

# **HURON-CLINTON METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY**



## **Mowing Plan**

2023

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## **Executive Summary:**

The Mowing Plan was created in response to the need for clarification on mowing and natural resource policies at the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority properties. It designates areas as the following classifications: regular mow areas, annual mow areas, and natural areas. The Mowing Plan also addresses how mowing should be accomplished in each of these classifications. This plan is the result of meetings and field visits with Interpretive Staff, Park Operations Managers, Park Maintenance Supervisors, and the public. The plan should be revisited and revised after its initial implementation and then regularly once every two years. The goal of the Mowing Plan is to clearly delineate areas as their designation, to provide staff with easy-to-use maps and mowing procedures for each classification.

## **Introduction:**

In 2008, the Natural Resources and Planning and Park staff identified areas that were potential for mowing reduction. This planned reduction in mowing was instituted to reduce the cost of maintaining park areas. This action was taken in response to the severe economic down turn that took place the same year and resulted in a loss of tax revenue coming to the Metroparks system. When mowing reductions were implemented in 2009, they were not well received by park users who utilize the Metroparks many picnicking and gathering areas. In 2014, Metropark staff noticed that many annual mow areas were becoming overgrown with invasive species such as thistle and autumn olive and affecting the professional standards of the Metroparks. As such, many of these no-mow areas were mowed to reduce weeds and increase the professional appearance of the Metroparks. This mowing took place in July. However, July is a peak period for nesting of grassland birds and this mowing was not received well by some park users. The mowing plan will balance the needs of these different user groups and institute a balanced approach between natural areas and other park uses.

## **Planning:**

Five steps were involved in the planning process of the 2018 version of this document. First, interpretive staff was contacted and ask to visit sites with Natural Resources staff. Interpretive staff was asked to help identify sensitive natural areas that should be managed as such and not maintained as a mowed area. Nine interpreters took part in these meetings throughout all three districts. Second, site visits were conducted by vehicle and on foot to delineate areas based on one of the four

categories. Data was collected using a handheld GPS device which allowed for conversion of data to usable maps. Third, draft documents were reviewed with Metroparks staff. These reviews involved Parks Operations, District Maintenance Supervisors, and District Park Superintendents. Fourth, public input on the management of Metroparks land was collected from groups that use the Metroparks and volunteers who help maintain the Metroparks.

In late 2017, updates to the original mowing plan were solicited in a meeting with parks operations staff to address deficiencies in the original plan. The updated plan also incorporates new legal requirements such as the EMR CCAA (Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Candidate Conservation 4 Agreement with Assurances), which encourages sustainable management of EMR habitat, of which the Metroparks is a participant.

In late 2022, Natural Resources staff met again with Park Operations, District Maintenance Supervisors, and District Park Superintendents. In all of the 13 parks, areas were designated as able to transition from regular mow to annual mow.

## **Implementation:**

Implementation of the three classifications is as follows:

**1) Regular Mow Areas:** These areas will be maintained as they have in the past, as manicured turfgrass for recreation purposes. Staff should maintain finish mow, the same width as has been mowed in the past, adjacent to all paved roads and trails as well to maintain trail safety. Exceptions may be made for special events. Open herbaceous areas outside of right-of-way should be managed as annual spot mow unless specifically designated as another classification.

**2) Annual Spot Mow:** Annual mowing of grasslands is intended to keep grasslands free of woody invasives and other undesirable species. Therefore, brush hogging or mowing should be limited to the control of these species. If brush hogging and/or mowing are used it should take place no earlier than November 1st unless otherwise noted in the plan.

**3) Natural Areas:** These areas are maintained by the Metroparks' natural resources department. They will be maintained for native species using several methods or combination of methods including prescribed fire, mechanical control, and/or chemical control.



## **Further information**

Natural Resources Department staff is happy to clarify any of the information in this document and will be available to perform site visits to clarify delineated boundaries. If any parks operation staff member is unsure if they should mow an area, contact natural resources to confirm mowing plan details.

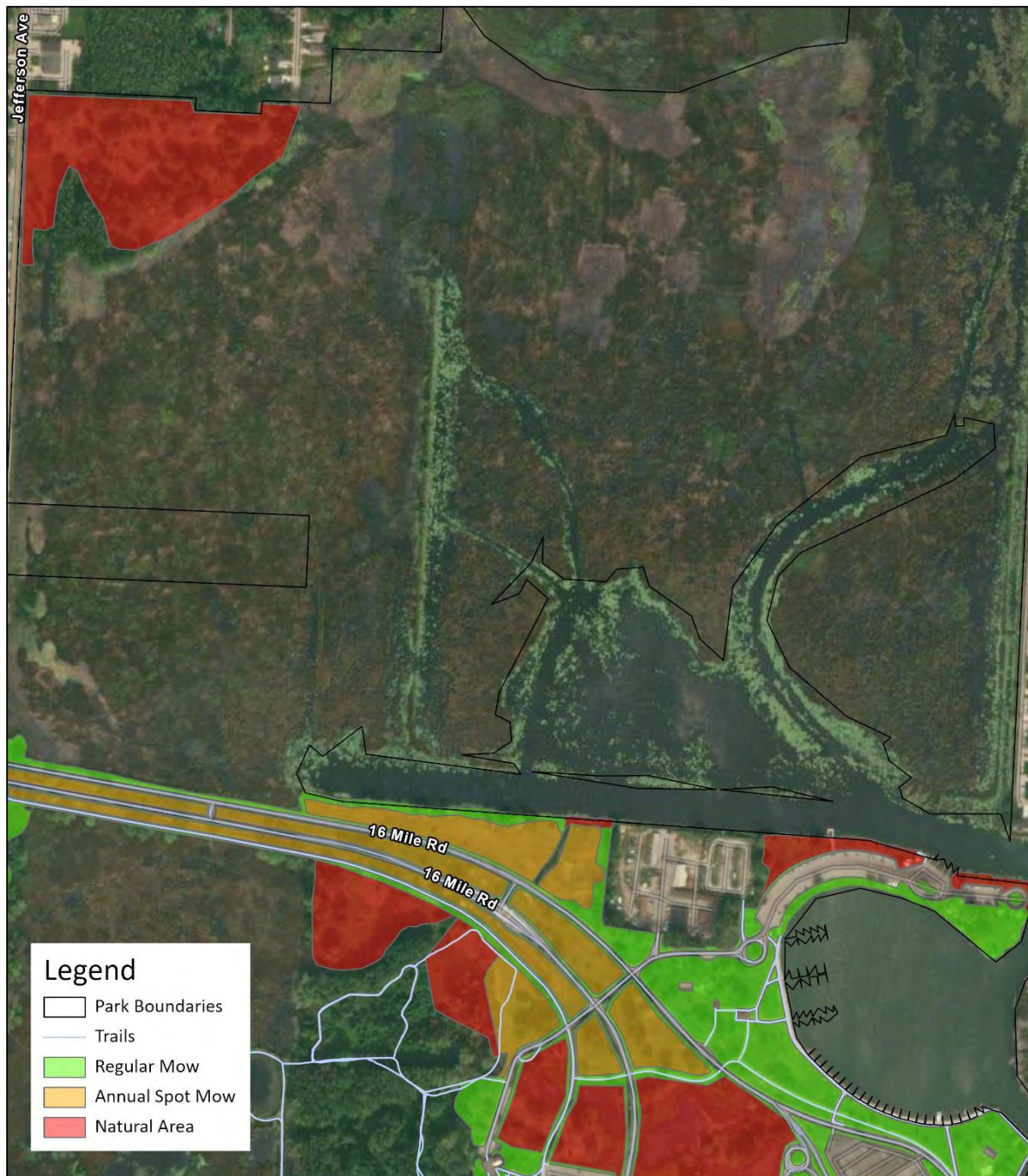
## **Glossary of Terms:**

**Regular Mow:** Areas historically maintained as manicured turf grass for recreation purposes. Should any of these areas be removed from recreational use, please notify Natural Resources Staff and we will update the plan accordingly. Also included in this category is right-of-way mowing for trails and roads. Staff should maintain a mower width of finish mow adjacent to all paved roads and trails. Open herbaceous areas outside of right-of-way should be managed with annual spot mowing unless specifically designated as another classification.

**Annual Spot Mow:** Areas that should be maintained as open herbaceous land. Includes abandoned recreation areas, among others. To maintain these areas only woody shrubs should be controlled. It is not necessary to mow the entire area annually if woody shrubs are controlled by partial mowing. Considerations for this classification of mowed area should include the presence of wildlife during rearing and feeding seasons for grassland habitat animals. Mowing should be conducted in these areas between November 1st – March 1st unless otherwise noted in the plan. If these areas must absolutely be mowed outside this timeframe to achieve aesthetic or recreational needs, staff should carefully sweep the area and contact Natural Resources Staff before proceeding to mow. Not adhering to this timeframe could result in “incidental take” or unintended killing of an animal which may have regulatory compliance consequences.

**Natural Areas:** Natural Areas are maintained by the Natural Resources Department staff. At no time should these areas be mowed, or woody species be controlled without prior approval from the Chief of Natural Resources or Natural Resources Coordinator. Habitat specific annual mowing plans should be carried out in accordance with plans established in coordination with Natural Resources staff.

## Lake St. Clair - Map 1





## Lake St. Clair - Map 2





## Lake St. Clair - Map 3





## Lake St. Clair - Map 4



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



## Lake St. Clair - Map 5



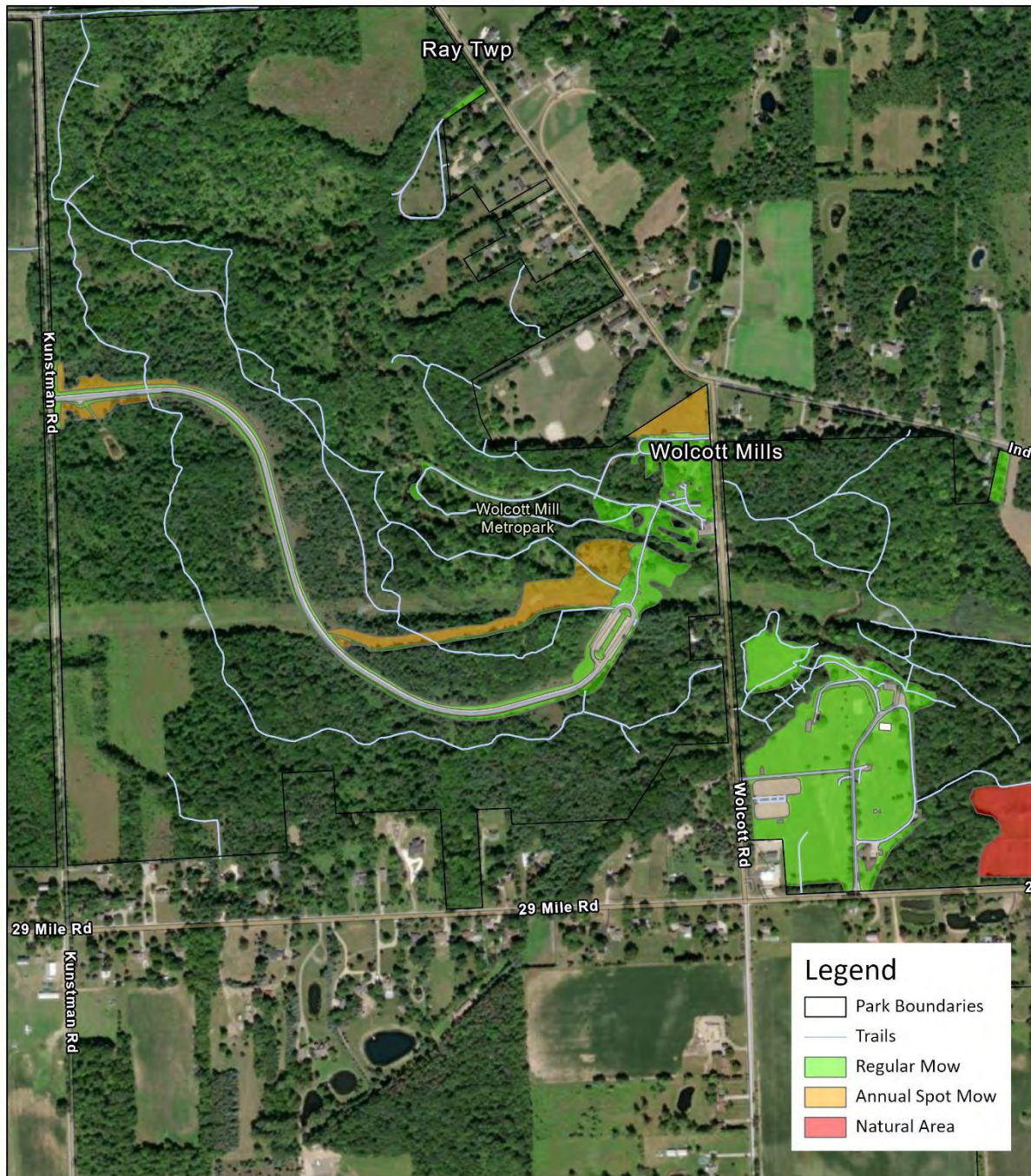


## Wolcott Mill - Map 1





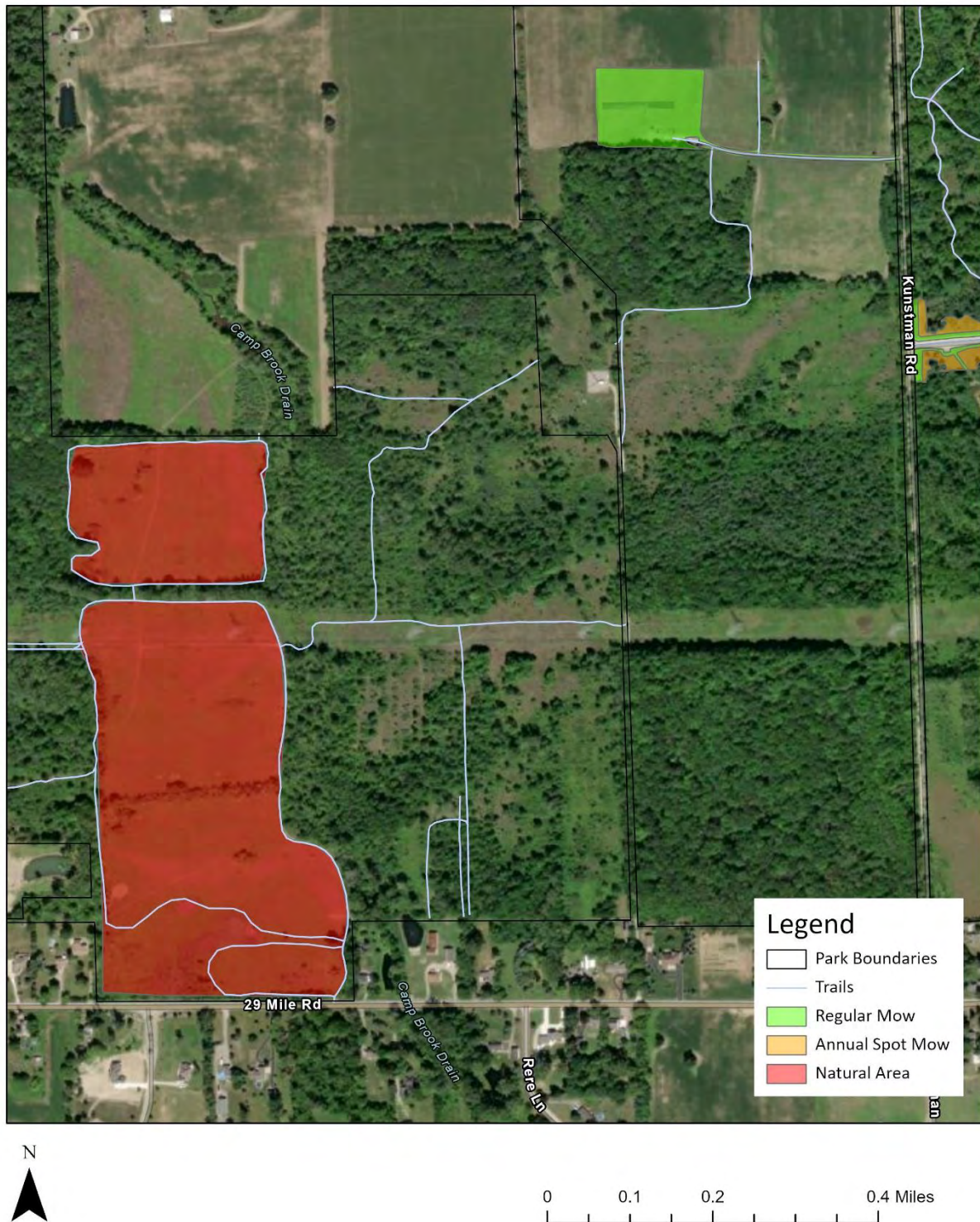
## Wolcott Mill - Map 2



0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles

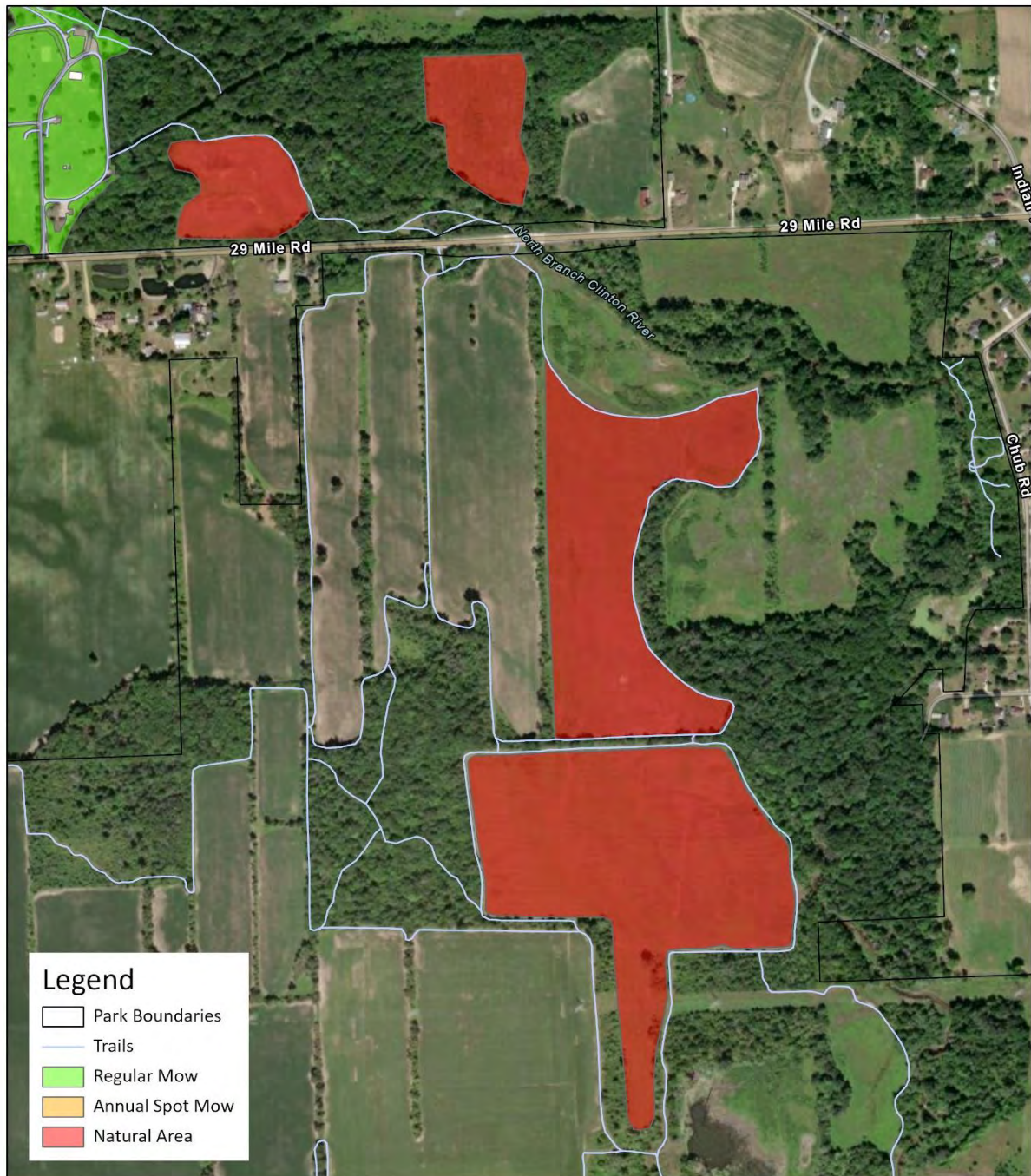


## Wolcott Mill - Map 3





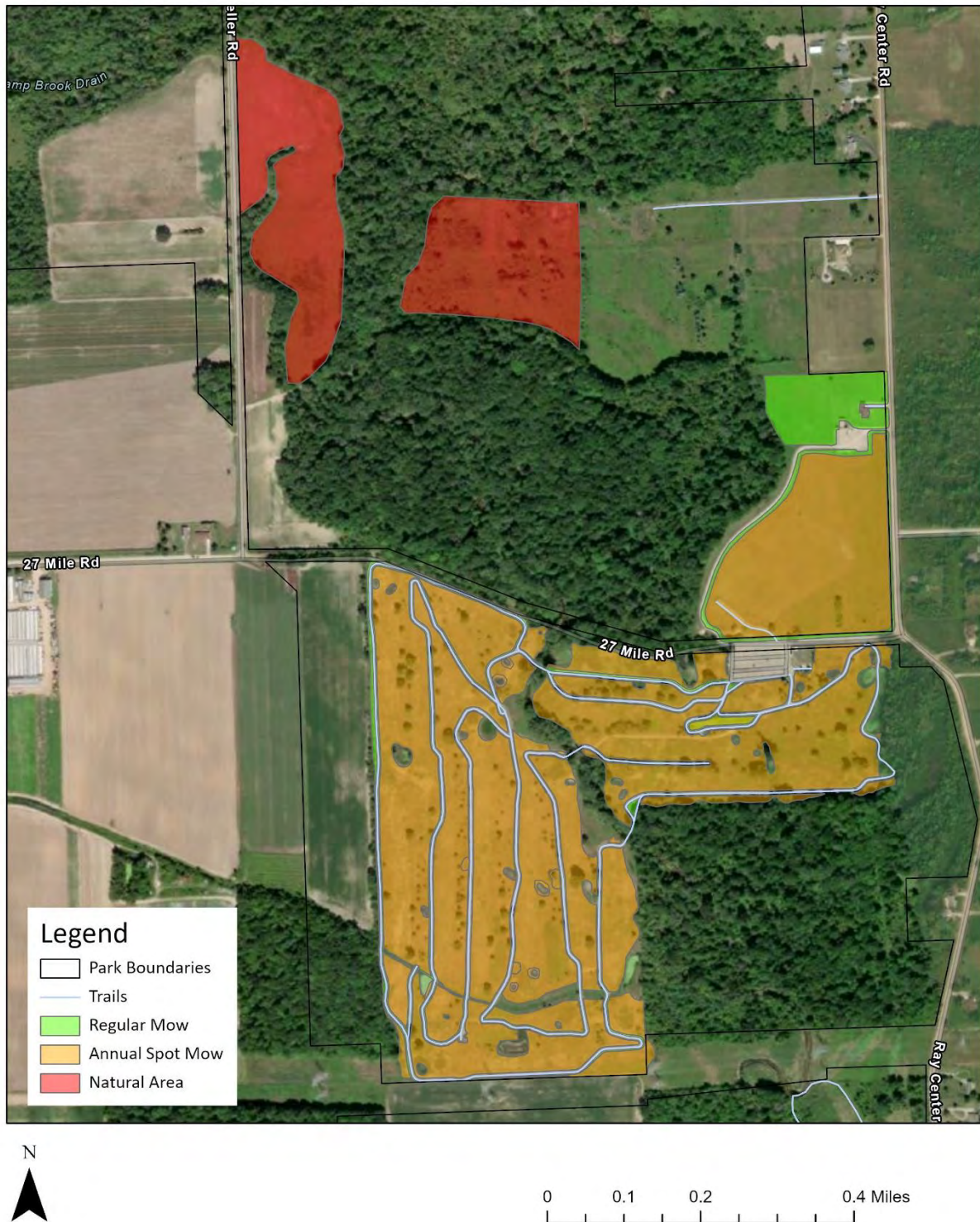
## Wolcott Mill - Map 4



0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles

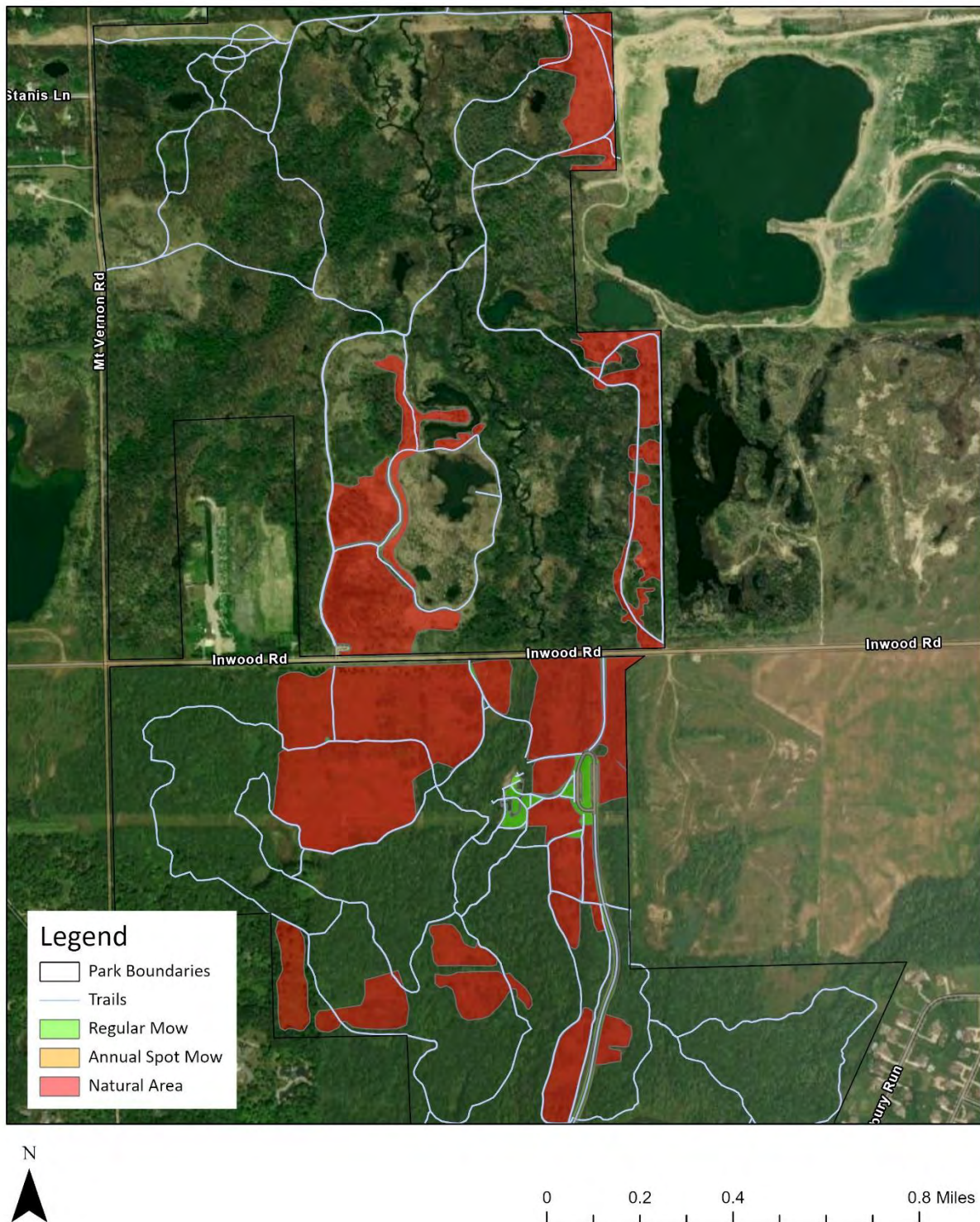


## Wolcott Mill - Map 5



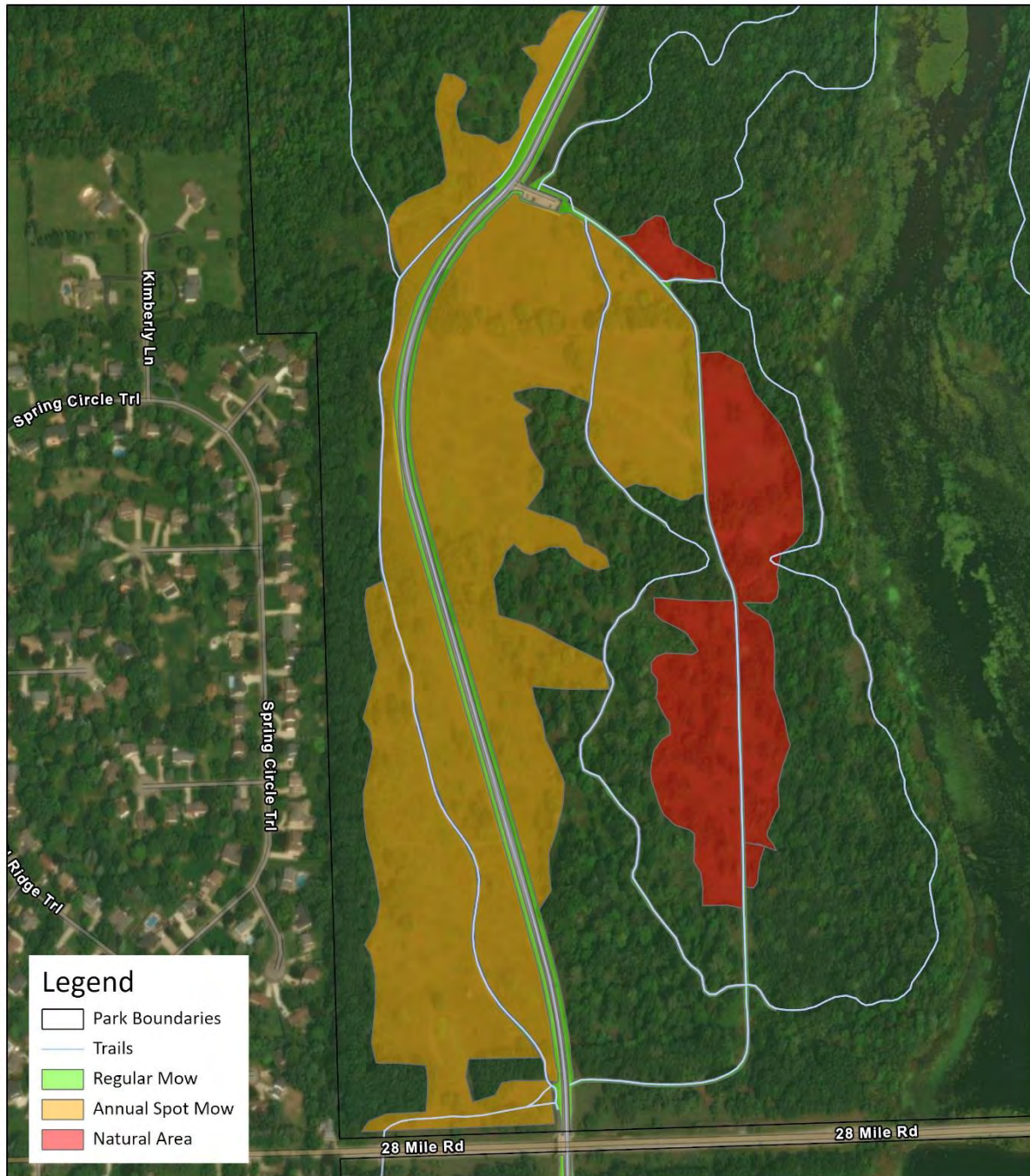


## Stony Creek - Map 1



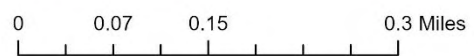


## Stony Creek - Map 2



0 0.07 0.15 0.3 Miles

## Stony Creek - Map 3



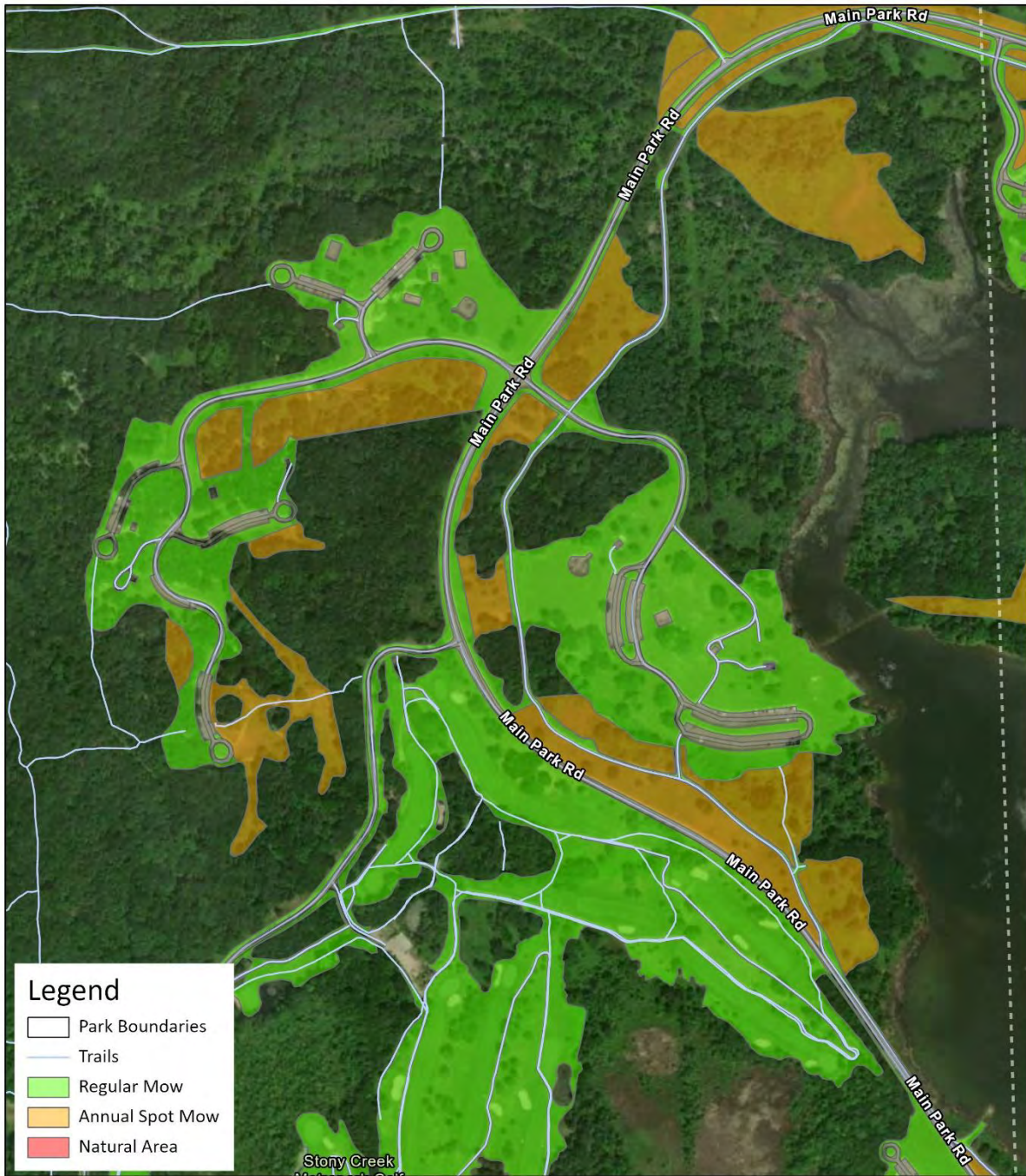


## Stony Creek - Map 4



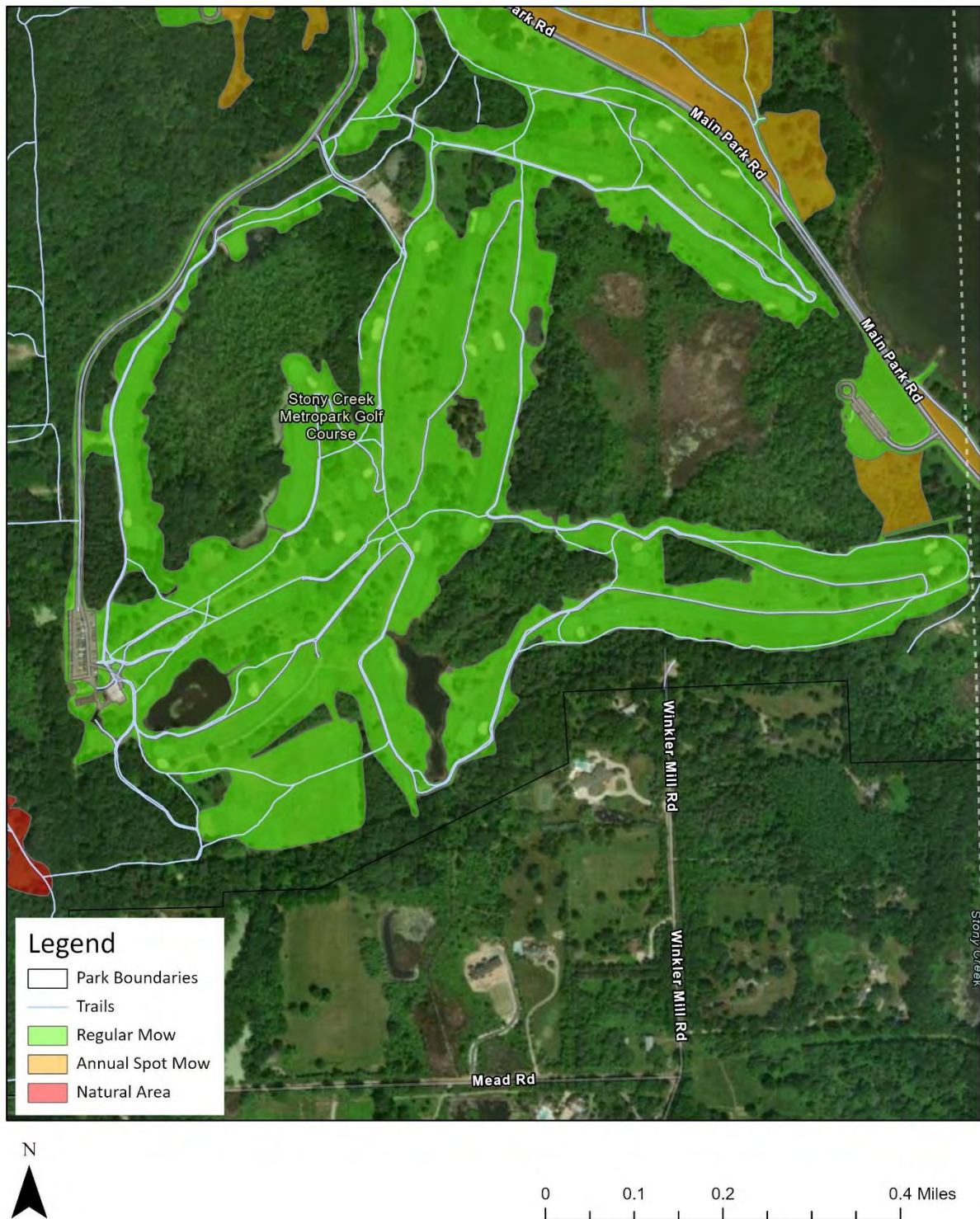


## Stony Creek - Map 5





## Stony Creek - Map 6



## Stony Creek - Map 7

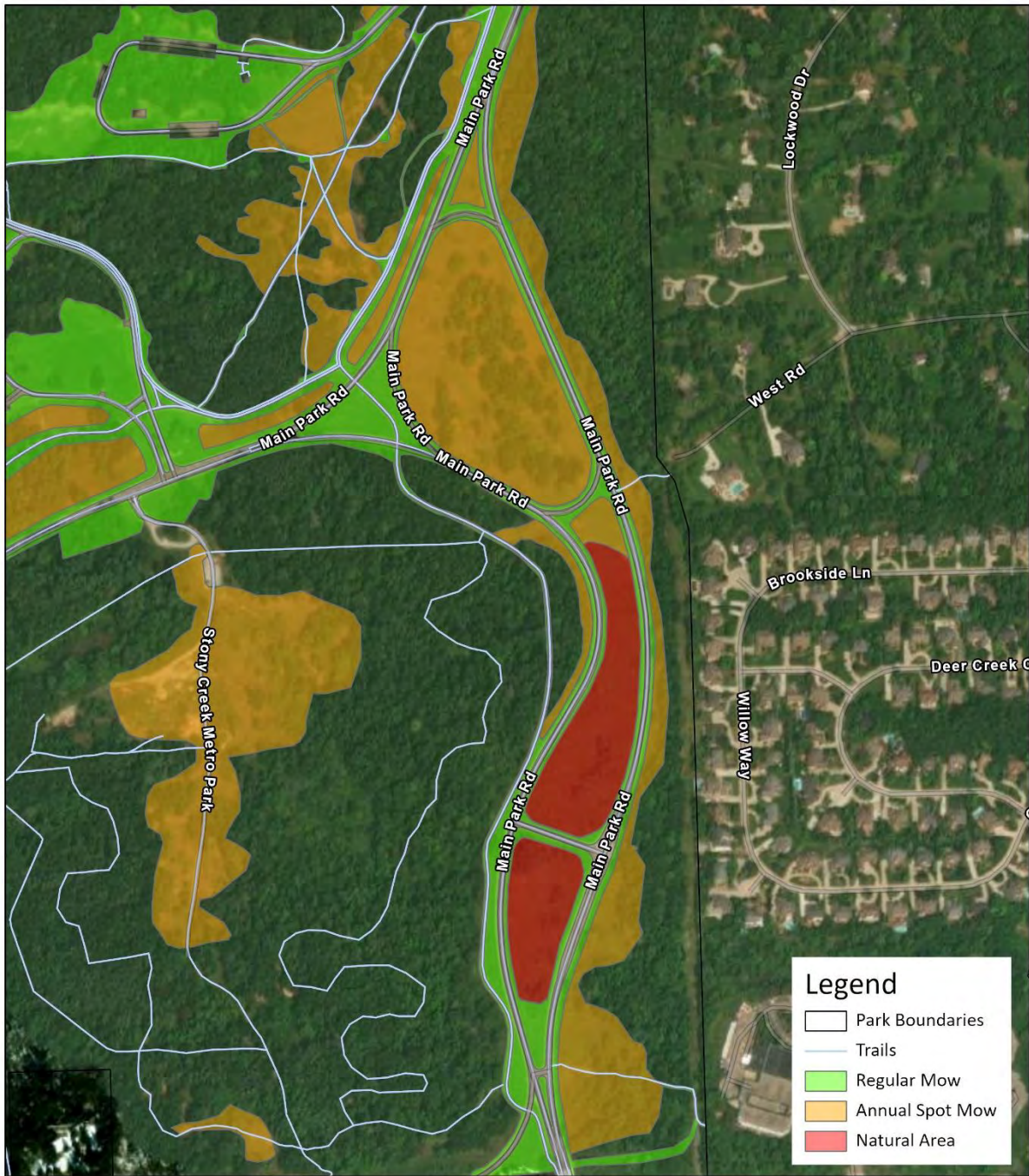




## Stony Creek - Map 8



## Stony Creek - Map 9



0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

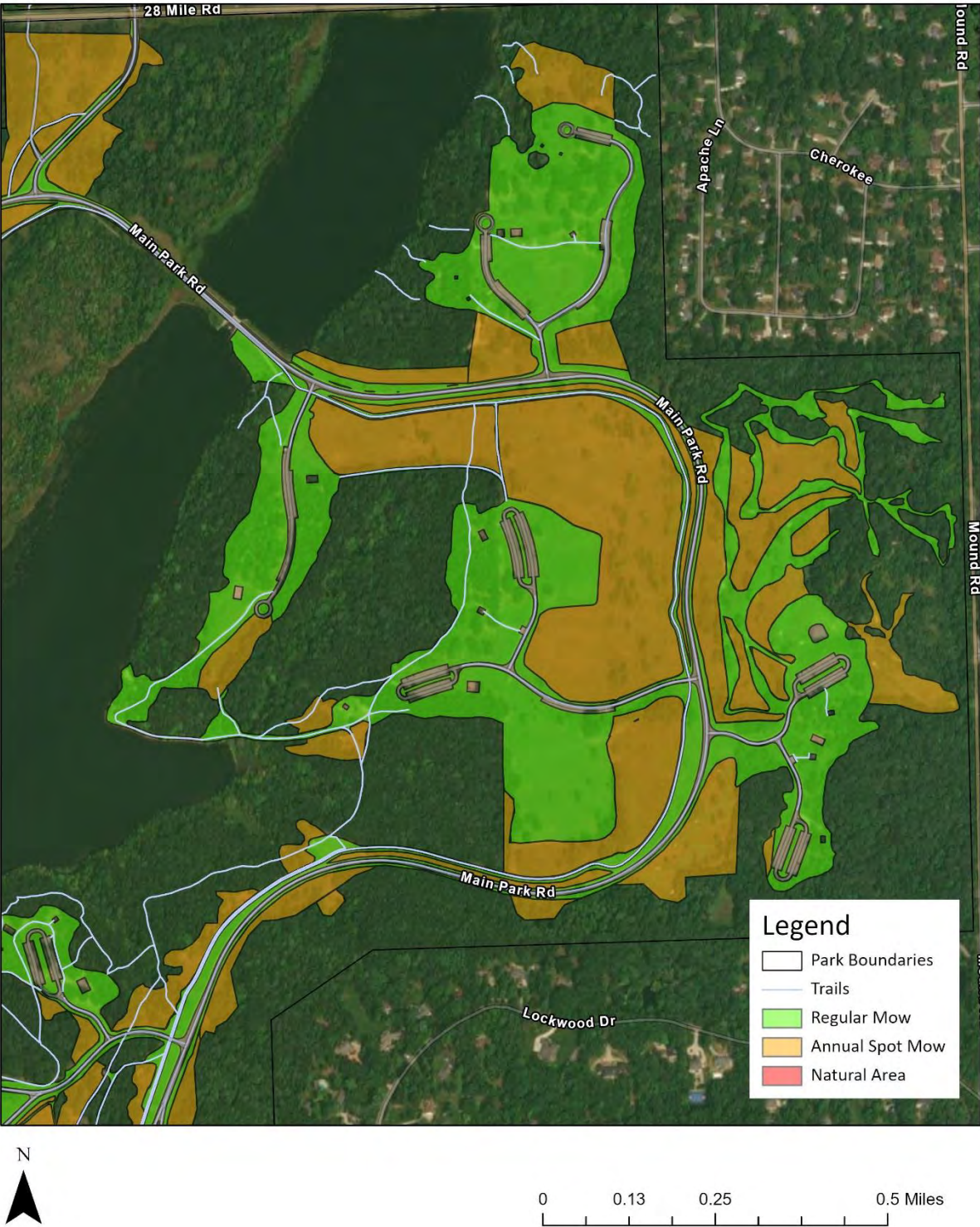


Stony Creek - Map 10



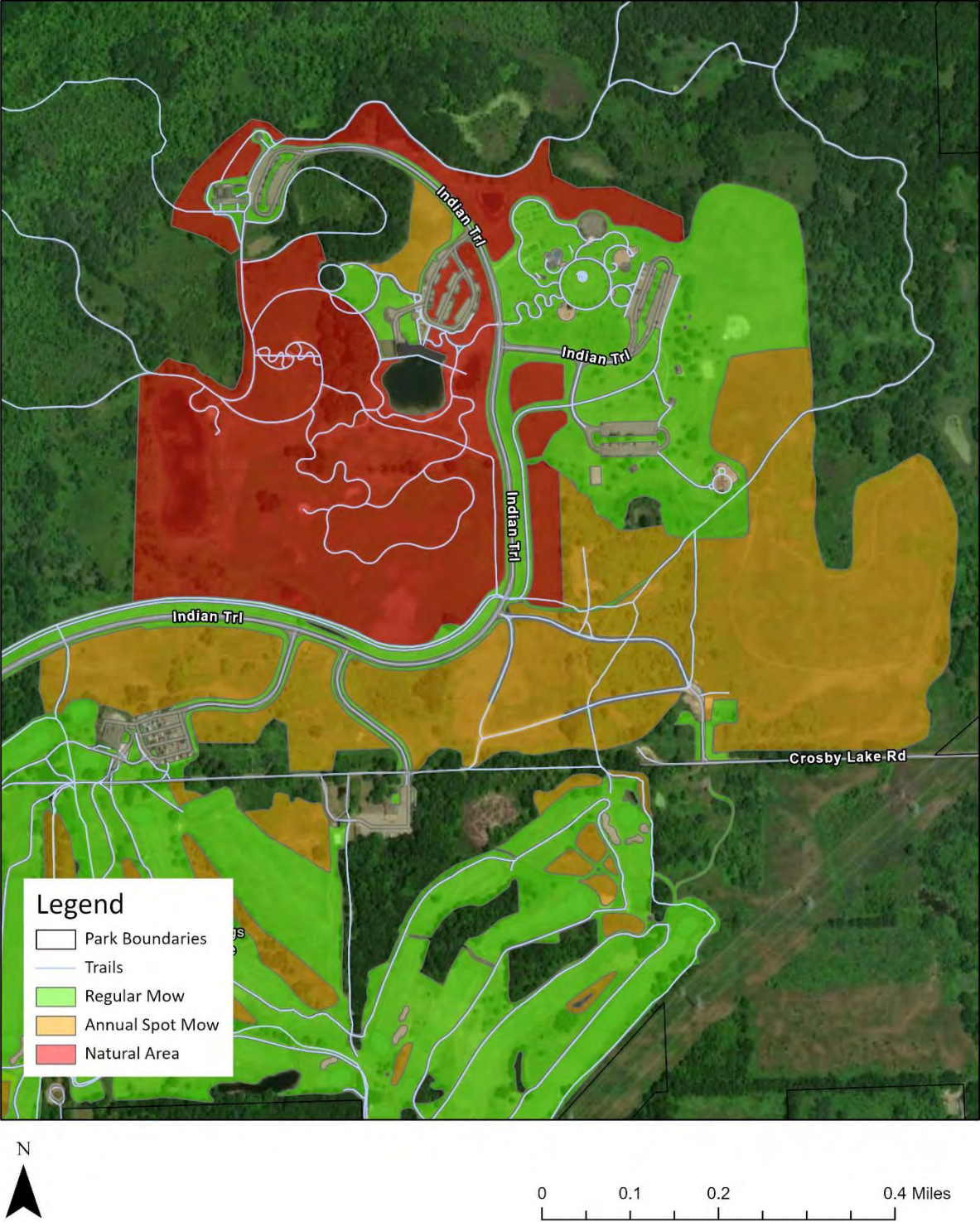


Stony Creek - Map 11



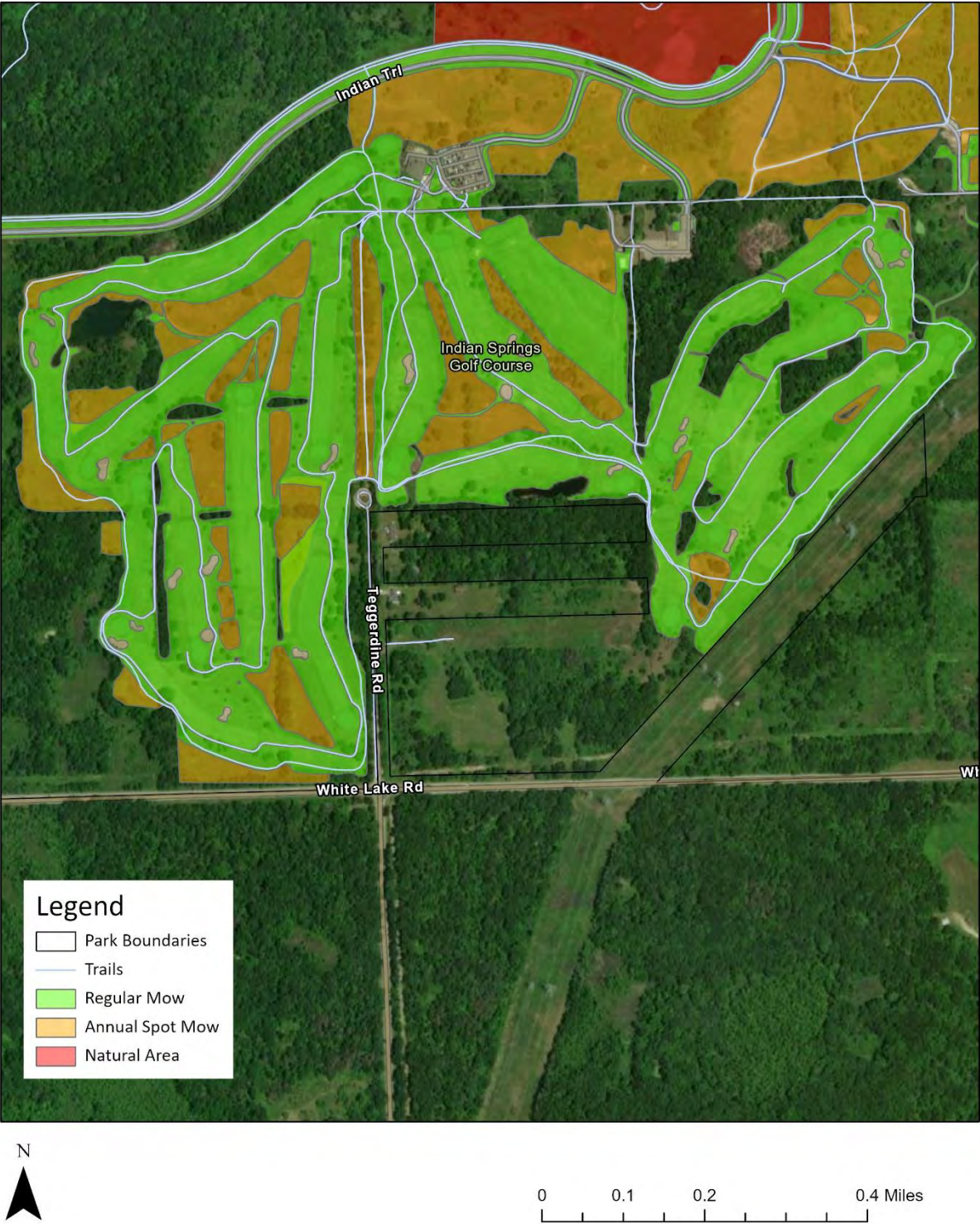


Indian Springs - Map 1



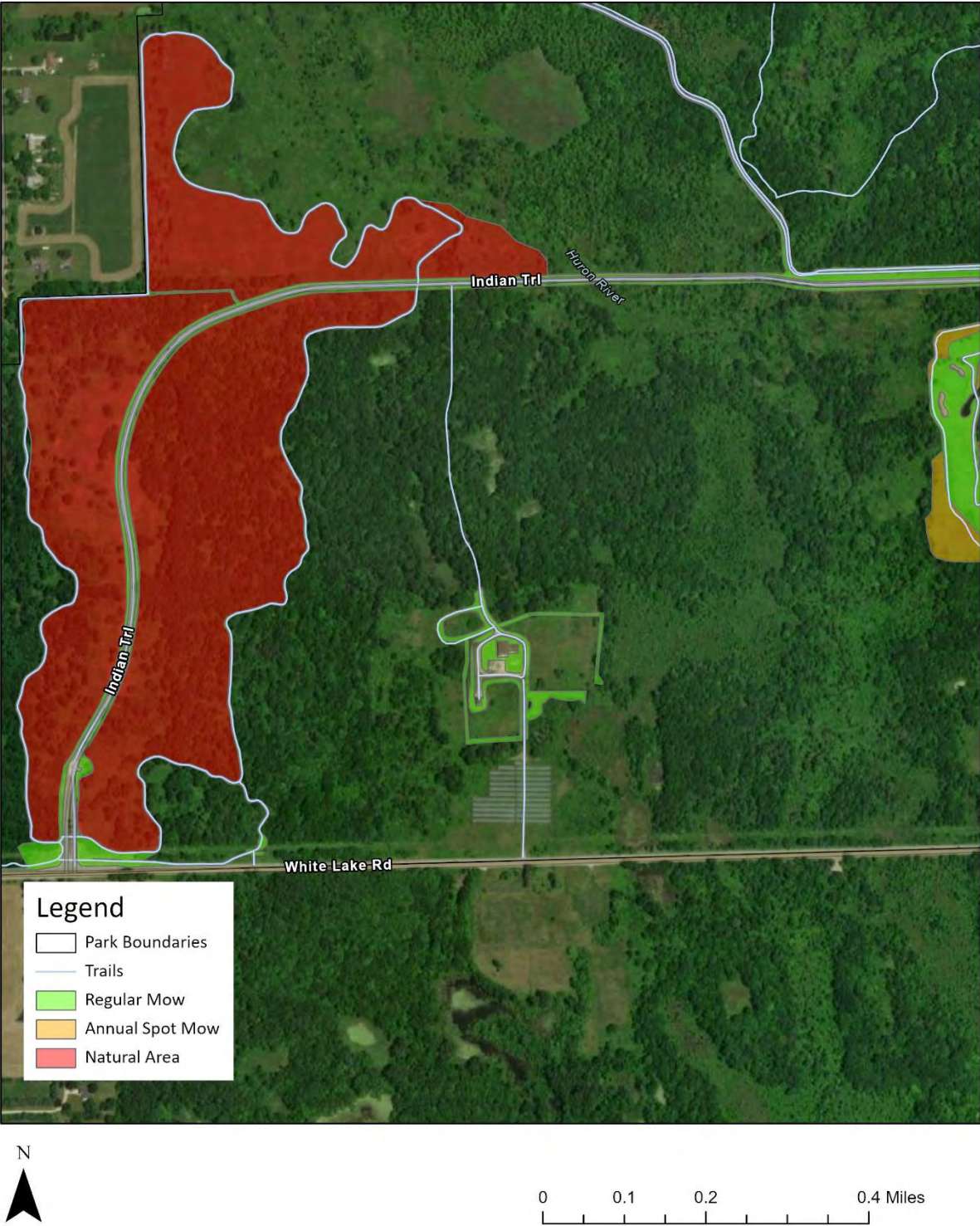


Indian Springs - Map 2



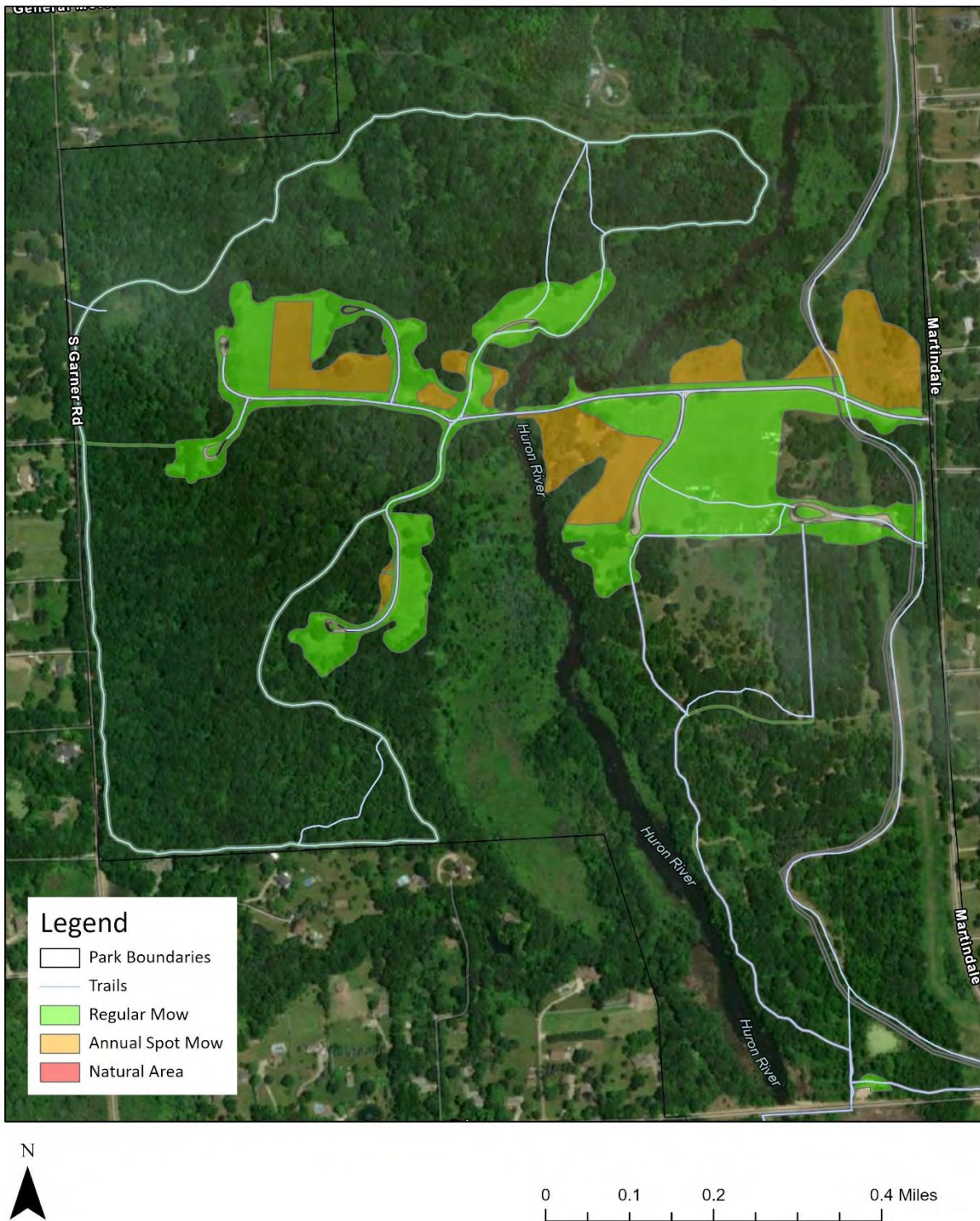


Indian Springs - Map 3



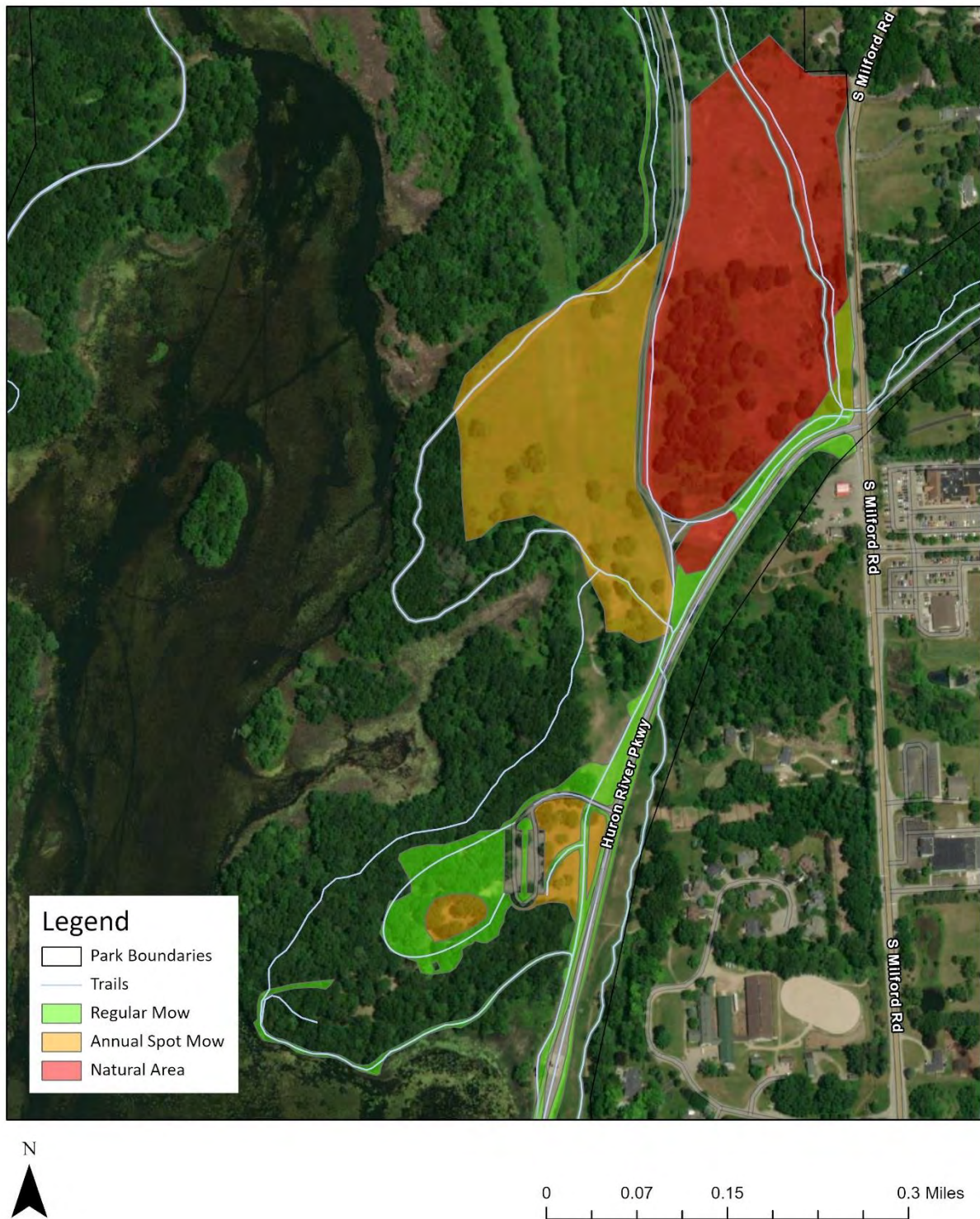


## Kensington - Map 1



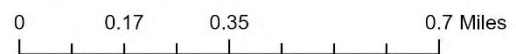
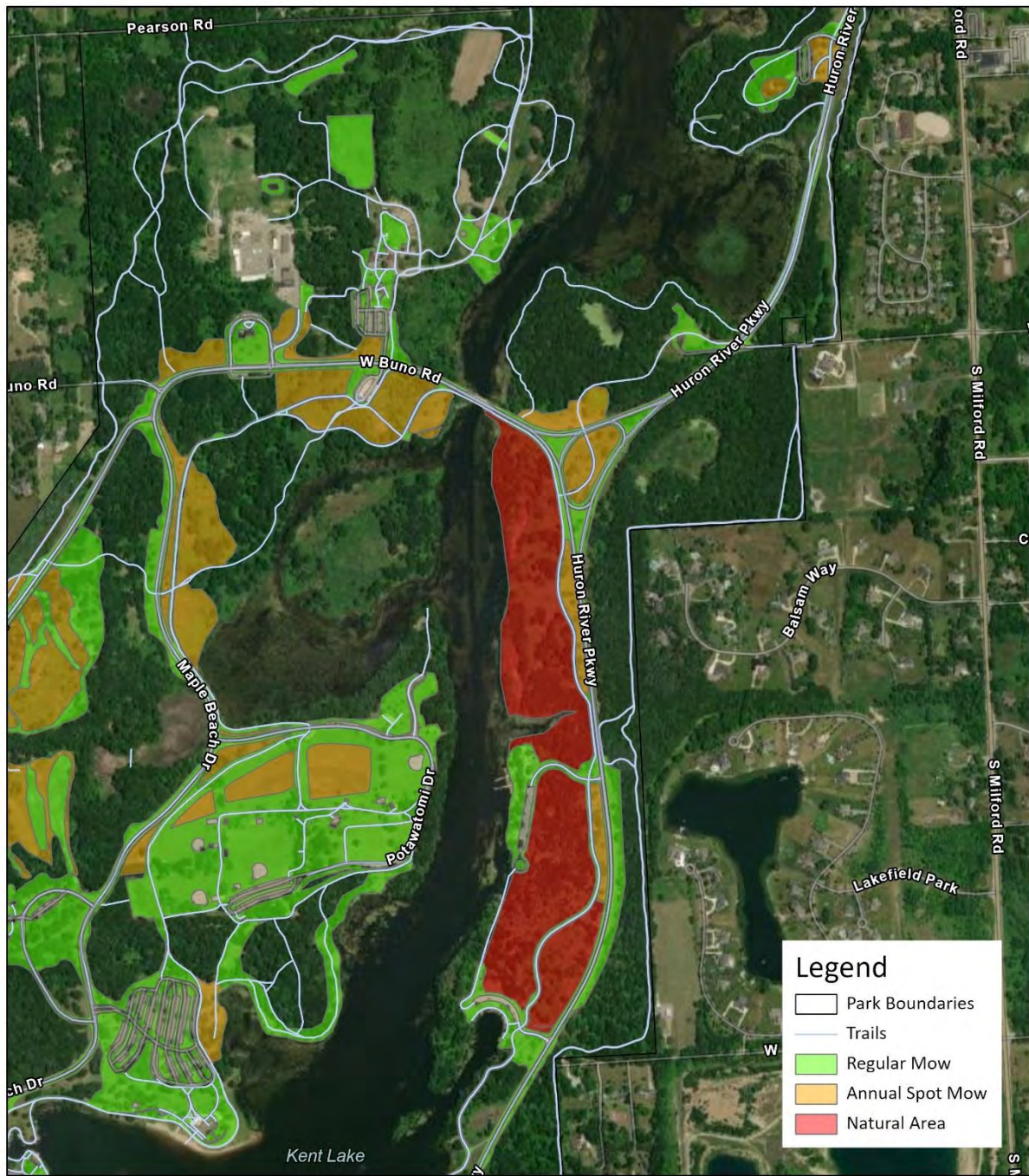


## Kensington - Map 2





# Kensington - Map 3



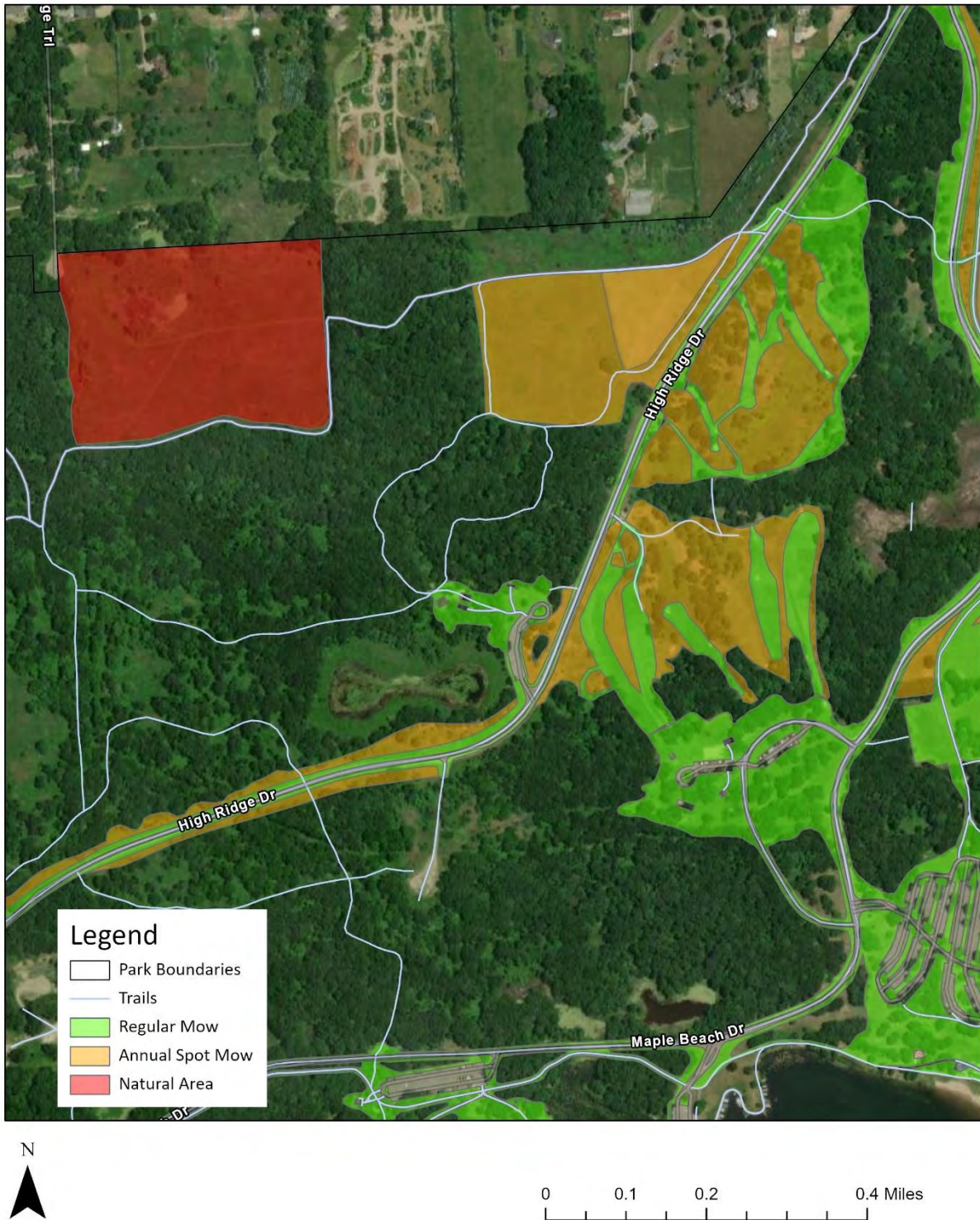


## Kensington - Map 4





## Kensington - Map 5



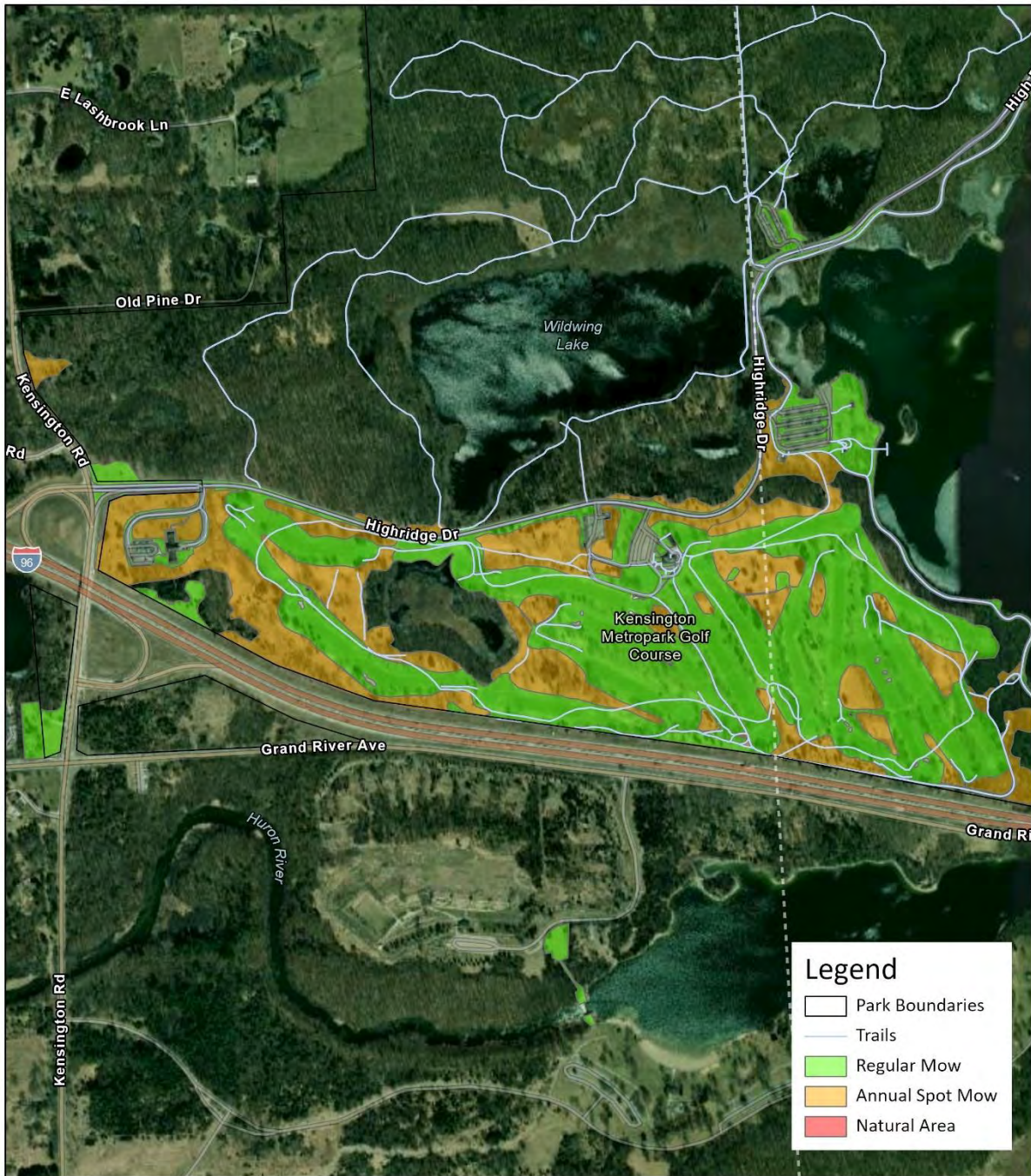


## Kensington - Map 6





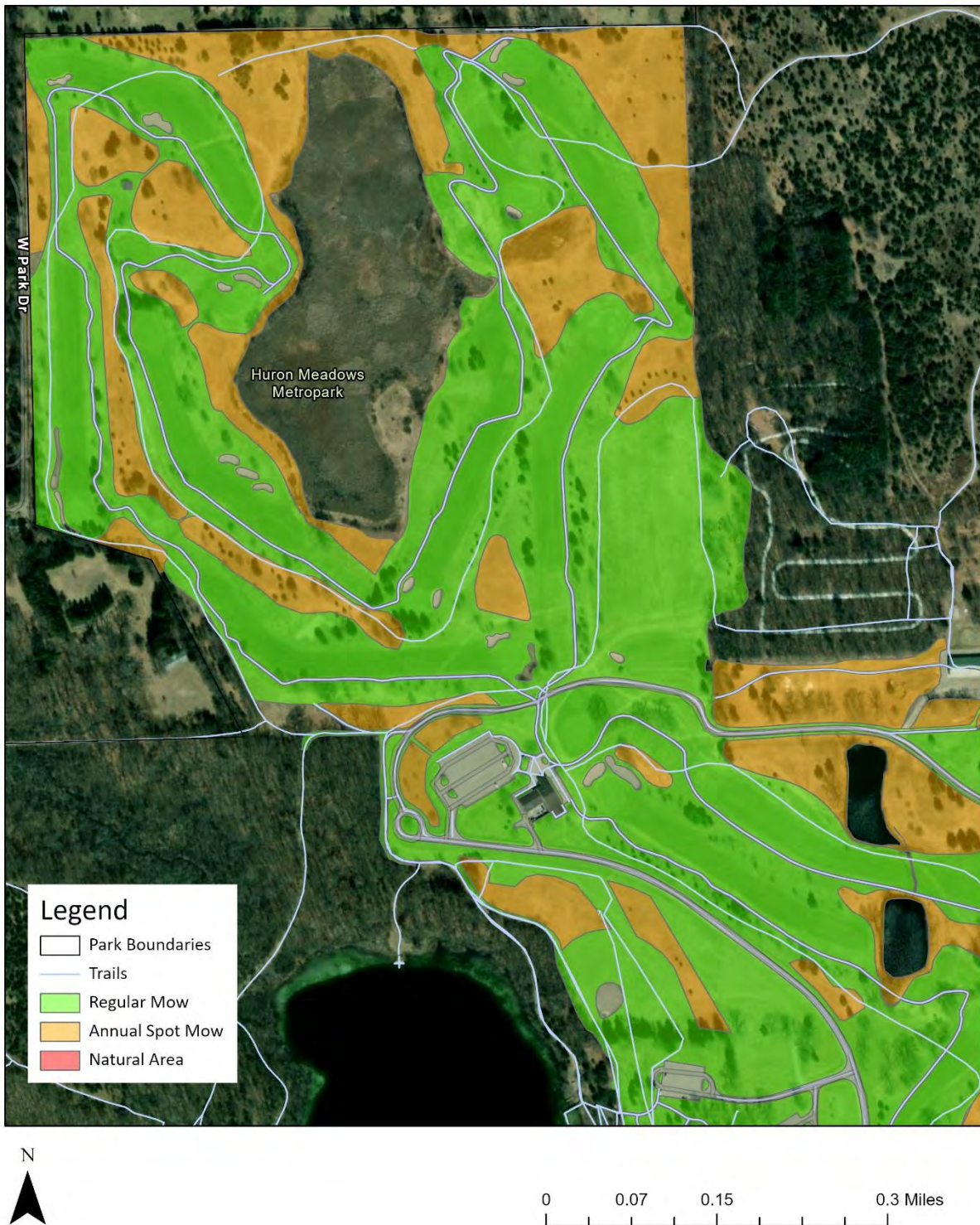
## Kensington - Map 7



0 0.17 0.35 0.7 Miles



## Huron Meadows - 1





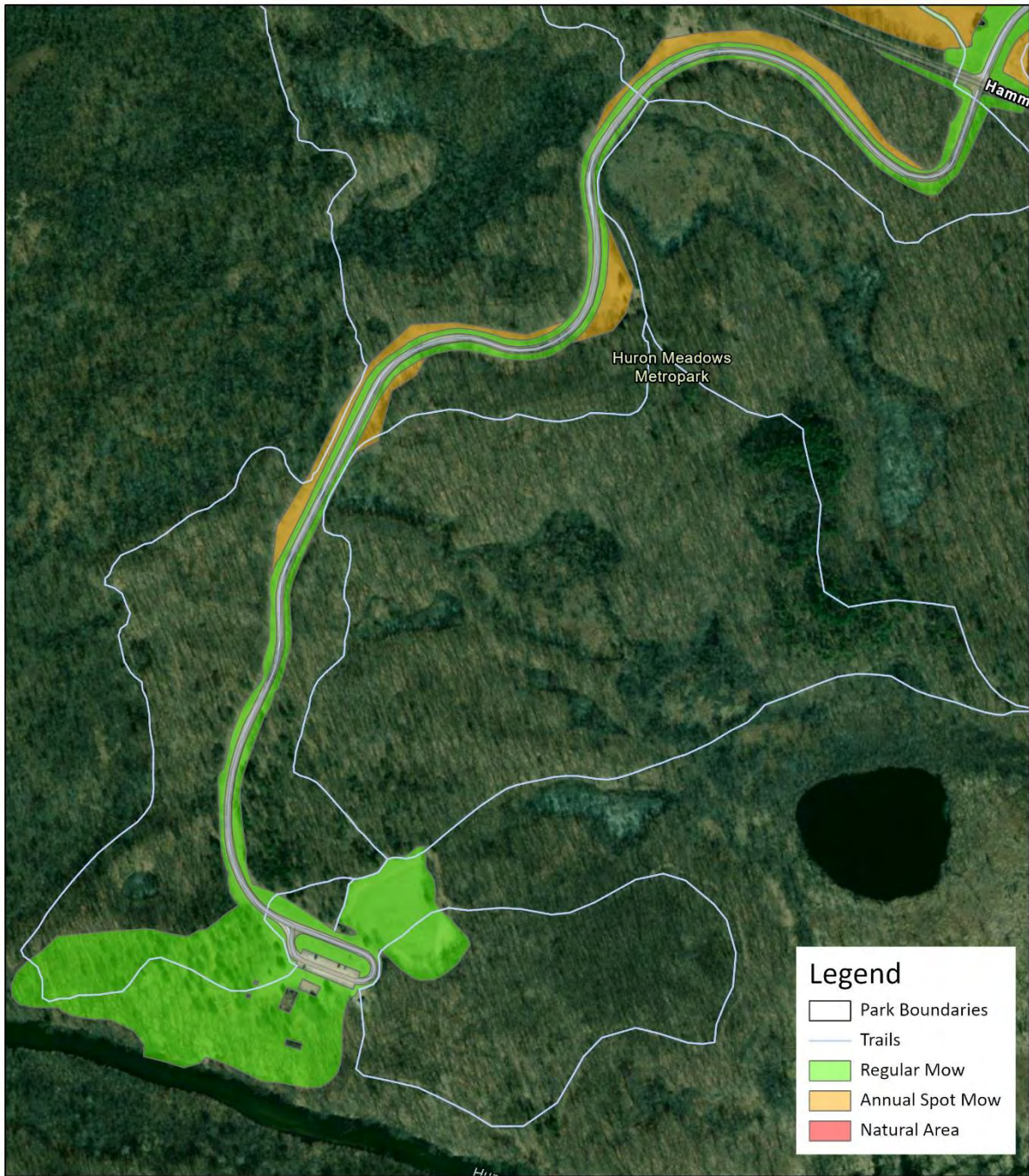
## Huron Meadows - 2



0 0.07 0.15 0.3 Miles



## Huron Meadows - 3



0 0.07 0.15 0.3 Miles

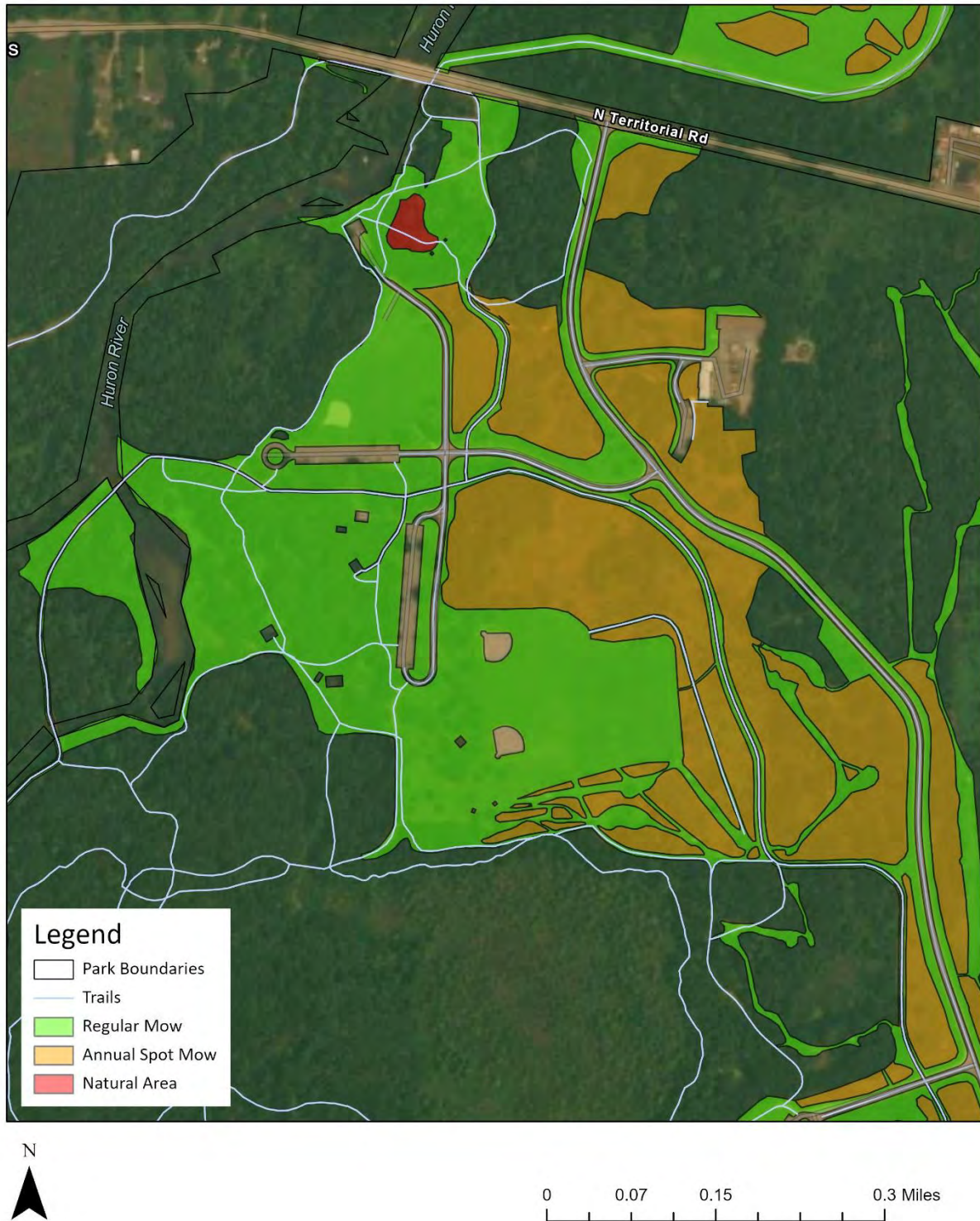


## Hudson Mills - Map 1

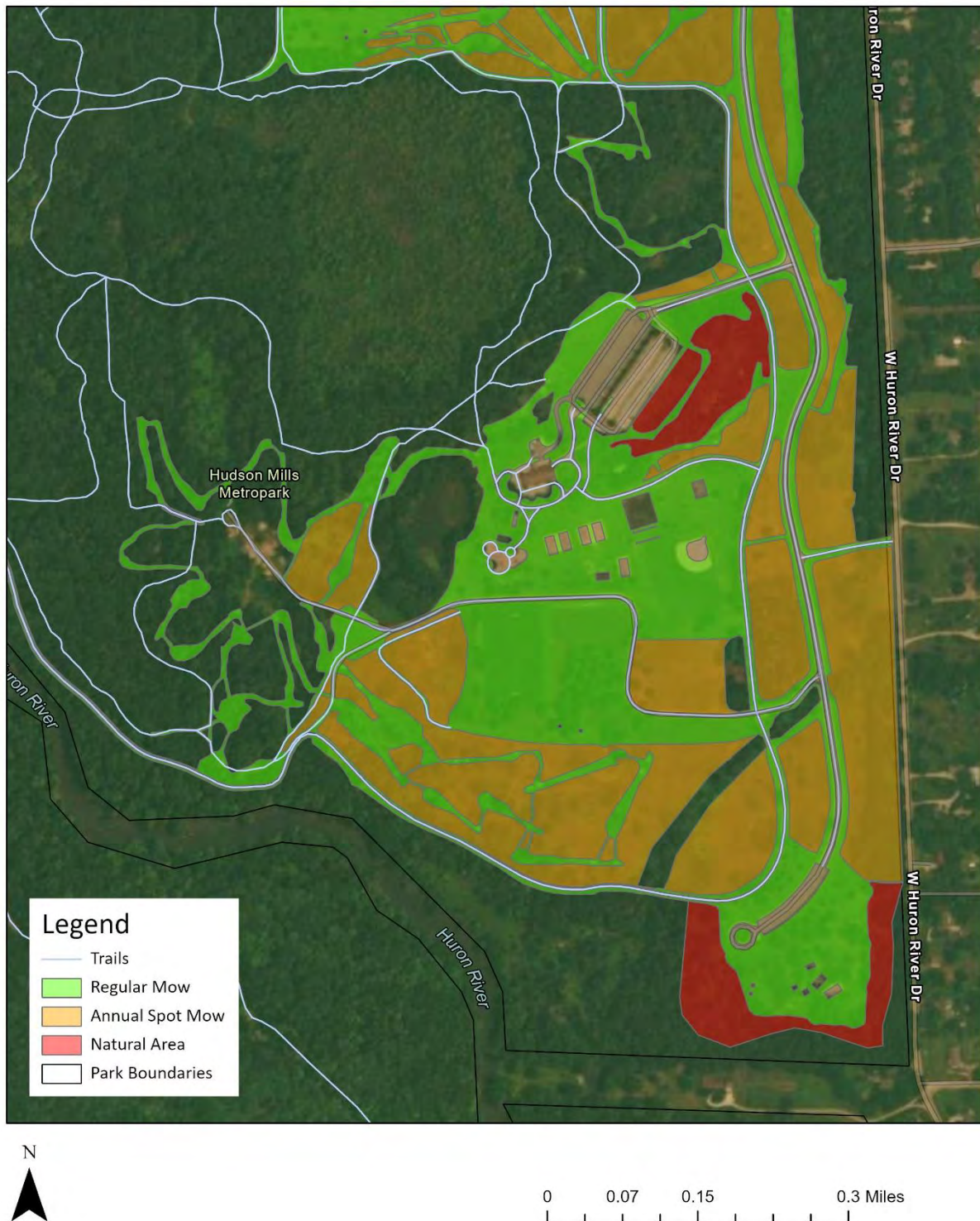




## Hudson Mills - Map 2

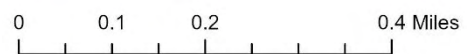
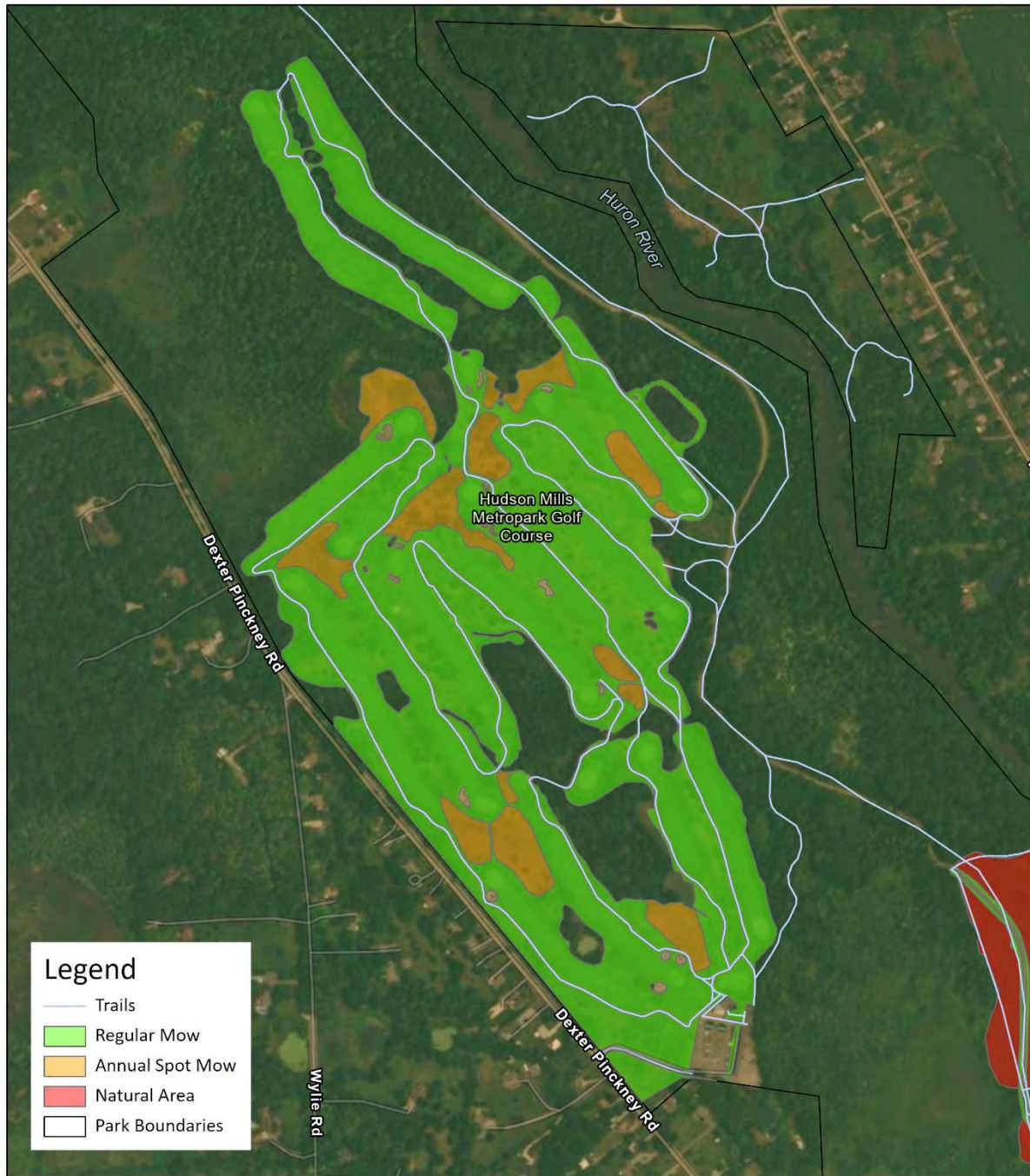


## Hudson Mills - Map 3

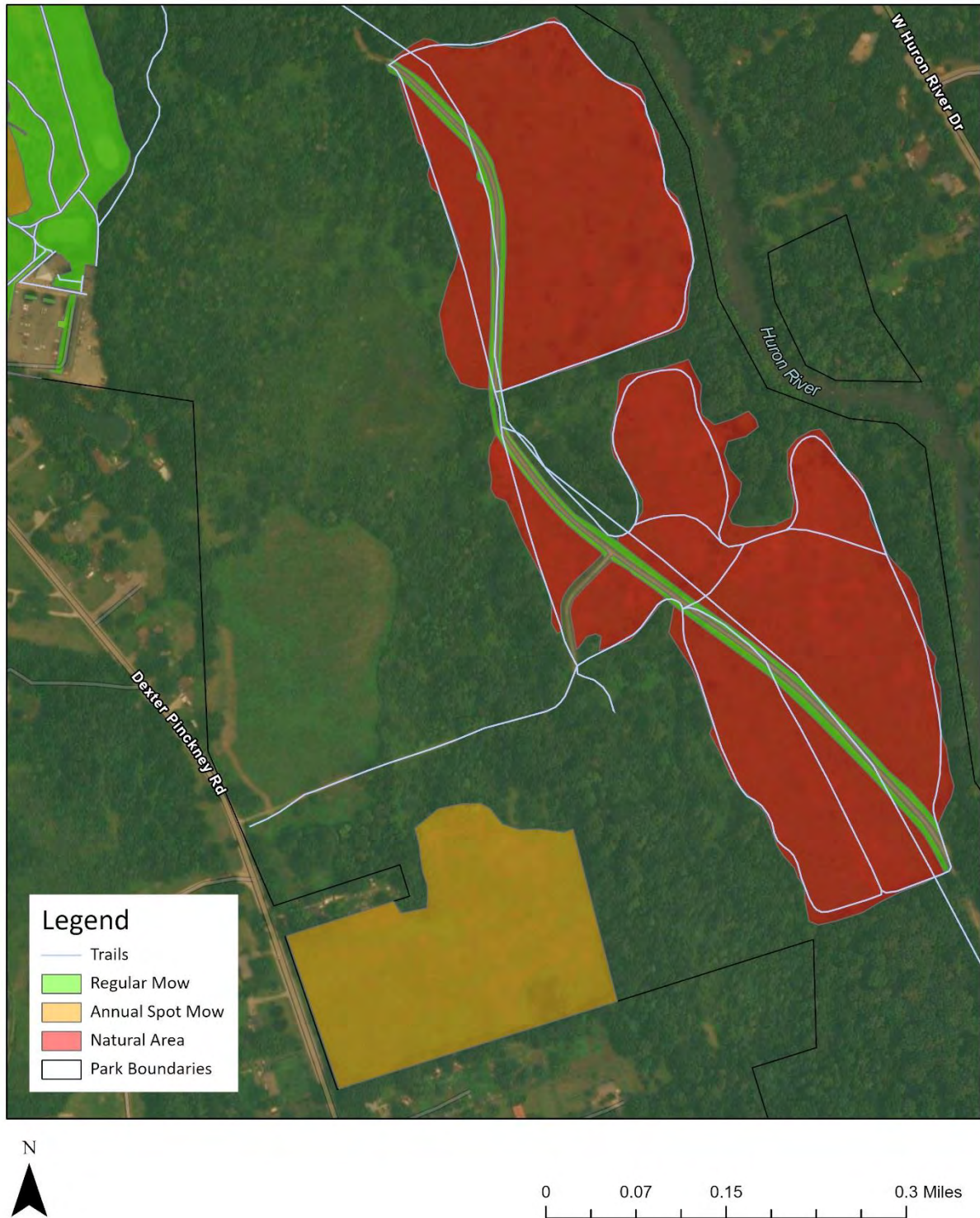




## Hudson Mills - Map 4

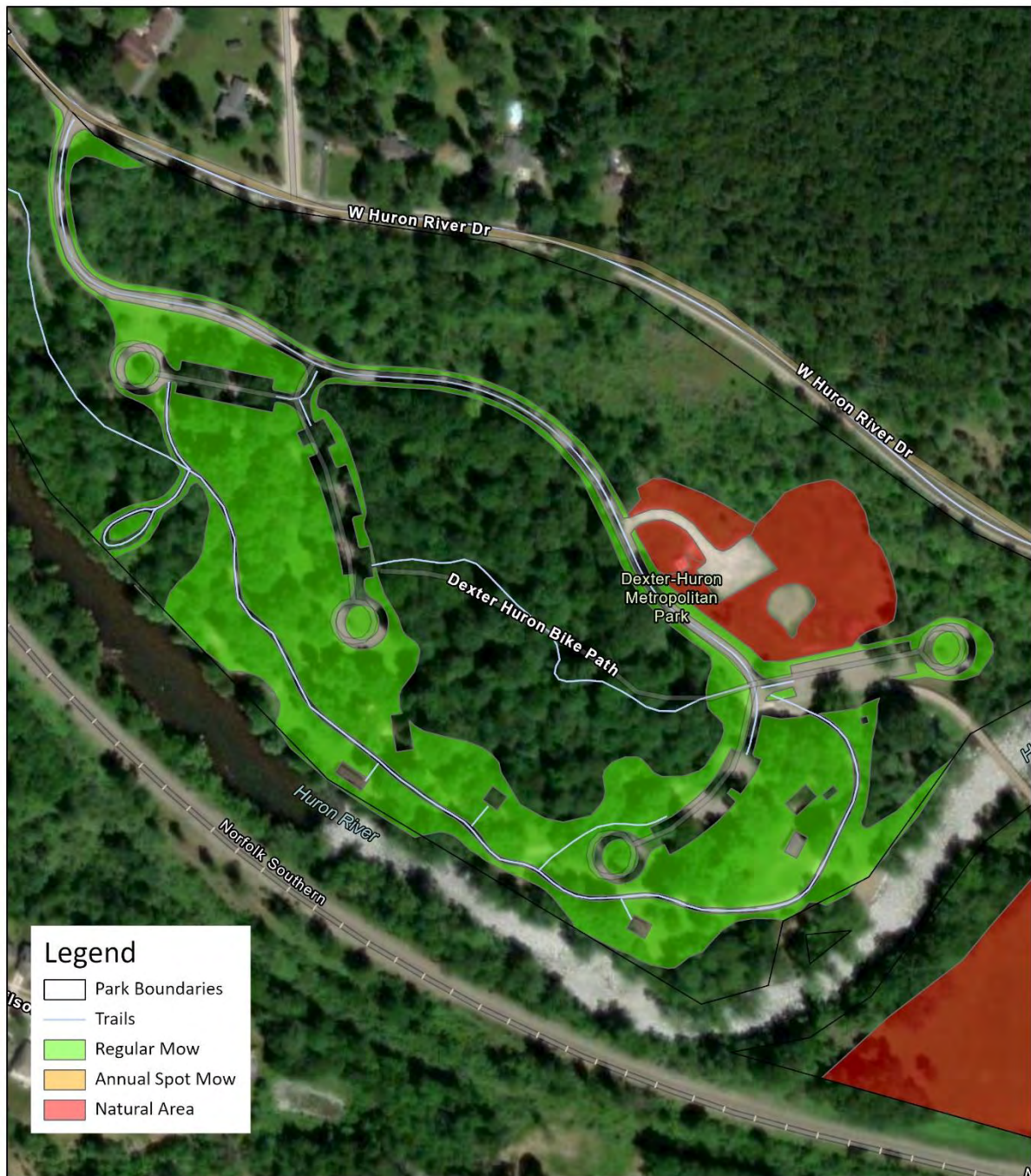


## Hudson Mills - Map 5





## Dexter-Huron - Map 1



0 0.04 0.09 0.18 Miles



## Dexter-Huron - Map 2





Delhi- Map 1





Delhi- Map 2



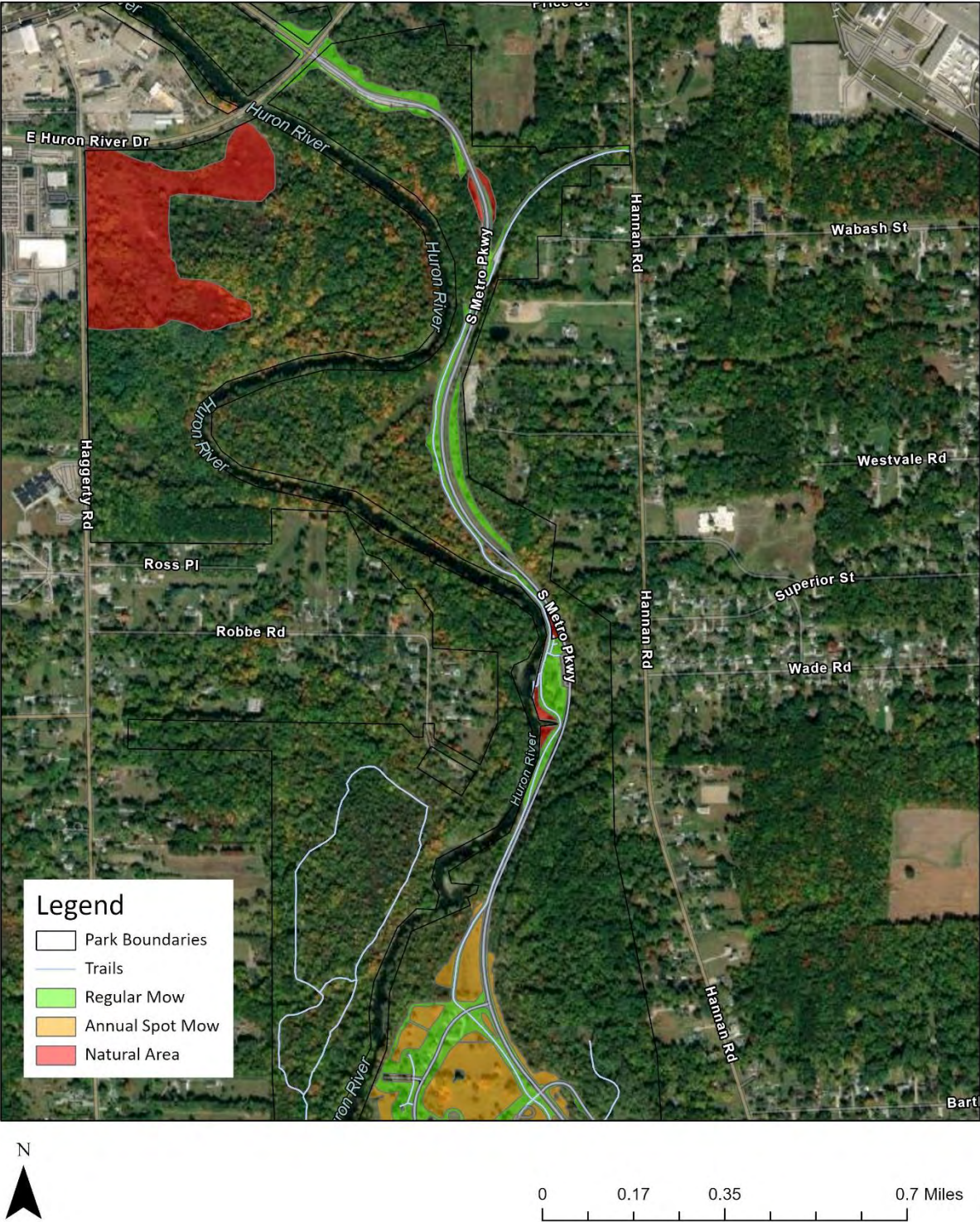


Delhi- Map 3



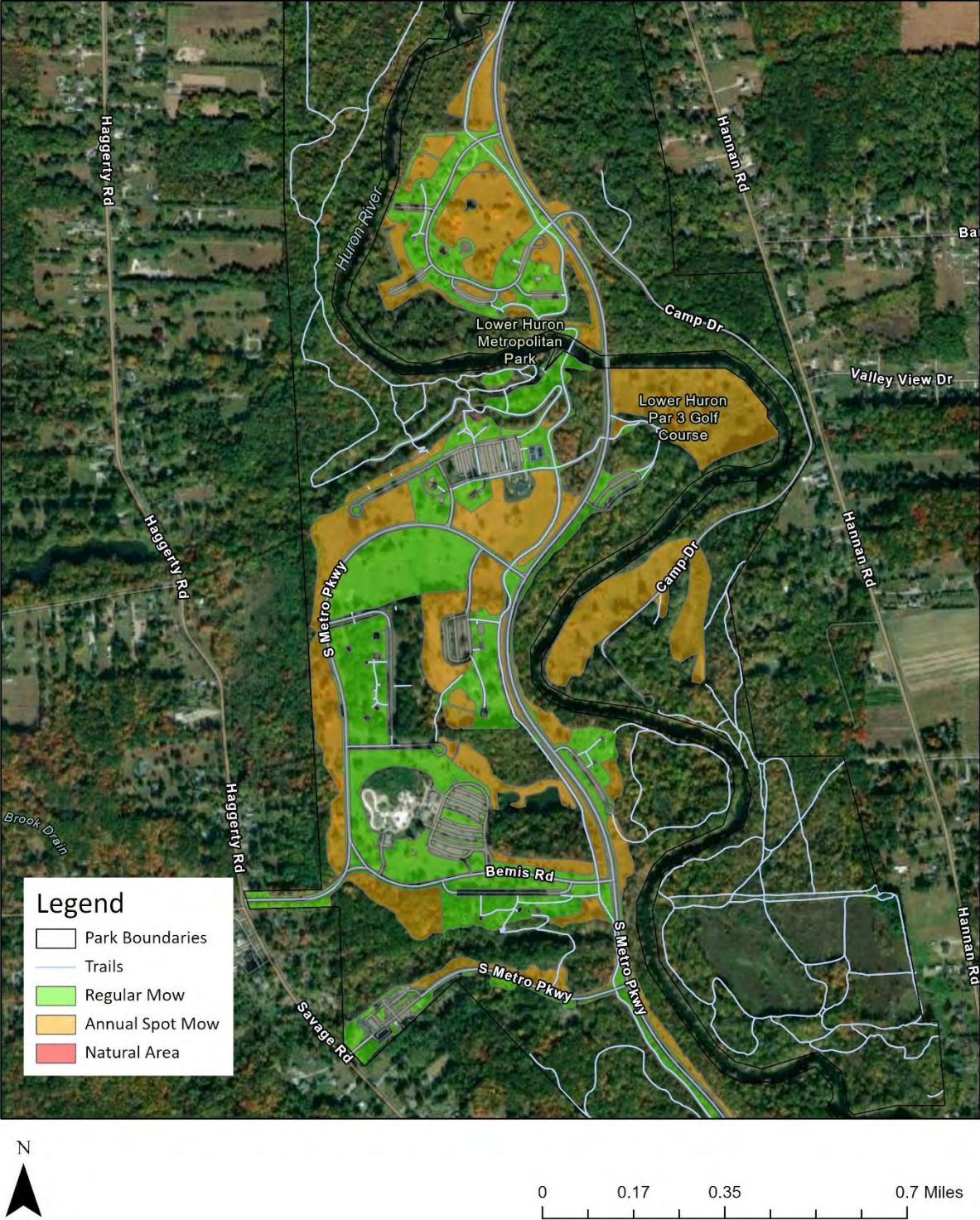


Lower Huron - Map 1



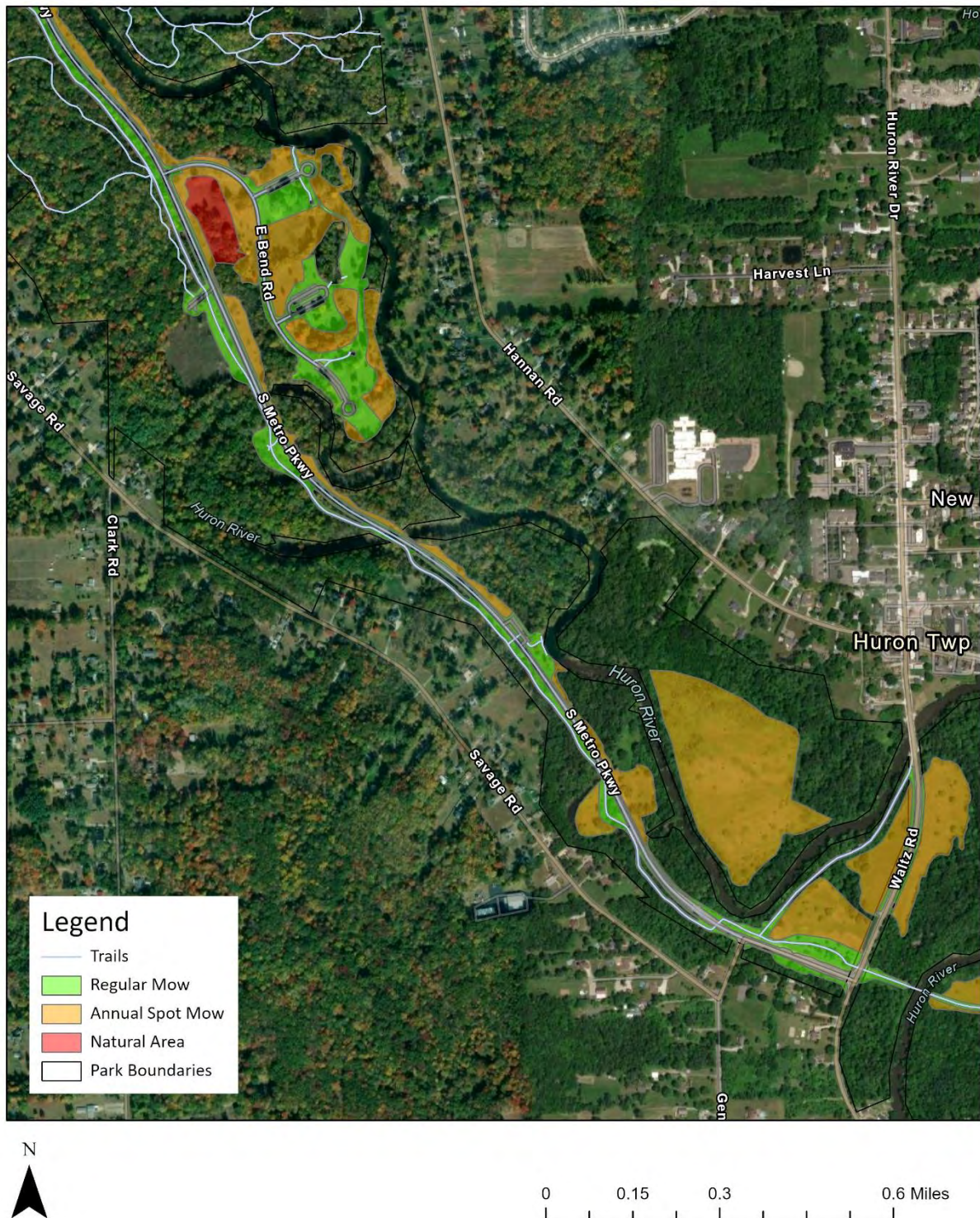


Lower Huron - Map 2



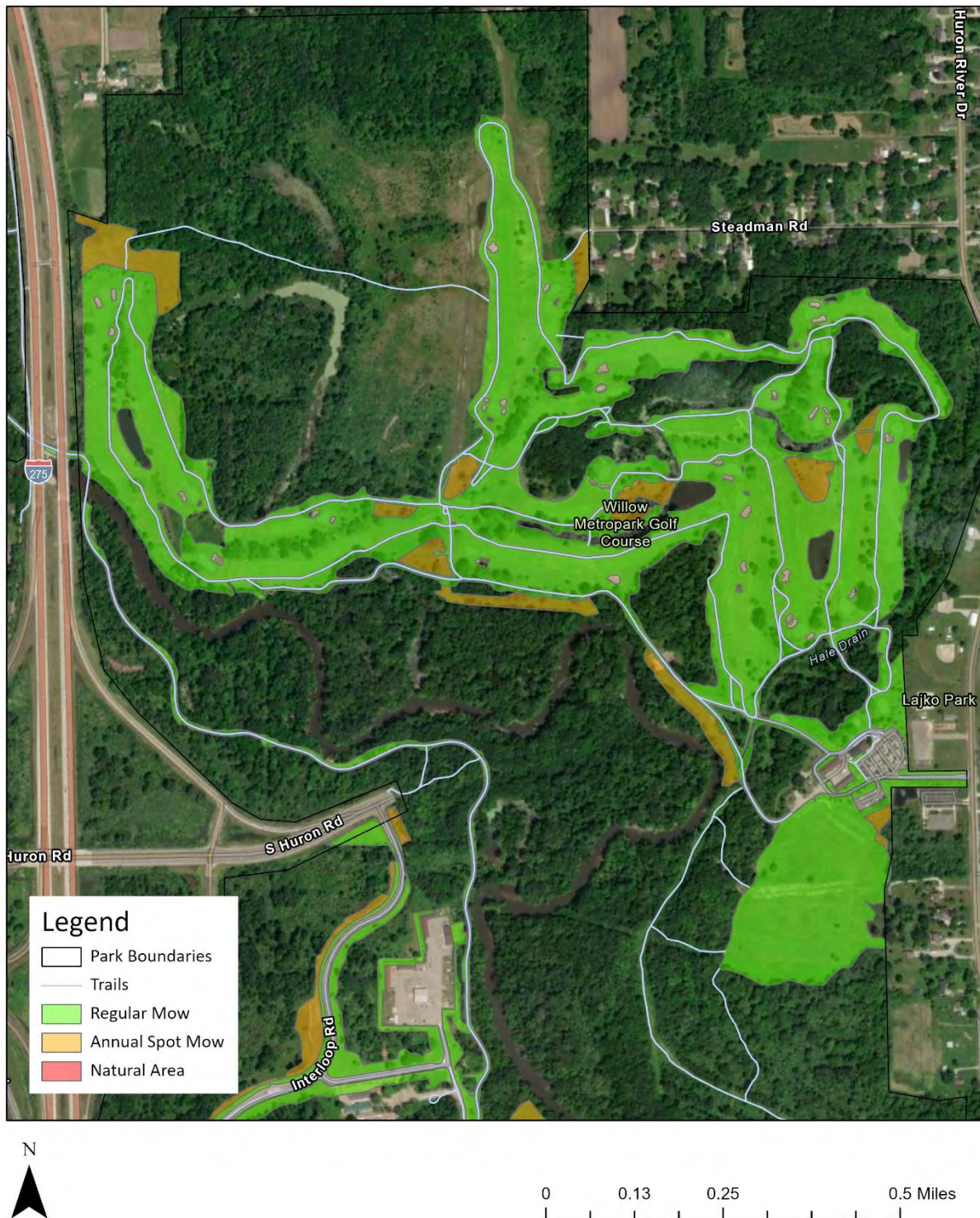


## Lower Huron - Map 3



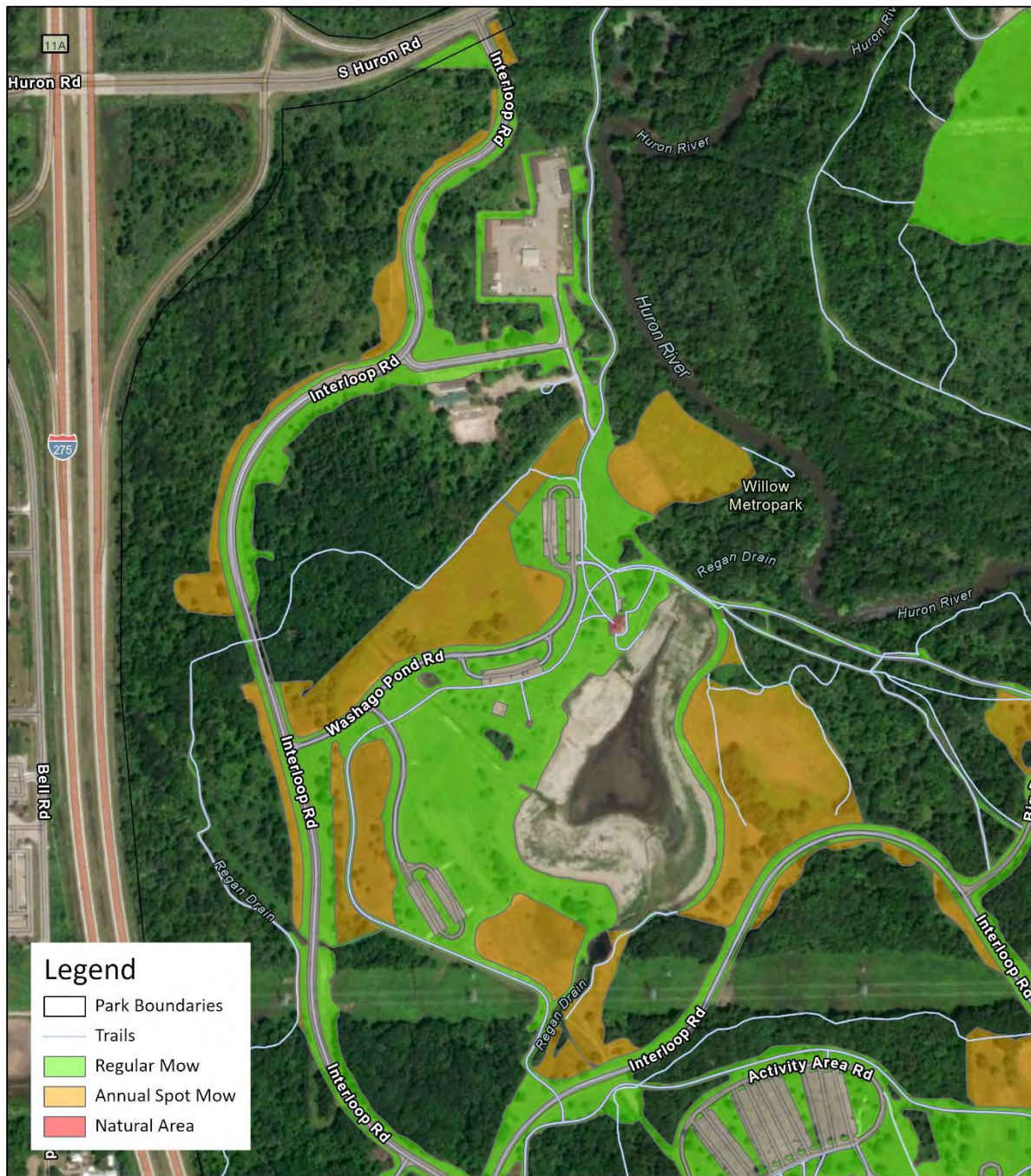


## Willow - Map 1





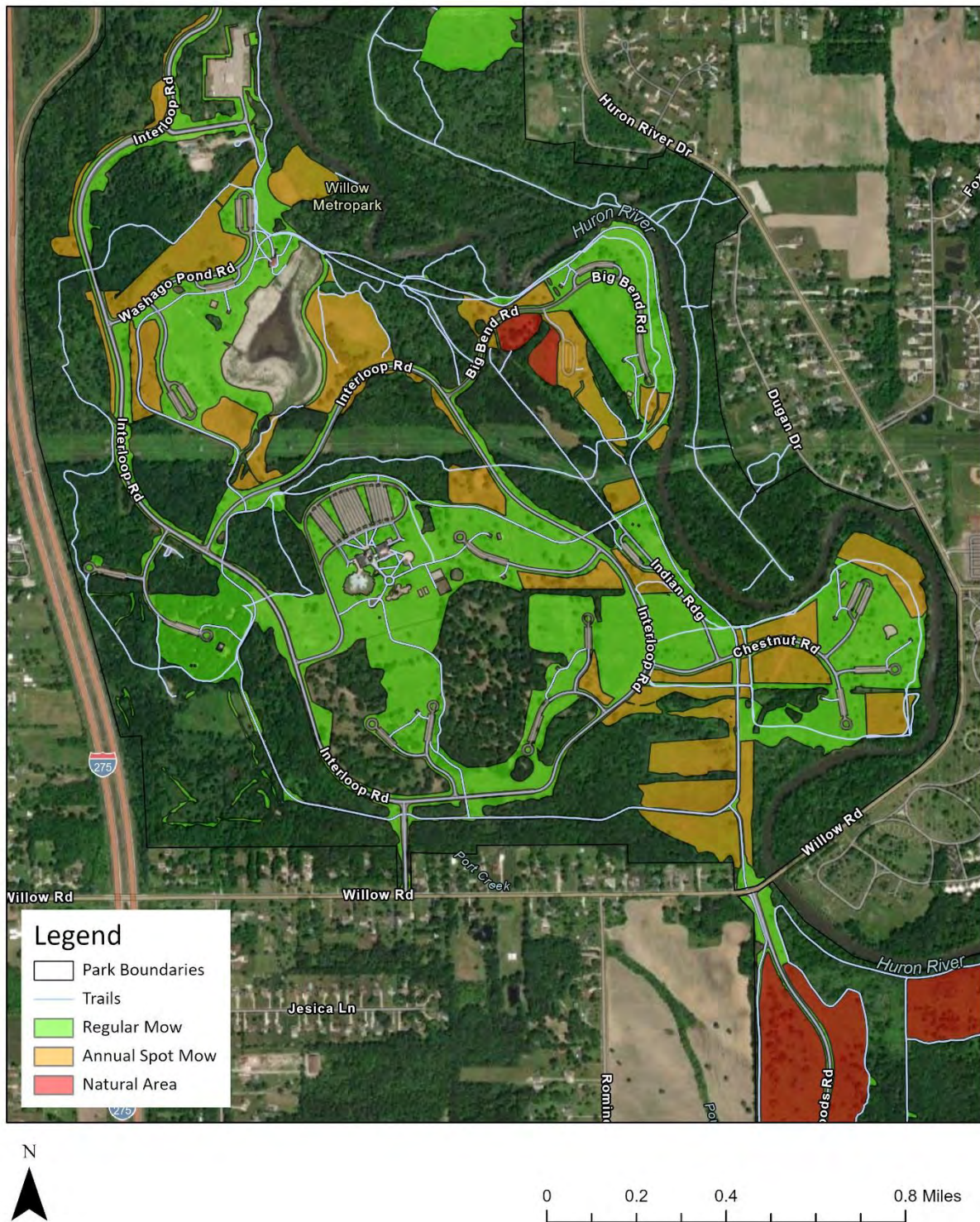
## Willow - Map 2



0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

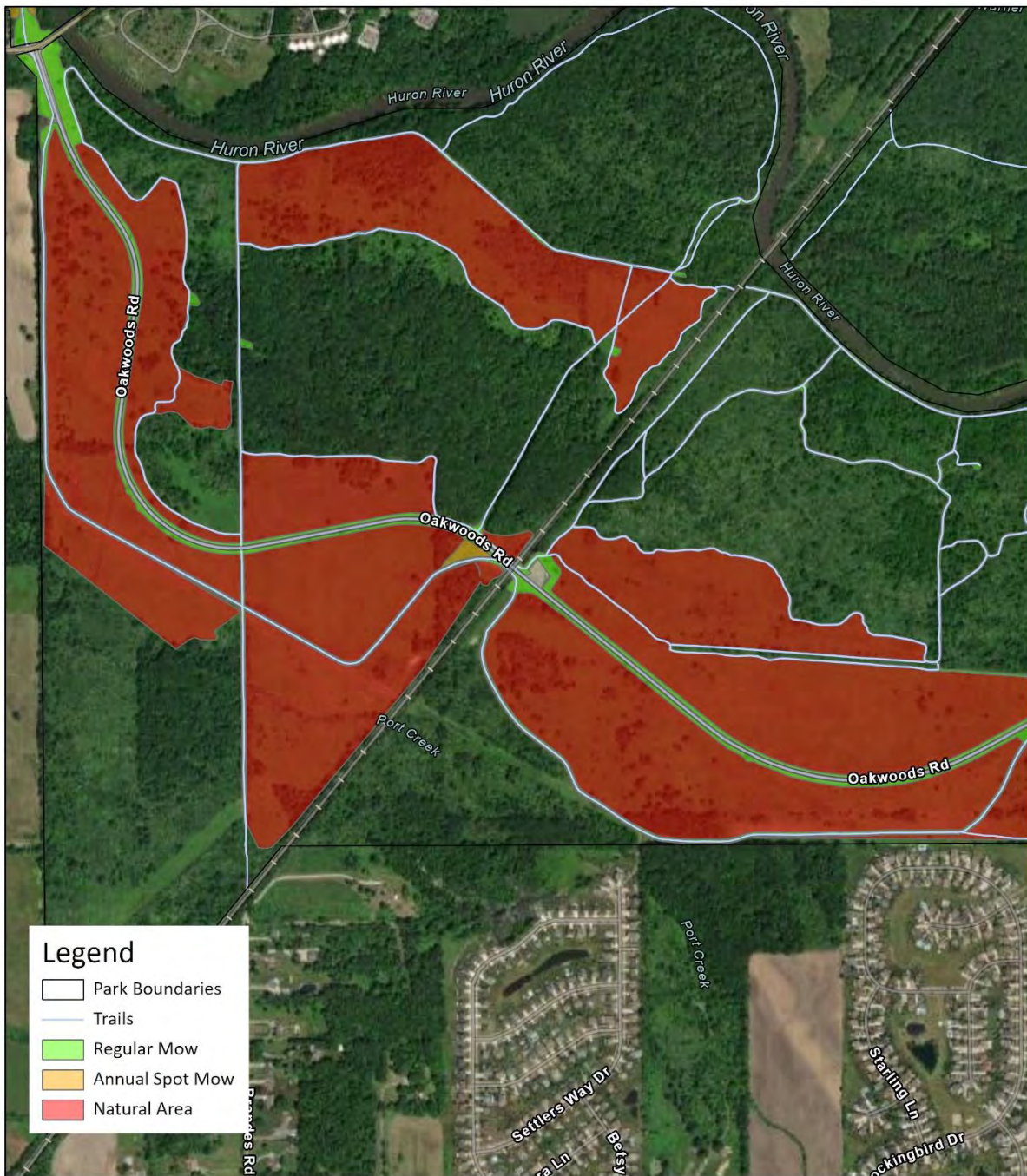


Willow - Map 3





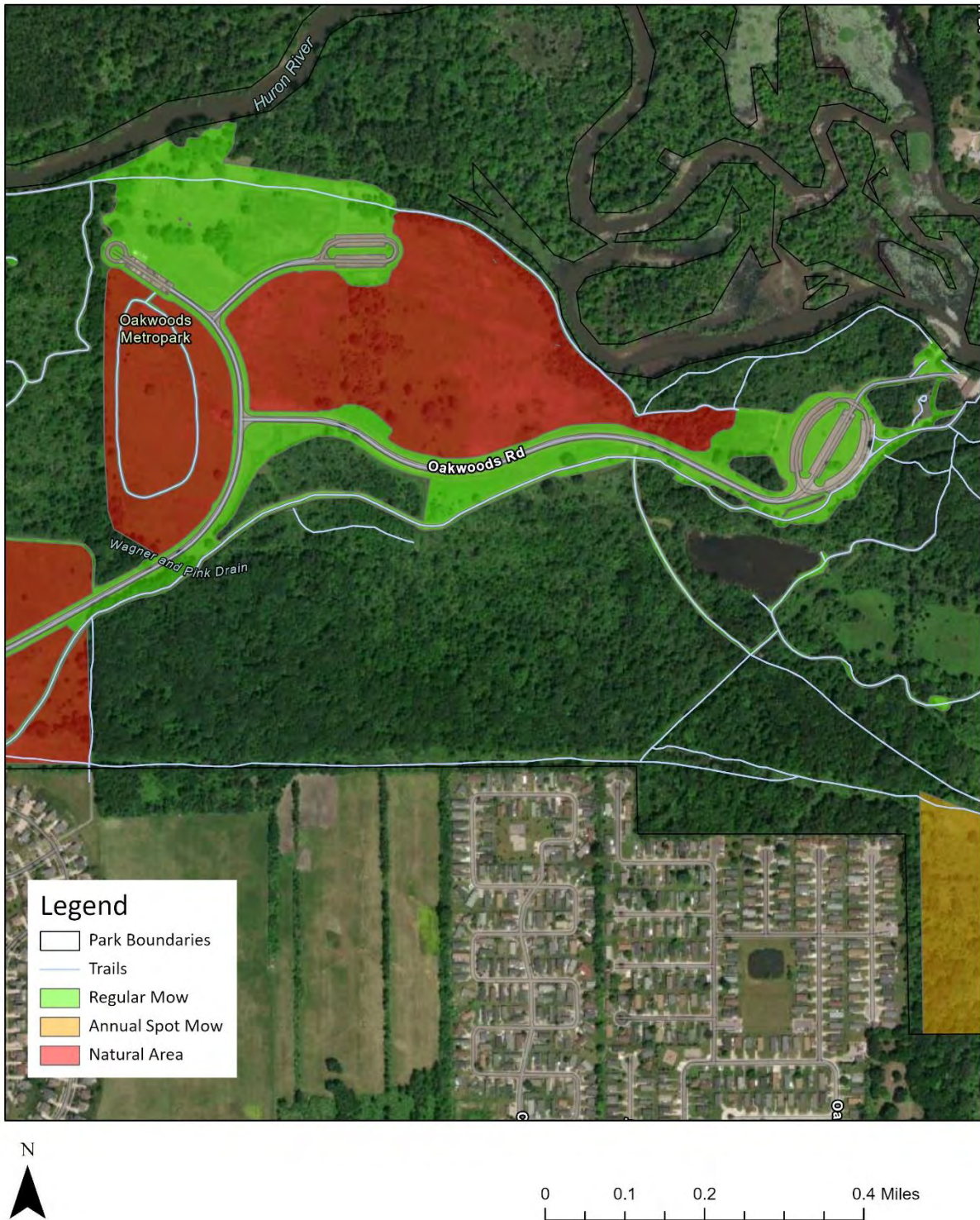
## Oakwoods - Map 1



0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

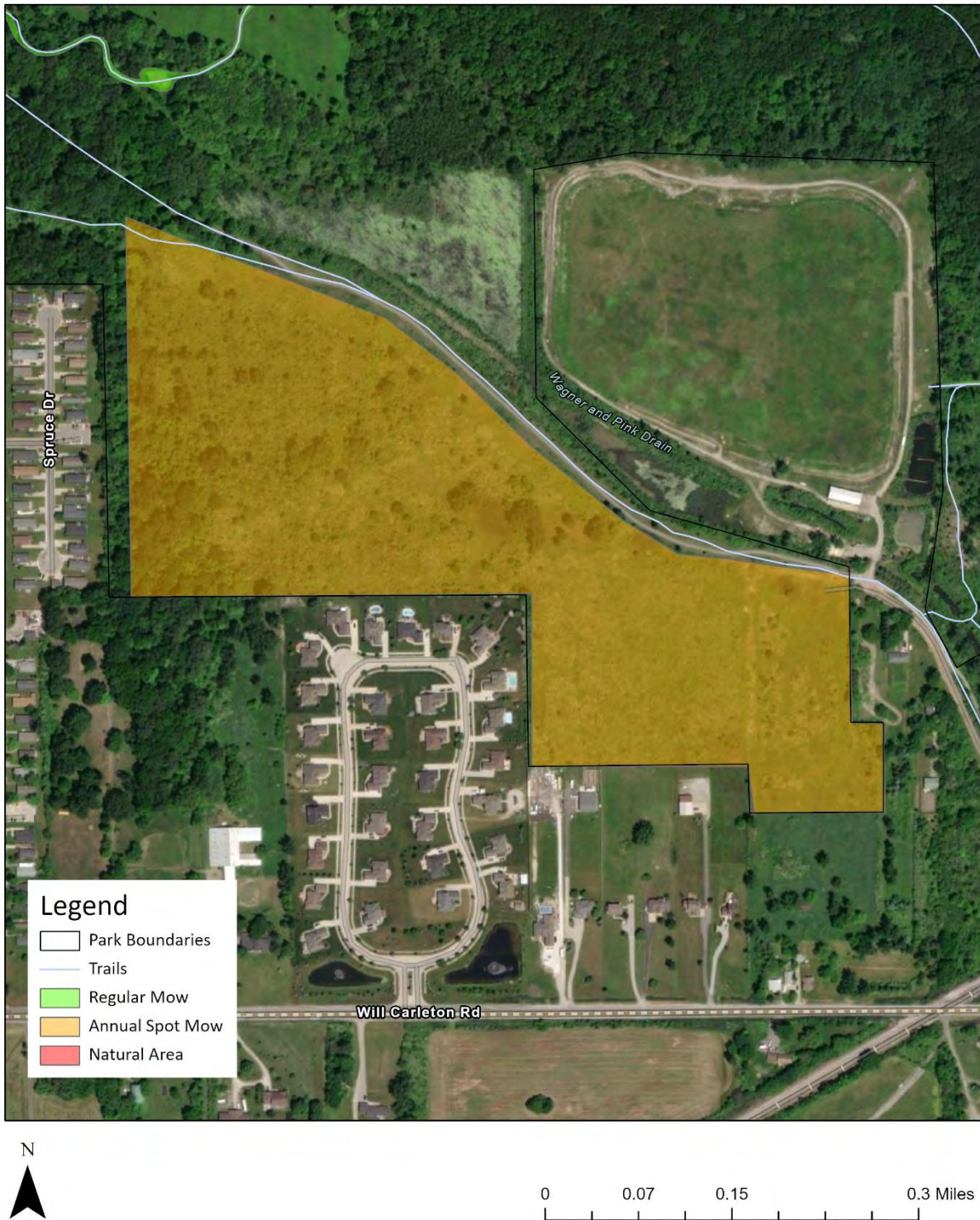


## Oakwoods - Map 2



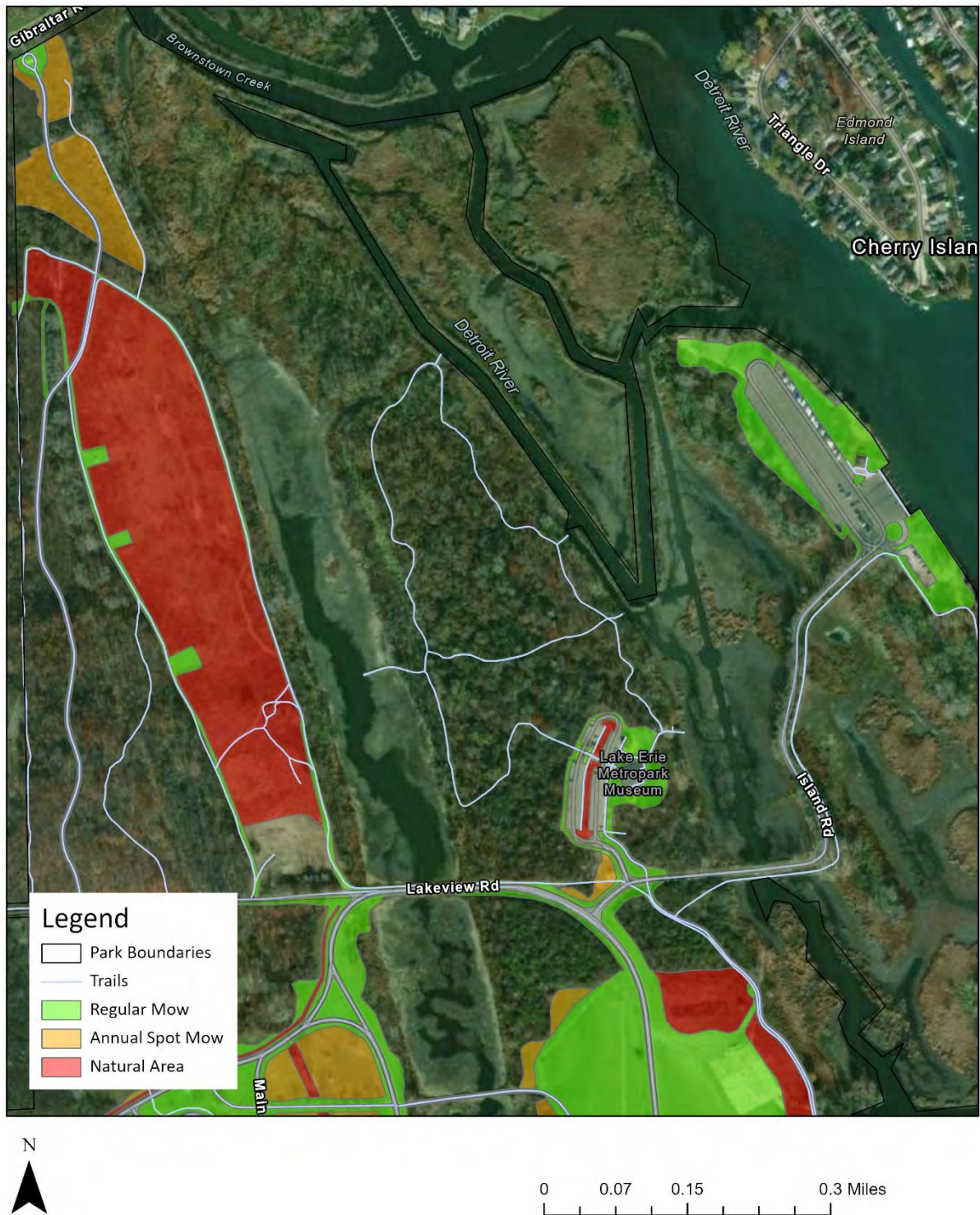


## Oakwoods - Map 3



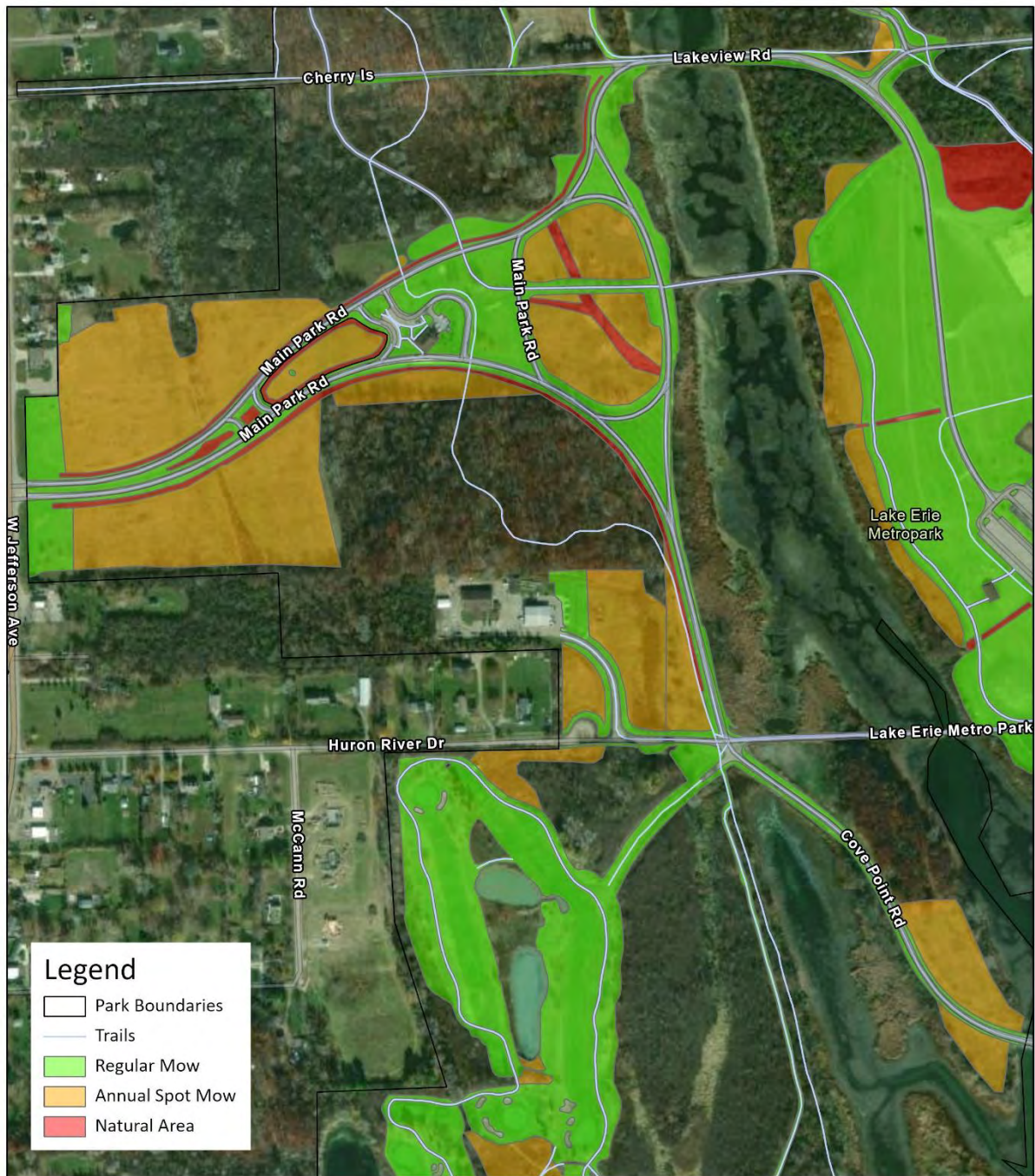


## Lake Erie - Map 1





## Lake Erie - Map 2



0 0.07 0.15 0.3 Miles

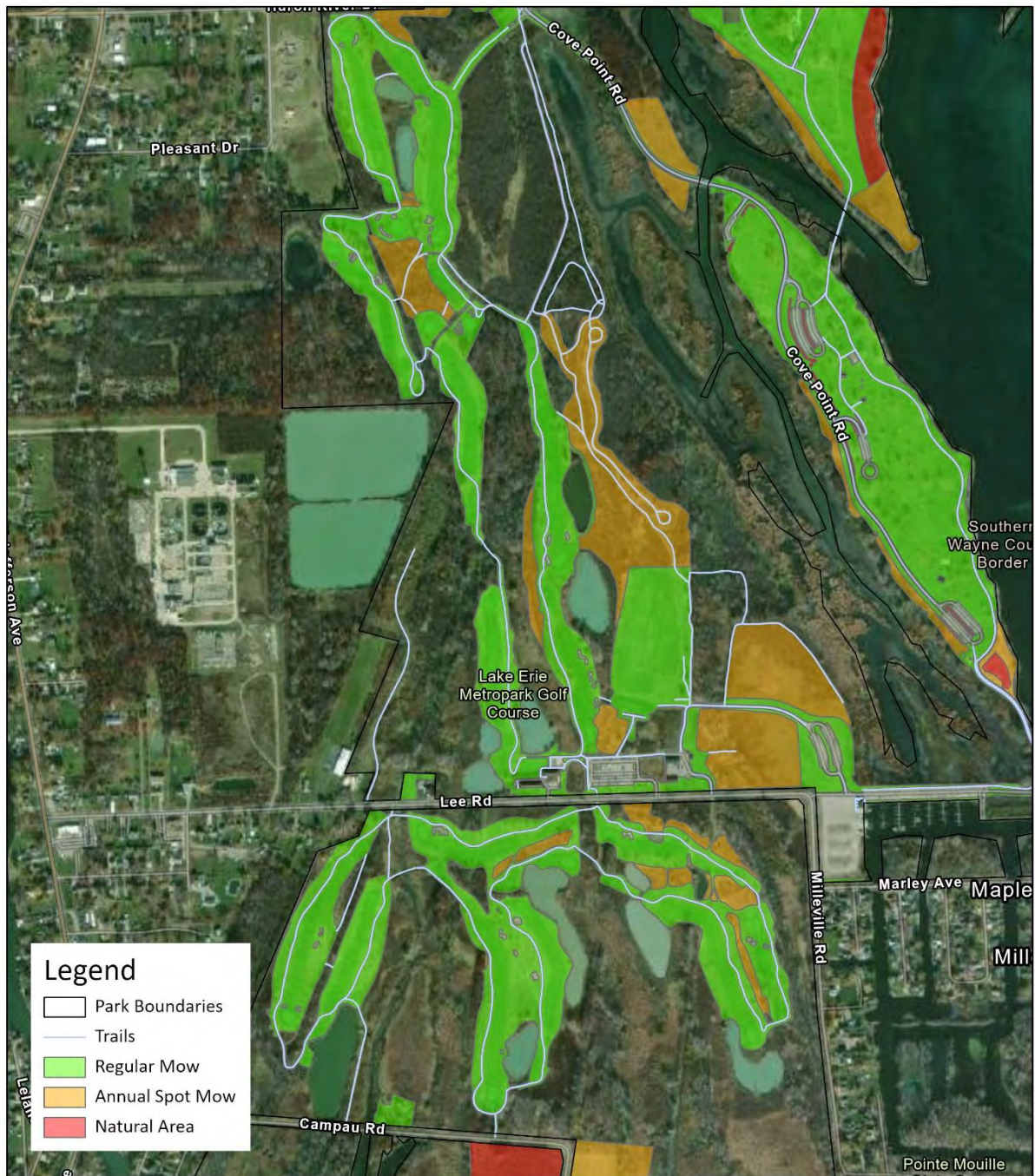


## Lake Erie - Map 3





## Lake Erie - Map 4





## Lake Erie - Map 5





## Lake Erie - Map 6

