



DAKOTA COUNTY SPRING LAKE PARK RESERVE MESSAGING PLAN

Dakota
COUNTY

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This publication was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Any views, findings, opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society, or the Minnesota Historic Resources Advisory Committee

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....1-16
 - 1.1 Project Purpose and Goals.....2
 - 1.2 2021 Master Plan Overview.....3
 - 1.3 Indigenous Collaboration and Engagement Process.....13
- CHAPTER 2: MESSAGING THEMES.....15-26
 - 2.1 Messaging Versus Interpretation.....16
 - 2.2 Guiding Principles.....18
 - 2.3 Existing Interpretation19
 - 2.4 Messaging Themes Overview.....21
 - 2.5 Subthemes and Storylines.....23
- CHAPTER 3: MESSAGING DESIGN FRAMEWORK.....27-60
 - 3.1 Messaging Plan Guidelines.....28
 - 3.2 Messaging Experiences.....29
 - 3.3 Process Recommendations.....31
 - 3.4 Landscape Interventions.....37
 - 3.5 Messaging Features.....47
- CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION.....61-63
 - 4.1 Plan Implementation.....61
 - 4.2 Cost Estimate.....62
- CHAPTER 5: APPENDIX.....65-67
 - 5.1 Existing Interpretation Inventory.....66

TABLE OF FIGURES

- Figure 1.1 | Spring Lake Park Reserve Location within Dakota County.....2
- Figure 1.2 | 2020 Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan Cover.....3
- Figure 1.3 | Relationship of Existing Planning Documents.....4
- Figure 1.4 | Site-wide Concept Plan, Long-Term Development Plan.....5
- Figure 1.5 | Overview Diagram of Sensitive Ecological and Cultural Areas.....7
- Figure 1.6 | Master Plan Interpretive Framework Map.....11
- Figure 2.1 | Existing Interpretive Themes Diagram.....20
- Figure 2.2 | Messaging Plan Thematic Framework Diagram.....21
- Figure 3.1 | Messaging Experiences Plan29
- Figure 3.2 | Bison Care Plan Organizational Chart.....34
- Figure 3.3 | Educational Programming Organizational Chart.....35
- Figure 3.4 | Landscape Interventions Plan.....37
- Figure 3.5 | Sensitive Areas and Existing Park Features Overlay.....39
- Figure 3.6 | Schaar’s Bluff Planting Intervention Plan.....41
- Figure 3.7 | Messaging Features Plan.....47
- Figure 3.8 | Kiosk Adaptation Features Plan.....49
- Figure 3.9 | Acknowledgment Stone Features Plan.....53
- Figure 3.10 | Dakota Connections Story Thread Features Plan.....55
- Figure 3.11 | Example of an interactive storytelling website.....60

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE AND GOALS

1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE + GOALS

The Spring Lake Park Reserve Messaging Plan is an interpretive messaging plan focused on honoring and acknowledging the Indigenous sites, spaces and histories located within Spring Lake Park Reserve. The Messaging Plan builds upon and evolves the foundation provided in the Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan process, both the interpretation framework included in the plan, and the engagement with Indigenous communities completed as part of this process.

Spring Lake Park Reserve includes Indigenous sacred spaces and settlement sites along with stories tied to today's living communities, connections to the river, and the connectedness of plant and animal relatives. With the addition of bison to the landscape in late 2022, the importance of bison as an animal relative is a primary focus of this proposal.

Messaging Plan Goals:

1. Emphasize that this is a sacred place to the Dakota community.
2. Engage Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), Dakota community members, and county stakeholders, on the possibilities for interpreting and messaging the themes and storylines of this place.
3. Engage park visitors with interactive interpretive messaging installations that are memorable.
4. Integrate interpretive messaging features into existing elements where possible to minimize possible disruption of the landscape.

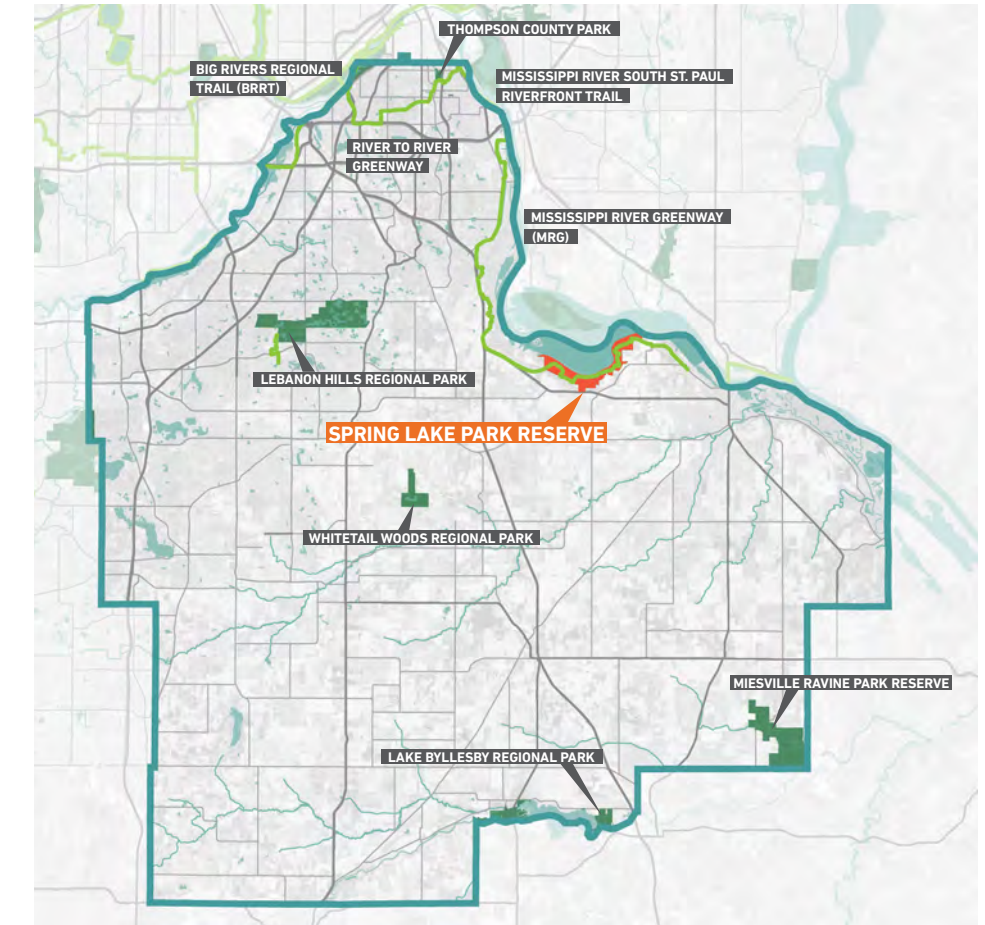


Figure 1.1 Spring Lake Park Reserve Location within Dakota County

1.2 2021 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

1.2 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

In June, 2021 the Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan was adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners. The plan is a comprehensive update for the park and is built on previous plans, policies and ordinances. The plan establishes a specific vision for a park, while guiding its ecological management and physical development to appropriately accommodate public use. The plan is a dynamic document -- firm enough to guide park improvements, yet flexible enough to change based on increased knowledge, experience and changing public needs as the plan is implemented.

Spring Lake Park Reserve is singular among regional parks in the Twin Cities, located on a west-to-east flowing reach of the Mississippi River with north-facing bluffs and river terraces that support rare ecosystems and offer expansive river views. A rich legacy of archaeological discovery and history is testimony to the power of this place to draw people over millennia, spanning pre-history, recorded archaeological periods, Indigenous communities, Euro-American settlement, 20th century farming, and today's park visitors. It is a place to observe, reflect, dwell, gather, travel, and time-travel.

Recognizing the park's remarkable qualities, the plan sets an attainable vision for the future, guides improvements, and carefully balances resource stewardship with public recreation. This plan builds from past plans, community feedback, regional recreation and education needs, and the park's natural and cultural landscape.

Goals of the Master Plan are to:

- Guide improvements and management of the park
- Preserve and enhance the park's natural areas
- Provide recreation amenities that need park visitor needs
- Celebrate the park's rich cultural and natural heritage



Figure 1.2 2020 Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan Cover

1.2.1 Master Plan Vision Statement

Spring Lake Park Reserve showcases the ecological and cultural integrity of the land to provide a regional destination where visitors can experience the integral relationship between humans and the landscape.

1.2.2 Master Plan Guiding Principles

- Protect, restore, enhance, and maintain natural resources.
- Create an engaging gateway to the treasures of the Mississippi River Valley.
- Become a regional, four-season destination.
- Celebrate the area's rich cultural heritage.
- Integrate ecological, cultural, educational and recreational experience.
- Provide inclusive, memorable, and relevant experiences for all.

1.2 2021 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

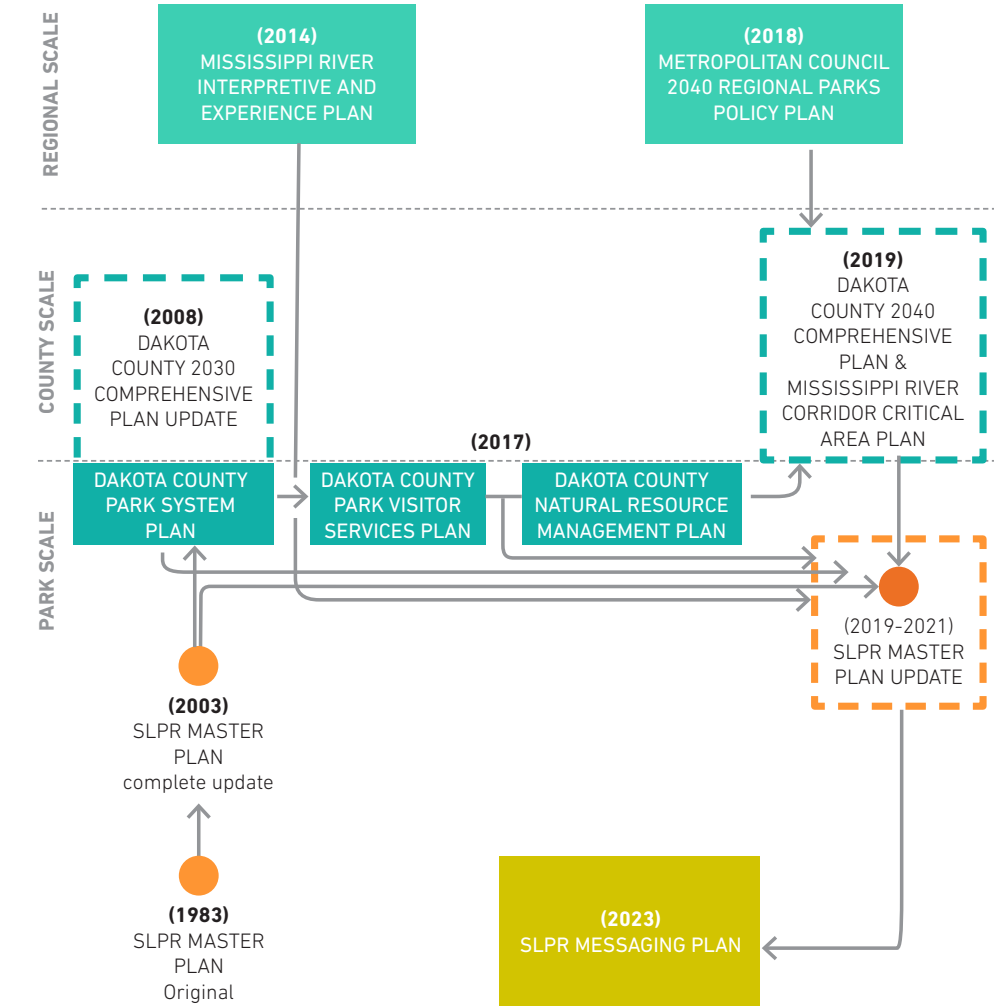


Figure 1.3 Relationship of Existing Planning Documents

1.2 2021 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

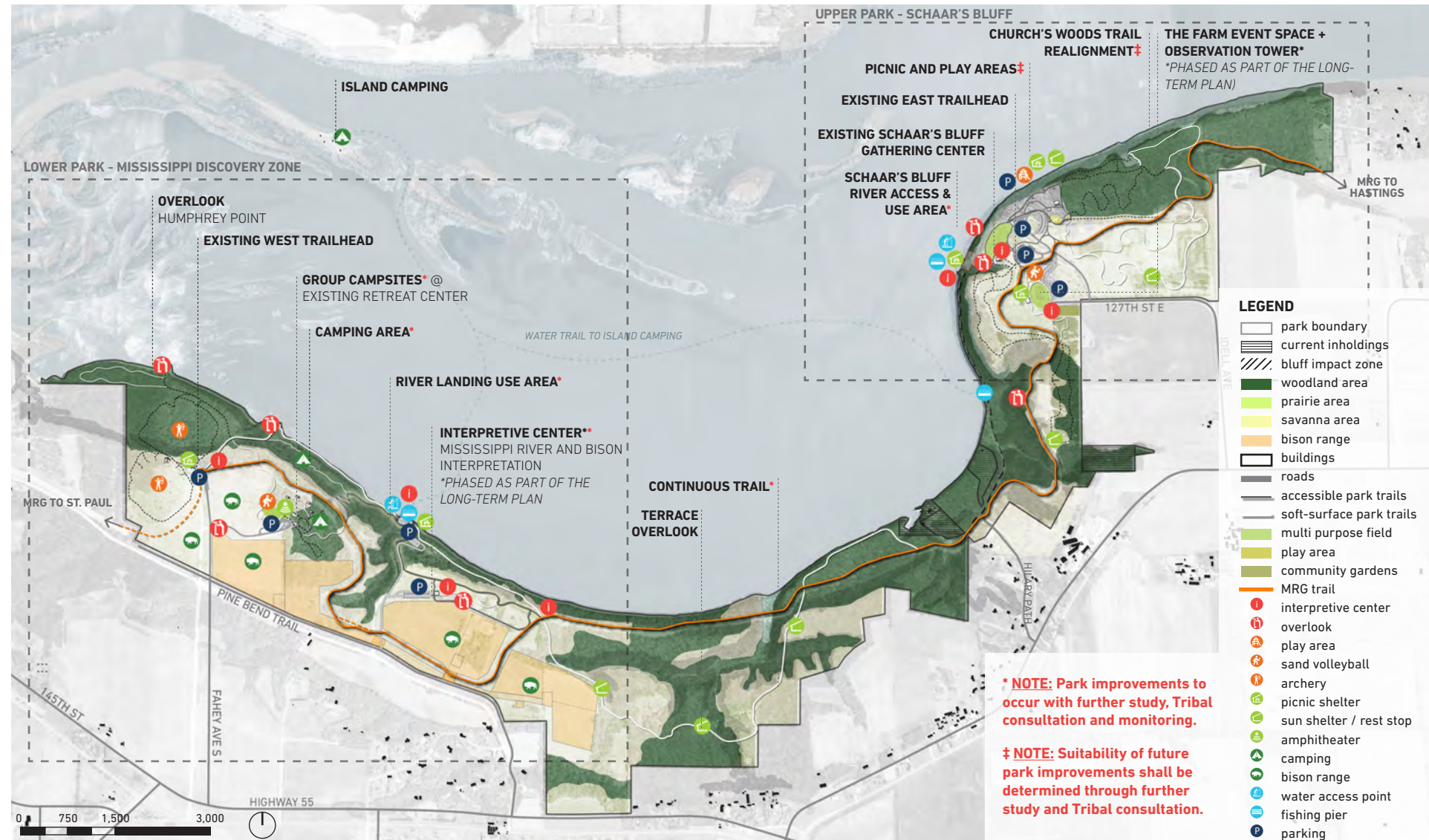


Figure 1.4 Site-wide Concept Plan, Long-Term Development Plan (From the 2021 Master Plan)

1.2 2021 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

1.2.3 Future Implementation

The Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan Update focuses on improvements prioritized for the next five and ten years within the framework of the long-term vision for the park. The long-term plan depicts the fully realized vision to the park and is important for understanding the five- and ten-year phasing. All priorities are flexible enough to respond to change and unanticipated funding.

Improvements are organized into the Upper Park and Lower Park. The Upper Park long-term plan enhances picnicking, play areas, the Gathering Center, community gardens, parking, water access, trails, and restoration areas. New features include the Farm and the Schaar's Bluff River Access and Use areas. The Lower Park long-term plan includes new hike-in campsites, river access points and overlooks, outdoor classrooms, pavilions, interactive interpretation, an interpretive center, trail extensions and restoration areas.

1.2.4 Commitment to Indigenous Community Partnership

Within the Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan Update, the long-term plan integrates guidance from a Traditional Cultural Places (TCP) Study that identifies "numerous highly sensitive TCPs of importance to the Dakota People and their ancestors for time immemorial." **Throughout the document, the master plan identifies the need for additional study, consultation, and monitoring by associated Indigenous communities to occur to finalize future design concepts and messaging.** Specific culturally significant locations are identified on individual maps in red text and noted by an asterisk throughout the plan. Recommended strategies for collaboration with associated Indigenous communities to protect TCPs and develop long-term plans for these locations is provided in the cultural landscape stewardship section of Chapter 5 of the plan and paraphrased in the next section of this chapter.

To honor this commitment, the approach to this Messaging Plan was not just to engage with Indigenous peoples throughout the planning process for guidance, but to develop the plan through co-creation with an Indigenous designer and Dakota Partners that serve as co-developers on the Design Team. These Dakota partners developed and guided the messaging themes, stories, and locations for messaging, and provided input on the messaging features. Interpretation and messaging throughout the plan recognizes and shares the stories of Indigenous people from their perspective and with their narratives.

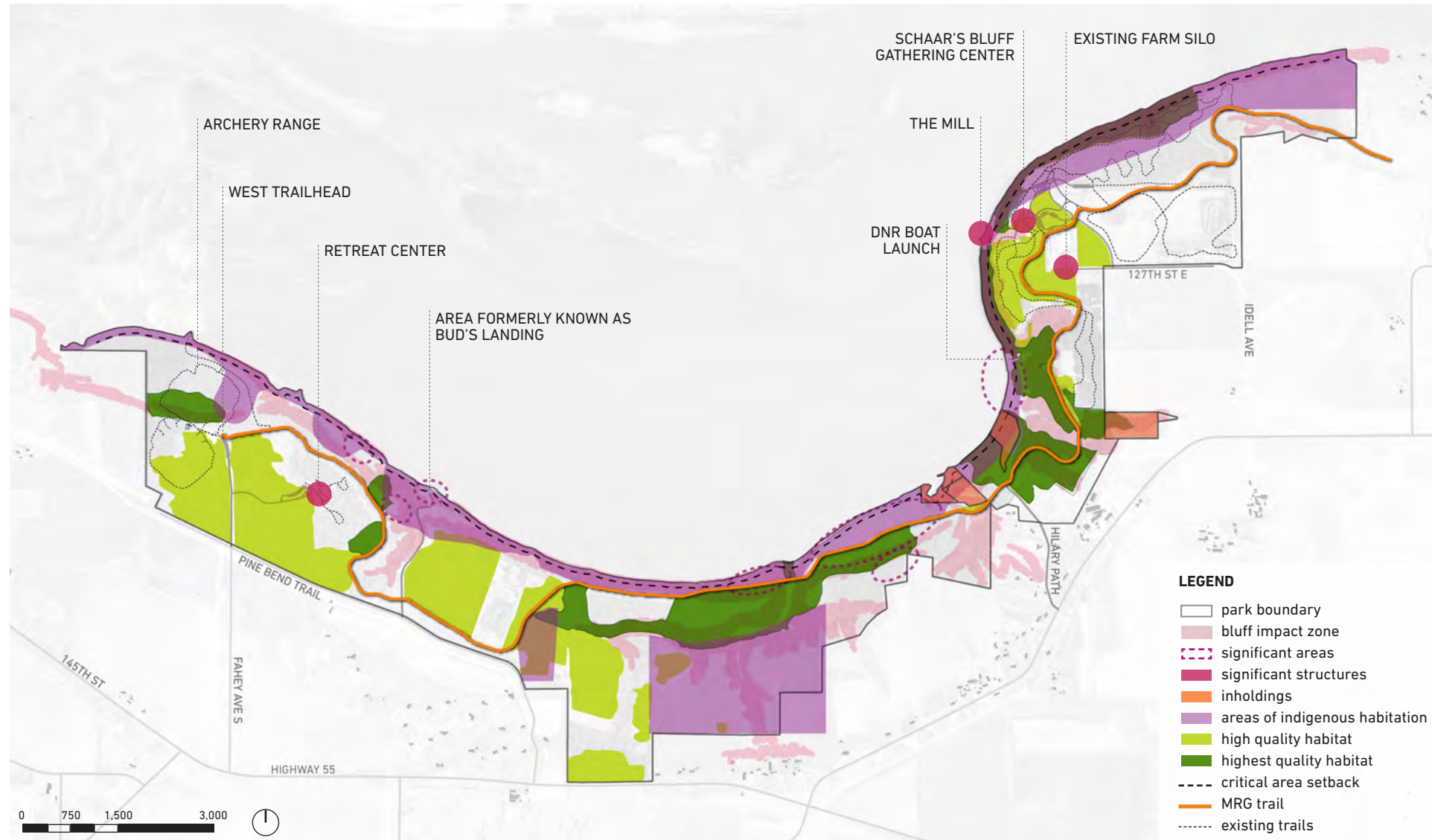


Figure 1.5 Overview Diagram of Sensitive Ecological and Cultural Areas

1.2.5 Traditional Cultural Places (formerly called Traditional Cultural Properties)

(Excerpts from the Master Plan (2021))

In the fall of 2020, the Upper Sioux Community Tribal Historic Preservation Office conducted a Traditional Cultural Places Survey for portions of the park. A Traditional Cultural Place, as defined by the National Park Service, is a “place that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. TCPs are rooted in a traditional community’s history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.” Two purposes of the survey are to begin to identify TCPs and culturally sensitive areas within the boundaries of the reserve and to evaluate the cultural significance of the known archaeological sites.

The survey findings support the cultural significance of the park as a place encompassing lands that are significant to the cultural identify of current and future generations of Dakota people. The survey identifies significantly more TCPs than were previously known and identifies much of the park as culturally sensitive. Culturally sensitive areas are locations that contain elements of a TCP or have proximity to identified cultural places. In addition the survey report notes that the Lee Mill Cave is incorrectly identified by archaeologists as habitation sites and has much greater cultural significance.

1.2.6 Cultural Landscape Stewardship Considerations

(Excerpts from the Master Plan (2021))

Key outcomes and recommendations from the Master Planning process identified several cultural landscape stewardship considerations that are relevant to this Messaging Plan. These considerations are equally important in guiding decision-making and co-management strategies associated with this Messaging Plan.

General

1. Work with tribal historical preservation officers (THPOs) to establish a formal partnership between Dakota County and Indigenous communities associated with the park to address decision-making on condition, maintenance, use, safety, and interpretation. Examples include partnership agreements, advisory commissions, oversight agreements, and memorandum of agreement. Topics in the agreement may include:
 - A clear vision on how Dakota people can reconnect to this landscape
 - Development of interpretive materials (refer to Consideration 3)
 - Special use permits (refer to Consideration 4)
 - Role of associated Indigenous communities in proposed bison herd (refer to Consideration 3)
 - Protocols and standards for Traditional Cultural Places (refer to Considerations 2, 5, and 6)
 - Mound Management Plan (refer to Consideration 7)
 - Policies that address inadvertent discoveries (refer to Consideration 8)
 - Reintroduction of culturally important vegetation (refer to Considerations 11 and 12)
2. Expand the relationship between Dakota County and representatives of associated Indigenous communities to address significant places throughout the County through a more holistic approach.
 - Work with THPOs to develop broad-scale strategies and processes for specific types of sites throughout the county.
 - Discuss individual project plans and process with representatives of associated communities before developing a scope of work. Build flexibility into the process to allow for adjustments based on tribal requests. If possible, include representatives of associated communities on project teams.
 - Work with THPOs, MIAC, and OSA to expand on the relationships

1.2 2021 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

developed through this master planning process to relationships with tribal representatives, tribal councils, and members. For example, visit tribal communities to better understand the perspectives of formal representatives and community members, and visit the physical sites with representatives of associated communities to better understand the connection between people and place.

3. Work with the Indigenous communities to develop appropriate interpretive materials on the park's cultural aspects, such as signage or interpretive materials on the connection between living associated communities and significant plants for traditional use. Locate this information in places that will not encourage collection.
 - Where possible, remove Euro-American names applied to Dakota sites
 - Integrate Dakota language in place names and interpretation
 - Consider opportunities for integrated technology and multi-tactile interpretation.
 - As evaluation of a bison herd at the park proceeds, include a representative of Prairie Island Indian Community experienced with the community's bison herd in a decision-making role.
4. Develop protocols for special use permits or priority seasonal use for harvesting and foraging by members of associated Indigenous communities.

Traditional Cultural Places and Archaeological Sites

(Excerpts from the Master Plan (2021))

5. Conduct a cultural landscape planning study to determine appropriate long-term landscape treatment at the Upper Park.
 - Work with representatives of associated communities to develop the scope of work. Include disciplines, expertise, and processes that should be incorporated to develop a vision, program, and locations for appropriate facilities, building on the considerations in the "Long Term

"The signage more generally should communicate a greater Dakota meaning of space. This place is a place where Dakota both lived and have relatives buried here. There is an interest to protect and maintain this place. For that reason, use this space with respect."

**- Darlene St. Clair
Mar. 16th, 2023**



Image Credit: TEN x TEN

1.2 2021 MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

Development Plan" section of this chapter. If tribal representatives agree, apply a cultural landscape approach that fully integrates Indigenous and other stakeholders into the decision making process.

- Include representatives of associated communities on the project team.
6. Work with representatives of associated Indigenous tribes and nations, the Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) to develop standards to protect Traditional Cultural Places and culturally sensitive sites that address:
 - Identification and assessment of TCPs and culturally sensitive sites within the park reserve
 - Identification of current impacts on TCPs and culturally sensitive sites within the park reserve, especially lake shore erosion
 - Avoiding and/or minimizing future impacts to TCPs and culturally sensitive sites
 - Maintenance and preservation of TCPs and culturally sensitive sites
 - Developing protocols for respectful visitor behavior at TCPs and culturally sensitive sites and providing this information to visitors
 7. Work with representatives of associated Indigenous communities, the Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council to develop a Mound Management Plan, which will be a legally binding document between the State, represented by MIAC, and Dakota County. Protocols and management decisions in this plan may necessitate modifications to master plan design or implementation.
 8. Work with associated Indigenous communities to develop protocols for

monitoring ground disturbing activities and potential inadvertent discoveries of cultural materials during implementation of master plan projects.

9. Develop policies that address ownership of cultural materials in the future.
 - Work with representatives of associated Indigenous communities to place any materials discovered through future development or disturbance in the care of designated associated Dakota communities.
 - Work with former landowners, museum collections, and associated Indigenous communities to appropriately protect cultural materials removed from the park in the past. Consider integration with a county-wide awareness and promotion plan to return and protect these items.

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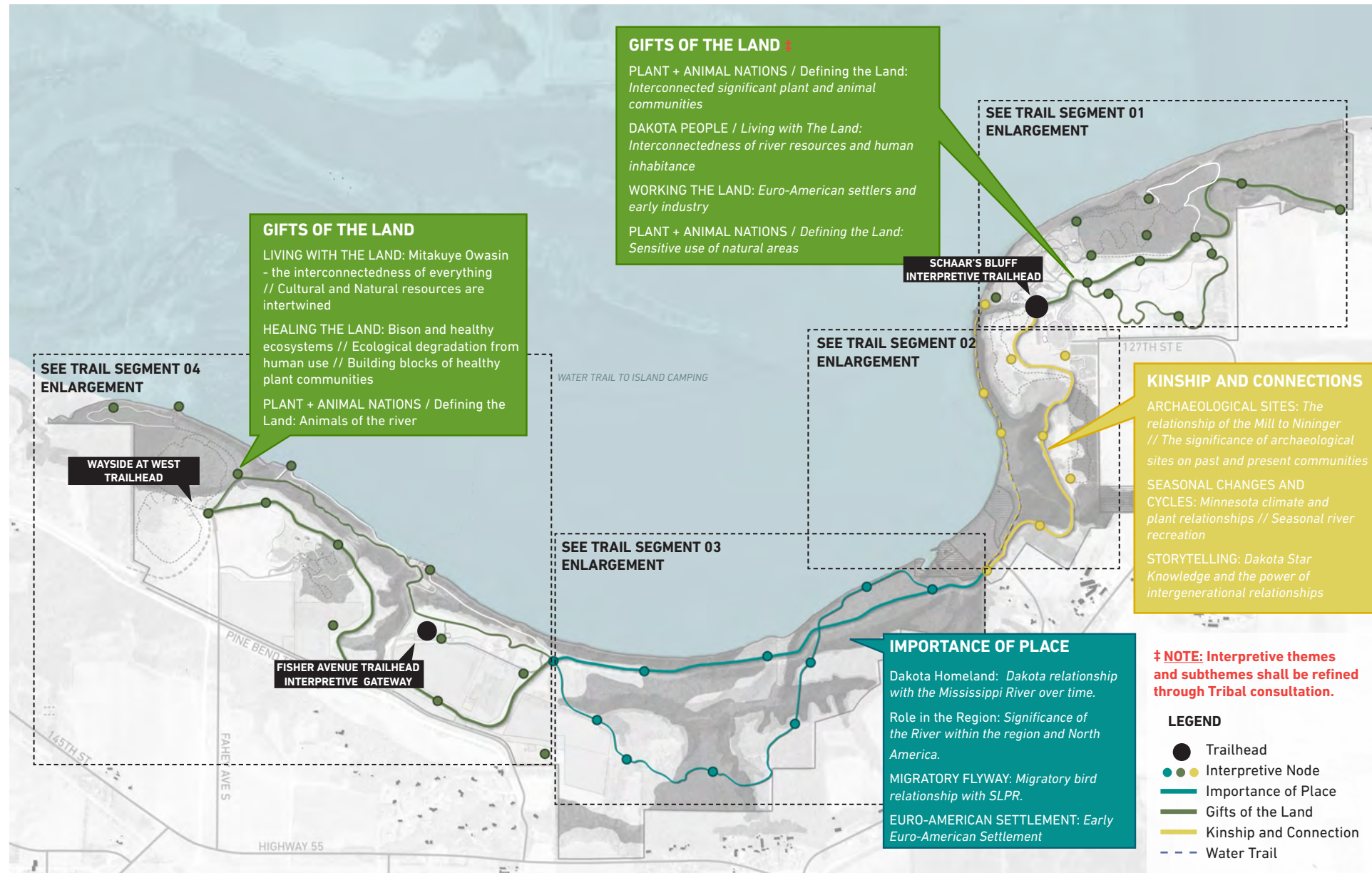


Figure 1.6 Master Plan Interpretive Framework Map

1.2.7 Master Plan Interpretive Guidelines

1. This is a Dakota Place. Interpretation will acknowledge the relationship between the Mississippi River and Dakota People.
2. Ecological and human history are tied. Interpretation will emphasize how the ecological diversity and the human activities on this site need to be understood together.
3. The site and its stories are continually evolving. Interpretation will communicate evolution of specific locations within the park over time.
4. Connected sites and stories. Interpretation will be structured by physical places connected to stories and be mindful of other adjacent planning efforts.
5. This is a place for gathering. Interpretation will be connected to gathering opportunities across the site.

1.3 INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

1.3 INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

As an essential part of the Messaging Plan for Spring Lake Park Reserve, Dakota County encouraged Indigenous-led teams and requested substantial engagement of broader Indigenous communities to guide interpretation and messaging. The consultant team included Indigenous partners who facilitated in-depth conversations and led the development of messaging topics and recommendations. From October 2022 through February 2023, the consultant team gathered input and feedback from many Dakota and Indigenous people about opportunities to assess and change the interpretive messaging at Spring Lake Park Reserve. Over time and in-depth conversations, three key topics emerged: bison, mounds, and regional context. Engagement was ongoing over the term of the project and the research provided guides next steps of engagement and plan development.

1.3.1 Engagement Summary

Four types of engagement were planned and facilitated for this project:

- Six (6) Listening Sessions
- One (1) Open House
- Six (6) One-on-One Interviews with Dakota elders and community members
- Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) meetings.

Listening Sessions

Listening sessions were two-hour in-person or virtual meetings that occurred over the course of the project with a group of Dakota co-developers, who were critical team members on the project. The group identified needs for additional outreach, guided research topics, and made feature location and site recommendations. The group was comprised of elders, language experts, and cultural knowledge keepers: Janice Bad Moccasin, Gwen Westerman, Glenn

Wasicuna, Maggie Lorenz, Darlene St.Clair, and Franky Jackson. Group members were hired as sub-consultants for this project and compensated for their time attending meetings and contributing to other outreach activities and conversations.

Open House

A two-hour, in-person Open House event occurred at the midpoint of the project. The event was Dakota-focused and aimed to gather Indigenous feedback on the preliminary outcomes based on conversations from listening sessions and one-on-one interviews. Invitations were sent to local, Indigenous-led organizations, THPOs and other cultural knowledge-keepers for local and regional tribes with connections to the site, and others with specific topic knowledge who were recommended by the Dakota partners group and Minnesota Dakota THPOs.

One-on-One Interviews

These one-hour, virtual meetings occurred at the project midpoint. Some meetings were one-on-one and others were small group conversations. The meeting agendas were based on the topics that emerged from the initial listening sessions. Invitations for interviews or small group meetings were sent to local, Indigenous-led organizations, THPOs, and other cultural knowledge-keepers for local and regional tribes with connections to the site, and others with specific topic knowledge who were recommended by the Dakota partners group and Minnesota Dakota THPOs.

THPO Meetings

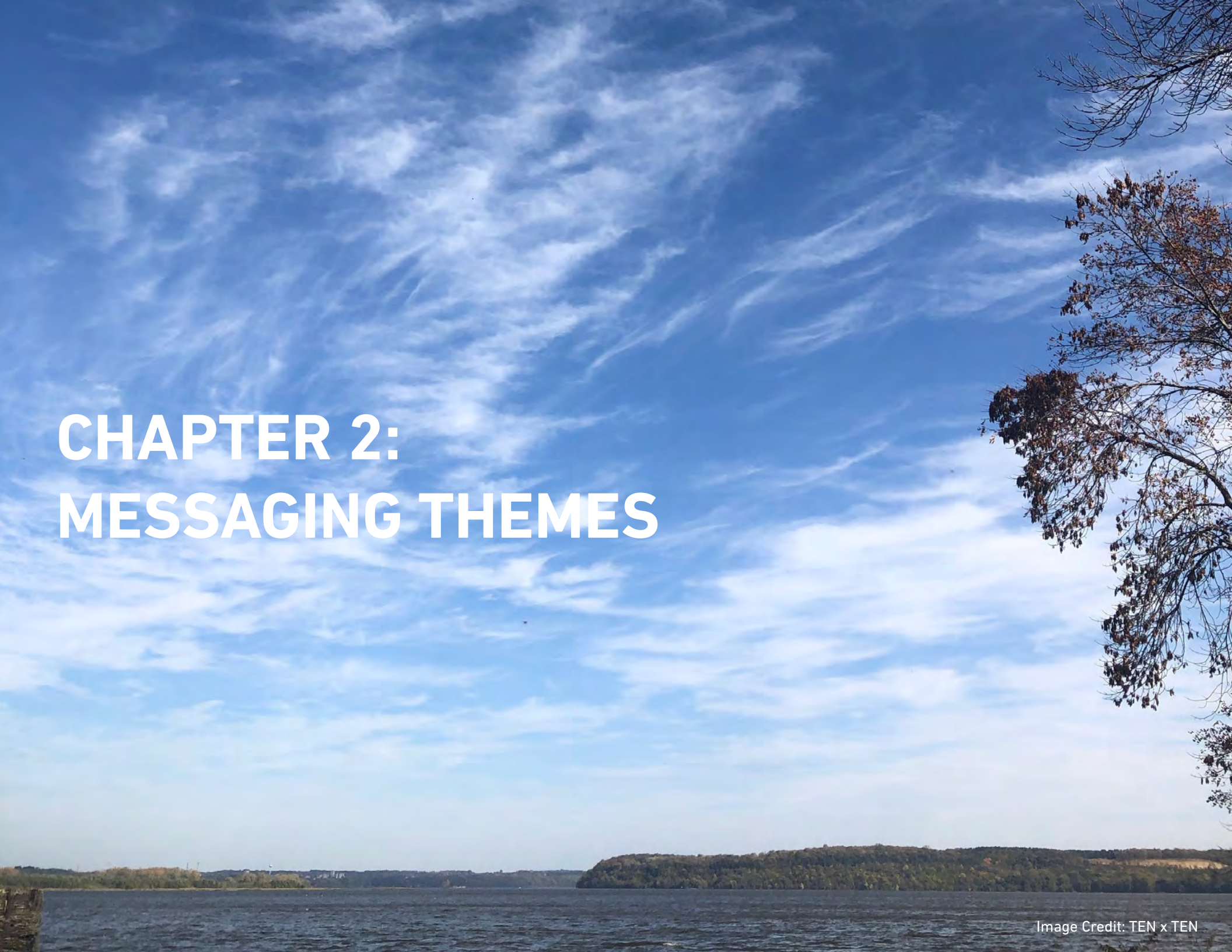
These one-hour, virtual meetings occurred at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the project. The meeting agendas were guided by project goals and subsequent listening session and interview conversations.

1.3 INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



Open House at the Gathering Center

Image Credit: TEN x TEN



CHAPTER 2: MESSAGING THEMES

Image Credit: TEN x TEN

2.1 MESSAGING VERSUS INTERPRETATION

Messaging Themes Overview

This section reflects the contributions and conversations of many Dakota voices during the engagement activities and conversations noted in Chapter 1. Those conversations defined the guiding principles as well as the three topics that emerged to inform the theme and subthemes.

2.1 Messaging Versus Interpretation

The project team re-considered the typical approach and format of an “Interpretive Plan” and determined “Messaging Plan” is a better model for communication for Spring Lake Park Reserve. For the team and advisors, interpreting a sacred Dakota landscape is not an appropriate approach for this place. The Messaging Plan differentiates between interpretation and messaging, understanding both have overlapping but also different purposes.

Interpretation is defined as the act of explaining, re-framing, or showing one’s own understanding of something. Interpretation involves translation to deepen understanding whereas Messaging is defined simply as communication shared intentionally to achieve a goal.

What is messaging?

While we usually think of a “communication” as a single event, it can be better understood as being made of a series of distinct events between the sender of the message, the nature of the message itself, and the receiver of the message. There is an inescapable reality that every communication presents a risk of misunderstanding or of miscommunication. Messaging, rather than interpreting, focuses on the verbal, written and non-verbal cues that communicate from a particular point of view. Where interpreting is the act of explaining, re-framing, or showing one’s understanding of something, messaging is a method of communication.

Messaging is a communication process. Through messaging, significance about a site’s cultural, historical, contemporary and natural resources are explored from different perspectives and revealed through a variety of means. Messaging also conveys information about the relationships among people to whom the site holds particular meaning and between those people and the site’s resources. Messaging uses experiences with rocks, trees, plants, water bodies, the sky, animals, humans, vistas, sites and exhibits, and programs to reveal meaningful stories.

2.1 MESSAGING VERSUS INTERPRETATION

Why is messaging important?

Messaging builds connections between people and places, stories, animals and each other. Connections are born between a place and a person through experiences that provide meaning, grow awareness and develop respectful relationships to that place. Messages engage people, emotionally or intellectually, with a place or story by presenting information that is meaningful and relevant to them individually and as part of a larger community.

For Spring Lake Park Reserve, messages are an important means to tell the story of why this place is sacred and to whom. New messages and cues aim to build respect between different cultures. Messages conveyed through planting, a variety of non-verbal cues, signage, markers and artful interventions will communicate that this is a sacred place and that it deserves respect and protection.

What is the purpose of a messaging plan?

A messaging plan is the resulting product of an in-depth planning process. It provides a vision for the experience of a place and identifies messaging goals. It recommends the most effective, efficient, and practical ways to address those goals. The plan guides the design and development of key messaging themes, stories and features and is a resource for site and exhibit development, partnership building, and fundraising.

A messaging plan structures how to communicate to an audience through appropriate and meaningful experiences. It organizes content into relevant and engaging messages and recommends interactive and powerful ways for visitors to experience them.

2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding principles provide structure and direction for the overall interpretive experience. The following emerged through in-depth, Indigenous-led conversations between Dakota partners and other Indigenous people who were engaged for their cultural knowledge related to the emerging topics. The following are the primary guiding principles that build upon and evolve the guidelines and topics of the Interpretive Framework provided in the Master Plan.

There can be multiple truths. Interpretation will convey information, including difficult stories, from multiple perspectives to foster cross-cultural understanding.

Restore balance and unity. Interpretive messaging will honor the significance of this place to the Dakota people through the lens of both loss and recovery in the treatment of land, people, and animals. Visitors will understand important efforts to restore the balance of land and community at the park.

Learn through storytelling. Interpretive messaging will encourage connections between people and place through storytelling within the park and convey messages in Dakota lapi (language) because the way you think is expressed in language, and language affects how you think.

Share responsibility and care. Interpretive messaging will acknowledge that Dakota people remain caretakers of the land and build an understanding and respect for how partners and visitors share in the responsibility to care for the land in an intentional and culturally appropriate way.

Forge pathways and connections. While engaging with the landscape, trails, and waterways, visitors will be presented with regional connections and ties to help broaden their understanding of the site, its larger context, and the history of Dakota people throughout the region.

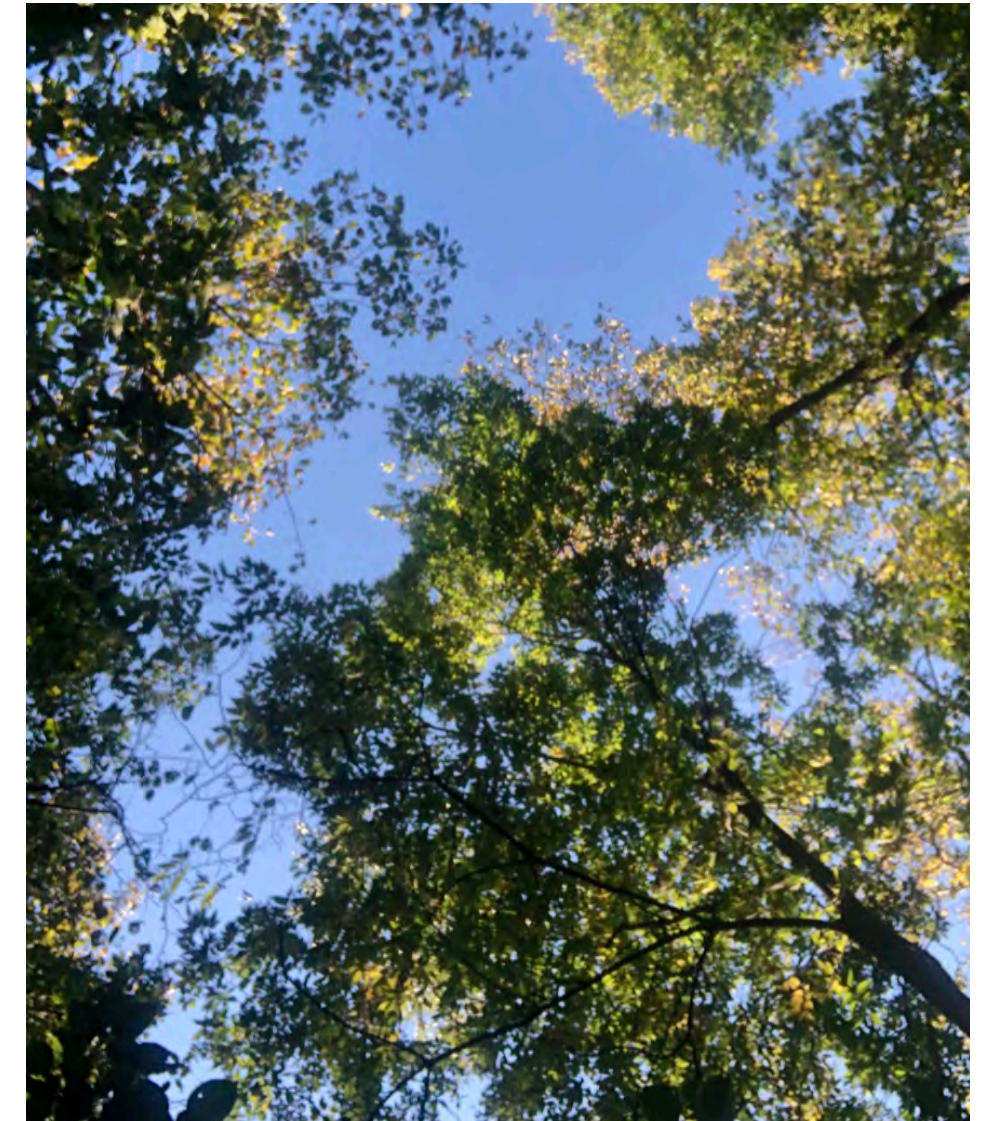


Image Credit: TEN x TEN

2.3 EXISTING INTERPRETATION

2.3 EXISTING INTERPRETATION

The current interpretation within Spring Lake Park Reserve, including the self-guided signage and programming, does not share information about the Indigenous sites, spaces, and stories, in a significant way. Primary themes within existing interpretive features focuses on wildlife and ecology, with lesser themes including the river as industry, recreation, and river connections. See Fig. 2.1. Refer to Appendix Section A for a more detailed inventory of existing Park Interpretive Features.

2.3.1 Upper Park: Gathering Center and Schaar’s Bluff

Being the most visited portion of the park reserve, Schaar’s Bluff and the Gathering Center house a variety of interpretive features both inside of and around park buildings and outdoor gathering areas. Almost all of the existing features sharing Indigenous histories are located in this area and include shadow boxes inside of the Gathering Center, steel panels along paths, and a directional compass featuring Dakota language. As part of this project, Dakota Partners and THPO’s were surveyed to provide feedback on the content of existing features and have expressed that many panels and installations contain language that is inaccurate and harmful. This Messaging Plan recommends that Dakota County establish a process for removing or replacing these panels in a timely manner.

2.3.2 Mississippi River Greenway (MRG)

Along the Mississippi River Greenway, an asphalt bike path that navigates the length of the park reserve, a series of 11 interpretive panels provide users with a broad depth of information. The themes and stories are primarily focused on the wildlife, ecology, and birds of the region, with panels that include such information as bird migrations, forest ecology and management, geology, and plant science. The series also includes panels on The River as a source for food for Indigenous People and later a source of energy for industry.

2.3.3 Lower Park: Retreat Center and Archery Range

While the lower, or westernmost, portion of the park reserve houses a retreat center, youth camp, and archery range, it is not as active on a daily basis and subsequently provides less interpretive installations than the upper, or eastern, portion of the site. However, four of the MRG interpretive panels fall within this portion of the park reserve, and a new series of interpretive features oriented around the bison reintroduction are currently being developed (see 2.2.4). Beyond traditional interpretive panels, the bison herd serves as a form of messaging, setting aside a significant portion of the site for rangeland and returning the landscape to a prairie ecosystem. This begins to change the way that visitors might think about Spring Lake Park Reserve and its history.

2.3.4 Bison Messaging

As part of its bison reintroduction at Spring Lake Park Reserve, Dakota County developed five interpretive panels that connect visitors to the cultural history, ecological role, and unique characteristics of the bison herd. Interpretive content is built on the SLPR Bison Herd Interpretive Framework, which was developed from the SLPR Master Plan and Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd interpretive frameworks during previous planning projects. Collectively, the interpretive panels express the theme: The reintroduction of bison to Spring Lake Park Reserve is transformative for both biological and human communities. Each interpretive panel conveys a subtheme that focuses the messaging for visitors.

The four subthemes are:

- Bison change the landscape.
- Bison are closely connected to their herd, to the landscape, and to people.
- Bison and human communities have a complex history.
- Dakota homelands and bison relatives.

2.3 EXISTING INTERPRETATION

EXISTING INTERPRETIVE THEMES AT SLPR



Figure 2.1 Existing Interpretive Themes Diagram. This bubble diagram represents a generalized categorical breakdown of interpretive themes contained within existing features. The size of each bubble represents the estimated amount of content that currently exists within each theme.

2.4 MESSAGING THEME OVERVIEW

2.4 OVERALL INTERPRETIVE MESSAGING THEME

An overall interpretive theme helps to organize the visitor experience by identifying a theme and supporting subthemes. A theme is the key message of all interpretation at a site. It may or may not appear in writing, exhibits, and programming, but all interpretive efforts should fall within the scope of the interpretive theme. A theme provides structure and clarity for the visitor experience. A theme is different from a topic in that it expresses a complete idea or message. A topic is a broad general category, such as recreation, waterways or natural resources. A theme should tell visitors why a specific topic is important.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the 2021 Master Plan Interpretive Framework was guided by the overarching theme “The Changing River: Spring Lake Park Reserve connects you to The Changing River, which continually shapes and united the many, ever-evolving stories embedded in this place.” The subthemes that supported and developed that theme were: #1 Importance of Place, #2 Gifts of the Land, and #3 Kinship & Connections. With input from Indigenous partners, this Messaging Plan builds upon and evolves the primary theme and subthemes to better reflect a Dakota perspective and connection with this place. The overall interpretive messaging theme is:

Sacred Place: The land that Spring Lake Park Reserve occupies is sacred to Dakota people and their ongoing connection to and care for this land provides enduring lessons and stories about connection and respect for all living beings.

Three key topics—bison, mounds and caves, and regional context—emerged through the contributions and conversations of many Dakota voices during the project’s engagement activities. Although presented separately here, they are intricately linked and have significant overlap. The three subthemes, which are based on the topics, are Sacred Spaces, Tatan̄ka Oyate (Bison Nation) and Dakota Homelands. These are further defined with their associated storylines on the following pages.



2.4 MESSAGING THEME OVERVIEW

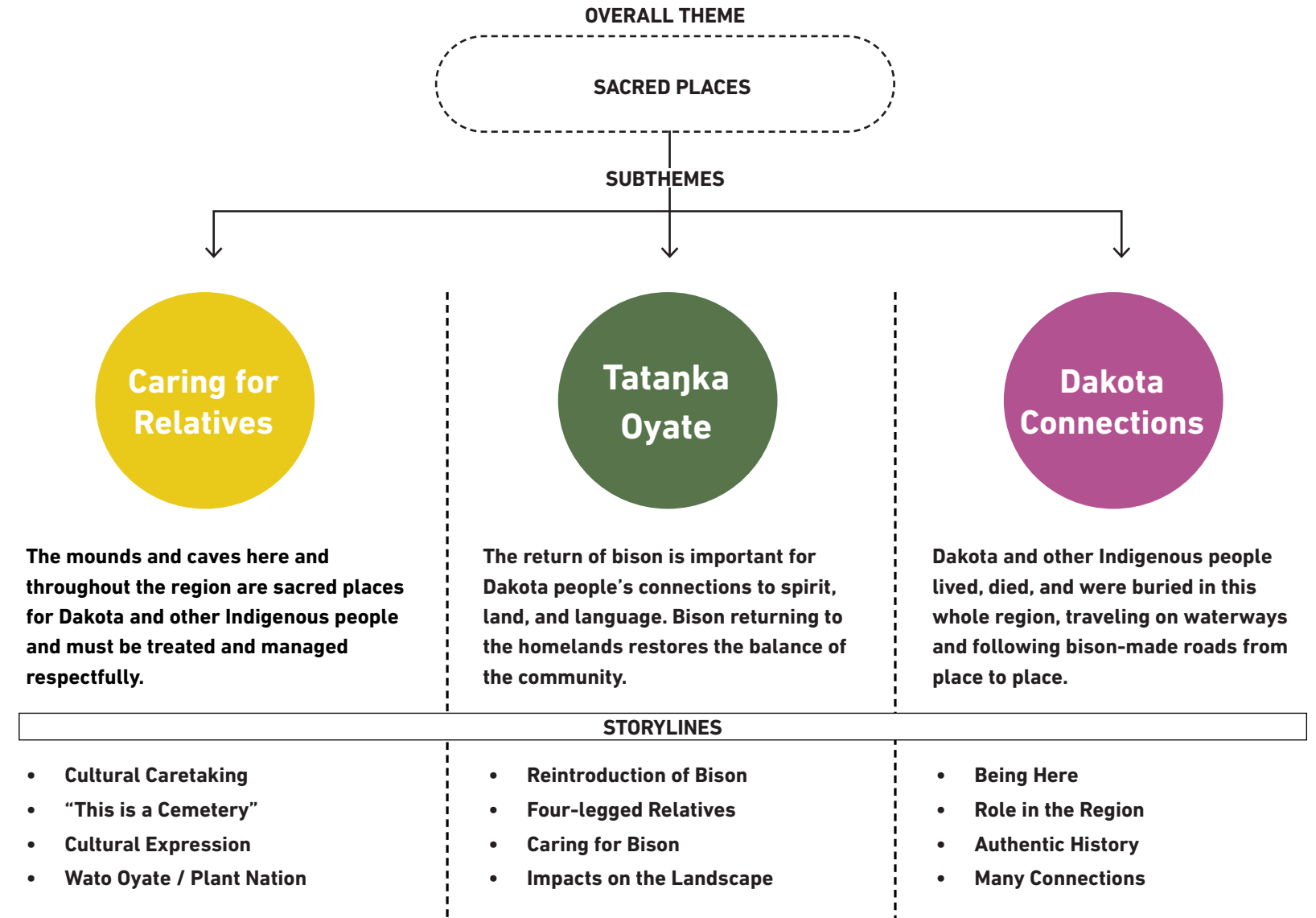


Figure 2.2 Messaging Plan Thematic Framework Diagram

2.5 SUBTHEMES AND STORYLINES

CR

Caring for Relatives

The mounds and caves here and throughout the region are sacred places for Dakota and other Indigenous people and must be treated and managed respectfully.

Potential Storylines

- **Cultural Caretaking:** Dakota people are the most recent caretakers of this place, with a responsibility to care for mounds whether they are Dakota or not. From a Dakota perspective, who made these mounds in the first place is an irrelevant argument. From the beginning, Dakota people were told by the Creator that this land is theirs to care for. How can a Dakota person care for the land that was taken from their hands?
- **“This is a Cemetery”:** Changing how people visit and relate to these landscapes, such as introducing protocols and recognizing Indigenous ways of honoring, will help foster understanding and respect for these sacred spaces.
- **Cultural Expression:** Caring for these sacred places is a distinctive cultural expression that visitors need to understand and behave accordingly.
- **Wato Oyate / Plant Nation:** Plants are used by Dakota people in positive ways to promote physical and spiritual well-being. Certain plants have cultural significance and it is important to preserve these plants, along with their Dakota name, for harvesting and medicinal use.

“People tend to think that the mounds exist only where mounds are identified, one thing that we can tell here is that there is a combination of in-tact and disturbed mounds. It’s important to paint the picture that the experience of mound damage and desecration spans the entire region. These issues and significance are ongoing.”

**- Darlene St. Clair
Jan. 17, 2023**



Image Credit: TEN x TEN

TO

Tatanjka Oyate (Bison Nation)

The return of bison is important for Dakota people’s connections to spirit, land, and language. Bison returning to the homelands restores the balance of the community.

Potential Storylines

- **Reintroduction of Bison:** The reintroduction of bison is a story of healing: healing our bodies and healing the landscape. Bison grazing aids in the restoration of the land and will change what kinds of plants are here.
- **Four-legged Relatives:** Spring Lake Park Reserve introduced eight bison in Fall 2022 and is one of five conservation herd locations supported by the Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd. Bison were nearly extinct due to the US government’s attempt to exterminate them as part of an attempted genocide of Dakota/Indigenous people.
- **Caring for Bison:** It is important to care for bison prayerfully and intentionally because how they are cared for by people mirrors how they care for us. For example, they are not for show, these bison are very sacred and have to be cared for accordingly.
- **Impacts on the Landscape:** Bison grazing, wallowing, and other activities will help restore the prairie landscape, which will ultimately support a greater diversity of plant and animal relatives who live here.

“... the discussion is about how the balance and unity of our community can be restored on this land. Sometimes you have to look to the four-legged relatives for how far we have lost our way in the natural world, and need to circle back to our connection with the buffalo nation thriving on Mni Sota Makoce.”

**- Janice Bad Moccasin
Nov. 11, 2022**



Image Credit: Anthony Souffle - Star Tribune

2.5 SUBTHEMES AND STORYLINES

2.5 SUBTHEMES AND STORYLINES

DC

Dakota Connections

Dakota and other Indigenous people lived, died, and were buried in this whole region, traveling on waterways and following bison-made roads from place to place.

Potential Storylines

- **Being Here:** Having more Dakota people visit and be active here could provide an opportunity for them to heal from displacement and help them find their identity and connection to this place.
- **Role in the Region:** Historically, Dakota people recognized the significance of this area by coming here to pray and bury loved ones, similar to other sites along the Mississippi River, such as Wakan Tipi in St. Paul. Today, this place retains its cultural significance.
- **Authentic History:** At Grey Cloud Island, strong kinships and ties were made between Euro-American and Dakota people, creating a “beautiful cross-cultural exchange.” The 1858 treaty and the removal of Dakota People, including Medicine Bottle, was emotionally devastating and harmful to both Euro-American and Dakota people, which clearly illustrates the concept of parallel trauma.
- **Many Connections:** Many tribes may be associated with an area, each with their own traditions, but they don’t debate or say that others’ elders were wrong. Tell stories from multiple perspectives and separately from the archaeology perspective.

“I want people to have an understanding that Dakota people lived, died, and were buried in this whole region. We can say this at SLPR, but if we don’t frame it in that context they don’t have the broader understanding.”

- Darlene St. Clair
Jan. 17, 2023



Image Credit: TEN x TEN

2.5 SUBTHEMES AND STORYLINES

A Note About Symbols

Throughout this document you will see the symbols below near key elements, information, and concept proposals. These symbols are intended to remind the reader of the three subthemes that guide the interpretive messaging storylines, strategies, and feature recommendations.

- CR** Caring for Relatives
- TO** Tatan̄ka Oyate (Bison Nation)
- DC** Dakota Connections



CHAPTER 3: MESSAGING DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Image Credit: TEN x TEN

3.1 MESSAGING PLAN GUIDELINES

3.1 MESSAGING PLAN GUIDELINES

After an intentional period of engagement, the outcomes for this Messaging Plan are rooted in fostering Dakota voices, language, and presence at Spring Lake Park Reserve. Messaging strategies deepen awareness and ensuring access for Dakota people to the park for all means of use and social gathering. The Messaging Plan creates an authentic experience that reflects a more honest history of the region through three guidelines:

- Awareness** - Introduce multiple world views to visitors and build connections between people and ecology.
- Access** - Provide multiple modes of messaging to increase connection of Dakota people to the site and reach the broadest range of park users.
- Authenticity** - Correct misinformation within current interpretation on site and expand the stories shared to reflect a more holistic history of the site.

3.2 MESSAGING STRATEGIES

Messaging, as described in Section 1.5, is broadly intended to change the way that people think about and experience a place. It can take many forms, and often, messages are best told through means beyond signage and interpretive panels. After an intentional period of engagement, three strategies for messaging at Spring Lake Park Reserve emerged.

Here, messaging will be communicated through Process-based Recommendations, Landscape Interventions, and the installation of Physical Features. These three interlinked strategies are intended to adjust existing or create new processes for park management that are inclusive of Dakota voices and communities and tell stories that meaningfully change the way that people think about Spring Lake Park Reserve. Within each messaging experience are themes and subthemes that speak directly to how specific messages are conveyed and how each of the processes may be implemented in future phases.



PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposals oriented around organizational, management, and coordination structures within the park reserve staff and administration. Includes co-management plans, care plans, access, and relationship building between Dakota County and the Dakota people.

LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

Physical alterations to the landscape that include new planting interventions and assess existing features that are in conflict with culturally significant areas for future consideration.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

A range of signage integrated into existing features with physical and digital messaging. Three Physical Feature types are recommended and developed in more detail.

3.2 MESSAGING EXPERIENCES

3.2 MESSAGING EXPERIENCES

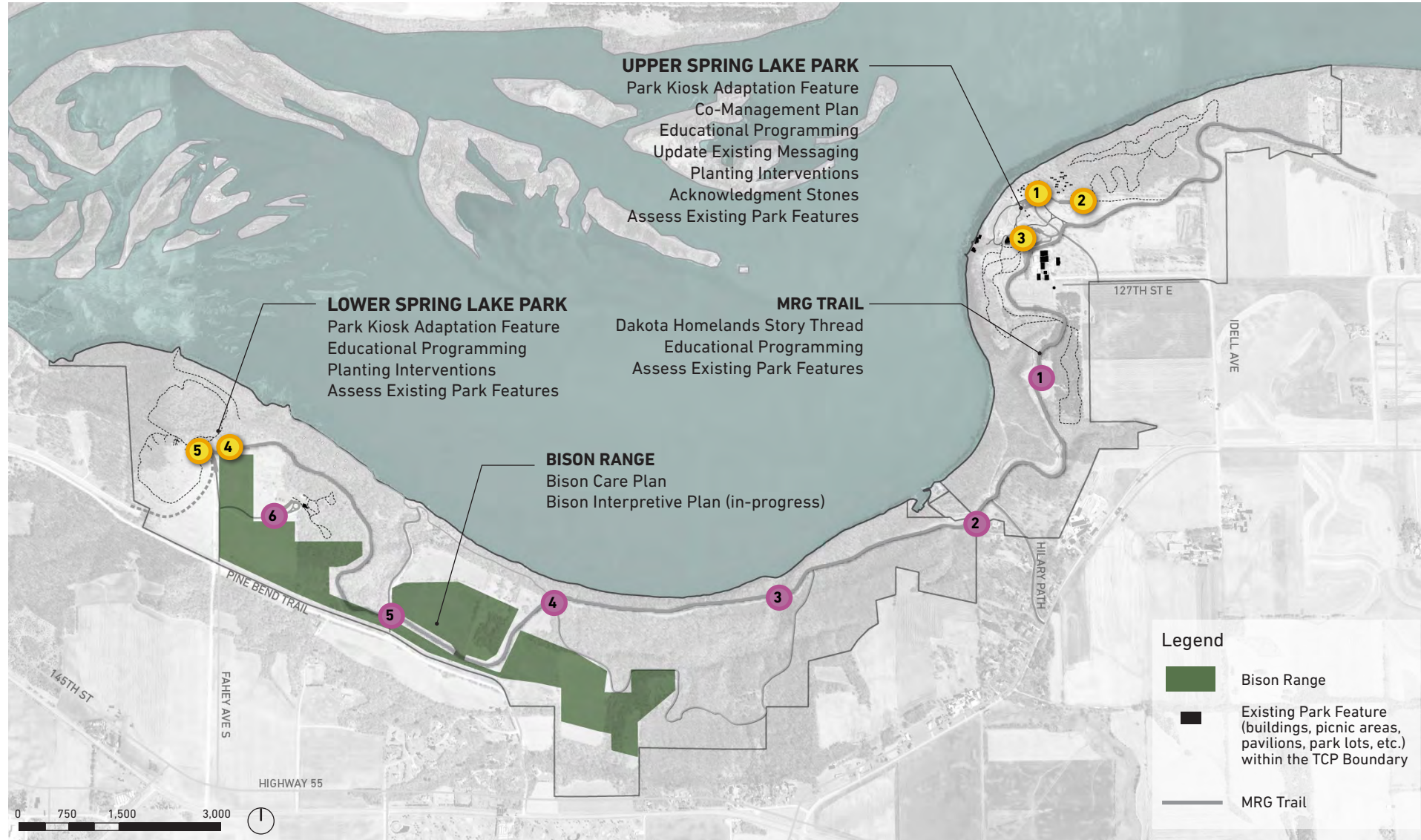


Figure 3.1 Messaging Experiences Plan

	PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS	LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS	PHYSICAL FEATURES
CARING FOR RELATIVES 	Co-Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the co-management of mound areas, including Dakota-led decision-making. Invite interested Tribal members to lead in stewardship decision-making. Create policy for access, navigation for Dakota people that builds ongoing and sustainable relationships 	Assess Existing Park Features Within Culturally Sensitive Landscapes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create partnership with Dakota Communities to address paths and structures within culturally sensitive areas and TCP's. 	Park Kiosk Adaptation Feature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maka Paha: Burial sites are here and are sacred. Etiquette message around appropriate behavior within the park reserve. Acknowledgment Stones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dakota language Plant ID Panels (Add signage along pathways indicating particular species and meanings, include all local Indigenous languages (Dakota, Ho-chunk, Ojibwe))
TATANKA OYATE (Bison Nation) 	Bison Care Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-create a plan for herd management and care alongside Dakota partners that include ceremony, local and national herd collaborations, and use of bison carcass when animal dies 		Bison Interpretive Signs (Completed in 2023) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress during time of Messaging Plan development
DAKOTA CONNECTIONS 	Educational Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage, welcome, and collaborate with Dakota people to build relationships to increase Dakota presence on the site. Foster educational opportunities: Culture Camps, curriculum/workshops, social gathering and awareness. Coordinate with Dakota County and Dakota partners on the management of ecosystems 	Planting Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new planting areas to welcome plant foraging by Dakota people Create new plantings focused on sensory experience Create new educational garden spaces Update Existing Messaging at the Upper Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove, amend or replace existing signage that tells an inaccurate history 	Dakota Connections Story Thread Trail Markers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the cultural significance of the region to the Dakota people Share an authentic history that tells the story of this place from multiple perspectives

3.3 PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS



Image Credit: TEN x TEN

3.3 PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3 PROCESS-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

Though the engagement process intended to establish themes, storylines, and concepts that would guide the design of physical interventions in the landscape, other needs emerged as well. Recommendations and conversations revealed the need for process-based and long-term organizational, administrative, and management-focused changes oriented around stewardship, care, and programming. These process-based recommendations address collaborative partnership between Dakota County and the Dakota people to strengthen relationships, prioritize Dakota voices in the everyday management of culturally significant areas of the park, and remove barriers to access for Dakota people at Spring Lake Park Reserve. These forms of collaboration align with regional efforts related to Dakota-led care and management decision-making, and protect intellectual and cultural knowledge.

Process-based recommendations are a form of interpretive messaging because they integrate Dakota voices and decision-making authority in park management and administration, providing access and control to individuals whose deep connections to this place provide the basis of its significance. Where landscape interventions or physical features may alter the way that a park visitor thinks about this site, process-based recommendations could create opportunities for park staff, boards, and management to think about this place and its history in a more holistic way. This messaging plan proposes three process-based interventions, a landscape co-management plan, a bison care plan, and a structure for educational programming. The development of all process-based recommendations shall be in alignment with the Cultural Landscape Stewardship Considerations from the Master Plan and other concurrent processes currently being implemented by The County to establish a formal partnership between Dakota County and the Indigenous communities associated with the park to address decision-making on condition, maintenance, use, safety, and

CR **LANDSCAPE CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN**
A landscape co-management plan is a structure for collaboration between Dakota County and Tribal members to collaborate on stewardship, maintenance regimes, installations or construction, or programming, activities, and recreation within any culturally significant landscape at SLPR.

TO **BISON CARE PLAN**
A bison care plan promotes and facilitates the ongoing relationship between Dakota County, the Dakota People, and Bison and provides a framework for integrating Dakota voices into planning and management practices of the bison herd at SLPR.

DC **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**
Educational programming at Spring Lake Park Reserve should welcome Dakota Communities. An educational programming plan promotes relationship-building and ongoing collaboration between Dakota County and Dakota People to facilitate and further develop Dakota-led protocols, messaging, programming, and educational events for Dakota communities in the future.

3.3 PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 Co-Management Plan

- Co-management areas include landscapes falling within any TCP area, village site, or known or discovered landscape of cultural significance to Dakota, Ojibwe, Iowae, Hochunk, or other Indigenous people.
- Dakota County to develop a plan to facilitate Indigenous leadership and decision-making authority with Tribal members on all stewardship initiatives in co-management areas including landscape interventions (planting or restoration), maintenance regimes (burning or invasive species removal), installations and construction (new paths or buildings), and changes to park reserve programming, activities, and recreation (YMCA Camp, seasonal events, hiking and ski trail use, or hunting and fishing), among others.
- Included in the co-management plan is policy that supports and codifies access, navigation, foraging, use, and decision-making authority by Tribal members within all areas of Spring Lake Park Reserve.
- In all co-management activities, the primary objective is to foster ongoing and sustainable relationships between Dakota County and Dakota people.



Image Credit: TEN x TEN

3.3.2 Bison Care Plan

- Co-create a Bison Care Plan with Dakota partners that fosters and facilitates the ongoing relationship between Dakota County, Dakota people, and bison.
- The Bison Care Plan should provide a framework for integrating Dakota voices into all feasible and appropriate planning and management practices of the bison herd at Spring Lake Park Reserve, including but not limited to bison health and wellness, culling of animals and use of remains, and other practices determined by the Dakota Partners as the collaboration is established.
- When possible and safe, The Bison Care Plan should provide physical access for Dakota people to the herd for relationship building, education, and, in the event of the natural death or culling of an animal, the harvest and use of their remains.
- The Bison Care Plan should steward and protect the intimate relationship between Dakota people, bison, and this landscape and recognize the importance that these ties have to the history and ecology of this region.

3.3 PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

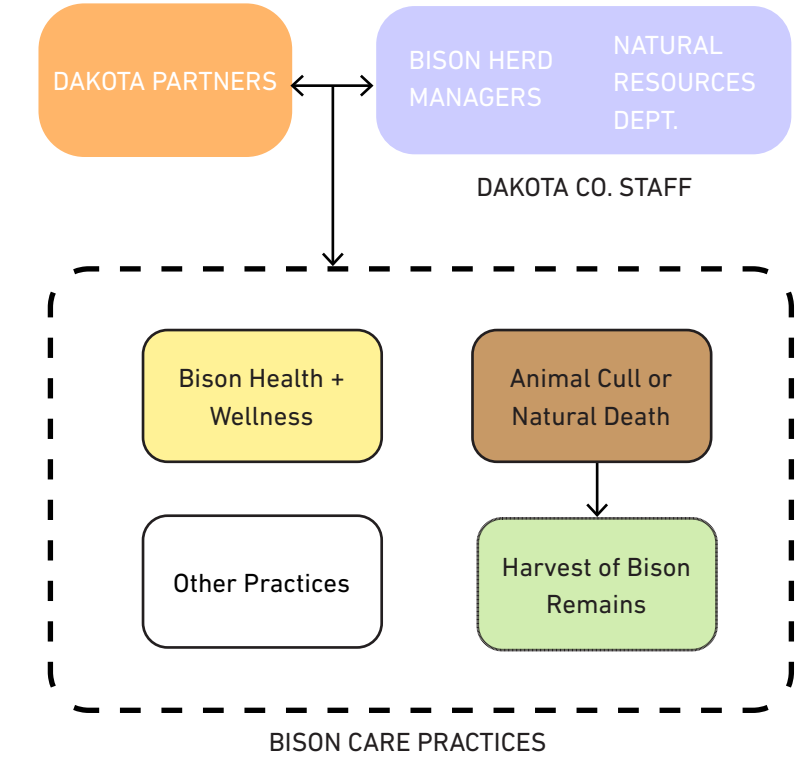


Figure 3.2 Bison Care Plan Organizational Chart

3.3 PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.3 Educational Programming

- Invite and collaborate with Dakota partners to encourage, welcome, and expand Dakota presence on the site.
- Foster relationship-building and ongoing collaboration with Dakota partners to further develop Dakota-led interpretation and messaging, and sacred site protocols.
- Prioritize Dakota educational programming, like Culture Camps, school curriculum workshops, foraging, and social gathering for Dakota communities.
- Provide the spaces needed for such activities to occur. Invite and welcome Dakota educational events at existing park reserve facilities and allow flexibility to encourage a wider range of Dakota events and activities to occur on site.

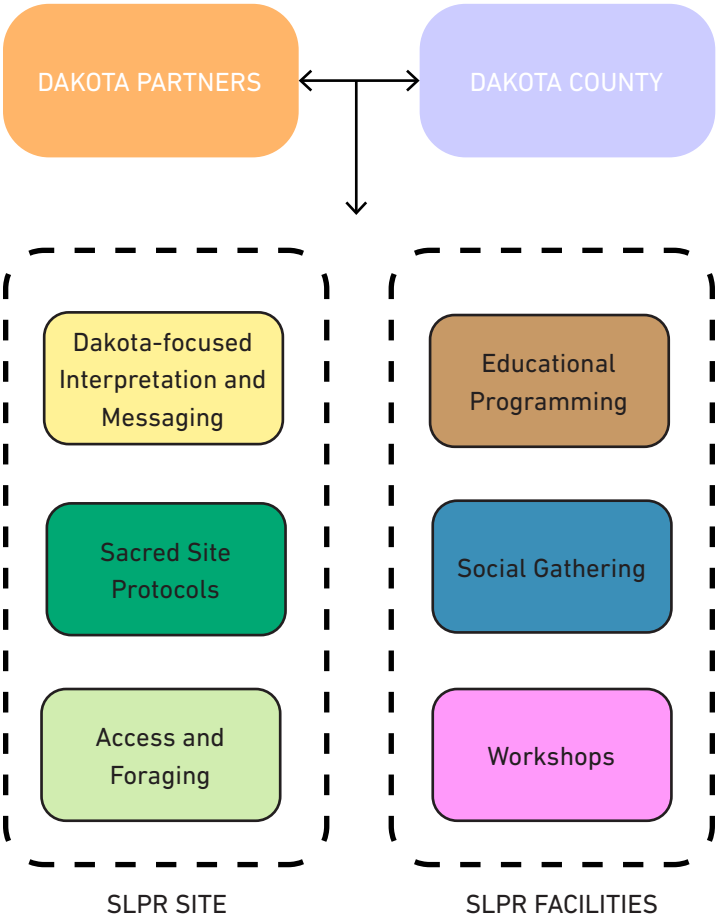


Figure 3.3 Educational Programming Organizational Chart

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3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS



Figure 3.4 Landscape Interventions Plan

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

Unlike process-based recommendations, landscape interventions are messaging experiences that occur within the realm of the physical ecosystem. They may not include traditional panels with text and images, but rather changes in the landscape that may shift the way people think about or experience a place. Landscape interventions provide cues that hearken to deeper stories and histories of a place and change the way that people behave. In this proposal, landscape interventions include changes to existing physical features, like trails, signage and structures, and modifications to soft-surface areas, such as planting and ecological restoration. Landscape interventions can be tied to process-based recommendations, since the implementation, care, and maintenance requires a deep collaboration and nurtured relationship between Dakota County and Dakota People. Landscape interventions can also be tied to messaging features because they often support and illustrate the direct stories that they share.

CR **1. Assess Existing Park Features within Culturally Significant Landscapes**

The Master Plan proposed the development of a partnership with Dakota Communities to develop a plan for assessing existing park features within TCPs to consider their appropriateness in the long term. While the implementation of these modifications is outside the scope of this proposal, the need to assess these features is considered critical to the authentic messaging of Spring Lake Park Reserve.

DC **2. Planting Interventions**

Experiencing the native ecosystems within Spring Lake Park Reserve is critical for seeing a more complete story of Dakota history and presence on the site. This plan proposes a starting point for locating and implementing ecological restoration and foraging gardens at meaningful locations within Schaar’s Bluff that reduce the amount of mowed turfgrass lawn currently existing on site.

DC **3. Update Existing Messaging at the Upper Park**

Several of Spring Lake Park Reserve’s existing interpretive signage, panels, and artwork contain inaccurate and harmful content that are to be edited or removed.

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

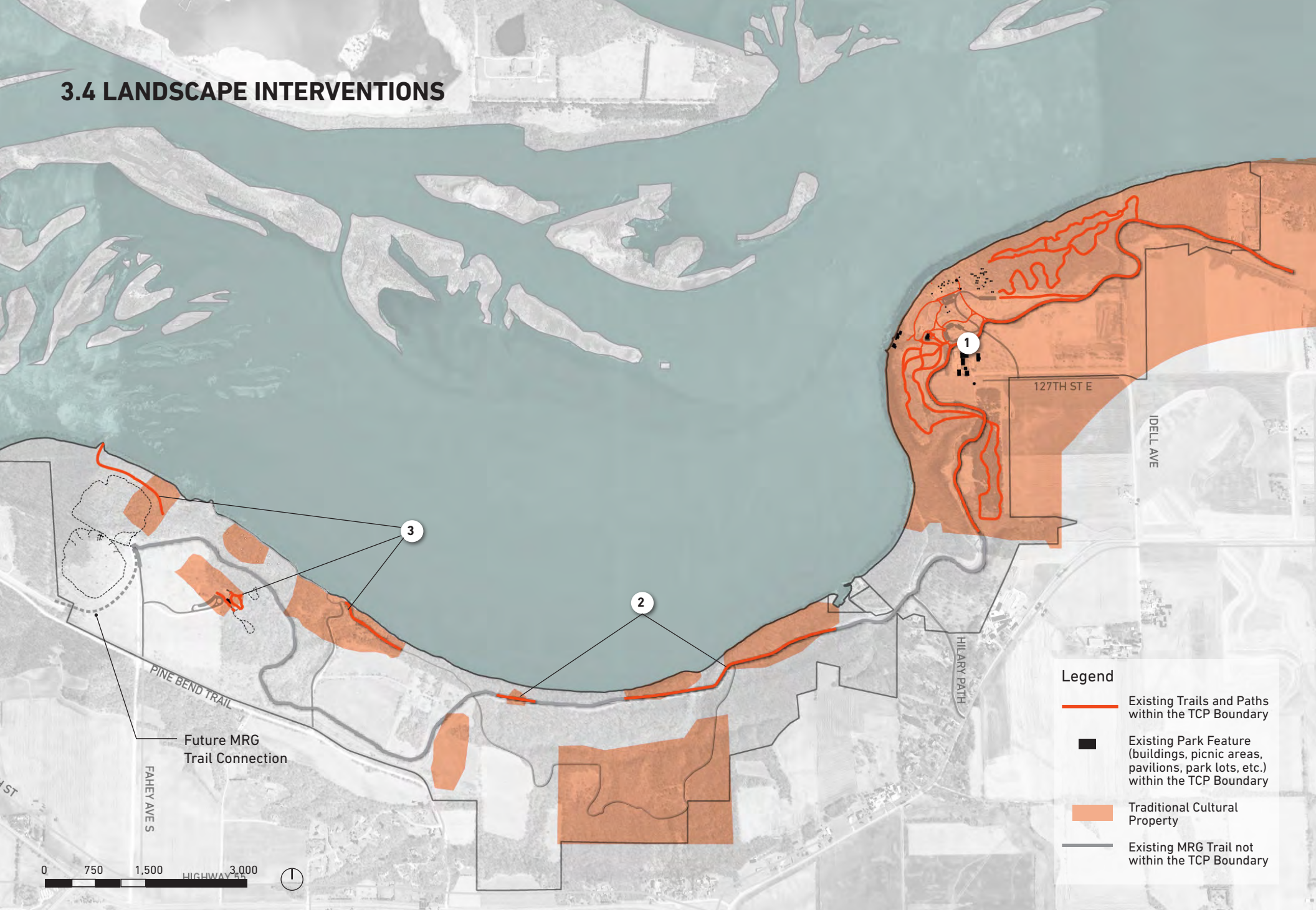


Figure 3.5 Sensitive Areas and Existing Park Features Overlay

CR

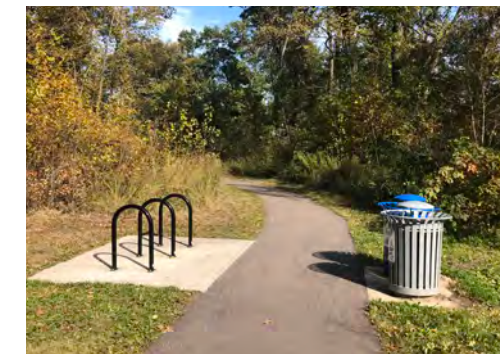
3.4.1 Assess Existing Park Features within Culturally Sensitive Landscapes

During the Traditional Cultural Places survey, conducted by the Upper Sioux Community, Tribal Historic Preservation Office and published in 2020, several sites of cultural significance were identified and delineated. These Traditional Cultural Places (TCPs), are extremely sensitive areas and all planning, activity, installation, and changes to the landscape within a TCP should be done in direct collaboration with and guidance from Dakota Partners. Many of Spring Lake Park Reserve's existing paths, structures, buildings, picnic tables, grills, and fire rings fall within TCPs, including the Minnesota Regional Greenway (MRG) and the Gathering Center at Schaar's Bluff. All built features that fall within the TCP boundary shall be assessed in partnership with the THPOs and Dakota Partners.

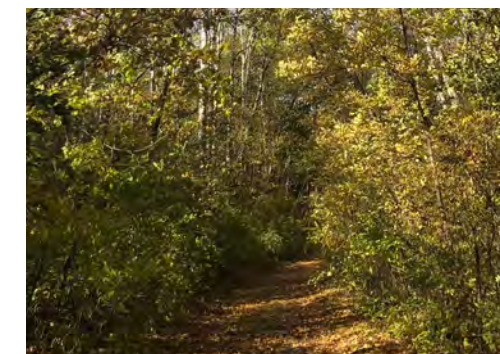
3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS



1. SCHAAR'S BLUFF TRAILS
All trails, buildings, and park structures in the Schaar's Bluff section of the park reserve fall within a known TCP. In close collaboration with and direction from Dakota Partners, this area should be carefully considered.



2. MINNESOTA REGIONAL GREENWAY
The Minnesota Regional Greenway (MRG) is a wide, asphalt bike path. Two sections of the path intersect with known TCP's.



3. OTHER TRAILS
Outside of the MRG, there are several trail typologies within SLPR including natural softsurface trails, gravel trails, and paved hardsurface trails. On the west end of SLPR, trails of various types overlap with known TCPs.

Image Credits: TEN x TEN

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

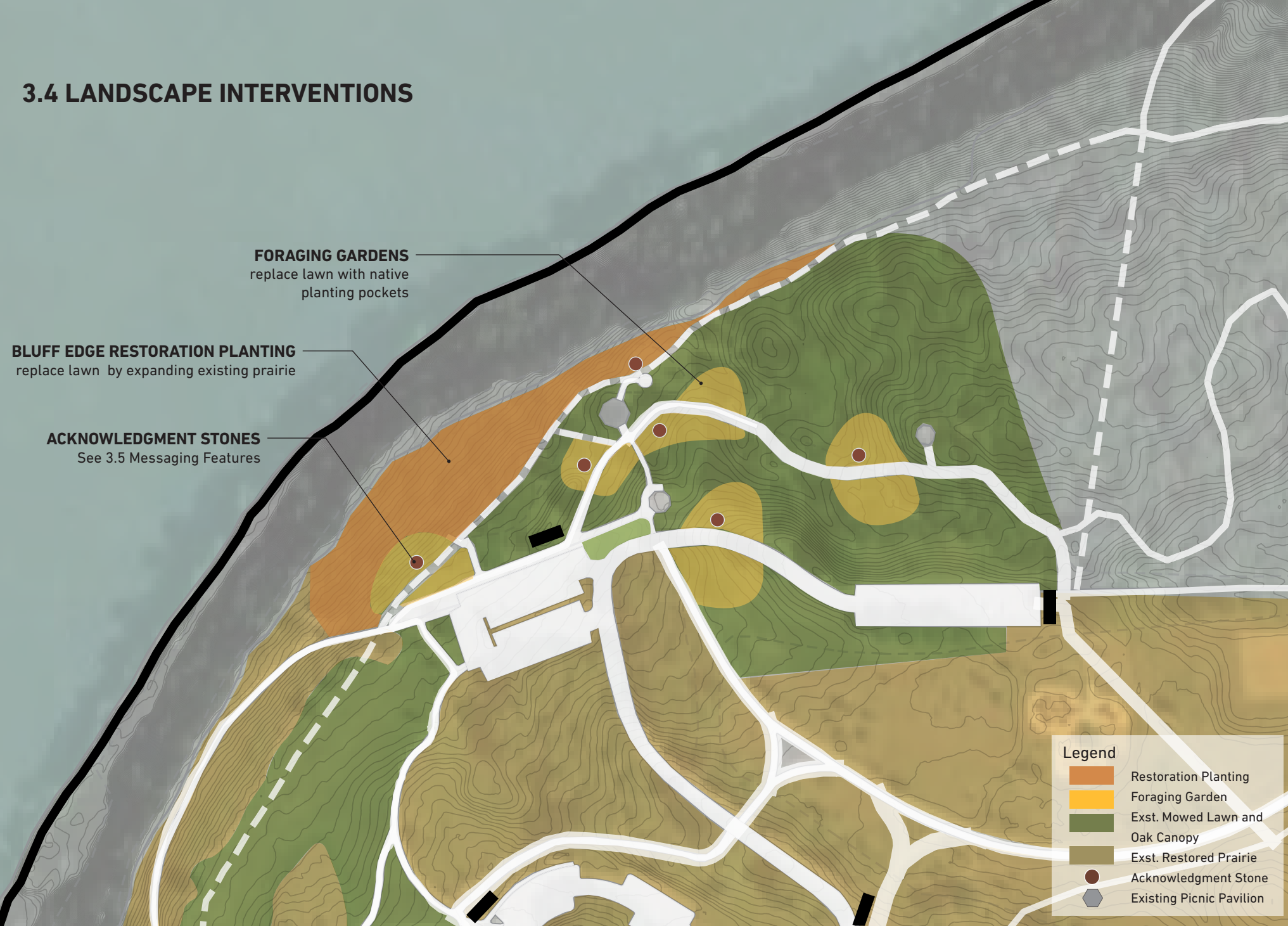


Figure 3.6 Schaar's Bluff Planting Intervention Plan

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS



3.4.2 Planting Interventions

Emerging from an extensive engagement process was the need for sharing the stories, experiences, and histories of plants in Spring Lake Park Reserve. The plants that are native to southern and central Minnesota thrived alongside Dakota People and hold within them connections to food and foraging, medicine, and storytelling. In order to tell a more complete story of this landscape, it is critical to include the plants and utilize changes to planting in the landscape as a way to begin a process of healing in areas where there has been significant development, loss of biodiversity, and where Traditional Cultural Places exist or have been desecrated.

Much of the landscape that is today Schaar's Bluff was once covered in oak openings and barrens. Today, this area, which consists of both turfgrass lawn and prairie restoration planting, is used heavily by park visitors who often recreate, picnic, celebrate, or have events in the park's structures and open areas. The area around the picnic shelters is covered in a large, beautiful oak canopy and is very shady. According to the 2020 TCP Survey, all of Schaar's Bluff is located within a Traditional Cultural Property and all current and future planning, programming, and landscape interventions should be considered in collaboration with Dakota Partners and with significant care. Such collaborations in the process of engagement with Dakota Partners in this messaging plan, have led to suggestions for improved planting areas within the park, particularly those that can function as foraging and educational gardens for Dakota People. Supporting the proposed Acknowledgment Stones messaging feature (see section 3.5.2), this plan proposes a series of gardens planted with native species in what is currently a large expanse of turfgrass lawn. These planting areas create a layered view that disrupts the continuous lawn experience and encourage the slowing down, noticing, and experiencing of meaningful plant species native to this park reserve. Each garden will include an Acknowledgment Stone that highlights a species in Indigenous languages, including Dakota (see section 3.5.2).

Potential Seed Mixes

Many of Minnesota's native plant species are culturally significant to the Dakota People. At Spring Lake Park Reserve, there is an opportunity to bring these species back to the landscape within which they evolved. When planted with intention, these species can create new opportunities for education, foraging, and sensory experience that create meaning and change the way that people understand this site. Alongside and guided by Dakota Partners, the proposed planting areas are an opportunity to create such experiences. Below are preliminary mixes of native shade tolerant and sunny species that could be planted on the site, however, a design phase with Dakota co-collaborators is necessary to refine the locations, species, and Acknowledgment Stones messaging further.

“We are losing so many species of plants and pollinators. At Schaar's Bluff we are interested in creating more restorative habitat.”

- Maggie Lorenz
Mar. 16th, 2023

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

FORAGING GARDENS

Smaller pockets of native planting gardens disrupt the extensive mowed lawn on the northern portion of Schaar’s Bluff. These gardens highlight plant species significant to Dakota People for foraging and storytelling. The plant palette within each garden will be specifically tailored to its local microclimate (some gardens lie in very shady areas, others in full sun), with selected species that will thrive. Visitors are encouraged to interact, touch, smell, listen, and engage with these sensory gardens, while Acknowledgment Stones highlight a particular species per planting zone, including plant names in Dakota language.

“When you are thinking about connections to water, river, plants – these are spirited beings. Audiences should be aware of that immediately when they start on this journey.”

- Cheyanne St. John
Oct. 20, 2022



Virginia Wild Rye
Elymus virginicus var. *virginicus*



Strawberry
Fragaria virginiana



Purple Prairie Clover
Dalea purpurea



PTEYAHOTA/Canada Wild Rye
Elymus canadensis



Wahca Zi Cistina/
Prairie Coneflower
Ratibida columnifera



Pussytoes
Antennaria spp.



Little Bluestem
Schyzachyrium scoparium



HEHAKA TAPEZUTA
Wild Bergamot
Monarda fistulosa



CAHDOGA PEZUTA
Blue Vervain
Verbena hastata



Indian Grass
Sorghastrum nutans



WAHPEHOTA / White Sage
Artemisia ludoviciana



ICAHPHU
Narrow Leaved Coneflower
Echinacea angustifolia

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS

BLUFF EDGE RESTORATION PLANTING

This planting area, primarily located along the northwestern edge of Schaar’s Bluff, creates an extension of the existing restoration planting along the top of the bluff. Considering the historic land cover, current context, adjacent vegetative communities, and changing climate of this site, the species palette would reflect plants found within the oak openings and barrens ecosystem and are drought tolerant, native species that thrive in the shade provided by large oaks, and the thin soil profile of the bluff edge. By establishing a process that returns a highly disturbed landscape into an ecology closer to its original form, wildlife can find habitat and healing may take place. The sensory qualities of restoration planting engage park visitors to notice and interact with Minnesota’s native species and the reduction of extensive mowed lawn in Schaar’s Bluff subtly suggests a change in behavior in a culturally sensitive landscape.



Little Bluestem
Schyzachyrium scoparium



Hairy Wood Mint
Blephilia hirsuta



Short’s Aster
Symphotricum shortii



Solomon’s plume
Maianthemum racemosum



Stiff Tickseed
Coreopsis palmata



Sweet Joe Pye Weed
Eutrochium purpureum



Wild Columbine
Aquilegia canadensis



CAHDOGA PEZUTA
Blue Vervain
Verbena hastata



Yellow Pimpernel
Taenidia integerrima



Woodland Knotweed
Persicaria virginiana



Prairie Dropseed
Sporobolus heterolepis



Harebell
Campanula rotundifolia

3.4 LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS



3.4.3 Update Existing Messaging at the Upper Park

During the engagement process, the Dakota Partners expressed that current interpretive features contained inaccurate or harmful messaging. A detailed inventory of all features, text, images, and feature locations took place and direct feedback on each individual sign was captured. The goals of this process were to (1) provide an inventory of existing interpretive panels for Dakota Partners to review, (2) Understand what content should be removed or modified and why, (3) recommend Dakota County develop a plan to address every panel in question and/pr remove panels immediately, as requested, and (4) replace panels or update elements within panels alongside Dakota co-developers within a timely manner.



Example images of existing interpretive elements at Schaar’s Bluff and inside of the Gathering Center. Images courtesy of Dakota County.

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3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

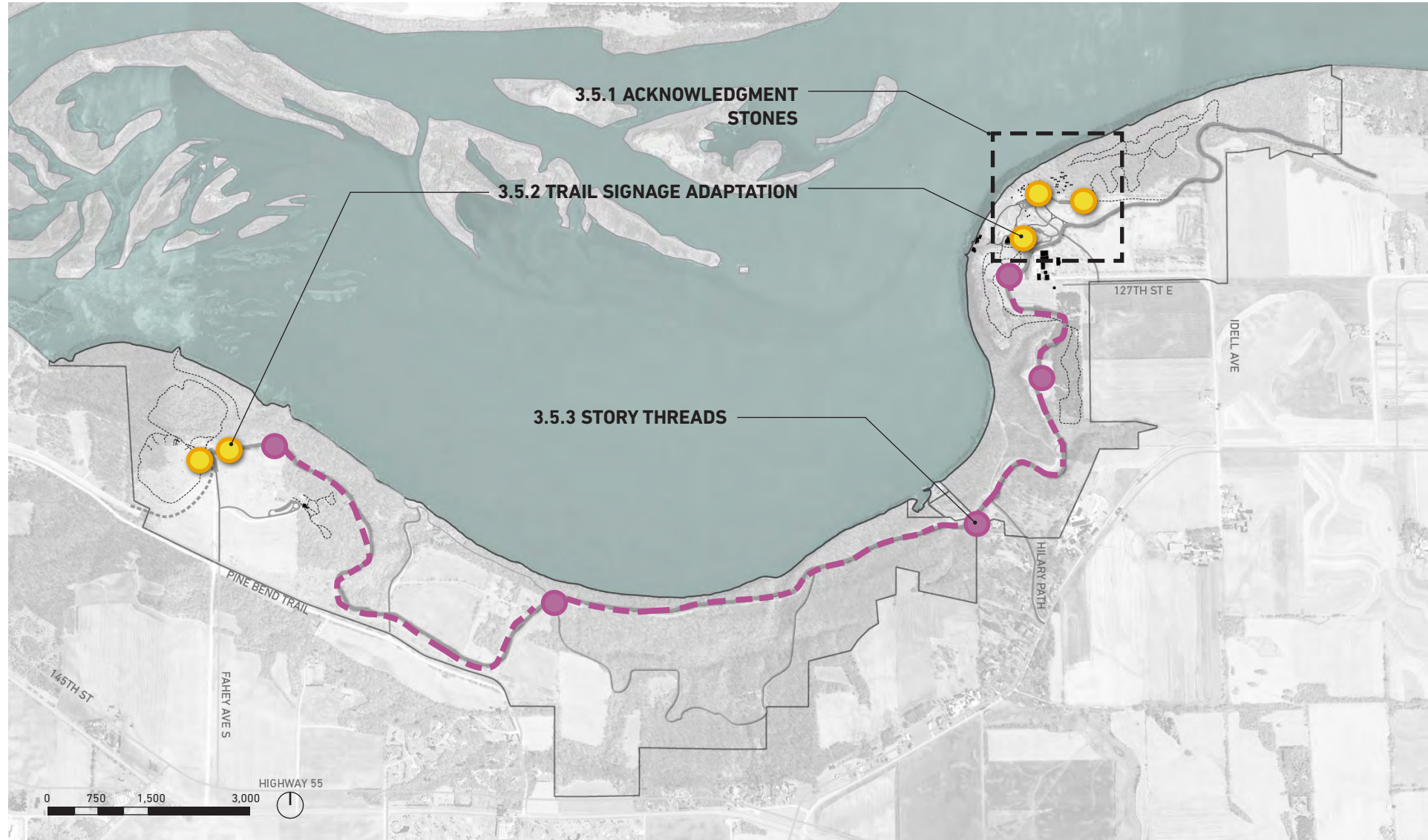


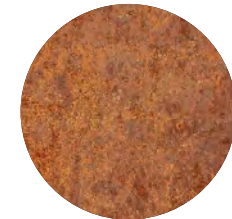
Figure 3.7 Messaging Features Plan

3.5 PHYSICAL FEATURES

Physical Features include messaging elements such as signs and interactive objects. These features support and communicate the work being implemented through Process-based Recommendations and Landscape Interventions and the three keys themes identified in Chapter 2. These features are studied in greater detail in this section to provide recommendations for appropriate locations, materials, and detailing, as well as the appropriate subthemes and stories to be communicated at those locations. Most of the proposed signage utilizes existing features to minimize clutter or disturbance. Where new features require footings, the Traditional Cultural Places Report was consulted to avoid recommending disturbance in culturally significant areas.

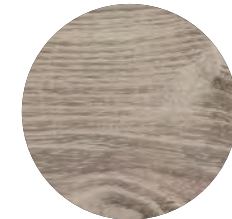
Material Summary

Materials selected for the messaging features are intended to have a common design language to connect new messaging features with the existing elements on site. The goal is to enhance the existing identity of Spring Lake Park Reserve, select material considerations that reflect the Dakota worldview and set the precedent for future messaging development within Dakota County Parks. Steel is used as the primary signage material because of its durability, cost, and elegant finish options. Wood and natural stone are integrated into signage features



WEATHERED STEEL

Corten, blackened-steel or weathered and durable finish.



WOOD

A sustainably harvested and regionally available wood such as black locust or thermally modified ash.



DIRECT EMBED

Graffiti-resistant digitally printed graphic signage.



NATURAL STONE

Regionally-sources limestone or granite with a natural and rough finish.



NATIVE PLANTS

Minnesota native species and Dakota culturally significant plants that are resilient against a changing climate.

because of their sustainable and natural characteristics, and because of their cultural significance.

Artistic Collaboration

This plan identifies specific opportunities for artwork embedded into messaging features. These opportunities could be drawn from traditional art practices such as drawing, painting, beading, storytelling, or other visual and written art forms. These are important opportunities to tell stories and collaborate with Indigenous artists on the placement, style, and content of the artwork. This plan intentionally keeps the artwork vague and open-ended to leave room for co-development and co-creation with Indigenous artists.



Park Kiosk Adaptation Features



Acknowledgment Stones



Story Thread Trail Markers

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

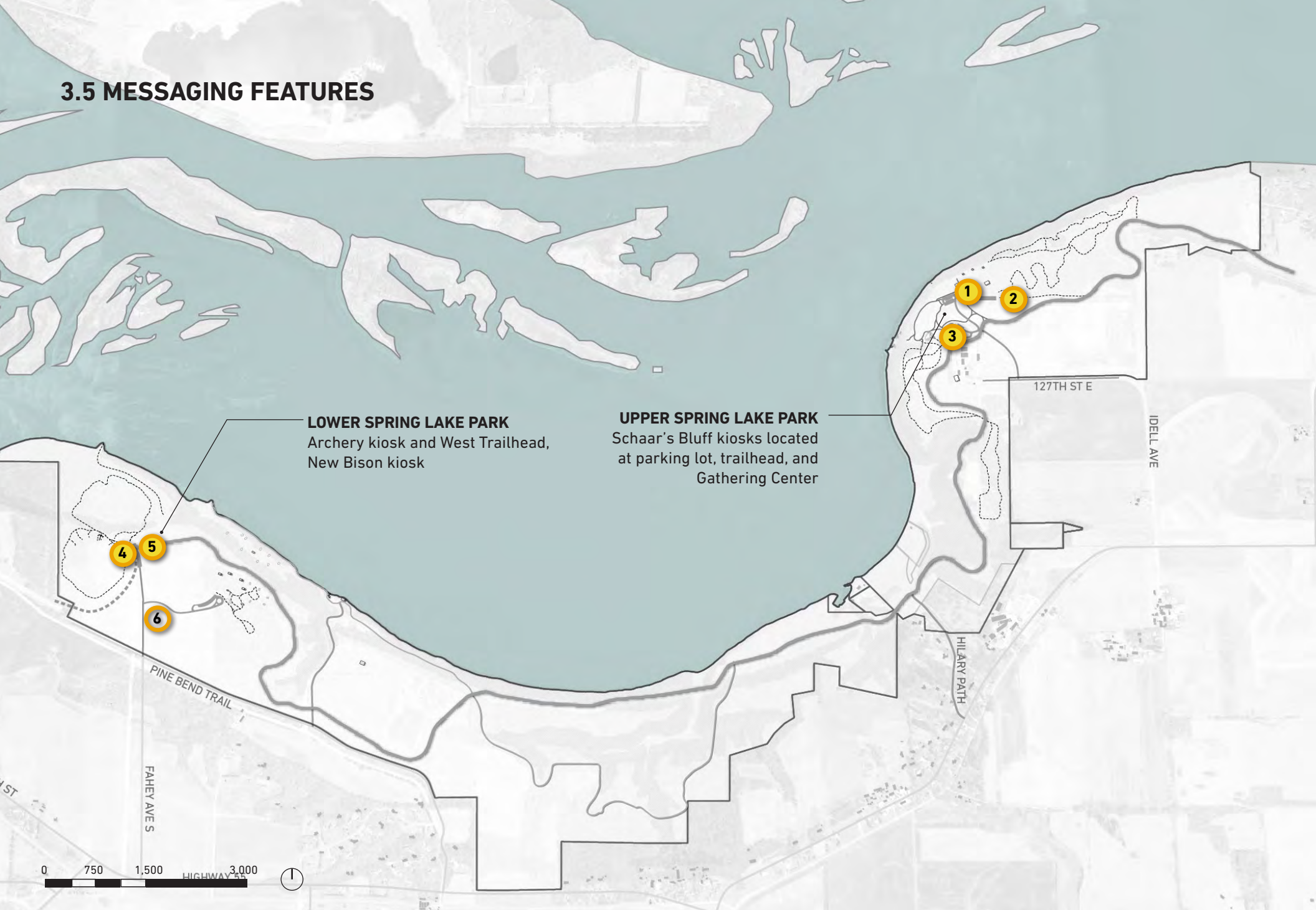


Figure 3.8 Kiosk Adaptation Features Plan

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

3.5.1 Park Kiosk Adaptation Features

Existing trailhead kiosks at the east and west entrances to the park do not acknowledge this landscape as Dakota homeland or a sacred place for Dakota and other Indigenous people. Sacred Spaces messaging at the park kiosks shall highlight subthemes of cultural caretaking and care as expression. Messaging shall acknowledge that the mounds and caves here and throughout the region are sacred places and must be treated and managed respectfully. The subtheme of Wato Oyate/Plant Nations can also share that plants in this cultural landscape are sacred and significant. This feature shall communicate the need for respect and a reminder that this is Dakota homeland.

The Park Kiosk Adaptation Feature is designed to adapt the two existing kiosk types in an elegant, seamless, and integrated way such that the messages appear as though they were meant to be here and always existed. The two kiosk types include a large sign with two protected bulletin boards (images 3,4, and 6 below) and a small sign with one protected bulletin board (images 1,2, and 5 below).

KEY THEMES

CR Caring for Relatives

KEY SUBTHEMES + STORYLINES

1. "This is a Cemetery"

Foster respect and change how people visit and relate to these landscapes through protocols and recognizing Indigenous ways of honoring.

2. Cultural Caretaking

Dakota people are the most recent caretakers of this place, with a responsibility to care for mounds.

3. Cultural Expression

Caring for these sacred places is a distinctive cultural expression that visitors need to understand and behave accordingly.

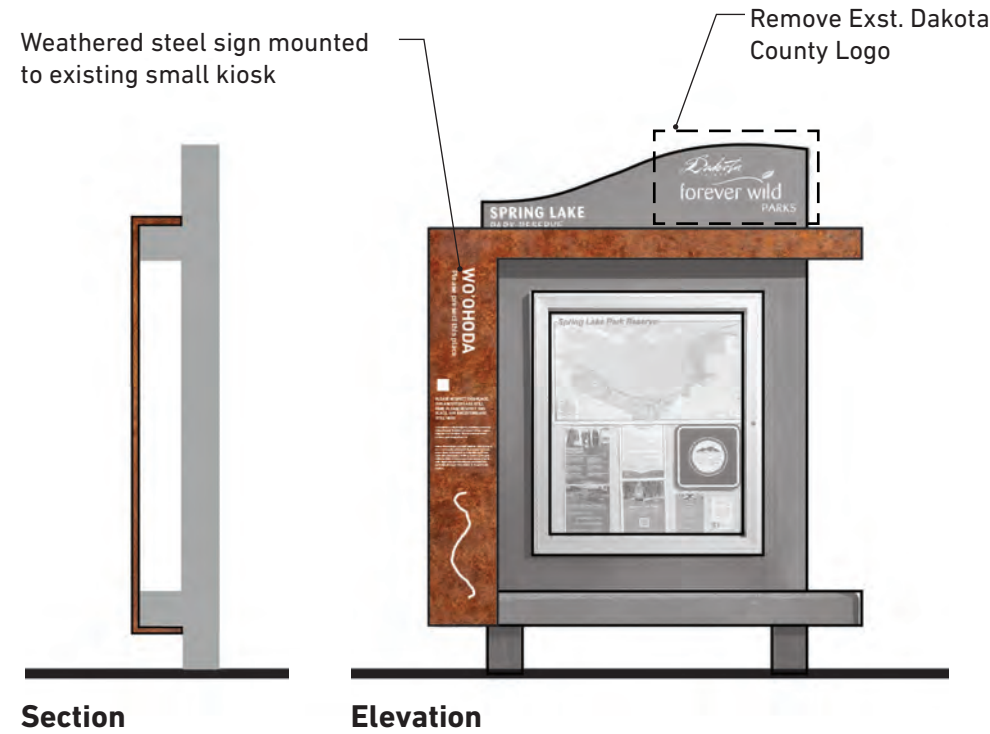


3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES



SMALL KIOSK

The small existing kiosks will be adapted with a steel panel alongside and across the top of the structure. The design is integrated into the aesthetic quality of both the existing kiosks and the material qualities of the existing interpretive features. The panels are a natural material quality that is durable and long-lasting that communicate Dakota presence and perspective in this landscape and the sensitivity of sacred spaces within Spring Lake Park Reserve. Panels will integrate Dakota language and artwork, and be designed and produced in collaboration with a Dakota co-developer for the narratives. Through these panels, the messaging of sacred spaces carries a permanent, prominent, and elegant place within the visitor entry experience.

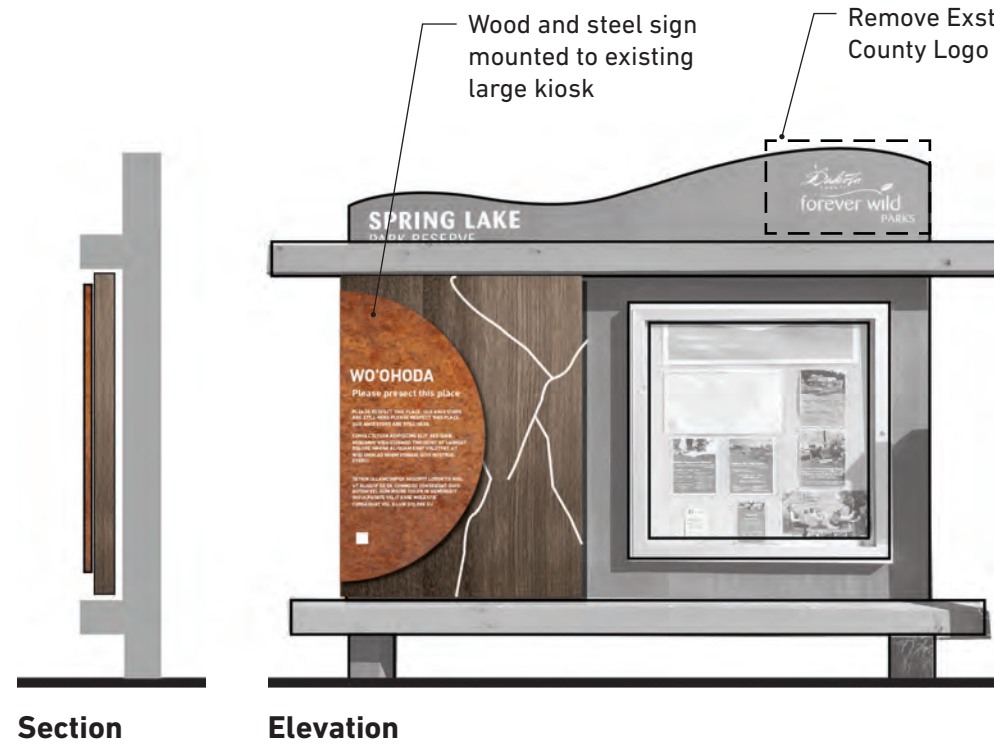


WEATHERED STEEL

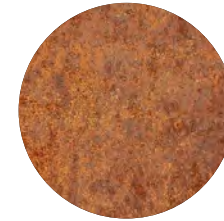


LARGE KIOSK

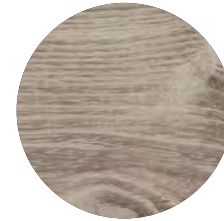
Similar in functionality and form to the small kiosks, the large kiosk adaptive panels will message the sacredness of spaces within Spring Lake Park Reserve. These panels are made from natural materials, layering an engraved wood backing with a steel panel. The panel overtakes roughly half of the existing kiosk, illustrating the importance of these messages and the prioritizing of Dakota voices at Spring Lake Park Reserve. Similar to the small kiosks, the large kiosk panels carry a permanent, prominent, and elegant presence in the visitors' experience.



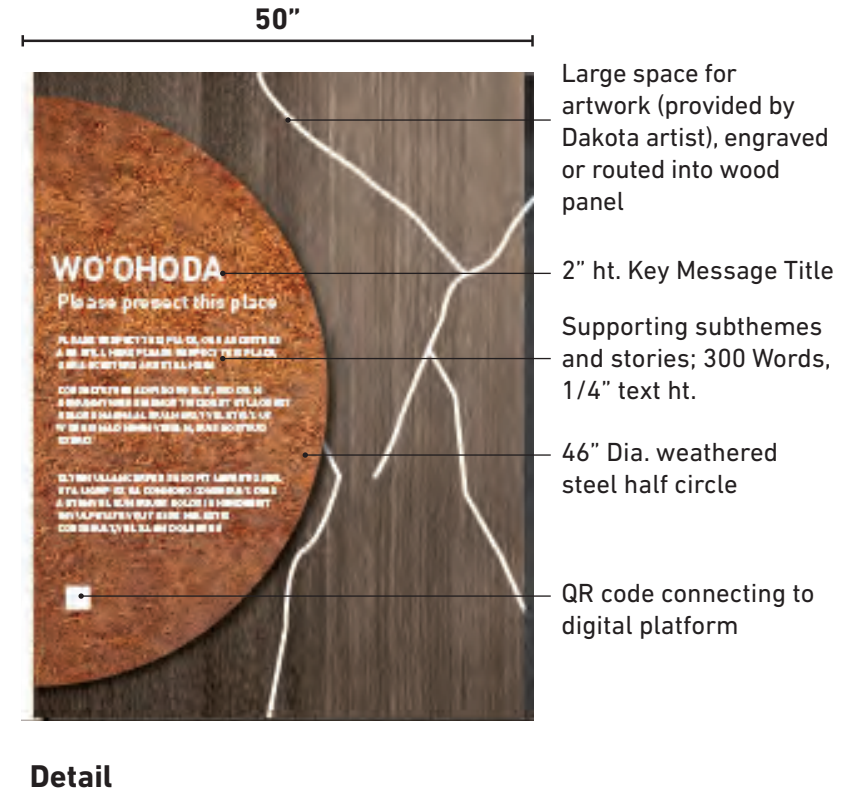
3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES



WEATHERED STEEL



WOOD



3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES



Figure 3.9 Acknowledgment Stone Features Plan

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

3.5.2 Acknowledgment Stones

Acknowledgment Stones are a feature recommended at Schaar's Bluff that work alongside and within the planting interventions. Each stone should be located adjacent to a proposed planting area and contain a message about the significance and uses of the plant species selected to the Dakota people and the intention of the planting as an act of healing, foraging, and education. Stone is a sacred material to Dakota people and, as such, should be used with care and respect.

KEY THEMES

CR Caring for Relatives

KEY SUBTHEMES + STORYLINES

1. Cultural Caretaking

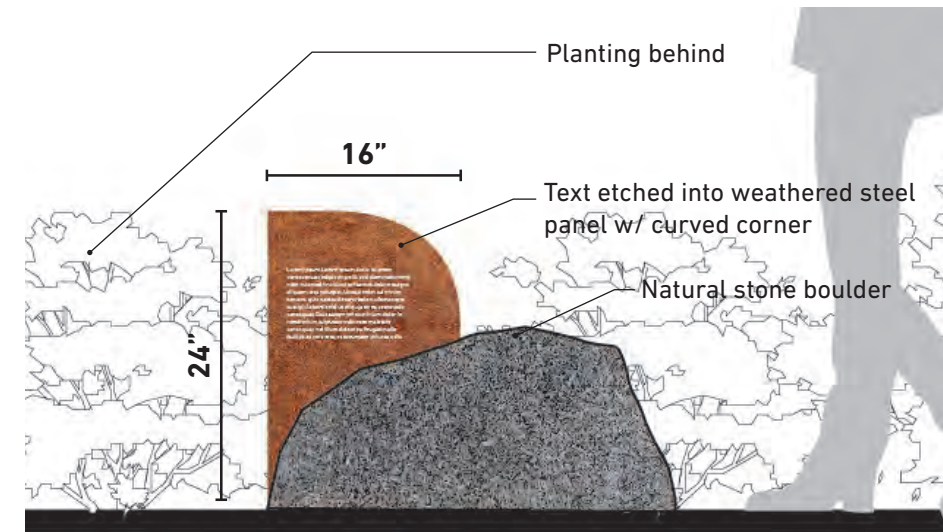
- Dakota people are the most recent caretakers of this place, with a responsibility to care for mounds.

2. "This is a Cemetery"

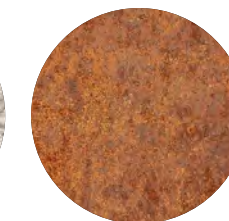
- Foster respect and change how people visit and relate to these landscapes through protocols and recognizing Indigenous ways of honoring.

3. Cultural Expression

- Caring for these sacred places is a distinctive cultural expression that visitors need to understand and behave accordingly.



NATURAL STONE



WEATHERED STEEL



NATIVE PLANTING

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

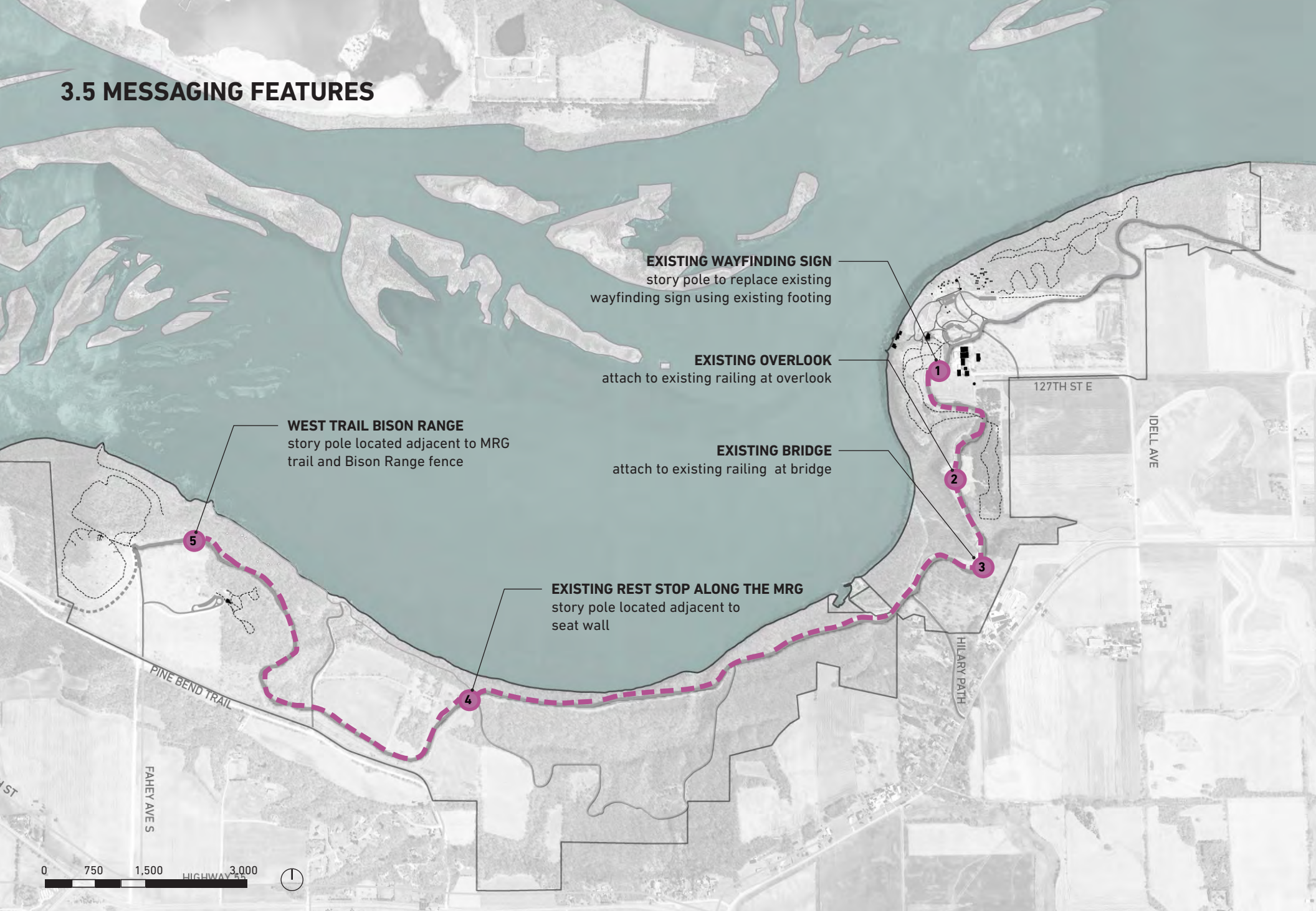


Figure 3.10 Dakota Homelands Story Thread Features Plan

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

3.5.3 Dakota Connections Story Thread Trail Markers

Trail Markers will be used to build on the existing infrastructure and expand the system in anticipation of the new soft-surface trail outlined in the 2021 master plan to minimize visual clutter on site. Each Trail Marker will include wayfinding information and a unique story to represent each subtheme. Each story should be represented consistently with English and Dakota text, graphics produced in collaboration with a Dakota artist and a QR code or similar mark to lead visitors to the parallel digital platform.

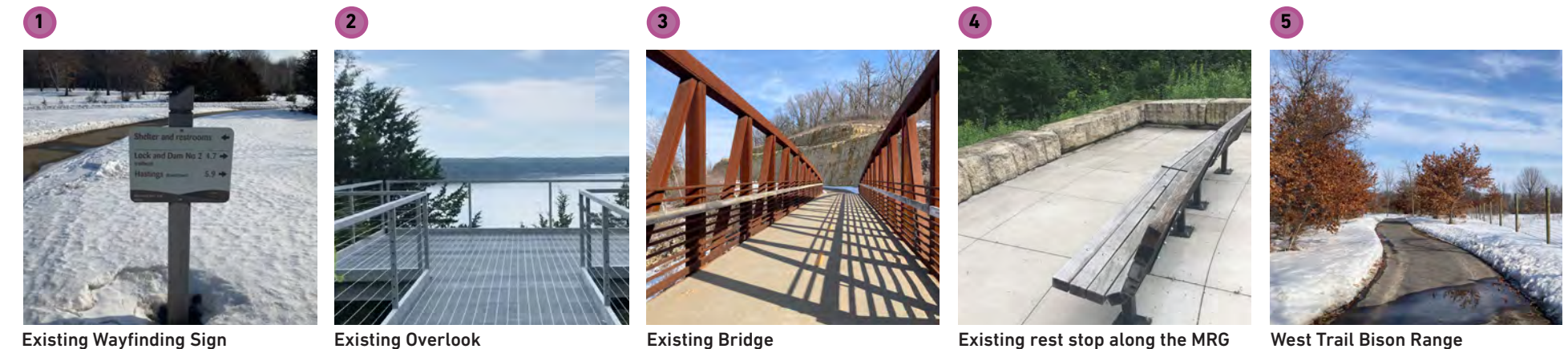
The story thread trail markers are intended to be interactive, graphically elegant, and designed to connect and orient visitors to the Mississippi River and the many layers of history present at Spring Lake Park Reserve. The five story poles thread a continuum of storylines across the site that focus on the Dakota Connections themes.

KEY THEMES

DC Dakota Connections

KEY SUBTHEMES + STORYLINES

- 1. Being Here**
Having more Dakota people visit and be active here could provide an opportunity for them to heal from displacement and help them find their identity and connection to this place.
- 2. Role in the Region**
This site is connected to others in the region as a sacred place. - Many tribes are associated with this area, so stories should be told from multiple perspectives and separately from the archaeological perspective.
- 3. Authentic History**
This region, including Grey Cloud Island, was a place of "beautiful cross-cultural exchange." The 1858 treaty and the removal of Medicine Bottle was harmful to both Euro-American and Dakota people, clearly illustrating the concept of parallel trauma.



Existing Wayfinding Sign

Existing Overlook

Existing Bridge

Existing rest stop along the MRG

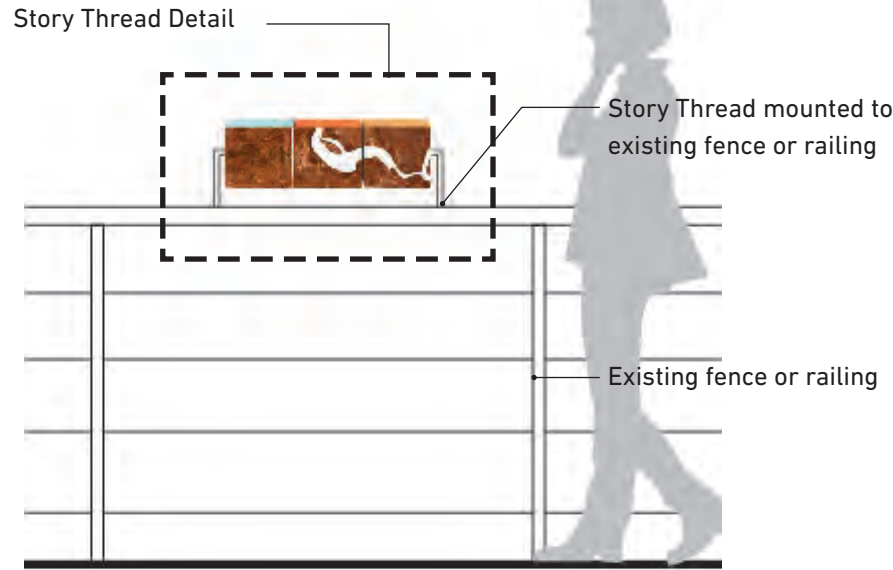
West Trail Bison Range

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

The design of these features includes three rotating cubes that offer a complete map of the Mississippi River and provide an opportunity for three distinct storylines (Being Here, Role in the Region, and Authentic History) to be identified and read in relation to one another. The intent is for these storylines to thread across the entire site and connect people and places throughout the park back to The River. By weaving together parallel and related stories over time told from the perspective of the people who lived, worked, and have ancestors buried here, this Story Thread feature will bring into focus how dynamic and sacred this landscape is.

Trail Marker Type 1: Attached To Existing Features

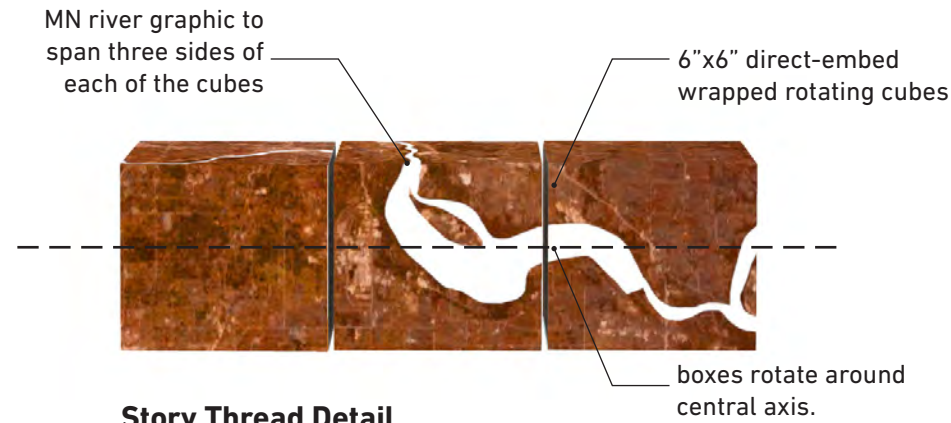
For Type 1 Trail Markers, proposed messaging shall be attached to existing features such as horizontal bridge railings or a vertical signage element. This includes locations 2 and 3. Sign attachment will need to be customized for each feature, but signs are consistent across the three locations.



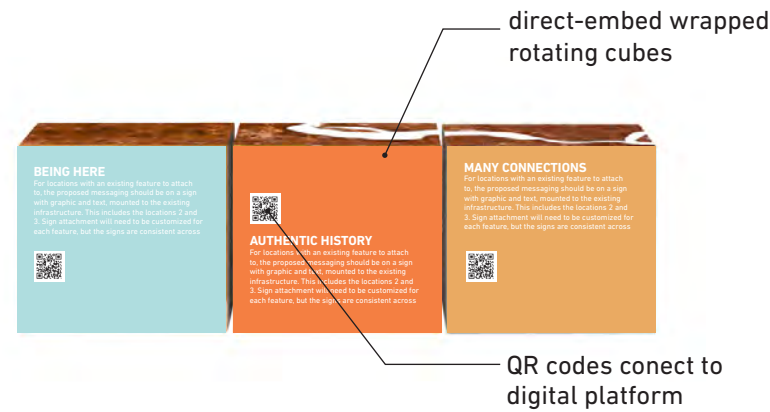
Story Thread Elevation



DIRECT EMBED



Story Thread Detail

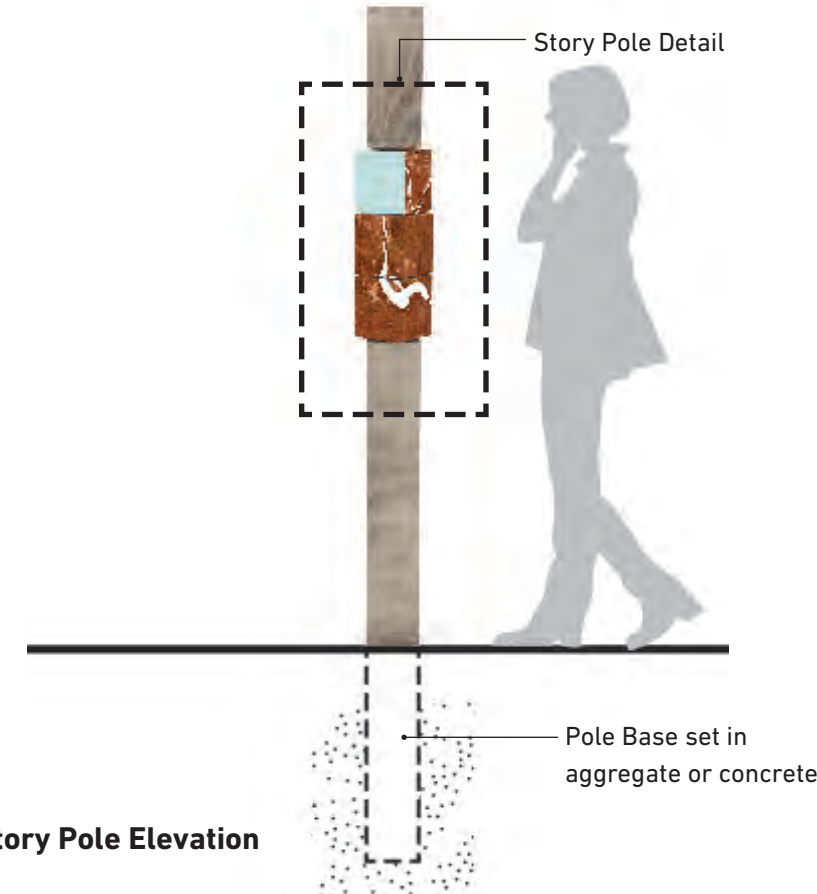


Story Thread Detail

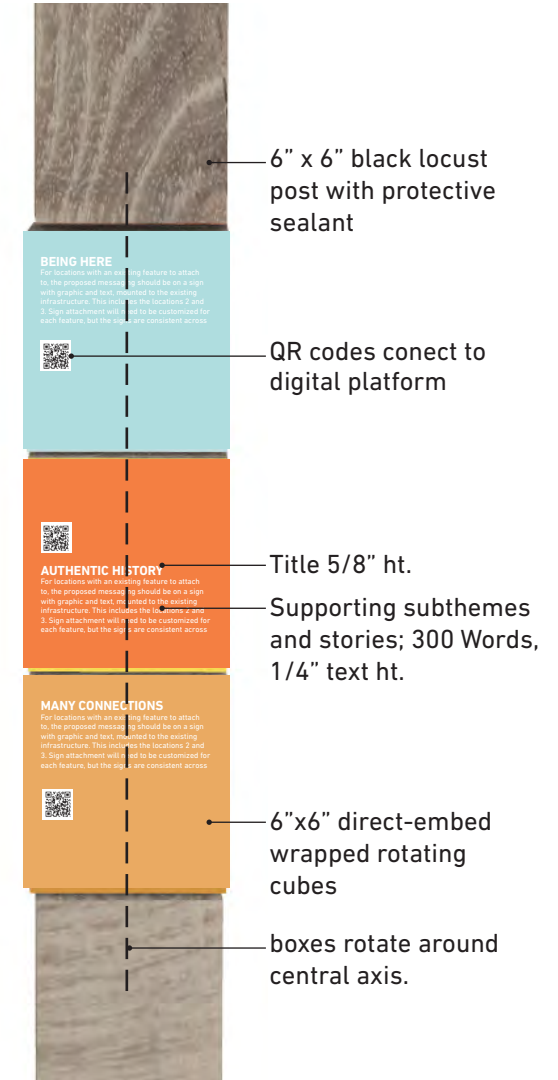
3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

Trail Marker Type 2: Story Pole

For Type 2 Trail Markers, three rotating cubes will stack vertically, with a complete map of the Mississippi River on one side, and thematic messaging on the others. Themes and storylines are consistent across Type 1 and Type 2 trail markers, they are only differentiated based on their assembly and construction. Type 2 markers are intended for locations where there isn't an existing feature to attach to and a new pole must be installed. This includes locations 1, 4, and 5. Final location will need to be verified on site.



Story Pole Elevation



Story Pole Detail



WEATHERED STEEL



DIRECT EMBED



WOOD

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

3.5.4 Digital and Audio Technology

This Messaging Plan recommends that digital interpretation and/or audio technology be developed to accompany all or some of the proposed physical messaging features. Digital and Audio Interpretation can improve and expand access to the themes and stories being shared on the site. Given the large scale of Spring Lake Park Reserve, providing digital access to these messages can ensure that this content can be viewed from anywhere in the world.

Digital technology offers numerous opportunities for increasing intellectual access to messages and can include a website or app. These platforms also offer alternative interpretive languages, audio-visual support, and other universal access opportunities that allow visitors to explore messages and content at their own preferred pace or route.

A website, app, or other digital platform can integrate text, video, and sound. Throughout the engagement process, the design team heard about the importance of spoken word, language, oral history, and sound to the Dakota people. Audio technology integrated into the physical features or digital technology that can be accessed by the features (such as QR code or other methods) will honor this request and help visitors deepen their understanding of the messages and enrich their experience.



Example of an interactive app. Image credit: Jam Creative Studios

3.5 MESSAGING FEATURES

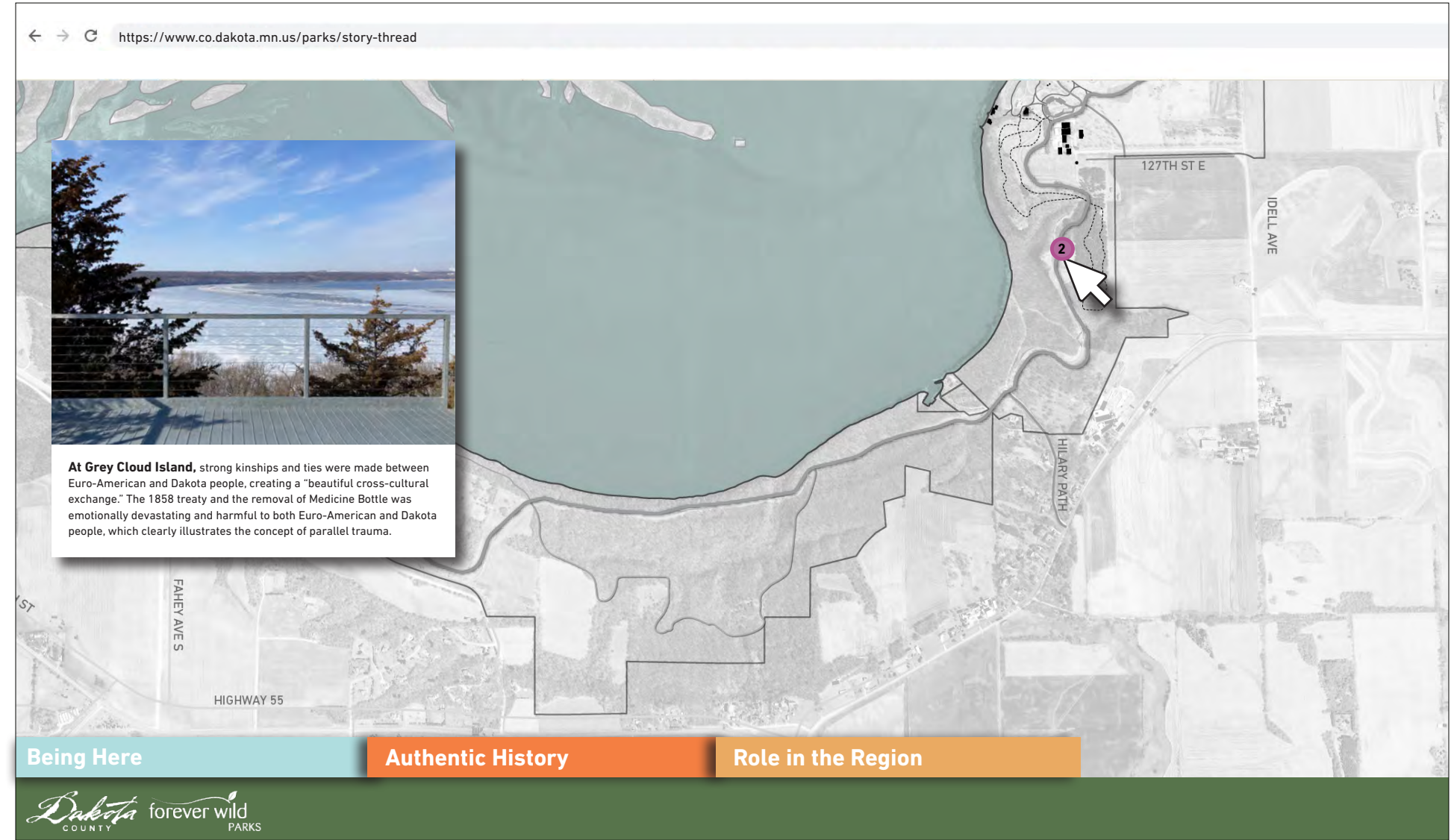


Figure 3.11 Example of an interactive storytelling website

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Spring Lake Park Reserve Messaging Plan will enhance the unique identity of this park within the greater context of sites within Dakota Homeland. Implementation will occur over time, as opportunities allow. It is anticipated that implementation will occur in two primary ways: 1) phasing of stand-alone projects and 2) as part of ongoing county initiatives to further partnerships.

A primary goal of this Messaging Plan is to foster stronger relationships between Dakota County and the Dakota People through co-management, removal of barriers to access, communication, coordination, care, and storytelling. These relationships provide opportunities for implementation of more holistic and authentic changes to Spring Lake Park Reserve that benefit the whole community.

Once constructed, the Dakota County Parks Department will be the lead department in operations, management, and maintenance for all messaging features and process-based recommendations. Maintenance is essential to protect public investment and provide recreation users clean, safe, and enjoyable year-round experiences. Messaging elements are located on or near existing infrastructure along trails and paths that are already maintained regularly.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

4.2 OPINION OF COST

The plan contains the essential information and design intent to fabricate the interpretive messaging features, but the final design details, precise locations, artwork, narrative development and final content, and final graphics are schematic. This provides a selected design team discretion with final placement, design, engagement, and installation methods.

The approximate estimated costs for the various interpretive messaging features (below) and landscape interventions (next page) are based on typical designs but could vary depending on specific site locations, access, materials availability, fabrication processes, inflation, and the construction team. The costs are based on the design team's experience and the anticipated fabrication and installation methods described within this plan.

Messaging Features

This opinion of cost assumed that all features will be further developed and funded as a single implementation project. The opinion reflects generalized costs for physical features and includes estimated costs for design fees, pre-production, and installation.

Price Summary

1	Interpretive Design, Engagement, Artists, and Construction Drawings	\$50,000
2	Pre-Production	\$8,539
3	Fabricate Park Kiosk Adaptation Features (6)	\$20,684
4	Fabricate Acknowledgment Stones (6)	\$21,271
5	Fabricate Dakota Connections Storythread Trail Markers (6, 3 of each type)	\$36,377
6	Installation	\$3,702
7	Contingency (15%, construction, escalation, inflation)	\$21,085
	Messaging Feature Subtotal	\$161,658

Cost Estimate Continues on Next Page

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Landscape Interventions

The opinion for landscape interventions reflects a generalized cost for softscape interventions including soil preparations, planting and groundcover materials, and installation labor. Landscape Installations proposed in this messaging plan include the bluff edge restoration planting and foraging gardens surrounding the Acknowledgment Stone features.

Price Summary		
1	Landscape Design Services, Engagement, Contractor Coordination	\$15,000
2	Site Preparations and Turf Removal <i>Selective clearing of proposed planting areas Includes site prep herbicide, disking, and harrowing soil prep (minimal disturbance)</i>	\$5,550
3	Net Erosion Blanket <i>On steep slopes as needed</i>	\$19,456
4	Custom Seed Mix <i>Native species suitable for site conditions</i>	\$2,208
5	Live Plants - Plugs	\$22,920
6	Maintenance <i>Estimated 5-year expense</i>	\$23,000
7	Contingency <i>15%, includes site cleanup, disposal, inflation</i>	\$13,220
	Landscape Installation subtotal	\$101,354
	COST ESTIMATE GRAND TOTAL	\$263,012

END OF DOCUMENT

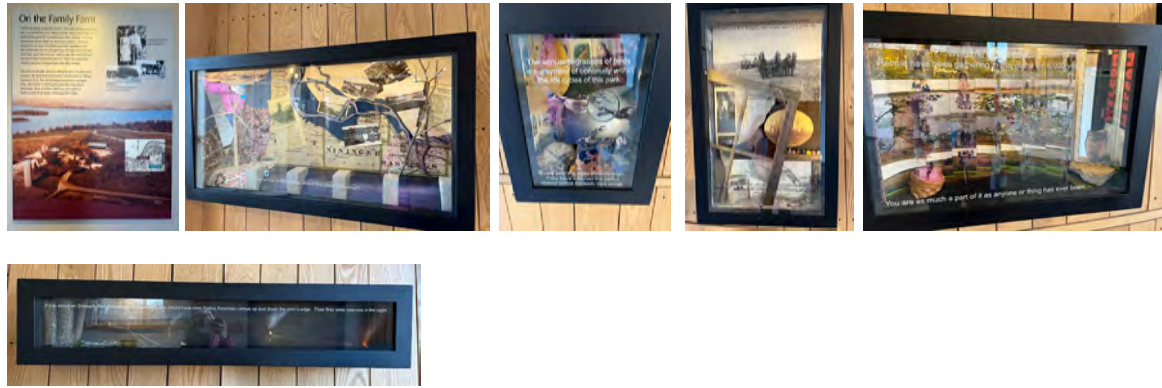
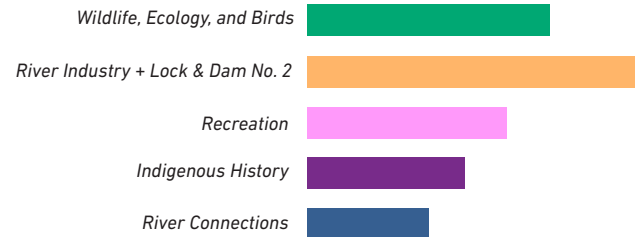
A photograph of a forest with a mossy rock outcrop. The scene is dominated by a large, layered rock formation covered in vibrant green moss. The rock face is textured with horizontal strata. In the foreground, a dark forest floor is covered with fallen leaves and a network of tree roots. The background is filled with tall, slender trees with lush green foliage, creating a dense canopy. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

CHAPTER 5: APPENDIX

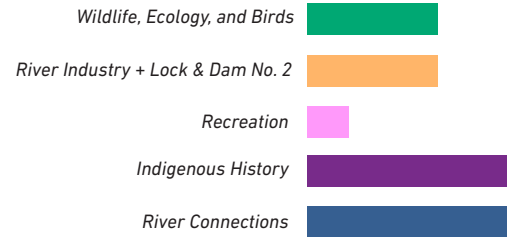
5.0 APPENDIX A : EXISTING INTERPRETIVE INVENTORY

Below is an inventory of existing interpretive features at Spring Lake Park Reserve. The features are organized by category and installation year. The panels located inside of the Gathering Center were installed in 2008-09, the panels exterior to the Gathering Center were also installed in 2008-09, the series of trail signs located throughout the park were installed in 2017, and the installation date of the National Park Service panels is unknown, they are installed in the lawn near the Gathering Center. Five general themes are included in each group but vary depending on the content included and stories told.

Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center (interior) (2008-09) Location: Upper Park, Gathering Center



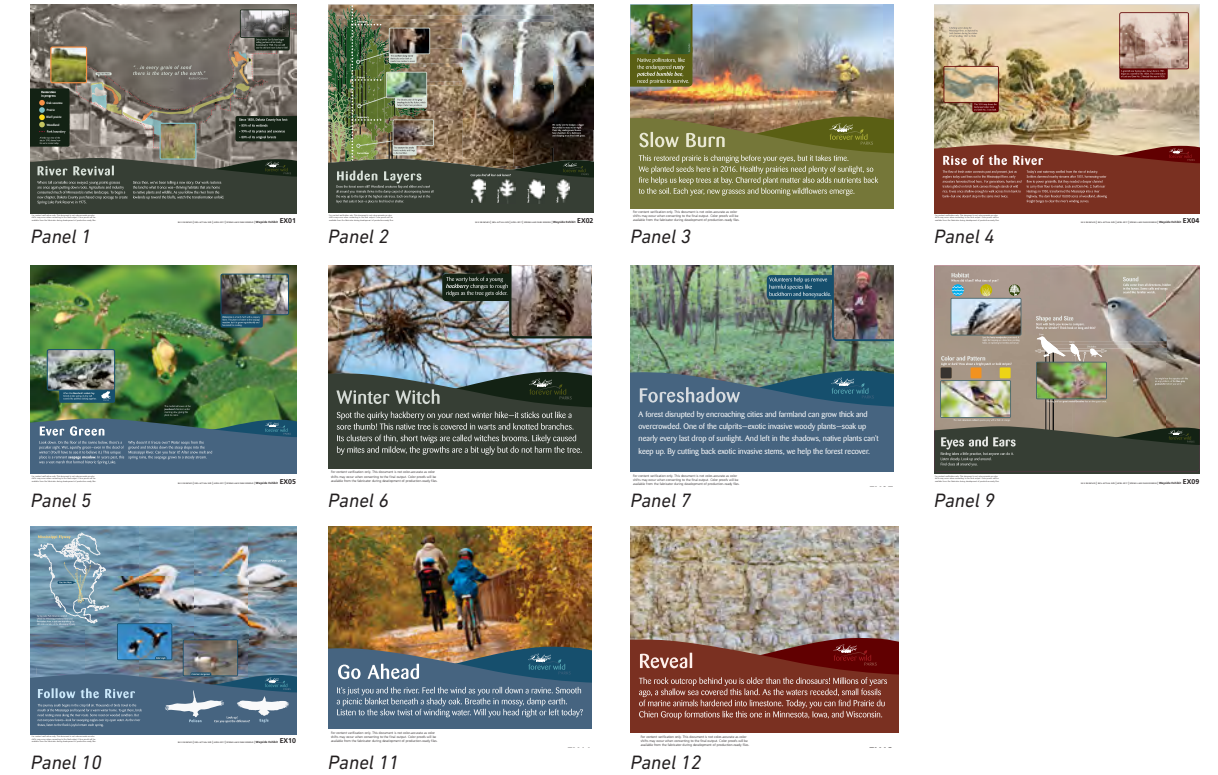
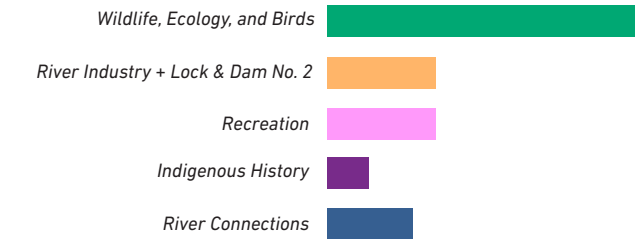
Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center (Exterior) (2008-09) Location: Upper Park, Gathering Center



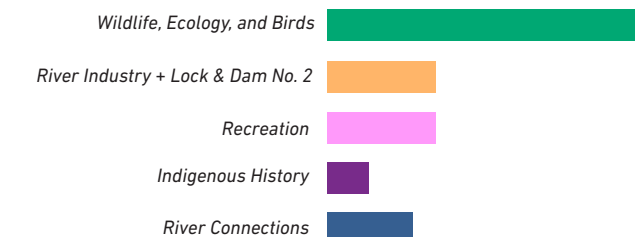
Images courtesy of Dakota County and 106Group.

5.0 APPENDIX A : EXISTING INTERPRETIVE INVENTORY

SLPR Trail Signs (2017) Location: Mississippi River Greenway (MRG)



National Park Service Signs Location: Upper Park, Schaar's Bluff



Images courtesy of Dakota County and 106Group.