

Interpretation



What is interpretation and why is it important?

Miesville Ravine Park Reserve was not always a park. This vast landscape has been a resting point and hunting grounds for the Dakota people since time immemorial; Euro-American settlers in the 19th and 20th centuries farmed the land and raised trout in Trout Brook; a rail line carried goods along the Cannon River where now there is a walking path; and through it all, the park reserve has remained a refuge for wildlife.

We can incorporate interpretive elements into the proposed sitework and in doing so, provide visitors a window into this history, while reinforcing the vision and guiding principles developed in the long-range planning process. Part of this vision is to expand people's comfort with and connection to the natural world and empower them to be stewards into the future.

Miesville Ravine Park Reserve exists as it does today, in large part, due to the kinship and care of the Dakota. Encouraging a stewardship ethic begins with the recognition that this place has welcomed generations of visitors before us and continues to be a sacred place. It is all of our responsibility to continue a relationship of reciprocity with the land and our plant and animal relatives who inhabit it. Many of the interpretive elements proposed below utilize Dakota language. By utilizing Dakota words throughout the park we hope to remind people of this relationship and reinforce a stewardship worldview.

We are in the early stages of developing these interpretive features and welcome your thoughts and feedback. The current budget may not cover all potential elements, and final selections will be subject to available funds- so let us know if you have preferences! We are currently using the Standard Dakota Orthography for these concepts.

Possible Interpretive Opportunities By Location:

At the Lower Trout Brook Trailhead:

Precedent Imagery:



Interpretive Panel Mounted to Bridge Rail a

The new bridge acts as a gateway to the ravine trails along Trout Brook and this panel will provide insight into Trout Brook and its surrounding habitat. The ravine's steep topography has allowed it to remain relatively undeveloped and an ecological refuge for plants and wildlife. The land is *oónakižin* (a safe place/refuge), offering protection to many creatures. Much work is being done to help steward Trout Brook and keep it healthy. We have an important role to play as *makhóche awányakapi* (caregivers).



Etched Limestone Block Fishing Platforms b c f

Hoǵán (fish) likely to be caught at each platform could be etched into limestone blocks at each. At Trout Brook: *hoǵánwičhaštašni* (Trout). On the Cannon River, *hohásapa* (Bass), *hoištazi* (Walleye), or *howákhaŋ* (Pike) could be featured.

At the Cannon River Trailhead:



Welcoming River Wayfinding Features d

Many visitors arrive to the park reserve from the Cannon River. Displaying a vertical sculptural element like a traditional Dakota paddle (*wad'iyopheya*) would help visitors identify this destination and highlight the role that waterways play as trails. Limestone blocks that help to reinforce the shoreline and provide seating for groups getting on and off the river could have words etched on the sides visible from the water in order to welcome people ashore. It could be a phrase like "*Oíčhmani, tanyán waŋčiyake dó. Waŋná oziyakiye kta iyéhaŋtu.*" (Traveler, it's good to see you. Now take a rest.)



Drinking Water Signage e

The team is in the process of determining whether a well can be drilled to provide drinking water at one of the trailheads. If it is feasible, we could include signage at the drinking fountain that reads: "*Mní kiŋ phežúta thokáheya. | Water is the first medicine.*" Park signage could also use Dakota language at the picnic areas, reminding visitors "*Makhóche kiŋ dé yušápa pi!*" (Keep the land clean!)



Railroad Ties g

The Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad traveled along the Cannon River through what is now Miesville Ravine Park Reserve. Railroad ties embedded into a section of the ADA-accessible limestone loop trail are proposed to reference this piece of the park reserve's history.