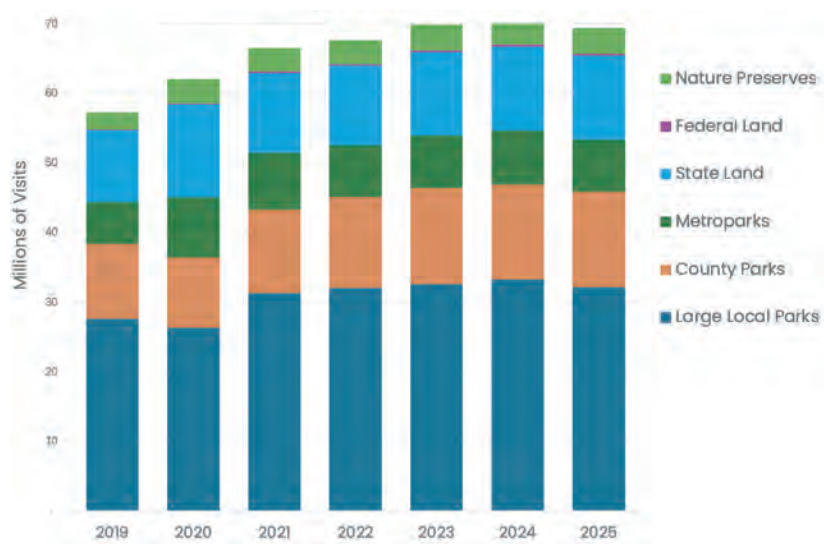


CONNECTING PEOPLE TO

NATURE

Visitation Trends in Southeast Michigan's Great Outdoors

This analysis tracks visitation trends from 2019–2025 across Southeast Michigan's 475 largest public outdoor recreation areas. Together, these shared landscapes serve millions of residents and visitors each year and show a growing demand for recreation access in the region. Connecting people to nature is a key metric of SEMCOG's GREEN Initiative, as an indicator of healthy, resilient, and engaged communities with a high quality of life.



BY THE NUMBERS

475 largest parks and preserves studied | **150,000** acres studied | **70** million visits in 2025

REGIONAL PARKS ARE MAJOR DESTINATIONS

Over the pandemic, total park visits grew by **16%** (2019 – 2021)



Overall, parks have sustained **21%** growth in annual visits (2019 – 2025)



Many parks have experienced even more significant growth (2019 – 2025)



4 parks see more than 2M visits

More than annual attendance at Tigers home games

7 parks see more than 1M visits

More than annual attendance at Pistons and Red Wings home games

22 parks see more than 500k visits

More than annual attendance at Lions home games

120 parks see more than 100k visits

More than a full stadium at the Big House



2025

MOST VISITED PARKS



TOP 10 MOST VISITED PARKS IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN (2025)

LIVINGSTON

1. Island Lake Recreation Area | **753k**
2. Brighton Recreation Area | **368k**
3. Bennet Park, Hamburg Twp | **362k**
4. Hartland Heritage Park | **221k**
5. Huron Meadows Metropark | **175k**

MONROE

1. Sterling State Park | **777k**
2. Monroe County Fair Grounds | **708k**
3. Munson Park, Monroe | **444k**
4. StoneCo Community Park, Whiteford Township | **257k**
5. Erie State Game Area | **168k**

ST. CLAIR

1. Lakeport State Park | **349k**
2. Algonac State Park | **304k**
3. Goodells County Park | **196k**
4. Sanborn Park, Port Huron | **170k**
5. Memorial Park, Port Huron Twp | **169k**

WAYNE

1. Belle Isle Park | **2.8M** 
2. Heritage Park, Taylor | **2.3M** 
3. Hines County Park | **1.9M** 
4. Victory Park, Canton Twp | **1.8M** 
5. Warrendale Park, Dearborn Heights | **1.3M** 

MACOMB

1. Stony Creek Metropark | **1.6M** 
2. Lake St. Clair Metropark | **1.2M** 
3. Dodge Park, Sterling Heights | **1M** 
4. Freedom Hill County Park | **628k**
5. Memorial Park, Mount Clemens | **618k**

OAKLAND

1. Kensington Metropark | **2.1M** 
2. Civic Center Park, Southfield | **1M** 
3. Founders Sports Park, Farmington Hills | **677k**
4. Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area | **661k**
5. Holly State Recreation Area | **660k**

WASHTENAW

1. Hudson Mills Metropark | **414k**
2. Rolling Hills County Park | **319k**
3. Bandemer Park, Ann Arbor | **304k**
4. Argo Nature Area, Ann Arbor | **272k**
5. Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center | **257k**

BEHIND THE NUMBERS:

Learn more about the data source, methodology, and individual system stats



Local LEGENDS



HERITAGE PARK - TAYLOR

As the host of the world championship for Junior League Little League Baseball, the park is the most visited local park in Southeast Michigan



INNOVATION HILLS - ROCHESTER HILLS

Established in 2019, Innovation Hills receives nearly 400,000 annual visits and is the fastest growing outdoor attraction in Southeast Michigan.



ARGO NATURE AREA - ANN ARBOR

Providing access to nature in the heart of the city, this park's visitation has doubled since 2019, and has become one of Southeast Michigan's most intensively used natural spaces.



Behind the Numbers

What is the data source?

This analysis of park visitation in Southeast Michigan is sourced from Placer.ai, a location analytics platform that gathers data from mobile phones through application activity, connection and interaction with public Wi-Fi, and third-party data integration.

How are visits tracked?

This anonymous data is used to understand generalized travel patterns of mobile users across the United States. Placer.ai only collects data on mobile users who “opt-in” to data tracking, and does NOT include:

- Users who “opt-out” of data tracking
- Data from mobile users under the age of 18
- Visitors without a mobile phone

As a result, overall visits can be considered conservative estimates – particularly for park spaces that are more youth-oriented.

How were these locations selected?

This analysis is limited to publicly owned, outdoor recreation destinations in Southeast Michigan that are greater than 40 acres in size. It includes 475 of the region’s largest local parks, all county, state, federal recreation land, Metroparks, and publicly accessible nature preserves. Placer.ai also limits visitation data for sensitive locations to protect individual privacy and mitigate regulatory risks. Reviewed on a case-by-case basis, recreational sites that encompass or are adjacent to the following uses may NOT be included:

- Schools
- Government offices
- Healthcare facilities
- Houses of worship
- Other sensitive uses

As a result, several large recreation sites were not possible to include in this study, despite their strong contributions to outdoor activity in the region.

What are the differences between park systems?

Large Local Parks

- 173 sites studied
- 16,837 acres
- 32.3M total visits in 2025
- 16% growth in visits since 2019
- 1,914 visits per acre

State Parks

- 55 sites studied
- 83,936 acres
- 12.1M total visits in 2025
- 17% growth in visits since 2019
- 144 visits per acre

County Parks

- 101 sites studied
- 17,453 acres
- 13.7M total visits in 2025
- 28% growth in visits since 2019
- 82 visits per acre

National Parks

- 3 sites studied
- 524 acres
- 257k total visits in 2025
- 125% growth in visits since 2019
- 490 visits per acre

Metroparks

- 13 sites studied
- 22,181 acres
- 7.5M total visits in 2025
- 25% growth in visits since 2019
- 337 visits per acre

Nature Preserves

- 130 sites studied
- 11,088 acres
- 3.8M total visits 2025
- 50% growth in visits since 2019
- 337 visits per acre

How can I use this information?

Placer.ai claims to consistently exceed 90% accuracy; however, these caveats leave room for underestimating park visits overall. While the platform is not intended to provide precise visitation numbers, it does highlight trends, growth, and relative popularity. The findings from this tool should be used to analyze broad concepts, compare findings across park spaces and communities, and serve as a basis for “unanswerable” questions within our parks and recreation network.