The Trailhead Pavilion will serve a dual purpose, marking both the entry and exit for the ANT. On the entrance side, a waterfall feature will attract the visitor’s attention, while offering a soothing and inviting gateway to the trail. Orientation materials will be available at the start of the Trail to provide an optimum experience during every visit.
The Sensory Station will captivate all of a visitor’s senses in a quiet and individualized way. Collections of leaves, moss, acorns, pinecones, bark, vines, seed pods, even animal fur and fossils will be available for up-close inspection, handling and smelling. Visitors will be reminded to listen for the sounds of the forest -- the wind in the trees, singing birds, chattering squirrels.
The Sunshine Slope, a gentle maze in a sun-filled, natural opening in the woods, weaves a wide walkway through mounds of various woodland plantings of different heights. A viewing platform at the pinnacle provides a vantage point from which visitors can peer deeply into the woods or look backward from where they have come, perhaps gaining a new understanding of spatial relationships before choosing a route back to the main trail.
The Music Circle is named for its location within a circular grove of pines some distance apart from the trail. Visitors can experiment with nature-inspired instruments while being in control of sound creation and volume. An observation deck occupies the center of the space where instruments ring the area, positioned so that collaboration among individuals is possible and encouraged.
The Reflection Point offers a quiet place under a canopy of trees to listen to nature and to reflect about the natural world. Cuddle swings, gliders and alone zones will further encourage a sense of well-being, security and safety. At this half-way point on the Trail, visitors may regroup, move on or end the exploration by taking the bypass back to the Trailhead Pavilion.
The Meadow Run & Climb is a dedicated space for running, jumping, climbing, balancing, and testing strength, coordination, flexibility and confidence. New earthworks rise into serpentine berms while a running/walking path playfully follows the rising and falling contours of the landscape before emptying into an open field. Native plantings grow and change the scene throughout the seasons, and an obstacle course, made primarily of logs and boulders, follows in a tight, zig-zag formation.
The Design Area taps into visitors’ ability to manipulate materials from the Trail site. This hands-on space encourages imagination and critical thinking, using natural items to create patterns, structures and “whole worlds!”
The Playful Path honors the joy of just being in the woods. Along this last stretch of the trail is a series of twisting paths covered in different surface materials (pea gravel, mowed grass, natural soil, pine needles). Each path can be navigated in a novel way, using a variety of motor skills.