

Chapter 3
Recreation and Resource Inventories

Heart of the Lakes Area Recreation Plan

Recreation Inventory

The recreation inventory for the Heart of the Lakes is comprised of all of the parks and recreation facilities and programs provided in the Area, not just those owned and managed by its members.

Village, Township, and School District Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs

A park and recreation plan should also recognize and use appropriate park standards. The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends a minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 persons (please see Appendix C). This means that the Heart of the Lakes Area should have approximately 184 acres to meet the needs of the population in 2010.

The Townships of Norvell, Napoleon, and Columbia and the Village of Brooklyn provide over 27 acres of parks and recreation facilities which are open to the general public:

VILLAGE AND TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

FACILITY	OWNER	ACRES	FACILITIES	BFA
SWAIN MEMORIAL PARK	VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN	11.0	PLAYGROUND, PICNIC AREA, GRILLS, PAVILLION, RESTROOMS, BASKETBALL, AND GOOSE CREEK	3
COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP HALL	COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP	1.0	EXERCISE AND FITNESS TRAIL	2
COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP PARK	COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP	6.0	PICNICKING, WINTER SPORTS, SWIMMING BEACH, OUTHOUSE, AND CLARK LAKE	2
NAPOLEON VILLAGE PARK	NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP	1.0	GENERAL PARK FACILITIES	2
NAPOLEON LIONS PARK	NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP	6.4	LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL DIAMONDS AND A COVERED PICNIC AREA	2
GIRLS SOFTBALL FIELD	NAPOLEON TOWNSHIP	4.8	GIRLS SOFTBALL DIAMOND	2
AHRENS PARK	NORVELL TOWNSHIP	4.0	BALLFIELD, PAVILLIONS, AND PLAY EQUIPMENT	1

The Napoleon Community Schools and the Columbia School District also provide over 198 acres to the residents of the Heart of the Lakes Area.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RECREATION FACILITIES

FACILITY	OWNER	ACRES	FACILITIES	BFA
BROOKLYN ELEMENTARY AND COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL	COLUMBIA SCHOOLS	18.0	PLAYGROUND, TRACK, BASEBALL FIELDS (4), GYM, FOOTBALL FIELD, AND BASKETBALL COURT	3
COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL	COLUMBIA SCHOOLS	106.0	TENNIS COURTS (4), SOFTBALL FIELD (1), BASEBALL FIELD (1), GYMNASIUM, THE COLUMBIA FITNESS CENTER AND TRAILS	3
MILLER ELEMENTARY	COLUMBIA SCHOOLS	5.0	BALLFIELD, BASKETBALL COURT, PLAYGROUND, AND GYMNASIUM	2
COLUMBIA COMMUNITY EDUCATION	COLUMBIA SCHOOLS	7.0	PLAYGROUND, SOCCER FIELD (2), BASKETBALL COURT, AND BALLFIELD	1
EBY ELEMENTARY AND NAPOLEON MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL	NAPOLEON SCHOOLS	29.5	PLAY EQUIPMENT, TENNIS COURT, BASKETBALL COURT, BALL FIELDS, WEIGHT ROOM, AND STADIUM (FOOTBALL AND TRACK AND FIELD)	3
ACKERSON LAKE COMMUNITY CENTER	NAPOLEON SCHOOLS	29.0	BALLFIELD, BASKETBALL COURT, PLAYGROUND, AND GYMNASIUM	2

The combined parkland and recreational facilities offered by the Village of Brooklyn; the Townships of Columbia, Napoleon, and Norvell; and the School Districts of Columbia and Napoleon are well over the amount of parkland prescribed by the (NPRA).

Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Commission is not aware of any grants awarded to parks and recreation facilities owned by its member communities.

Park Standards and Types – The standards of the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) advocate that the Heart of the Lakes Area provide approximately 184 acres of parkland. (Please see the *Parks Standards* section of Appendix C of this document.) As the above tables illustrate, village, township, and school district facilities provide in excess of 226 acres. According to the NRPA standards, the school facilities generally function as community parks for the Heart of the Lakes Area. In most instances, the village and township parks function more as neighborhood facilities.

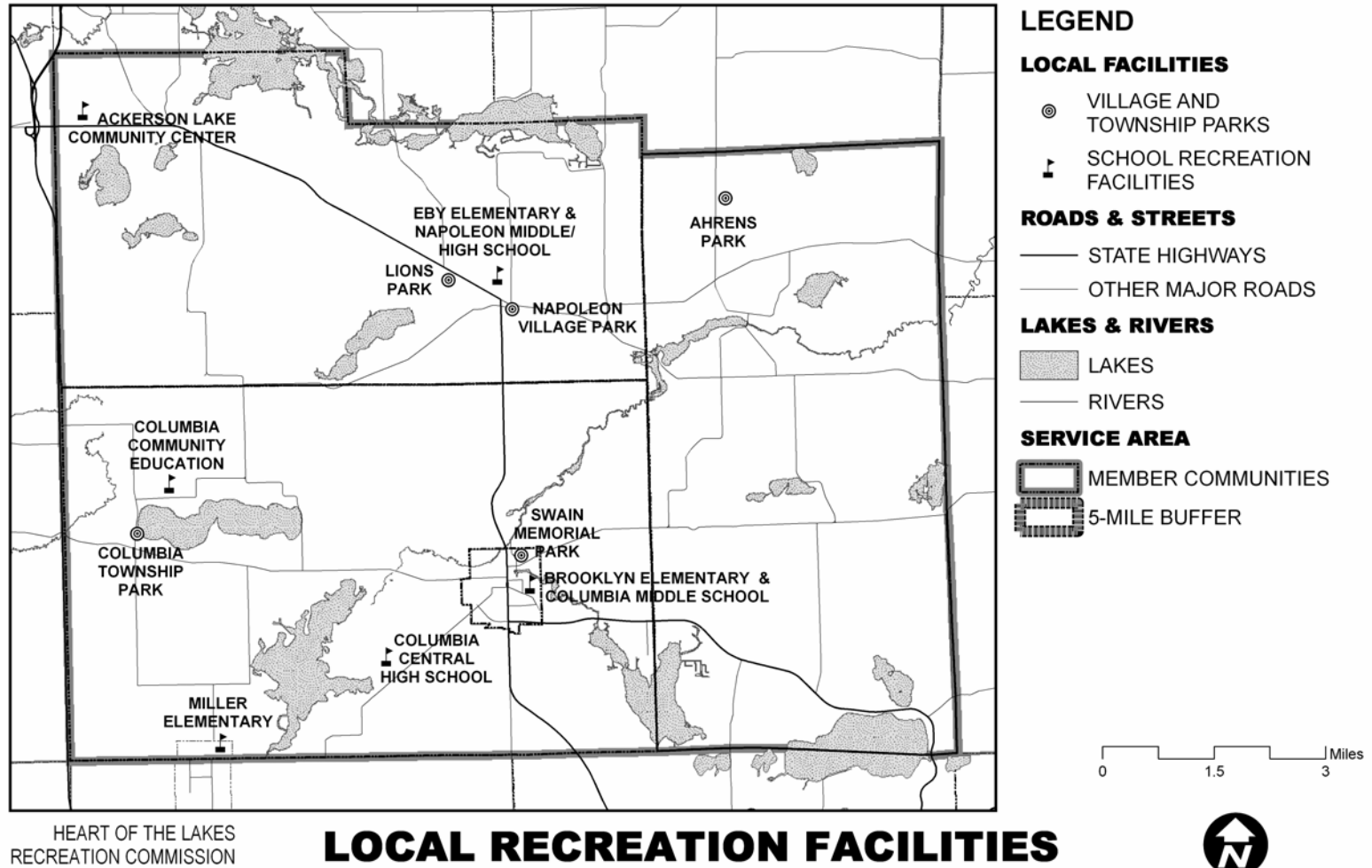
Barrier-Free Access – It is important that Heart of the Lakes Area parks and recreation facilities be accessible to people with disabilities. After all, almost 18% of Area residents had at least one disability in the Year 2000. Each of the parks and recreation facilities included in the tables above was also rated according to their level of barrier free access.¹ The number listed under the BFA column in those tables equates to the barrier-free rating listed below:

BARRIER FREE ACCESS (BFA) ANALYSIS

KEY	DESCRIPTION
1 =	NONE OF THE FACILITIES/PARK AREAS MEET ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES
2 =	SOME OF THE FACILITIES/PARK AREAS MEET ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES
3 =	MOST OF THE FACILITIES/PARK AREA MEET ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES
4 =	THE ENTIRE PARK MEETS ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES
5 =	THE ENTIRE PARK WAS DEVELOPED/RENOVATED USING THE PRINCIPAL OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Recreational Programming – The Village of Brooklyn and the Townships of Columbia, Napoleon, and Norvell provide a few recreational events in the village and township parks and recreation facilities located throughout the Heart of the Lakes Area. The Columbia School District and the Napoleon Community Schools, however, provide the majority of the recreational programming in the Heart of the Lakes. Those programs include a variety of athletics, music, and clubs (e.g., academic, social, and/or service). Although those programs are aimed at students, their fans and boosters, as well as the entire community, benefit from their performances and athletic events.

¹ The analysis of barrier free access was provided by members of the Heart of the Lakes Recreation Commission, based upon their knowledge of the parks and understanding of barrier-free access. A professional analysis may produce different results.



Other Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs

A variety of other public agencies and private entrepreneurs also provide recreational opportunities to Area residents.

County Parks – The counties of Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee, and Washtenaw maintain park systems which generally include a number of recreational facilities (e.g., beaches, boat launches, picnic facilities, playgrounds and sporting facilities, etc.). In fact, the counties of Jackson and Washtenaw maintain at least one park within the five-mile study area. The counties of Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee, and Washtenaw also maintain fairgrounds at or near the cities of Jackson, Hillsdale, Adrian, and Ann Arbor, respectively.

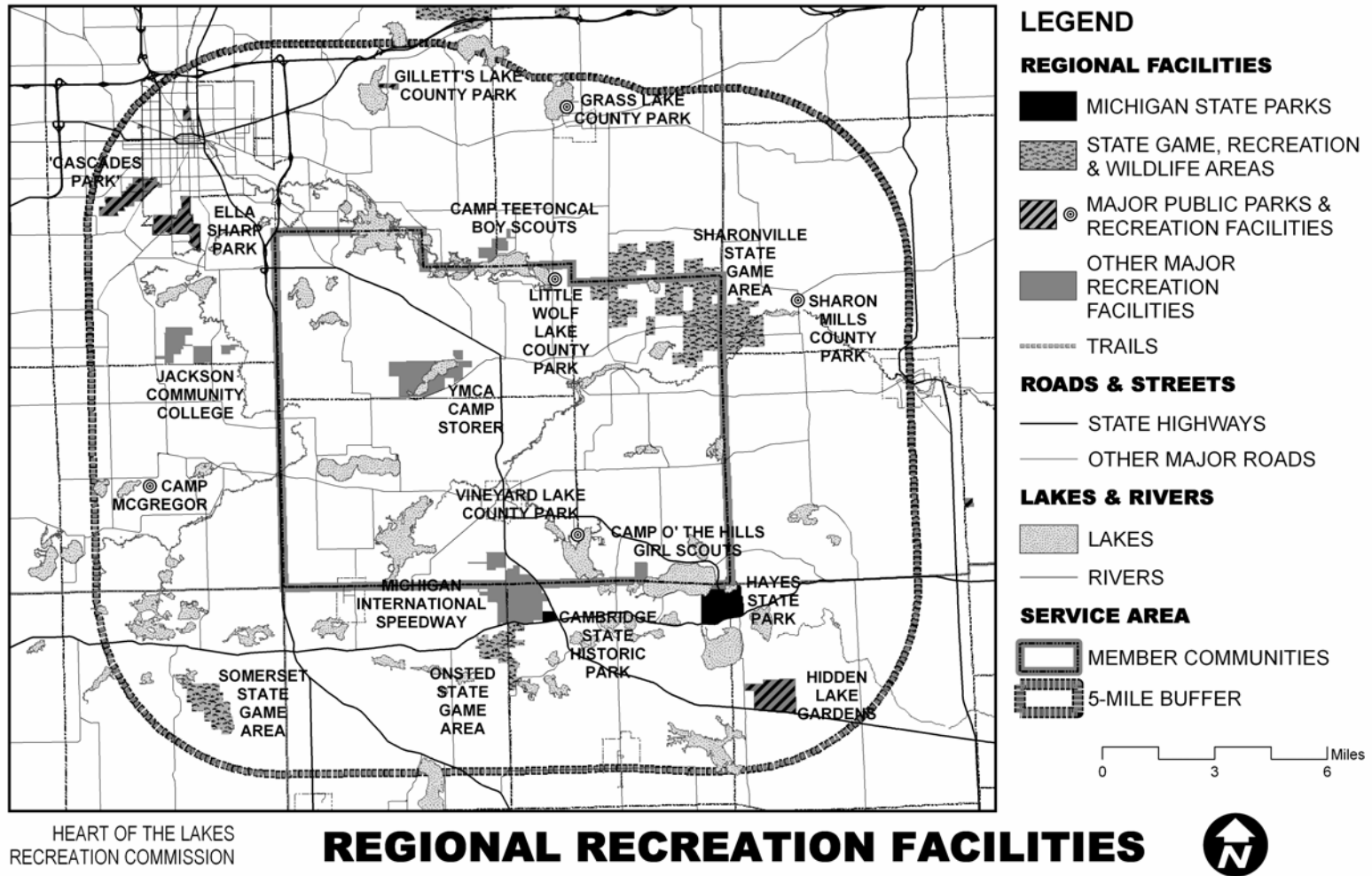
Jackson Community College – The Jackson Community College provides track and field facilities, ball fields, and tennis courts as well as a number of theaters that can be used for musical performances and plays.

Jackson County Intermediate School District (ISD) – The ISD operates Camp McGregor.

Other Local Parks – The cities and villages located within Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, and Washtenaw Counties, as well as many of the townships, also provide parks and recreational facilities for their residents. Larger communities often host extensive park systems with regional facilities such as Jackson’s Ella Sharp Park. Smaller cities and villages often provide a few recreation facilities. Townships may only provide one or two parks. Small parks, however, can have regional significance, such as the collection of handcrafted concrete pedestrian bridges located in Somerset Township’s McCourtie Park.

State Parks – The State of Michigan maintains a number of recreational facilities in the Hudson Area. For example, the Department of Natural Resources maintains a couple of state parks and several state recreation, wildlife and game areas. Michigan State University also maintains Hidden Lake Gardens, an arboretum and botanical garden located within the Study Area. The Waterloo State Game Area (Jackson and Washtenaw Counties), the Lake Hudson State Recreation Area (Lenawee County), and Lost Nations State Game Area (Hillsdale County) are also close by.

COUNTY PARKS
JACKSON COUNTY
SPARKS FOUNDATION (CASCADES)
CLARK LAKE
GILLETT’S LAKE
GRASS LAKE
LITTLE WOLF LAKE
VINEYARD LAKE
WASHTENAW COUNTY
SHARON MILLS



STATE OF MICHIGAN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

STATE PARKS	STATE GAME AREAS
WALTER J. HAYES STATE PARK	SHARONVILLE STATE GAME AREA
CAMBRIDGE STATE HISTORICAL PARK	ONSTED STATE GAME AREA
	SOMERSET STATE GAME AREA
OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES	
HIDDEN LAKE GARDENS	

Private Parks and Recreation Facilities – A wide variety of private entrepreneurs provide recreational experiences to their patrons. Some of these experiences can be considered traditional recreational facilities. Some of the other facilities provide recreational experiences as a byproduct of their primary mission.

Camps – YMCA Camp Storer is located in Napoleon Township. Various scouting facilities are also located in the Heart of the Lakes. The Girl Scout’s Camp O’ the Hills is located in Norvell Township and the Boy Scout’s Camp Teetoncal is located in Grass Lake Township.

Golf Courses – The Heart of the Lakes Area is blessed with fifty-four golf courses within twenty-five miles of Brooklyn, according to golfcourse.com, The GOLF MAGAZINE Golf Course Guide (<http://www.golfcourse.com/>). In fact, Hill’s Heart of the Lakes Golf Course is located within Brooklyn and the Clark Lake Golf Course, the Green Briar Golf Course, and the Irish Hills Short Course and Range are located close by.

Bowling Opportunities – The Village of Brooklyn hosts a local bowling facility known as Brooklyn Lanes. The Jackson Urban Area also hosts several opportunities for bowling.

Michigan International Speedway – The Michigan International Speedway is located south of Brooklyn on the southern boundary of the Heart of the Lakes Area. The Speedway is an important facility which hosts racing events three weekends each summer. The facility is also available for other events such as the Michigan High School Athletic Association’s annual Lower Peninsula Finals for Boy’s and Girl’s Cross Country each autumn.

Spirit of Clark Lake Trail – A trail around Clark Lake –utilizing easements across private land and public road rights-of-way– is under development. It is known as the Spirit of Clark Lake Trail.

Local Service, Sport, Volunteer, and Social Clubs – The Brooklyn Area Service Club, the Irish Hills Eagles Aerie #3689, the Clark Lake and Napoleon Lions, the Brooklyn Kiwanas, the Heart of the Lakes Woman’s Club (GFWC), the Irish Hills Charitable Quilters, the Irish Hills Woman’s Club, the Brooklyn Masonic Lodge #169, the Brooklyn Sportsman Club, the Brooklyn Artists, the Buds ‘n’ Buddies Garden Club, Oh These Irish Hills!, and the Brooklyn American Legion provide social and recreational opportunities for their memberships.

Dining and Shopping – Going to restaurants is a recreational activity for many people (e.g., dates, groups of friends, and other outings). Opportunities for dining and shopping are located in the Village of Brooklyn, the unincorporated village of Napoleon, and in the vicinity of some area lakes. Many residents also travel to the downtowns, malls, and other retail areas of nearby communities such as the Irish Hills, Tecumseh and other nearby communities, as well as urban areas such as Lansing, Ann Arbor, and Toledo, to dine and shop.

National and State Historical Sites – The Village of Brooklyn contains three historic sites that are considered to have state and/or national significance. Columbia Township contains an additional two sites in the vicinity of Clark Lake. Michigan’s Department of History, Arts and Libraries provide more information on the sites listed below on line at: http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/hso/advance_search.asp. That same site will also provide information on historic sites of national and/or state significance statewide as well as the other fifty-five sites in Jackson County; one hundred-forty sites in Washtenaw County; eighty-six sites in Lenawee County; and twenty-seven sites in Hillsdale County.

HOTL NATIONAL AND STATE HISTORICAL SITES

STRUCTURE	ADDRESS/LOCATION	REGISTERS*	
ALL SAINT’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH	151 MAIN ST, BROOKLYN	SR	
BROOKLYN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	160 N MAIN ST, BROOKLYN	SR	
MILL STREET BRIDGE	S BRANCH, RIVER RAISIN, BROOKLYN	NR	HM
GORDON HILL FARMSTEAD	4561 N LAKE RD, CLARK LAKE	NR	
KENTUCKY HOMESTEAD	6740 KENTUCKY AVE, CLARK LAKE	NR	

*NR = NATIONAL REGISTER ; SR = STATE REGISTER; AND HM = HISTORIC MARKER

Taken together, the existing acreage contained in state, county and local parks; school sites; and private recreation land within the Heart of the Lakes Area, provides ample room for the development of local recreation facilities without having to acquire additional property; however, the opportunity to acquire additional parkland should always be considered.

Resource Inventory

In addition to the Area's recreation facilities, the Heart of the Lakes is also home to a wide variety of cultural and natural resources.

Soils

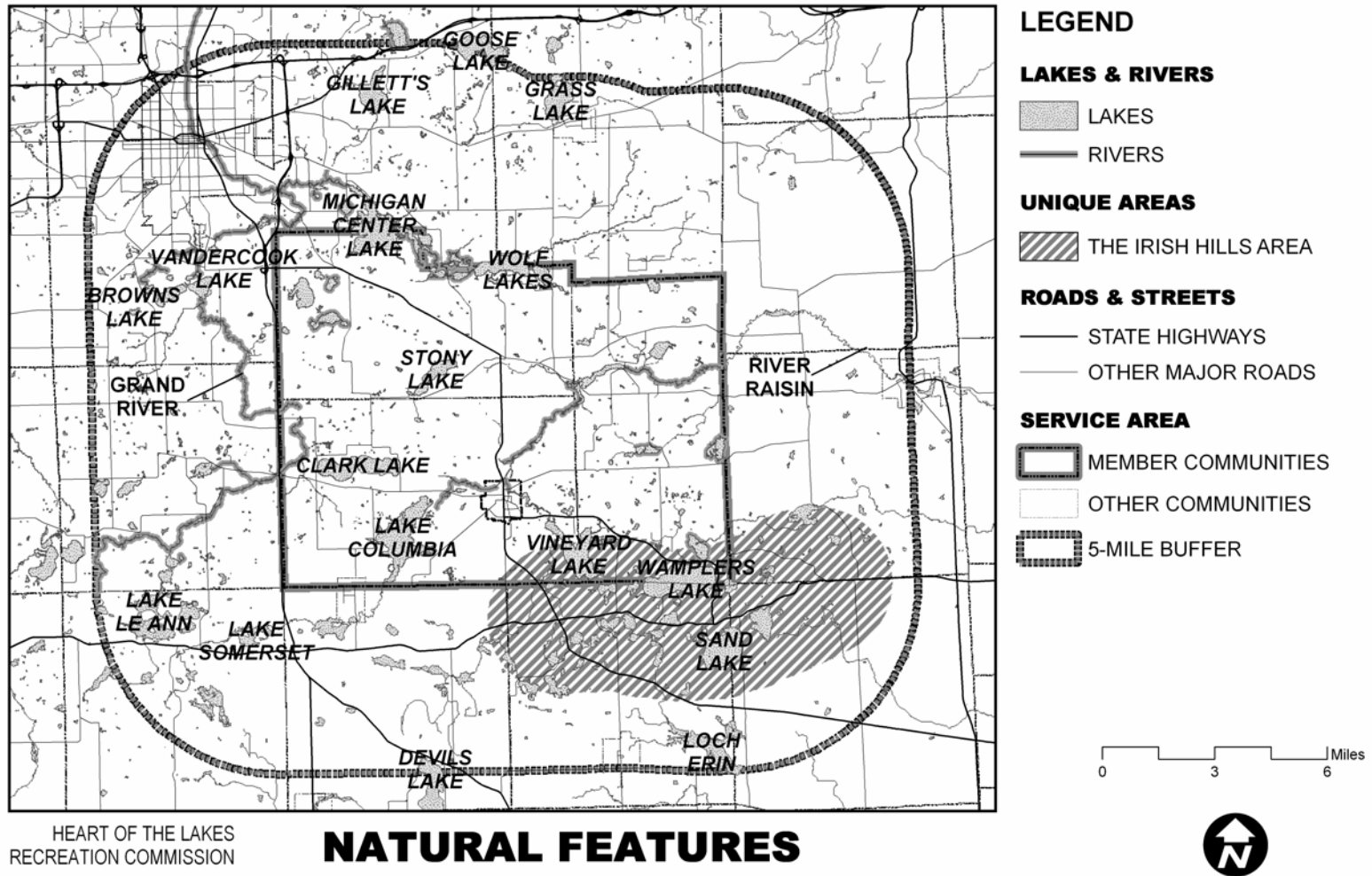
The soils in the Heart of the Lakes Area can be analyzed for their suitability for recreational developments. Appendix C is comprised of a series of maps showing soil suitability throughout the Area for camping areas; picnicking areas; playgrounds; paths and trails; and golf fairways.²

Water Resources

The following map highlights the natural resource that unifies the Heart of the Lakes Area – its lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Many of the cottages that surround these lakes have been converted into year-round homes, contributing to the population gains in the Area over the past sixty years. Other new homes have also been built for year-round use. Portions of some Area lakes, however, are still relatively free from development due their proximity to a public park or a private camp.

A couple of Michigan's major river systems flow through the five-mile study area for the Heart of the Lakes. The River Raisin flows from Vineyard Lake, through the Village of Brooklyn and the unincorporated village of Norvell, to the Village of Manchester. Goose Creek, its tributary, flows from Lake Somerset in Hillsdale County through Lake Columbia and into the River Raisin in Brooklyn. As the next map shows, the watershed for the River Raisin contains roughly the southeastern two-thirds of the Heart of the Lakes. The Grand River flows in the vicinity of the Area's western edge, intruding into Columbia Township near Clark Lake. The Grand (or one of its tributaries) flows through Lake LeAnn, Vander Cook and Browns Lakes, and Michigan Center and Wolf Lakes. The watershed for the Grand River contains roughly the northwestern third of the Heart of the Lakes Area.

² All information is adapted from Table 9 of the Soil Survey of Jackson County, Michigan.



Topography

The topography for the Heart of the Lakes follows its rivers and their watersheds. The highest ridge in the Area follows the common boundary between the River Raisin and the Grand River Watersheds. The landscape to the east of that ridge is included in the Lake Erie Basin and the landscape to the west is included in the Lake Michigan Basin.

Greenways

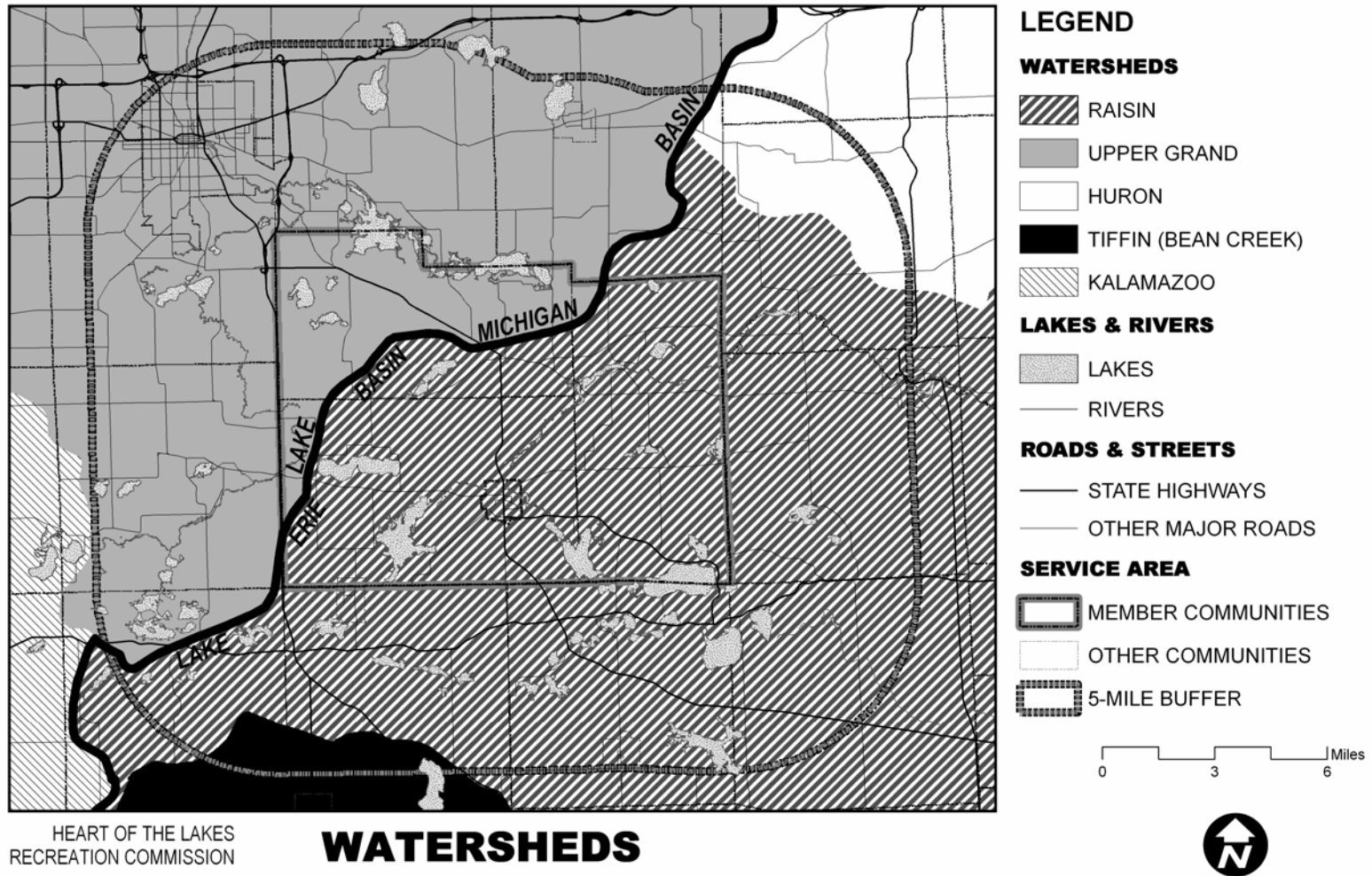
The Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan “identifies a network of greenways proposed throughout Jackson County. This network generally follows wetland areas, drainage ways, and forested lands. The network recognizes these areas as a part of Jackson County’s natural system which should be preserved. The preservation of this system helps to assure high quality surface water, wildlife habitat and movement, diversity, and can be used to help define urban growth.” The following map shows the greenways recommended for the Heart of the Lakes Area. Please see Appendix B of this Plan in order to view the entire greenways map and the supporting text.

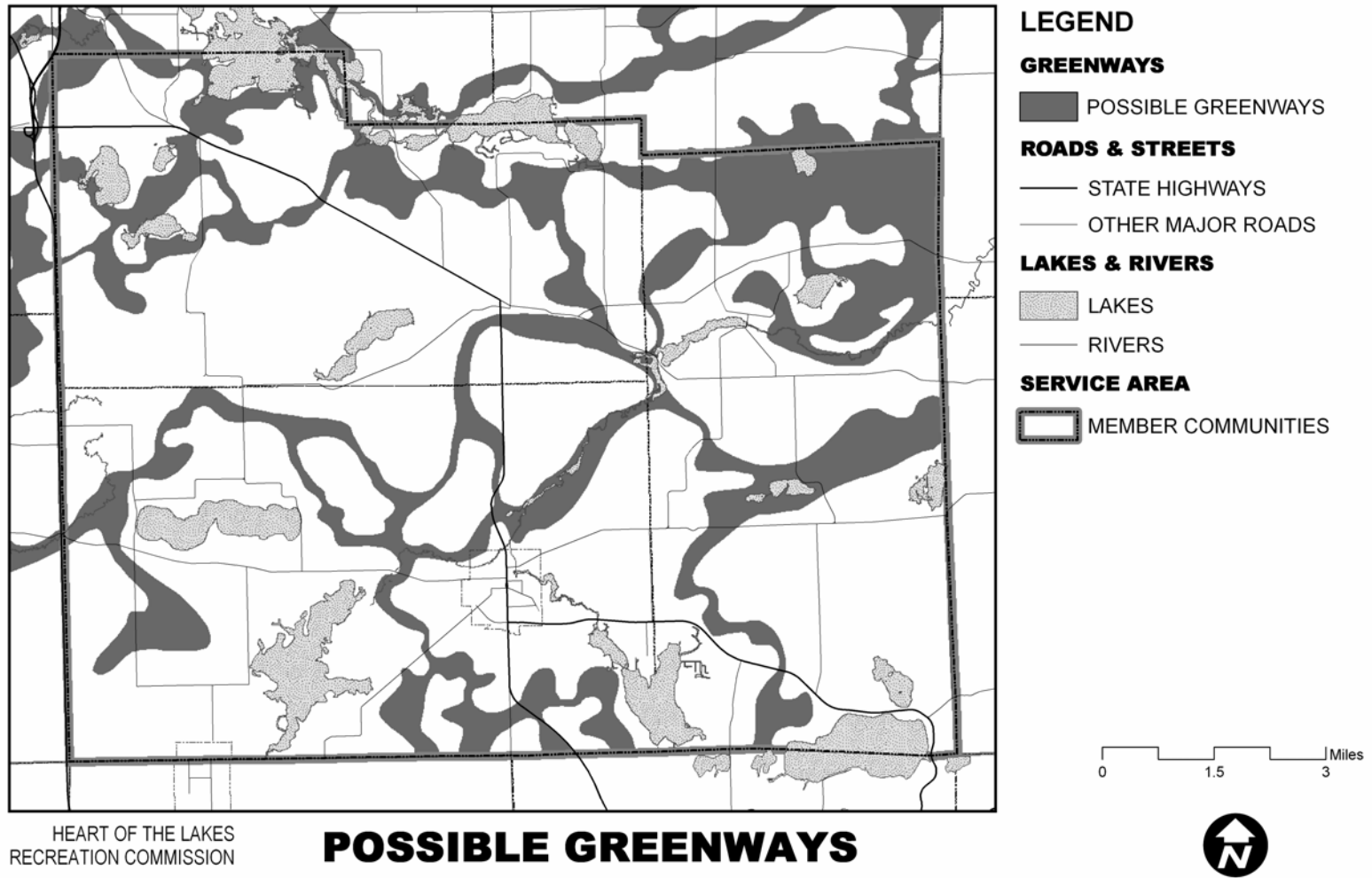
The Irish Hills

The Irish Hills is an undefined geographic area with its center along US-12 (United States Highway 12) in the vicinity of Wampplers Lake and Sand Lake. Some groups/individuals would include the majority of the Heart of the Lakes Area within the Irish Hills. For the purposes of this study, the boundary is defined as a one and a half mile radius around US-12 from Cambridge Junction (the intersection with M-50) and the Lenawee/Washtenaw County Line. Regardless of its boundary, there is a complimentary relationship the Irish Hills and the Heart of the Lakes Area.

Land Use

In an effort to illustrate development in the Heart of the Lakes, existing urban areas and the future land use pattern will be described.





Urban Areas

As the following map illustrates, the 2000 US Census identifies several types of urban areas within the five-mile study area for the Heart of the Lakes. The City of Jackson and its immediate surroundings has been considered a small urban area for quite some time. Urban clusters are a category of urban areas new to the US Census. The Village of Brooklyn and the vicinity around Lake Columbia and Clark Lake as well as the vicinity around Lake LeAnn and Lake Somerset are urban clusters. The remainder of the study area is considered to be rural. However, pockets of commercial and residential development can also be found along the Area's roadways. The Irish Hills is a prime example of this type of development. There are no large urban areas located within the vicinity of the Heart of the Lakes

URBAN AREAS			
	POPULATION RANGE		
URBAN CLUSTER	2,500	–	49,999
SMALL URBAN AREA	50,000	–	199,999
LARGE URBAN AREA	200,000	–	>200,000

Future Land Use

The Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan includes a generalized plan for future development in Jackson County (please see Appendix B for a future land use map for Jackson County and the accompanying text). Residential neighborhoods are planned around the Area's lakes as well as in the vicinity of the Village of Brooklyn and the unincorporated village of Napoleon. Small commercial and industrial districts are also planned in the vicinity of Brooklyn and Napoleon as well as along portions of the United States Highway 127 (US-127) corridor.

