

Irving and John Anderson Park

Master Plan 2013

September 2013

Isanti County Parks



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Photo: Steve Kingsbury

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Goals of the Master Plan

Irving and John Anderson Park (Anderson Park) is a 174-acre park located within Isanti County and the Anoka Sandplain. The land was acquisitioned in 2007 as part of funding allocated through the state Remediation Grant Program, the state Regional Parks Grant Program, the Metro Greenways Grant Program, along with donations from the Trust for Public Land, Oxford Township, and the Anderson Family. The park now consists mainly of restored tall-grass prairie, and is adjacent to two lakes (Horseshoe and Horseleg Lakes) with high-quality wetlands and hardwood forest area. A trail system, of over (3) miles of mowed paths, serve as one of the Park's largest assets. Some of the other improvements to the park have included the creation of a parking lot, a log picnic shelter, three wetland boardwalks, an interactive playground and an elevated viewing platform. In the fall of 2008, the Friends of Anderson Park was established. This is a group of community members who are dedicated to the stewardship of the park through preservation of the wildlife and diverse vegetation found here.



Photo: Steve Kingsbury

During the summer of 2013, through a partnership between Isanti County Parks, Friends of Anderson Park, the University of Minnesota's Center for Rural Design and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, a master planning process for Anderson Park was launched. The desire for a master plan grew out of increased interest in investment in the park by the Friends of Anderson Park. The goals of this process are to:

- a) create an outline for future activities
- b) identify partnerships and implementing agencies for these activities
- c) recognize short-, mid-, and long-term timelines for implementation
- d) foster community input and engagement through the master planning process and beyond
- e) enable future development of Anderson Park that will reflect the shared values of the community



Birdwatchers at Anderson Park Photo: Joe Sausen



*Wetland Boardwalk,
Photo: Joe Sausen*



*Elevated Observation Platform
Photo: Barry Wendorf*

Classification

A tangential goal of the master planning process is to create a working document to serve as a deliverable within applications for future Park & Trail Legacy funding, and any other type of funding in the future. Initially, the intention is to have Anderson Park recognized as a Natural Resource-Based Regional Park, according to the Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan of January 2013. As outlined in this document, a Natural Resource-Based Regional Park should provide “high quality outdoor recreational opportunities in a natural and scenic setting,” in order to qualify. Anderson Park meets this criteria, as it includes large areas of remnant and restored prairie, access to (2) lakes, wetland areas with high bio-diversity, and northern hardwood forests. Within these settings, the following recreational offerings are provided:

- Picnicking and a picnic shelter
- Multi-use trails (non-motorized)
- Canoeing, kayaking, and other non-motorized boat access
- Interactive playground area comprised of found, natural objects
- Elevated observation platform

Facilities which exist at Anderson Park which support recreational activities include:

- Boardwalks across (3) distinct wetland areas
- Portable restroom facility
- Landscaped raingardens with plant species markers
- Vehicular access with (3) parking areas
- Historical and informational signs at trailheads

A series of criteria must be met in order to qualify as a Natural Resource-Based Regional Park. The following pages describe the applicability of the criteria to Anderson Park.



Picnic shelter Photo: Jody Rader



*Big bluestem labeled in the rain garden,
Photo: Jody Rader*



*Chimney swift tower
Photo: Jody Rader*

Criteria #1: Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience

A broad range of recreational activities are available at Anderson Park; nearly all attract individuals and groups of people interested in experiencing the outdoors for the natural beauty of the place and the connection to the landscape and wildlife.

Recreational activities provided at Anderson Park:

- World-class bird-watching (Audubon Society involvement, annual birdwalks hosted by the Friends' Group), including an elevated observation platform overlooking Horseleg Lake and emergent marsh, and man-made bird habitats, such as the chimney swift tower. These were built through partnerships between the Friends of Anderson Park, the Isanti County Parks Department, Wild River Audubon Chapter, and Audubon Minnesota.
- Unique and well-maintained prairie plantings and diversity throughout. Hiking is pleasurable and, because of the flat terrain, the Park has the potential to attract elderly/handicapped visitors.
- Labeled rain garden plantings help to identify prairie plants in the field, in order to enhance experience for those interested in plant identification.
- Public access to Horseleg Lake, facilitating canoeing or kayaking.
- Horseback riding trails, utilized by local riders.
- A large picnic shelter, which allows larger group gatherings to occur within the Park's beautiful setting.
- A nature-based interactive playground area which provides opportunities for children to create their own unique experience through building, digging, and arranging objects from the Park within the play area.

Criteria #2: Preserves a Regionally-Significant and Diverse Natural or Historic Landscape



Restored Prairie Photo: Jody Rader



Wetland Photo: Jody Rader

Prairies are vitally important to the history and function of Minnesota's landscape. At the time of European settlement, tallgrass prairie covered approximately one-third (approximately 18 million acres) of Minnesota. Prairie habitats support a diverse community of plants and animals, such as bison and elk, which have disappeared over the last 150 years. The grass and sedge species with deep root systems cultivated the rich soil which served as the foundation of agricultural use across the state. Today, less than 2% of the original prairie exists within the state (235,076 acres). (Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, 6) Within Anderson Park, there are approximately 13 acres of remnant prairie, containing species such as little bluestem, stiff goldenrod, wild strawberry, pussytoes, hoary puccoon, round-headed bushclover, spiderwort, Indian grass, prairie sage, and yarrow. (Natural Resource Management Plan, 5). Restored prairies cover over (68) acres within the park. Species that have been planted in these areas are big bluestem, indiangrass, little bluestem, sideoats grama, and prairie dropseed, to name a few. The prairie areas overlap the valuable oak savanna areas, which provide additional habitat and contribute to the diversity of flora and fauna within the Park.

Within the wetland areas, there are approximately 30 acres of emergent marsh, adjacent to Horseshoe and Horseleg Lakes. Red-osier dogwood, willow, alder, lake sedge, softstem bulrush, broad-leaved cattails, broad-leaved arrowhead, and cranberry can be found in this area. This is the critical habitat for the threatened Blandings turtle, often spotted within the park. Horseshoe and Horseleg Lakes provide staging areas for migratory waterfowl and the nearby shrub swamps serve as habitat for songbirds and frogs. The two lakes and adjacent wetlands provide nesting areas for loons, trumpeter swans, ducks, shorebirds, and other birds such as warblers, wrens, and lark sparrows.

Most vestiges of the original Anderson Family farm do not exist within the park boundaries, as the emphasis has been to preserve the natural setting and revert the land back to pre-settlement native plant communities. This landscape stands in contrast to the surrounding land cover, which is primarily dedicated to agricultural and residential use.



Becklin Homestead County Park
Photo: co.isanti.mn.us/



Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve
Photo: cedarcreek.umn.edu



Sunrise Prairie Trail
Photo: stacymn.org



Lake Ojiketa Regional Park
Photo: ci.chisago.mn.us

Criteria #3: Well-located and Connected to Serve a Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination

Anderson Park is located in the southeast corner of Isanti County, with close proximity to Anoka and Chisago Counties. Isanti County falls just outside of the 7-county Twin Cities metropolitan area; Anderson Park is easily accessed by Interstate 35 from both Minneapolis (45 miles) and St. Paul (43 miles), and also accessed by Hwy 95 from St. Cloud (65 miles).

Projections indicate that by 2035, the Central region will grow in population by 74.4 percent, with Isanti County listed within the top three counties in the region projected to grow significantly, by 94.8 percent. (An Inventory of Recreation Experience Opportunities in Minnesota: Central Region Profile, 5).

Visitors travel to this part of the Central Region of Minnesota to enjoy the rural character of the landscape and to utilize the many lakes, rivers, and outdoor recreational areas.

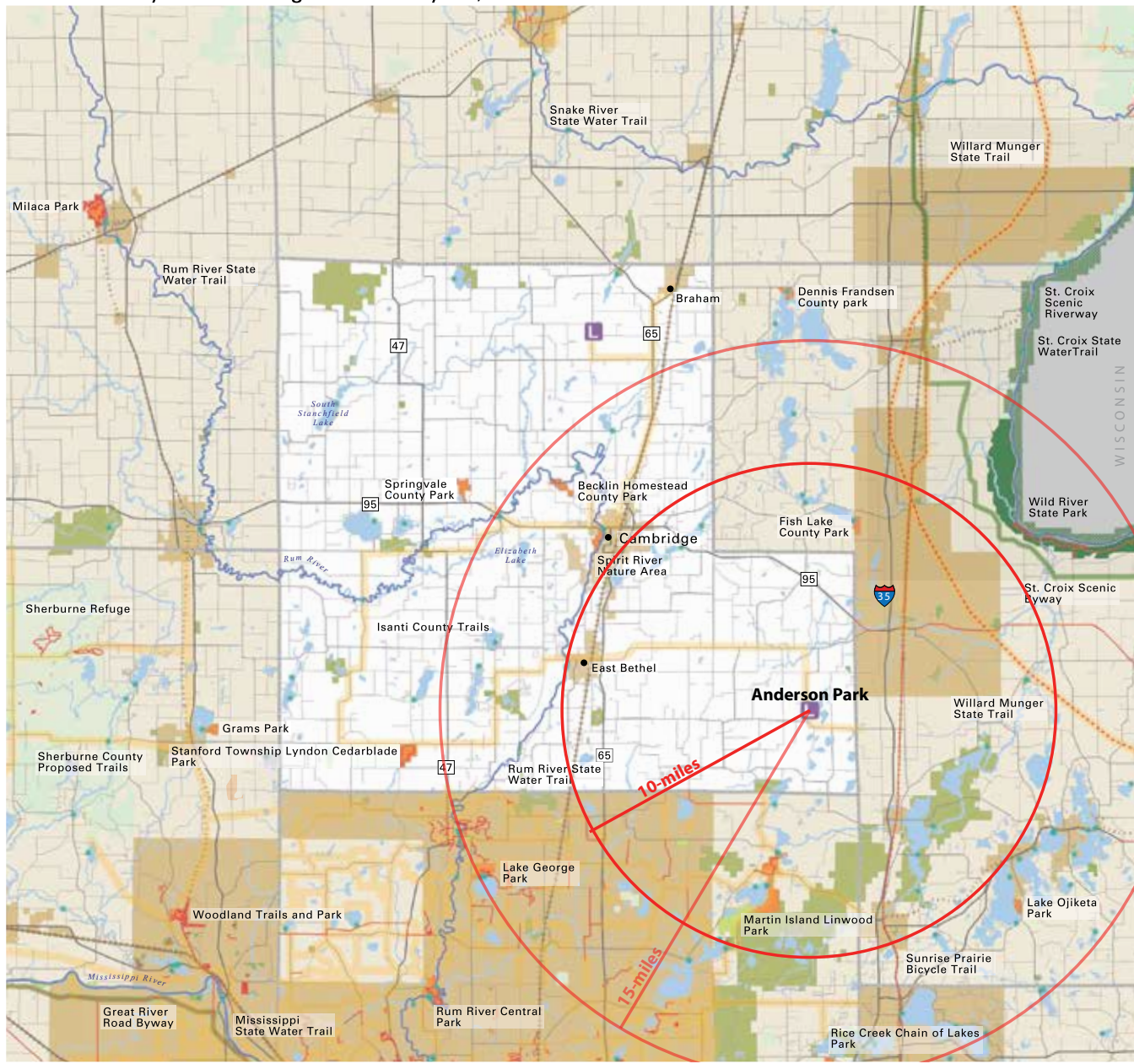
Within a 15-mile radius, the following trails, scenic byways, Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA), State Parks, and Regionally Significant Parks can be found:

- St. Croix Scenic Byway
- Lake Ojiketa Regional Park
- Sunrise Prairie Trail
- Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park
- Martin Island Linwood Lakes Regional Park
- Lake George Regional Park
- Rum River State Water Trail
- Isanti County Trails
- Spirit River Nature Area
- Fish Lake County Park
- Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve
- Carlos Avery WMA
- Becklin Homestead County Park

(Minnesota's Network of Parks & Trails: Inventory, Isanti County Central Region January 15th, 2011).

Minnesota's Network of Parks & Trails: Inventory

Isanti County Central Region January 15, 2011



CENTER FOR
CHANGING
LANDSCAPES

COLLEGE OF DESIGN
Department of Forest Resources
College of Food, Agricultural
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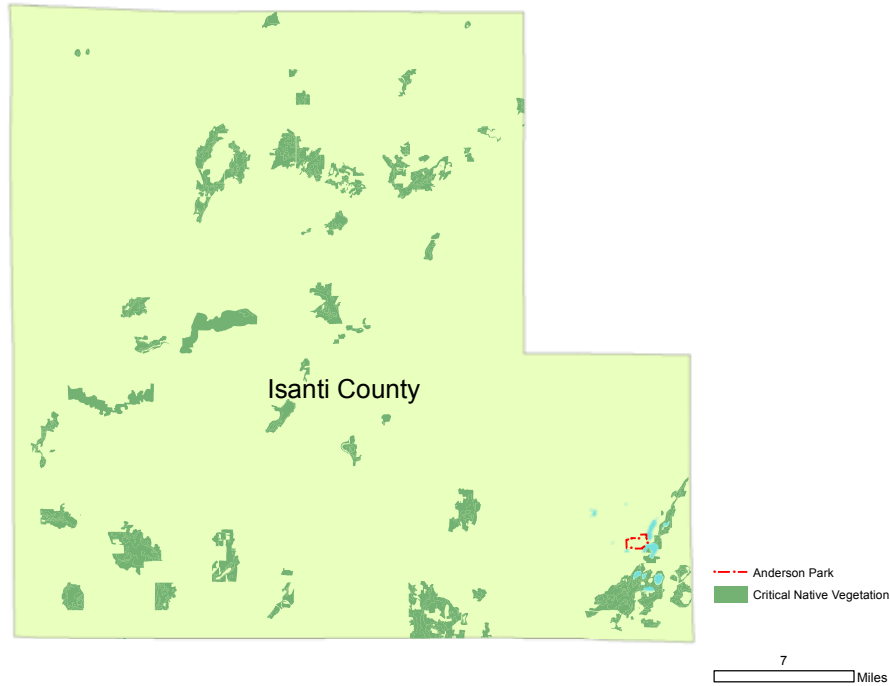


Isanti County

- Federal Forest
- Federal Park
- State Park, Rec Area, Wayside
- State Forest
- DNR WMA
- DNR SNA
- Tribal Land
- Regionally Significant Park
- Planned / Proposed Regionally Significant Park
- Local Park
- Planned / Proposed Local Park
- Legacy Funding 2009 & 2010
- Municipality
- Water
- Public Water Access
- Active Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Scenic Byways
- OHV Trail
- Trail
- Planned Trail
- Proposed Trail
- State Water Trail

10-mile and 15-mile radius overlaid on map of Minnesota's Network of Parks & Trails: Inventory, created by the Center for Changing Landscapes, 2011.

Minnesota Biological Survey:
Critical Native Vegetation of Isanti County



Data: Minnesota Biological Survey, MN DNR



Canada goose
Photo: Joe Sausen



Rare Blandings turtle
Photo: Barry Wendorf

Criteria #4: Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region

Trail-hiking, birdwatching, picnicking, horseback-riding and geo-caching are currently the most popular recreational offerings at Anderson Park. While many of these activities are allowed and encouraged at parks throughout Isanti, Chisago, and Anoka counties, Anderson Park is able to offer a unique experience for recreational users.

Anderson Park is the only county park and one of only three parcels of publicly-owned land east of Hwy 65 in Isanti County. The park boundaries lie within the Twin Lakes Complex, an area identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey as having one of the largest remnants of critical native vegetation in the county. Unique and interesting plant and animal species that are found within the Twin Lakes Complex include Blanding's turtles, red-shouldered hawks, black bears, beavers, otters, sandhill cranes, redheaded woodpeckers, orchids, yellow birch, cranberries, pitcher plants, leatherleaf, waterwillow, white pine, white cedar, wild rice, mink frogs, warblers, loons, black terns and trumpeter swans.

Within the Park, there is a convergence of a variety of ecosystems: lakes, marshes/wetlands, oak savanna, tallgrass prairie, and hardwood forests exist within the property. The trails have been intentionally placed to border the edges of adjacent ecosystems. Because of this, viewing nature, and especially birdwatching are premium activities that are provided by the Park's setting.

In 2012, Anderson Park was the recipient of Legacy Funding, further supporting the notion that this park has regional value and contributes greatly to the variety of recreational offerings that the Central Region has to provide.

Acknowledgments

The master planning process was made possible through a partnership with the Isanti County Park Board, the University of Minnesota's Center for Rural Design, the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, and the Friends of Anderson Park. This document was prepared by Jody Rader, Graduate Research Assistant with the University of Minnesota's College of Design, under the direction of Barry Wendorf, Isanti County Parks & Recreation Director, and Steve Roos, Senior Research Fellow. The Township of Oxford graciously provided space for all meetings and workshops.



Photo: Marlene Yenish



Photo: Jody Rader



Photo: Jody Rader

Proposer and Implementing Agencies

Isanti County Parks & Recreation: The mission of Isanti County Parks & Recreation is to maintain, acquire and/or expand parks that preserve natural areas, provide passive recreation opportunities, strive to maintain the rural character of the county and promote the health, well-being and quality of life for residents of the county.

www.co.isanti.mn.us/parksrechome.html

Friends of Anderson Park: The mission of the Friends of Anderson Park is to preserve the natural beauty and primitive nature of the park and to assist Isanti County with its planning, development and maintenance of facilities.

www.andersonparkfriends-isanti.org/

Oxford Township: Oxford Township is located in the southeastern corner of Isanti County. This municipal organization is responsible for roads, ditches, rights-of-way adjacent to roads, bridges, as well as fire-protection.

oxfordtownship.us/

Wild River Audubon Chapter: This chapter of the National Audubon Society is concerned with birds, wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and biological diversity, with a focus on east-central Minnesota.

www.wildriveraudubon.org/

Isanti County Soil and Water District: This county department provides technical, financial and educational resources to land occupiers in order to implement practices and projects that preserve, protect and enhance the soil, water quality and other natural resources.

<http://www.isantiswcd.org/>

Master Plan Advisory Committee

Lee Kingsbury (Friends of Anderson Park)
Maurie Anderson (Friends of Anderson Park)
Joe Sausen (Wild River Audubon Society)
Bill Carlson (Isanti County Park Board)
Richard Reichle (Isanti County Park Board)
Bob Shogren (Isanti County Park Board)
Susan Morris (Isanti County Commissioner)
Barry Wendorf (Isanti County Parks Director)

Potential Implementing Agencies

The following agencies have the potential to demonstrate partnerships in order to implement the plans set forth in this document:

North Branch Township
Audubon Minnesota
MN Parks and Trails Council

Setting and Regional Context

Isanti County Parks and Recreation

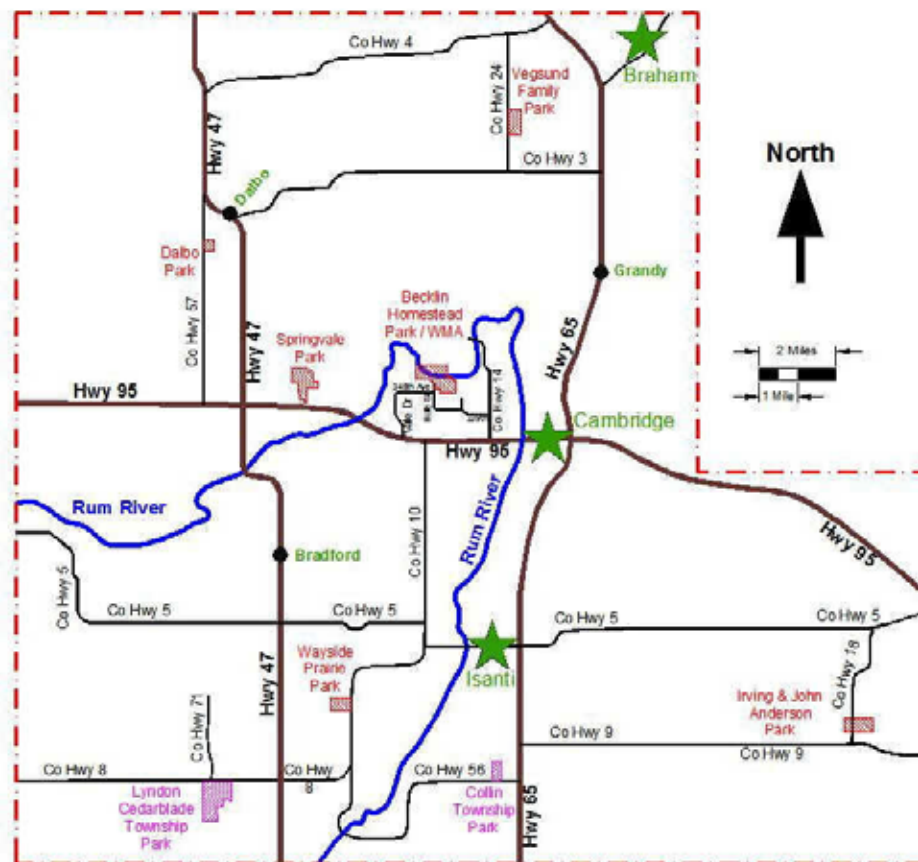


*View up CR18 to neighboring agricultural property
Photo: Jody Rader*

As of the summer of 2013, Anderson Park is the newest acquisition for Isanti County Parks. The addition of the 174-acre park within the County Parks system is compliant and compatible with the goals and implementation strategies outlined in the *Isanti County Parks & Recreation Plan*, completed in January of 2008. This document, which was created through a series of public engagement workshops and with input voiced by residents and administrators throughout the county, the fact that population projections show Isanti County experiencing a relatively high population increase over the next thirty years is noted as a concern. Coinciding with this trend will likely be lowered density rates for new developments, which will mean a higher environmental impact on rural areas, as more land will be converted from agricultural or open pasture to residential and commercial. This places an importance on the placement and presence of Anderson Park, which is not far from Interstate 35, as a unique, preserved historical park and a significant contribution for regional wildlife habitat with diverse plant communities present.

Prior to the addition of Anderson Park within the Isanti County Parks system, there were no county or township parks in the southeast quadrant of the county. Anderson Park is geographically positioned to serve as a future destination within a recreation corridor, connecting other destinations such as:

- Sunrise Prairie Trail
- Marvin W. Schubring Memorial WMA
- Rum River State Water Trail
- Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area
- Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve
- Twin Lakes Special Natural Area
- Martin-Island-Linwood Lakes Regional Park



Isanti County Parks
 Map: Isanti County Parks

Surrounding Parks and Trails

Anderson Park is strategically located within the context of a potential network of regional and county parks and trails in the central region, north of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. No other county park in this region provides the level of high-quality, natural resource-based recreational opportunities (hiking, horseback-riding, bird-watching, picnicking, geo-caching, non-motorized boating, interactive playground) as Anderson Park.

Anderson Park's proximity to the Sunrise Prairie Trail located in Chisago County, serves as an asset. The Sunrise Prairie Trail offers over 16 miles of paved trail and is within 5 miles of Anderson Park.

Within Isanti County, there are five other County Parks: Dalbo County Park, Springvale County Park, Vegsund Family County Park, Becklin Homestead Park/WMA, and Wayside Prairie County Park. These parks strive to preserve natural areas, provide passive recreation opportunities, and work to maintain the rural character of the county, while promoting health, well-being and quality of life for residents.

In addition to the County Parks, there are city parks within Braham, Cambridge, Isanti, and North Branch, all within short driving distance from Anderson Park.



Oxford Township Plat map, courtesy of Oxford Township, <http://oxfordtownship>.



Anderson Park main entrance, Photo: Barry Wendorf

Site Information

The existing boundaries of Anderson Park lie within three adjacent parcels (Parcel Identification Numbers 080021301, 080030102, and 080550020) bounded by Horseleg Lake and Horseshoe Lake to the east, private agricultural-use property to the south, west and north. Adjacent to the northeast boundary of the park exists Kozy Oaks Kamp, a privately-owned family-friendly campground, with motor-home camping facilities available.

The Park is separated by County Road 18 (Furman St. NE), which runs north-south between the smaller west parcels and the larger eastern parcel. The main entrance is located on the east side of County Road 18. A compacted gravel drive intended for vehicles winds through the prairie at the entrance and leads back to a compacted gravel parking lot, picnic pavillion, and access to the pier at Horseleg Lake. There is another entrance to the Park on the west side of County Road 18. Here, visitors can park off of a short drive and access mowed hiking trails.

At 174 acres total, the existing boundaries of the Park are able to meet the needs of the current recreational opportunities, as dictated by demand. However, future plans, as outlined within this document, could necessitate the acquisition of adjacent properties, in order to extend the park. It should be emphasized that the Isanti County Parks and Recreation Department is not actively seeking to purchase property. However, if lands become available from *willing* sellers, for the purpose of adding high-quality wildlife habitat and natural resources to the Park, then Isanti County Parks and Recreation would pursue this acquisition. Preferable adjacent properties for adding habitat and natural resources would be to the east (the property which lies between Horseleg and Horseshoe Lakes, PIN 080020100), which would facilitate further recreational use of the lakes via the Park, and directly to the west (PIN 080030500), which would create further opportunities for extended prairie restoration, access to the park from 275th Ave NE, and allow for more hiking trails within the western side of the Park.

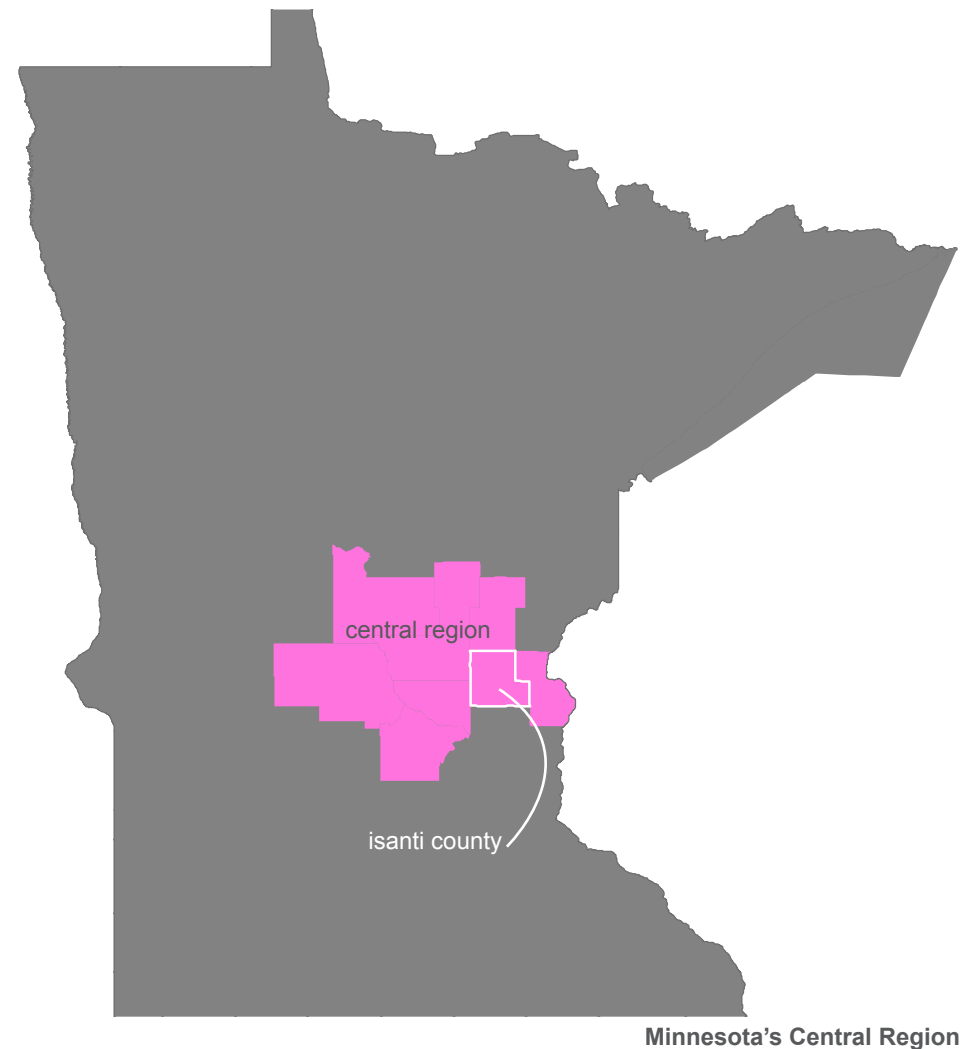
Vision, Trends, and Public Values

Demographics

The Central Region, as defined within the *Central Region Profile* of *Minnesota's Network of Parks and Trails*, consists of the following counties: Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties. Despite the rural character of this region, the overall population density within the Central Region (94.3 persons per square mile), is higher than the State's population density (61.8 persons per square mile). However, the population density of Isanti County is lower than the density of the region at 71.3 persons per square mile. (*Central Region Profile*, 5). The age distribution within the Central Region of younger residents (18 years old and younger) is slightly higher than that of the State, while Isanti County has a slightly lower population younger than 18 years old.

The median household incomes within the Central Region vary widely from one county to the next. Mille Lacs County has the lowest median household income at \$43,616. This is in stark contrast to neighboring Sherburne County, where the median household income is \$67,634. The median household income (based on US Census Data from 2007) for the Central Region is \$58,011, which is higher than the median household income for the State at \$55,664. The median household income for Isanti County residents is \$56,430, making it the county within the Central Region with median household incomes closest to the values listed for the region and the state. (*Central Region Profile*, 6)

According to 2008 US Census Data, 89% of Minnesotans are white, with the Central Region having nearly 96% of residents listed as white. Isanti County is 97.1% white. Mille Lacs County has the highest population of non-white residents, with 4.8% reporting as American Indian/Alaska Natives. (*Central Region Profile*, 7)



Vision, Trends, and Public Values

Recreational Activity in the Region

According to a 2005 study (*2004 Outdoor recreation participation survey of Minnesotans: Report on findings*), walking, hiking, and boating (of all types) are the most common recreational activities performed by Central Region residents; these findings are consistent with statewide recreational activity findings. (Kelly, 2005)

In a 2008 survey to determine the motivation for people to engage in walking or hiking as a recreational activity, physical fitness and experiencing nature were the highest reported motivations for participants in the Central Region. These findings are fairly consistent with statewide survey values reported within the same survey. (Schneider et al, 2009)

A 2008 study reported that there were 7.8 million person-visits to the North Central/West Region (this area is defined by five of the nine counties within the Central Region) from June 2007-May 2008 for the purpose of nature-based tourism. 49% of the visitors were from Minnesota; 31% of the visitors were from the Twin Cities area. (Davidson-Peterson Associates, 2008)

In 2012 (3,966) vehicles were recorded entering and exiting at Anderson Park. This was the first full year of operation for the Park, and also a year with unseasonably warm weather throughout the spring. The first six months at Anderson Park in 2013 (3,391 vehicles counted as of June 2013) have shown the visitor counts to be consistent with the previous year. Use throughout the year has fluxuated, with the largest number of visitor counts reported for the month of May. The month with the lowest number of counts was January. These counts only reflect the number of vehicles which have entered the Park, and do not count the actual number of visitors. (See *Research Plan*, page 38)



Demonstration at Anderson Park
Photo: Joe Sausen

Master Planning Process: Public Engagement

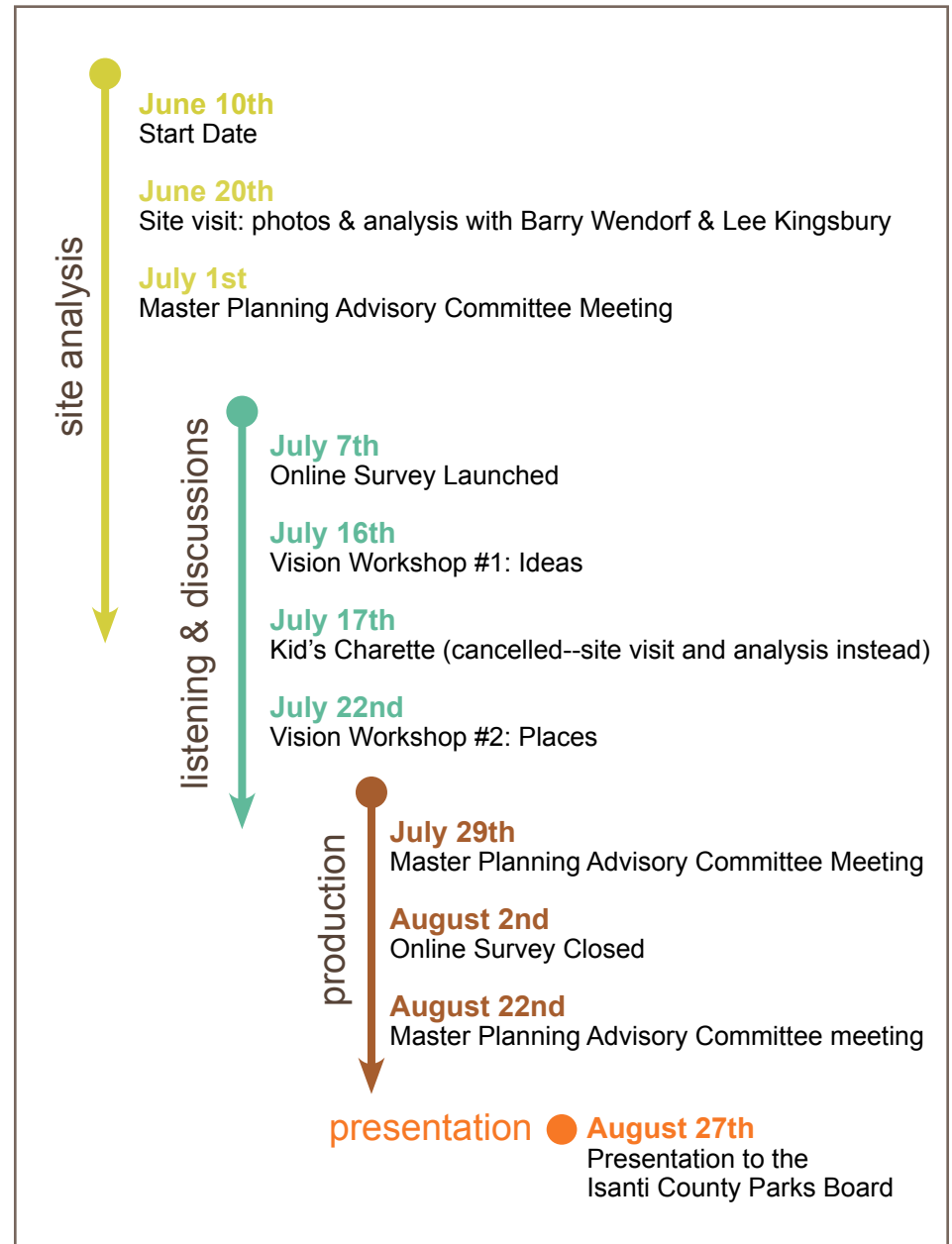
Since 2008, the Friends of Anderson Park has taken great initiative to act as stewards for Anderson Park. Through the dedication of many individuals and local businesses volunteering time, money, and effort, there has been a strong community presence within the Park. Through the Friends' group, community members have gotten involved by attending annual guided bird-walks, guided wildflower hikes, initiating oak wilt clean-up operations, organizing memorial bench fund-raising, planting rain gardens, building the beautiful picnic pavilion on the northeast portion of the Park, and constructing the nature-based interactive playground area. The existing beauty and amenities at the Park today are the physical expression of neighborliness and community involvement.

To continue in the spirit of community involvement, the master planning process, undertaken in the summer of 2013, was designed to gather as much input from the already-invested group of people involved at the Park, along with additional input from people who may have not been involved in the past. An advisory committee was formed, which included members of the Friends of Anderson Park, members at the Isanti County Parks Board, a member of the Wild River Audubon Society, and a County Commissioner.

Two public workshops were hosted during July of 2013. The purpose of these workshops was to gather input from a variety of people regarding existing and future recreation, facilities, education, wildlife habitat, and park amenity opportunities. A children's event was planned, however it was canceled due to weather and low attendance.

In order to gather further information from those who were unable to attend the vision workshops, an online survey was launched. This survey asked similar questions that were posed during the vision workshops. The online survey, along with the planning events were advertised through flyers (which were mailed to all residents within a 2-mile radius of the Park), web-presence on the Isanti County Parks and Friends of Anderson Park websites, and word-of-mouth. A list of stakeholder organizations was generated by the advisory committee at the first meeting, and these organizations were contacted directly by the advisory committee members.

Work Plan: Summer 2013 Anderson Park Master Planning



recreation



Currently, there are many types of recreational activities at Anderson Park. Trail hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, canoeing/kayaking, and birdwatching are some of these programmed activities. Some of these recreational activities require special facilities, such as the birdwatching platform for optimal viewing of birds over the wetland area. Others share facilities and infrastructure, such as horseback riding and trail hiking. Providing a variety of recreational opportunities greatly influences the usage and character of the Park.

What are the recreational activities currently offered at Anderson Park?
List as many as you can think of:

Who are the people engaged in these activities?
(Kids, adults, families, etc.)

How could the current recreational offerings better serve the community?

What are activities that are not currently offered here, but **would be** positive additions in the future ?

Are there other parks that you have visited, which offered recreational activities that could be enjoyed here?

In the next year , we would like to see at Anderson Park:	Over the next 5 years , we would like to see at Anderson Park:	In 20 years , we would like to see at Anderson Park:
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Example of one of large worksheets completed through group discussion and participation

Vision Workshop #1: Ideas

While the turnout for the Vision Workshops was lower than anticipated, the discussions and exchanged ideas which occurred in these meetings generated valuable and viable ideas for future goals and strategies at Anderson Park.

In order to frame the discussion, the first Vision Workshop focused on ideas and programs at the Park. Participants began by introducing themselves, and explaining why they were present. Surprisingly, many participants in this first workshop had never visited the Park; they were interested because they saw a need for additional future programs that were not currently available within the area, and believed that these programs could have a ‘home’ at Anderson Park. Next, a group discussion was held, where ideas were brainstormed through the framework of answering the following questions, as they pertained to recreation, facilities, plants & animals, trails/benches/signs, and education:

- “What is existing?”
- “Who is currently participating?”
- “How could the current conditions be improved?”
- “What can be added?”
- “Where are interesting examples elsewhere?”

Overall, there a few common themes were visited repeatedly:

1. There was a strong desire expressed to get more people within the area to use the Park. Because it is a newer addition to the Isanti County Parks system, people are unaware the Park exists, or are not clear about the activities and programs which exist. Concurrently, there was a strong desire expressed that the Park does not become over-crowded.
2. Integrating more children’s activities at the Park, strengthening the Park’s ties with the local school districts, and finding different ways to teach people about the plants, animals, and history of the Park seemed very important to participants.
3. Further recreational activities needed to be improved upon or facilities needed to be added to the Park in order to entice stewardship of the Park. Some of the suggested ideas for achieving this included: adding areas for informal outdoor games (such as a no-mow field), adding primitive camping as an activity within the park, adding a butterfly garden, and hosting Native American traditional ceremonies and events at the Park.

Vision Workshop #2: Places

The focus of the second Vision Workshop was to take the ideas generated during the first Vision Workshop, and begin to lay them out within the park. This required group discussion related to the overlap and relationships of various activities, and also spurred further discussion of changes in activity throughout the year. Notably, an area avid horseback rider, and member of the Friends of Anderson Park was in attendance; her insight regarding the needs and necessary facilities for horseback riders, their horses, and their vehicles was able to add valuable clarity to the discussion.

Inevitably, the group discussion of placement spurred further ideas of programs and projects that would improve the park and increase the quality of experience for visitors. Here are some of the larger topics that were discussed:

1. Increasing the accessibility of the boardwalks and pier were identified as priorities, as well as building more observation platforms throughout the Park.
2. Currently, signage is minimal within the Park; a lack of large, intrusive signs lends to the authentic, natural experience. However, wayfinding is difficult and educational opportunities were identified throughout, both of which could be improved through additional well-designed signs.
3. Similarly, the Park is in need of identity outside of the Park boundaries, both in the way of signs directing people to the Park, and by a recognizable landmark at the entrance. Creative ideas were discussed regarding integrating art into this landmark, and using it as a means to advertise upcoming events.
4. The shared use of all of the trails creates a conflict between hikers, horseback riders, and bicyclists. Most of this is due to the damage that is caused by horses on mowed paths. Divots created by horse hooves pose as a hazard for walkers, bikers, and joggers on the paths. Creating horseback riding-only trails, and limiting the time of year that horses are allowed within the park were ideas that were presented to alleviate this problem.

Online Survey

The intention of the online survey was to extend the opportunity to provide a voice in the planning of Anderson Park to a larger audience. The survey was open beginning July 3rd, and closed August 2nd. In total, eleven people participated in the online survey.

The survey consisted of (23) total questions, all of which were open-ended, so as to avoid any sort of bias. Similarly, the survey was completely anonymous, with no access to any personal information regarding online survey participants. The survey questions were split into the same categories as presented in Workshop #1 (recreation, facilities, plants & animals, trails/benches/signs, and education), with similar questions asked regarding existing conditions and users, and then asking further detailed questions regarding ideas for future improvements and additions.

All of the responses were thorough, enthusiastic, and well-thought out, and generally echoed the responses that were received at the Vision Workshops. However, there did seem to be a running theme that was voiced louder through the online survey. This was the desire for the Park to remain quiet, with the underlying natural beauty and superb wildlife habitat serving as the largest asset and catalyst for future decision-making.

Responses to the online survey are listed in the Appendix.



Vision Workshop #2 Photo: Barry Wendorf

A Vision for Anderson Park

Through the Vision Workshops and the online survey, some notable quotes were gathered that voice the sentiment of the community and help to define the Park and the direction that people would like to see it heading towards.

“We need to get kids and families here!”

“I like the low-tech rustic approach the Park has right now. I wouldn’t want to see a lot more development or it will lose the ‘wild’ feel.”

“Keep it simple! Enjoying the last wooded and prairie vestiges of earth remain a vibrant wish.”

“This piece of property will be fantastic if our grandkids were able to appreciate the same characteristics as it once was. I hope it will still have its’ fingerprints in 100 years.”

“This Park is a world-class birding spot....and a huge asset to our community.”

“It is important to have some strong guidelines to make sure that [the Park] doesn’t change a lot.”

“I like the passive nature of the park and would like it to remain walking, bird watching, hiking and nothing active or structured.”

Anderson Park Vision Statement

With input gathered at the community meetings, and through an interactive and iterative process with the Anderson Park Advisory Committee, a Vision Statement was determined, which reflects the existing and progressive values embraced at Anderson Park.

The stewards of Anderson Park will continue to

PRESERVE

the ecological integrity of the Park,

RESTORE

its native habitats, and

CONNECT

people with the natural world through innovative outdoor experiences.

PRESERVE

Preservation of the ecological integrity of the Park is important for the future of Anderson Park, Isanti County, and the Central Region of Minnesota. Today, most of the area surrounding the Park is dedicated to agricultural, commercial, or residential uses, and projections show this area increasing in development. The Park serves as a means to protect ecologically sensitive and invaluable areas, not only for the enjoyment of humans, but also for the vitality of plants and animals.

RESTORE

Preservation alone cannot repair ecosystems and return them to functioning, healthy places for wildlife to thrive. Restoration implies an active approach to researching the history of the land, and strategically utilizing accepted best practice methods to create verdant and lively habitats.

CONNECT

Preservation and restoration plans are only as effective as the people who are able to implement these measures. By connecting people to the natural world, via innovative outdoor experiences provided at Anderson Park, generations of visitors, community members, and outdoor enthusiasts from across the region will continue to practice stewardship and find inspiration in the Park, and ultimately, in all natural places on Earth.

Vision Timeline

Determining a vision that is attainable requires identifying key milestones and weighing short-term, middle-term, and long-term priorities. At the end of both Vision Workshops and the online survey, participants were asked to fill in the blank for the following statements. The lists below summarize the answers given.

“In the **next year**, I’d like to see _____ at Anderson Park.”

- More Blanding’s turtles, native orchids, monarch butterflies, bull snakes, warblers, etc....
- More trail grooming in the winter for XC skiing
- Increased membership for the Friends of Anderson Park
- More children and adults using the Park and becoming active
- Local colleges using the Park for research/classes and an established connection with the public schools in the area
- More community-based events
- More observation spots for birdwatching
- An area planted with no-mow species grass for informal recreation
- Some interpretive signs installed informing visitors about the plants and animals that they see at the Park

“Over the next **five years**, I’d like to see _____ at Anderson Park”.

- More oak savanna restorations
- A funding plan for possible acquisition of adjacent properties to expand the acreage of the Park
- Widespread knowledge that Anderson Park is a world-class birding site
- Programs that engage people of all ages in nature experiences, connecting them with the natural world
- Separate trails for horses, another boardwalk on the wetland on the western side
- Electricity and water access near the existing parking and pavilion area
- Snowshoeing trails
- Solar lights installed
- Groomed cross-country ski trails
- Explicit trail delineation for certain uses, such as horseback riding, hiking, and mountain-biking

“In **20 years**, I’d like to see _____ at Anderson Park.”

- Further acquisition of key parcels adjacent to the Park
- Native bird populations flourishing
- An East-Central Minnesota Birding Trail that lists Isanti County Parks, especially Anderson Park, a “must-see” site on the birding trail.
- A well-established nature-study school for people of all ages
- A green corridor extending from Carlos Avery and Cedar Creek through Isanti County
- Many more people using the Park on a daily basis
- The natural and historical beauty of the Park has been maintained
- Full-time personnel working at the Park to facilitate more nature-based activities

Development Master Plan

Master Plan Principles and Goals

The following pages detail principles and goals, as determined through the community input sessions, with approval from the Advisory Committee. For each principle statement, an explanation of existing conditions and motivations for the principle are outlined, followed by a list of short-term (to be accomplished in 1-2 years), and mid-term goals (to be accomplished within 2-5 years). Long-term goals, which are much broader, are listed here (right). All of the goals outlined within the Development Master Plan reflect the Vision Statement. The long-term goals are expressed within this document as the five principles guiding the short-term and mid-term goals.

For each short- and mid-term goal, there is a short explanation and a general list of requirements, which include programs, funding, materials, or future partnerships. Where possible, the implementing agency or partnership is named, such as Isanti County Parks or the Friends of Anderson Park.

A few of the goals overlap principles, demonstrating how a single solution can suffice to meet the needs of multiple issues.

A corresponding illustrative site plan demonstrates the existing, short-term, and mid-term goals, as they would appear physically throughout the Park. These site plans are meant to serve as schematic plans, and further detailed civil and construction drawings will be needed for implementation of ideas. It is the intention, as well, that a more detailed Park map, as shown in these examples, will better communicate the Vision for the future and the opportunities which exist now at Anderson Park. A site plan depicting the long-term goals was determined to be unnecessary, as after the mid-term goals are implemented, further development will likely not be expressed in the built form and will likely be focused on adding activities and programs. It is nearly unanimous amongst all involved in the master planning process to keep Anderson Park from becoming overly developed with structures.

Long-Term Goals

Principle #1:

Increase the publicity and the number of visitors who frequent Anderson Park

Principle #2:

Increase the quality and availability of a variety of recreational opportunities at Anderson Park, along with associated facilities as needed.

Principle #3:

Make the Park enjoyable and accessible for people of all ages and capabilities.

Principle #4:

Expand educational opportunities throughout Anderson Park.

Principle #5:

Seek additional land acquisition for Anderson Park of adjacent properties for the purpose of increasing the potential for high-quality wildlife habitat and additional natural resources.

Principle #1: Increase the publicity and the number of visitors who frequent Anderson Park

Anderson Park contains incredible opportunities to experience nature-based recreation. For those that are frequent visitors to the Park, the desire to share this experience with others is strong, as it will benefit the Park, through increased stewardship. Equally, those who visit Anderson Park will inevitably benefit, as their appreciation and knowledge of the important plant communities and wildlife native to Central Minnesota will increase, along with all benefits associated with outdoor fitness.

While increasing users of the Park, it is important that the existing character remains—rustic with minimal visible human footprint, and quiet (except for the birds!). Today, the challenge exists that the Park is new, and relatively unknown outside of the current users and Friends of Anderson Park.



Activities with kids at Anderson Park Photos: Marlene Yenish

Anderson Park entrance Photo: Jody Rader

Short-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 1-2 years)

a) Establish a lasting connection through an on-going program with the local elementary/junior high or high schools (Cambridge-Isanti, North Branch, Chisago Lakes, St. Francis and Braham) to integrate lessons on geography, history, natural sciences, or biology. (See Principle #4 as well) *This will require creating a program that is able to sustain itself through personnel turnover and the progression of students, to create long-lasting and enduring opportunities for teachers, students, and administrators to work and learn at Anderson Park. This may also require additional staff (Isanti County Parks) to assist.*

b) Utilize the web-based and social-media outlets, along with the regional news outlets for advertising events and activities that occur at the Park. Additionally, create or strengthen relationships between the Park stewards and 4H clubs, home-school co-ops, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts by offering educational day camps. *This could require at least one person to dedicate up to 2-5 hours per week to update photos and information and maintain contacts with news outlet, or additional staff as community outreach coordinators.*

Mid-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 2-5 years)

a) Create a visual attraction at the east entrance of the park, to serve as a landmark and a way to advertise upcoming events. *This landmark should be visually attractive, express the values embraced by Anderson Park (natural resources), able to endure years of exposure to the elements, and be uniquely artistic. A somewhat popular idea presented at a Vision Workshop was to install large sculptural bison along the prairie adjacent to Hwy 18 at the entrance to the Park or a sculptural tribute to the many birds that are appreciated at the Park. A way to facilitate excitement and innovation for this project and for the Park may be to host a regional design competition.*

b) Install or add to existing roadside signs along the major highways and county roads in the area to assist wayfinding to the Park. *This will require establishing a relationship with the Department of Transportation and meeting any local or statewide requirements for sign installation, along with additional funding for implementation.*

Principle #2: Increase the quality and availability of a variety of recreational opportunities at Anderson Park, along with associated facilities as needed.

Today, the majority of visitors who enjoy Anderson Park on a frequent basis are interested in hiking along the mowed trails and birdwatching. Families and kids use the interactive playground frequently, as this is a unique and inviting amenity. These activities will likely remain the main attractions of the Park, as it has been expressed through the community input sessions that these activities are in demand in the area. However, it has been acknowledged that non-motorized boating (canoeing and kayaking) is also in demand, along with further nature-based recreation. The accommodations at Anderson Park are available for these activities, but there is room for improvement.

Additionally, the Park boasts a beautiful, locally-designed and built pavilion, which has the capacity to hold large groups of people for gatherings. However, there is currently no running water or electricity to service this building, which makes food service and larger gatherings difficult. The existing restroom facility is (1) portable outhouse, which is located near the pavilion, with a vertical wood screen installed on (3) sides facing the pavilion.

The restored and remnant prairie, abundant throughout the Park, serves as a natural-resource asset, contributing to wildlife habitat and stormwater drainage for the area. The tallgrass, however, is difficult to walk through and there does not currently exist an area for informal or spontaneous games, such as tossing a baseball or frisbee with kids, or kite-flying.



Horse riders on a gravel trail
Photo: doublesmokefarm.com

One of the only conflicts which exists for visitors at Anderson Park revolves around the damage that is caused to the existing mowed trails by horses on the trails. Deep divots in the earth pose as a safety risk for hikers and joggers along the trail, along with contributing to surface-level soil erosion. There have been a few isolated incidents involving horses on the boardwalks, which is strictly prohibited due to weight capacities of the boardwalk structures, and some complaints that horse droppings throughout the trails and at high-traffic areas are a nuisance. It has been determined that the current conditions of the Park do not facilitate trailer-transport of horses to the Park, as the existing parking area does not have space for trailer-turnaround; most horseback riders who visit Anderson Park ride their horses into the Park, implying that the recreational offering of horseback riding is somewhat limited to local riders. Coinciding with this, is the fact that the existing trails, while lengthy enough to create challenging and interesting hiking trails, are considered short for horseback riding. It was determined through the Vision Workshops and Advisory Committee meetings that it is not the majority's wish to create additional facilities, in order to cater to regional-scaled horseback riders. However, there is opportunity to compromise and tighten up Park policies regarding horseback riding.

Principle #2: Increase the quality and availability of a variety of recreational opportunities at Anderson Park, along with associated facilities as needed.

Short-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 1-2 years)

a) Extend the existing pier at Horseleg Lake to facilitate launching of non-motorized boats during the spring, summer, and fall. Additionally, add a turnaround area near the pier for vehicles with trailers. *This will require funding for materials and installation. The pier should be extended at least 30' into the lake, in order to reach the deeper portions of the water.*

b) Add trail markers throughout the existing trail system, especially at trail intersections, to assist with wayfinding within the Park. Integrate the trail names and distances into Park maps. *This will require minimal effort to install and maintain small trail markers. An update of the existing park map with trail names will be required.*

c) Continue to maintain existing interactive, nature-based playground near the pavilion area, along with the raingarden with plant identification markers. These amenities are highly valued by the community, as they encourage imaginative exploration. A potential longer-term goal may be to build an “eagles nest”-style platform in this area, to be tailored to children’s curiosities and exploration of birdwatching and wildlife viewing. *Maintenance of existing facilities does not require any additional funding or effort. A children’s viewing platform will require a design which emphasizes safety for children, along with funding for installation, materials, and site work.*

d) Improve cross-country ski trails during the winter season through grooming. Include a snowshoeing trail on park maps. *This will require on-going funds for trail maintenance, along with an updated park map.*

e) Create a clearly-defined and extensively communicated policy on horseback riding within the Park. *This policy should address the time of the year that horseback riding is allowed (generally avoiding the wet seasons), and explain rules regarding clean-up of droppings, etc...*



The fishing pier and an existing trail marker Photos: Jody Rader



Volunteers working to improve Anderson Park Photos: Marlene Yenish

Principle #2 (continued): Increase the quality and availability of a variety of recreational opportunities at Anderson Park, along with associated facilities as needed.

Mid-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 2-5 years)

a) Install up to (1) acre of no-mow species grass in the area west of the pavilion for informal recreation. *This will require the funding for materials and labor to install and also require at least one year for soil preparation, seeding, and growing. Fescue, sedge, or other drought-tolerant species that thrive in sandy soil are preferable for this area. A designated path from the pavilion area will also need to be maintained.*

b) Install potable water and electricity service to the pavilion area only. *This will require coordinating with local utilities, and raising funds for installation. Installing solar-powered or alternative energy sources would be preferred.*

c) Install composting toilets or permanent vault-style toilets, to replace the existing portable toilet. *This will require raising the funds for materials and installation, but will also require an on-going cleaning and maintenance schedule, to be implemented by the Isanti County Parks.*

d) Implement a system for canoe storage or rental at Horseleg Lake, to increase the interest of visitors both locally and regionally. Encourage non-motorized boaters to access the Horseshoe Lake as well as Horseleg Lake. *This will require a) an addition of at least (1) seasonal, full-time employee to oversee rentals, and/or b) a yearly membership system for canoe or kayak storage on-site. Additional staff or staff-hours with the Isanti County Parks may be needed to assist with this goal. Another idea would be to partner closely with Kozy Oaks to take advantage of existing amenities. Marking the access point at Horseshoe Lake on Park maps will be required as well.*



Planted no-mow grass Photo: Bob Mugaas, U of M



*example of canoe storage
Photo: suspenszkayakstorage.com*



*example of compost toilet
Photo: nachi.org*

Principle #2: Increase the quality and availability of a variety of recreational opportunities at Anderson Park, along with associated facilities as needed.



Elevated observation platform
Photo: Barry Wendorf



Example of bird-blind
Photo: arts.muohio.edu



Example of regional greenway
Photo: rvcog.org

e) Install (2) additional observation platforms. One platform will be located along the southeast edge of the existing Park boundary, within the wetland area adjacent to Horseshoe Lake. This viewing platform will be “in the cattails”, only slightly elevated, and designed as a bird blind. The second platform will be located in the western portion of the Park, facing southeast—overlooking the existing shrub-carr area. This will likely be designed to be also only slightly elevated. *This will require funding for materials, installation, design, and associated site work for the construction of the platforms. Also, installation of components should not disturb existing habitat.*

f) Expand the existing parking options by 10-15 additional spaces, including at least (1) handicap-accessible space. *This will require the funding for materials, labor to install, design work, and site work to create additional parking. Spaces are to be surfaced with class 5 aggregate or similar. 10-15 additional parking spaces will require at least 2,000sf of additional area. Additional parking may create an opportunity to add turn-around space for larger vehicles, such as school buses or vehicles with trailers.*

g) Create a green/recreational corridor linking parks throughout the region via motor vehicle, bicycle and/or hiking trails. Connections with the Sunrise Prairie Trail, the Marvin W. Schubring Memorial WMA, the Rum River State Water Trail or the Carlos Avery WMA are all possible links (see page 9) that could be created from Anderson Park. *This will require regional-level coordination between county and state agencies. Regional-level master planning of a Central Region corridor, with stakeholder input will be necessary for this process and implementation. At Anderson Park, proper entrances, signage, and maps may need to be updated in order to accommodate such a corridor.*

h) Identify specific trails to be specially surfaced for horseback riding, to avoid damage to the existing mowed trails. *This will require conversion of existing mowed trails to gravel-surfaced (or similar material). These trails should be very clearly marked, both on maps and on the trails.*

Principle #3: Make the Park enjoyable and accessible for people of all ages and capabilities.

This principle is mainly emphasizing the creation of handicap-accessible paths, boardwalks, and facilities throughout the Park. The existing topography lends itself well to maintaining fairly accessible grades throughout the trail system without too much intervention. However the lack of surface material makes maneuvering the existing mowed trails difficult for people who use walkers or wheelchairs. Additionally, the boardwalk does not currently provide places for turning around for people who use wheelchairs. These turnaround areas could also serve as areas of rest or additional birdwatching platforms for all visitors to the Park. It should be emphasized that any additional facilities will be designed in a manner which reflects the values and character of Anderson Park.



Example of turnaround Photo: crotchedmountain.org_turnaround



Example of trail bench Photo: accessiblenaturetravel.com



Examples of accessible trail and crushed gravel Photos: americantrails.org



Hiking trail for all Photo: crotchedmountain.org

Short-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 1-2 years)

- a) Install a gravel path (class 5 aggregate) to the east boardwalk (Marigold Marsh Walk) from the parking/pavilion area. *This will require the funding for materials and labor to install the path, along with detailed design work to ensure that the maximum grade does not exceed 1:20 rise-to-run ratio.*
- b) Install a turnaround at the end of the existing pier (coordinate with pier extension project mentioned in Principle #2, short-term goals) to accommodate the reversal of direction for a person in a wheelchair. *This will require the funding for materials and labor to install, along with design work to ensure that the turnaround will meet accepted standards for accessibility.*

Mid-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 2-5 years)

- a) Install at least (2) platforms along the existing boardwalk along the east side of the Park to allow for wheelchair turnarounds. Potentially install benches or armrests to serve as areas of rest or wildlife viewing. *This will require funding for materials and labor to install the additional platforms. The bench design could potentially be accomplished through a design competition.*
- b) Designate specific trails throughout the Park which are completely accessible by someone in a wheelchair, providing full-access to the existing picnic area along Horseshoe Lake. *This will require either the addition of new trails throughout the Park, or the installation of class 5 aggregate or a similar material within an existing trail. It will also require updating any maps and wayfinding devices throughout the Park in order to clearly communicate path types.*
- c) Integrate accessible design into as many built elements within the Park, moving forward. This will include any additional observation platforms, trails, restroom facilities, and parking. *This will require design consultation for all built projects in order to adhere to accepted accessibility standards.*

Principle #4: Expand educational opportunities throughout Anderson Park.

The potential for educational opportunities is incredibly strong at Anderson Park. The idea of further integrating education for people of all ages has nearly unanimous support by all those involved in the master planning process. Because the Park contains both remnant and planted prairie, there are many lessons to be taught regarding the importance and value of this plant community, especially in our region where it has nearly disappeared since European settlement. Rotational prescribed burns are an interesting facet to the on-going maintenance of the Park, and provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about the survival techniques of various plant species throughout multiple plant communities. Wildlife and vegetation is abundant, healthy, and easily spotted throughout, creating excellent opportunities for plant and animal identification tours. Wetland processes function at the Park, filtering phosphates and nitrates from nearby crops, creating an opportunity to do water testing and learning about de-nitrification processes.



Birdwatcher at Anderson Park
Photo: Steve Kingsbury



Pie and Ice Cream Day with kids at Anderson Park
Photos: Marlene Yenish



Nature-based educational events at Anderson Park
Photos: Barry Wendorf



Short-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 1-2 years)

a) Establish a lasting connection through an on-going program with the local elementary/junior high or high schools (Cambridge-Isanti, North Branch, Chisago Lakes, St. Francis and Brahm) to integrate lessons on geography, history, natural sciences, or biology. (See Principle #1 as well) *This will require creating a program that is able to sustain itself through personnel turnover and the progression of students, to create long-lasting and enduring opportunities for teachers, students, and administrators to work and learn at Anderson Park. This may also require additional staff (Isanti County Parks) to assist.*

b) Install at least (2) interpretive signs throughout the Park, explaining the natural systems at work and the relationship between wildlife and plants at that particular place. *This requires the funding for materials, installation, and design of these signs. It should be stressed that these signs need to be of the highest-possible quality, both in terms of endurance and aesthetics. Discrete, unobtrusive designs would be preferred.*

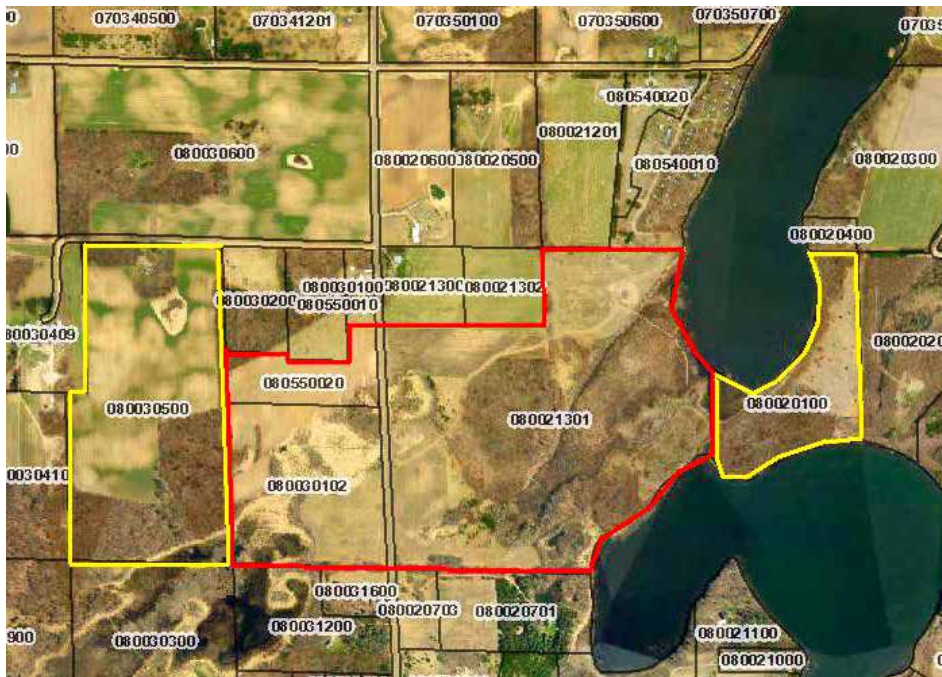
Mid-Term Goals (to be accomplished within 2-5 years)

a) Create a citizen-scientist program to collect data throughout the Park. This could include items such as photographs taken at particular places, creating a database that visitors can add identified species to, or creating a system of measuring water levels/temperatures/etc. whereas visitors can contribute to the ongoing monitoring of particular aspects of the Park. *This will require the partnership with a local natural resource-based agencies and the Friends' Group to coordinate communication through their website/facebook. Citizen-scientist programs offer opportunities to 'crowd-sourced' data that can be collected by visitors. This will potentially require additional staff through Isanti County Parks for implementation.*

b) Establish a full-time employee to serve as the residing Park Naturalist, who will facilitate educational activities for visitors. *This will require an on-going funding source and support from the Isanti County Parks to create a full-time or seasonal position. This is potentially a longer-term goal, as full implementation may take longer than 5 years.*

Principle #5: Seek additional land acquisition for Anderson Park of adjacent properties for the purpose of increasing the potential for high-quality wildlife habitat and additional natural resources.

Currently, the 174 acres that comprise Anderson Park are suitable to meet the current demand of visitors and are also suitable for providing miles of recreational trails. However, with projected population increase, and the projected success of Principle #1 (to increase visitor counts at Anderson Park), additional land area dedicated to the Park will be desired. The current trend of agricultural land conversion to residential or commercial use in areas of increasing development (like Isanti County) creates a further need for high-quality wildlife habitat to be restored, and preserved. Adjacent lands that can serve as additions to the existing Anderson Park will increase the quality of the existing and added lands, as larger, contiguous patches of natural areas are able to provide better habitat within an ecosystem, over smaller, separated patches. It should be emphasized that the Park Board will only seek adjacent lands from willing sellers, if the opportunity arises.



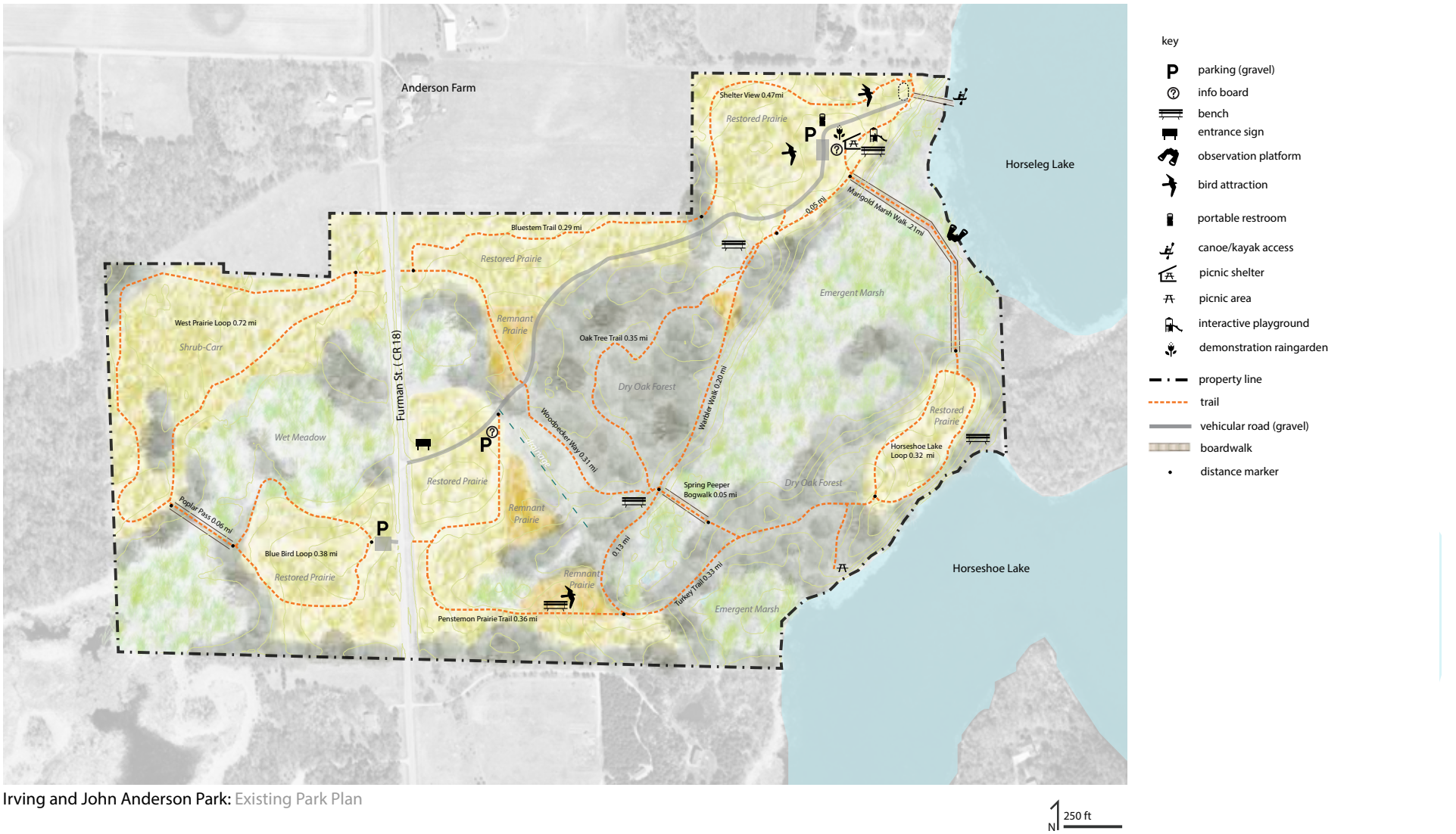
**Parcel map showing existing Park parcels (red)
and potential future additional parcels (yellow)**
Map: Barry Wendorf

Mid-to-Long-term Goal (anytime)

a) Proceed with acquisition of adjacent properties to add acreage to Anderson Park, with the sole purpose of raising the quality and quantity of high-quality wildlife habitat, with secondary purpose of increasing recreational opportunities through such acquisitions. *This will require funding for land acquisition and the existence of willing sellers of preferable properties. The properties immediately adjacent to the east and the west of the Anderson Park property boundaries have been identified as top choices, should the opportunity for Park expansion arise.*

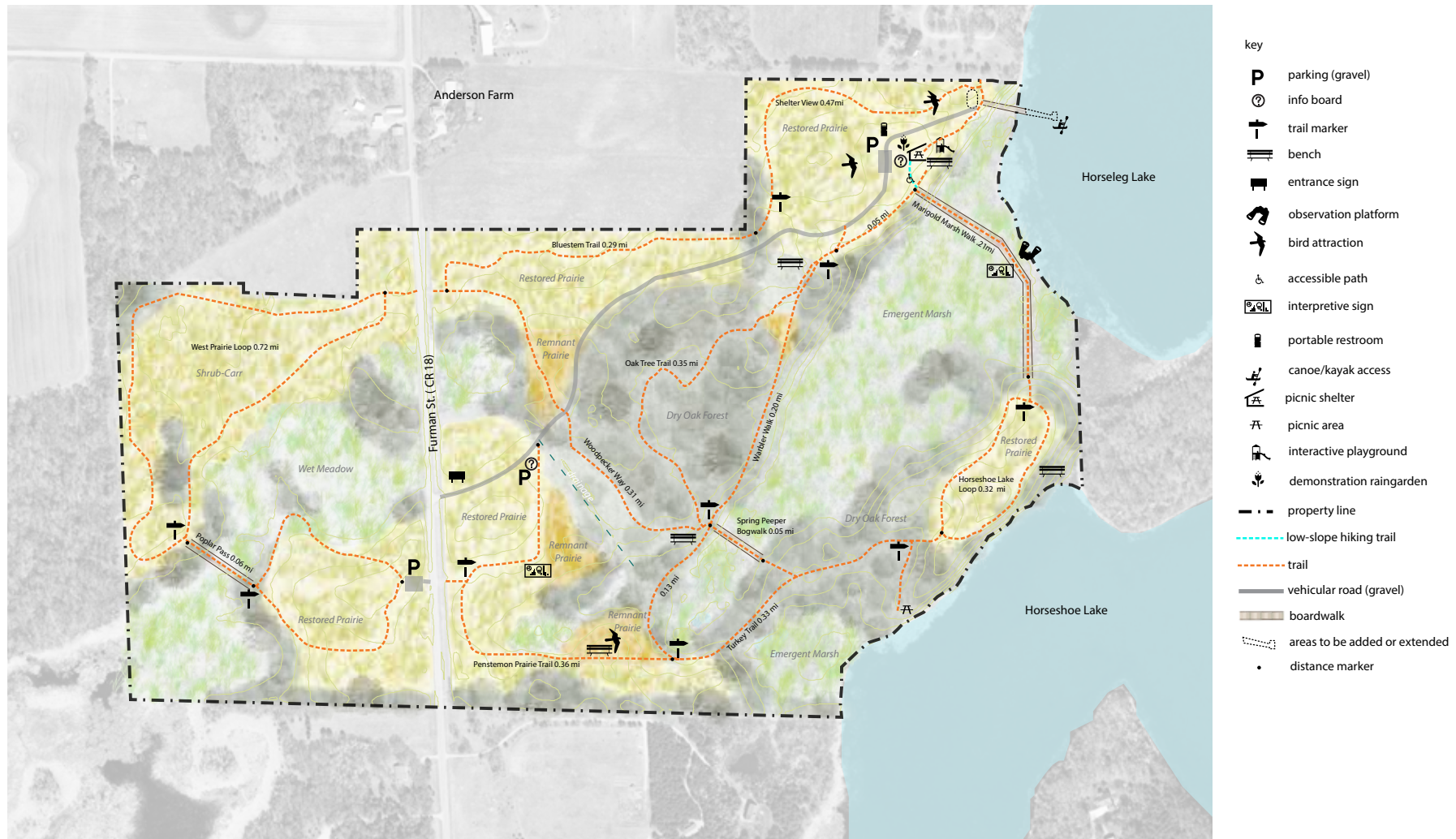
Existing Park Plan

The plan below shows the Park, as it exists in the Fall of 2013. Currently, there are (3) boardwalk paths through wetland areas a fishing pier, and over (3) miles total of shared hiking trails. The majority of facilities are located in the northeast corner (parking, picnic shelter, playground, restroom). There are (2) additional parking areas, along with bird attractions (bird houses, chimney swift tower), and an elevated observation platform within the Park.



Short-Term Goals (to be implemented 2013-2014)

The plan below shows the implementation of short-term goals, as identified through the master planning process. Trail markers, interpretive signs, a 30-foot pier extension with a turnaround area, and a low-slope accessible path leading from the picnic shelter to the Marigold Marsh boardwalk have been added to the Park.

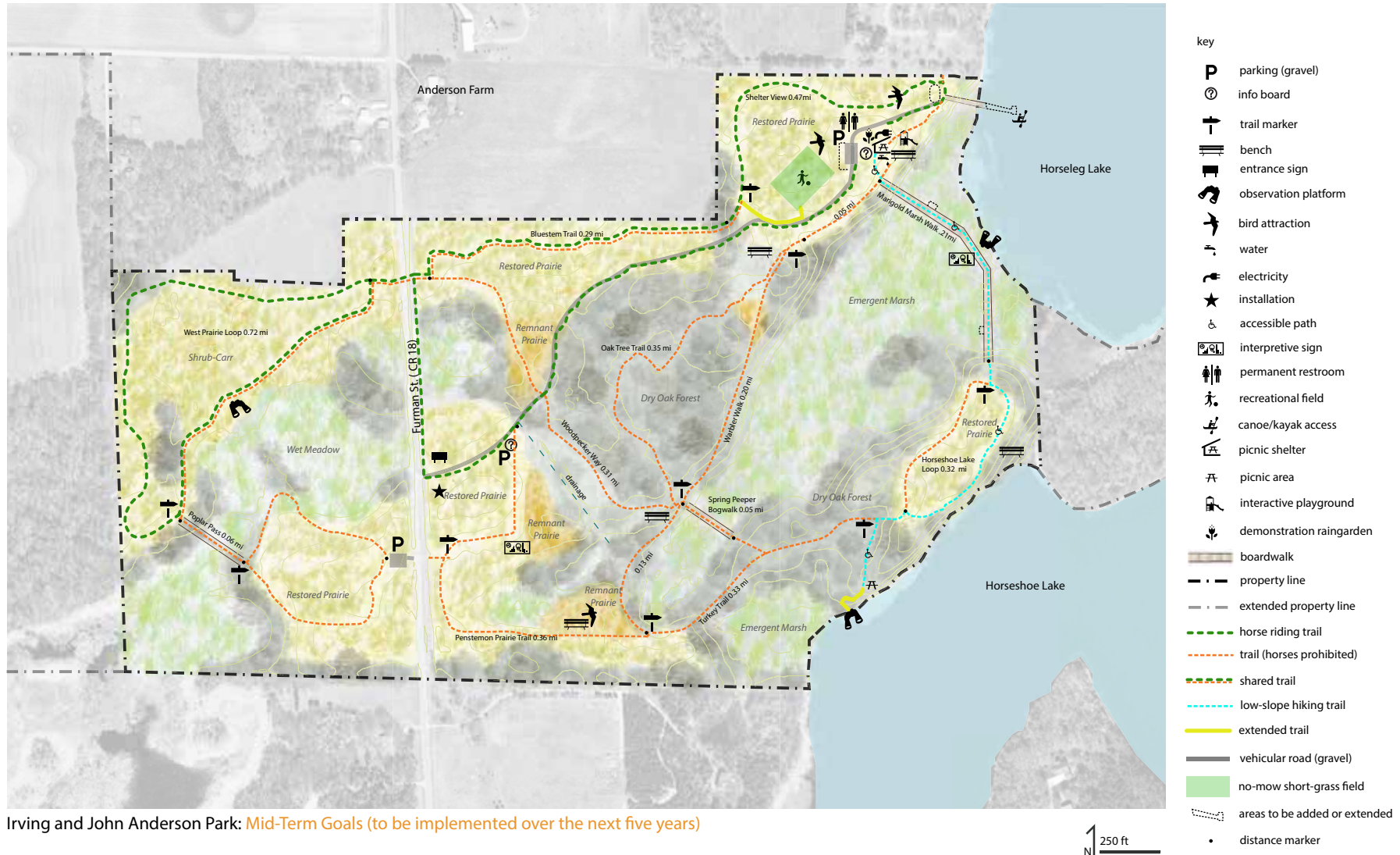


Irving and John Anderson Park: Short-Term Goals (to be implemented over the next year)

1
250 ft
N

Mid-Term Goals (to be implemented by 2019)

The plan below shows the implementation of mid-term goals, as identified through the master planning process. Here, the following facilities have been added to the picnic shelter area: a no-mow recreational field (1-acre) for informal family use, additional parking spaces for 10-15 vehicles, electricity and potable water accessible at the picnic shelter, and a permanent style restroom. Additionally, trails have been delineated to minimize the shared use of the trails by horseback riders and hikers. Finally, an artistic and welcoming installation near the main entrance has been constructed.



Ecological Stewardship Plan

Land Cover: Natural, Cultural and Historical Features

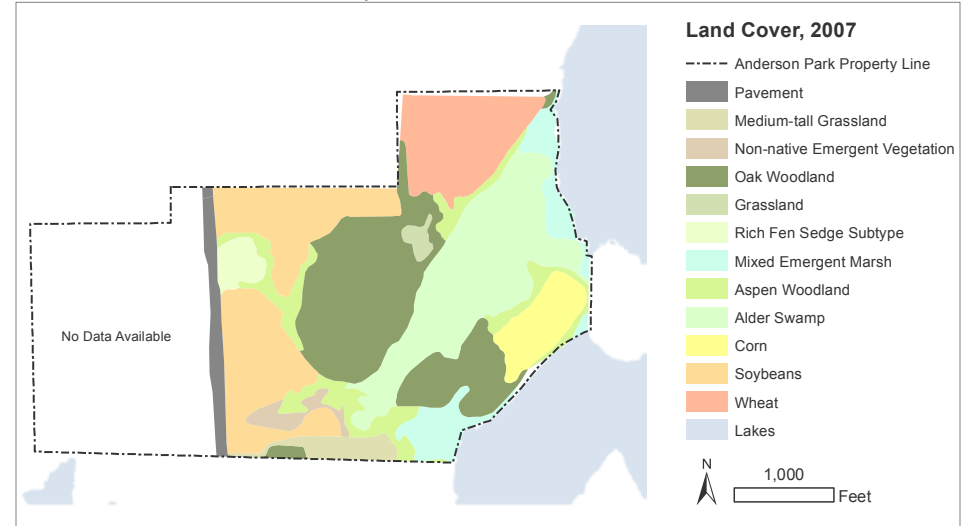
Land cover information related to the natural, cultural and historical features was gathered through the Natural Resource Management Plan (a natural resource inventory was conducted on May 11th, 2007) and the Archaeological Survey, which was conducted in June of 2007.

Prior to European settlement of the area, Isanti County land cover consisted of conifer bogs, prairie savanna and wet meadows. This area is part of the Twin Lakes Complex, which includes seven shallow lakes within Oxford Township. Horseleg and Horseshoe Lakes were formed by a retreating glacier, approximately 10,000 years ago. Prairie savanna, oak woodlands and oak savanna dominated the surrounding landscape until 4,000 years ago, when the climate became cooler and more humid. When this happened, white pine/hardwood forests and wet prairies began to emerge as dominant features in the landscape. After European settlement in the mid-1800's, most of this area was converted to agricultural uses, leaving forest fragments scattered throughout the county. The Anderson Farm, which is now Irving and John Anderson Park, was purchased by the Anderson family in 1884. The property remained in the family until 2007, when the property was purchased by Isanti County Parks, to be converted from agricultural uses to a prairie parkland. The Anderson Family farm house still exists today, to the north of the main entrance off of CR 18.

Two collapsed buildings remained on the property at the time of purchase by Isanti County Parks, all of which were removed for the safety of visitors, as they were determined through the archaeological study to have no structural integrity. Both buildings were made of modern dimensional lumber and nails, indicating that there was little significant historical value.

Extensive prairie restoration beginning in 2007 has successfully resulted in the presence of (68) acres of restored prairie, converted from agricultural fields that were previously managed for RoundUp Ready soybean and corn rotational crops. This restoration is contributing greatly to the acreage of quality wildlife habitat and is protecting nearby lakes and streams from pollutants and runoff.

Minnesota Land Cover Classification System: Land Use Prior to Park Acquisition



Data: Minnesota DNR - MIS Bureau



Original Anderson Family Farm



Irving and Amy Anderson
Photos provided by the Anderson Family

Today, the following plant communities and the associated species exist in the Park:

A. Dry Oak Forest (35 acres)

B. Dry, Remant Prairie (13 acres)

C. Dry, Restored Prairie (68 acres)



Oak forest Photo: Jody Rader



Swamp milk weed Photo: Jody Rader



Restored prairie Photo: Jody Rader

Northern pin oak
Bur oak
Black cherry
Paper birch
Trembling aspen
Red maple
American hazelnut
Gray dogwood
Juneberry
Chokecherry
Blue beech
Blackberry
Common raspberry
Virginia creeper
Blueberry
Wild grape
Poison Ivy
Hog peanut
Canada mayflower
Bracken fern
Big leaf aster
Wild geranium
Wild sasparilla
Lycopodium moss
False solomon's seal
Pale bellwort
Bluebead lily

Little bluestem
Stiff goldenrod
Wild strawberry
Pussytoes
Hoary puccoon
Round-headed bushclover
Spiderwort
Tick trefoil
Indian grass
Big bluestem
Prairie sage
Panic grass
Yarrow
White pine
White spruce
Trembling aspen
Eastern red cedar
Blackberry
Raspberry

Big bluestem
Indiangrass
Little bluestem
Sideoats grama
Prairie dropseed
Prairie brome
Purple prairie clover
White prairie clover
Yellow coneflower
Canada milkvetch
Leadplant
Blackeyed susan
Flowered beardtongue
Purple coneflower
Alum root
Wild bergamot
Hoary vervain
Butterfly weed
Golden alexander
Prairie coneflower
Prairie cinquefoil
Round-headed bushclover
Wild Rose
Showy goldenrod
Stiff goldenrod
Ox eye sunflower
Switchgrass
Rattlesnake master
Anise Hyssop
Prairie Coreopsis



boardwalk through wetland Photo: Jody Rader

D. Wet Meadow (17 acres)

Bottle gentian
Willow species
Dogwood
Blue joint grass
Reed canary grass
Trembling aspen

E. Emergent Marsh (30 acres)

Red-Osier dogwood
Willow
Alder
Lake sedge
Softstem bulrush
Broad-leaved cattails
Broad-leaved arrowhead
American cranberry

F. Shrub-Carr (11 acres)

Beaked willow
Red-Osier dogwood
Lycopodium
Equisetum
Pennsylvania sedge
Giant goldenrod
Marsh aster
Trembling Aspen
White pine

G. Shrub Swamp (area TBD)

Speckled Alder
Dogwood
Willow
Bog birch
Sedge grass
Blue joint grass
Crested fern
Sensitive Fern
Cinnamon fern
Marsh marigold

Natural Resources Management Plan

Annual surveys of the park and adjacent lakes will continue to be performed by the Isanti County Parks, for the purpose of detecting invasive and exotic species, such as Eurasian water milfoil (none present, currently), buckthorn, leafy spurge, purple loosestrife and oak wilt. A natural resource professional, either as Isanti County Parks staff, or as a contracted professional, will assess the presence and severity of invasive/exotic species or invasive forest insects/diseases. The following are management activities, as they pertain to certain plant communities throughout the existing and future park boundaries.

Record-keeping through photography is a recommended practice to monitor biodiversity, understory and canopy characteristics from year to year. Taking photographs from specific locations for each patch of plant community, with consistent aspect and time each successive year will allow Isanti County Parks to keep records of change in the landscape. This could be accomplished by the Parks department alone, or through volunteer effort in conjunction with the Friends of Anderson Park group. Another way to document plant succession is to keep a burn frequency report, with monitored emerging species noted. This information can be then shared through interpretive signs within the Park, to be utilized as an educational tool.

Periodic brush removal is necessary to prevent over-crowding of species, especially in remnant prairie areas. This should be performed throughout the year. To prevent resprouting of stumps, an applicable herbicide should be applied (check with the current DNR recommendations for best practices).

All introduced planting within the Park should be done using native seeds. Seeds should originate from less than 50-100 miles from the Park. Suitable seed sources can be found at a number of nearby areas, such as roadsides, areas from within the Park property, and other parks in the area. Seed collection can be performed by Isanti County Parks staff or by volunteers, potentially organized through the Friends of Anderson Park group.

The following pages detail specific management guidelines for plant communities that exist within Anderson Park.

Natural Resources Management Plan

Proposed Prairie Restoration

Future land acquisition of adjacent properties to the existing Park will be pursued if willing sellers are identified by Isanti County Parks, for the sole purpose of augmenting existing wildlife habitat and natural resources. If this opportunity arises, proposed prairie restoration will commence, to convert existing agricultural lands to restored prairie. These opportunities will need to be properly assessed and a specific land management plan will need to be enacted prior to completing any of these activities. Soil quality tests, historic and archaeological assessment, existing land cover and species inventory, and a community engagement process to gather input from affected and future stakeholders are all activities that will need to be performed in order to create an active and progressive management plan for restoring future prairie.

In general, prairie restorations are successful if new planting projects are implemented in the fall, after weedy and noxious plant growth has subsided for the season. In the year proceeding fall planting, the prairie area should be mowed 2-3 times to a height of 8-12 inches. In the second year, the grasses should be mowed 1-3 times, depending on weed competition and the overall health of the prairie. By the third year, the prairie should be well-established with only spot-mowing or spot herbicide treatment necessary. Sometime between the 6th and 9th year, and every 3-6 years after, a prescribed burn should be performed in order to prevent weed growth. If fires occur too often, the diversity of the plant growth will slow and habitat will be affected.

Existing Restored Prairie/Remnant Prairie

The existing prairies in Anderson Park have entered into the cycle of prescribed burns every 3-6 years, as the health and quality of the prairie depends on this. To promote growth of warm-season grasses such as Big bluestem and Indian grass, prescribed burning should be performed in late spring/early summer. Monitoring of the existing prairies should include assessments for the existence of buckthorn, white pine, northern pin oak, white spruce and staghorn sumac. If these species are found, hand-pulling small seedlings and stump herbicide treatments for buckthorn, aspen, northern pin oak and sumac saplings is recommended. A single basal cut, flush to the ground with no use of herbicides is recommended to control the existence of conifer species, such as white pine and spruce within the restored and remnant prairies.

Fire-breaks are necessary for the control of prescribed burns. These should be planned at least 3 months in advance of the burn schedule, as they require mowing or plowing areas with a tractor in 8-12ft wide swaths. Conveniently, many of these fire-breaks can coincide with the existing trail system, as the trails predominantly are located at the edges of adjacent plant communities.

Natural Resources Management Plan

Dry Oak Forest/Forest Disease Control

In order to control diseases and maintain biodiversity within the dry oak forest, low-intensity prescribed burns should be performed in conjunction with the prescribed prairie burns.

Oak wilt has been a problem within the Park in the past; currently there are approximately 25 acres of thinned areas that have been fragmented due to oak wilt management. For continued and future alleviation of oak wilt, which will decrease the need for excessive thinning techniques, vibratory plowing methods should be enacted between mid-July and at the end of November. After the plowing, and after the ground freezes for the year, removing and processing of all northern pin oak trees within affected areas should occur (also known as “cutting to the line”). Inspections for oak wilt disease should occur between June 15th and September 15th, annually, with the intention of locating and controlling continually-spreading infection centers.

Lakeshore/Wetland/Emergent Marsh Management

The existing Park contains (3) boardwalks and a fishing pier. The construction and maintenance of these boardwalk areas contributes to the overall health of areas which experience higher ground saturation rates, to avoid damage by visitors utilizing the Park. It also contributes by minimizing unnecessary sinking of emergent vegetation along shores. Any removal of existing ground cover along the shorelines of water bodies should be avoided as much as possible, and native species should be planted in these areas only, as a means to stabilize banks. These native species include dogwood, sedge grasses, blue joint grass, and arrowhead.

Recreational use of water bodies within the Park can contribute to the inadvertent spread of invasive species, through contamination via fishing poles, paddles, and non-motorized boats. These items should be cleaned prior to introduction into any bodies of water, and subsequently cleaned after each use. This information should be posted on signs at any water body access points within the Park. Information regarding Eurasian water milfoil and other invasives should be posted as well.

Blandings turtles, which are particularly rare within this region have been documented throughout Anderson Park. In order to protect their habitat areas, care should be taken to maintain existing shorelines. Particularly, the banks of Horseshoe Lake are a critical nesting habitat for this threatened species. High, dry areas for egg-laying should be maintained near water and wetlands. These areas should be roped-off from foot traffic during the nesting season (late May to mid-June), and all prescribed burning or mowing should occur no later than the end of May, in order to protect the eggs and nests of the turtles. Informational signs and literature located at trailheads should be posted, informing visitors of this critical habitat.

Research Plan

Collecting Visitor Information

The current system for collecting visitor counts at Anderson Park is consistent with the methods used by the Isanti County Parks and Recreation at all Isanti County parks. Each vehicle is counted as they enter and exit the Park, using an automated vehicle counter. While these counts accurately measure the number of vehicles entering the Park, they fail to give detailed information regarding the actual number of people who visit the Park, as more than one person can ride in a vehicle. Also, it fails to count the number of people who enter by alternate means of transportation (pedestrians, bicyclists, horseback riders). Counts are tallied for each month for each of the Isanti County Parks.

By improving the methods for counting visitors, planning and implementation efforts can be tailored to specific uses and visitor needs. The overall quality and knowledge of the Park and intended uses can be improved by adhering to *The Protocol for Visitor Counts and Site Intercept Surveys*, as outlined in Section 6 of the *Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan*.

This method for collecting counts requires additional staff or volunteers to complete. *The Protocol* outlines specific periods of time between Memorial Day and Labor Day where random locations are sampled. Data is collected and synthesized to produce information on high and low volume times of day and year, and specific uses. Site-intercept surveys provide data on visitor origins and travel distances, and are performed as on-site, in-person interviews between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

All recommendations and requirements for adhering to *The Protocol for Visitor Counts and Site Intercept Surveys* is located in Section 6 of the *Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan*.



Park visitors enjoying the interactive playground
Photo: Marlene Yenish

Implementation, Management, & Sustainability Plan

Physical Sustainability

In order for the trajectory of Anderson Park to continue as a natural resource-based park with valuable recreational amenities and high-quality wildlife habitat, stewardship of the Park is the key. Without the hard work and dedication of the Isanti County Parks, the Friends of Anderson Park, and countless volunteers, the pristine landscape which exists today would not be possible, and would likely not be able to sustain itself in the future. Therefore, it is very important that people feel a level of comfort and delight while visiting Anderson Park, so that a connection through generations can be created.

This will be somewhat achieved by maintaining a level of rustic beauty, which exists today and that will remain in the future, no matter what structural, infrastructural, or ecological developments occur. All future designs to be implemented within the Park shall come under the scrutiny of a public engagement process. Additionally, the highest quality aesthetic designs shall be proposed, within the means of reasonable finances. Strict aesthetic design guidelines are not to be established through this document. However, all future buildings, structures, and developments within and related to Anderson Park should demonstrate the Vision of this master plan, which places an emphasis on *preservation*, *restoration* and *connection*. Future projects may benefit from pursuing a more formal design and engagement process, as outlined in national-level standards, such as Sustainable SITES. (www.sustainablesites.org)

Additionally, future projects shall strive to achieve the highest level possible of energy efficiency. This means that if possible, future power sources will use alternative fuel sources. This also means that as many locally-sourced materials and local labor will be utilized for any future building.

Finally, the stewards of Anderson Park are committed to creating a Park that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy and appreciate. This means that all future developments within the Park will be as accessible as possible. People of all capabilities will continue to be considered and consulted for all future design implementations.



The fishing pier is an example of the rustic design appreciated by visitors
Photo: Marlene Yenish

Programming Sustainability

In order for a sustainable level of stewardship to happen, regular and well-received programming needs to occur within the Park and throughout the community and region, in conjunction with Anderson Park. It was stressed heavily in the *Development Master Plan* to incorporate educational opportunities in an emphasized manner through on-going programming, and partnership with public schools and children's extra-curricular activity groups (such as 4-H, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts). The Friends of Anderson Park group will be initially spear-heading this effort. However, a long-term goal outlined in the *Development Master Plan* is to have an employed full-time naturalist (employed by Isanti County Parks) to oversee all of the educational planning and programming for Anderson Park. This position may be specific to Anderson Park, or more likely, would start as a county-wide position. This person would be a liason between the county, the school districts, the DNR and any other natural resource-based community group to ensure the highest quality and the most innovation in the arena of education connected to Anderson Park.

Currently there are a number of programs which exist in the Park today, thanks to the dedication of the Friends of Anderson Park group. These programs will continue to grow and expand.

- Annual birdwalks, hosted by local bird-experts and coordinated through the Friends of Anderson Park
- Guided wetland and woodland tours
- Annual National Public Lands Day Celebration with presentations by local naturalists
- Volunteer work days, including invasive species removal, raingarden and trail maintenance, construction of bird attractions (such as the chimney swift tower), and tree/shrub planting
- Creation and maintenance of the interactive natural playground



Park visitors examining a bird's egg found at Anderson Park during a nature-based event
Photo: Joe Sausen



Prescribed burn at Anderson Park
Photo: Barry Wendorf

Operations and Management Sustainability

Currently, operations and maintenance is the responsibility of Isanti County Parks. Potentially, as future agencies and organizations are strengthened and formed, some operations may be performed by a regional Parks agency.

Currently, all mowing, trail maintenance, invasive species removal, prescribed burns, information board maintenance, and all other maintenance is performed by the Isanti County Parks and Recreation Department, with the assistance of volunteers, mainly through the Friends of Anderson Park group. Special projects, such as the construction of the picnic shelter, were initiated by the Isanti County Parks Department and the Friends of Anderson Park, who have partnered with other regional organizations, such as the Wild River Audubon Chapter and the Isanti County Soil and Water District. These partnerships have proven to be beneficial, and through increased programming as outlined in the *Development Master Plan*, will continue to grow.

As park amenities increase in quality, such as the construction of permanent-style restrooms and access to water and power, additional funding will be sought to cover the cost of additional labor involved to maintain and clean facilities. This additional funding will need to be secured through future Legacy funding and other grant opportunities.



Horseshoe Lake
Photo: Joe Sausen

Ecological Sustainability

The long-term ecological stewardship of Anderson Park is currently dependent on the commitment of the Isanti County Parks and Recreation department, the on-going support of the Friends of Anderson Park group, and the growing enthusiasm of park users who take advantage of the wide range of nature-based outdoor activities, such as hiking, canoeing, wildlife viewing, and photography. Future involvement with the DNR and a regional parks coalition will expand the ecological stewardship of Anderson Park and other parks within the Central Region.

Some of the ecological challenges that the Park currently, and will increasingly, face in the future involve water quality. Phosphate and nitrite levels, which affect the habitat for fish and wildlife, are influenced by adjacent and nearby agricultural lands. By securing the property of the Park under the Isanti County Parks system, and through increased areas dedicated to natural resource-based parkland, water quality and habitat quality will thrive. By maintaining high-quality prairie and wetlands, pollutants will be filtered through the soil before entering sensitive water bodies.

The ecological function of Anderson Park serves as its greatest asset; the continuation of natural resource management through active maintenance as described in the *Ecological Stewardship Plan* encompasses the most up-to-date best management practices for the Park.

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Appendix

The following are the survey questions and results from the online survey launched from July 3rd to August 2nd. The questions followed a similar format to those posed in the Vision Workshops.

What are the recreational activities currently offered at Anderson Park?

- Hiking
- Cross Country Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Birdwatching
- Photography
- Picnicking
- Horseback riding
- Special events
- Playground
- Observation deck
- Boardwalks
- Fishing
- Enjoying the great outdoors
- Friends of Anderson Park
- Walking around the raingardens
- Dog walking
- Mountain biking

Who are the people engaged in these activities?

- Hiking: all ages, birdwatching: all ages, botanizing: mostly adults, horse riding: youth and adults, nature play: children and parents, canoeing: all ages, picnicking: all ages, cross country skiing: mostly adults, snowshoeing: mostly adults, geocaching: youth and adults, mountain biking: adults,
- Families with kids, adults, birdwatchers
- Adults, mainly. Some families
- Grandchildren, grandparents, naturalists, families, friends, environmental groups

How could the current recreational offerings better serve the community?

- Separate horses from hiking trails or not allow as it is a pretty small park.
- Groom ski trails
- I like the low-tech rustic approach the park has right now. I wouldn't want to see a lot more development or it will lose the wild feel.
- Often the trails are set up for exclusive use by skiers. As a snowshoer, I feel discouraged when I am unable to use the boardwalk areas due to the groomed ski trails.
- While there are a number of activities scheduled for the park (such as bird walks, nature walks, etc.) done once a year, maybe something of more general interest on a more frequent basis would cause my family to view the park as a larger part of our lives.
- More naturalist talks
- More targeted and regular marketing
- Maybe a weekly/monthly column in local papers highlighting activities at various parks
- Wider marketing....connection to schools or groups/ organizations of all ages.
- Have ski trails consistently groomed. Advertise events in the Cambridge paper. Host a township potluck picnic. Post pictures of the most common birds found here for beginning birders. Put mileage on the walking trails for exercise.
- I like the current activities and would like them to remain passive recreation.
- Keep it simple! Enjoying the last wooded and prairie vestiges of earth remain a vibrant wish.

What are activities that are not currently offered here, but would be a positive addition in the future?

- More regularly scheduled general interest events such as short local band or musician concerts, a backyard type movie event when the bugs aren't terrible, maybe some type of lantern-lit night hiking or cross country skiing gathering.
- For the size of the park, it seems that there are enough human structures on the site.
- Cross country skiing
- Butterfly watching
- A citizen scientist program, more birdwatching activities, a prairie "core" program (volunteers who monitor certain prairie plants or flowers by documenting their progress)
- More regularly scheduled recreational programs for families; engage schools and other groups. Summer day camps for kids.
- Guided canoe trips around the lakes.
- More observation decks for wildlife viewing
- Fishing
- Advertise as a party area for reunions
- Swings
- Benches on the piers and on the elevated platform
- I would like it to remain walking, birdwatching, hiking and nothing active or structured.

What are the featured plants found at Anderson Park?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| -Herbaceous Ferns | -Chord grass |
| -Indian grass | -Putty root orchid |
| -Big bluestem | -Blue-bead lily |
| -Little bluestem | -Lycopodiums |
| -Leadplant | -Royal fern |
| -Bottled gentian | -Ostrich fern |
| -Side-oats grama | -Sensitive fern |
| -Butterfly weed | -Broad-leafed cattail |
| -Bush clover | -Cranberry |
| -Penstemon | -Sphagnum moss |

How could habitats at Anderson Park be improved?

- Many of the habitats are still at the stage of developing. They just need some time to mature.
- Rotational prescribed burning of prairie and savanna areas
- Invasive plant control
- Minimize human intrusion into best habitat types and always have wild corridors that merge into diverse habitats.
- Don't allow horses--they trash the trails for walking and leave large waste piles
- Add adjacent lands to the park
- Remove the sand burs!
- Add more diversity in the prairie
- Establish the oak savanna areas
- Groom trails for cross country skiing
- Let them be naturally

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| -Sand burs | -Pussytoes |
| -Wild rice | -Sweet flag |
| -Bladder-wort | -Goatsbeard |
| -Swamp milkweed | -Dandelion |
| -Sedges | -Oaks |
| -Buttercups | -Willows |
| -Canada anemone | -Cherry trees |
| -Mullein | -Water lillies |
| -Burdock | -Maple trees |
| -Bidens | -Pine trees |

What types of animals inhabit Anderson Park?

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| -Swans | -Raven | -Common yellowthroat |
| -Ducks | -Red-headed woodpecker | -Redstarts |
| -Geese | -Canada geese | -Robins |
| -Deer | -Wild turkey | -Bluebirds |
| -Reptiles, amphibians | -Pileated woodpecker | -Red-eyed vireo |
| -Blandings turtles | -Vesper sparrow indigo bunting | -Chirping sparrow |
| -Snapping turtles | -American goldfinch | -Song sparrow, |
| -Northern prairie skunk | -Rose-breasted grosbeak | -Great crested flycatchers |
| -Western hognose snake | -Barred owl | -Meadow voles |
| -Garter snakes | -Great-horned owl | -White-footed mice |
| -Spring peepers | -Redtail hawk | -Deer mice |
| -Chorus frogs, | -White-tailed deer | -June beetles |
| -Wood frogs | -Muskrat | -Mosquitoes |
| -Leopard frogs, | -Beaver | -Deer flies |
| -Red-bellied snakes | -Raccoon | -Wood ticks |
| -Sandhill cranes | -Red and Gray fox | -Deer ticks |
| -Lark sparrow | -Coyote | -Darkling spiders |
| -Common loon | -Fox squirrel | -Bowl and doilie spiders |
| -Yellow Warbler | -Red, Gray squirrel | -"Daddy long-legs" |
| -Redstarts | -Cottontail rabbit | -Gophers |
| -Tennessee warblers | -Badger | -Mountain lion |
| -Ovenbird | -Jumping mouse | -Opossum |
| -Great-crested flycatcher | -White-footed dear mouse | -Martins |
| -Eastern kingbird | -Short-tailed shrew | -Swift |
| -Eastern wood | -Brown bat | -Many more birds! |
| -Peewee | -Cinerosus shrew | |
| -Common night hawk | -Mink | |
| -Eastern bluebird | -Otter | |
| -Common crow | -Black bear | |
| -Raven | -Turkey | |
| -Great blue heron | -Pheasant | |
| -mallard duck | -Hairies | |
| -Trumpeter swan | -Downies | |
| -Song sparrow | -Piliated woodpeckers | |

Are there particular plants or animals that attract you to Anderson Park?

- It is a thrill to see swans.
- I'm happy to see every creature in the park except for woodticks
- Spring warbler migrations,
- Red-headed woodpeckers
- I tend to stick to the woodlands and swamp/lakeshore areas, largely due to the sand burs
- Birds of all kinds. This is a world-class birding spot
- Warblers and ducks in the spring
- Sandhill cranes
- Trumpeter swans
- Loons
- Blandings turtles
- The newly planted prairie is exceptional!
- Swans on the water, other waterfowl

Are there particular plants or animals that are of concern, or should be removed from the park?

- Sand burs around the play area
- I would not allow horses
- Determine management goals and look at species that are threatened or of special concern and address their viability.
- Don't mess with it. Let dead trees stand. Even buckthorn will probably find its balance despite being invasive.
- Invasive plants
- Brown-headed cowbirds
- Starlings
- Cats
- Poison ivy
- Nettles
- Buckthorn

What types of trails exist at Anderson Park?

- Grass and dirt trails for hiking
- Cross country skiing
- Horseback riding
- Boardwalk trails
- Snowshoeing
- Wide, mowed trails on land
- Two boardwalk trails over wetland
- Easy access trails, natural trails, and boardwalk trails
- Prairie trails, woodland trails, boardwalks by the lake/marshes
- Foot paths and awesome bridges over marshland

Are there certain types of trails that you would like to see at Anderson Park?

- Groomed cross-country ski trails
- Given the size of the park, I don't think one can expect to provide distinct hiking, horse, cross country, mountain biking, and snowshoeing
- Skiing trails that are groomed for skiing are subject to the disturbance of the set ski track by snowshoers. Signage and education would help that issue. The good news is that folks are outside moving their bodies!
- Current trail system seems more than enough
- There is a danger of bisecting the habitat too frequently. Don't do it.
- I like what is there now. Just need groomed cross-country ski trails.
- Another long boardwalk on the west side
- Keep them low-impact mowed trails, NOT paved
- These are perfect

How could the existing trails, benches, and signs at Anderson Park be improved?

- I think one has to be careful in not over-signing trails and parks in general. Too many signs or signs spread across the park give it a cluttered appearance. The natural landscape is best.
- Concentrating signage at kiosks is best.
- Trail improvement would be to keep horses off hiking trails. That means not allowing them access to the park or building yet more trails.
- Trail improvement would include funds to maintain groomed ski trails.
- For the size of the park, I think it is adequately saturated with benches and trails.
- I think no more trails or benches--there are plenty now for the small size of this park.
- I love the trails.
- I think they are fine.
- Add some benches on the west side trails
- Name the trails
- Separate horse trails from hiking trails
- More interpretive signs identifying natural features or booklets describing them.
- Place a directional sign at the north and south intersections of county roads.
- Would like to see small trail signs, small arrows indicating the way to go, would like to see map indicating length of each of the trails.
- Signs up and information about the specific area about to be entered.

What are some of the educational opportunities that exist at Anderson Park?

- There are annually scheduled nature/bird walks, kids events on Parks Day.
- Birdwatching, wild foraging, nature hikes, looking for wildlife
- Oak savanna restoration
- Telling the story of the land, wild to human settlement to park
- Insects, reptiles, amphibians, night critters, medicinal plants
- Collecting prairie plant seeds
- Partnering with the natural world to inspire arts (writing, painting, sculpting, photography, etc...)
- Birdwalks
- Teaching residents about the native plant communities in Isanti County
- Guided bird walks and the fall event that has a program
- Self-guided, annual birdwalks
- Occasional planned activities, such as the one on the wetlands or wildflower walk
- Annual educational opportunity on a Saturday in the early fall
- Birdwatching, tree identification, plant identification, animal watching
- Special events, birdwatching, newsletter and web site

In your opinion, who would be interested in learning more about the history or ecology of the park?

- Most people
- The general public, scouting groups, 4H groups, school groups, conservation-minded groups, garden clubs
- Homeschool families, families with kids
- Ideally, everyone should know this stuff
- Neighbors of the park, local organizations, schools
- School kids, adults already with an interest in nature
- All who venture to visit the park
- Girl scouts, boy scouts, 4H clubs, families
- More birdwatchers

How could the educational experience at Anderson Park be improved?

- It's not really what I think the park is for or needs to provide
- More naturalists--hire a full-time one
- More variety, especially a citizen-scientist program
- Improved booklets to help folks identify plants in the evolving prairie. Also, booklets to help new-comers to birding, more observation decks.
- Offer information and a treasure hunt guide to North Branch and Isanti elementary schools
- Offer interpretive walks/activities a couple of times per year
- Web site, broader marketing to schools

In your opinion, what are the most interesting things to learn about at Anderson Park?

- Prairie plants, how they are special
- Bird populations
- The wide variety of birds who pass through and live at the park. Why and how humans need to be connected to nature. How the land has been used in the past and how and why bring it back to its natural state. The marshes and why they are important. How animals use the park.
- The evolving prairie plantings, the diversity of birds
- The lakes and bog walks.
- History of the land and the people that owned it, the types of trees and ecosystems living at the park.
- The varied ecosystems
- Natural wildlife

What are the most important facilities offered at Anderson Park?

- Picnic shelter and the trails
- The natural facilities are the most valuable.
- The trails, particularly the boardwalk and observation tower give folks a peek into a habitat that they generally do not have access to.
- Mowed trails and the boardwalk
- Trails, docks
- The picnic shelter, the boardwalk
- The trails, the picnic shelter and the children's play area. I'd add the canoe access if it extended all the way to the lake.
- Boardwalks and observation deck, trails
- Covered picnic area and restroom
- The bridges linking the ecosystems
- Picnic shelter

What facilities are needed at Anderson Park?

- I think it is pretty maxed out on human-built facilities. Perhaps an observation deck on Horseshoe Lake that is bilt in natural cover, such as cattails. Any human-built facilities should blend into the natural setting and almost be invisible.
- Perhaps a vault-style restroom could be built near the picnic shelter and an outhouse provided over in the woods (out of sight)
- Potable water near the picnic shelter
- An interpretive sign
- Not a lot! Keep it as a natural area unspoiled by man-made structures.
- Water and electricity by the picnic shelter
- A small parking area for horse trailers on the west side of the Park. Keep the usage down though. Don't build a large parking lot! No more roads are needed.
- More observation decks, for instance, one at the edge of lake by Rob's picnic table. Another boardwalk with observation deck in the marsh on the west side.
- Drinking water
- Handwashing station