory Committee recommends that the plan that has been developed to dredge a portion of the lagoon to a depth of fifteen feet (15') be implemented by the Parks and Recreation Division. In addition to the two fishing piers that will be constructed as a part of this plan, a boardwalk which will cross the southeast end of the lagoon is being proposed by this Committee. This will serve as a nature walk and will connect the trails located on each side of the lagoon.

PARK SIGNS

The park signs, necessary for visitor information, and being recommended by the advisory committee, will all be similar in character. The area entrance sign shown on the cover of this report is the style of the sign that will be used throughout the recreation area to identify the various use areas available to the visiting public. The sign panel will be wood with the type of use etched (sandblasted) into the panel and color added as appropriate. The panel will be supported by heavy round posts.

The signs identifying the area entrance will be located on State Park Drive at the points where the State property begins. (These locations are identified on the master plan).

The additional use area signs identifying the day use areas, the Andersen Nature Trail, the Saginaw Bay Visitor Center, the campground, etc. will be a smaller version of the entrance sign. They will be located at the entrance to each specific use area.

PARK ACCESS

Two vehicular entrances are required to gain access into the major use areas at Bay City. One serves the day use area fronting on Saginaw Bay, and the second access serves the campground and park headquarters facility.

The existing access drives are not considered to be of sufficient length to provide suitable vehicular waiting lanes within the park prior to the park entrance control points.

Therefore the Advisory Committee recommends that two new entrances be developed to serve the two use areas in question. A part of this proposal would include a new contact station and turn-around serving the day use area and a new campground office, sanitation station and turn-around, serving the campground.

The alignments for the new access roads are shown on the proposed master plan for the area.

PARK OFFICE

The existing park office is combined in the same building as the shop and maintenance garage and is a part of the park headquarters complex which also includes a storage garage and the manager's residence.

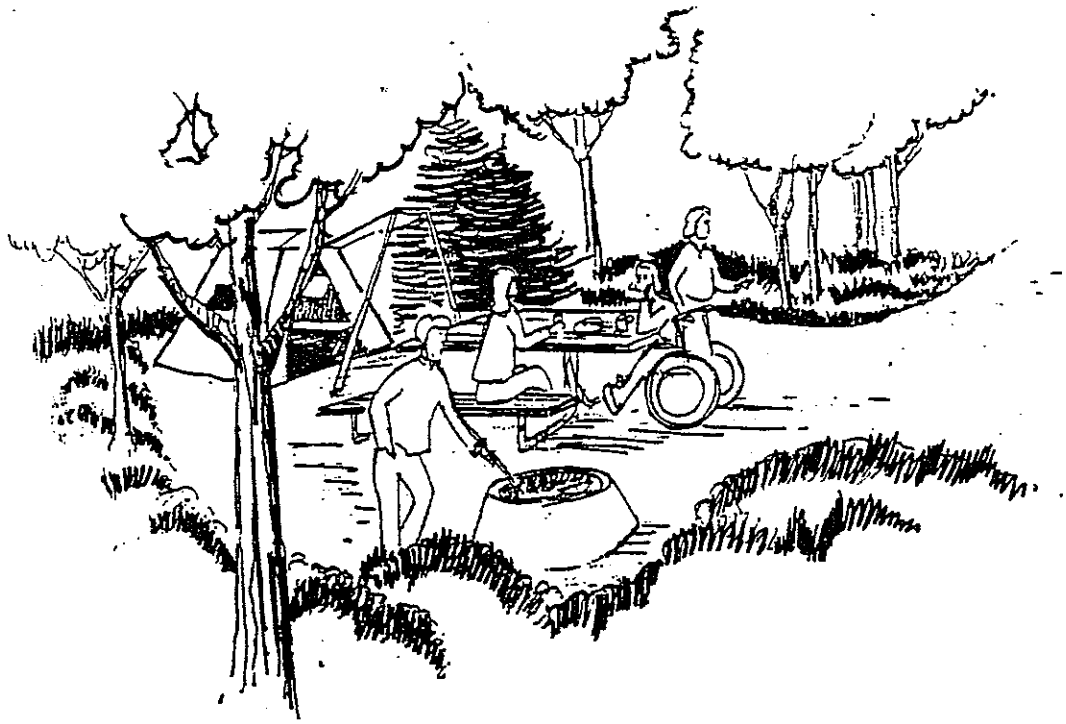
As it exists, the office is much too small to serve as a complete park management center. In addition, because the office is located adjacent to the shop and maintenance garage, it causes noisy and dusty work conditions for both the office employees as well as the general public conducting business at the office. The location of this entire complex also makes it very difficult to expand or modify the campground and almost impossible to revise the existing access into the campground.

Therefore, it is recommended by the Advisory committee that the entire headquarters complex be relocated, and that the park office be separated from the park maintenance headquarters.

The proposed location recommended for the park office is an area between State Park Drive and the new day-use entrance road with access off the day-use entrance. This location will be both visible and accessible to all park users. It will also be more accessible during the winter months to the ice fishermen using the park.

PARK HEADQUARTERS

It is recommended that the park maintenance headquarters be relocated to an area south of the new campground entrance road. The headquarters will serve all of the area maintenance needs. It will include an office, shop, maintenance garage, and sufficient storage area for the park.



"CAMPING"

CAMPGROUND MODIFICATIONS

The modern campground located at Bay City, and consisting of 264 sites, is one of the most beautiful settings found in the State Park system due to the mature trees found there. However, this campground, as it exists, is not without its problems.

The entire campground is low and during periods of wet weather, such as during the spring season, much of the campground is rendered unusable due to standing water. In addition, the entire electrical system needs upgrading, the roads need to be resurfaced and at least two of the toilet/shower buildings require major modifications.

Because of the need for major modifications to the existing campground, the advisory Committee recommends upgrading the entire campground which would make it a desirable, attractive, modern overnight facility that will attract family campers for years to come. The improvements would include a new entrance into the campground and full service (sewer, water and electric) hookups to serve the campers. In addition, fill material and a new drainage system is required throughout the campground. Another improvement being proposed, is to increase the size of each individual campsite allowing for more space in between sites. This would result in a reduction in the total number of campsites which will help to increase the overall quality of the camping experience.

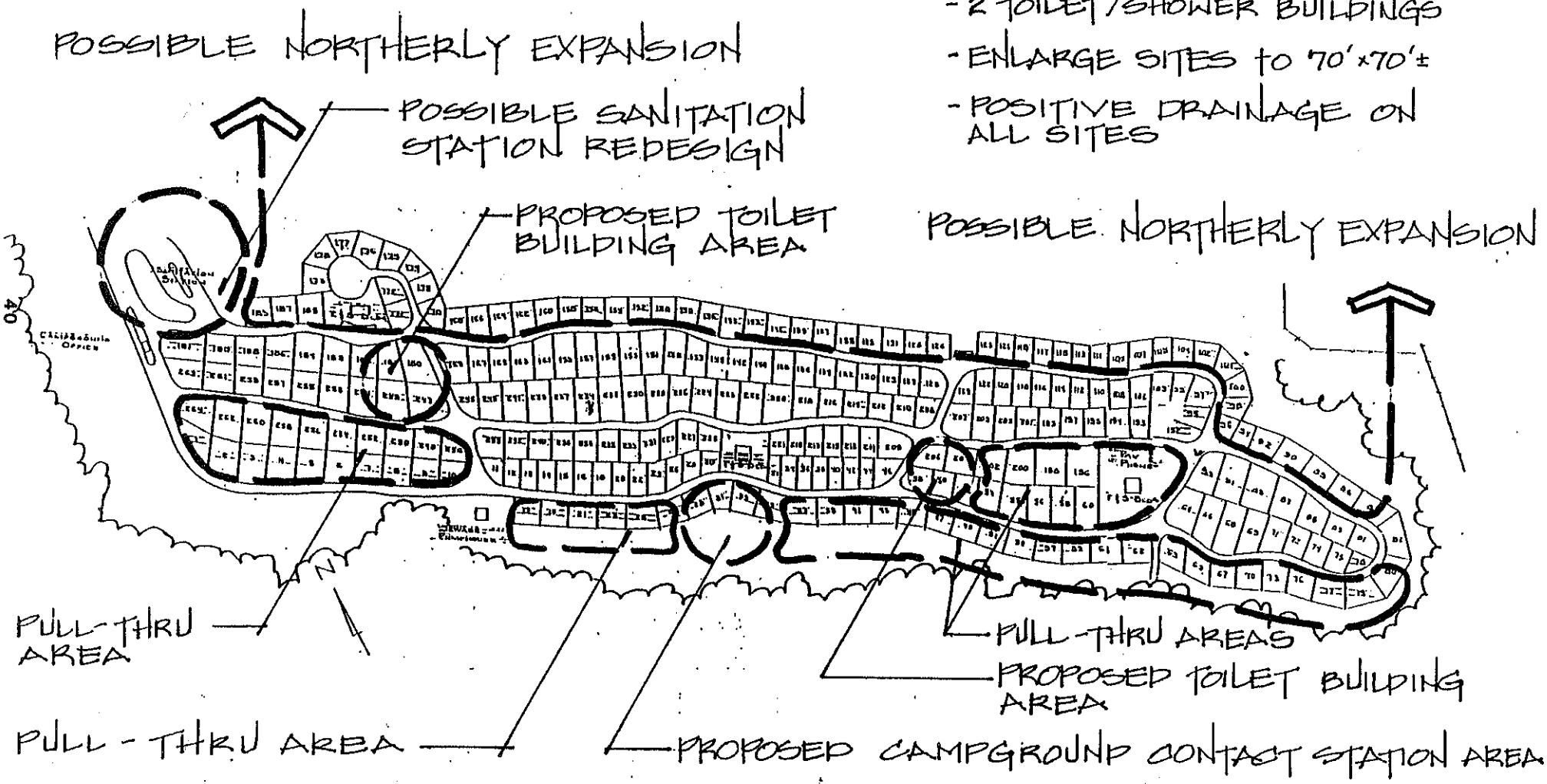
AMPHITHEATER

The existing amphitheater serving the campground, which provides an area for evening programs, will be upgraded to include better access, seating and viewing screen. This area also requires fill material as it is wet during the spring months.

NOTE -

- CONCEPTS FOR CAMPGROUND REDESIGN ARE OUTLINED ON EXISTING CAMPGROUND LAYOUT.

- CURRENTLY, 260 SITES EXIST
- REDESIGN 200 SITES TOTAL
  - 30-50 PULL-THRU'S
  - ALL SITES WILL HAVE FULL HOOK-UPS (Sewer, Water, Electric)
  - 2 TOILET/SHOWER BUILDINGS
  - ENLARGE SITES TO 70'×70'±
  - POSITIVE DRAINAGE ON ALL SITES



CAMPGROUND REDESIGN CONCEPT

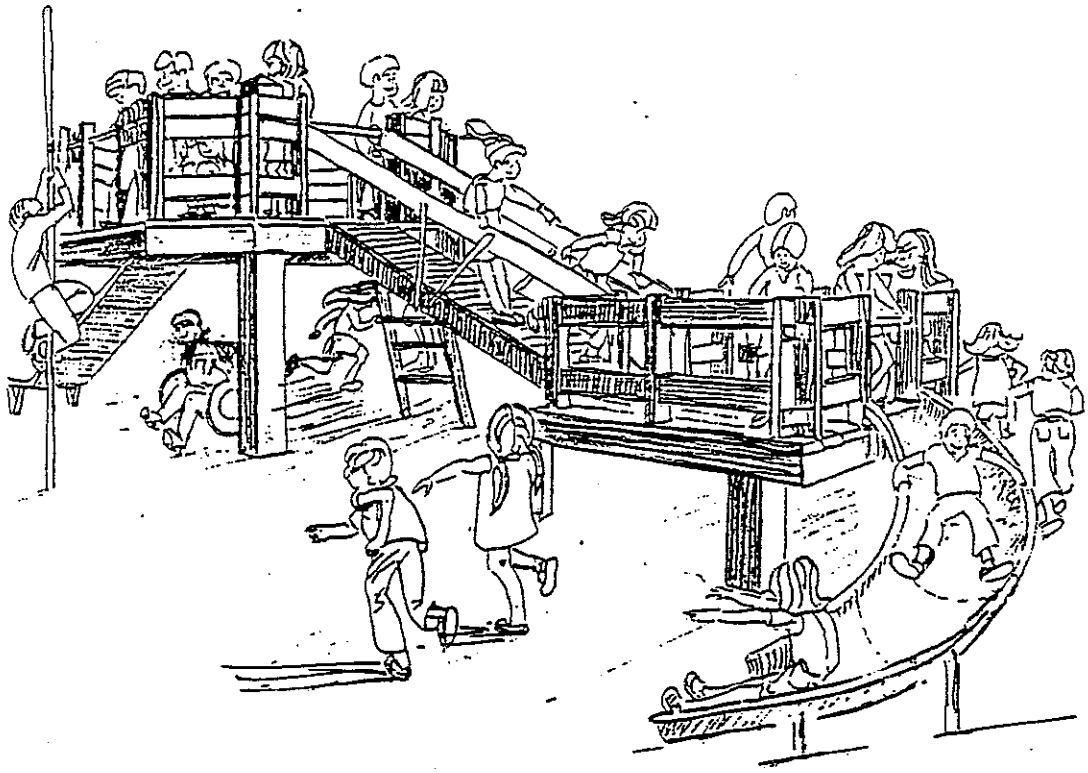
PICNIC AREAS

The day use area offers ample opportunity for picnicking in a variety of settings ranging from wooded picnic sites overlooking the Tobico Lagoon to very open (few trees) sites overlooking Saginaw Bay.

It is recommended however, that several barrier-free sites be developed so that all areas are served by accessible facilities. These facilities would include hard-surface access routes as well as barrier-free tables and cook stoves available at each site.

It is also recommended that a tile drainage system be installed throughout the picnic area in order to eliminate the standing water following extended periods of rain.

The picnic areas are combined with other day use activities, including the beach area, the proposed aquatic center, proposed hard-surface game area and a proposed play structure. The activities just mentioned are discussed in other areas in this report.



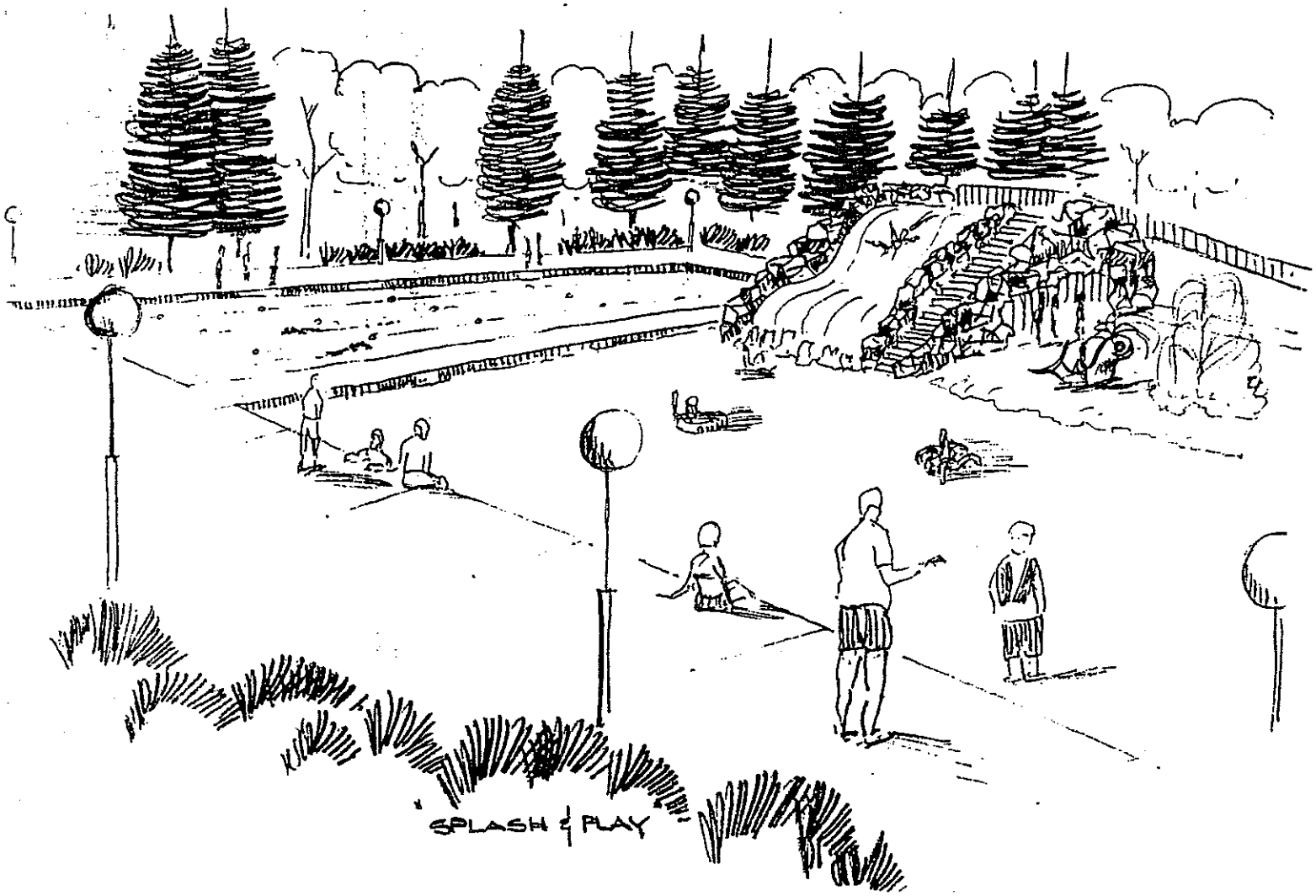
"PICNIC-N-PLAY"

PLAY STRUCTURE

Large play structures, created almost entirely of wood, and providing a wide variety of play/learning conditions and involving different skill levels, is recommended for inclusion into the park master plan by the Advisory Committee.

It is suggested that although the final design approval would come from the Parks and Recreation Division, the structures would be designed and constructed by the local community. The materials required for the project would be provided by the Parks and Recreation Division.

These play structures will serve very young children as well as teenagers and adults. The location, as shown on the master plan, will be readily accessible to both campers and day users.



AQUATIC CENTER

The objective of the aquatic center is to provide water-oriented entertainment for park visitors of all ages. It is recommended by the Advisory Committee that this center include a water slide, a children's shallow play area with a waterfall, fountains and play elements, plus a calm-water beach pool which ranges in depth from zero to four feet. Also, a lap-exercise pool, which has the potential for being covered during the fall and spring seasons, will be a part of this complex.

This center is not intended to replace the beach use, fronting on Saginaw Bay, but rather to supplement it. It will certainly provide a water quality and temperature that is controlled, and will also provide a longer use season for swimming than the existing beach does.

The center will be located adjacent to the existing beach house complex for visitor services and control. The design and landscape treatment of this facility will be in keeping with the character of the park and surrounding area.

HARD COURT GAME AREA

A hard-surface game area for use during the summer months is being recommended to be included in the day use area. This hard surface area will include two regulation-sized tennis courts and two basketball courts. These facilities will provide additional activities for the park visitor, including the camping families.

An existing parking lot surface located at the extreme southeastern end of the day use area will be converted to this use.

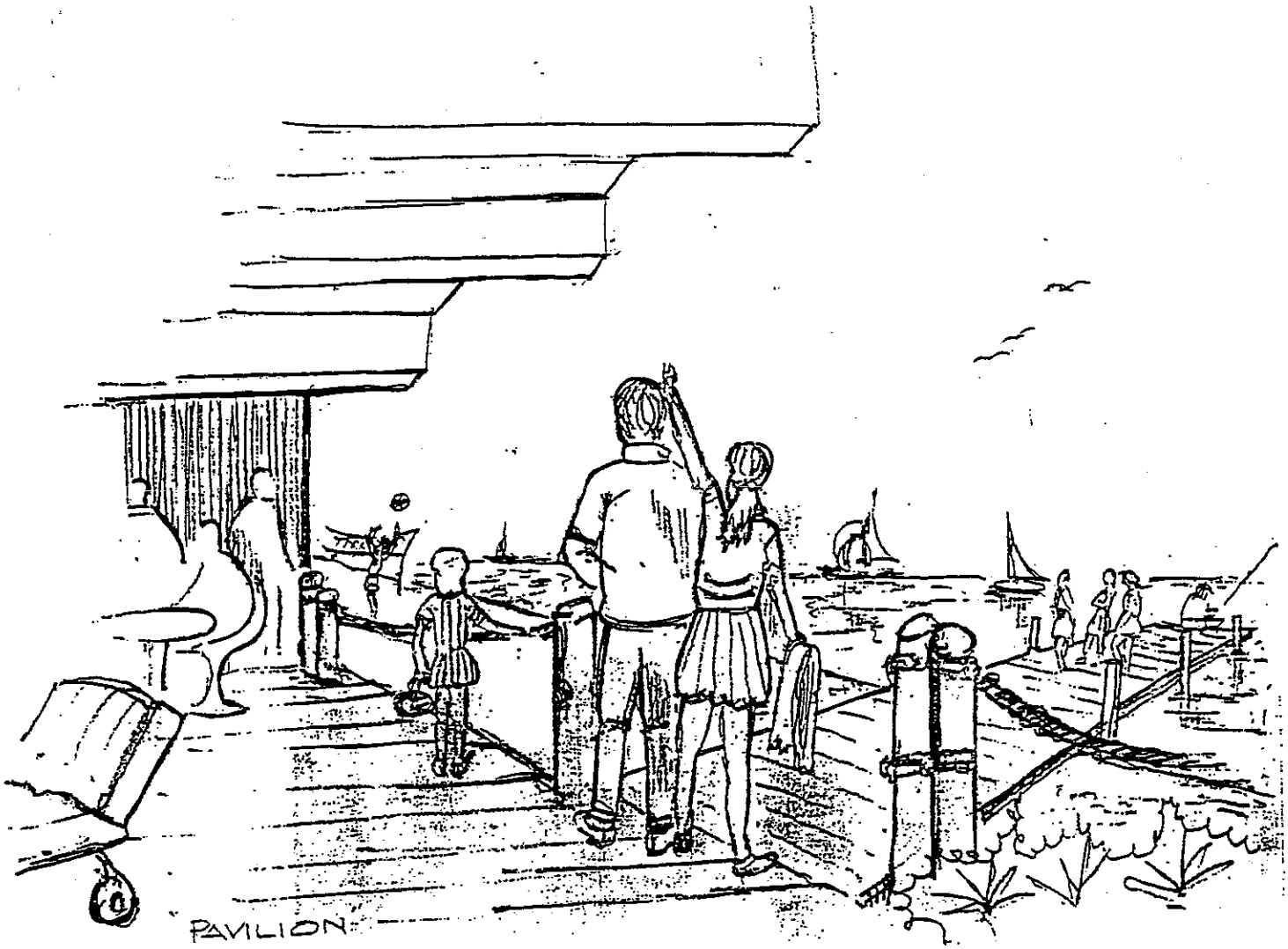
The tennis court facilities are planned for the parking lot surface closest to the Bay. The basketball courts are proposed for the parking surface closest to State Park Drive. The natural island/drainage-way that separates the two areas will be retained. The turn-around that serves the parking will be relocated to the west of this proposed facility.

Some fencing and use of plant material around the perimeter will be revised to protect the hard-court areas from the wind. Night lighting is not planned for these facilities.

VOLLEYBALL COURTS

Beach volleyball has become a very popular outdoor recreation activity. The court is regulation in size, but uses a sand base for the court surface rather than a hard surface. This type of outdoor facility is often found located on the beach using natural sand rather than an artificially created court.

At Bay City, it is being recommended that a minimum of six courts be located between the beach house and the beach as shown on the master plan. Although the sand base for each court would have to be created, it is felt that this would be more desirable than taking up valuable improved beach area. However, if in the future, it is determined that there is sufficient space on the beach fronting Saginaw Bay for volleyball courts to co-exist with other beach activities without conflict, then they can be added as needed.



SUNDECK/PAVILION

A sundeck/pavilion is being planned for the day use area to be located near the south end of the swimming beach. The purpose of this structure is to provide a sheltered area near the beach that offers protection from the weather, as well as bathrooms, and a small food concession area.

The structure would be two levels with the second level serving as an observation/sun deck. The large deck area would also serve as the roof for the pavilion located below it. Access to the second level would be available from both a ramp and stairs.

The ramp to this beach pavilion would extend from the aquatic center, linking the two major day use areas together.

This structure will provide views of much of the day use portion of the park as well as of the beach and Saginaw Bay. It is envisioned as a major user attraction to the park.

The specific location and design of this facility will have to take into consideration winter storms and ice conditions.

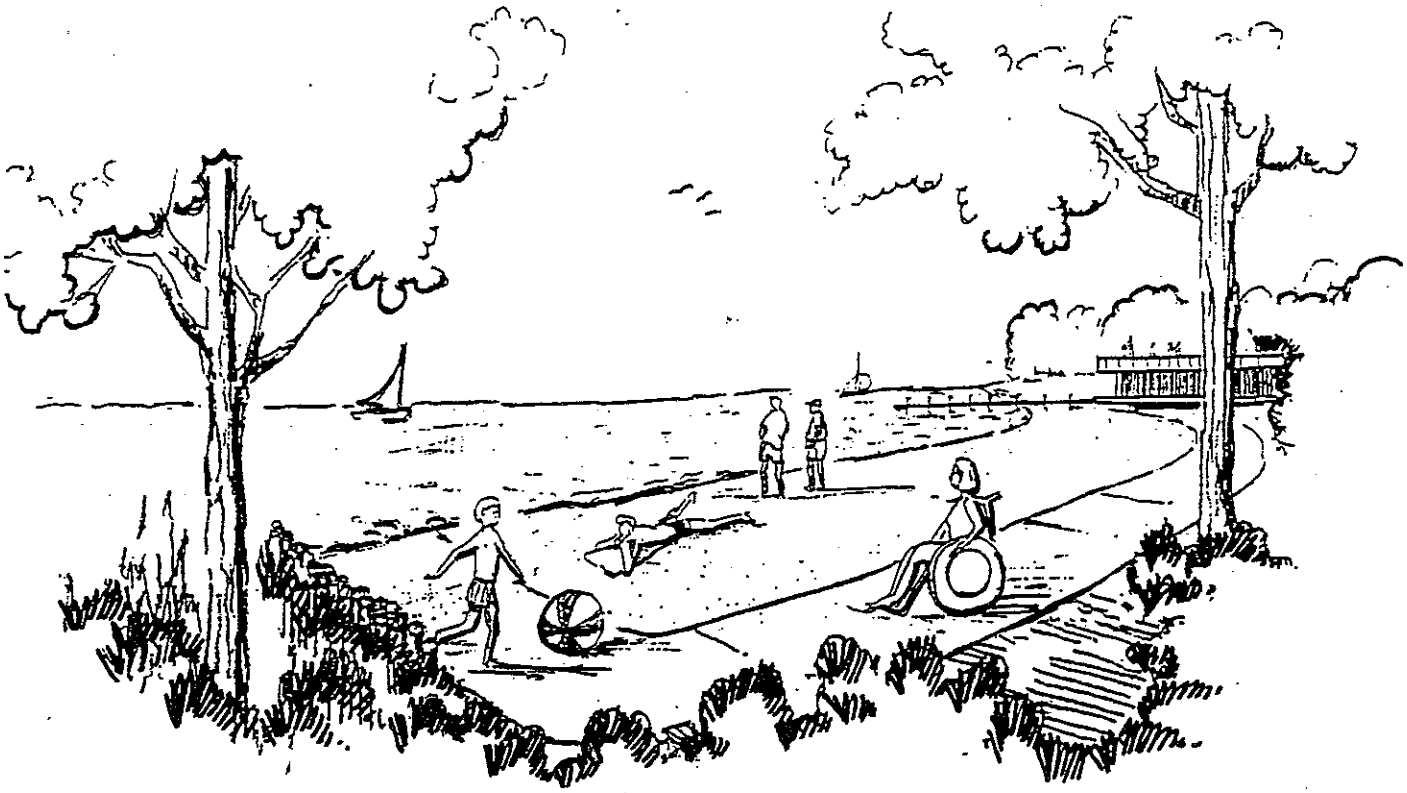
PORTABLE PIER

As was previously discussed in this report, a portable pier which will extend out into Saginaw Bay is being recommended by the Committee. This pier will be accessed from the sundeck/pavilion and will create the southern boarder for the improved beach area as it extends across to reach the waters of the Bay.

The pier will be constructed in sections which can be assembled each spring for summer use and disassemble each fall for winter storage.

The purpose of this pier is to allow park visitors an opportunity to walk out over the Bay. It may also offer limited fishing opportunities. The activities of diving from this pier, as well as pleasure craft tie-ups will not be allowed. However, this pier may be used for accessing the water by bathers.

The actual length (detailed dimensions) and structural supports required for the pier have not been determined at this time.



"BEACH"

BEACH IMPROVEMENT

Nearly all the coastal area shall be reverted to a swimming beach. The exception being a wetland demonstration area, to be located in an appropriate location, an limited to 15% of the coastal area.

As a first step, the 550-foot stretch of Saginaw Bay beach located in front of the existing beach house complex is recommended for improvement and an on-going maintenance program that normally supports a public bathing beach.

The beach limits will be defined by a 10-foot walkway which will separate the beach from the remainder of the day use area. The walkway will provide access points along the entire length of the improved beach, including down to the water's edge.

The purpose of this beach fronting on the Bay is to provide a natural sand area for sunbathing, wading and access into the Bay waters for other water-oriented activities.

It is recommended that the DNR secure the permits necessary to allow for ongoing maintenance of this improved beach area, as well as any other beach areas that are approved. It is also recommended that a "wetland bank" be developed as a part of the ongoing land acquisition program for Tobico Marsh to be used for future beach mitigation projects. It will be necessary for the DNR to secure the necessary permits for this process, as well.

FAMILY CABINS

Cabin facilities are very popular throughout Michigan's State Park system. They provide an opportunity for park visitors to experience an overnight(s) stay in a cabin located in a rustic setting, without actually owning it.

It is recommended by the Advisory Committee that no fewer than three, but no more than six cabins with housekeeping opportunities, be located in the areas indicated on the master plan.

In addition to the sleeping quarters (6-8 people) the cabins would contain a bathroom, running water, electricity, and a small kitchen area. A central heating system would be required allowing for year-round use. A fireplace would be optional.

The use of these cabins would be restricted to vacationing park visitors and will be separated from other park activities as much as possible so that a conflict of use does not arise.

BAY ACCESS

There is and existing, unimproved access trail that extends from the southeastern parking area to the shoreline of Saginaw Bay. This access serves small watercraft during the summer months as well as the access route for the ice fishermen during the winter months.

This access route is a very important element in the existing and future use of the park, particularly during the winter season, and therefore it should be continued. It is not, however, planned to improve this access site, but rather to continue its use as is.

BAY WALK

It is recommended that a hard-surfaced boardwalk be developed adjacent to the beach, linking the toilet shelter building, which serves the southeastern parking/beach area, with all of the activity use areas along the edge of the beach, and ultimately connecting with the bridge crossing at the mouth of the Tobico Lagoon. This pathway will provide visitors an opportunity to enjoy the scenic views along the entire Saginaw Bay waterfront involved within the boundaries of the park. Benches will be provided at strategic locations to enhance the enjoyment of the user

"CULTURAL TRAIL"
"SHIP ON THE ROCKS"

TRAILS

Andersen Trail - The existing Andersen Trail links the Jennison Nature Center with the Tobico Marsh, using the abandoned railroad right of way (R.R.R.O.W.). This trail consists of a hard surface with interpretive and wildlife observation stops along its course.

It is recommended that the Andersen Trail be continued from its origin at the Nature Center, southeasterly towards the community of Bay City. The alignment of the proposed trail would make use of the abandoned R.R.R.O.W., as much as possible. This trail would also consist of a hard-surface, providing for hiking and bicycle use.

At this point in time, the entire rail corridor linking Bay City with the park is not in public ownership. It is therefore recommended that Bay City and the State of Michigan join forces to create such a trail "link-up" in the future.

Cultural Trail - A cultural trail is being proposed for the park which will serve as the interior park-trail network. The trail alignment will meander throughout the park linking up the various use areas. For example: the cultural trail will not only provide access to the Andersen Trail at several locations, but will also link the campground to the entire day use area.

At select locations along this totally accessible, hard-surfaced trail, areas will be set aside to display art pieces (sculpture). This is an opportunity to display the work of local artists as well as add interest for those visitors using the trail. The details of the sculpture including theme, size and material will be monitored very closely by the park and or advisory group to insure high quality and theme compliance. It is envisioned that a part of the theme would include the history of the Bay City Region and could be used to further link the community with the park. These display areas will also be considered as resting stops, as benches will be located at each area for the convenience of the visitor.

TOBICO MARSH

The Tobico Marsh State Game Area was acquired by the State primarily because of its value for waterfowl migration and breeding habitat. The combining of the Tobico Marsh State Game Area and the Bay City State Park into one management unit (Bay City State Recreation Area) does not reduce the value of this area, nor does it change the management goals that are currently in place as established by the Wildlife Division of the DNR.

The following are planned activities for the Tobico Marsh.

1. Protection of waterfowl habitat: Continue to provide and enhance nesting, brood rearing, and migrational habitat for native and waterfowl species.

Strategies which will assist to accomplish this activity:

Design and implement a project to create additional habitat for breeding waterfowl is SW 1/4, Section 24, T15N, R4E by creating several dugout potholes. This must be further investigated before action can be selected.

Create openings in dense cattail stands in Sections 12 and 13, T15N, R4E to accommodate additional pairs of breeding waterfowl, enhance brood rearing habitat and enhance nongame bird-breeding habitat (especially for least bittern, and black tern) and feeding areas (primarily herons and egrets). There are several methods that might be used to accomplish this goal. One method would be to draw the water level of the marsh down right after waterfowl season, cut the cattails off at ice level (by whatever means possible) and then trap run off water during winter and early spring to kill out cattail stands.

Create secure waterfowl nesting habitat in upland areas: a) for wood ducks by leaving oak woodlands unmanaged to provide ample nesting cavities; b) for ground nesting species by mowing brush stands (up to 40 acres) and planting meadow grasses and forbs in approximately 20 acres of the area.

Purchase approximately 275 acres of wetland or nesting cover within the project boundary (Figure 5), at (SW 1/4, NW 1/4, Section 13, T15N, R4E, 40 acres), (SE 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 11, T15N, R4E, 40 acres), (E 1/3, SW 1/4, SW 1/4 Section 13, T15N, R4E, 11 acres), (NW 1/4, Section 24, T15N, R4E, 113 acres), (NE 1/4, Section 13, T15N, R4E, 15.6 acres) and (E 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 23, T15N, R4E, 12 acres).

Stabilize water levels in dug wetlands in S 1/2, SE 1/4, S25, T15N, R4E by placing two culverts (40 feet long, 24 inches) in present trail area.

Work with Department administrators, other public agencies, private individuals, and legislative leadership to minimize water withdrawals from the marsh during summer months.

Action must be taken to allow water from Saginaw Bay to recharge the marsh.

Monitor occurrence of purple loosestrife in marsh (presently found only along Parish Road) and take action to control it by spot treatment with approved herbicide or by biological controls.

2. Protect special Community: Continue to pursue protection and enhancement of the special lake plain prairie community that has been identified in the area. This special lake plain wet prairie community must be burned on a rotational basis if it is to persist. Subunits of the prairie should be identified and scheduled for burning so that each subunit is burned once every 4-5 years. This will control woody brush encroachment, limit invasive cool-season grass competition, and provide optimal conditions for the prairie. If the prairie is not burned, it will eventually be lost.

3. Enhance Fisheries Resources: Continue to provide fish spawning and rearing habitat in conjunction with Fisheries Division. This can be accomplished by providing access to Tobico Marsh spawning areas for game fish by providing for fish passage in and out of Tobico Marsh. Therefore, it is essential that Parks and Recreation Division continue to maintain a manually operated control gate in cooperation with Bangor Township and MDNR Fisheries Division.

4. Improve Marsh Water Levels: Encourage completion of a study that will determine why the water levels have dropped within the Marsh, as well as provide corrective measures that will ensure a healthy marsh in the future. This is very important to both the Wildlife and Fisheries programs.

5. Enhance Recreational Opportunity: Provide additional recreational hunting opportunities primarily for waterfowl hunting and fur bearer harvest. In addition, opportunities for nature study in conjunction with the Jennison Nature Center (Saginaw Bay Visitor Center) should continue.

The following strategies will assist with this objective:

Create six perimeter parking lots to allow access into the area.

Extend the area open to public hunting 1/2 mile further south in the main portion of the marsh. This will allow boat access and provide realistic waterfowl hunting opportunities while reducing refuge size. A similar refuge at the nearby Nayanquing Point Wildlife Area is effective, and operates well. Although Tobico Marsh does not provide the same food resources as the Nayanquing Point Refuge, it will continue to be used by significant numbers of waterfowl.

Clear and mow access trails into Section 24 and Section 25, T15N, R4E from the Schmidt Road parking area.

Repost refuge and public hunting areas annually prior to September 15.

Continue to maintain and improve where necessary, the hiking trails and observation areas located in the preserve area.

Continue to provide controlled access to the parking area that serves as a trail head for Tobico Marsh.

6. Archeological Discoveries: During the past few years significant archeological discoveries have been made within the Tobico Marsh area. Habitat management activities will be planned and executed in a manner that will conserve these resources.

MASTER PLAN

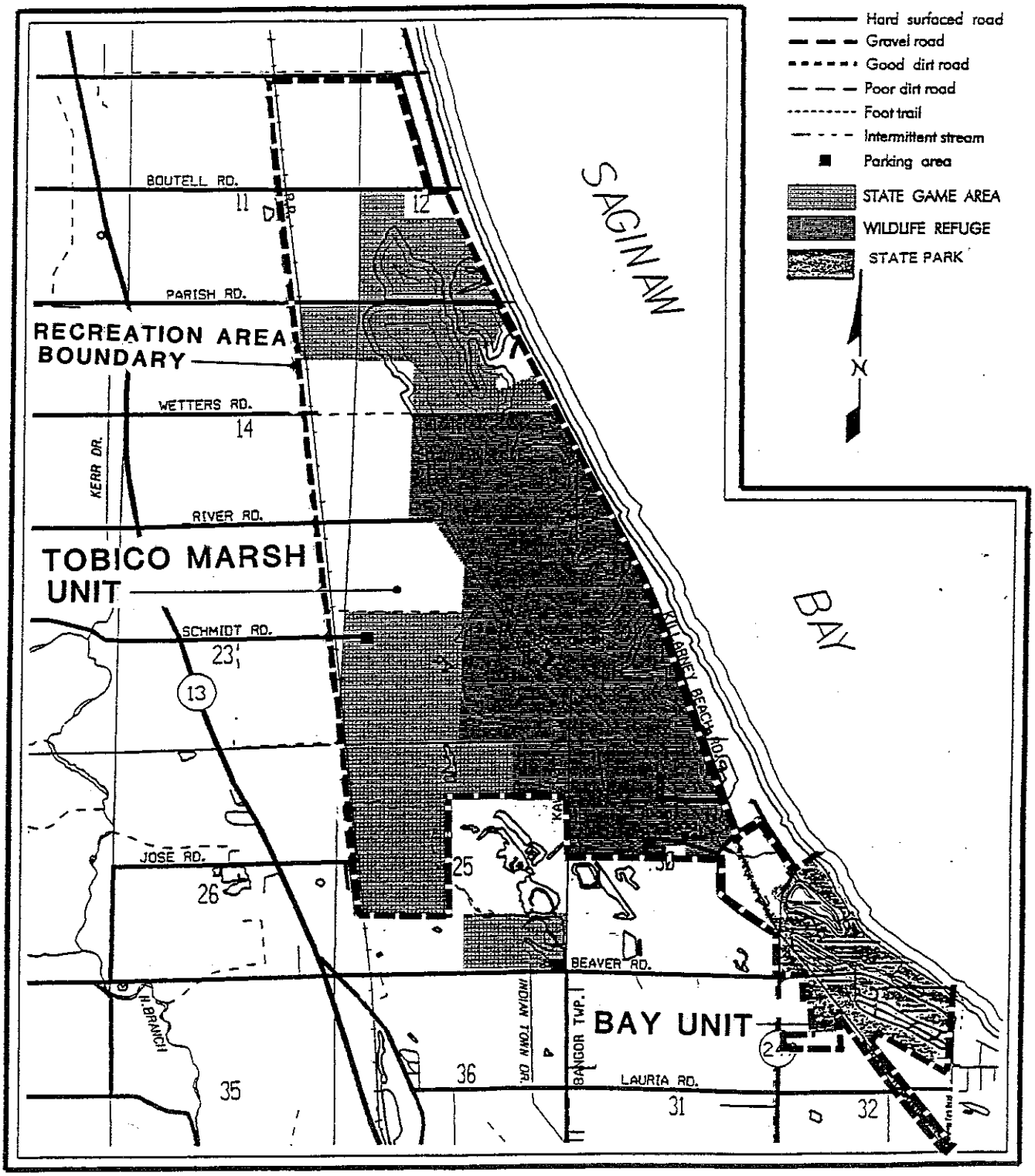
MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN

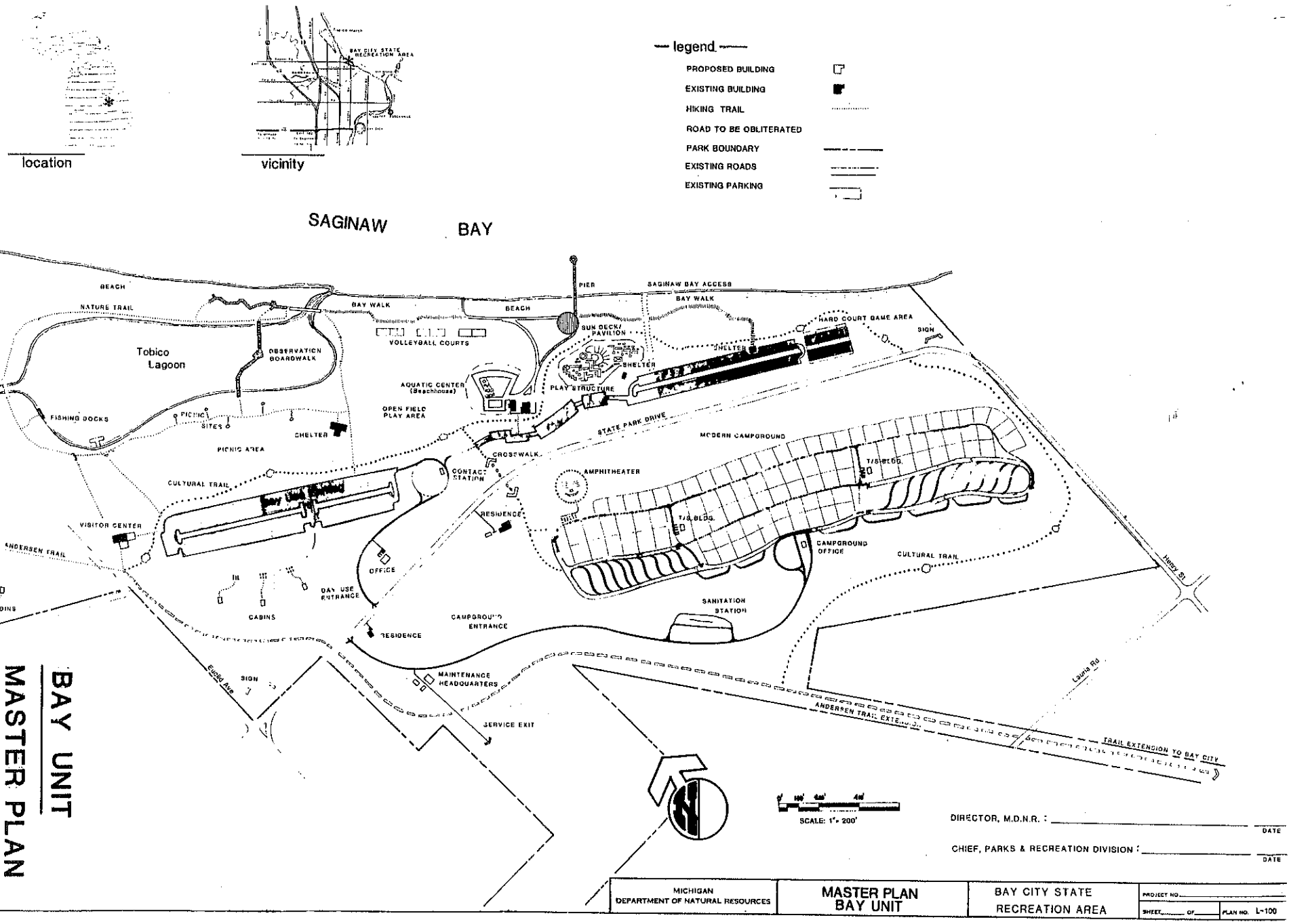
Scale

0 1 2 Miles



MASTER PLAN

(SHEET 1 of 3)



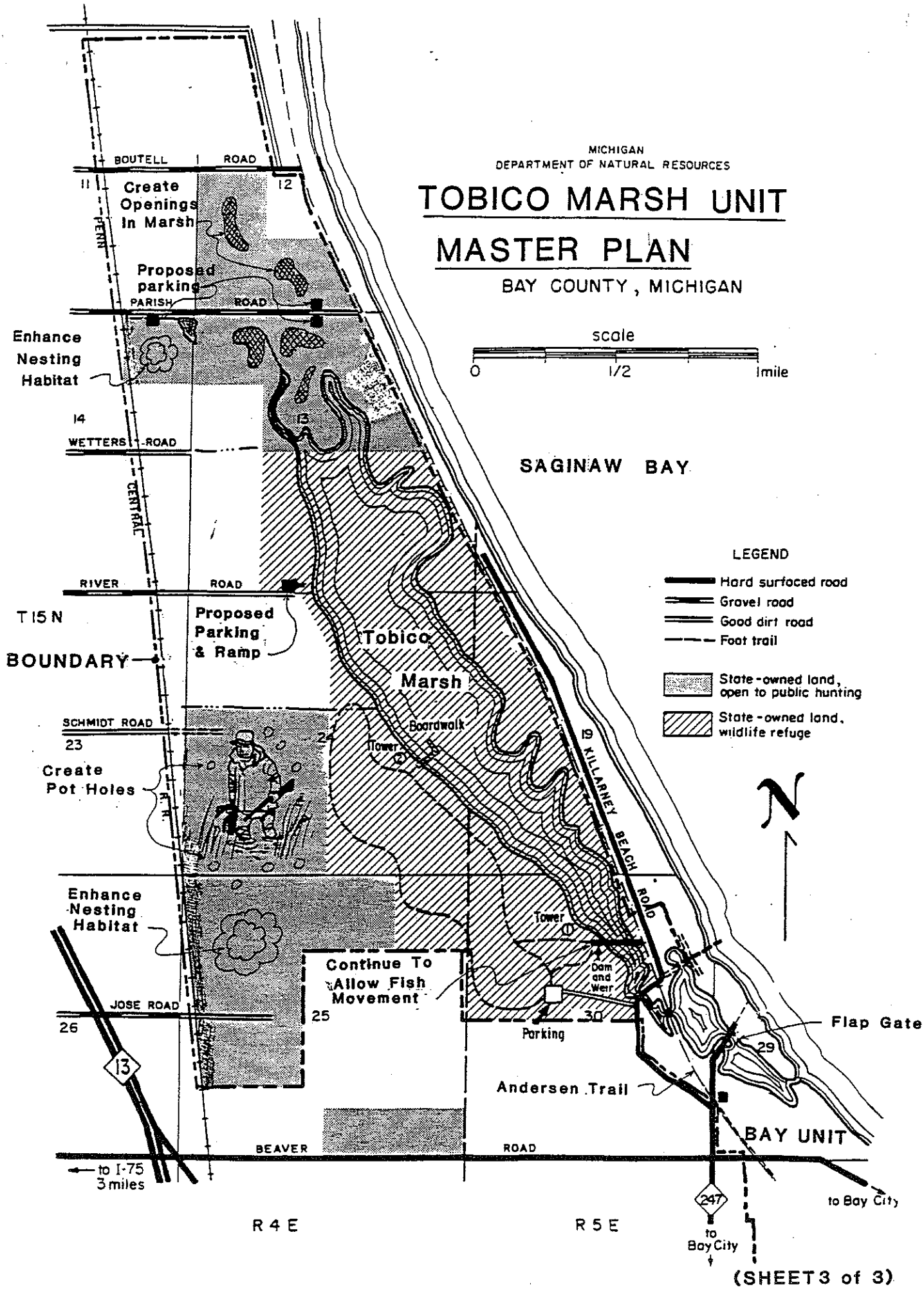
DIRECTOR, M.D.N.R. : _____ DATE

CHIEF, PARKS & RECREATION DIVISION : _____ DATE

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	MASTER PLAN BAY UNIT	BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA	PROJECT NO. ____ SHEET ____ OF ____ PLAN NO. L-100

BAY UNIT MASTER PLAN

(SHEET 2 of 3)


MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
TOBICO MARSH UNIT
MASTER PLAN
BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN
scale
0
1/2
1mile
SAGINAW BAY
LEGEND
Hard surfaced road
Gravel road
Good dirt road
Foot trail
State-owned land, open to public hunting
State-owned land, wildlife refuge
N
BOUTELL ROAD
PARISH ROAD
WETTERS ROAD
RIVER ROAD
SCHMIDT ROAD
JOSE ROAD
BEAVER ROAD
PENN CENTRAL
KILLARNEY BEACH ROAD
T 15 N
R 4 E
R 5 E
BOUNDARY
Create Openings In Marsh
Proposed parking
Enhance Nesting Habitat
Proposed Parking & Ramp
Tobico Marsh
Boardwalk
Tower
Create Pot Holes
Enhance Nesting Habitat
Continue To Allow Fish Movement
Dam and Weir
Parking
Flap Gate
Andersen Trail
BAY UNIT
to I-75 3 miles
to Bay City
to Bay City
11
12
13
14
19
23
24
25
26
29
30
13
247

(SHEET 3 of 3)

APPENDIX

Bay City State Park Boundary Land Description :

T15N R4E

Section 11	That fractional portion lying easterly of the West ROW line of the D&M RR.
Section 12	That fractional portion of the Northwest 1/4 lying Westerly of the West ROW line of Kolbiaz Drive.
Section 12	That fractional portion of the South 1/2 lying Westerly of the abandoned D&M RR West ROW line.
Section 13	That fractional portion lying Westerly of the abandoned D&M RR West ROW line.
Section 14	That fractional portion lying Easterly of the West ROW line of the D&M RR.
Section 23	That fractional portion lying Easterly of the West ROW line of the D&M RR.
Section 24	Entire
Section 25	The North 1/2 of the Northeast 1/4.
Section 25	That fractional portion of the North 3/4 of the West 1/2 lying Easterly of the West ROW line of the D&M RR.
Section 26	That fractional portion lying Easterly of the West ROW line of the D&M RR.

T15N R5W

Section 18	That fractional portion lying Westerly of the abandoned D&M RR West ROW line.
Section 19	That fractional portion of the North 7/16 lying Westerly of the abandoned D&M RR West ROW line.
Section 19	That fractional portion of the South 9/16 lying Westerly of the abandoned D&M RR East ROW line.
Section 29	That fractional portion of the Northwest 1/4 lying South of the West line of Ploof's Beach Subdivision.
Section 29	All of the South 1/2.
Section 30	All of the North 1/2 lying West of the abandoned D&M RR East ROW line.
Section 30	The area of the North 1/2 lying South of the South line of Little Killarney Beach Subdivision and South of the West line of Ploof's Beach Subdivision.
Section 30	All of the South 1/2 lying East of the center line of Tobico Road.
Section 32	All of the North 1/2 of the center 1/2 of the section lying North of the abandoned D&M RR East ROW line and North of a line described as follows; Starting at the Southeast corner of the Southeast 1/4 of the Northeast 1/4, thence N2dE 410 feet, thence W 160.4 feet, thence N61d14mW 1584.6 feet, thence S39d09m30sW 323.7 feet to the East ROW line of the abandoned D&M RR.
Section 32	The East 1/2 of the Northwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 lying North and South of the abandoned D&M RR.
Section 32	The East 175 feet of the Northwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4.
Section 32	The North 8 acres of the Southeast 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4.
Section 32	The 100 foot ROW of the abandoned D&M RR running from the Northwest to the Southeast of the section.

BAY CITY STATE RECREATION AREA
Projected Facility Costs

All of the items listed are critical to the future of the park. However, priority should be given to those facilities that stimulate new use and encourage an orderly process during the implementation of the master plan, as proposed.

RECREATIONAL USER FACILITIES:

*	Move and Restore the Beach	$25,000
*	Construction of Large Play Structure	$500,000
*	Construction of the Trail System	
	- Bay Walk	$50,000
	- Cultural Trail	$100,000
	- Extend Andersen Trail to the South	$125,000
	- Tobico Lagoon Observation Boardwalk	$75,000
*	Sun Deck and Pier Structure	$300,000
*	Aquatic Center Complex	$2,500,00
*	Hard Court Game Area	$50,000
*	Volleyball Courts	$25,000
*	Build Cabins	$300,000
*	Campground Development	$1,700,000

SUPPORT FACILITIES:

*	Change Day Use Access and Control	$90,000
*	New Campground Road and Campground Office	$195,000
*	Construct the Management Unit Headquarters	$150,000
*	Move Maintenance Headquarters	$150,000

LAND ACQUISITION:

* Acquire Approximately 650 acres
  - Located within Project Boundary
  - As property becomes available

Board of County Road Commissioners
County of Bay

COMMISSIONERS:

EUGENE S. HARANDA
Chairman

GERALD M. REDMOND
Vice-Chairman

ERWIN M. NEARING
Member

2600 EAST BEAVER ROAD, KAWKAWLIN, MICHIGAN 48631
ROBERT A. FUDGE, P.E., MANAGING DIRECTOR
TELEPHONE: (517) 684-4610 FAX: (517) [illegible]

DEPARTMENT OF WATER & SEWER
D. LARRY DULL, DIRECTOR
3933 PATTERSON ROAD
BAY CITY, MICHIGAN 48706
(517) 684-3883

RECEIVED
DEC 02 1993
Bay County Planning Dept.

RESOLUTION - CLOSING A PORTION OF BEAVER ROAD

Commissioner Redmond offered the following resolution and moved for its adoption:

WHEREAS, The Commission has determined that the public and emergency services desires the use of Beaver Road through the Bay City State Park, and

WHEREAS, The Bangor Township Board opposes the closing of Beaver Road through the Bay City State Park,

BE IT RESOLVED, That it is not in the best interest of the public that Beaver Road through the Bay City State Park be closed.

Motion was seconded and adopted on a roll call vote:
Yeas: Nearing, Haranda, & Redmond

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution made and adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners, County of Bay, Michigan on the 24th day of November, 1993.

Julie K. Bowker

Julie K. Bowker, Clerk of the Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND NOTES

TOBICO MARSH STATE GAME AREA

MASTER PLAN

Tobico Marsh State Game Area was established because of its value to waterfowl and wetland dependent wildlife species. It is located within the Saginaw Bay Focus area of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Basin Joint Venture.

KEY ISSUES

Water Management

Historic:

Historically Tobico Marsh functioned as a coastal wetland. During periods of high Great Lakes water levels the marsh contained deeper water, probably opened up somewhat and undoubtedly experienced dramatic increases in muskrat populations. During periods of low Great Lakes water levels mudflats were exposed in the marsh and emergent wetland vegetation became dense.

Recent:

Recently two water control structures were added to the system. A water control weir, placed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in 1965, was constructed to keep water in the marsh during periods of low Great Lakes water levels. During periods of high Great Lakes levels the boards in the structure were overtopped and water entered the marsh from the lake. Keeping water in the marsh during lower water periods improved conditions for breeding waterfowl and has allowed an extensive and desirable submergent plant community to develop. This plant community is especially important to diving ducks.

In 1974 the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, acting on the request of local residents, constructed a large flap gate between the State Game Area and Saginaw Bay to protect private land from flooding. This has eliminated water recharge into the marsh from the lake. It restricted fish movement into and out of the marsh. The Bay County Drain Commission removed the flap gate in the fall of 1990.

A third factor that affects water levels in the marsh is the use of marsh water for irrigation of nearby agricultural fields. Water is drawn out of Lesperance Drain causing a back flow of water out of the marsh into the drain. This activity lowers the water level in the marsh during the growing season, causing emergent vegetation to become more robust and densely populated which in turn results in less waterfowl use. Complaints about this withdrawal have been recorded as far back as 1978.

Some contaminants have reached the marsh ecosystem from Hartley and Hartley Landfill. Although the landfill site has been identified for state superfund cleanup, the time frame for cleanup action is uncertain.
Waterfowl production and hunting opportunities are limited because of cattail density in the northern portion of the marsh and limited public parking facilities.

A portion of the area contains special plant communities. These communities do not pose special management problems and significantly add to the value and diversity of the area.

Within the last two years significant archeological discoveries have been made at Tobico. Habitat management activities will be planned and executed in amanner that will conserve these resources.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

A. Provide and enhance nesting, brood rearing, and migrational habitat for native waterfowl species.

B. Protect and enhance special lake plain prairie community that has been identified on the area.

C. Provide fish spawning and rearing habitat in conjunction with Fisheries Division.

D. Provide additional recreational opportunity primarily for waterfowl hunting, furbearer harvest, and nature study.

E. Provide nature interpretation in conjunction with Parks Division.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

Provision of Waterfowl Habitat

Design and implement a project to create additional habitat for breeding waterfowl at SW 1/4, S24, T15N, R4E (see Figure 4, page 14), either by creating a shallow impoundment, several dug-out potholes or a combination of the two methods. (Cost could be as little as $3,000 for a low dam or as much as $70,000 for potholes). This must be further investigated before the most prudent course of action can be selected. Funding possibilities, DU MARSH, Michigan Duck Hunters Association, Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation.

Create a very small water control structure to enhance a six to eight acre cattail marsh in SE 1/4, S24, T15N, R4E, for waterfowl (primarily wood duck and mallard) breeding and brood rearing habitat. (Cost could be as little as $100 for sandbags, etc. or as much as $1,500 for a small concrete spillway). Funding, local DU or Michigan Duck Hunters Association Chapter.

Create openings in dense cattail stands at S12 and S13, T15N, R4E, to accommodate additional pairs of breeding waterfowl, enhance brood rearing habitat and enhance nongame bird breeding habitat (especially for least bittern and black tern) and feeding areas (herons and egrets primarily). There are several methods that might be used to accomplish this goal. One method would be to draw the water level of the marsh down, right after waterfowl season, cut the cattails off at ice level (by whatever means possible) and then trap runoff water during winter and early spring to kill out cattail stands. (A rough estimate of cost would be $3,000 for materials and manpower). Funding, combination of Michigan Duck Hunters Association chapters, Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation, other private and public sources.

Create secure waterfowl nesting habitat in upland areas: 1) for wood ducks by leaving oak woodlands unmanaged to provide ample nesting cavities; 2) for ground nesting species by mowing brush stands (up to 40 acres) and planting meadow grasses and forbs in approximately 20 acres of the area. (Cost: mowing - $500 every third year, meadow management and planting $2,500). Funding would be through contractual services, supplies and materials (CSS&M).

Purchase approximately 275 acres of wetland or nesting cover within the project boundary (see Figure 5, page 15) at (SW 1/4, NW 1/4, S13, T15N, R4E, 40 acres), (SE 1/4, SE 1/4, S11, T15N, R4E, 40 acres), (N 1/2, SW 1/4, S12, T15N, R4E, 16 acres), (NW 1/4, SW 1/4, S13, T15N, R4E, 40 acres), (E 1/3, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, S13, T15N, R4E, 11 acres), (NW 1/4, S24, T15N, R4E, 113 acres), (NE 1/4, S13, T15N, R4E, 15.6 acres) and (E 1/4, SW 1/4, S23, T15N, R4E, 12 acres). Funding through Michigan Duck Stamp, DU MARSH, Michigan Land Trust Fund.

Stabilize water levels in dug wetlands in S 1/2, SE 1/4, S25, T15N, R4E, by placing two culverts (40 feet long, 24 inches) in present trail area. Funding through CSS&M.

Work with Fisheries Division, other public agencies and private individuals to: 1) minimize water withdrawals from the marsh during summer months and; 2) allow water from Saginaw Bay to recharge the marsh inexpensively. This will produce a more natural system while at the same time allowing for more effective management.

Monitor occurrence of purple loosestrife in marsh (presently found only along Parish Road) and take action to control it. Spot treat with herbicide.

Protect Special Community

A lake plain wet prairie has been identified at Tobico Marsh State Game Area. It is registered as a Michigan Natural Area and will require special management practices, especially controlled burning, if it is to persist.

Enhance Fisheries Resources

Provide access to Tobico Marsh spawning areas for gamefish by working with Fisheries Division to provide fish passage in and out of Tobico Marsh, and install a manually operated water control gate and establish a cooperative agreement with Bangor Township and MDNR Fisheries to open and close the gate to assure fish passage and provide flood protection.

Enhance Recreation Opportunity

Create five parking lots and improve Schmidt Road (1/4 mile) to allow access onto the area (see Figure 6, page 17). This is subject to approval by SHPO.

Clear and mow access trails into S24 and S25, T15N, R4E from Schmidt Road parking area, subject to approval by SHPO.

Re-post refuge and public hunting area annually prior to September 15.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR TOBICO MARSH

James P. Baker, Acting District 8 Fisheries Biologist

Tobico Marsh has historically served as a spawning and nursery area for several species of fish from Saginaw Bay, with northern pike being the most important game fish. The Marsh is currently one of the largest surviving wetlands connected to Saginaw Bay. It has the potential to become a major spawning and nursery area for pike if problems of fish passage between the Marsh and the Bay can be resolved.

There are three obstacles to fish passage between the Marsh and Saginaw Bay:

1. The current low levels of the Great Lakes have caused expansion of the beach at the mouth of the Tobico Lagoon. The channel flowing from the outlet of the Lagoon currently crosses more than 200 yards of sand beach to reach the Bay. The channel spreads into a wide shallow delta near its confluence with the Bay. This lack of water depth causes stranding of pike attempting to enter the Marsh to spawn. (We have documented stranding of northern pike during the spawning period in 1989 and 1990).

2. If fish are successful in negotiating the outlet channel from the Bay to the Tobico Lagoon, the flap gate flood control structure which separates the Marsh from the Lagoon precludes fish passage into the Marsh proper. Fish passage is only possible during periods of runoff of sufficient magnitude to open the flap gate. Fish that enter the Marsh frequently become trapped there during low runoff periods. Depletion of dissolved oxygen levels caused by natural decay processes have caused fish kills in the Marsh on several occasions. The most recent major fish kill in Tobico Marsh occurred in 1987.

3. Fish passage into the upper reaches of the Marsh is periodically blocked by beaver dams in the vicinity of the eastern dike. (This dike was constructed in the early 1920's by the Tobico Hunt Club to maintain the water level in the hunting area).

All of these problems can be overcome and free fish passage can be ensured.

The flap gate flood control structure that separates the Marsh from the Tobico Lagoon is of primary importance. This gate must be removed and replaced by a flood control system that can remain open during periods of normal or low Great Lakes water levels. Such a system could then be closed manually if the danger of flooding to private property along Killarney Beach became imminent. At all other times, free fish passage would be maintained between the Marsh and the Lagoon. If the flap gate is left in place, all other measures to provide fish passage would be meaningless.

Passage of fish from the Lagoon to the Bay could be provided most economically by stabilizing the outlet channel. This could be accomplished by lining the channel with a strip of waterproof synthetic material to prevent the water from cutting down through sand or spreading into a delta at the mouth. The liner could be held in place by some combination of rock riprap, sandbags, and sand backfill in such a manner as to minimize any negative aesthetic impacts that such a channel would have on the swimming beach area. Such a channel could easily be lengthened if water levels continue to decline. If water levels rise, the low profile of the canal would minimize the hazard to small boat navigation. (Even if water levels again reach the record highs of 1987, the end of the canal would be in approximately two feet of water. Only very small boats can venture into water this shallow. Boats this small are generally not utilized on Saginaw Bay).

It seems unlikely that construction of a stabilized outlet channel will increase opportunities for poaching of spawning fish. The open nature of the beach facilitates easy observation of the entire area (even on moonless nights) by Conservation Officers. Currently, Conservation Officers patrol the area intensively during fish spawning runs.

In order to ensure fish passage into the upper reaches of the Tobico Marsh, beaver activity at the earthen dike must be controlled, and beaver dam debris must be periodically removed from the spillway. The entire Marsh should be maintained at the same water level.

The Tobico Marsh contains some of the best remaining northern pike spawning habitat contiguous with Saginaw Bay. Pike populations in Saginaw Bay are currently depauperate, due primarily to the destruction of their wetland spawning habitat by urbanization and agriculture. If fish passage can be guaranteed, the Tobico Marsh could become a major spawning and nursery area for northern pike and could be instrumental in the rebuilding of pike populations in the Saginaw Bay. In addition, the State Park will benefit from fish passage because all species of fish will be attracted into the outlet channel and the Tobico Lagoon. The Lagoon is open to fishing and attracts many anglers that fish from shore, in small boats, and through the ice. Continuous fish passage would help to provide better fishing opportunities on a year-round basis.

BAY AREA

CONVENTION
& VISITORS
BUREAU

September 28, 1994

Mr. O. J. Scherschlight, Chief
DNR Parks & Recreation
P.O. Box 30028
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Scherschlight:

I am writing on behalf of the Bay City State Park Citizens Advisory Committee. As you know, our group is made up of concerned community representatives. As part our discussions we agreed to the benefits of dredging the Lagoon at the park to provide additional fishing opportunities.

A common concern I hear in my efforts to promote our community is that you need a boat to access the game fish of the Saginaw Bay area. As a result, there is a demand for bank fishing opportunities that provides both good fishing and a scenic or natural setting. Although Bank fishing does occur along the Saginaw River and tributaries in the in the warm weather months, there are limiting factors to availability. Access, productivity, esthetics are all issues in attempting to find an appropriate location to fish from shore. A final issue is the danger factor when youth fish along the Saginaw River. It is a large river with significant currents is not an appropriate body of water for youth to utilize for recreation of any sort. With these factors in mind, creating additional bank fishing opportunities would be beneficial for the area. It should also provide an additional incentive to visit the park.

We would appreciate your continued attention to the completion of the dredging project. If you have questions concerning the Bay Area's interest in the park or this particular issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rivet
Executive Director

CC: Terry Sheehan
Larry Miller

Commerce One Building • 901 Saginaw Street • Bay City, MI • 48708 • 517/893-1202 • 800/424-5114 • Fax 517/893-7016