

**ALTERNATIVES TO DAM SITE 21 MASTER PLAN**  
**and**  
**INDEX OF CURRENT MCPC IMPROVEMENTS**

**General Recommendations for alternative plan:**

- improve access, wayfinding signage and existing parking lot(s)
- share parking with Mercer County Vocational School (“MCVS”) and its existing 250 car parking lot which is empty on weekends and 25-30% of capacity M-F.
- connect, improve and maintain the existing trails and proposed core trails including connection to Mercer County Park (“MCP”)
- improved stewardship
- utilize existing ranger station and maintenance yards at MCP located less than ½ mile from DS 21
- if there is then an increased demand/utilization warranting additional improvements they can be revisited and addressed as necessary

**Summary**

- Improvements should be nothing more than Proposed Core Trails with improved access as described in detail below.
- The MCPC Master Plan lists 53 separate construction and activity items. From our detailed analysis of those items, and the corresponding "Capital Improvement Cost by Area," provided by Simone Collins, 11/04/19, "Friends" has identified various items as “Acceptable” or “Unacceptable” on the list below. These items identified as Acceptable will best serve the mission of preserving and protecting the DS 21 natural habitat and flood control area, in a fiscally responsible manner, while guaranteeing that more openness, accessibility, and improved stewardship will mean that the site can be enjoyed by all Mercer County residents.
- The attached list of specific items, A through AAA, shows a ***"first cut" savings of approximately \$8.8 million*** from the MCPC's original \$19.7 million estimate. However, the cost of the vast majority of items eliminated (either unnecessary, unwarranted, or duplicative) was not possible to accurately determine by using the Simone Collins 11/04/19 estimate budget data provided thus far. Therefore, much greater savings would be anticipated.

The following items lettered A. through AAA. are in reference to the MCP Master Plan with A. starting at the top (i.e. 12 o'clock) and then going clockwise around the site.

**Specific Items (using MCPC Master Plan Legend, Items A.-AAA.):**

- A. Improved Crossing: Acceptable
- B. Parking (40 Spaces): Unnecessary utilize shared parking with Mercer County Vocational School (“MCVS”). Existing 250 parking space lot (at grade) that is empty on weekends which will be peak use for DS21, and only utilized to 25-30% of capacity M-F (i.e. 62.5 to 75 vehicles). Utilization of the MCVS was part of the original proposal, however since then they have expressed “safety”

- concerns, but said concerns are unclear i.e. are they facility safety, vehicular driving safety, etc. (are park users worse drivers than other users of the parking lot, etc.)—Cost savings \$243,200
- C. Restroom: can be relocated closer to MCVS as an outbuilding addition to an existing building, along with the parking for the reasons set forth above in B—Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
  - D. Multi-Purpose Trail to Technical School: Unnecessary with shared parking set forth in B. above Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary). Further if the MCVS has “safety” concerns discussed in B. above which does not allow for shared parking why would a trail to the MCVS be acceptable?
  - E. Wetlands Boardwalk: Unnecessary Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_. (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary) If part of proposed Core Trails acceptable.
  - F. Forest Restoration Area: Unnecessary Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary). Forests actually reforest themselves.
  - G. Primitive Camping Area and Fishing Access: Unnecessary exists at MCP and fishing access exists all around the lake, located within the FEMA flood plain and will wash out Cost Savings \$48,800.00
  - H. Nature Based Play Area: Unnecessary location is most remote and will require the most infrastructure Cost Savings \$249,500
  - I. Inclusive Play: Unnecessary location is most remote and will require the most infrastructure Cost Savings \$774,100
  - J. Education Pavilion & Restrooms: Unnecessary location is most remote and will require the most infrastructure. Restroom will be located at MCVS less than 1/4 mile away as discussed in C. above and entire loop around the lake is 2 miles. Average walking pace is 15 to 20 minutes per mile, and as a result you could complete the entire loop in 40 minutes, so why is it necessary to provided more than one rest room? Cost Savings \$422,200
  - K. Kayak Launch & ADA Fishing Access: Unnecessary exists at MCP if necessary, can be located closer to MCVS access point which will require less infrastructure Cost Savings \$196,400
  - L. Parking Area (40 Spaces): Unnecessary see B. above more than ample parking, removal creates less disturbance. Cost Savings \$609,300
  - M. Drop-Off Circle: Unnecessary see B. and L. above. Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
  - N. Island Trail and Overlooks: Unnecessary. Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
  - O. Forest Restoration Area: Unnecessary Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary). Forests actually reforest themselves.
  - P. Hiking Trail: Acceptable
  - Q. Park Entrance/Line Road Improvements: Unnecessary Cost \$2,506,200
  - R. Meadow Restoration: Unnecessary meadow grass will simply be a deer magnet for farm filed next door. Cost Savings \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
  - S. Multi Use Trail: Acceptable
  - T. Crosswalk Improvements: Acceptable
  - U. Existing Trail: Acceptable
  - V. Forrest Restoration Area: Unnecessary Cost Savings \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary). Forests actually reforest themselves.
  - W. Hutchinson Road Pathway: Acceptable
  - X. Crosswalk Improvements: Acceptable

- Y. Marsh Boardwalk: Unnecessary located within the FEMA flood plain and will wash out Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
- Z. Accessible Trail: Acceptable
- AA. Line Road Bridge: Unnecessary Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
- BB. Line Road Cul-de sac improvements: Acceptable
- CC. Boardwalk: Unnecessary cost savings \$\_\_\_\_\_. (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary) If part of proposed Core Trails acceptable
- DD. Neighborhood Access Future: This will require further discussion and input with the immediate neighbors.
- EE. Accessible Trail: Acceptable
- FF. Accessible Boardwalk/Pond Overlook: Unnecessary existing. the top of the berm which is accessible to all is the overlook Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- GG. Pavilion: Unnecessary Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- HH. Successional Meadow: Uncertain as to necessity Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- II. Accessible Trail: Acceptable
- JJ. Sledding Hill: Unnecessary improvement as it already exists Cost Savings \$330,100.00
- KK. Spillway Bridge: Acceptable as part of Core Trails, however the canopy ornamental decoration is unnecessary and not in keeping with the character of the site Cost Savings\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- LL. Nursery Enclosure: Unnecessary maintenance facility already exists ½ mile up on Hughes Drive. If it is somehow deemed necessary, relocate from this residential zone to MCVS area (which is basically an industrial facility) and along with maintenance facility and ranger station incorporate into a MCVS program such as landscaping Cost Savings \$11,100
- MM. Maintenance Building & Parking (8 Spaces) aka Vitterito House: Unnecessary maintenance facility already exists ½ mile up on Hughes Drive. If it is somehow deemed necessary, relocate from this residential zone to MCVS area (which is basically an industrial facility) and along with nursery enclosure and ranger stations facility incorporate into a MCVS program such as landscaping. If DS21 is truly the purpose, then demo the house and replant with meadow grass Cost Savings \$175,600 (less \$25,000 in demo cost)
- NN. Picnic Area: Unnecessary exists at MCP and located within the FEMA flood plain and will wash out and require constant maintenance. Cost Savings \$285,400.00
- OO. Parking Removal & Floodplain Restoration: Acceptable but illogical as you will move parking much farther from the Sledding Hill. If not removed and replanted, Cost Savings\_\_\_\_\_? (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- PP. Miry Run Bridge (and all the circular trails): Unnecessary. Bad user experience located immediately adjacent to Hughes Drive with the roar of constant vehicular traffic. This area should be nothing more than a buffer for the attraction which is from the top of the berm in. Cost Savings\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- QQ. Vernal Pool Boardwalk: Unnecessary, although vernal pools are of ecological significance, they are not an attraction as they are nothing more than a mud hole, swamp, etc. Bad user experience located immediately adjacent to Hughes Drive with the roar of constant vehicular traffic. This area should be nothing more than a buffer for the attraction which is the lake from the top of the berm in. Cost Savings \$298,700.00

- RR. Accessible Canopy Treewalk/Bridge Unnecessary amenity (not required for access to top of berm) although vernal pools are of ecological significance, they are not an attraction as they are nothing more than a mud hole, swamp, etc. Bad user experience located immediately adjacent to Hughes Drive with the roar of constant vehicular traffic and view of residences. If construction of this component is the attraction it can be located within MCP for a better user experience (i.e. no traffic and out of residential area). This area should be nothing more than a buffer for the site which is the attraction, features such as this will actually change the character of DS21. Cost Savings \$1,121,800.00
- SS. Parking Area (25 Spaces) Unnecessary, parking already exists on Hughes Drive and simply needs to be improved Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
- TT. Restroom: Unnecessary Restroom can be located at MCVS less than 1/3 of a mile away mile away as described in C. and J. above. Entire loop around the lake is 2 miles, average walking pace is 15 to 20 minutes per mile, and as a result you could complete the entire loop in 40 minutes, so why is it necessary to provided more than one rest room? Further this rest room is located immediately adjacent to a residential home. It should also be noted that it is interesting that Soil Conservation will allow sharing of facilities, but MCVS will not. Cost Savings \$80,000.00
- UU. Soil Conservation Building (not identified on Master Plan): Unnecessary it is nothing more than an office building located in a residential zone. If DS21 is truly the purpose, then demo the house and replant or allow it to reforest
- VV. Floating Wetland Boardwalk: Unnecessary located within the FEMA flood plain and will wash out Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_00(unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary).
- WW. Pond Overlook: Unnecessary existing, the top of the berm which is accessible to all is the overlook Cost Savings \$345,000.00
- XX. Deer Fence: Unnecessary, serves absolutely no purpose (deer will not destroy vernal pools and actually drink from them) and will shepherd deer farther into residential neighborhoods and onto Hughes Drive, while denying access of DS21 to residents that adjoin the site. Numerous locations within MCP that MCPC could conduct this experiment without creating a safety issue and without denying access to residents Cost Savings appears to be \$57,500.00, however was unclear from the MCPC cost summary.
- YY. Meadow Restoration: Uncertain as to necessity Cost Savings \$\_\_\_\_\_ (unknown unable to identify line item cost from the MCPC cost summary)
- ZZ. Grass Emergency Access Gated: Acceptable, however as set forth in B. above this should also be utilized as the main access in light of all of the existing infrastructure and the fact that the location is at grade.
- AAA. Accessible Trail: Acceptable.

**Total savings so far (with many costs that are unknown for items than can and should be eliminated) is minimum of \$6,860,200 plus 28% (\*items set forth below) is \$1,920,856 = \$8,781,056**

\*add 28% to all cost savings (Mobilization 3%, Construction Surveying 2%, Construction and Contingency 10%, Design and Engineering 13%)

\*\*\*the above does not include infrastructure costs such as electric, water, sanitary sewer which could not be identified, and could significantly be reduced by locating same closer to existing connections rather than be dragged to the furthest point from said connections.