KEY STATS:
- 83% of park remains natural
- 1.4 miles of natural surface trails
- 2 miles of paved trails
- 4 new picnic shelters
- 20,000 sf Nature Play Area
- 38.1 acres of restoration

LODGE EXPANSION:
Continue to provide permitted facility rental space (weddings, meetings, events)

Create indoor/outdoor connection

New outdoor gathering space

New indoor park visitor center area

- Park information and orientation
- Public gathering space for walk-in use
- Greeting desk, water fountain, restrooms, comfort room, vending

Building updates to support visitor service goals

- Small space for education programs and permit use
- Storage expansion to accommodate equipment rentals
- Commercial food production kitchen
CONCEPT A: CIRCULATION

WAYFINDING

WINTER TRAIL USE

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THOMPSON COUNTY PARK PLANNING
CONCEPT A: EXAMPLES

- Inclusive Play Area
- Sand Play
- Restoration Showcase
- Entry Plaza with Interactive Plaza Water Feature
- Community Event Lawn
- Informal Amphitheater Seating
- Bollard Lighting
CONCEPT A: EXAMPLES

Food Trucks Near Entry Plaza

Savanna Restoration

Flowering Open Play Field

Simon’s Ravine Overlook

Shore Fishing

Sensory Garden and Walking Loop

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CONCEPT B: DRAFT PLAN

IMPROVE ENTRY LANDSCAPING/VIEWS INTO THE PARK

LEGEND
- PARK BOUNDARY
- RIVER TO RIVER GREENWAY
- NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS
- PAVED TRAILS
- INTERPRETATION
- DISPLAY SPACES/STORY WALK WITH SEATING
- ECOSYSTEM EXPLORATION LOOP

DRAFT 1/7/19

THOMPSON COUNTY PARK PLANNING
KEY STATS:
79% of park remains natural
1 mile of natural surface trails
2.3 miles of paved trails
9 new picnic shelters
26,000 sf Nature Play Area
35.8 acres of restoration

LODGE EXPANSION:
Continue to provide permitted facility rental space (weddings, meetings, events)
Create indoor/outdoor connection
New outdoor gathering space
New indoor park visitor center area
  • Park information and orientation
  • Public gathering space for walk-in use
  • Greeting desk, water fountain, restrooms, comfort room, vending
Building updates to support visitor service goals
  • Small space for education programs and permit use
  • Storage expansion to accommodate equipment rentals
  • Commercial food production kitchen
CONCEPT B: CIRCULATION

WAYFINDING

WINTER TRAIL USE

LEGEND
- VEHICLE WAYFINDING
- ENTRANCE WAYFINDING
- TRAILHEAD WAYFINDING
- TRAIL WAYFINDING

LEGEND
- Winter Walking Loop
- Winter Snowshoe Loop

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THOMPSON COUNTY PARK PLANNING
CONCEPT B: EXAMPLES

Sunset Plaza and Community Space outside of Dakota Lodge

Pollinator Promenade

Observation Tower

Enhanced Picnicking Areas/Options

Food Truck Access outside Dakota Lodge

Ecosystem Exploration Loop

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THOMPSON COUNTY PARK PLANNING
CONCEPT B: EXAMPLES

Natural Playground

Picnic Lawn

Nature-themed Play

Hammock Grove

Amphitheater

Loose Parts "Play in Nature"

Boardwalk

Bollard Lighting

Trailhead
The Interpretation section of a master plan should:

- Research, synthesize and prioritize the historical themes and specific stories within that are key to understanding the park or greenway.
- Develop the best methods of interpretation to share those themes and stories.
- Focus on ways to create action, whether the interpretation is focused on creating a better understanding of and relationship to the park and its cultural and recreational resources, or assisting in stewardship of natural resources in the park and community.

A theme provides organizational structure and clarity to the main message that visitors encounter when they visit the park. A theme should answer the question, “So what?” It should tell visitors why a specific topic is important. Supporting subthemes develop the theme and provide further organization for interpretive messaging.

**INTERPRETIVE THEME**

The INTERPRETIVE THEME for Thompson County Park was developed through research, on-site assessment, and a staff and stakeholder workshop.

“You are part of this community. Come here to meet your neighbors, explore nature, and make a difference. Gather together and foster wellbeing.”

**SUBTHEMES**

**SUBTHEMES**: support the theme and further organize the on-site interpretive experience. Potential storylines and methods for guided and self-guided interpretation will be further developed in a future project phase.

- **Social Gathering: Find community here.**
  Gather with family and friends. Join a new group or try something new. People come here for events and gatherings throughout the year—to connect and reconnect with known and new communities.

- **Water Resources: Follow the flow.**
  Water connects us all through pipes, streams, rivers, and lakes. Rainwater and snow melt flow from our home and neighborhoods to the Mississippi River, recharging drinking water supplies and sustaining ecosystems along the way.

- **Natural Resources: Leave a sustaining legacy.**
  Here, people learn to be environmental stewards and take those lessons home. Because of its size, location, and history, this urban park provides opportunities for bird-watching, nature walks, and habitat restoration.

- **Healthy Lifestyle: Play in the park.**
  Here, people of all ages can bike and hike, sled and skate. Whether with a group or on their own, Thompson County Park offers visitors a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities year-round.

- **Cultural History: You are part of a bigger story.**
  People have been here, in this place, for thousands of years. What is now a park was once a farm, home, and haven.
**INTERPRETATION LOCATIONS**

**Location: Entry Plaza**
**Find community here**

Visitors are encouraged to share their experiences and stories about this park with others or answer questions, such as “what animals did you see today?” or “what flowers are in bloom?” Alternatively, a welcome sculpture could feature some of the plants and animals that thrive in this park landscape.

**Location: Sand Play**
**Follow the flow**

Interactive signage can help with plant and habitat identification.

**Location: Simon’s Ravine Overlook**
**Leave a sustaining legacy | You are part of a bigger story**

Audio, binoculars, and outdoor birding book can encourage birdwatching and help with identification.

**Location: Restoration Showcase**
**Find community here | Follow the flow | Leave a sustaining legacy**

A multi-sided landscape element could highlight different theme-based stories and encourage simple activities.

**Location: Ravine Bridge**
**You are part of a bigger story**

Tactile elements or etched footprints and other tracks link visitors to the stories of people who have been here before.
**CONCEPT B**

### INTERPRETATION LOCATIONS

**Location: Story Walk**

*Follow the flow*

A story walk could tell the Thompson Lake water story and encourage visitors to walk around the lake.

**Location: Interpretive Playground**

*You are part of a bigger story*

An interpretive playground could be themed as the farmstead that once stood here, with play structures such as a house, barn, and silo, as well as climbable animal sculptures.

**Location: Observation Tower**

*Leave a sustaining legacy*

A sign with corresponding bronze sculpture could highlight some of the animals that live in the park or nearby. Audio could shared animal sounds and bird calls.

**Location: Pollinator Promenade**

*Leave a sustaining legacy | Play in the park*

Signs integrated into the overlook could identify pollinators and the habitat plants that support their activity, and encourage visitors to plant pollinator gardens at home. Tactile elements could interpret different life stages of pollinators.

**Location: Ecosystem Exploration Loop**

*Leave a sustaining legacy | Play in the park*

Low signs along the trail could identify park habitats, their significance to the ecosystems, park management activities, and stewardship opportunities.