

WILLIAMS COUNTY PARKS

2022 PARK SYSTEM PLAN



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APPROVED BY:

Williams County Board of County Park Commissioners

September, 2022

PREPARED FOR:

Williams County Parks Department



CONSULTANT:



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The planning team would like to thank the numerous community members who attended public meetings and events throughout the planning process. We were incredibly grateful for those that took the time to provide us with feedback that was incredibly valuable and insightful.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work of the Williams County Park Board and county staff who, through visionary and enthusiastic leadership, contributed all the necessary data, promotion efforts and guidance throughout the planning project.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Census confirmed what Williams County residents already knew. The population in the past decade was significant and is impacting local recreational facilities. The Williams County park and trail system includes five large county park sites that are primarily focused on campgrounds and one smaller developed park. As a result, the County initiated the development of a strategic and comprehensive master plan that provides an overall vision and recommendations to guide future investments to meet the needs of its residents.

The park system is governed by the Williams County Board of County Park Commissioners (Park Board) and is managed by the Parks Director.





PLANNING PROCESS

A year-long planning process began with a project start-up meeting with county staff and the Park Board to explore goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. Community engagement was critical to raise awareness of the planning process and ensure outcomes were aligned with community needs. Engagement opportunities were held across Williams County with numerous efforts used to solicit feedback that included an online engagement platform, social media, in-person interviews, and attendance at various community events.

The next stage of the planning process included an assessment of need. This assessment evaluated the condition, quality, and distribution of existing parks. The analysis process was combined with community demographics and recreation trends to identify future needs.

The findings from the planning process provided guidance to the development of preliminary recommendations and concept plans for park improvements. The concept plans went through a review process by county staff, the Park Board, and members of the community.

The final park system plan documents the planning process and recommendations for final acceptance by the Williams County Board of County Park Commissioners.



MISSION AND GOALS

MISSION

The following Mission Statement reflects the sentiment that Williams County strives to provide to its residents for parks, trails, and outdoor recreation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Williams County Parks mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance a high-quality system of parks and trails to connect current and future generations to the outdoors through diverse year-round recreation opportunities, consistent with responsible land use conservation and stewardship.

GOALS

The recommendations from this plan provide policy, capital, and strategic direction for meeting the vision of the park system and to accomplish the following goals:

- **High-quality experiences:** Williams County Parks strives to provide high quality recreational experiences through safe and clean facilities and diverse programming.
- **Four-season opportunities:** Williams County Parks provides diverse recreational opportunities across all seasons to promote healthy communities and future recreation enthusiasts.
- **Stewardship:** Williams County Parks promotes responsible use and stewardship of the parks, trails and natural resources through thoughtful design, public awareness, community engagement, and proper oversight.
- **Sustainability:** Williams County Parks establishes responsible management of the parks, trails, and natural resources through sustainable development, maintenance practices, and fiscal resources
- **Connectivity:** Williams County Parks strives to connect people to the outdoors through improved access, programs, and interconnected pedestrian trail systems.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summary of recommendations includes both short and long term initiatives to meet the goals of the system plan. The recommendations as shown are not listed in order of priority, but alphabetically. Priorities are listed in the System Plan Recommendations, found in Chapter 5.

- **Blacktail Dam:** Recommendations are focused on improving safety, circulation and experience. Maintain the park at its current level of capacity to avoid overuse during the prime summer recreation season. Expand opportunities for more flexible spaces, improved layout, and recreation during the fall through spring seasons. Implement management methods to protect and improve habitats, water quality, and other natural resource areas.
- **Epping-Springbrook Dam:** Recommendations are focused on an improved park access for ease of access and safety. Additional recommendations include layout modifications to support improved camping experiences and consideration for those seeking day use recreation. Implement management methods to protect and improve habitats, water quality, and other natural resource areas.
- **Kota Ray Dam:** Recommendations are focused on layout modifications to support improved camping experiences with expansion for additional development on the northern park parcel. Implement management methods to protect and improve habitats, water quality, and other natural resource areas.
- **Little Egypt:** Recommendations are focused on making the existing campsites more user-friendly with site layout modifications to improve circulation, and improvements for day use activities that make Little Egypt a prime destination. Allow for potential expanded camping activities as demands warrant. Additional recommendations include enhancing the cultural and historical aspects of the site while implementing management methods to protect and improve habitats, water quality, and other natural resource areas.
- **Lookout Park:** Recommendations are focused on completing the park improvements in entirety.
- **McGregor Dam:** Recommendations are focused on the development of a day use recreational area and improvements to the existing campsites, as future needs dictate.
- **Future Parks and Trails:** Recommendations outline future opportunities to expand the park and trail development in Williams County to diversity recreation experiences and improve connectivity.

PLANNING PROCESS

2



OVERVIEW

Williams County is located in the northwestern region of North Dakota with Montana on the western border and the Missouri River forming its southern border. It is well known for the Bakken formation that lies beneath the region containing expansive amounts of oil and natural gas, spurring growth in the region. The oil industry also contributes to the revenue for park funding. Williams County was created in 1891 and named for Erastus Appleman Williams, who served in the Dakota Territory legislature and the North Dakota legislature (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Williams_County,_North_Dakota).





BACKGROUND

Williams County boasts 2,148 square miles of land containing rolling hillsides, rugged buttes, stunning sunsets, and what would seem to be vast amounts of unexplored lands that have seemingly changed little over generations of time. Its history is as wild as the landscape with remnants of Native American settlements still identifiable in the prairies, and bison routes that have left their marks on the lands and boulders they passed. The historic forts and trading posts that remain offer a glimpse into the past and a means to interact with the history in a meaningful manner.

Williams County has abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation. It is located within the Prairie Pothole region known for its importance to migratory waterfowl habitat. It also contains grasslands popular for deer, pronghorn, and upland game birds such as grouse, pheasant, and turkey.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is a partner to Williams County with a goal of ongoing protection and conservation of lands and water suitable for habitat. They also contribute to shared costs related to boat launch facilities and fishing opportunities within the Williams County park sites, and continually monitor the dams and stock the lakes with fish.

Of great significance is the fact the southern border of Williams County is the shoreline of the Missouri River containing the expansive Lake Sakakawea reservoir, one of its most valued natural resources for tourism and recreation.

Lake Sakakawea continues to remain a primary destination for walleye, sauger, and northern pike fishing with abundant space for water-related recreation such as boating and skiing. Its scenic qualities provide the ultimate backdrop to experience this natural water feature, whether for a day trip or an extended stay. There are opportunities throughout Williams County for the public to access Lake Sakakawea for swimming, camping, boating, hiking, or simply for enjoying its scenery.

Williams County has unique attributes that can meet the needs of diverse types of outdoor recreation enthusiasts across all seasons, for local residents and tourists alike.





PURPOSE OF WILLIAMS COUNTY PARKS & TRAILS

The purpose of the Williams County Park System is to preserve and manage lands designated as county parks and trails for the recreational use and enjoyment of its residents and visitors. Beyond recreation, county managed lands also provide critical habitat, protect water and natural resources, and preserve lands for future generations that contribute to the quality of life for its residents. This in turn helps create future stewards and outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

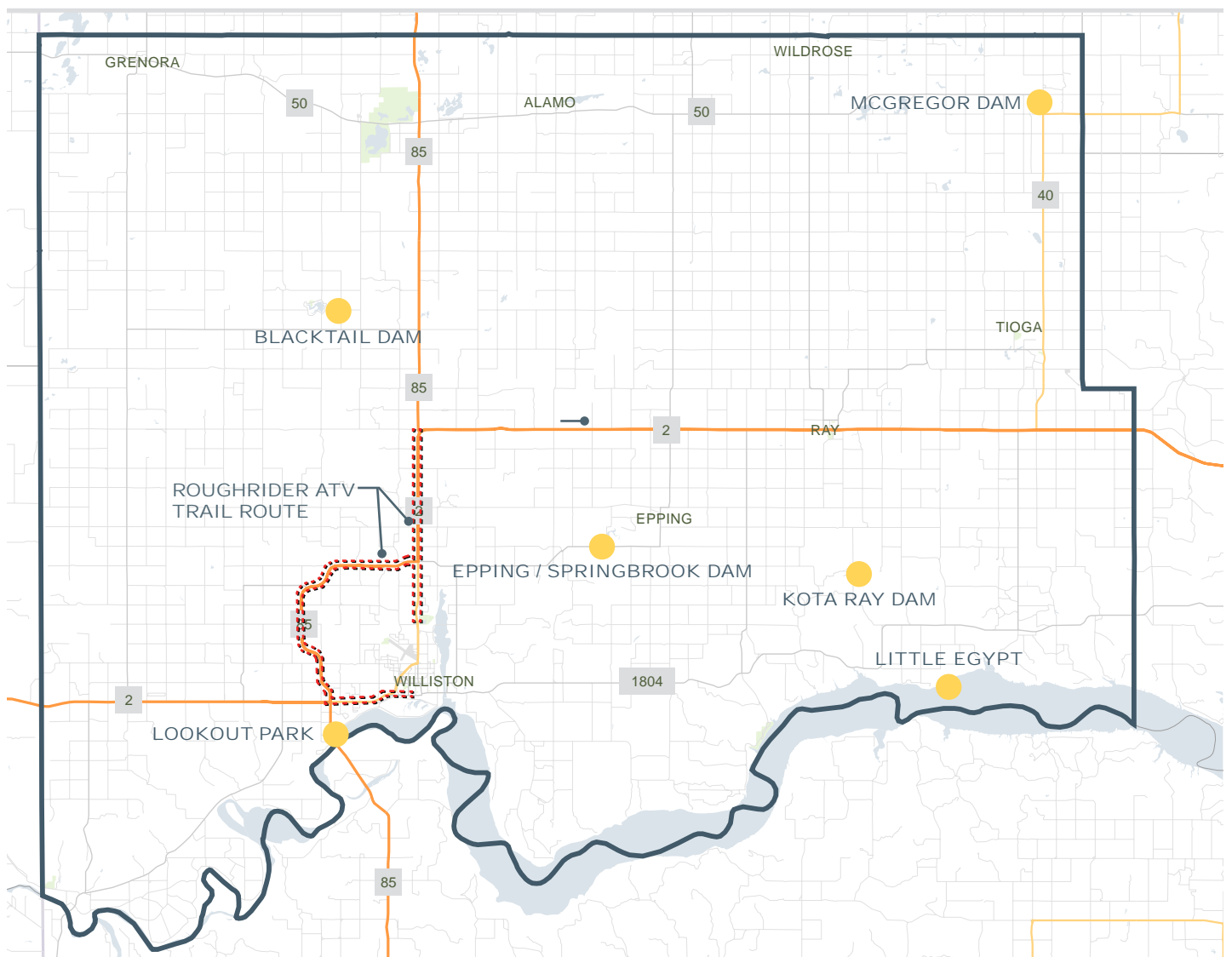
The Williams County parks were established at varying dates and through varying means with management and oversight split between the Williams County Board of County Park Commissioners (Park Board) and the Williams County Water Resource District Board (Water Board). This planning document is specifically developed for the parks that fall under the management of the Park Board.

PARK BENEFITS

Parks and trails can respond directly to the needs of its residents and can improve the quality of life and overall mental and physical health by providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, connecting with nature, or exploring the culture and history of the region.

The park and trail system can also provide opportunities for direct revenue generation related to park amenities, such as camping fees. In turn, they also benefit indirect revenue associated with purchases of recreation equipment, fuel, food, and lodging within the various communities of Williams County.

Promotion and potential future expansion of the parks and trails can continue to draw in local and regional visitors that will continue to expand opportunities for recreation and revenue generation.



PARK BOARD PARKS & TRAILS

OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

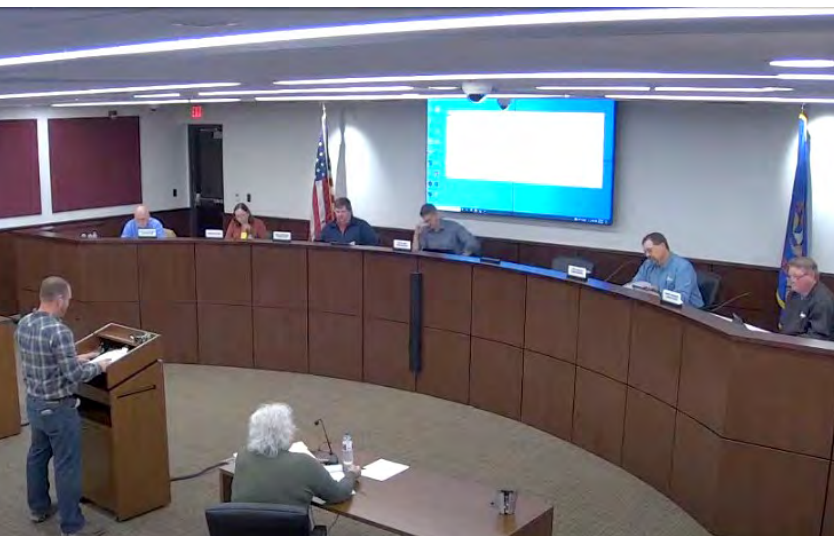
Williams County has established a Parks Department with a Parks Director to provide management and oversight of the lands that are under the authority of the Board of County Park Commissioners (Park Board) to ensure that the lands are sustainably managed in order to balance use in line with the function of the parks.

The following are general duties and responsibility of the Parks Director:

- Prepare annual budget and funding requests
- Create regular reports and presentations for the Park Board
- Manage ongoing maintenance and operations of the parks and trails
- Supervision of staff and ensuring proper staffing levels
- Develop and manage park programming
- Coordinate funding and revenue initiatives

WILLIAMS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY PARK COMMISSIONERS

As stated by the Williams County website, *“the powers and duties for the Williams County Board of County Park Commissioners are set forth in North Dakota Century Code Chapter 11-28 and include the power and duty to: regulate, supervise, control, and manage all areas of land and water owned or held by the County or which may be under the jurisdiction, supervision, control, and management of the board of county park commissioners for park or recreational purposes; promulgate, publish, and impose rules and regulations concerning the uses to which such land and water areas may be put; regulate, supervise, control, and manage all land and water areas under its jurisdiction; prevent the pollution, contamination, or other misuse of any water resource, stream, or body of water in its jurisdiction; to provide recreational areas or facilities; and lease lands owned or controlled by the board of county park commissioners for residential, camping, concession, and other purposes under terms determined by the Park Board.”*



County Parks and lands under the authority or management of the Board of County Park Commissioners include:

- Blacktail Dam
- Epping-Springbrook Dam
- Kota Ray Dam
- Little Egypt
- Lookout Park
- McGregor Dam
- Roughrider ATV Trail



WILLIAMS COUNTY WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT BOARD

As stated by the Williams County website, *“the statutory powers of the Water Resource District Board are set forth in North Dakota Century Code Chapter 61-16.1 and include generally the local management, conservation, protection, development, and control of water resources and for the prevention of flood damage in the watersheds of this State; and carry out to the maximum extent possible the water management policy that upstream landowners and districts that have artificially altered the hydrologic scheme must share with downstream landowners the responsibility of providing for proper management and control of surface waters.”*

“The Water Resource Board handles certain drainage issues and complaints; reviews and approves storm water management plans (SWMP) for Williams County and oversees regulatory water usage.”

The Williams County Water Resource District Board supervises, controls, and manages the following lease sites:

- Confluence Recreation Area
- Cut Bluff Historic Site
- Kettle Lake
- Lewis & Clark Bridge Boat Ramp
- Little Beaver Bay Recreation Area
- Pumphouse Fishing Area
- Ryder Point Recreation Area
- Thompson's Landing
- Trenton Lake Recreation Area
- Whitetail Bay (Lund's Landing)

ADDITIONAL RECREATION

Williams County benefits from numerous additional recreational and historical sites that contribute to overall tourism and offer additional opportunities for recreation. The following identifies additional park resources available within Williams County.

LEWIS & CLARK STATE PARK

Lewis & Clark State Park is one of the most recognizable parks in the county with a regional draw. This USACE property is managed by the ND Department of Parks & Recreation and contains 525 acres of land with modern and primitive campsites, group campsites, camper cabins, and a boat ramp with marina. It also offers activities to keep guests active across all seasons with trails for swimming, biking and hiking, and winter cross-country skiing with ice skating in the bay. Its close proximity just 18 miles outside of Williston allows for added convenience in terms of offering shopping, dining, lodging and improved access to Williams County with a new airport.

HISTORIC SITES

Located outside of Williston near Buford are historic sites that offer a glimpse into the past.

- **Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site:** This trading post was reconstructed and is operated by the National Park Service. Interpretive and educational programs showcase Native American culture and the sites history as a fur trading post.
- **Fort Buford State Historic Site:** This site was once a military post and is known as the location where Sitting Bull surrendered in 1881. It is operated by the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The site contains some original structures and a cemetery that have been preserved, and it offers self-guided tours. It has a small primitive campground.

LOCAL PARKS

Individual communities within Williams have additional park and recreation that contributes to the overall park system. The following identifies some additional park resources available within Williams County.

- **Grenora:** The Grenora Park District manages Sunset Park, which has playground equipment and a few electric campsites. The City of Grenora owns the Grenora Municipal Golf Course and leases it to a separate board. As of August 2022, the Golf Course was inactive.
- **Tioga:** The Tioga Park District operates and manages many of the recreational experiences in Tioga. There is camping and fishing at Tioga Dam, the Tioga Park with playgrounds, campgrounds, ice rink, ballfield, and picnic shelters, a public swimming pool, and Pioneer Centennial Park. The City of Tioga owns and operates the Tioga County Club, a 9-hole golf course, and the Tioga Community Center and Library.
- **Ray:** The Ray Park District for the City of Ray operates and manages North Park, the Northside Ball Fields, Veterans Memorial Park, and South Park (Lake McLeod). There is a 9-hole municipal golf course managed by the Ray Golf Association; the City of Ray and the Ray Park Board both own land within the golf course area. The Ray Recreation Council puts on programming and events for the community.
- **Williston:** Williston is the County Seat and the largest city in the county. The Williston Parks and Recreation District (WPRD) manages and operates eleven parks providing numerous types of outdoor athletic fields, playgrounds, a splash pad, a skate park, picnic areas, and trails. The WPRD also manages a 9-hole municipal golf course.

MASTER PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the plan is to articulate a comprehensive vision for the park system that will guide strategic improvements.

This plan provides the framework and recommendations to guide investments for both short and long term projects in order to achieve the goals of the master plan. It is meant to be a living document that should routinely be evaluated and amended to remain in line with community needs as well as improvements that have been completed.

With Williams County still remaining in the top 5 counties in the United States for annual growth, it is recommended to revisit the plan a minimum of once every five to ten years to reflect changes in population, demographics, trends, stakeholders, as well as environmental and fiscal factors.

The park system master plan identifies the existing park system in terms of development, condition, ownership, easements, and joint partnerships. This is crucial for understanding all of the nuances of each site as they each have differing circumstances and regulatory oversight.

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

A year-long planning process began in early 2021 with a project start-up meeting with County staff and the Park Board to explore their vision and goals for the park system plan, and to obtain relevant project data.

A critical piece of the planning process was community engagement. Engagement was not only used to raise awareness of the project, but to also gain an understanding of the viewpoints of the residents to ensure the plan aligns with community sentiment and identified needs. Input, review, and feedback of the planning process was solicited through numerous methods throughout the planning process.

The findings and analysis from the engagement and data collection process provided guidance to the development of preliminary recommendations and concept plans in the draft system master plan, which included a review and comment process.



Feedback from the review process confirmed priorities and guided further refinements to the final Williams County Park System Master Plan document.



PARK MISSION AND PLAN GOALS

The following mission statement and goals were prepared as a guide for establishing both short and long term priorities for the parks, trails, and outdoor recreation to better meet the needs and desires of the community over the next decade.

PARK MISSION STATEMENT

The Williams County Parks mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance a high-quality system of parks and trails to connect current and future generations to the outdoors through diverse year-round recreation opportunities, consistent with responsible land use conservation and stewardship.

PARK PLAN GOALS:

The following are goals of the Plan:

- **High-quality experiences:** Williams County Parks strives to provide high quality recreational experiences through safe and clean facilities and diverse programming.
- **Four-season opportunities:** Williams County Parks provides diverse recreational opportunities across all seasons to promote healthy communities and future recreation enthusiasts.
- **Stewardship:** Williams County Parks promotes responsible use and stewardship of the parks, trails and natural resources through thoughtful design, public awareness, community engagement, and proper oversight.



PARK PLAN GOALS (CONTINUED):

- **Sustainability:** Williams County Parks establishes responsible management of the parks, trails, and natural resources through sustainable development, maintenance practices, and fiscal resources.
- **Connectivity:** Williams County Parks strives to connect people to the outdoors through improved access, programs, and interconnected pedestrian trail systems.





HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The planning framework provides guidance based upon a 10-year assessment of needs. It is intended to be a living document with recommendations, standards, and guidelines for system planning for park and trail development and budgeting purposes. Recommendations within this document will require additional analysis and further planning efforts prior to implementation.

It is recommended that the Plan be reviewed by staff annually and updated comprehensively a minimum of every five to ten years as projects are implemented, and to account for current economic conditions, funding opportunities, partnerships, and community needs that will continue to evolve.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

3



OVERVIEW

Assessing the needs of the county is a critical first step in developing a park and trail system master plan because it represents those who it is intended to serve. The needs analysis includes identification of local needs in conjunction with greater recreational trends for consideration as the county continues to grow.

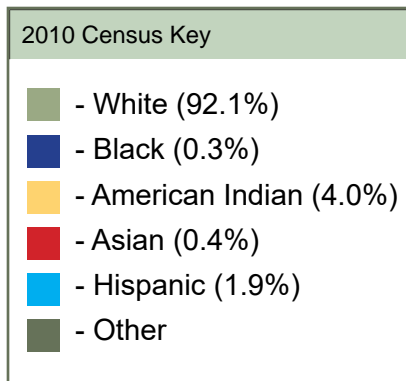
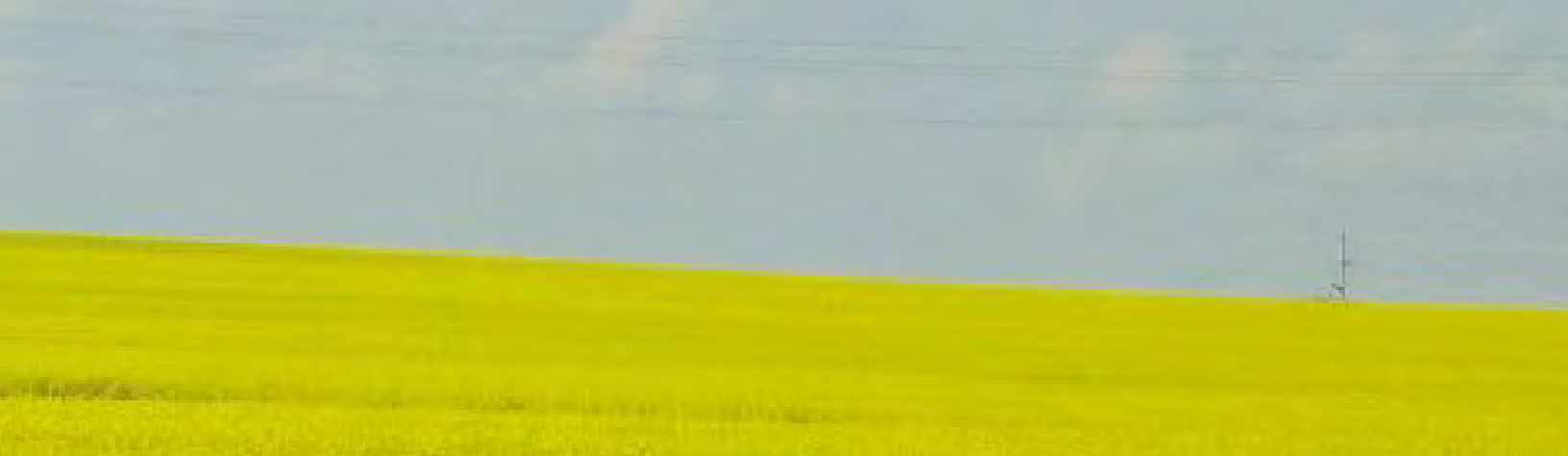
DEMOGRAPHICS

The recent gas and oil boom between 2008 and 2012 resulted in significant population growth within Williams County. Despite the ensuing downturn in oil activity, Williams County is still identified as one of the fastest growing counties with a population of 10,000 or greater in the United States. The 2020 census confirmed this growth with a population that nearly doubled, going from 22,398 residents in 2010 to 40,950 in 2020 (Source: 2020 census).

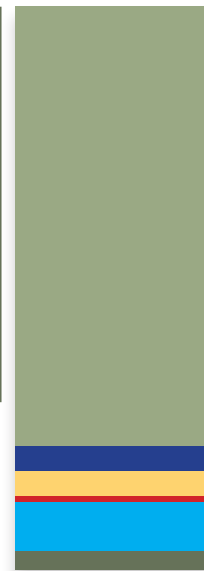
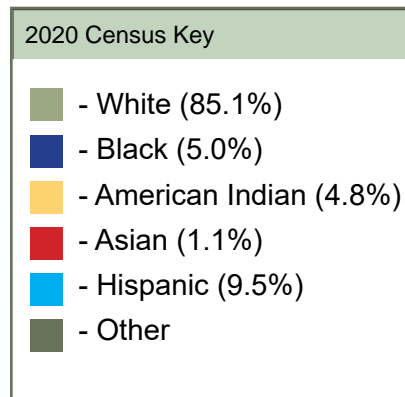
Many of the growing pains that came with the oil boom significantly impacted the parks within Williams County as new populations were known to use, and sometimes abuse, the parks.

Though prohibited, many people used the parks and campsites to fulfill their temporary housing needs. This caused consequential and sometimes dangerous conflicts. Local residents did not feel safe using many of the park sites and the county had difficulty retaining staff and campsite hosts who sought higher wages, compounding the difficulties for the county parks.





2010 Census



2020 Census

While the initial influx of new residents generally consisted of men, eventually their partners and families followed. This has led to more diverse demographics across the county with a growth in younger populations and broader ethnicities. In turn, differing and expanded needs of recreation have also increased.

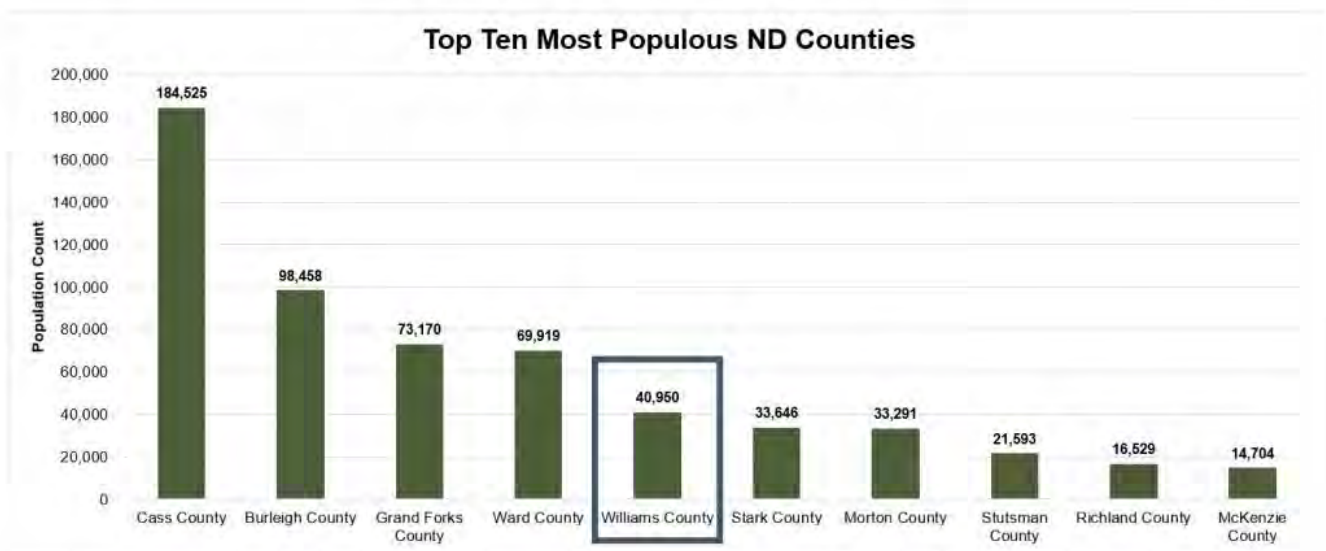
Between 2010 and 2020 the Hispanic and Black populations showed some of the most significant growth. Hispanic/Latino went from 1.9% of the population to 9.5%, and Blacks went from 0.3% to 5.0%.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

The following identifies the changes in demographics within Williams County from 2010 to 2020, showing a population that nearly doubled with Williams County currently ranking in the top ten most populous counties in North Dakota.

| Demographics | Census 2010 | Census 2020 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Population | 22,398 | 40,950 |
| Households | 9,293 | 16,619 |
| Median Age | 38.9 | 39.2 |

| Name | 2010 Total Population | 2020 Total Population | Difference |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Williams County | 22,398 | 40,950 | +18,552 |



The biggest growth in population in Williams County was Williston, which doubled in population since 2010, followed by Tioga that grew by nearly 80%.

| Name | 2010 Total Population | 2020 Total Population | Difference |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Alamo | 57 | 53 | -4 |
| Epping | 100 | 84 | -16 |
| Grenora | 244 | 221 | -23 |
| Ray | 592 | 740 | +148 |
| Springbrook | 27 | 37 | +10 |
| Tioga | 1,230 | 2,202 | +972 |
| Wildrose | 110 | 115 | +5 |
| Williston | 14,716 | 29,160 | +14,444 |

Source: <https://www.williamsnd.com/2020-census-results/>



DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The increase in overall populations will have a more direct impact on the existing parks as new and existing residents continue to seek out places to recreate. This will lead to more impacts on existing parks with an increased demand for additional parks, programs, and facilities to meet growing needs.

The increase in diversity is evident with more ethnic restaurants and food options continuing to open throughout the communities. This trend points to the potential for an increased demand for more diverse types of experiences than what currently exists.

As an example, many Hispanic and Latino populations seek out recreational spaces able to accommodate field sports, such as soccer or futbol, and group shelters suitable for large gatherings.

It is important that the county to be proactive in planning by staying ahead of population growth in order to adequately provide diverse experiences in line with community needs and trends. All populations, ages, and incomes should have proper access to high quality parks and outdoor recreation.

Of importance is being able to identify future park search areas that may have significant opportunities meeting the goals of this plan and growing populations.

Ongoing engagement with the community will be crucial to better understand what types of recreation the residents desire and determining appropriate locations for new parks or programs to meet those needs.

PARK DISTRIBUTION

The park distribution map illustrates the local communities in relation to the primary county and state parks within Williams County. There are numerous recreation areas along the Missouri River / Lake Sakakawea, which is a primary destination for locals and tourists.

There are four Park Board dam sites which are more strategically dispersed throughout the county and provide a differing type of experience than those located along Lake Sakakawea. It should be noted that many residents prefer to travel further from their place of residence for overnight camping activities in order to make it feel like a getaway or vacation. Residents will typically use parks that are located in close proximity to their place of residence for day use recreation.

The following provides a brief overview of the general draw and populations being served by each of the Park Board sites.

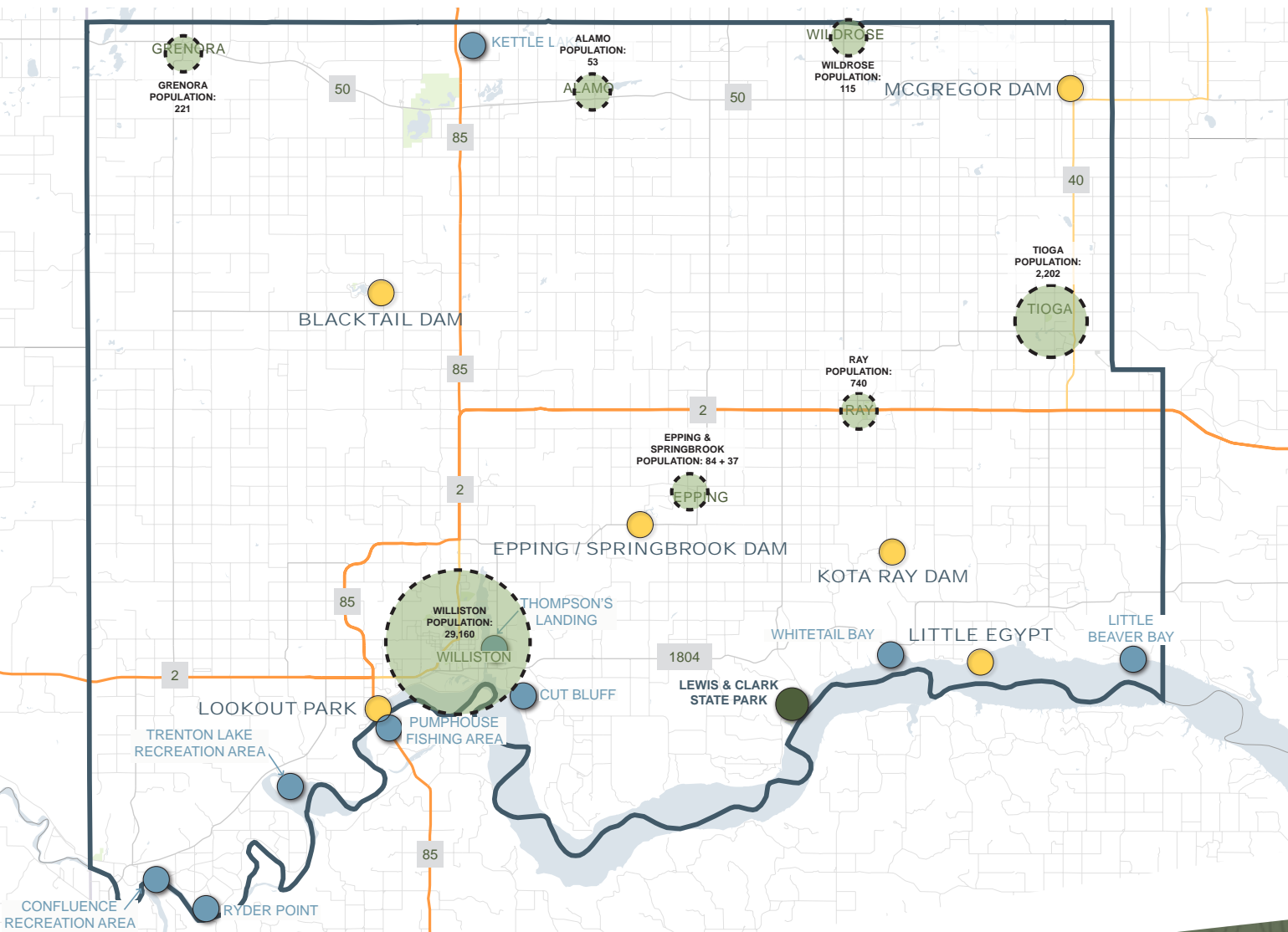
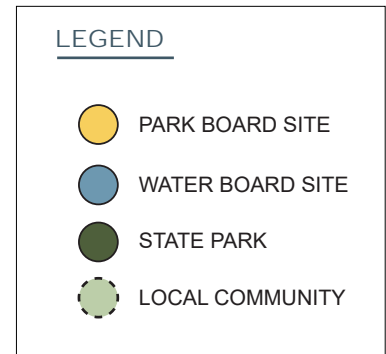
EXISTING PARKS

- **Blacktail Dam:** Blacktail Dam is a popular weekend destination spot primarily serving the residents of Williston, many who have a cabin on the lake. The campgrounds serve many “regulars” from the Williston area and portions of Montana.
- **Epping-Springbrook Dam:** Epping-Springbrook Dam is centrally located between the larger community of Williston and the remaining smaller communities. This location makes it popular with residents across the county for overnight camping as well as day use recreation, particularly for its swimming beach.
- **Kota Ray Dam:** This site is also more centrally located but is smaller in size and slightly lesser known by some Williston residents. This site generally serves more of the smaller communities. It has good fishing which makes it ideal for both overnight and day use activities.
- **Little Egypt:** Little Egypt has a long history of attracting users from across the county for its sugar sand beaches. It was primarily a day use beach destination until campsites were added to the park. Now it is used for overnight camping in conjunction with the day use beach activities and remains a highly popular site.
- **Lookout Park:** Lookout Park is a small county park built primarily for the surrounding neighborhood located outside of the Williston boundary which was previously lacking park space. It is located along a major vehicular route with easy access for anyone seeking a bright and inviting playground, picnic space and pickleball court.
- **McGregor Dam:** McGregor Dam typically draws residents from further away for overnight activities, while residents of McGregor primarily use the site for day use activities and will seek out further destinations for overnight recreation. Popular destinations for McGregor residents include campground sites along Lake Sakakawea, White Earth Dam in Mountrail County, Smishek Lake in Burke County, and Lake Metigoshe State Park in Bottineau County, bordering Canada.

PARK DISTRIBUTION

The map below identifies the park locations relative to the local communities and their 2020 populations. The three largest communities include the following:

- **Williston:** Williston is the County Seat with a population of 29,160, the largest in the county.
- **Tioga:** Population of 2,202.
- **Ray:** Population of 740.



WILLIAMS COUNTY PARK DISTRIBUTION



RECREATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

TRENDS IN TRAIL USE

Trail use continues to be a major recreation trend nationwide. Many communities have been focusing on active living and promoting overall health and wellness through trail development. Williams County follows along the national trends with many seeking trails for exercise, recreation, and connections to destinations.

Williams County recently identified the Roughrider ATV / multi-use trail route along Hwy 2 from 58th St West in Williston up to the 13-mile corner and also along the Hwy 85 bypass route west of Williston connecting to Hwy 2 up to Arnie's Powersports and Cycle. The connection between a cycle business in Williston and a motocross track located near the 13-mile corner with varying access points will likely increase the popularity of this trail route.

While ATV/OHV has been popular in the county for decades, there is an ever-increasing need for trail routes that are safe and encourage respectful use while minimizing conflicts, particularly in locations of residential areas and access drives.

There is an increasing demand for multi-use trails suitable for walking and biking in Williams County which is expected to continue as the population continues to increase.

Avid bicyclists seek out long distance routes and varied challenge levels to meet their needs for health and challenge levels. There are also groups with an interest in mountain biking, ump tracks, and cross-country ski trails. Nationally, mountain biking in particular has seen an increase as a desired camping related activity. Families with younger kids are seeking out trail routes suitable for the entire family with many younger kids using Strider bikes.

It is important to keep in mind that proper planning and design of trails will determine their ultimate success and value by the community.

TRAIL SUCCESS FACTORS

Factors affecting the overall use and success of a trail include:

- Scenic quality and ability to connect with nature.
- Trail access and connectivity.
- Diversity of trail types, experiences and destination points.
- Trail quality, safety and comfort (e.g. shade, rest areas)



LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS AFFECTING RECREATION

The following identifies local and regional trends that should be taken into consideration for planning efforts.

- **Accessibility:** Accessibility relates not only to people with disabilities, but also the able bodied populations. Aging adults may have a tendency to prefer trails that have shorter loop options, a level surface, and have minimal slopes. Accessibility also includes consideration of populations that may lack a vehicle to access the parks and trails, which is an important consideration given the remote location of many of the county parks. It also includes overall awareness of the park system and the ability to easily find the parks given the more rural locations.
- **Active Living:** Populations, young and old, value active living and trails for exercise, pedestrian access to destinations, and connection to nature. The growing popularity of active seniors means providing appropriate recreational programming and opportunities to socialize. Many of the younger generations seek out adventurous activities and participate much more heavily in fitness activities such as long-distance biking, day hiking, triathlons, and cross training. Seniors generally like to socialize while partaking in activities and examples of preferred activities include walking, viewing scenery or wildlife, pickleball, kayaking / paddleboarding, and low impact activities.
- **Convenience:** Another concern affecting recreation is convenience. Many desire easier methods for reserving campsites, access to fuel, food, ice, and convenience items while camping. Access to equipment rentals is increasing in popularity, as many people do not want to invest in expensive equipment in order to participate. Across many generations there has been an increase in guided or structured excursions and activities that reduce the need for research and planning on their own. One trend suggests that mothers in particular are the primary person for planning an activity, making a reservation, and doing the majority of the necessary preparations. With many people who have busy lifestyles, adults who work full time, and kids that are in multiple sports, the convenience of simply signing up to attend a program or activity is very appealing.

- **Technology:** Though the purpose of many County parks and campgrounds is to promote outdoor recreation and a connection to nature, the importance of technology cannot be ignored. Park and trail users rely heavily on technology and want immediate access to maps and the peace of mind that comes with knowing they have the ability to call for help in the event of an emergency. In terms of technological advances, there is an increase in popularity for electric vehicles and even electric RV's. While this trend may not be as prevalent t the time of this planning study, it is worth consideration to be ahead of the demand in order to provide future electrical charging stations.



- **New Experiences:** Other trends include the desire to experience a new type of recreation or activity. Special events, programs, or even access to shared equipment can provide an opportunity to try a new type of activity and create future enthusiasts. Williams County Parks has begun to implement programs that help fill this need. An example included a day where Williams County Parks held an winter event for kids to try ice fishing for free. Fishing equipment was provided, prizes were given out, and in the end, kids who will want to come back and try it again. This holds true not only for kids, but all ages. Simple items like providing a locker for kayak rentals expands the opportunity to multiple visitors. Programmed events such as a sunset wine and painting party, trying out skate sailing for the first time, or even a day camp to learn the basics of camping can encourage recreation users across multiple seasons.



- **Canine Companions:** Another trend worth mentioning is pet-friendly recreation opportunities. Many people consider their pet part of the family and continually seek out parks, trails and activities that are pet-friendly. This includes trails and water access where dogs can run off-leash, swim, and practice retrieving.





BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

Williams County remains one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. With this influx of new populations to Williams County are people who are generally not familiar with the region and what it has to offer. This lack of awareness is a primary barrier prohibiting people to participate in outdoor recreation.

With the promotion of the County park system and music in the park events that took place in the summer of 2021, there were numerous comments from people who were very excited to learn more about the park system and attended the events for the first time. Another primary barrier is general lack of knowledge for those who have had little exposure to outdoor recreation. Educational programs and small events can encourage new users and allow them to feel more confident to participate.

There are many other factors beyond lack of awareness that can create barriers for participation in outdoor recreation but understanding the barriers will allow potential methods to overcome them.

GENERAL COMMON BARRIERS

- Lack of leisure time
- Lack of interest
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of knowledge or ability to participate (e.g. no previous experiences)
- Economic constraints (e.g. lack of transportation, fees)
- Lack of equipment & gear
- Fear / safety concerns
- Physical constraints / disabilities
- Cultural barriers (e.g. communication, fear of discrimination)
- Desire for comforts and convenience

SITE ANALYSIS

NATURAL RESOURCES

Williams County contains 2,148 square miles of land with nearly a million acres consisting of farm land. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, approximately 75 percent of that land was dedicated to crops and 22 percent pasture. Oil and gas resources continue to be primary drivers of the local economy and production can be found across the county. The natural resources within Williams County are varied and provide a distinctive character that is, and can continue to be, the primary draw for residents and tourists. From the rolling hills of the short grass prairie to the majestic buttes that rise to the endless sky, the beauty is unparalleled. Lake Sakakawea is a primary draw along with the various County park sites. The goal of Williams County is to continue to protect and improve upon the existing natural resources to protect the park lands for generations to come. Areas of effort include addressing threats to the natural resources for quality systems.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **Water Quality:** Blue-green algae is a recurring annual issue and a concern for many residents and park users. Williams County will continue to work with partner agencies and stakeholders to monitor and address threats to the overall quality of the water at each of the park sites through natural resource management and best management practices. This includes efforts to reduce shoreline erosion, encourage native plantings, provide treatment of stormwater runoff, and identifying areas prone to erosion. While the county can provide management of their park lands, exterior factors are also affecting the water quality. Farms and pastures can contribute to an influx of chemicals, bacterial contamination, and higher amounts of nitrogen that directly affect the water quality. Additional contributors include dust from gravel roads, risk of contamination from industrial spills, and large storm events that increase the propensity for erosion and sedimentation to enter water bodies.
- **Fisheries:** The North Dakota Game & Fish Department is a strong partner whose objective is to conserve, protect, and enhance habitat for game and fish. They routinely monitor and stock the dam sites with fish, as well as contribute to park improvements related to public access to fishing. The health of the water contributes to its ability to provide habitat as a fishery along with water depth. McGregor Dam is one location where winter kill has been an issue that directly affects the park usage.
- **Air Quality:** Williams County is known for its wide open spaces and wind. Primary concerns in the parks are related to air-borne particles, such as dust from gravel roads. Gravel dust is harmful to a humans respiratory system and can immediately affect those who have allergies or asthma. Williams County will continue to monitor and address dust control while avoiding or limiting dust control substances known to be dangerous to humans or that negatively impact water quality.
- **Invasive Species:** Invasive species continues to be an ongoing threat across all natural systems that threaten native plant and animal communities and can lead to a decline in biological diversity. Williams County will continue to work with partner agencies in an ongoing effort to identify invasive species and determine management efforts necessary to help control or minimize their spread.
- **Land Management:** The land itself is an important asset and one that is prone to a variety of threats. Williams County will seek partnerships and efforts to protect and enhance the lands ability to be more resilient through proper management. Efforts are meant to improve native species diversity, wildlife habitat, and erosion control according to their ecotype.



SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A site inventory identifies the existing site development and features. A site analysis provides information on how the sites are functioning, what is working well, and it identifies any known concerns or issues to be addressed. The information gathered from a site analysis also provides relevant data on site opportunities or constraints to be considered during planning and design.

The following provides a high level site inventory and analysis of each park site currently under the management of the Park Board.

BLACKTAIL DAM

LAND OWNERSHIP: Williams County Park Board

SIZE: 421.13 acres (entire parcels)

MANAGEMENT: Williams County Park Board, in partnership with the Blacktail Dam Association (BDA), manages park lands; dam and water access operated by the ND Game & Fish Dept.

LEASES & AGREEMENTS: Williams County Parks leases out pasture land to ranchers; some private septic systems are located on park lands; agreement with BDA on maintenance of primary roads.

BACKGROUND

Blacktail Dam was built in 1959 and is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Williston on Blacktail Creek. The lake is spring fed and consists of approximately 172 acres with a controlled elevation of 2073 and an emergency spillway at 2086. There are currently some private lots that are below the emergency spillway elevation.

The lands around the lake are owned and managed by Williams County Parks except for the lots along the lake that were sold by Williams County for \$999 each. Each private landowner is a part of the Blacktail Dam Association which has a Board of Directors consisting of elected members. The Blacktail Dam Association has been a willing partner with Williams County Parks in raising money, seeking grants and assisting in improvements to the recreational areas.

Due to the proximity of Blacktail Dam to Williston, many of the landowners and visitors are from the Williston community and it receives a high amount of use in the summer, especially over the weekends and over the 4th of July holiday.

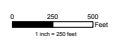
Williams County Parks manages majority of the lands which currently contains a maintenance shop, the primary campground located along the southern shoreline and includes the Blacktail Dam Fire Hall building which is not operational as a fire station, but used for community events. Additional lands owned and managed by the Park Board includes an area on the west shoreline with additional campsites and a public beach, a 9-hole golf course located on the north of the dam, a primitive camping area to the west of the golf course, and some lands leased out for pasture.

The North Dakota Game & Fish Department manages the dam and boat ramp and shares costs related to fishing docks, the boat ramp and other fishing improvements. Public access to the lake includes the boat ramp on the southern shore in the primary campground, several fishing docks, and the general public is allowed access to the first 50-feet of the shoreline around the entire lake, including along private lots. All watercraft is allowed but must go in a counter-clockwise direction.



Blacktail Dam Park Location

Williams County Park Plan
Williams County, ND



BLACKTAIL DAM INVENTORY



54 - CAMPSITES



4 - TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



1 - DUMP STATION



7 - PICNIC SHELTERS



6 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1 - SHOWER FACILITY



9-HOLE GOLF COURSE



1 - SWIMMING BEACH



2 - PLAYGROUNDS



1 - BOAT LAUNCH



1 - FISH CLEANING STATION



3 - DOCKS/PIERS



NATURAL TRAILS



BLACKTAIL DAM ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES:

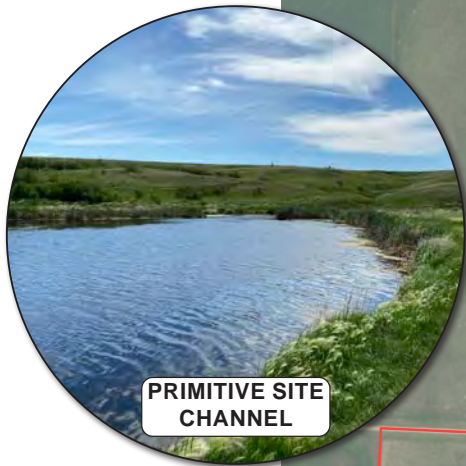
- **Convenience:** Very popular, close to Williston with a convenience store located at the 13-mile corner. The County shop provides easy maintenance access and oversight of campgrounds. Campground has a dump station.
- **Access & Circulation:** Gravel lake loop road provides access to entire park site and private sites. Gravel road keeps vehicular speeds down.
- **Fishing & Lake:** Fairly protected ramp location, depending on wind direction. Shoreline fishing, several fishing piers, and a fish cleaning station.
- **Campsites:** Numerous campsites, blend of standard and tent/primitive sites offering overflow opportunities. Group site is popular. Beachside camping area has immediate access to beach and boat beaching area.
- **Amenities:** Potable water in main campground, showers, and restrooms. Concrete shelters are popular. Larger playground is located in the main campground. Old Fire Hall in the campground provides location for community events. The golf course popular.
- **Beach:** Beach is large, clean, and in a fairly protected area. Has a small playground.
- **Trails:** ATV routes through the prairie (though prohibited).
- **Natural Resources:** Scenic settings with varied landscapes from hilly prairie to wetlands along creeks. Great vistas. Trees provide shade in select locations. The lower primitive campsite area is very peaceful.

CONSTRAINTS:

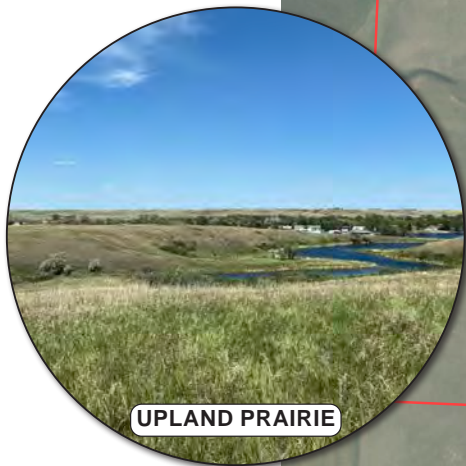
- **Convenience:** Lacks adequate cell service. Many desire more convenience items on site to reduce trips to convenience store.
- **Access & Circulation:** The primary lake loop road is directly routed through the campground, increasing vehicular traffic and dust in the campground from non-campground users. Vehicular routes in the campground are haphazard and cause safety concerns. Gravel roads cause dust concerns.
- **Fishing & Lake:** The existing ramp is in poor condition and in the center of the campground. Lack of trailer parking. Due to popularity of site, boats must follow in a counter-clockwise motion which can be crowded and dangerous.
- **Campsites:** Some sites are not well marked, some sites are very close to one another, undersized, or not level. Main campground peninsula can be purposefully blocked off for group use.
- **Amenities:** Some amenities are beyond their useful life and in need of replacement. Many amenities lack proper ADA access. Playground needs shade and seating areas. The golf course is very windy and has gopher issues.
- **Beach:** Lack of a beach in the primary campground area, requiring transportation to use the beach for many campers.
- **Trails:** Lack of pedestrian trails and accessible routes to amenities.
- **Natural Resources:** Shoreline erosion issues, extensive maintained lawn spaces that could be kept more natural. Some ongoing water quality issues. Management of wind break plantings and conifer plantings warranted. Lower areas prone to insects.



PRIMITIVE SITE SHELTER



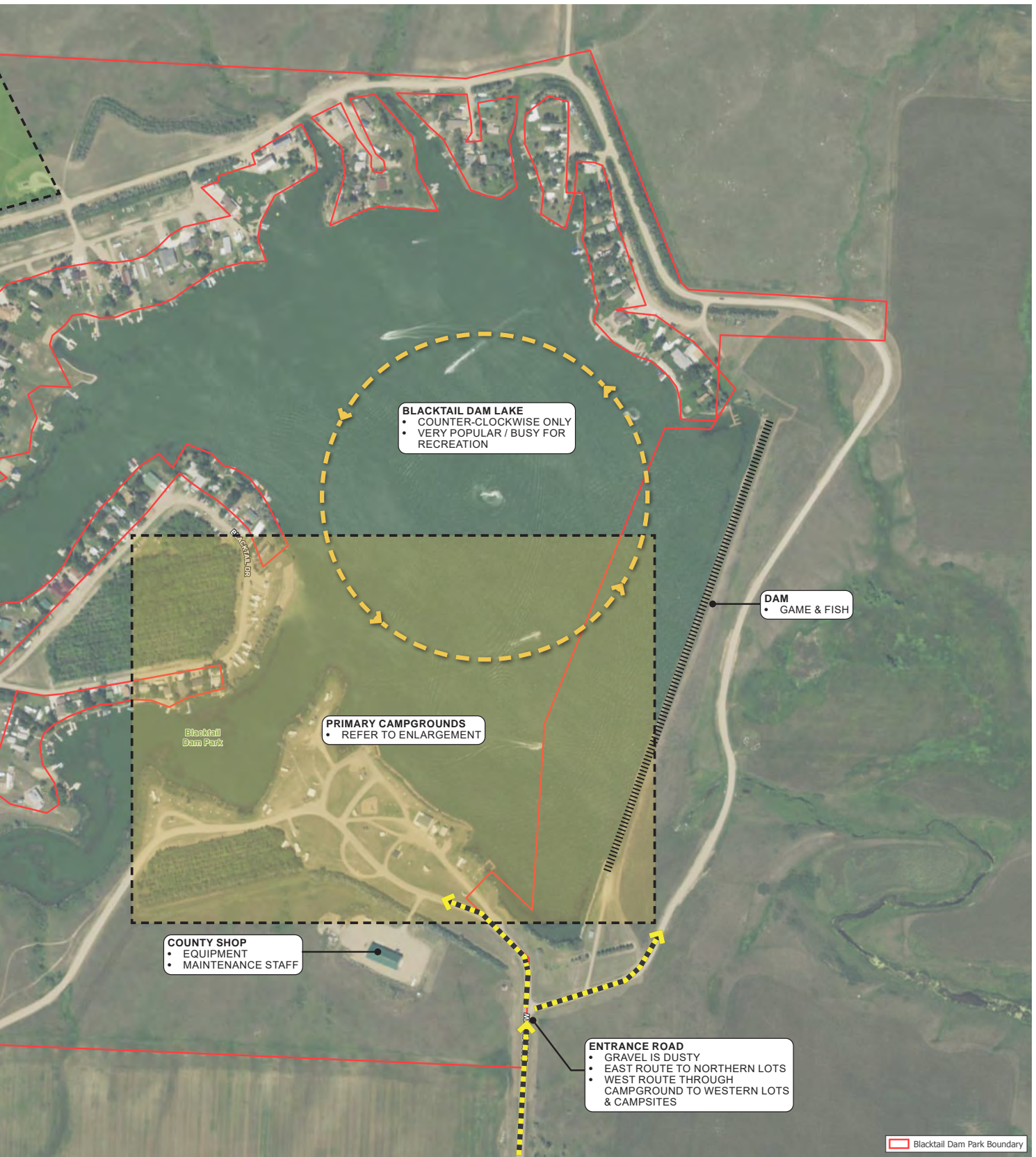
PRIMITIVE SITE CHANNEL



UPLAND PRAIRIE



Blacktail Dam | Existing Conditions





BOAT RAMP



BEACH AREA



FIRE HALL



- SITES 29-44**
- CROWDED SITES
 - SOME SITES LACK ADEQUATE MANUEVERING SPACE
 - SCENIC VIEWS
 - GETS A LOT OF ROAD DUST
 - PICNIC SHELTER (GOOD CONDITION; LOCATION NOT DESIRABLE)
 - VAULT RESTROOM

Blacktail Dam | Existing Conditions - Enlargement Pla

- SITES 45-54**
- CAMPSITES 45-54
 - SOME SITES CROWDED
 - SOME SITES UNDERSIZED
 - SOME PRIVATE LOT ENCROACHMENT ISSUES
 - GREAT BOAT BEACHING AREA
 - VAULT RESTROOM
 - 2 SHELTERS GOOD CONDITION

- SWIMMING BEACH**
- GOOD SIZE
 - REMOTE LOCATION FROM MAIN CAMPGROUND
 - MINIMAL PARKING

- PRIMITIVE AREA**
- TENT CAMP SITES
 - OVERFLOW CAMP SITES
 - LOW AREA / MORE PROTECTED
 - SCENIC SURROUNDINGS
 - WATER PRONE TO ALGAE
 - SHELTER POOR CONDITION
 - ACCESS ROAD ON CURVE AND DROPS DOWN



| | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Any Size | Boat Ramp |
| 33' or Smaller | Camp Host |
| 21' or Smaller | Dump Station |
| Tent | Fish Cleaning Station |
| Group | Fishing Pier |
| Overflow | Non-Potable Water |
| Road | Pavilion |
| Beach Access | Playground |
| Restroom | Potable Water |
| | Trash |

0 75 150 300 ft

- SITES 13-28**
- SOME SITES UNDERSIZED
 - NORTHERN AREA NOT LEVEL AND LACKS SPACE FOR ADEQUATE TURNING MOVEMENTS
 - NORTHERN AREA BLOCKED OFF BY USERS FOR USE AS GROUP SITE
 - GOOD BOAT BEACHING LOCATIONS
 - VAULT RESTROOM
 - SHORELINE FISHING SPOTS

- BOAT RAMP & DOCK**
- POOR CONDITION
 - STEEP ACCESS ROAD ON CURVE

- SITES 5-12**
- SITES 5-12
 - MANY UNDERSIZED
 - STEEP DROP-OFF AT LAKE
 - GREAT VIEWS OF LAKE

- FIRE HALL**
- OUTDATED / NON-COMPLIANT
 - USED FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS
 - BRINGS MORE TRAFFIC INTO CAMPGROUND

- SITES 1-4**
- SOME SITES UNDERSIZED
 - FISHING PIER
 - BUSY TRAFFIC LOCATION

- OFF-SITE**
- GAME & FISH
 - OLD SHELTER
 - USED FOR TENT, GROUP AND OVERFLOW CAMPING

GROUP SITE

PLAYGROUND

DUMP STATION

- CAMPGROUND AMENITIES**
- PICNIC SHELTERS (2)
 - FISH CLEANING STATION
 - SHOWER/RESTROOM
 - VAULT RESTROOM (1)

- ROADWAYS**
- ACCESS ROAD FOR PRIVATE LOTS RUNS THROUGH THE MAIN CAMPGROUND - CONTINUOUS TRAFFIC
 - NUMEROUS ROADS THROUGHOUT CAMPGROUND
 - GRAVEL CAN KICK UP DUST

PAY STATION

n

EPPING-SPRINGBROOK DAM

LAND OWNERSHIP: Williams County Park Board;
some adjoining Williams County Water Board parcels;
some overlapping privately owned parcels

SIZE: 77.11 acres (entire parcels)

MANAGEMENT: Williams County Park Board (lands);
ND Game & Fish Dept (dam and boat launch)

BACKGROUND

Epping-Springbrook Dam was built in 1936 as a Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) project and considered the largest earthfill dam in the State. At the time, the intent was to make it into a State park devoted entirely to recreation. The Epping-Springbrook Dam is located approximately 3 miles southwest of Epping and 15 miles east of Williston making it central to numerous county populations. The lake is approximately 180 acres in size with a maximum depth of 29 feet and a current no-wake policy.



Epping/Springbrook Dam Park

Williams County Park Plan
Williams County, ND



0 200 400
1 inch = 200 feet





EPPING-SPRINGBROOK INVENTORY



13 - CAMPSITES



1 - TENT/PRIMITIVE AREA



1 - DUMP STATION



8 - PICNIC SHELTERS



3 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1 - SWIMMING BEACH



1 - PLAYGROUND



1 - BOAT LAUNCH



2 - DOCKS/PIERS



NATURAL SUMMER HIKING
/ BIKING & WINTER CROSS-
COUNTRY SKI TRAILS



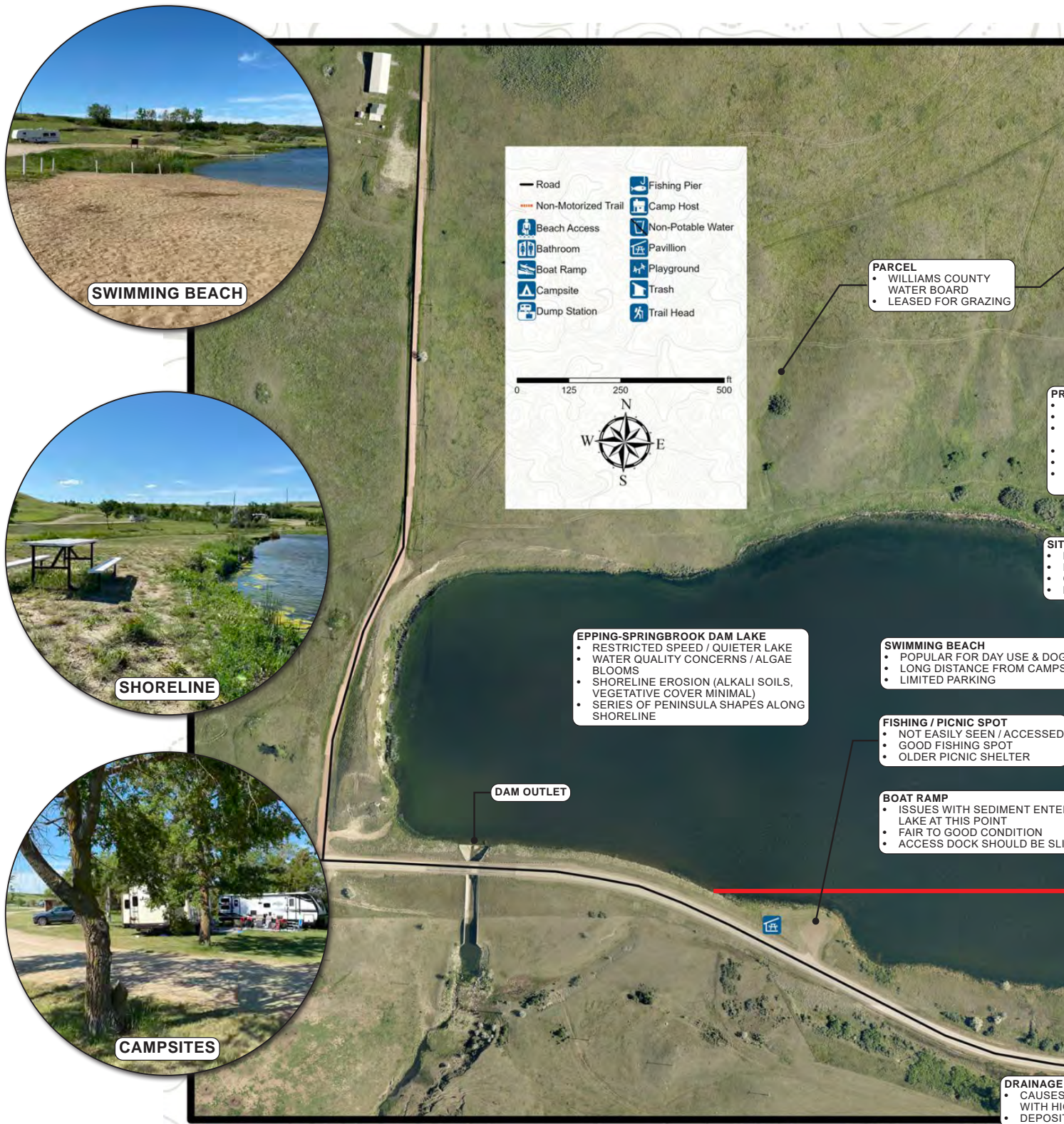
EPPING-SPRINGBROOK DAM ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES:

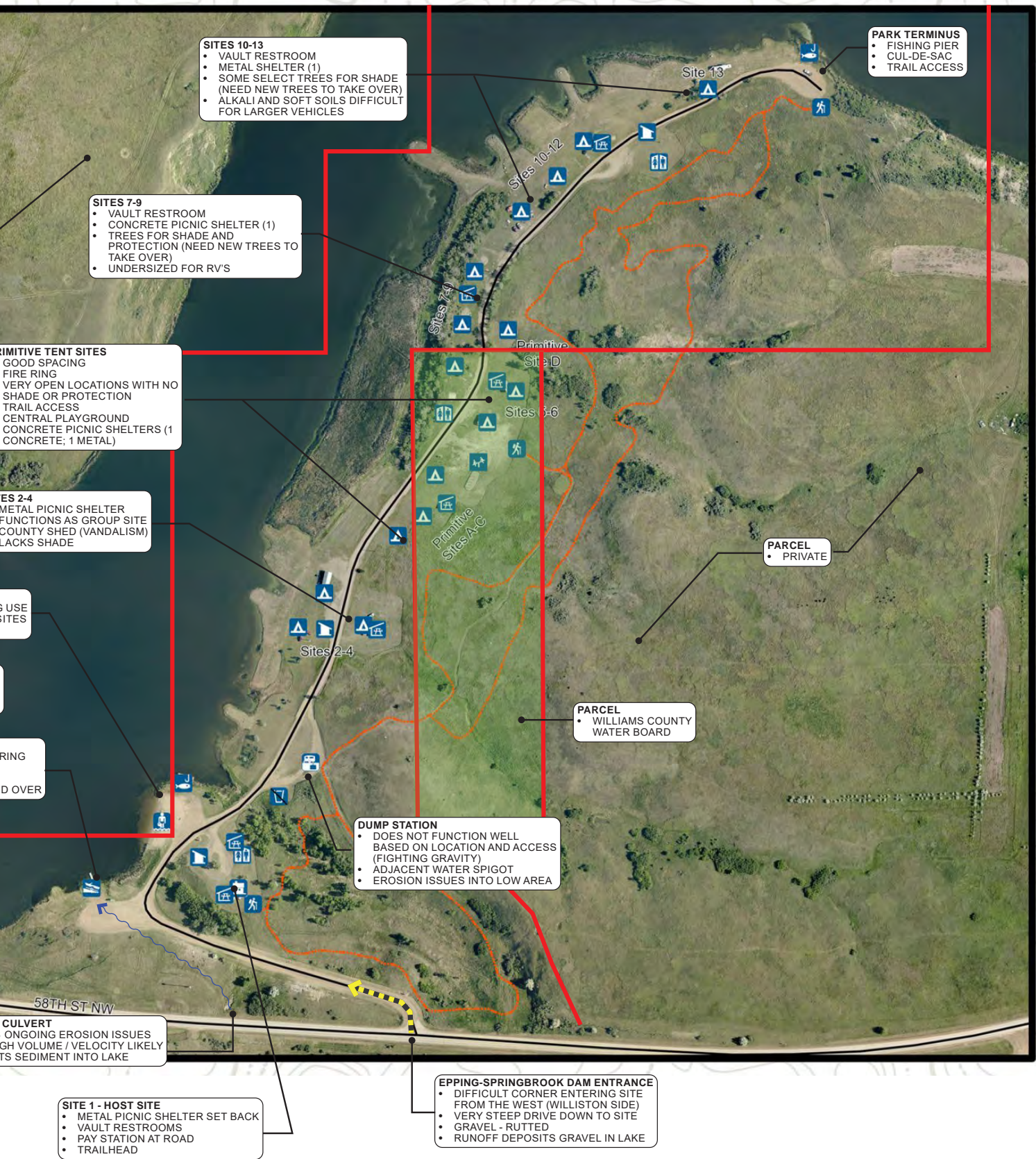
- **Convenience:** Popular site. Central location to Williston and smaller communities. Has a dump station. Small county storage building and has good cell service.
- **Access & Circulation:** Central location allows for easy access from many communities.
- **Fishing & Lake:** The boat ramp has easy access with informal space for parking. There are shoreline fishing opportunities and some fishing piers. Restrictions on motors in idle-only results in a quiet setting.
- **Campsites:** Blend of group sites, individual sites, and tent areas. Individual sites are situated among trees with nice shade. Good spacing of sites in some locations.
- **Amenities:** Has a nice playground. Shelters are popular in group sites. Has interesting red post structures in select locations of the site, aligned as trail access points in some locations.
- **Beach:** Beach is large, clean, and popular for day-use. Has a small parking area adjacent to beach.
- **Trails:** Natural trails through the prairie offer opportunities year-round for walking/hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.
- **Natural Resources:** Scenic setting with rolling hills of prairie surrounding the campground and low ravines. Mature trees provide shade along many campsites.

CONSTRAINTS:

- **Convenience:** Issues with existing electrical service not functioning adequately. Dump station not ideally situated, resulting in many users going to other locations for this service.
- **Access & Circulation:** The entrance drive is difficult to maneuver from the west and is very steep entering the site. One road with a small cul-de-sac turnaround has limitations. The beach is a long distance from the campsites resulting in users driving kids to the beach. The fishing spot off of the main road is more difficult to access.
- **Fishing & Lake:** The lake is known for leaches. Water quality issues with algae blooms.
- **Campsites:** Some sites are small and require more space for parking among the trees. The tent / primitive areas are in full sun, resulting in lack of comfort.
- **Amenities:** Some amenities are beyond their useful life and in need of replacement. Many amenities lack proper ADA access. Playground needs shade and seating areas.
- **Beach:** Long distance to beach from campground results in vehicle use to the beach. The beach can receive a lot of use between day use visitors and campers, dogs included.
- **Trails:** Lack of pedestrian trails from campsites to the beach. Lack of accessible pedestrian routes to amenities. Trails cross onto private lands.
- **Natural Resources:** Shoreline erosion issues, alkaline soils along lake, extensive maintained lawn spaces that could be kept more natural. The culvert runoff causes significant erosion and sedimentation issues. Some more serious water quality issues with blue-green algae. Management of tree plantings is necessary with new plantings warranted.



Epping-Springbrook Dam | Existing Conditions



KOTA RAY DAM

LAND OWNERSHIP: Williams County Park Board

SIZE: 39.65 acres (entire parcels)

MANAGEMENT: Williams County Park Board (lands);
ND Game & Fish Dept (dam and boat launch)

LEASES & AGREEMENTS: Agreement with Vance
for access through the park to privately owned parcels and
park development across boundary

BACKGROUND

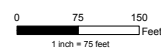
Kota Ray Dam is an earth dam built on the Nelson Creek River in 1933 and further modified in subsequent years. The dam itself is 42 feet high and 880 feet long (source: nationaldams.com). The Kota Ray Dam is located approximately 10 miles south of Ray and is known for its great fishing. The lake is approximately 28 acres in size and has a current no-wake policy.





Kota Ray Dam Park

Williams County Park Plan
Williams County, ND



KOTA RAY DAM INVENTORY



19 - CAMPSITES



1 - DUMP STATION



7 - PICNIC SHELTERS



2 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1 - SWIMMING BEACH



1 - PLAYGROUND



1 - BOAT LAUNCH



3 - DOCKS/PIERS



KOTA RAY DAM ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Convenience:** Fairly central location to Williston and smaller communities. Has a dump station. Has good cell service.
- **Access & Circulation:** Central location allows for easy access from many communities. Internal loops allow for adequate site maneuvering.
- **Fishing & Lake:** The boat ramp is in a fairly protected location. There are shoreline fishing opportunities and some fishing piers. No wake lake results in a quiet setting. Known for very good fishing, which results in overnight and day use.
- **Campsites:** Blend of group or individual sites, some are situated among trees with nice shade.
- **Amenities:** Has a nice playground. Shelters are popular in group sites.
- **Beach:** Small beach.
- **Trails:** No trails.
- **Natural Resources:** Scenic setting with rolling hills of prairie, areas of dense sub-canopy/brush vegetation (silver buffaloberry, etc.), and cattails along some shoreline areas. Mature trees provide shade in some locations.

CONSTRAINTS:

- **Convenience:** Small park site, can fill up quickly.
- **Access & Circulation:** The entrance drive is split into two at the entrance with an upper and lower road which can cause some confusion and avoidance of the pay station. Park road provides access to private property which has very little area to turn-around at the end of the park road. Dust can be an issue. Currently lacking access to the northern separate parcel of park land.
- **Fishing & Lake:** Water quality issues with algae blooms.
- **Campsites:** Some campsites cross park boundaries. Sites 10-12 are difficult to access and use unless it's an entire group due to limited and linear space.
- **Amenities:** Some amenities are beyond their useful life and in need of replacement. Many amenities lack proper ADA access. Playground needs shade and seating areas.
- **Beach:** Beach is very small and unnoticeable. It can appear to be part of a campsite.
- **Trails:** Lack of pedestrian trails and accessible pedestrian routes to amenities.
- **Natural Resources:** Shoreline erosion issues. Damage to a storm culvert combined with steep slopes is causing significant erosion issues in the park which washes sediment and gravel into the lake. Concerns with water quality issues. Management of tree plantings is necessary.



Kota Ray Dam | Existing Conditions



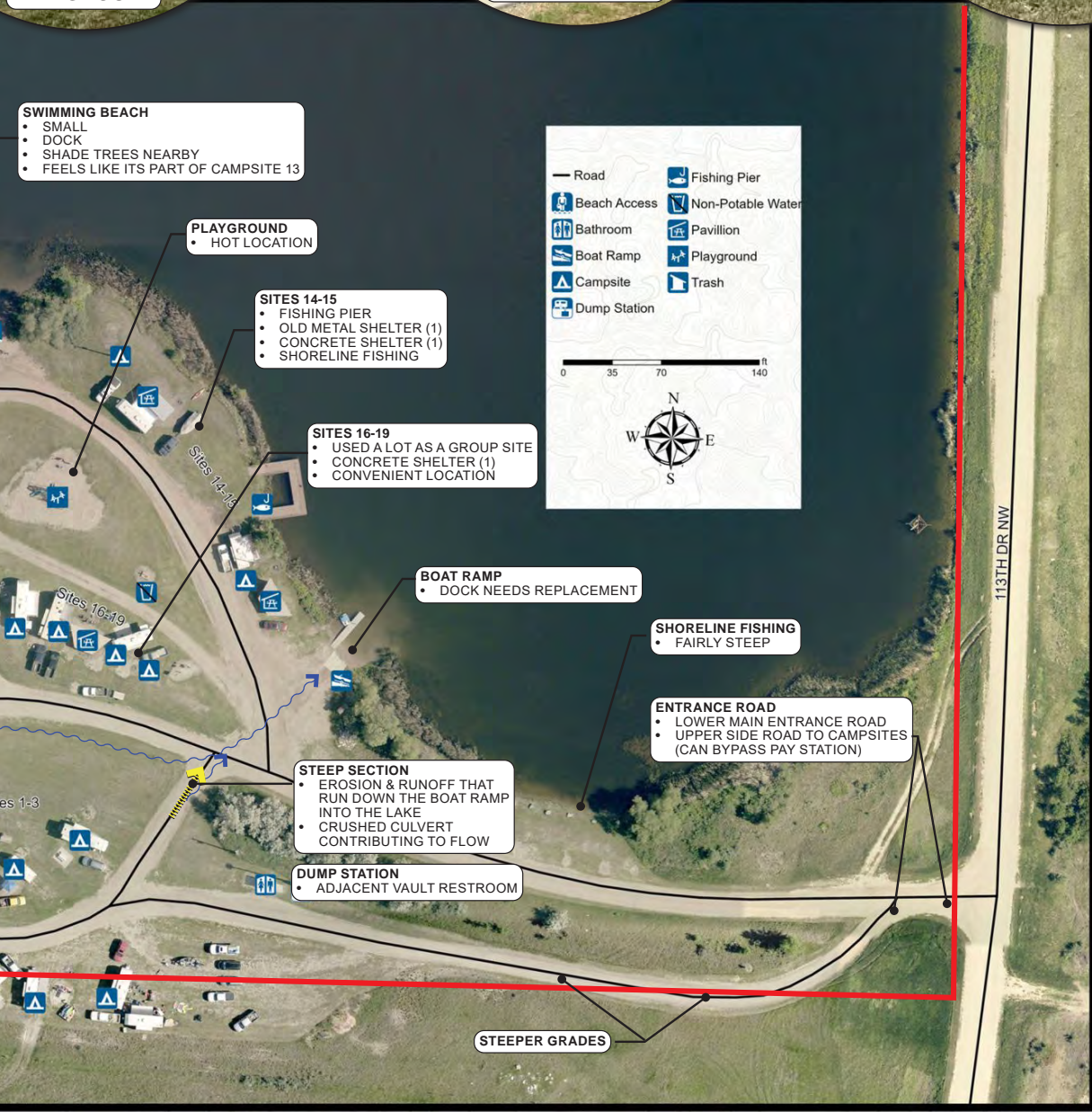
PLAYGROUND



PICNIC SHELTER



CAMPsites 10-12



LITTLE EGYPT

LAND OWNERSHIP: United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE)

SIZE: 78.89 acres (entire parcels)

MANAGEMENT: Williams County Park Board (park lands); USACE (up to elevation 1850)

LEASES & AGREEMENTS: 25-year lease with USACE for portions of the Little Egypt property to be managed for recreation

BACKGROUND

Little Egypt is located along Lake Sakakawea (Missouri River) approximately 16 miles south of Ray and 28 miles east of Williston. It is located adjacent to Red Mike Hill, the current site of The Links of North Dakota, a nationally recognized 18-hole golf course overlooking Lake Sakakawea. To the east, the site adjoins the Hofflund Wildlife Management Area, managed by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

The park site is aptly named for its sugar sand beaches that are shallow and soft, making it a prime location for summer recreational use for those seeking a place to sunbathe, swim, and hang out.

For a number of years, the USACE prohibited use of the beach due to the sandy soils being prime nesting habitat for the Piping Plovers and Least Terns that were once both protected species. The USACE has since allowed pedestrian use of the beach but does not allow vehicles of any kind on the beach, including bikes, ATV/OHV, motorcycles, etc. The entire edge of the park along the bluff line is currently fenced off with select gate locations for pedestrians to access the lake. Any work below the 1850 elevation triggers additional regulation and reviews.

The Missouri River, Little Egypt, and Red Mike Hill all have a fascinating history worth sharing. From the ice that formed this region, the coal and oil deposits that lie beneath the surface, the Native Americans who lived along the Missouri River and used its fertile grounds for sustenance, and the route that brought in Lewis and Clark, followed by subsequent settlers and the fur trade, there is much to be told. A few interesting tidbits include the tale of George Grinnell who had a booming ranch along Beaver Creek, some of which remains after the flooding from the creation of the Garrison Dam and is connected to Little Egypt. Learn of his ultimate fate after chasing down his wife, Josephine, one night while in a drunken rampage through the following source. (Source: <http://georgegrinnell.blogspot.com/p/the-story.html>).



Red Mike also has an interesting tale that included a vigilante group led by a man named “Flopping Bill” Cantrell and a notorious horse thief named Louis LaPache in 1884. The group called themselves the Strangers and they terrorized and tortured men, including “Red” Mike, who was tied to a chair on top of the hill with a fire built beneath him to try and get information from him. Unsuccessful, they finally released Red Mike and took him to Fort Buford. (Source: The Wonder of Williams County, vol 1 and 2).

LITTLE EGYPT INVENTORY



21 - CAMPSITES



1 - TENT/PRIMITIVE AREA



1 - DUMP STATION



1 - PICNIC SHELTER



2 - RESTROOM BLDGS



SWIMMING BEACH



LITTLE EGYPT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Convenience:** Popular site with a dump station and the campsites have water. Has good cell service. Adjacent golf course provides additional recreation opportunity.
- **Access & Circulation:** Primary roads off of the main highway allow for easy access to the park and signs for wayfinding. Park roads create a large loop for easy access to various points of the site with no dead-ends.
- **Fishing & Lake:** Several points to access the lake at a pedestrian level with one winter vehicular access location.
- **Campsites:** Sites 10-13 are located in a lower protected area with shade and typically used by groups. Sites 1-9 are long and accommodate ample space for campers, vehicles, and gear with great views of the lake. The new 2021 sites also have great views of the lake with the majority sites having good orientation and are pull-through sites. The interior area used for primitive tent sites has a lot of space to spread out with trees for shade and protection.
- **Beach:** Sugar sand beach with shallow water has been a draw since the lake was flooded and is a prime summer destination for day use. A small parking area is located on the far eastern edge for day use access.
- **Trails:** A few natural paths identify access locations to the beach.
- **Natural Resources:** Scenic setting with rolling hills of prairie along the lake. The main central area of the site is surrounded by wind rows of pines and Russian-olive trees that provide protection to the interior area. The low areas of the site contains floodplain vegetation, primarily cottonwood, that offers shade and some wind protection.

CONSTRAINTS:

- **Convenience:** Long distance to any convenience items or places to launch a boat (boat launches at Lunds Landing or Lewis & Clark State Park).
- **Access & Circulation:** General lack of immediate access to the beach due to the USACE fencing off the beach. Back in sites 1-9 are difficult to maneuver due to tight road radii on a corner.
- **Fishing & Lake:** Not a primary fishing location. Lake water is very cloudy and can be a long distance from the campsites. Lake is too shallow for a boat launch.
- **Campsites:** Sites 1-9 are oriented so that the use areas of campers are faced away from the lake and towards hot afternoon sun.
- **Amenities:** General lack of amenities. Educational sign is in need of replacement.
- **Beach:** Beach access is fenced off by the USACE due to Piping Plovers and Least Terns that nest in the sand, limiting access points to the beach. Water level fluctuations can result in a long walk from campsites to the edge of the water and can be difficult with gear and/or kids. The beach is a draw for day use groups, primarily teens and/or party crowds.
- **Trails:** Lack of pedestrian trails and accessible pedestrian routes to amenities.
- **Natural Resources:** The site is very sandy and prone to erosion once groundcover is disturbed. The site is known for bull snakes and rodents. The beach is habitat for protected birds.
- **Ownership:** Ownership by the USACE and related permitting restricts some uses, increases the funding necessary for any improvements or development, and increases length of time for implementation.



CAMPsites



BEACH



BEACH ACCESS



ADJACENT TO THE LINKS OF NORTH DAKOTA & RED MIKE HILL

PARK ENTRANCE
 • NORTH DAY USE ROUTE
 • SOUTH CAMPGROUND ROUTE
 • ABANDONED CENTRAL ROUTE

SITE VEGETATION
 • WINDROWS OF PINES AND OLIVES PROVIDE GOOD PROTECTION TO CENTER AREA OF THE SITE (UNUSED SPACE)
 • OLDER STAND OF TREES
 • PINES APPEAR TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION
 • RUSSIAN OLIVE NOT A DESIRABLE SPECIES AND ARE SHOWING A LOT OF DAMAGE
 • CENTER AREA MAINTAINED

HOST SITE
 • NICE PROTECTION (VEGETATION)
 • LOWER AREA

PAY BOX
 • ADJACENT VAULT RESTROOM

DUMP STATION
 • EAST ACCESS FOR SITES 10-13
 • DIFFICULT TO MANUEVER

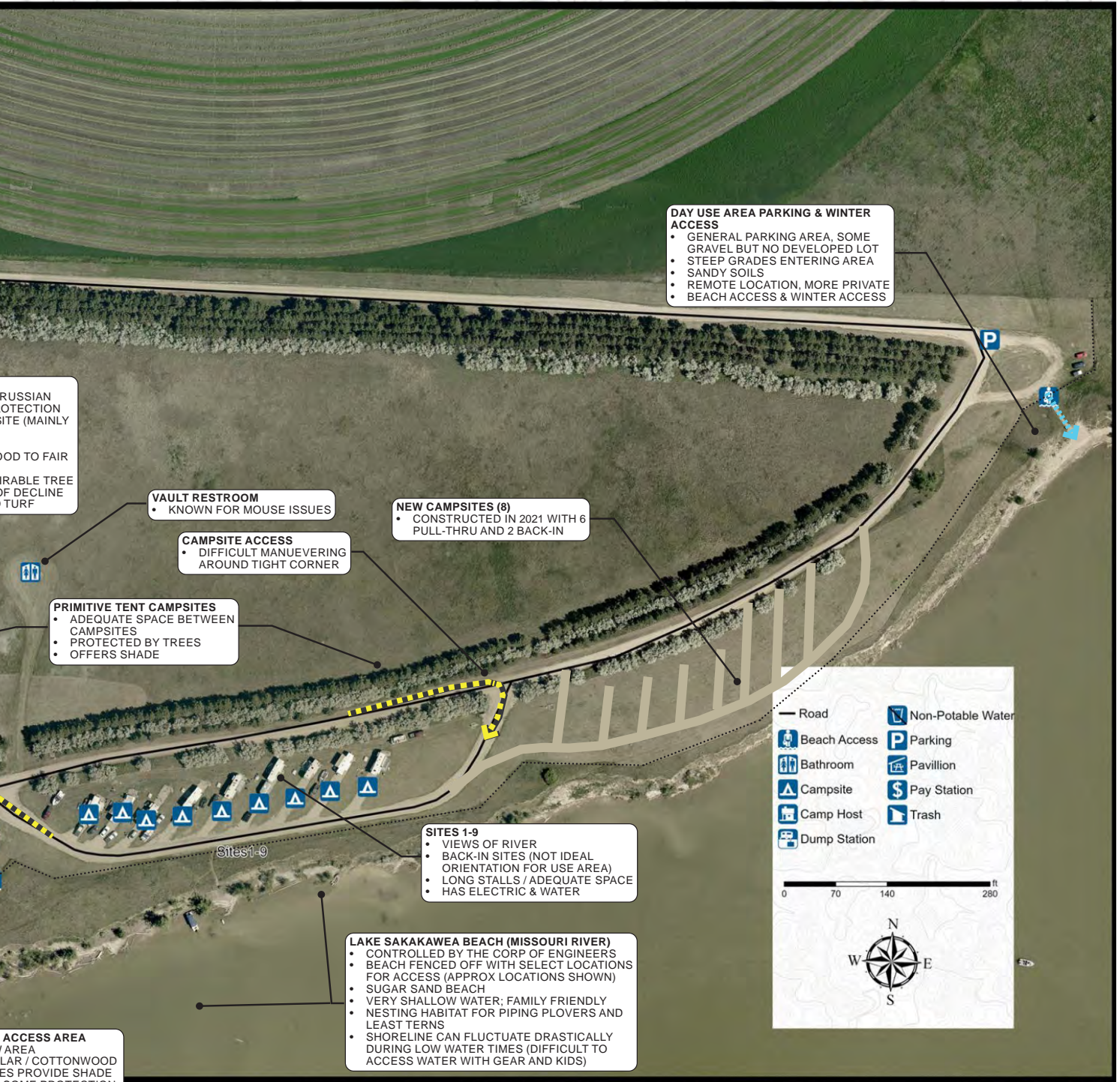
WELL HOUSE

SITES 10-13
 • NICE PROTECTION (VEGETATION)
 • LOWER AREA

HILLSIDE
 • ADJACENT TO GOLF COURSE
 • NATURAL VEGETATION
 • SOME STEEP AREAS
 • GOOD VIEWS OF RIVER

BEACH
 • LOW
 • POP
 • TRE
 • AND
 • VAR
 • LOC

Little Egypt | Existing Conditions



DAY USE AREA PARKING & WINTER ACCESS

- GENERAL PARKING AREA, SOME GRAVEL BUT NO DEVELOPED LOT
- STEEP GRADES ENTERING AREA
- SANDY SOILS
- REMOTE LOCATION, MORE PRIVATE
- BEACH ACCESS & WINTER ACCESS

RUSSIAN PROTECTION SITE (MAINLY)
 GOOD TO FAIR
 FAVORABLE TREE OF DECLINE TURF

VAULT RESTROOM

- KNOWN FOR MOUSE ISSUES

NEW CAMPSITES (8)

- CONSTRUCTED IN 2021 WITH 6 PULL-THRU AND 2 BACK-IN

CAMPSITE ACCESS

- DIFFICULT MANUEVERING AROUND TIGHT CORNER

PRIMITIVE TENT CAMPSITES

- ADEQUATE SPACE BETWEEN CAMPSITES
- PROTECTED BY TREES
- OFFERS SHADE

SITES 1-9

- VIEWS OF RIVER
- BACK-IN SITES (NOT IDEAL ORIENTATION FOR USE AREA)
- LONG STALLS / ADEQUATE SPACE HAS ELECTRIC & WATER

LAKE SAKAKAWEA BEACH (MISSOURI RIVER)

- CONTROLLED BY THE CORP OF ENGINEERS
- BEACH FENCED OFF WITH SELECT LOCATIONS FOR ACCESS (APPROX LOCATIONS SHOWN)
- SUGAR SAND BEACH
- VERY SHALLOW WATER; FAMILY FRIENDLY
- NESTING HABITAT FOR PIPING PLOVERS AND LEAST TERNS
- SHORELINE CAN FLUCTUATE DRASTICALLY DURING LOW WATER TIMES (DIFFICULT TO ACCESS WATER WITH GEAR AND KIDS)

ACCESS AREA

AREA
 LAR / COTTONWOOD
 ES PROVIDE SHADE
 SOME PROTECTION
 YING BEACH ACCESS
 ATIONS

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| — Road | Non-Potable Water |
| Beach Access | Parking |
| Bathroom | Pavillion |
| Campsite | Pay Station |
| Camp Host | Trash |
| Dump Station | |

0 70 140 280 ft

N
W E S

LOOKOUT PARK

LAND OWNERSHIP: Williams County Park Board

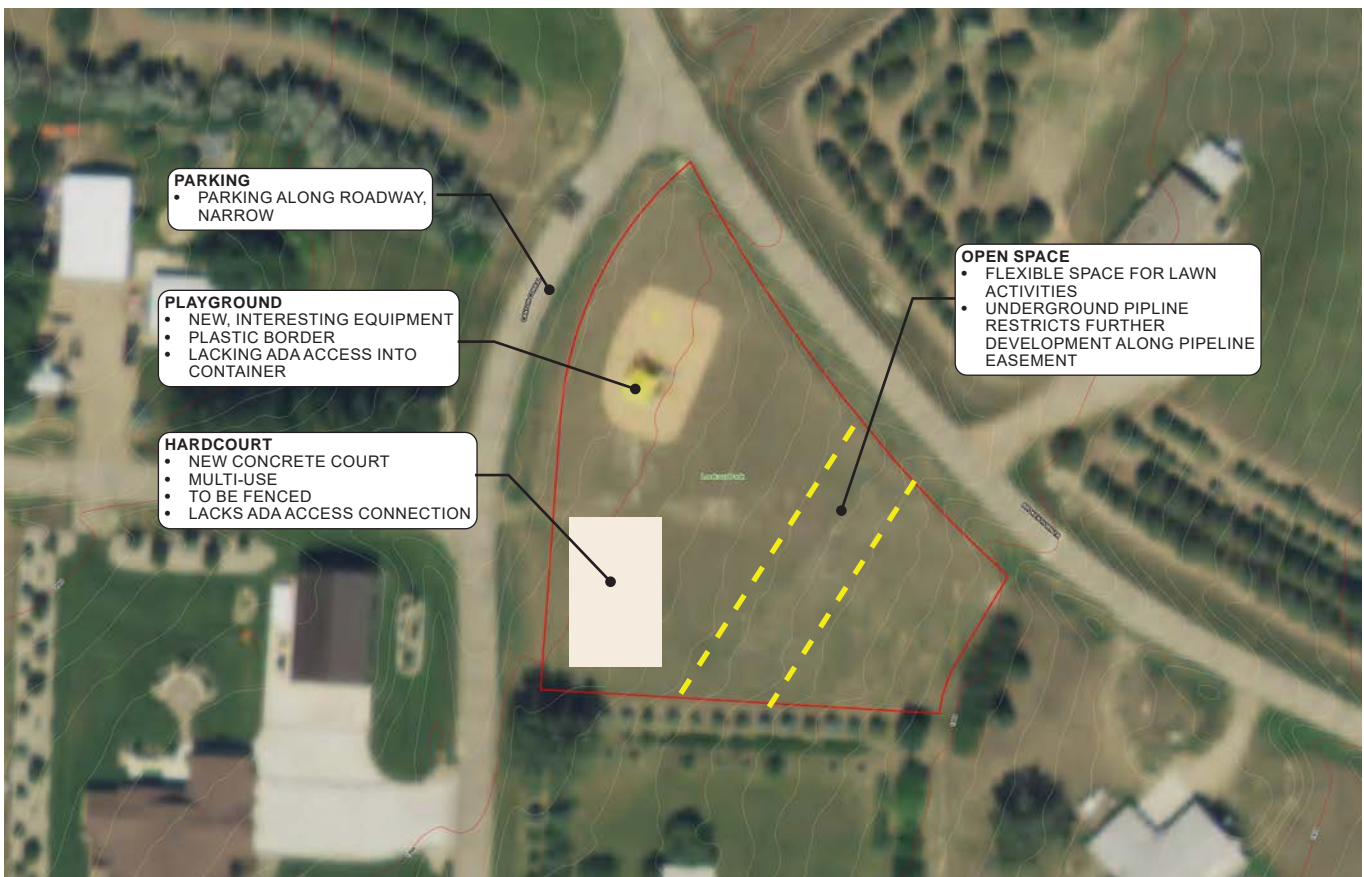
SIZE: Approx. 1 acre

MANAGEMENT: Williams County Park Board

LEASES & AGREEMENTS: Pipeline

BACKGROUND

Lookout Park is a mini-neighborhood park located in a housing development southwest of Williston in the Rio Vista neighborhood. The land is owned by Williams County and there is an underground pipeline that runs through the site, prohibiting some development on the site. The Park Board has developed the site to include a playground and a concrete pickleball court to provide recreation to the surrounding neighborhoods. Some areas of the neighborhood have great views of the Missouri River valley.



LOOKOUT PARK INVENTORY



PLAYGROUND



HARD COURT



PICNIC AREA



LOOKOUT PARK ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Convenience & Access:** Convenient access to surrounding neighborhood within walking distance and located near Hwy 85, a major vehicular route.
- **Amenities:** New playground with unique appeal. Playground has wood fiber surfacing. Has a picnic table and trash receptacle.
- **Hard Court:** Hard court is made of concrete for longer durability and less maintenance. It is multi-use to meet greater demographics and user groups with basketball and pickleball capabilities.
- **Trails / Walks:** None.
- **Site & Landscape:** Flexible open lawn space.

CONSTRAINTS:

- **Convenience & Access:** Lack of pedestrian routes to the park site and there is no parking for anyone driving to the site.
- **Amenities:** Lacking ADA access. Additional seating and shade areas would be desirable.
- **Hard Court:** Lacking ADA access to court. Court has a steep non-confirming slope.
- **Trails / Walks:** Lack of trails or walks, accessible routes to amenities.
- **Site & Landscape:** Lack of trees for shade. Limitations from pipeline easement and overall size. Park size does not meet general criteria for a County Park.

MCGREGOR DAM

LAND OWNERSHIP: State of North Dakota Game & Fish Department

SIZE: 187.74 acres (entire parcels)

WATER RIGHTS: Sauk Valley Twp Board through permit

MANAGEMENT: Williams County Park Board manages the recreational areas; Game & Fish manages the dam, boat launch and natural resource areas.

LEASES & AGREEMENTS: Williams County holds a lease agreement with the ND Game & Fish Department for the management of the park and recreational areas.

BACKGROUND

The town of McGregor is located approximately 15 miles north of Tioga and was established in 1910. The State of North Dakota purchased 226 acres of land just outside of McGregor in 1966 for park and recreation development. Of that land, 60 acres was to be used as a reservoir, 80 acres for wildlife habitat and the remainder for park and recreational facilities to be managed and operated by the Williams County Park Board. The land was named the McGregor Dam and Recreation Area.

It was noted that at the time of its acquisition that it was of utmost importance to provide facilities for swimming, boating, fishing, ice skating, picnicking, camping, sledding, skiing, and playgrounds, along with wildlife habitat.

Sauk Valley held a water permit for 760 acre-feet of water storage plus 150 acre-feet annual use for the reservoir. The report indicated an 800 acre-feet reservoir with a drainage area of 10 miles. The average annual runoff was noted at 315 acre-feet and an 8-foot freeboard between the emergency spillway and the pipe spillway.

The current cooperative agreement between the Park Board and the Game & Fish Department lists the site as the McGregor Dam Public Use Area and also lists portions of the property as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The Park Board has sole responsibility to manage and maintain the lands dedicated for recreation, and Game and Fish has sole responsibility to manage the remaining lands and dam (approximate boundaries shown on map).

The current dam structure has a larger growth of pine trees in the dam embankment and spillway area that is compromising its integrity and further review of corrections are being determined. The lake currently has a no-wake policy, making it a quiet setting. The lake has undergone winter fish kills and due to the lack of quality fishing, the site is used to a lesser degree than other sites. Overnight camping is currently prohibited on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, which was put in place by Game and Fish to try and control oil field worker encampments on site, but has since contributed to the site being less utilized.



McGregor Dam Park Location

Williams County Park Plan
Williams County, ND

N

MCGREGOR DAM INVENTORY



17 - CAMPSITES



3 - TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



5 - PICNIC SHELTERS



4 - RESTROOM BLDGS



2 - PLAYGROUNDS



2 - BOAT LAUNCHES



2 - DOCKS/PIERS



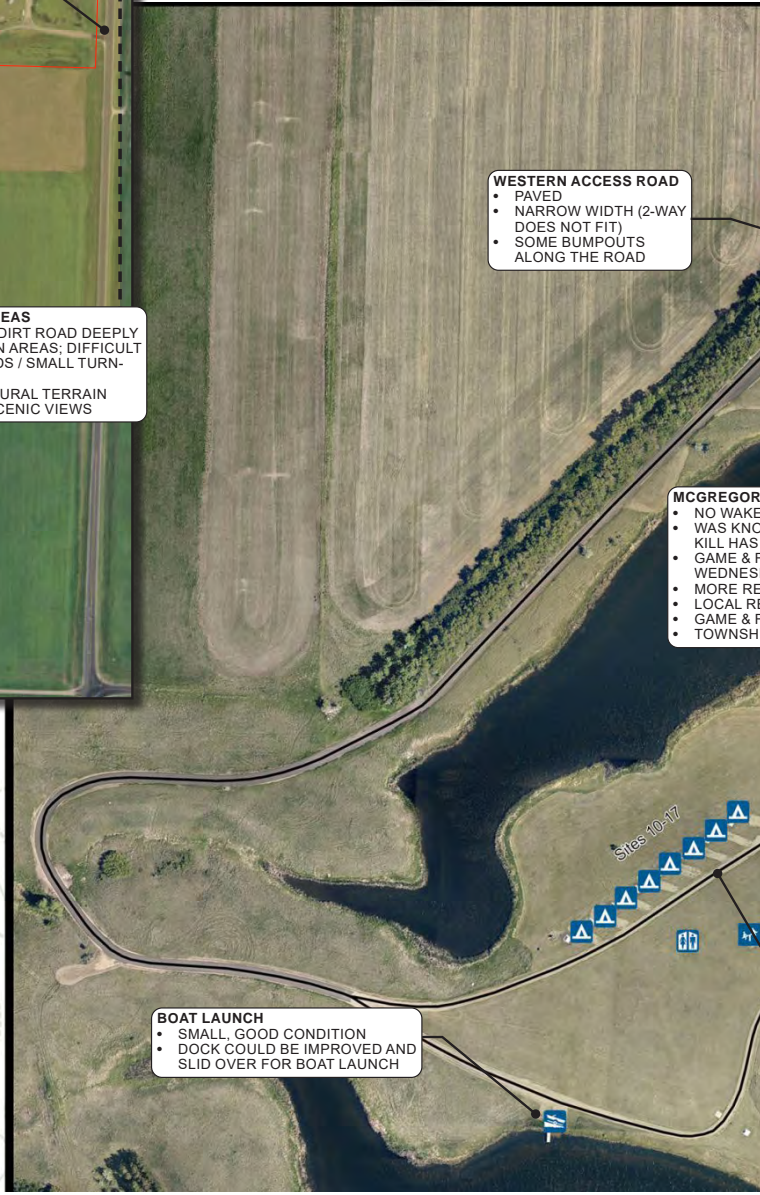
MCGREGOR DAM ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Convenience:** Located close to McGregor and Tioga for access to convenience items and other forms of recreation. Good cell service. Generally used more for day use recreation.
- **Access & Circulation:** East side of park is directly off of Hwy 2 for easy access and identification. Majority of the park roads are paved so dust is not a problem.
- **Fishing & Lake:** Two boat ramps provide locations for both east and west boat access into lake. There are shoreline fishing opportunities and some fishing piers. No wake lake results in a quiet setting.
- **Campsites:** Sites 1-6 can be used as single sites or large groups. Sites 10-12 are newer and clearly designated. Primitive sites on west side of lake have ample space for groups.
- **Amenities:** Has two playground areas, one on each side of the lake. Mixture of older and newer shelters and newer restrooms.
- **Beach:** No beach.
- **Trails:** No trails.
- **Natural Resources:** Scenic settings with rolling hills of prairie, areas of dense sub-canopy/brush vegetation (silver buffaloberry, etc.) and areas of denser tree plantings and wind rows that provide some protection from wind. ND Game and Fish owns the site. A very quiet and scenic park setting with views of windmills.

CONSTRAINTS:

- **Convenience:** Lacking dump station and swimming beach. Game & Fish restrictions on park use affects camping activities (no Tuesday or Wednesday nights allowed).
- **Access & Circulation:** The park has two separate access points with the western side of the lake less obvious and feels private, not public. The roads are very narrow and can cause difficulty when meeting oncoming vehicles. Roads on the eastern side south of the boat launch need improvements and lead to a dead-end with a small turnaround.
- **Fishing & Lake:** Lake has had winter kills that has affected the fishing and reduced park use. Western ramp is small.
- **Campsites:** Sites 1-6 can receive more traffic noise from Hwy 2.
- **Amenities:** Some playground pieces and shelters are beyond their useful life and in need of replacement. Many amenities lack proper ADA access. Playgrounds need shade and seating areas.
- **Beach:** Lack of a beach.
- **Trails:** Lack of pedestrian trails and pedestrian access routes to amenities.
- **Natural Resources:** Shoreline erosion issues. Some Game & Fish restrictions on the park in terms of use and development. Dam is considered high risk due to pine plantings in dam area and the town of McGregor located directly downslope. Heavy rains can flood the site. The dense tree plantings can result in significant insect issues that affect experience.





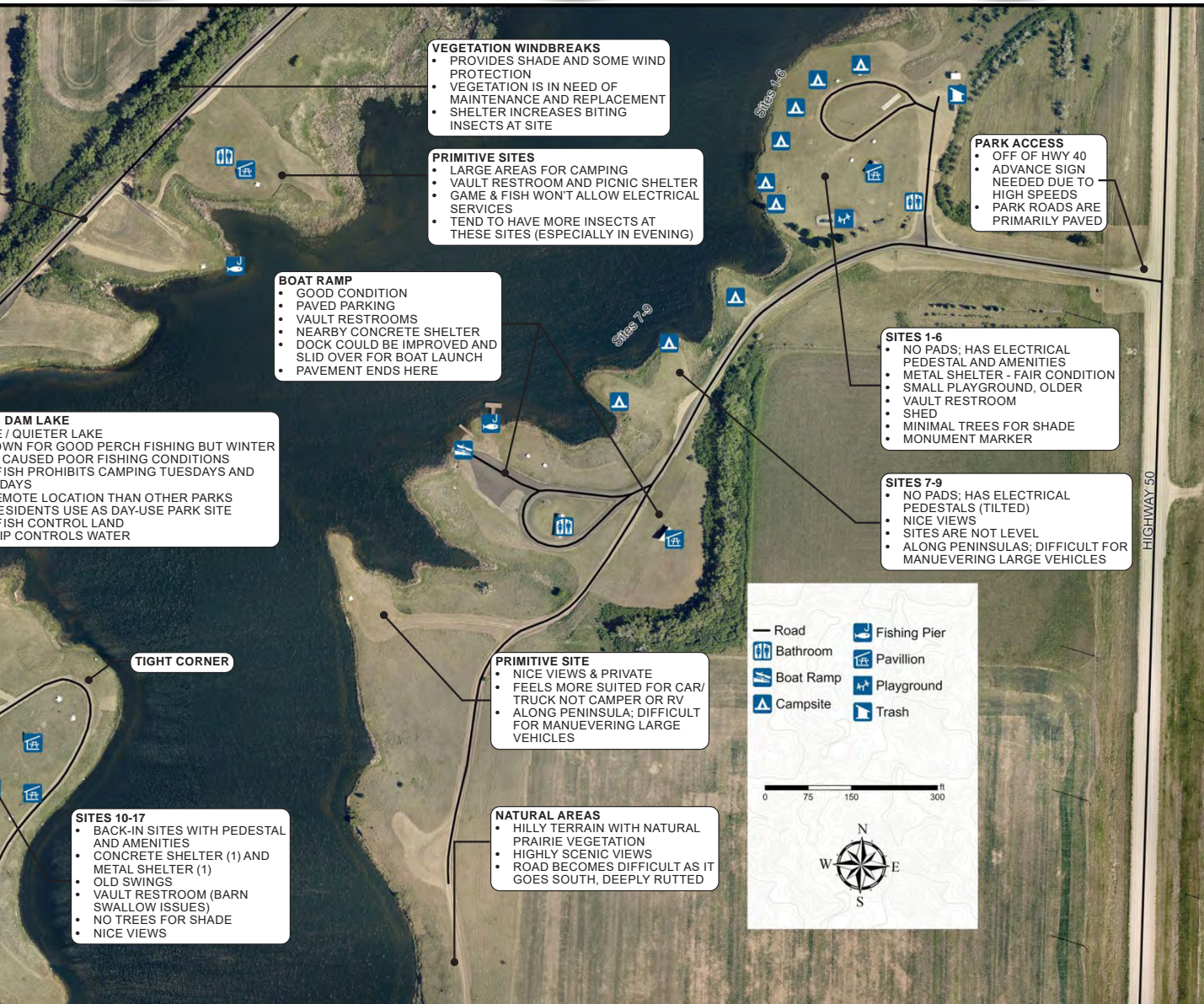
PICNIC SHELTER



WESTERN CAMPSITES



FISHING PIER



SWOT ANALYSIS

The Park Board participated in a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis in April 2021 at a regularly scheduled Park Board meeting. It was a high-level and fast-paced activity to gain a better understanding of how the Park Board viewed the existing park system as a whole, as well as for the individual sites. It also identified goals and primary priorities for the future park system.

The following lists some of the primary take-aways from the SWOT analysis.

PARK BOARD / PARKS DEPARTMENT

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Quality leadership, staff, and a Board of Commissioners fully backing improvements and growth
- Support internally; many County departments at Parks Departments disposal (marketing, GIS, etc.)
- Opportunity to use of percentage of sales tax for marketing & awareness
- Funding available to make improvements (~\$500K per year dedicated to park general fund)
- Good working relationship with other agencies (USACE; Water Board; Game & Fish) which can help with implementation and management

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Low staffing capacity; difficult to find staff or camp hosts
- Need for additional equipment
- Land leases; need to work with agencies and corresponding regulations; improvements on private property (liability concerns)
- Potential greater funding needs for improvements, staff and equipment
- Oil royalties contingent on economy

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Unified point of contact for assistance, emergencies, and questions
- Enhance programming through community events & activities that meet current interests, are fun, and encourage involvement (noted Little Beaver Bay Survivor Games and Triathlon that has raised about \$14K with volunteers)
- Encourage and strengthen partnership and volunteer opportunities
- Provide rentable facilities and equipment
- Improved distribution and access for parks maintenance and operations (ie: old Ford building for additional shop)
- Prioritize park improvements and growth

PARKS (GENERAL)

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Some Park Board sites are more unique than other campground sites in the county
- Good distribution across the county
- Opportunities for partnerships and business ventures to fill needs (food trucks, equipment, programs or activities)

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Confusion between sites operated by Park Board vs. Water Board for users / one point of contact preferred
- Lack of community awareness of existing system and what is available
- First-come first-served campsites in remote locations results in frustration when getting to a site that is full and having to leave (some will send “spotters” in advance); overall lack of capacity at popular sites. NOTE: during the planning process a reservation system was implemented in all parks except for McGregor Dam.
- Camp hosts difficult to retain
- Responsible use & enforcement; awareness of park rules, not adhering to rules, not paying, abandoning campers on site, and vandalism
- Lack of wayfinding (not all apps/maps show park locations); lack of convenience items (snacks, food, gas, bait, etc.); and some sites have lack of internet / wifi
- Old issues or conflicts that have led to a poor perception of park use, safety and experience

GOALS & IDEAS:

- 4-season park uses; look at winter activities (skating trails, ice skating, pond hockey, skiing, sledding, winter golf, ice fishing, skijouring)
- Unified reservation system that is fair to still allow method for some first-come first-served
- Unified point of contact for assistance, emergencies, questions, etc.
- Make campsites identifiable for how/ where to park
- Enhance programming through community events & activities (paint ball, polar plunge, fishing derby’s, food trucks, vendors, beer gardens)
- Improve campsites (identifiable pad, level pad, improved sizes) and allow for greater opportunities (camper cabins, yurts)
- Organizations and businesses to rent equipment (paddleboards, jet skis, bikes, ice houses)

BLACKTAIL DAM

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Highly popular; proximity to Williston is ideal and is the primary draw for users (many own lots)
- 4th of July event popular
- 2021 was first year of renting seasonal campsites (5) which generated much more revenue
- Very scenic areas
- County maintenance shop on site allows for better operations, maintenance, and oversight of campgrounds

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Small lake space in relation to users (have to go counter-clockwise with watercraft) which feels too crowded and very unsafe during high use times
- Campsites are very tight with minimal room for storage and proper circulation, lack of campsite delineation
- Dust issues from gravel roads
- Safety issues of fire due to distance to services and lack of cell service
- Private residences utilizing park land for septic systems, storage, encroachment, etc. without fee
- Lack of wayfinding for beach campsites and lack of boundaries from private lots by beach sites
- Algae blooms
- Concerns with ATV use / also high amount of golf cart use on site
- Residents unsure who owns what roads / extents of maintenance (coordinate between Park Board and Blacktail Dam Association)

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Incorporate into own town
- Enhanced programming opportunities and “community” events for both park users and private owners
- Remote tent camping in low area where it’s quiet
- Add group camping areas and overflow camping areas for high use events
- Evaluate the seasonal camp sites to determine appropriate number of sites and fee
- Potential for expanded storage area with possible revenue generation
- Mini golf
- Vendors / Food Trucks
- Trails to connect areas
- Need shade and resting areas
- Improve vehicle safety (specifically around playground)
- Categorize camping areas by type to diminish conflicts
- Add wayfinding
- Winter skiing

EPPING-SPRINGBROOK DAM

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Multiple recreational types (camping, biking, swimming, skiing)
- Centrally located between Williston and the smaller towns
- Good fishing at this site
- Has trees and some protection from wind for some campsites
- Nice feel to campsites, not too over crowded

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Can get transient populations due to proximity to Williston
- Camping access / some camp sites on little peninsulas into water which are narrow
- Some older amenities
- Small beach
- Algae blooms
- Erosion issues
- Lacking connection to Water Board land on other side leased to grazing
- Trail is partially on private property; part of beach is on private property

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Room for some expansion
- Enhance the family-friendly feel; great place for kids fishing
- Ice-skating trails
- Some areas here more suitable for non motorized watercraft due to better protection from wind



KOTA RAY DAM

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Good fishing here, maybe best of all sites, including ice fishing
- Has some protected areas with trees on far west side but area by road is windy

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Add group camp sites

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Use of park as access road to private property
- Known as a party site and has had some vandalism (shoot out lights); 1 shooting incident
- Erosion by boat launch / crushed culvert
- Algae blooms

LITTLE EGYPT

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Unique site with sugar sand beach
- High amount of awareness and day use for beach
- Close to numerous communities
- Relationship to The Links

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Balance camping use with day use effectively to minimize conflicts
- Make use of land within the central area
- Continue pavement to park (currently terminates by The Links)
- Additional campsites
- Make use of unique character

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Lack of boat launch
- Sand is easily disturbed / eroded
- Lack of campsites (more built in 2021)
- Turning movement to existing campsites not adequate
- Internal open space not being utilized
- Lease lands from the Corp (25 year)
- Protected species (Least Tern and Piping Plover) use sand for nesting
- Lack of connection to Red Mike and Hofflund Area due to being fenced off by Corp (bird protection)

LOOKOUT PARK

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Provides recreation to adjacent neighborhood

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Members of local community asked about trail along Hwy 85 to connect neighborhood to Williston

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Does not draw county-wide populations
- Could lead to other neighborhoods relying on County for smaller park needs

MCGREGOR DAM

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Hunting a draw here
- Paved roads with a lack of dust
- Good family site; quiet and appealing with areas of thicker trees and terrain that offer good protection
- Adjacent homeowners watch site (Post's)

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Remove camping restrictions
- Partner with Game & Fish for trails around dam

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- Two different entrance access points to differing areas can be confusing; the north entrance looks like a private drive
- No camping Tuesday and Wednesday (was put in place by Game & Fish during oil boom)
- Western roads are narrow, difficult when traffic going in both directions on road
- Winter fish kill common
- Pines causing issues on dam; may need to drain in order to do repairs; high risk dam with McGregor downhill from dam elevation
- Longer distance from primary populations

FUTURE PARKS

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Future park site(s) with broader four-season appeal and differing types of recreation. There are various locations with large vertical differences and aesthetic landscapes suitable for winter skiing, trail development, challenge events, and additional activities currently lacking in the county.

TRAILS

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES:

- Abundant land with unique spaces / routes for expanded trail systems (multi-use and specialty)
- Many people own ATV/OHV equipment and trails are in demand along with skills / use areas
- North Dakota has a statute that eliminates liability to the owner if the users are not charged for use of the property

WEAKNESSES & THREATS:

- ATV/OHV routes are primarily along roads which cross private drives and land, causing conflicts and a poor overall image
- High costs for securing land for trails, implementation, and ongoing maintenance and replacement

GOALS & IDEAS:

- Trenton area may have sites worth considering as an addition to the park system. Trenton Lake (park with campsites) is owned by the USACE, but run by the Trenton Indian Service Area (TISA) with a contract with the Williams County Water Resource District Board.
- Pedestrian / multi-use trail along Highway 85

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

A Level of Service (LOS) analysis of existing facilities was prepared for each park site. This is a high-level assessment of facilities in terms of overall design, condition, accessibility, and function. The LOS analysis should be used as a general guide to help the County determine where efforts should be focused as amenities are added or improved. It also identifies any major items that may need more immediate attention, such as those that are a liability concern.

The LOS was split between campground development and remaining park amenities. The campground development assessment provided a ranking in comparison to an ideal developed campsite with water, electric, fire ring, table, level pad, location within 400 feet of potable water, and adequate number of accessible sites. Seasonal sites included the additional need for sanitary services.

Park amenities were ranked based on condition, accessibility, comparison to preferred design standards, and if it met a need or requirement.

It should be noted that the LOS analysis is subjective and takes some assumptions into consideration. The ranking percentages are as follows:

LEVEL OF SERVICE RANKING

- A ranking of 66% or higher is considered between good and exceptional and is meeting current needs.
- A ranking of 33-65% is considered fair to good and is meeting the minimal basic needs. Improvements are warranted to raise the overall LOS.
- A ranking below 33% identifies a poor to minimal condition that needs more immediate attention.

| LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| PARK NAME | LOS% |
| Blacktail Dam | |
| Campground Development | 45% |
| Park Amenities | 44% |
| Epping-Springbrook Dam | |
| Campground Development | 47% |
| Park Amenities | 58% |
| Kota Ray Dam | |
| Campground Development | 39% |
| Park Amenities | 56% |
| Little Egypt | |
| Campground Development | 69% |
| Park Amenities | 78% |
| Lookout Park | |
| Park Amenities | 83% |
| McGregor Dam | |
| Campground Development | 58% |
| Park Amenities | 49% |

GAP ANALYSIS

The parks under the management of the Park Board are focused primarily on fishing and campground activities which meets an existing demand in the region. There are additional campground sites in Williams County managed by the Williams County Water Board, the State of North Dakota, and privately owned sites.

Lewis and Clark State Park Campground provides a more highly developed campground experience with added conveniences desired by many tourists and locals and is kept to a higher standard than many other types of campgrounds.

White Earth Bay, also along Lake Sakakawea in Mountrail County, has been highly developed with private lots, seasonal sites, a bait shop, food, and rentals. This is a much different experience from both Lewis and Clark and the Park Board sites.



Source: Google Imagery 2022 (White Earth Bay)

The Williams County Water Resource Board manages Little Beaver Bay, located along Lake Sakakawea, which contains 28 sites that are all seasonal sites only.

Maintaining availability to campsites that are not seasonal is an important aspect for the Park Board in order to meet an existing camping need. There are also many people who prefer the first-come, first-served campsites found at the existing Park Board sites.

Winter activities in general are lacking. The Williston Parks and Recreation District has plans for more robust winter activities within their park system, but due to current budget constraints and higher priority projects, these will likely not be implemented in the near future. Development for winter recreation comes with difficulties. Extreme cold conditions with high winds, difficult access along rural routes, and remote locations all contribute to the need for ensuring programs and developments are sited properly to get the desired use in relation to the investment.

One of the most notable gaps in the existing system is related to trail development. Newer and younger populations value trails for running, biking, and walking making this a need that will likely continue to increase as the populations continue to increase.

The North Dakota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Williams County notes there is a primary need for camping facilities and trails, as existing needs exceed supply. Outdoor sports and picnic shelters fell under secondary needs. Winter activities, dog parks, disc golf, and designated swimming areas were listed as tertiary needs.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4



OVERVIEW

Community engagement was critical to understanding the current needs and desires of the residents and park users in order to make relevant improvements that will also foster champions for the park system.

The approach to the community engagement process included numerous methods to reach broader demographics and user groups.

Valuable feedback was gained through the engagement process that was used to inform the recommendations of this plan, but more importantly, the engagement process itself improved overall awareness of the park system.

Many comments were made by those who did not know what parks and amenities existed and were excited to visit a new park or trail. Those who did have an understanding of the parks provided valuable insights to the finer details that are easily overlooked but can make significant improvements for the users.



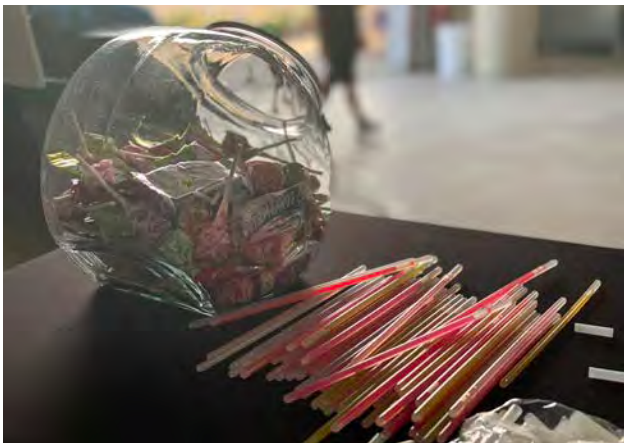


ENGAGEMENT METHODS

A comprehensive community engagement process was undertaken to attempt to reach both existing park users as well as non-park users as noted below.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS:

- Interactive project map & surveys
- Attendance at local community events
- Pop-up park visits
- Social media
- Press releases & interviews
- Open house meetings



INTERACTIVE PROJECT MAP

A project website was utilized as a conduit for information distribution and to receive feedback. An interactive map highlighted the Williams County Park locations and existing amenities.

People who visited the website had an opportunity to take a survey. The survey results provided information on what parks were most commented on and visited, recommendations for improvements or additional features, trail use preferences, and general comments.

A total of 70 surveys were submitted with additional comments placed on the Williams County Facebook posting.

The schematic concept designs for each of the park sites were also placed on the project website with a corresponding survey in order to identify which proposed improvements were liked or disliked, along with general identification of priorities for implementation so that further refinements could be made to the concept plans.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

A Williams County Parks booth was set up at multiple local community events throughout the county to provide opportunities for input, and to raise awareness of the project. The booths contained small give-aways, games, and sometimes a raffle drawing to attract users to visit the booth. Williams County promoted attendance at each of the events through their social media accounts, as well as through various press interviews and press releases.

An overall map of the park system with upcoming park events was on display and garnered questions and comments along with a “Bingo” dot board for recreation preferences. There was also a QR code to take users to the Storymap interactive project website for an additional method of providing feedback.

COMMUNITY EVENTS ATTENDED

- **Blacktail Dam:** July 2, 2021. Music in the park event with campground users and cabin residents in attendance providing input.
- **Tioga Freedom Fest:** July 3, 2021. Downtown Main Street location with other vendors, food and a kids bouncy house as part of the 4th of July festivities.
- **Crazy Days Sidewalk Sales:** July 9, 2021. Downtown Williston location with other vendors, food and Crazy Days event.
- **Rescued and Reclaimed Sip and Shop Event:** July 9, 2021. Located at the Williston fairgrounds in the ice arena for a specialized evening event with vintage goods for sale.
- **Downtowners Main Street Market:** July 10, 2021. Downtown Williston farmer’s market event with other vendors and food.
- **Epping Buffalo Trails Day:** July 11, 2021. Yearly event held in downtown Epping during their parade with other vendors, food and events.



POP-UP PARK VISITS

In conjunction with individual site inventory and analysis visits, pop-up visits were conducted to interact with park users and observe how the sites were being used. Discussions with actual users provided valuable insights as to what is working well and what could be improved upon to enhance user experiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA, PRESS RELEASES & INTERVIEWS

As part of the overall promotion of the planning process, Williams County utilized a variety of methods to increase awareness county-wide. This included numerous social media posts to promote park and engagement events and use of the storymap website with surveys.

A variety of interviews were held with local and regional news including print press releases, Williston Trending Topics, and a KTGO radio show hosted by Jim Prather.

Additional one-on-one interviews were held with specific project stakeholders. This included the United States Army Corp of Engineers, North Dakota Game & Fish Department, Williston Parks & Recreation District, and the City of Williston Planning Department.

OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

Open House Meetings were held in Williston and Tioga to provide additional opportunities for community review and feedback on the individual schematic concept plans for each park. Unfortunately, there were very poor weather conditions during both of the open house meetings. Each meeting received approximately 10 to 15 attendees.



ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Overall, the community engagement resulted in informative comments and input from residents with many expressing their appreciation for the County’s efforts to reach out during the planning process. The engagement efforts, combined with the park programs, resulted in an expanded awareness of the park system. Near the end of the planning effort, the Williams County social media was seeing more “shares” of posts for upcoming park programs and related comments, and generating excitement across many communities.

RESULTING THEMES

The input that was received was formed into the following themes.

COMFORT & CONVENIENCE:

- **Wifi / Cell Service:** A majority of users expect to have adequate cell service for accessing maps, emergency use, remote work, entertainment, or to connect with other campers.
- **Reservation System:** Some users prefer an easy method to reserve a site. The County began implementation of a reservation system during the planning process.
- **Campsite Services:** Campsites are expected to have electric service pedestals and tent users appreciate electric pedestals to avoid running down car batteries. Water service is not expected but provides convenience for campers staying longer than a weekend to avoid using up their drinking water. Sanitary service is only expected for seasonal sites.
- **Access to Food & Fuel:** Convenient access to food and fuel options offers flexibility to items forgotten, a special treat for kids, convenience for those in charge of food preparation, or campsite use longer than a weekend. Ice in particular is an item that was noted as being in constant need during camping trips, particularly for those who tent.



USER-FRIENDLY:

- **Access:** Users are looking for easy access to parks and individual campsites with clear identification. This is particularly important for those who are not familiar with the region, stressing the importance of signage and wayfinding. Providing options to access park sites for those who do not own vehicles is another factor to take into consideration.
- **Circulation:** Design roads and campsites with the current size of campers, RV's and boats in mind to allow for adequate width drive lanes and turning movements. There should be sufficient space for backing up and turning around. If a user is not as skilled with backing up a camper or launching a boat, they will seek out other sites that meet their skill level.
- **Flexible Spaces:** People's recreational interests are variable. Some users seek out a quiet retreat and connection to nature, while others prefer large group gatherings filled with fun and adventure and need space to spread out. Day users will have different needs than overnight users. Install flexible facilities that can serve multiple needs and identify areas where less is best.
- **Safety:** Safety is of the utmost priority at a park and recreational area. Proper design, circulation, identification and signage will help with the perception of safety. Camp hosts, park staff, and adequate cell service to access will improve the feeling of safety at site.



Source: <https://rsmdesign.com/services/wayfinding-signage>



EXPERIENCE:

- **Complementary Experience:** Many who use the park sites repeatedly do so due to the type of experience they currently offer. Many prefer the more intimate and remote experience at many of the Williams County park sites which is complementary from what is currently found at Lewis & Clark, Tobacco Gardens, or White Earth Bay. People don't want the park sites to become overdeveloped or overused which stresses the importance of finding the right balance of providing comfort and convenience without negatively affecting the overall desired experience.
- **New Experiences:** There are many who would like to try a new recreational experience but either don't have their own gear or don't have the knowledge to try it on their own. They are seeking methods to learn new skills and try out new forms of recreation. Programs, day camps, or equipment rentals can fill this need and create future enthusiasts.
- **Extreme and Challenge Recreation:** People indicated an interest in Ninja Courses and more challenging events such as Tough Mudders, zip lining, and climbing. There were also comments for a desire to have challenging trails suitable for training with areas to camp nearby.
- **4-Season Recreation:** The Park Board is looking for methods to increase 4-season recreation throughout the county. Many of the existing sites are focused primarily on summer use. Park programs and pop-up events during other seasons can help encourage recreation across the entire year and even make use of prime seasons for specific types of recreation.



Source: Albert Lea Tribune



ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:

- **Climate:** Williams County is known for its extreme climate conditions. It falls in a semi-arid climate zone and can suffer from long periods of drought with wind being very common. The combination of hot, dry weather and high winds can increase fire hazards, dust, and reduce the ability to enjoy outdoor recreation. Users expressed the desire for more shade opportunities, particularly at playgrounds and tent sites. Picnic shelters are popular for shade but the existing concrete picnic shelters also have added protection from the wind. Campers also seek out areas that have buildings that act as emergency shelters during severe weather events.
- **Pests:** Certain parks were noted for having insect problems which can deter users. Not only are insects a nuisance, but they can also spread disease to humans and animals. This includes mosquitoes, biting flies, gnats, chiggers, and ticks. Additional pest issues include barn swallows, flies, and rodents at vault restroom locations.
- **Environmental Threats:** Many comments were received about concerns related to water quality at the park sites. This is mainly due to the presence of noticeable algae along shorelines, causing concerns for those fishing or those who want to swim in the water.
- **Sustainability:** Users expect sites to be maintained well. Proper site design and the use of suitable materials can help reduce overall maintenance needs, consumption of natural resources, and can extend the life spans of the amenities. There are also increasing demands for reduced use of chemicals at park sites and services for electric vehicles.



TRAILS:

- **Recreational:** Trails are continually ranked the most desired form of recreation nationally, and Williams County is also seeing an increase in this demand. Multi-use trails that allow for walking, biking, in-line skating, etc. are the most requested. Campers are seeking out campgrounds that have nearby recreational trails to get out and explore their surroundings.
- **Health & Fitness:** There are some who expressed a desire for county trails that allow for long distance running and biking for training in a more pleasing setting. Routes along roadways are not desirable and feel unsafe.
- **Specialty Trails:** Mountain bike trails and pump tracks are more dedicated forms of trails with banked ramps and obstacles built into the trails or tracks. Many families with younger kids use Strider bikes and have noted the desire for special trails or courses that allow kids to improve their balance skills, though they can use multi-use trails as well.
- **Winter Trails:** Incorporate winter trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Fat tire biking is an activity that can be done year-round and in combination with other trails.
- **ATV / OHV:** There are many who have ATV/ OHV vehicles and desire trails for this type of use. There are some existing routes along roadways but these are less desirable and can lead to conflicts and safety concerns when they cross roads or private drives. Specialty areas for skills training was also desired.

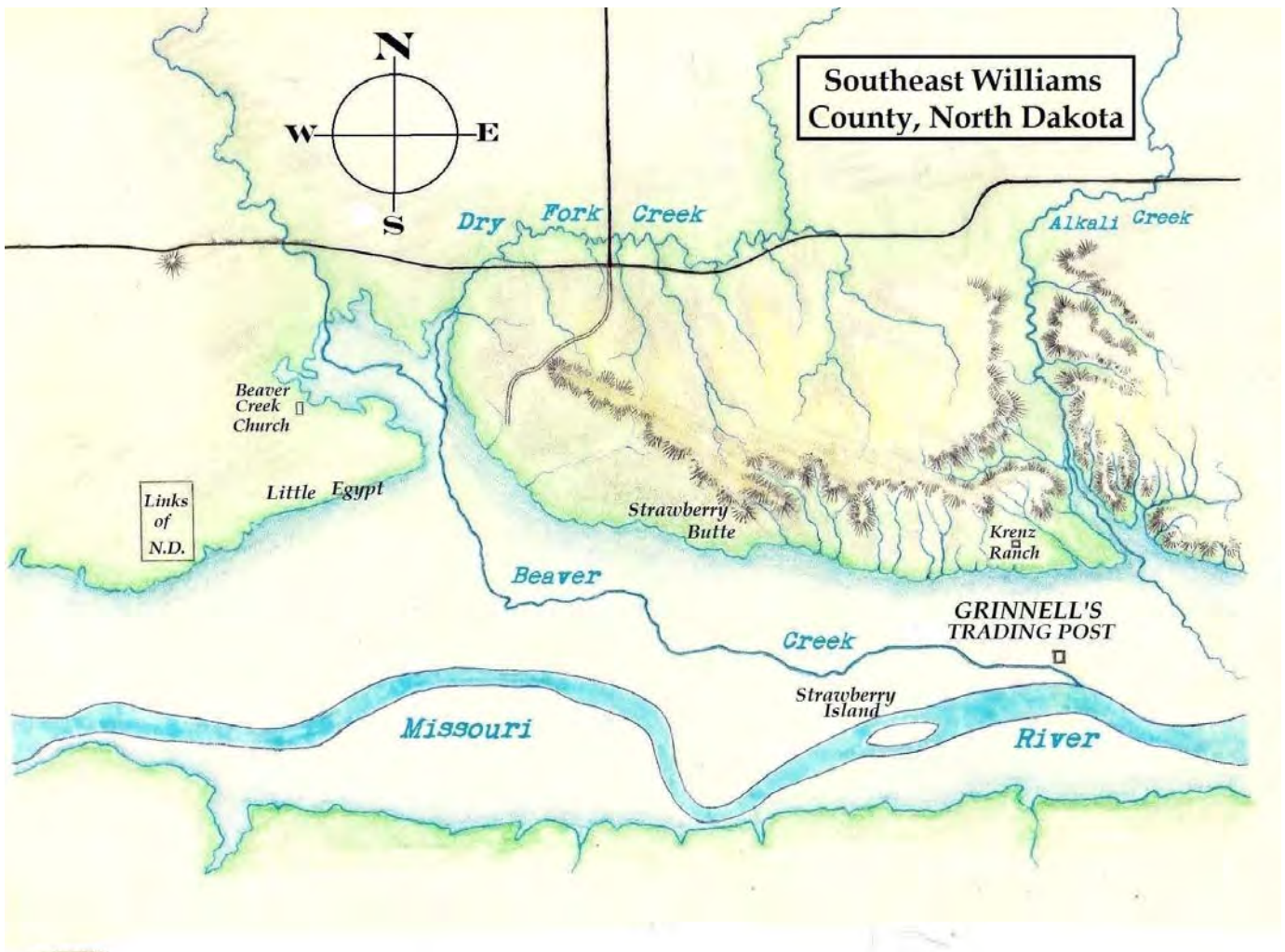


PARK SYSTEM PLAN

5

OVERVIEW

The park system plan reflects the vision and goals established by the Park Board for the future of the park system, and supported by the community. The park system plan represents a reasonable balance between meeting the needs of the local, regional, and tourist populations while ensuring the County can adequately maintain the park system.





DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The development plan reflects a reasonable balance between meeting the recreational needs of the community while preserving the natural resources and park character, showing restraint in the development of individual park sites. The public engagement process played a vital role in shaping the planning outcomes with refinements made to the concept plans in response to known concerns.

The concept plans for development provide general documentation of primary goals, site programming, and recommended locations for improvements and development. The schematic concept plans for development will continue to be refined as they are taken into final design prior to construction to ensure they are in conformance with existing site conditions, requirements of regulatory and permitting agencies, and applied design standards.

The mixture of facilities included in the schematic concept plans help meet the needs for those who are seeking day-use recreation, along with those seeking short-term or longer overnight stays in the parks. The mixture of amenities places emphasis on year-round capabilities meeting current accessibility standards to support programming and allows visitors to enjoy the parks all seasons of the year for varying abilities interests.

PARKS DEPARTMENT ROLE

While the current policy has the Park Board and Water Board managing and operating different park sites, future consideration should be given to consolidating oversight and management of the recreational components for all park sites to be placed solely under the Park Board. This will avoid ongoing confusion by users and will allow for consistent management and maintenance procedures.

PARK SYSTEM INITIATIVES

The following identifies the recommended initiatives to meet the vision and goals of the system plan and the basis for the identified park recommendations.

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES

- Develop / redevelop facilities in conformance with current design and accessibility standards.
- Account for new recreation trends and demands meeting a broader range of users and abilities by adding new amenities and programs.
- Incorporate flexible spaces that can account for varying types of uses or user groups.
- Adequately maintain and operate parks and trails to ensure they are clean, safe, and in good condition.
- Balance the level of development as suitable for each site to avoid over-crowding and over-use.

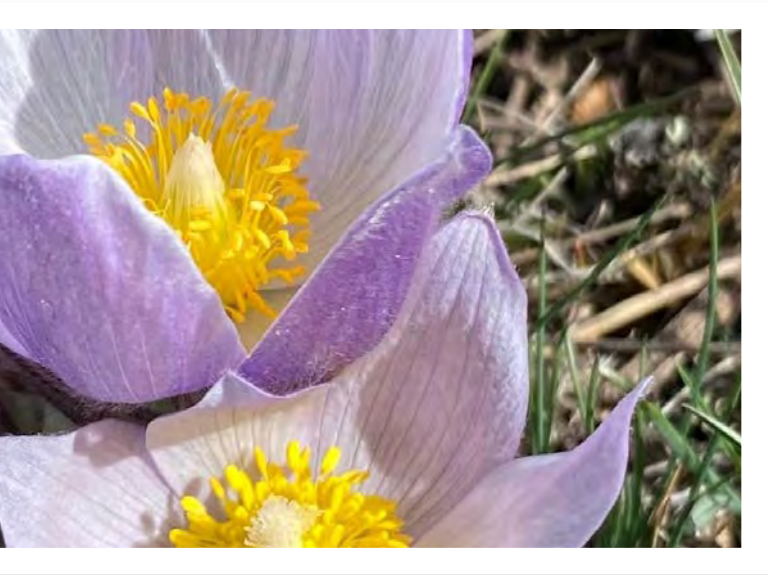
FOUR-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES

- Incorporate winter uses into the existing parks through development and programs (focus on sites with safe and more direct access).
- Encourage use of the outdoor spaces during all seasons through recreational development and park programs.
- Promote awareness of the parks, trails and recreation through news, social media, and programming opportunities.
- Identify future land acquisitions to add into the existing park system that have safe and convenient access across all seasons and that may offer added protection from the elements.



STEWARDSHIP

- Identify park rules, regulations, and emergency contact information in a highly visible location.
- Work with partners and law enforcement to aid in oversight and enforcement of park lands.
- Engage the community through programs and volunteer opportunities that promote the parks, educate users about the natural resources, and identify methods to help care for the parks.
- Ensure development facilities are aesthetically pleasing, constructed with durable materials, and have proper access.
- Incentivize camp hosts at campground sites.
- Promote programs focused on children and teens to develop future park and recreation stewards and enthusiasts.



CONNECTIVITY

- Incorporate pedestrian routes to connect people to desired destination areas.
- Identify pedestrian routes with desired scenic qualities and varying challenge levels to account for varying abilities.
- Promote the parks and trails through programs and events that encourage exploration of the existing system and allows users to participate in a new activity.
- Identify methods to expand access and opportunities to users who may lack transportation, necessary gear, or the skills to participate in certain types of recreation.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Incorporate maintenance standards that use more natural methods and rely less on harmful chemicals for ongoing management.
- Design sites in accordance with unique features or habitats meant for preservation or protection.
- Work with landowners and agencies to reduce detrimental effects of the parks and water bodies from adjacent and contributing properties.
- Incorporate native landscapes and buffers that enhance the sites character while improving air and water quality, pollinators, and habitats.
- Develop a yearly budget and operating plan with associated CIP for improvements and development.
- Develop an asset management plan to track ongoing development and improvements across the system with replacement schedules and corresponding costs to ensure operating budgets are in alignment with available funding.

DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

Best practices in park and campground design are high level objectives meant to provide Williams County Parks with accepted methodologies and recommendations to provide quality recreational experiences. Site specific opportunities, constraints, and land uses will ultimately determine final land uses and methods of development. Williams County Parks will also be responsible for meeting regulatory and permitting requirements.



COUNTY LAND PARAMETERS

- **Park Size:** Minimum size of 25-50 acres; optimal size of 100+ acres. The size can vary based upon the programmed use and level of development.
- **Trail Corridors:** Linear lands and routes that promote connectivity with development for one or more modes of transportation. Preferred destination and recreational routes through scenic spaces preferred. Linking corridors can be developed along vehicular routes. Corridor width varies dependent on location and trail type. Preferred minimum corridor width of 20 feet, with 30 to 50 feet preferred for greenways.
- **Outdoor Recreation Development:** Publicly owned spaces suitable for outdoor recreation development and designed to connect regional populations to desired recreation such as camping, fishing, skiing, hiking, biking, swimming, gatherings, and trail use, meeting current accessibility standards.
- **Natural & Cultural Resources:** Quality natural resource areas such as prairies, wetlands, lakes, streams, and buttes. Lands that contribute to wildlife habitat, fisheries, pollinators, and preserve unique features and cultural resources.
- **Regulations:** Meant to encourage responsible and respectful use of park spaces through guidance, access, awareness, and oversight.

The following describes more in-depth design best practices related to park and trail development.

PARK ROADS & WAYFINDING

Each park access road to include a park identification sign with consistent style and branding to quickly and easily identify Park Board lands. Park gates may be included at the Park Board's discretion and in accordance with partnership agency regulations. Park rules and emergency contact information should be displayed in a highly visible and easily accessible location with print suitable for reading from a vehicle.

Campground pay stations, as applicable, to be located along a pull-off or median area for easy access from a vehicle and highly visible with appropriate signage.

One-way park roads without parking on sides to be a minimum of 16-feet wide with 2-foot level shoulders on both sides.

Two-way park roads without parking on sides to be a minimum of 24-feet wide with 2-foot level shoulders on both sides.

Two-way park roads with parking on both sides to be a minimum of 34-feet wide with 2-foot level shoulders on both sides.

Bituminous pavement is preferred for park roads but gravel surfaced roads are suitable.



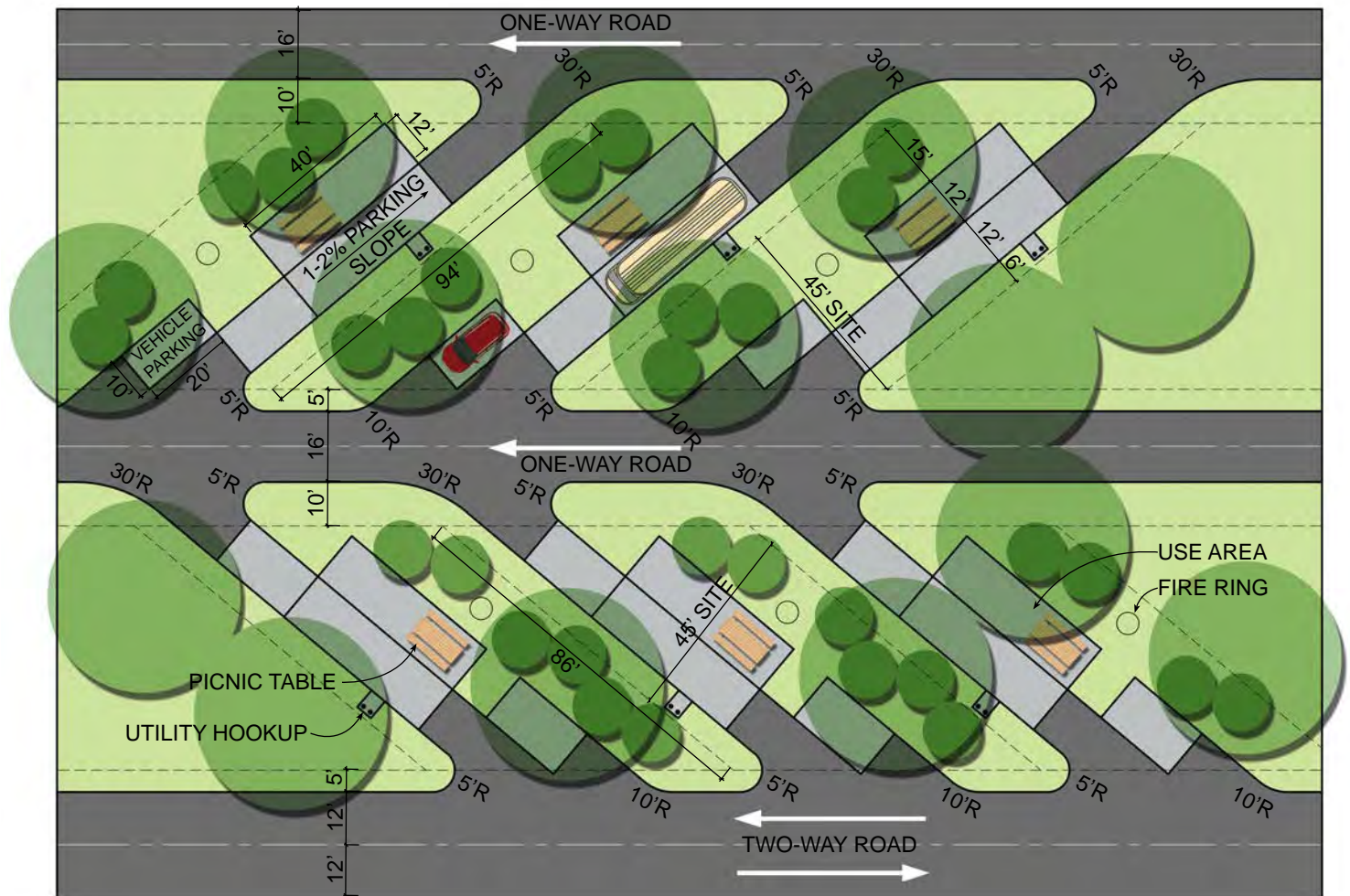


CAMPGROUND DEVELOPMENT

The best practices for campgrounds are derived from recommendations published by the National Park Service and Forest Service guidelines and the United States Access Board guide for Outdoor Developed Areas. The North Dakota Century Code for “Mobile Home Parks, Trailer Parks, and Campgrounds” regulations also apply and should be referenced.

GENERAL CAMPGROUND DESIGN

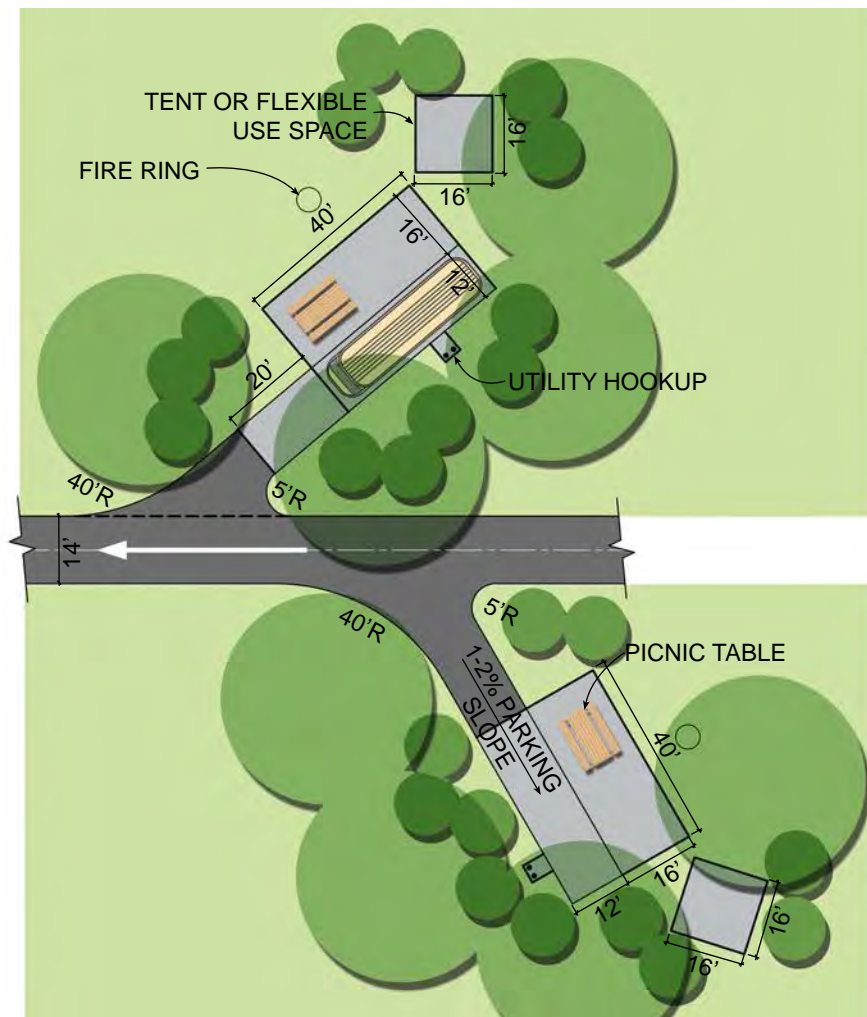
- All non-primitive campsites to be within a 400-foot distance to restroom facilities and potable water.
- Shower facilities are required for use by any recreational camping vehicle that does not come equipped with toilet and bathing facilities.
- Campsites to include a sign designation on a highly visible and reflective marker.
- Campgrounds to contain required number of accessible camp sites.
- A sanitary dumping station must be provided at a rate of 1 station per 100 campsites and must be located a minimum of 50 feet from any campsite.
- Maximum speed of 10 mph clearly posted throughout the campground.



PULL-THRU CAMPSITE

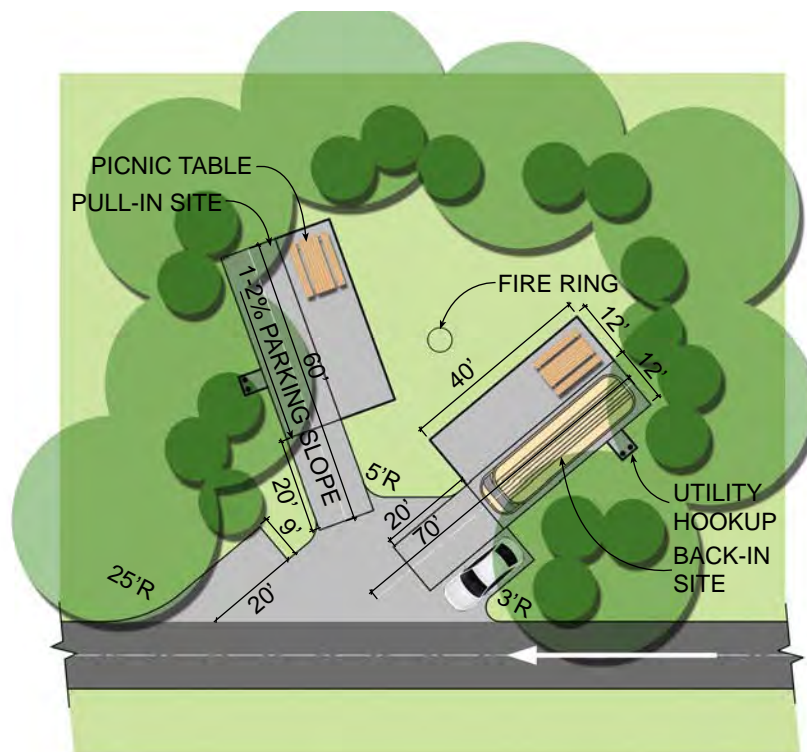
- Minimum size of 2,000 sf recommended, 15 to 20-foot minimum stall width with 40-foot minimum length; 75-foot preferred; 100-foot ultimate
- Layout can also be spur design
- 20'x10' additional parking area
- Approximate 500 sf minimum use area located outside door of camper / RV and recommended to be aligned with optimal views or protection from elements (sun, wind)
- Use area to contain picnic table and fire ring or grill with room for adjacent tent area

- 10-foot minimum buffer, 15-foot preferred on use side; 6-10 foot buffer on non-use side
- Stalls to be a minimum 25-foot distance from property lines that abut a public street or highway; minimum 10-foot distance from all other property boundary lines
- Electrical pedestal with 30 & 50 amp service
- Water service hook-ups at all seasonal rental sites; non-seasonal rental sites are optional
- Sanitary hook-ups recommended at all seasonal rental sites
- Shade trees recommended



BACK-IN CAMPSITE

- Minimum size of 2,000 sf recommended, 15 to 20-foot minimum stall width with 40-foot minimum length; 75-foot preferred; 100-foot ultimate
- Preferred spur location off of drivers side along one-way road but both sides acceptable; placed along passenger side along two-way roads
- 20'x10' additional parking area
- Approximate 500 sf minimum use area located outside door of camper / RV and recommended to be aligned with optimal views or protection from elements (sun, wind)
- Use area to contain picnic table and fire ring or grill with room for adjacent tent area
- 10-foot minimum buffer, 15-foot preferred on use side; 6-10 foot buffer on non-use side
- Stalls to be a minimum 25-foot distance from property lines that abut a public street or highway; minimum 10-foot distance from all other property boundary lines
- Electrical pedestal with 30 & 50 amp service
- Water service hook-ups at all seasonal rental sites; non-seasonal rental sites are optional
- Sanitary hook-ups recommended at all seasonal rental sites
- Shade trees recommended



GROUP CAMPSITE

- Minimum size of 2,000 sf recommended per stall; 15 to 20-foot minimum stall width with 40-foot minimum length; 75-foot preferred; 100-foot ultimate
- Numerous layout options from pull through design to back-in / pull-in sites
- 20'x10' additional parking area per stall.
- Approximate 500 sf minimum use area located outside door of camper / RV surrounding additional combined group use space
- Shared use area to contain picnic tables and fire ring or grill with room for adjacent tent area
- 10-foot minimum buffer, 15-foot preferred on use side; 6-10 foot buffer on non-use side
- Stalls to be a minimum 25-foot distance from property lines that abut a public street or highway; minimum 10-foot distance from all other property boundary lines
- Electrical pedestal with 30 & 50 amp service
- Water service hook-ups at all seasonal rental sites; non-seasonal rental sites are optional
- Shade trees recommended
- General considerations for more separation of group sites from single sites for additional privacy



TENT & PRIMITIVE CAMPSITES

- 20' x 20' foot tent pad - developed pad with sand optional, otherwise open turf space is appropriate
- Approximate 500 sf minimum general use area located adjacent to the tent pad
- Group tent sites or tent wheel can have shared central use area with a picnic shelter
- Picnic table and fire ring
- Electrical pedestal with 30 & 50 amp service optional, but not required
- 10' x 20' parking area
- Shade trees recommended
- Typically more consideration given to adequate space between tent sites for more privacy
- Tent sites to be designated for tent only



YURTS & CAMPER CABINS

- Sizes and design vary but basic designs include 300-500 square feet of interior space
- Optional: entry porch area
- Typically beds to sleep 4; some up to 6
- Interior table and shelf
- Exterior picnic table and fire ring
- Potable water
- Interior electric outlet preferred, interior light
- Optional: interior electric heater
- Should be located within 400' of restroom facility; proximity to showers preferred but optional
- 20' x 20' parking area for 2 vehicles

WATER QUALITY & FISHING

Protecting the existing natural resources is of incredible importance for swimming, fishing, and habitat. There are concerns from existing park users related to the water quality, as many can see the ongoing algae blooms each summer, and winter kills at McGregor Dam has led to a decrease in park users.

Williams County can implement improvements that will help with water quality, though there are also efforts with private landowners needed to improve the water entering the lakes from private property.

The following describes some efforts that can be done at the park sites to help improve overall water quality.

NATIVE VEGETATION BUFFERS

Many of the park sites have mowed vegetation all the way to the waters edge. In many areas the turf is very sparse leading to minimal cover, erosion issues, and soil entering the water.

Use of native vegetation to create natural buffers in select areas will offer the following benefits:

- Cleans and slows site runoff prior to entering the water
- Reduces erosion
- Reduces the need for mowing
- Improves overall park aesthetics
- Creates habitat and pollinator areas

STORMWATER TREATMENT

Best management practices for stormwater treatment of site runoff can be implemented through various means. Many implement rain gardens or stormwater basins that can pre-treat site runoff to reduce harmful nutrients prior to the runoff entering a water body. These can also be aesthetically pleasing and contribute to pollinator habitats.



SHORELINE STABILIZATION

Shoreline stabilization includes methods to prevent or control shoreline erosion and also includes methods to control the types of vegetation growing along the shoreline.

Currently, the Game & Fish Department uses a barrier mat along specific areas of the shoreline to help deter the extent of cattails for improved fishing. There are numerous types of mats available to provide varying levels of cover and purpose.

Additional erosion control measures include the use of rip-rap, though it is encouraged to minimize this use as it can make the site and shoreline feel less inviting.

Sites should be evaluated to determine which stabilization method is most appropriate in each setting based on existing needs and uses.

SHORELINE FISHING:

The primary concern of park users includes any practices that would limit the ability to fish from the shoreline.

The goals of this plan can accomplish improvements to water quality and shoreline stabilization while also allowing for shoreline fishing opportunities.

The use of natural boulders with flat surfaces as fishing platforms is one approach that can be used in conjunction with both mats and riprap that will blend with the natural surroundings.

Creating mowed paths through native plantings will help guide users to fishing areas and improve the feeling of privacy.



TRAILS

Park trails to be designed in accordance with typical standards and as deemed appropriate for each site, dependent on primary use. Requirements for trails and accessibility will be dependent on funding mechanisms. The 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards are required for all park sites, federal lands and funding includes the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA), and routes along roadways includes the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).



GENERAL PARK TRAILS

The primary goal for park trails is to keep them simple in design while making use of optimal views and natural landforms for a quality experience.

- 5-foot minimum width; 8-foot width preferred
- Firm and stable surfacing (compacted earth, aggregate, bituminous or concrete pavement)
- Trails with less than 1:20 running slope are the design preference with 1:10 maximum running slope allowed for natural trails due to terrain
- Accessible routes as necessary to comply with ADA standards not exceeding 1:20 running slope and 1:50 side slope

Maintaining a high degree of accessibility will also be a design objective and there should be access routes as necessary to developed facilities.

Crossing of the park drives and other roads should be kept to a minimum to avoid conflicts.

All crossings are to be purposefully located where traffic is expected to be highly visible, moving slower, or stopping at an intersection.

Trails through sensitive natural areas, ravines, and along steep slopes pose design challenges. In these cases, two principles will be applied:

1. Maintain a safe trail experience.
2. Minimize impacts to the site.

There are trusted methods of trail construction that can be applied to reduce the propensity for ongoing erosion issues. One is the use of a rolling-grade technique that creates a series of mini-watersheds to disperse water. Another is the use of waterbars, though these are less desirable unless absolutely necessary and are not located along an identified access route.

While trail systems can be laid out on paper or a computer, many trail alignments are best field fit on site with a qualified designer or installer to fit the routes with the terrain while making use of the optimal views and experience.

MULTI-USE PAVED TRAILS

- 8-foot minimum width; 10-foot preferred
- Firm and stable surfacing (aggregate or bituminous pavement preferred)
- Trails with less than 1:20 running slope are the design preference with 1:10 maximum running slope allowed for natural locations with steep terrain and not a pedestrian access route.
- Trails separated from vehicular traffic preferred; routes along paved roadways to have 4-foot minimum paved shoulder identified by striping

SPECIALTY TRAILS

There are a number of specialty trails that require varying levels of effort in terms of planning, design and implementation, as well as support facilities. Some trail uses can easily overlap with one another, while others may need dedicated routes to avoid conflicts and safety concerns. Prior to any specialty trails being implemented, there should be involvement with specific user groups and design professionals to ensure a safe and pleasant experience.

- Natural trails
- Cross-country ski trails
- Snowshoe trails
- Mountain bike / single track trails
- Ice trails
- Equestrian trails
- ATV/OHV trails





TRAILHEADS

There are specific locations where trailheads are identified to provide access to the trail system or to special features such as overlooks, observation platforms, and interpretive areas. The design principle for trailheads and trail amenities is to keep them simple and unobtrusive. Important to siting these features is controlling the field of view from specific points of interest to preserve the aesthetic value of what is being observed. The careful placement of trails and associated amenities will be important to preserving the experience that park visitors are seeking. Trailhead parking lots are kept purposefully small to blend with the setting and provide only what is needed to meet daily parking needs. They can be expanded if clear demand is warranted.

TRAILHEAD / TRAILSIDE AMENITIES

- Small parking area (3-5 stalls) constructed with firm and stable surfacing (aggregate, bituminous pavement) and direct access to trail system or identified feature
- Accessible route from the parking area to developed features such as an overlook, interpretive area
- Information sign, map or other wayfinding measures with pleasing character that is complementary to the setting
- Support Amenities: Common trailhead amenities include a bench or picnic table, restroom (may be vault or portable), trash receptacles, bike fix-it station, and access to drinking water is desirable, though may not be feasible in all locations



WAYFINDING

A clear wayfinding signage program should be implemented throughout Williams County that provides guidance to park locations, trailheads, routes, and other points of interest. This is particularly important along rural routes and intersections to help guide users who may not be familiar with the local region.

Appropriate signage is important for safety and peace of mind, but also key to the overall user experience. Signage should have consistent branding that quickly identifies the site or trail as being a part of the Williams County Park system.

Wayfinding includes signage such as park monument signs, directional traffic signs, trail markers, kiosks, and maps. Park signs should include a map as well as a primary point of contact with emergency number, general park rules, and regulations.

BLACKTAIL DAM PROPOSED



50+ CAMPSITES &
4 - CABINS



TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



1 - DUMP STATION



15 - PICNIC SHELTERS



6 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1 - SHOWER FACILITY



9-HOLE GOLF COURSE



2 - SWIMMING BEACHES



2 - PLAYGROUNDS



1 - BOAT LAUNCH



4 - DOCKS/PIERS



NATURAL TRAILS



ATV AREA

BLACKTAIL DAM RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING PLAN GOALS

The following identifies primary recommendations to help meet park plan goals:

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES:

- **Improved Vehicular Circulation:** Primary vehicle route around the lake will bypass the campground for improved safety and a better camping experience within the primary campground.
- **Improve Camping Experience:** Maintain existing number of campsites with modified layouts and improved amenities to help meet current needs, offer greater flexibility, and improve experience for varying types of users.

4-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Programming:** Williams County Parks will offer programs during spring, fall, and winter seasons to promote outdoor recreation (spring and fall hiking/biking, winter ice fishing, etc.).
- **New Development:** New improvements and developments allow for expanded recreational opportunities across varying seasons, as well as to support programming.

STEWARDSHIP:

- **Education & Volunteerism:** Williams County will promote programs and events focused on utilizing volunteer efforts and educating users.
- **Park Information:** Rules, regulations, and a park contact person will be easily identifiable for park users.
- **Oversight:** County staff and private residents can help provide oversight if a campground host cannot be secured.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- **Materials & Construction:** Development and improvements will consider materials and amenities with longer life spans and less maintenance.
- **Oversight & Management:** Williams County Shop and equipment provides convenient county oversight and management of the park site with higher maintenance needs.
- **Natural Resources:** Proper management of the natural resources will protect and improve habitat, water quality, and other natural resources.

CONNECTIVITY:

- **Pedestrian Connections:** Pedestrian trails connect users around the entire lake and to various destination points throughout the park.

CONVENIENCE:

- **Added Campground Beach:** Swimming beach added to the primary campground area for easy access and oversight by campground users.
- **Improved Services:** Potable water services and improved electrical services provided at campsites with added sanitary connections at seasonal sites.
- **Cell Service:** Work with services to enhance cell service capabilities.

The following page illustrates the concept plan for Blacktail Dam, followed by a description of the plan recommendations.

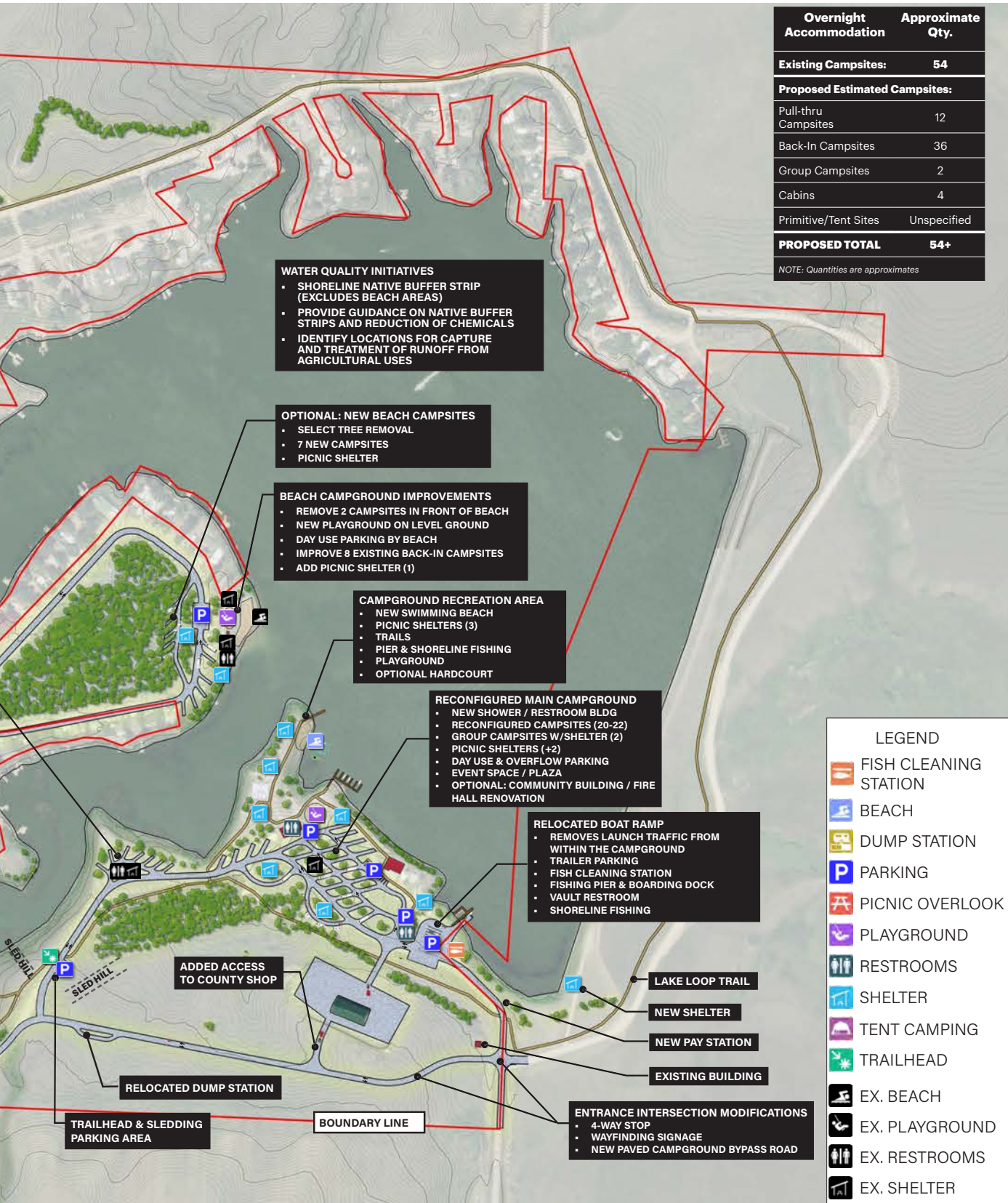


- PRIMARY PLAN GOALS**
- SEPARATE THRU-TRAFFIC TO PRIVATE LOTS FROM CAMPGROUND
 - IMPROVE SAFETY
 - IMPROVE CAMPING EXPERIENCE (CAMPING STALL SIZES, SERVICES, CAMPING OPTIONS)
 - IMPROVE RECREATION OPTIONS FOR 4-SEASON USES



Blacktail Dam | Schematic Master Plan

Williams County, North Dakota
 November 5, 2021 | WSB Project number: 017689-000



| Overnight Accommodation | Approximate Qty. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Existing Campsites: | 54 |
| Proposed Estimated Campsites: | |
| Pull-thru Campsites | 12 |
| Back-In Campsites | 36 |
| Group Campsites | 2 |
| Cabins | 4 |
| Primitive/Tent Sites | Unspecified |
| PROPOSED TOTAL | 54+ |

NOTE: Quantities are approximates

WATER QUALITY INITIATIVES

- SHORELINE NATIVE BUFFER STRIP (EXCLUDES BEACH AREAS)
- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON NATIVE BUFFER STRIPS AND REDUCTION OF CHEMICALS
- IDENTIFY LOCATIONS FOR CAPTURE AND TREATMENT OF RUNOFF FROM AGRICULTURAL USES

OPTIONAL: NEW BEACH CAMPSITES

- SELECT TREE REMOVAL
- 7 NEW CAMPSITES
- PICNIC SHELTER

BEACH CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

- REMOVE 2 CAMPSITES IN FRONT OF BEACH
- NEW PLAYGROUND ON LEVEL GROUND
- DAY USE PARKING BY BEACH
- IMPROVE 8 EXISTING BACK-IN CAMPSITES
- ADD PICNIC SHELTER (1)

CAMPGROUND RECREATION AREA

- NEW SWIMMING BEACH
- PICNIC SHELTERS (3)
- TRAILS
- PIER & SHORELINE FISHING
- PLAYGROUND
- OPTIONAL HARDCOURT

RECONFIGURED MAIN CAMPGROUND

- NEW SHOWER / RESTROOM BLDG
- RECONFIGURED CAMPSITES (20-22)
- GROUP CAMPSITES W/SHELTER (2)
- PICNIC SHELTERS (+2)
- DAY USE & OVERFLOW PARKING
- EVENT SPACE / PLAZA
- OPTIONAL: COMMUNITY BUILDING / FIRE HALL RENOVATION

RELOCATED BOAT RAMP

- REMOVES LAUNCH TRAFFIC FROM WITHIN THE CAMPGROUND
- TRAILER PARKING
- FISH CLEANING STATION
- FISHING PIER & BOARDING DOCK
- VAULT RESTROOM
- SHORELINE FISHING

ADDED ACCESS TO COUNTY SHOP

RELOCATED DUMP STATION

TRAILHEAD & SLEDDING PARKING AREA

BOUNDARY LINE

ENTRANCE INTERSECTION MODIFICATIONS

- 4-WAY STOP
- WAYFINDING SIGNAGE
- NEW PAVED CAMPGROUND BYPASS ROAD

LAKE LOOP TRAIL

NEW SHELTER

NEW PAY STATION

EXISTING BUILDING

LEGEND

- FISH CLEANING STATION
- BEACH
- DUMP STATION
- PARKING
- PICNIC OVERLOOK
- PLAYGROUND
- RESTROOMS
- SHELTER
- TENT CAMPING
- TRAILHEAD
- EX. BEACH
- EX. PLAYGROUND
- EX. RESTROOMS
- EX. SHELTER

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular Circulation

The most impactful improvement is the change to the primary vehicle route around the lake. A new section of road is proposed starting at the entrance point of the park property where a 4-way stop intersection is proposed. Users may either proceed to enter the main campground, turn left to go west, or turn right to extend to the north side of the lake.

The introduction of the bypass road removes the general private lake traffic from traversing through the main campground for a more pleasant experience and improved safety.

Wayfinding signs and a main park entrance sign will be installed to help direct traffic from the main park entrance at the intersection.

Entering the park, the roads through the main campground are intended to be paved to reduce ongoing issues with dust. The bypass route going west will also be paved up until it meets the intersection to the beach road. Any further paving beyond this point will be determined at a future point due to existing concerns that paving the road will increase the propensity for vehicle speeds, however the existing problems with dust will continue if it is not paved.

Main Campground & Boat Launch

The main campground is redeveloped to improve overall circulation, safety, and layout. The following provides greater detail.

- **Pay Station:** Located along entrance drive with a widened area to pull up a vehicle. Includes general campground rules, map, and contact information.
- **Boat Launch:** Relocated near the main campground entrance point to allow users to launch a boat without traversing through the campground. An optional trailer parking area is identified for campground users and day-users. Includes a fish cleaning station, boarding dock, and vault restroom.
- **Primary Campground:** Reconfigured to allow for more adequate spacing and sizes of campsites. Campsites are delineated with level pads, general use areas, and amenities to include picnic table and fire pit, as well as electric and water hook-ups. Add sanitary service to season sites. Many sites are pull-through with some back-in sties and two larger group areas. Several new picnic shelters added.
- **Recreation Area & Beach:** Peninsula becomes a recreational area with picnic shelters, trails, fishing areas, playground, and a swimming beach.
- **Peninsula Campground:** Reconfigured to remove a few campsites to allow for more adequate spacing and sizes of campsites. Campsites are delineated with level pads, general use areas, and amenities to include picnic table and fire pit, as well as electric and water hook-ups.
- **Comfort Station:** New shower and restroom building in main campground.
- **Sledding Hills:** Delineated winter sledding hills with varying challenge levels and a small parking area.
- **Shelters:** Concrete shelters and potential culvert shelters.

Beach Campground Improvements

- **Existing Campsites:** Reconfigured to remove a couple of campsites to allow for more adequate spacing and sizes of campsites as well as a more open area adjacent to the beach.
- **New Campsites:** An optional campsite expansion area in the trees creates expanded camping opportunities near the beach. Campsites are delineated with level pads, general use areas, and amenities to include picnic table and fire pit, as well as electric and water hook-ups. Many sites are pull-through with some back-in sties and two larger group areas. Several new picnic shelters added.
- **Beach Improvements:** Small day use parking area delineated with an improved playground moved further up on more level ground.

Pedestrian Trails & Disc Golf

- **Pedestrian Trails:** Trails developed throughout the site for connectivity with a primary aggregate or paved trail around the entire lake. Many internal trails can be aggregate or natural compacted soils.
- **Disc Golf Area:** Trailhead parking lot with wayfinding signage and trail connections. Disc golf winds through natural terrain and a low area with a simple pedestrian bridge. One or two seating overlooks are placed in prime viewing areas.

Primitive Campground Area

Simple improvements improve the setting and experience with expanded opportunities if the needs increase.

Improved access drives into the site create a loop drive for tent sites. Includes a small parking area, vault restroom and a new picnic shelter and boarding dock.

ATV / OHV Recreation Area

Lower in priority, this area can be phased in as deemed appropriate. Further engagement may be necessary to make final determinations on consideration of a dedicated ATV area.

- **Parking Area:** General aggregate parking area with wayfinding kiosk.
- **ATV Trails & Skills Course:** ATV trail system throughout a specified area with some skills and training area for teaching.
- **Potential ATV Campground:** Future consideration for sites designed to accommodate RV's and associated ATV trailers. Support amenities to include picnic shelters, comfort station, and trails.

EPPING-SPRINGBROOK PROPOSED



11 - CAMPSITES &
6 - CABINS



TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



1 - DUMP STATION



1 - SHOWER FACILITY



9 - PICNIC SHELTERS



4 - RESTROOM BLDGS



2 - SWIMMING BEACHES +
1 DOG BEACH



1 - PLAYGROUND



1 - BOAT LAUNCH



6 - DOCKS/PIERS



NATURAL HIKING /
BIKING & WINTER CROSS-
COUNTRY SKI TRAILS

EPPING-SPRINGBROOK RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING PLAN GOALS

The following identifies primary recommendations to help meet park plan goals:

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES:

- **Improved Access:** Primary access drive is realigned for improved ease of access and more manageable grades.
- **Improve Camping Experience:** Modified campground layouts and improved amenities help meet current needs, greater flexibility, and improved experience for varying types of user groups.

4-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Programming:** Williams County Parks will offer programs during spring, fall and winter seasons to promote outdoor recreation (spring and fall hiking/biking, winter ice fishing, etc.).

STEWARDSHIP:

- **Education & Volunteerism:** Williams County will promote programs and events focused on utilizing volunteer efforts and educating users.
- **Park Information:** Rules, regulations, and a park contact person will be easily identifiable for park users.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- **Materials & Construction:** Development and improvements will consider materials and amenities with longer life spans and less maintenance.
- **Natural Resources:** Proper management of the natural resources will protect and improve habitat, water quality, and other natural resources with a focus on stormwater treatment to control erosion issues.

CONNECTIVITY:

- **Pedestrian Connections:** Pedestrian trails connect users to amenities.

CONVENIENCE:

- **Campground Recreation Area:** Recreation area with swimming beach added to the campground area for easy access and oversight by campground users.
- **Improved Services:** Potable water services and improved electrical services provided at campsites.

A description of the primary plan recommendations is provided with the concept plan illustration on the following page.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular Circulation

- **Entrance Road:** Realigned entrance road can improve ease of access and maneuverability with less steep grades and better turning radii. The use of a traffic circle is optional but lengthens the run for helping grades and provides a point to either to enter the campground or the day use area.

Day Use Area

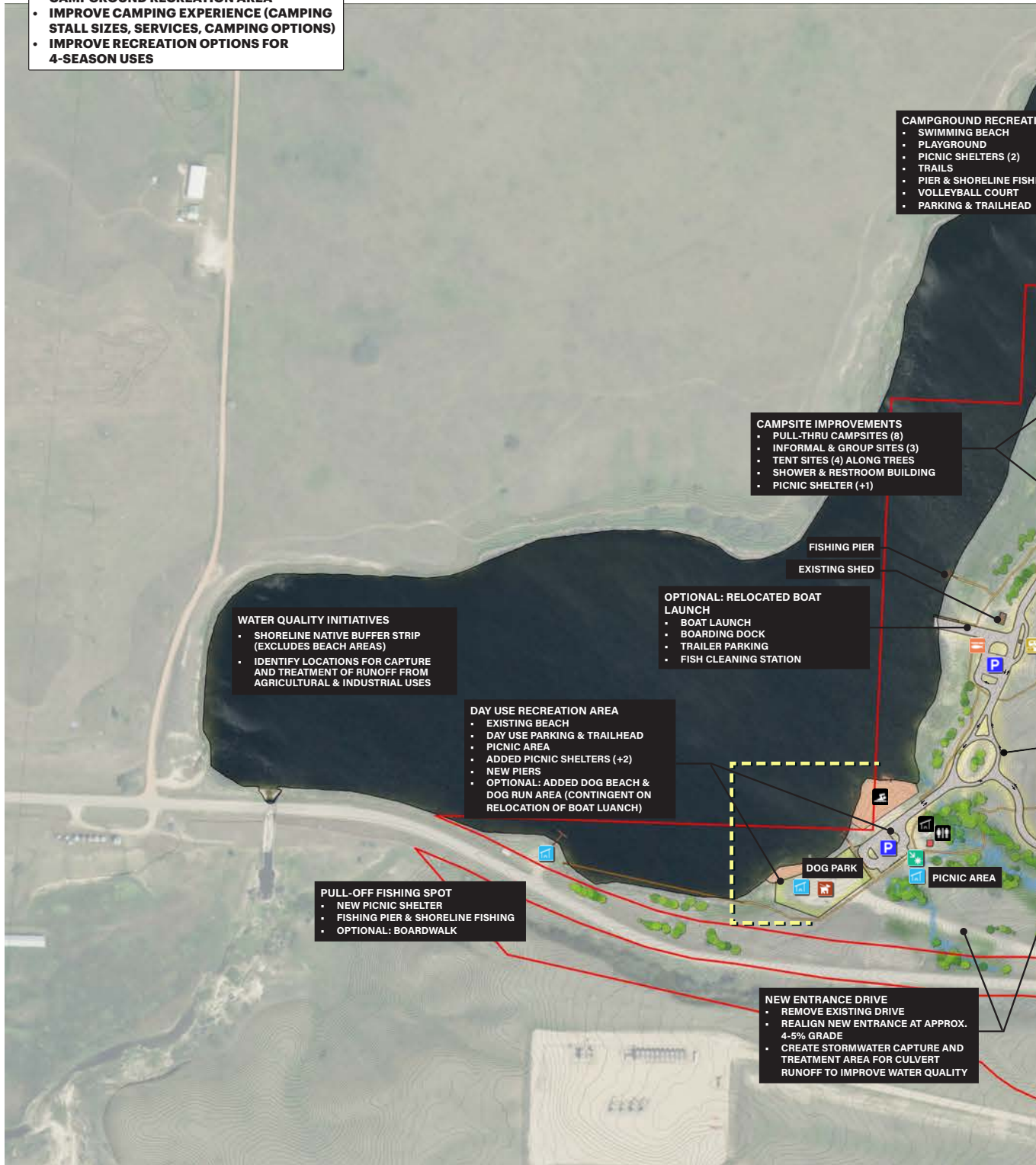
- **Day Use Parking:** A separate day use and trailhead parking area is adjacent to the existing swimming beach with picnic areas.
- **Dog Area:** Optional dog swimming beach and dog run area.

Main Campground & Boat Launch

The main campground is modified to improve overall circulation, safety and layout. The following provides greater detail.

- **Pay Station:** Located along entrance drive with a widened area to pull up a vehicle. Includes general campground rules, map and contact information.
- **Boat Launch:** As an option, but possibly a lower priority, the plan shows a relocated boat launch to allow for development of a day use area and dog beach. Includes a fish cleaning station, boarding dock and vault restroom.
- **Campground Improvements:** Reconfigured to allow for more adequate spacing and sizes of campsites with some pull-through sites. Campsites are delineated with level pads, general use areas and amenities to include picnic table and fire pit, as well as upgraded electric services and water hook-ups and an added comfort station. Tent sites are relocated to areas with more shade.
- **Dump Station:** Relocated due to new entrance road.
- **Recreation Area:** Added swimming beach and recreation area with picnic shelters, trails, fishing pier and volleyball court.

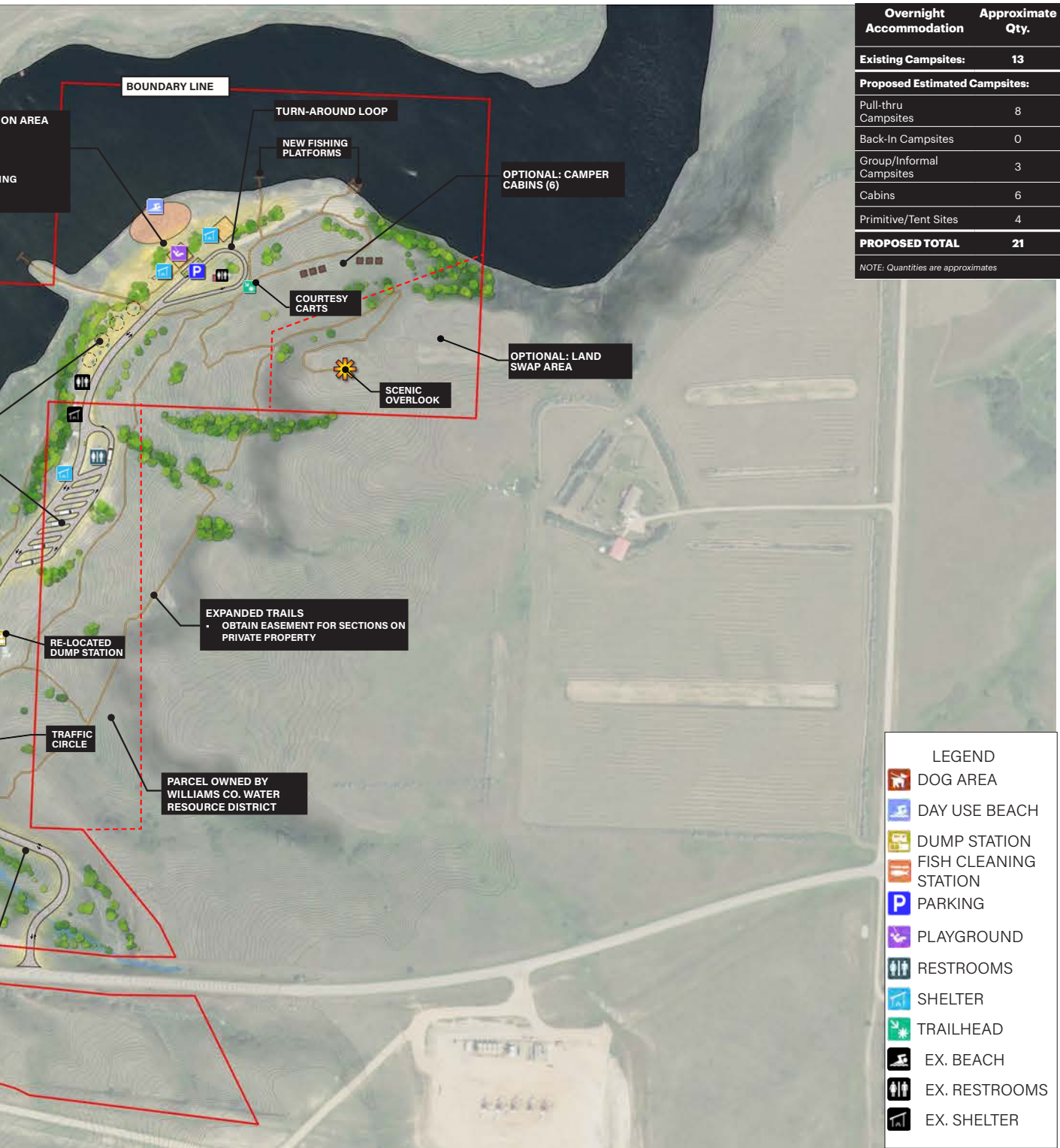
- PRIMARY PLAN GOALS**
- IMPROVE ENTRANCE DRIVE (LESSEN SLOPE AND ANGLE UPON ENTRY)
 - SEPARATE DAY USE RECREATION AREA FROM CAMPGROUND RECREATION AREA
 - IMPROVE CAMPING EXPERIENCE (CAMPING STALL SIZES, SERVICES, CAMPING OPTIONS)
 - IMPROVE RECREATION OPTIONS FOR 4-SEASON USES



1810689-000-001-environmental/Plans/Concepts/Epping-Springbrook-Dam/ConceptFinal/2022

Epping-Springbrook Dam | Schematic Master Plan

Williams County, North Dakota
November 5, 2021 | WSB Project number: 017689-000



| Overnight Accommodation | Approximate Qty. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Existing Campsites: | 13 |
| Proposed Estimated Campsites: | |
| Pull-thru Campsites | 8 |
| Back-In Campsites | 0 |
| Group/Informal Campsites | 3 |
| Cabins | 6 |
| Primitive/Tent Sites | 4 |
| PROPOSED TOTAL | 21 |

NOTE: Quantities are approximates

KOTA RAY DAM PROPOSED



15 - CAMPSITES &
6 - CABINS



TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



1 - DUMP STATION



7 - PICNIC SHELTERS



2 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1- SHOWER FACILITY



1 - SWIMMING BEACH



1 - PLAYGROUND



1 - BOAT LAUNCH



3 - DOCKS/PIERS

KOTA RAY DAM RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING PLAN GOALS

The following identifies primary recommendations to help meet park plan goals:

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES:

- **Improved Access:** Primary access drive is consolidated.
- **Improve Camping Experience:** Modified campground layouts and improved amenities help meet current needs, greater flexibility, and improved experience for varying types of user groups.
- **Northern Parcel:** Development of northern parcel to support day use recreation or expanded opportunities for fishing and camping.

4-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Programming:** Williams County Parks will offer programs during spring, fall, and winter seasons to promote outdoor recreation (spring and fall hiking/biking, winter ice fishing, etc.).

STEWARDSHIP:

- **Education & Volunteerism:** Williams County will promote programs and events focused on utilizing volunteer efforts and educating users.
- **Park Information:** Rules, regulations and a park contact person will be easily identifiable for park users.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- **Materials & Construction:** Development and improvements will consider materials and amenities with longer life spans and less maintenance.
- **Natural Resources:** Proper management of the natural resources will protect and improve habitat, water quality, and other natural resources with a focus on stormwater treatment to control erosion issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular Circulation

- **Entrance Road:** Realigned entrance road to avoid duplication and confusion.

Main Campground & Boat Launch

The main campground is modified to improve overall circulation, safety and layout. The following provides greater detail.

- **Pay Station:** Located along entrance drive with a widened area to pull up a vehicle. Includes general campground rules, map and contact information.
- **Boat Launch:** As an option, but possibly a lower priority, the plan shows a relocated boat launch that swaps location with the swimming beach. Includes a small parking area, fish cleaning station and boarding dock.
- **Campground Improvements:** Some reconfigured to allow for more adequate spacing and sizes of campsites and stormwater improvements. Some sites may need agreement or easement with landowner. Campsites are delineated with level pads, general use areas and amenities to include picnic table and fire pit, as well as electric services and water hook-ups and an added comfort station. Tent sites are relocated to the linear area along the lake that is shady and difficult for campers.
- **Dump Station:** Relocated due to new entrance road.

CONVENIENCE:

- **Improved Services:** Potable water services and improved electrical services provided at campsites.

A description of the primary plan recommendations is provided with the concept plan illustration on the following page.

Northern Parcel Development

Considered optional.

- **Entrance & Parking:** Construct access drive and parking area for day use.
- **Day Use Recreation:** Playground, kids bike course, optional dog run area. Picnic shelter pavilion with restrooms along upper level and picnic shelter with performance pad on lower area with hillside amphitheater seating.
- **Trails & Fishing:** Trails wind down to lake edge with fishing piers and shoreline fishing.
- **Camper Cabins:** Optional; lower priority.

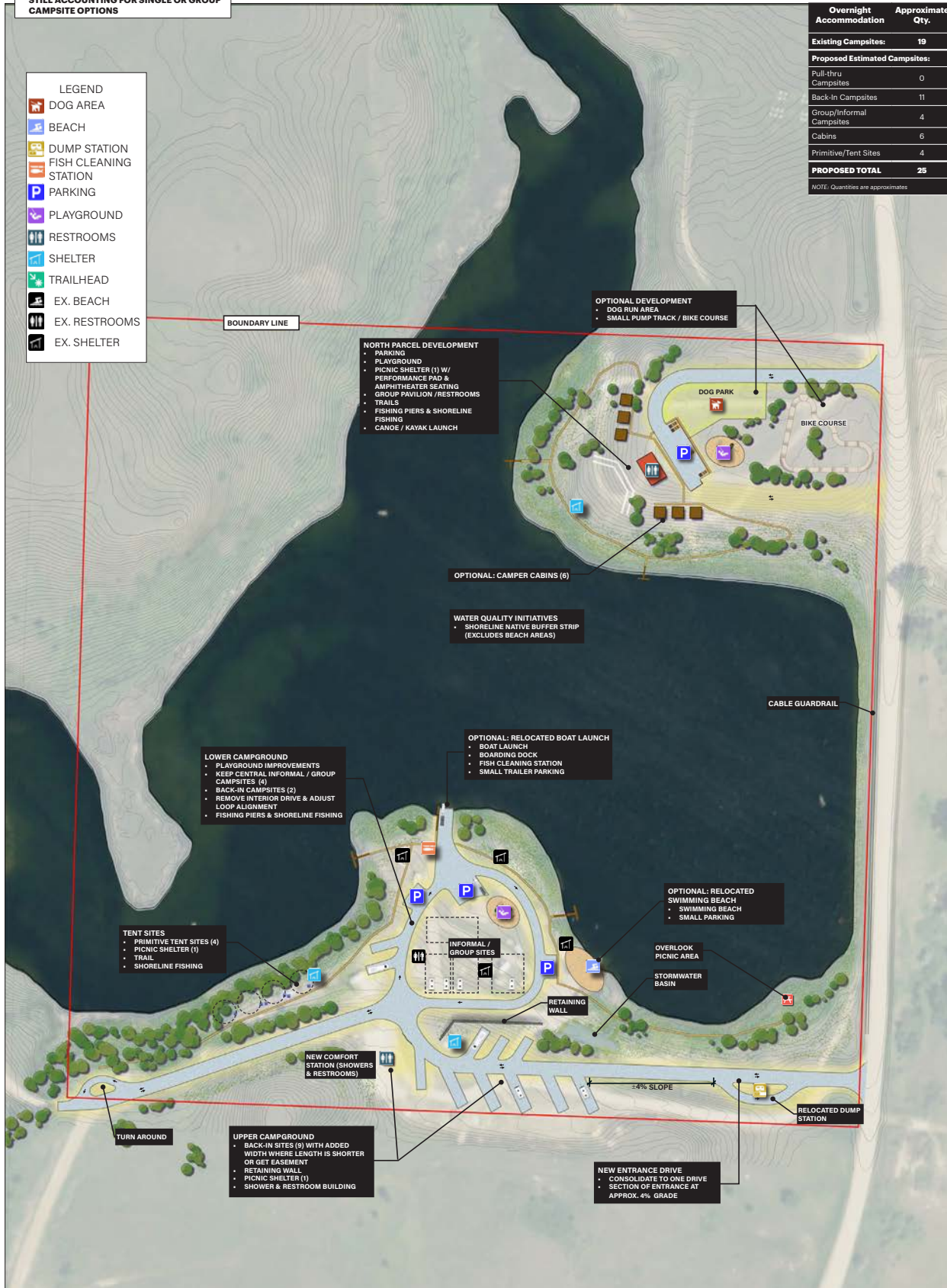
- PRIMARY PLAN GOALS**
- IMPROVE ENTRANCE DRIVE
 - PROVIDE NEW RECREATION / DAY USES
 - IMPROVE CAMPING EXPERIENCE (CAMPING STALL SIZES, SERVICES, CAMPING OPTIONS)
 - BETTER CAMPSITE ORGANIZATION WHILE STILL ACCOUNTING FOR SINGLE OR GROUP CAMPSITE OPTIONS

LEGEND

- DOG AREA
- BEACH
- DUMP STATION
- FISH CLEANING STATION
- PARKING
- PLAYGROUND
- RESTROOMS
- SHELTER
- TRAILHEAD
- EX. BEACH
- EX. RESTROOMS
- EX. SHELTER

| Overnight Accommodation | Approximate Qty. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Existing Campsites: | 19 |
| Proposed Estimated Campsites: | |
| Pull-thru Campsites | 0 |
| Back-in Campsites | 11 |
| Group/Informal Campsites | 4 |
| Cabins | 6 |
| Primitive/Tent Sites | 4 |
| PROPOSED TOTAL | 25 |

NOTE: Quantities are approximates



Kota Ray Dam | Schematic Master Plan

Williams County, North Dakota
November 5, 2021 | WSB Project number: 017689-000



LOOKOUT PARK PROPOSED



PLAYGROUND



HARD COURT



PICNIC AREA



PICNIC SHELTER

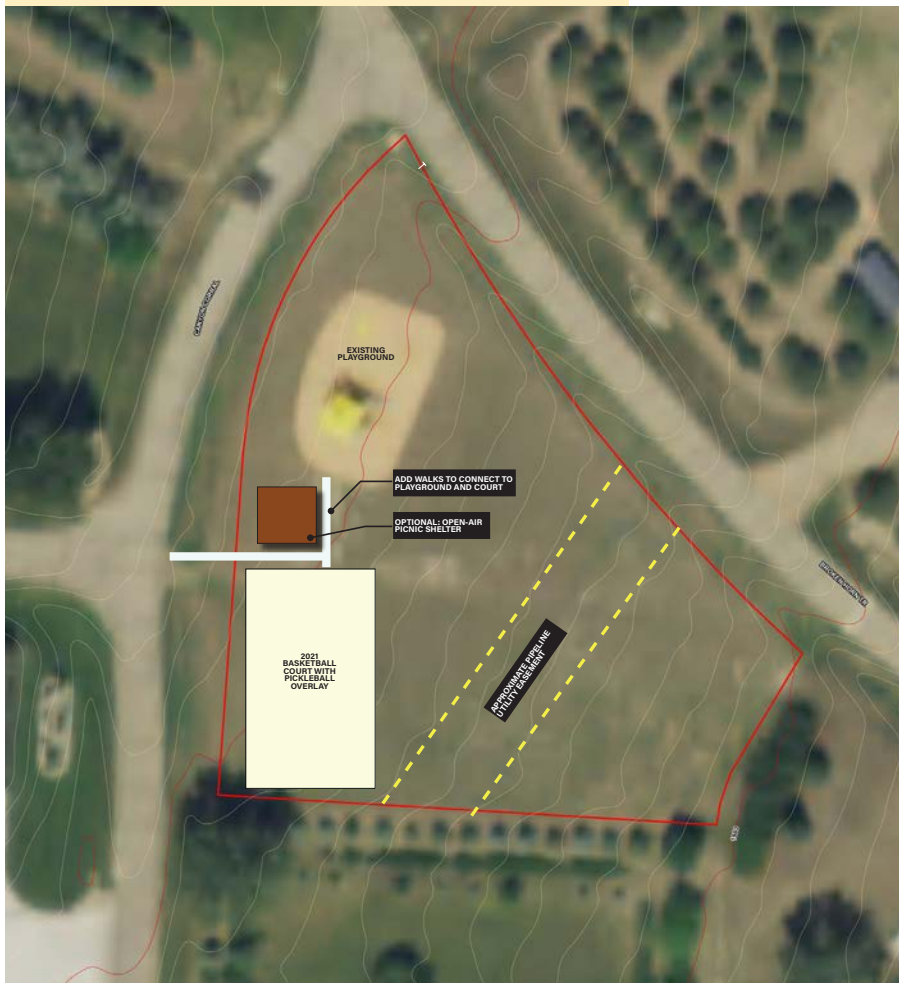
LOOKOUT PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING PLAN GOALS

The following identifies primary recommendations to help meet park plan goals:

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES:

- **Improve Experience:** Complete park improvements for a fully developed site with a range of amenities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Accessibility:** Construct accessible walks to existing amenities and alter playground curb to allow for accessible route to equipment.
- **Court:** Adjust court for slopes in alignment with design standards.
- **Picnic Area:** Add open-air picnic shelter (20' square) on concrete pad with picnic tables and nearby grill.

LITTLE EGYPT PROPOSED



24 - CAMPSITES &
4 CABINS



TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



1 - DUMP STATION



11 - PICNIC SHELTERS



4 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1- SHOWER FACILITY



SWIMMING BEACH



2 - PLAYGROUNDS

LITTLE EGYPT RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING PLAN GOALS

The following identifies primary recommendations to help meet park plan goals:

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES:

- **Interpretation:** Incorporate methods to introduce fun and interesting historic and educational interpretation into site design.
- **Improve Camping Experience:** Slight improvements to existing campsites to make them pull-through improves function and experience. Future considerations for expanded camping as needs dictate.
- **Day-Use Area:** Allow for adequate day use recreation that also supports campground activities.

4-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Programming:** Williams County Parks will offer programs during spring, fall and winter seasons to promote outdoor recreation (spring and fall hiking/biking, winter ice fishing, etc.).

STEWARDSHIP:

- **Education & Volunteerism:** Williams County will promote programs and events focused on utilizing volunteer efforts and educating users.
- **Park Information:** Rules, regulations and a park contact person will be easily identifiable for park users.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- **Materials & Construction:** Development and improvements will consider materials and amenities with longer life spans and less maintenance. Consider sandy soils.
- **Natural Resources:** Proper management of the natural resources will protect and improve habitat, water quality, and other natural resources with a focus on erosion control.

A description of the primary plan recommendations is provided with the concept plan illustration on the following page.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular Circulation

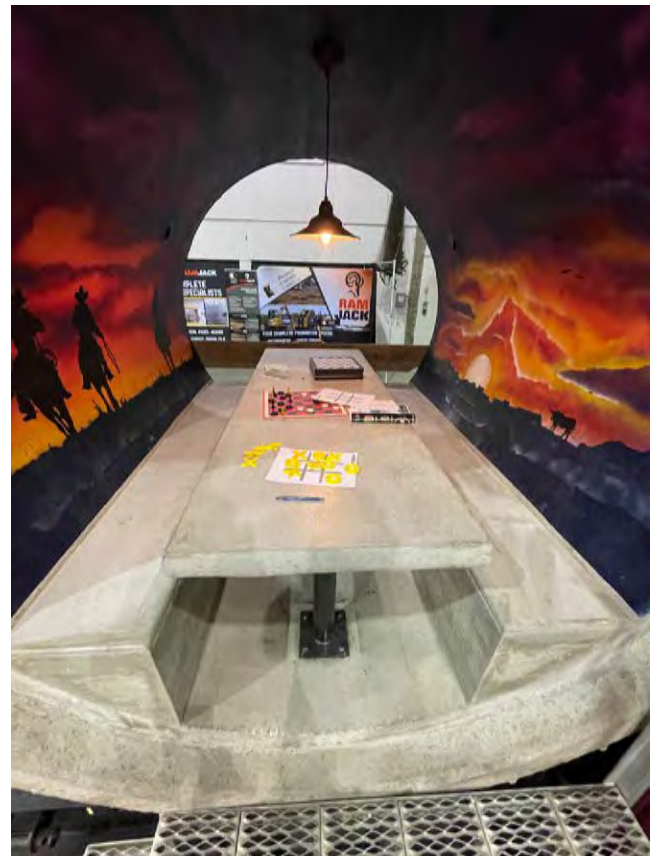
- **Park Roads:** Pave park roads with a realigned entrance road to create a primary loop drive. Relocated dump station to accommodate new circulation. An internal loop drive provides connection to potential future campsite expansion areas and provides exit route for existing campsites.
- **Ice Access:** Reconfigured small paved parking lot on northeast side of park with winter vehicular ice access route.

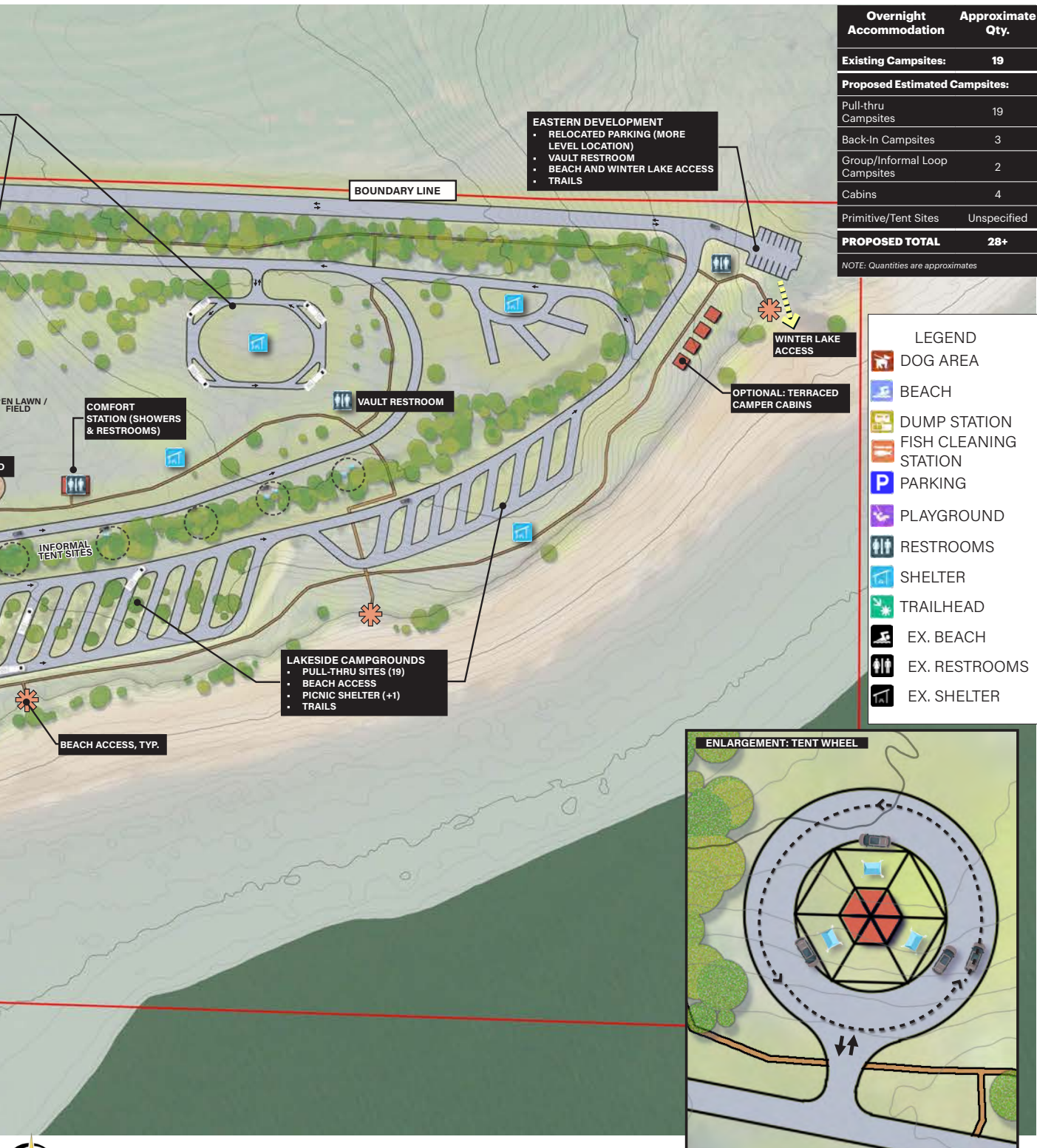
Campgrounds

- **Pay Station:** Located along entrance drive beyond day use area with a widened area to pull up a vehicle. Includes general campground rules, map and contact information.
- **Existing Campsite Improvements:** Make all existing campsites pull-through.
- **Inner Campground:** Option to expand and improve camping within large open area protected from tree rows. Group sites with electric and water services, picnic table, and fire pit. Existing tent sites have added electrical pedestals. Optional tent wheel. Added comfort station, vault restrooms, playground, and picnic shelters.
- **Camper Cabins:** Optional, near ice access.

Day Use & Recreational Area

- **Parking:** Parking along main 2-way park drive in lower area.
- **Recreation:** Open turf field, playground, picnic shelter, and quad restroom with running water. Optional disc golf area or challenge pieces in prairie and informal sledding hill.
- **Trails:** Natural trails that can also be used as an optional mountain bike course.
- **Picnic Shelter:** Shelter with performance pad and integrated interpretation. Consider views for use as photo opportunity. Additional concrete shelters and potential culvert shelters.





| Overnight Accommodation | Approximate Qty. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Existing Campsites: | 19 |
| Proposed Estimated Campsites: | |
| Pull-thru Campsites | 19 |
| Back-In Campsites | 3 |
| Group/Informal Loop Campsites | 2 |
| Cabins | 4 |
| Primitive/Tent Sites | Unspecified |
| PROPOSED TOTAL | 28+ |

NOTE: Quantities are approximates

LEGEND

- DOG AREA
- BEACH
- DUMP STATION
- FISH CLEANING STATION
- PARKING
- PLAYGROUND
- RESTROOMS
- SHELTER
- TRAILHEAD
- EX. BEACH
- EX. RESTROOMS
- EX. SHELTER

MCGREGOR DAM PROPOSED



24 - CAMPSITES



TENT/PRIMITIVE AREAS



1 - DUMP STATION



5 - PICNIC SHELTERS



4 - RESTROOM BLDGS



1 - SHOWER FACILITY



2 - PLAYGROUNDS



2 - BOAT LAUNCHES



2 - DOCKS/PIERS

MCGREGOR DAM RECOMMENDATIONS

MEETING PLAN GOALS

The following identifies primary recommendations to help meet park plan goals:

HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES:

- **Improve Camping Experience:** Improvements to eastern park campsites with pull-through sites and potential future expansion on western park campsites. Improved amenities help meet current needs, greater flexibility and improved experience for varying types of user groups.
- **Day-Use Area:** Allow for day use recreation that also supports campground activities.

4-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Programming:** Williams County Parks will offer programs during spring, fall and winter seasons to promote outdoor recreation (spring and fall hiking/biking, winter ice fishing, etc.).

STEWARDSHIP:

- **Education & Volunteerism:** Williams County will promote programs and events focused on utilizing volunteer efforts and educating users.
- **Park Information:** Rules, regulations and a park contact person will be easily identifiable for park users.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- **Materials & Construction:** Development and improvements will consider materials and amenities with longer life spans and less maintenance.
- **Natural Resources:** Proper management of the natural resources will protect and improve habitat, water quality, and other natural resources.

A description of the primary plan recommendations is provided with the concept plan illustration on the following page.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular Circulation

- **Entrance Road:** Realigned entrance road to avoid duplication and confusion.

Main Campground & Boat Launch

The main campground is modified to improve overall circulation, safety and layout. The following provides greater detail.

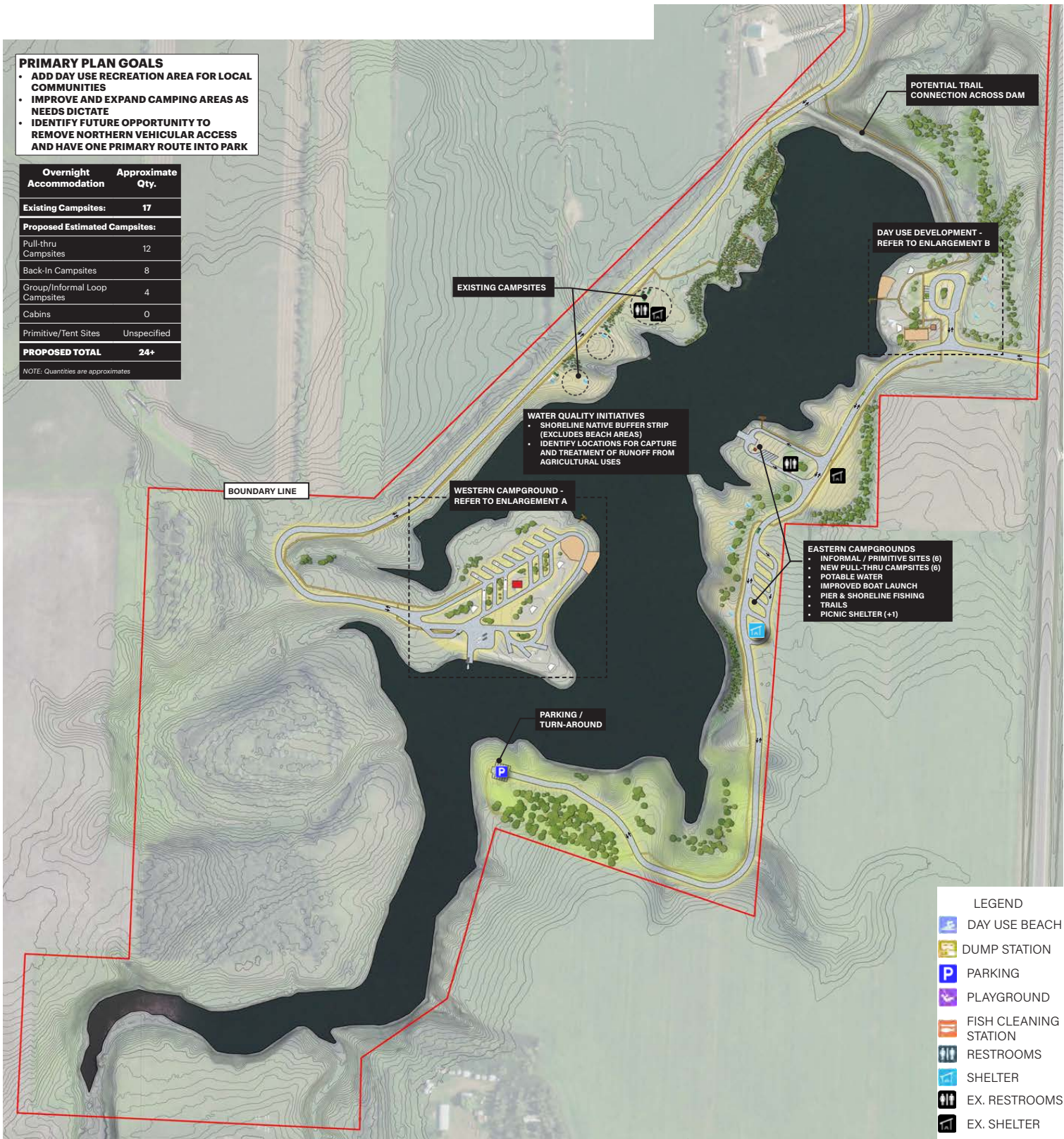
- **Pay Station:** Located along entrance drive with a widened area to pull up a vehicle. Includes general campground rules, map and contact information.
- **Boat Launch:** As an option, but possibly a lower priority, the plan shows a relocated boat launch that swaps location with the swimming beach. Includes a small parking area, fish cleaning station and boarding dock.
- **Campground Improvements:** Some reconfigured to allow for more adequate spacing and sizes of campsites and stormwater improvements. Some sites may need agreement or easement with landowner. Campsites are delineated with level pads, general use areas and amenities to include picnic table and fire pit, as well as electric services and water hook-ups and an added comfort station. Tent sites are relocated to the linear area along the lake that is shady and difficult for campers.
- **Dump Station:** Relocated due to new entrance road.



- PRIMARY PLAN GOALS**
- ADD DAY USE RECREATION AREA FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES
 - IMPROVE AND EXPAND CAMPING AREAS AS NEEDS DICTATE
 - IDENTIFY FUTURE OPPORTUNITY TO REMOVE NORTHERN VEHICULAR ACCESS AND HAVE ONE PRIMARY ROUTE INTO PARK

| Overnight Accommodation | Approximate Qty. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Existing Campsites: | 17 |
| Proposed Estimated Campsites: | |
| Pull-thru Campsites | 12 |
| Back-In Campsites | 8 |
| Group/Informal Loop Campsites | 4 |
| Cabins | 0 |
| Primitive/Tent Sites | Unspecified |
| PROPOSED TOTAL | 24+ |

NOTE: Quantities are approximates

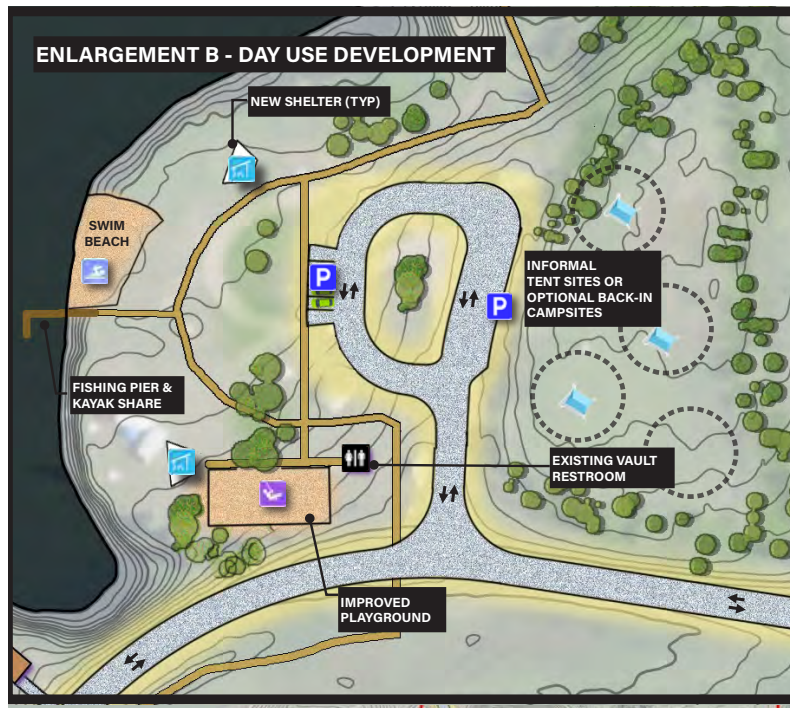


- LEGEND**
- DAY USE BEACH
 - DUMP STATION
 - PARKING
 - PLAYGROUND
 - FISH CLEANING STATION
 - RESTROOMS
 - SHELTER
 - EX. RESTROOMS
 - EX. SHELTER

McGregor Dam | Schematic Master Plan

Williams County, North Dakota
November 5, 2021 | WSB Project number: 017689-000



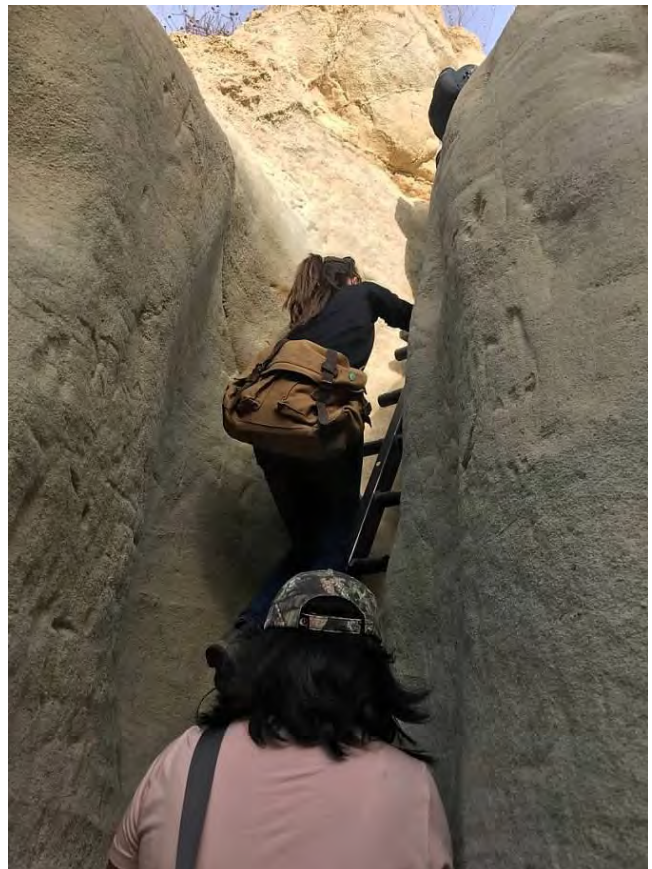


FUTURE PARKS

PRIMARY VISION

The vision for additions to the current park system is to provide opportunities for varying types of recreation than what is currently found and to expand recreation across all seasons. Other important aspects included more challenging or unique experiences, and a sense of adventure. The Park Board should carefully determine expansion of the park system to ensure funding is adequate to add to the park system along with the necessary staffing for ongoing maintenance and operations.

Additional parks should be strategically located based upon the opportunities that individual sites may present to fill existing needs and should also consider the needs of access from growing populations. As communities continue to grow, park search areas may continue to shift to be in alignment with the growth areas.



FUTURE TRAILS

PRIMARY VISION

There are many opportunities for expansion of trail systems across Williams County. Partnerships with stakeholders and buy-in by the community are important considerations along with funding needs. Initial planning and feasibility studies for trail systems should be undertaken to identify potential routes with regional significance that may result in funding opportunities. Smaller routes may be easier to implement but working with stakeholders will be key to their success.



IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

6



OVERVIEW

Implementing the recommendations of the plan will require significant initial and long-term capital investments for development, operations, and maintenance. Realistically, implementation will occur over a number of years as funding and other resources are made available. This section considers an overall strategy for implementing the plan that takes these factors into consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The implementation strategy is based on County goals and objectives, trends in recreation, and community feedback. The implementation and management plan should be used as a guide for determining future priorities and updated accordingly.

Implementation of the park improvements will occur across the park system based on strategic priorities. Factors affecting priorities may be based on the condition of existing park facilities, meeting the needs of the populations, and partnership opportunities in line with available funding. While the plan identifies initial recommendations and priorities, the strategy shall remain dynamic so that priorities consistently stay in line with community needs, changes in demographics, and derived benefits to the public.

The strategy for implementing the system plan and establishing priorities is underpinned by two primary objectives:

1. Developing a balanced system that offers multiple diverse recreational opportunities.
2. Taking advantage of opportunities as they arise.



PRIORITIZATION STRATEGY

The following table identifies the evaluation criteria that will inform the priority rankings. The criteria are based on factors that influence the demand for parks, trails, and recreation and are broad enough to consider the important factors, yet limited enough to be manageable for decision-makers to gain consensus and take action.

| Prioritization Strategy | |
|--|--|
| Evaluation Criteria | General Description |
| Community Need | Action is warranted due to identified community need or demand based on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Meets an identified need (from needs assessment) » Improves equity of park system (more diverse) » Balances overall quality of system |
| Redevelopment / Upgrading | Action is warranted due to the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Unsafe conditions / hazard / poor quality » Old and at the end of its life-cycle » Ineffective at servicing current needs |
| Funding Availability | Action is warranted due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Funding availability for specific development » Partnership or funding opportunity for specific development |
| Securing Lands and Preservation of Natural Resources | Action is warranted due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lands needed for expanding park system or trail development » Protection of significant natural resources and habitat |

PRIORITIZATION

The following provides initial recommendations for prioritization based on meeting primary project goals. They should continue to be evaluated and ranked as opportunities or changes in community needs and desires dictate.

It is important to consider the impact to the community when prioritizing improvements. More comprehensive projects that are completed at once are much more impactful and meaningful to users than when investments are scattered across the system. Smaller improvements can go unnoticed and make the parks feel unfinished, which leaves the user with a feeling of being dissatisfied. Due to the size of many of the parks, phasing the improvements will likely be necessary but can still consider completion of specific areas in order to lessen the impact of construction to the users and be more apparent when completed.

PARK PRIORITIES

Park priorities and methodology are as follows:

- 1. Lookout Park:** This park is nearly complete and finishing it off for a quality park experience will make a more positive impact that will be noticeable to the users.
- 2. Blacktail Dam:** Due to the high amount of use and the greatest needs for a safer and more pleasant park experience, this park is ranked as a higher priority. Of highest importance is the bypass road to remove it from traversing through the primary campground.
- 3. Epping-Springbrook Dam:** This is ranked as a medium to high priority. The highest priority for improvements at this site include the realignment of the main entrance road to make it more user-friendly and will also protect the site from ongoing erosion issues.
- 4. Kota Ray Dam:** This is a medium park priority. It is currently generally meeting the needs of the users, though many amenities are nearing or past their lifespan and are in need of replacement. However, of higher importance is correcting the erosion issues that are affecting the site and lake.
- 5. Little Egypt:** This is a high priority site but is listed lower in priority for implementation only due to the amount time necessary to complete all of the Federal regulatory investigations, reviews and permitting prior to proceeding with any improvements. It is recommended that Williams County immediately begin the process to gain approval. In the near-term, the County may be able to proceed with modifications to the existing campsites without having to go through the more extensive approvals process.
- 6. McGregor Dam:** This park is ranked low in priority based on the fact this site receives little overnight use, has restrictions on camping, and is currently meeting existing needs. Some minor improvements may be warranted but larger projects are not recommended until there is a higher demand at this site.

FUTURE PARKS

Before identifying future additions to the county park system, further planning and feasibility studies should be completed to identify if it meets an existing need and if it meets the criteria for providing quality outdoor recreation for the county-wide populations based on the site size, character, natural resources, and opportunity for development.

It is recommended that potential future parks provide more varying types of recreation rather than focusing primarily on campgrounds in order to meet more diverse needs. Park facilities that can help generate revenue to be reinvested into the park system are also an important consideration.

TRAIL SYSTEM PRIORITIES

Williams County should be proactive in reaching out to other agencies, partners, and stakeholders to start the process of identifying potential trail corridors and networks. It can be a lengthy process to get from initial trail planning to actual implementation, stressing the importance of starting the conversations in the near term so opportunities are not lost through future land development.

Recreational trails are a growing demand and there are some very unique trail experiences that could be developed with connection to prime destinations which could benefit the local economy by supporting tourism efforts.

There are some potential opportunities to explore for trail development. Some examples include:

- Grenora route along an old rail line
- Connection to the Columbus mountain bike trails
- Connections and loop routes to Williston from neighborhoods outside of city limits with connections to Fort Buford, Fort Union, and Trenton township
- Scenic 1804 routes (look for separated alignments, not primarily along road)
- Missouri River routes to connect to Williston Little Muddy trails
- Hwy 85 route to Theodore Roosevelt North Unit

PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS & EASEMENTS

The cost projections do not include costs for property acquisitions for park properties, trail corridors, or easements. It is recommended that Williams County proceed with securing any joint agreements or easements for existing park and trail improvements that expand beyond current county ownership or infringe upon necessary buffers or setbacks. Trail systems in particular are a high priority to continually be actively engaged with inholders to develop acquisition strategies for securing lands.

COST PROJECTIONS

The cost projections describe the estimate of probable costs of construction associated with the recommendations of the park system plan. These costs were developed on projects of similar size and complexity and assumes that the work would be completed by a licensed and bonded contractor. Costs do not take into consideration work that could be performed by the County, volunteers, or donations. The estimates also do not include costs for land acquisitions or easements due to new park or trail development.

The cost figures are based upon a high-level master plan evaluation, which brings certain limitations due to project unknowns. The cost figures are meant for general budgetary purposes, project phasing, and comparing the relative cost of one item to that of another. Although the costs are meant to be conservative, the actual costs will vary depending on a number of factors, including actual topography of the site, soil conditions, current economic conditions affecting bidding, and other unknown site factors.

It should be noted that the costs were developed during the 2021 to 2022 construction time frame which included significant volatility in the bidding environment due to rapid inflation, high fuel prices, high product demands, and low product availability. The estimates generally consist of prices that are somewhat conservative, but do not account for the extreme changes taking place in the current economic conditions. Due to these uncertainties, the estimates should also be reviewed annually and adjusted to account for current conditions. Inflation rates should be applied at the time of design to adjust to the most current economic conditions. While the general rule of thumb is to assume a 3% to 5% increase each year for inflation, this factor should be evaluated at the time of budgeting and implementation in accordance with current economic conditions.

The estimates break out proposed recommendations with a preliminary listing for order of priority. These are based on the premise of providing the most meaningful improvements and also take into consideration some construction phasing that will need to precede other improvements. These priorities are subject to modifications based upon available budgets and preferred phasing approach.

For the purposes of this estimate, estimated construction costs have been added to include 15% set aside for general construction costs associated with bonding, earthwork and erosion control. An additional 15% is included for a construction contingency to help cover unknowns.

The alternates or optional area include items that were lower in priority and can be implemented in any order. Also included under this category are professional design fees that were based on assumptions for specific items that would necessitate professional design and engineering costs.

BLACKTAIL DAM

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Priority | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| 1 | Bypass Road & Trail Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New paved bypass road Pave existing road up to intersection of beach access road Wayfinding signage New dump station Lake loop trail (gravel) | \$1.6 to \$2M |
| 2 | Boat Ramp Redevelopment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocated boat ramp Boarding dock Paved parking lot Fish cleaning station Vault restroom | \$700,000 to \$1M (may be some cost sharing opportunities) |
| 3 | Main Campground Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New campsite development Paved internal roads Comfort station building Playground Picnic shelters (7) Swimming beach Fishing piers (2) & shoreline fishing Trails | \$2.3 to \$2.5M |
| 4 | Peninsula Spur Campground Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realign / improve select existing campsites | \$75,000 to \$100,000 |
| 5 | Beach Campground Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New campsite development Improvements to existing campsites Picnic shelter (1) Day use parking lot (gravel) New playground | \$230,000 to \$250,000 |
| 6 | Prairie Trails & Disc Golf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day use parking (gravel) Natural trails & simple ped bridge Picnic shelter (1) Wayfinding signage Disc golf (9-hole) Overlooks and seating | \$200,000 to \$250,000 |
| 7 | Primitive Campsite | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravel parking and drives Picnic shelter (1) Vault restroom Fishing pier & shoreline fishing | \$200,000 |
| 8 | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$1.5 to \$2M |
| | SUBTOTAL | | \$7 to \$8.3 M |

BLACKTAIL DAM (CONTINUED)

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| Alternates / Optional | | | |
| | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| | Gated Storage (optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chainlink fencing and gates | \$200,000 to \$250,000 |
| | ATV Area & Campgrounds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravel parking and drives Signage ATV trails Skills course area Campsites (14) Picnic shelters (2) Vault restroom Comfort station Playground | \$1.3 to \$1.5M |
| | Camper Cabin Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Camper cabins by others) Trails Seating overlook Vault restroom Entrance road and parking | \$300,000 to \$400,000 |
| | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$250,000 to \$380,000 |
| | Professional Design Fees (includes all base & alternates) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of 10-15% (select items) | \$800,000 to \$900,000 |
| | SUBTOTAL | | \$2.8 to \$3.4 M |

EPPING SPRINGBROOK DAM

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| Priority | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| 1 | New Entrance Road | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New entrance road Dump station Stormwater improvements Signage | \$800,000 to \$1M |
| 2 | RV Pull-Thru Campsites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campsites (8) Picnic shelter (1) Comfort station | \$800,000 to \$1M |
| 3 | Campground Recreation Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day use parking and turn-around Playground Picnic shelters (2) Swimming beach Volleyball court Fishing pier (1) & shoreline fishing Trails | \$400,000 to \$500,000 |
| 4 | Tent Campsite Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocated sites Miscellaneous improvements | \$10,000 to \$15,000 |
| 5 | Day Use Development Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking lot (gravel) Picnic shelters (2) Fishing pier Trails | \$200,000 to \$250,000 |
| 6 | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$650,000 to \$850,000 |
| SUBTOTAL | | | \$2.8 to \$3.6 M |
| Alternates / Optional | | | |
| | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| | Boat Ramp Redevelopment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boat ramp and parking Boarding dock Fish cleaning station | \$500,000 to \$600,000 |
| | Dog Beach and Run Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dog swimming beach Dog park and run | \$50,000 to \$75,000 |
| | Southern Fishing Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing pier & shoreline fishing Picnic shelter (1) | \$100,000 to \$120,000 |
| | Boardwalk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boardwalk to fishing area | \$400,000 to \$600,000 |
| | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$300,000 to \$400,000 |
| | Professional Design Fees (includes all base & alternates) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of 10-15% (select items) | \$400,000 to \$500,000 |
| SUBTOTAL | | | \$1.7 to \$2.3 M |

KOTA RAY DAM

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|------------------------|
| Priority | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| 1 | Main Campground Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New entrance road & retaining wall Dump station Stormwater improvements Signage Fishing piers (2) & shoreline fishing Campsite redevelopment Picnic shelters (2) Comfort station Playground | \$1.4 to \$1.5M |
| 2 | Northern Parcel Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrance road and parking (gravel) Fishing piers (2) & shoreline fishing Picnic shelter w/performance pad Restrooms Retaining walls amphitheater Playground Kids bike course | \$800,000 to \$1M |
| 3 | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$650,000 to \$750,000 |
| | SUBTOTAL | | \$2.8 to \$3.2 M |
| Alternates / Optional | | | |
| | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| | Boat Ramp Redevelopment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boat ramp and parking Boarding dock Fish cleaning station | \$400,000 to \$500,000 |
| | New Swimming Beach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dog swimming beach Dog park and run | \$15,000 |
| | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$125,000 to \$155,000 |
| | Professional Design Fees (includes all base & alternates) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of 10-15% (select items) | \$300,000 to \$400,000 |
| | SUBTOTAL | | \$840K to \$1 M |

LITTLE EGYPT

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|------------------------|
| Priority | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| 1 | Existing Campsite Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make all sites pull-through Picnic shelter (1) | \$100,000 to \$150,000 |
| 2 | Road Redevelopment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pave existing north road Redevelop paved primary road and loop Dump station Internal gravel campsite loop Signage | \$1.2 to \$1.4M |
| 3 | Winter Ice Access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paved parking Vault restroom | \$250,000 to \$350,000 |
| 4 | Day-Use Recreation Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day use parking Restroom w/utilities Playground Picnic shelters (3) Shelter w/performance pad Disc golf course (9-hole) Retaining wall amphitheater Volleyball court Trails | \$1 to \$1.5M |
| 5 | Campsite Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comfort station Playground Picnic shelters (3) Trails | \$1 to \$1.3M |
| 6 | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$1 to \$1.4M |
| SUBTOTAL | | | \$3.5 to \$6.1 M |
| Alternates / Optional | | | |
| | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| | Challenge Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge type of equipment | \$300,000 to \$600,000 |
| | Campsite Expansion (center area) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group campsites Tent campsite improvements | \$200,000 to \$300,000 |
| | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$150,000 to \$270,000 |
| | Professional Design Fees (includes all base & alternates) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of 10-15% (select items) | \$450,000 to \$550,000 |
| SUBTOTAL | | | \$1.1 to \$1.7 M |

LOOKOUT PARK

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Priority | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| 1 | Park Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete walks / pads Picnic shelter Picnic tables (2) | \$50,000 to \$60,000 |
| 2 | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% construction contingency 5% general construction costs | \$5,000 to \$6,000 |
| | TOTAL | | \$55 to \$66K |

MCGREGOR DAM

| Estimate of Probable Costs | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|------------------------|
| Priority | Plan Component | Description | Estimate |
| 1 | Eastern Day Use Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road improvements and parking Playground Swimming beach Picnic shelters (2) Fishing pier (1) & shoreline fishing | \$300,000 to \$500,000 |
| 2 | Eastern RV Pull-Thru Campsites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campsites (8) Picnic shelter (1) | \$150,000 to \$250,000 |
| 3 | Western Campground Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road adjustments Improved boat launch and parking Dump station Pull-thru campsites (6) Group campsite Playground Picnic shelters (3) Swimming beach Comfort station Fishing pier (1) & shoreline fishing Trails | \$1.4 to \$1.6M |
| 4 | Trails | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural trails | \$50,000 to \$100,000 |
| 5 | General Construction Factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% construction contingency 15% general construction costs | \$500,000 to \$750,000 |
| | Professional Design Fees (includes all base & alternates) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of 10-15% (select items) | \$200,000 to \$300,000 |
| | TOTAL | | \$2.6 to \$3.5 M |

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

The cost of trail construction can be a major barrier for communities hoping to build out non-motorized transportation and recreational networks. The following table outlines planning-level cost estimates for common bicycle facilities. While actual implementation costs can vary dramatically, these figures provide a general idea of the investment required and the cost differences between various facility types.

| Planning Level Estimates | |
|--|------------------------|
| Type | Cost per Mile |
| Paved Shoulder | \$300,000 to \$550,000 |
| Multi-use Separated Bituminous Trail (10' wide) | \$300,000 to \$500,000 |
| Natural Trail (5' wide compacted soils to aggregate) | \$50,000 to \$200,000 |

MANAGEMENT PLAN

OVERVIEW

Management and operations of the park and trail systems is the primary consideration for a park system that is successful or a failure. If the parks are not properly managed to be kept functioning, clean and safe, the park will quickly become degraded and will attract undesirable uses.

The Park Board is charged with the operation and management of the parks identified in this plan and established policies and goals for the park system. Funds for management and operations are provided through an annual budgeting process that identifies capital and operating funds for the parks.

REVENUE & EXPENSES

The Parks Department has an annual budget of approximately \$__ million with a current fund of approximately \$__ million to operate and maintain the park system.

The Park Board receives mineral royalties from the land at Blacktail Dam, Epping-Springbrook Dam, and Kota Ray Dam. Williams County and also receives a Gross Production Tax (GPT) collected from oil producers by the State of North Dakota. Tax revenue is deposited into the County General Fund. The Parks Department receives approximately 80% of its funding from the General Fund, with the exception of maintenance at Blacktail Dam. Williams County also receives a percentage of sales tax revenue to be used specifically for marketing and awareness. North Dakota Game & Fish stocks the dams through their fisheries program and they manage and will contribute to boat ramps, fishing improvements, and habitat management.

Additional revenue contributing to the park operating budget includes the following:

| Revenue | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Description | 2021 Actual |
| Blacktail Dam | \$29,142 |
| Epping-Springbrook Dam | \$6,751 |
| Kota Ray Dam | \$4,766 |
| Little Egypt | \$7,788 |
| McGregor Dam | \$2,025 |
| Oil Royalties | \$87,752 |
| Grants / In-Lieu | \$58,964,27 |
| Golf Course Fee's | \$223 |
| Storage Fee's | \$7,220 |

PARK OPERATIONS

Management and operations is the key critical component of a successful park and trail system. The parks department has one full time Parks Director meant to provide leadership, oversight and management with up to five temporary/seasonal employees under the Director. There are approximately five seasonal employees. In addition, the parks department is supported by other Williams County service areas, such as marketing, GIS, accounting, etc. with employed mechanics and equipment.

The Parks Director is currently undertaking a considerable amount of maintenance tasks. This does not allow for adequate time for management tasks such as budgeting, applying for funding opportunities, developing recreation programs, and strengthening relationships with partner agencies.

In order to meet the growing needs of the park system, it is recommended that the County explore considerations for an additional full or part time employee to help alleviate lesser tasks from the Parks Director and to also support programs and operations. An employee dedicated to natural resource management across the system may also be desired, however, there may be opportunities to work with Game and Fish to help support some of those activities.

Williams County recognizes the need to remain committed to the maintenance needs of the park system and to meet the new needs and priorities identified in the system plan. It is unlikely that existing staff and budget resources will be sufficient for proposed new development.

MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

The existing maintenance center currently serves a maintenance function and is located at Blacktail Dam where demands for oversight and maintenance are generally higher. Some of the other park sites have storage sheds to allow for easier access to smaller equipment but staff typically have to haul larger items to and from each park site.

Due to the large size of Williams County and the broad distribution of parks, there should be consideration for support facilities for larger equipment, materials and other storage needs dedicated for the parks department. With the primary location of the Williams County building in Williston, this provides an opportunity for location of a heated support facility equipment to be in close proximity to staff.

Beyond Williston, storage facilities may be able to be secured either at the park sites, or in nearby locations that would be more centrally located to several parks.

CONCLUSION

Williams County is undertaking a visionary approach to ensuring the future park and trail system will provide desired forms of recreation to existing and future park users. Through exploration of the wild natural lands to passive enjoyment of the abundant nature, there will be many forms of recreation available and suitable for many user preferences.



APPENDIX