

Wannigan Regional Park Master Plan Final Draft March 16, 2022

Vision for Wannigan Park:

Wannigan Park is a premier destination for outdoor recreation and cultural preservation that improves quality of life and the land through open space, trails, and storytelling



**Prepared by the Wannigan Park Committee for
the City of Frazee, Minnesota and the
Frazee Community Development Corporation**

FCDC

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Wannigan Regional Park Master Plan

GENERAL INFORMATION

Park Name: Wannigan Regional Park

GMRPTC Park District: 3

Park Type: Nature Based Park

Location Description

- **Park or trail address:** part of Sec. 26, Twp. 138, Range 040, Burlington Township, MN (parcel numbers or legal description can be provided upon request)
- **GPS coordinates of park or trail** [Filled in by system based on facility address listed.]
- **Map of Park or Trail**

- **Park Website**

<https://wanniganpark.com/>

- **Facility Website**

<https://frazeecity.com/>

https://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/parks_recreation/default.aspx

Proposed Wannigan Park Drone Flyover Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHxmQankO9s>

- **Lead Applicant Organization** [Must be a city or county in Greater Minnesota] **City of Frazee**

- **Lead Contact Person:** Jordin Roberts

- **Lead Contact Title:** Frazee City Administrator

- **Mailing address (lead applicant):** 222 W. Main Ave., Frazee, MN 56544

- **Phone:** 218-334-4991

- **Email:** jordin.roberts@frazeecity.com

- **Joint Applicants** [Listing of formal application partners, all must be a city or county in Greater MN]]:

- **Application Resolution**

City of Frazee Supporting Resolution

The original Master Plan was adopted by the Burlington Township Board of Supervisors on March 11, 2021, and the Frazee City Council on March 15, 2021.

The Master Plan update in 2022 will be reviewed by the Burlington Township Board of Supervisors in February 2022, and by the Frazee City Council in March 2022.

Initial resolutions of support were passed by the Becker County on 12/17/19 and the township on 1/14/21.

- **Other project supporters**

Frazee Community Development Corporation, North Country Trail Association, Frazee School District, Becker County, Detroit Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Neighbor to Neighbor, Frazee EDA, Becker County EDA, Becker County Soil & Water District, Becker County Natural Resource Management, Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee, River Keepers, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, MN Dept. of Transportation, Fischer Century Farms, Frazee Community Club, Becker County Museum, Cornerstone

DESCRIPTION TAB

Regional Significance Statement—75 words max

Wannigan Regional Park will be a nature based park that will serve as a trailhead for three unique recreational trails of statewide/national significance:

1. The Otter Tail River State Water Trail - a designated canoe and kayak route;
2. The Heartland State Trail Extension - a multi-use non-motorized trail; and
3. The North Country National Scenic Trail, a hiking trail.

It will offer much needed camping, performance and gathering spaces, onsite trails and an interpretive center in a natural setting.

Classification

Natural Resource Based Regional Park Classification

Overview/Description of Park—

Park Description

Wannigan Regional Park will be located just north of the City of Frazee in Becker County, within a lake country corridor that experiences a lot of tourist traffic.

Wannigan Park will be comprised of various biomes that include coniferous and deciduous forests and prairies that will provide a beautiful and contrasting setting.

The park will act as a hub for the federal North Country National Scenic Trail (hiking); the Otter Tail River State Water Trail (canoeing/kayaking); and the Heartland State Trail

(walking, biking, in line and skating). The park will provide visitors with:

- Short term campground facilities (RV hookups and tent)
- Picnic shelters;
- An amphitheater;
- An interpretive facility/multi use building;
- Natural and paved trails and ADA access routes;
- A canoe/kayak boat launch;
- Scenic & birdwatching viewpoints;
- Interpretive signage and informational kiosks;
- Riverbank fishing; and
- Ample preserved & restored natural areas
- Pollinator gardens
- Fruit tree orchard

The Setting

This Park site is surrounded by wetlands and forested areas to the northeast; agricultural land and scattered farmsteads to the northwest and north; a golf course to the east; and adjacent to the Frazee Elementary & High School complex and ballfields to the south. The planned park is less than ½ mile from downtown Frazee. US Highway 10 is about ½ mile from the planned park. Frazee is ten miles south of Detroit Lakes, and about an hour's drive from the Fargo/Moorhead area. Fergus Falls is about 50 miles southeast of Frazee.

User Groups To Be Served

The park will serve: campers of all types, bird and wildlife watchers, fisherpeople, and a variety of picnicking group sizes as well as primitive campsites including a primitive group campsite. Trails will serve: hikers, bikers, rollerskaters, cross country skiers, snowshoers, canoeists and kayakers. The interpretive center and amphitheater will serve-program participants, informal and formal classes, and audiences of all ages. School classes and youth groups will be able to use the building and property. The public will be able to rent out a portion of the interpretive center for private events.

Sizes of Major Planned Park Facilities

- Interpretive center building: 4000 - 6000 sf
- Two large picnic shelters: one with kitchen, both sized for 10 - 12 tables
- Two picnic shelters sized for two to four picnic tables
- Paved trails: asphalt, 10' wide with 2' level shoulders
- Access Routes to the major facilities: meet ADA regulations, hard surface, 5-6 feet wide
- RV pump out station: sized to service the onsite RV units.
- Natural surface trails: four feet wide with no shoulders; North Country National Scenic Trail: two feet wide with one foot clear zones on each side
- Campground with 49 sites in the Phase 1 development
- In future phases, restroom buildings, interpretive center and one picnic shelter will serve as emergency shelters. These will be sized to accommodate the expected number

of park visitors to comply with emergency shelter requirements.

Programming

Programming will be offered through partnerships with local and regional organizations and will include:

- Self guided exhibits in the interpretive center;
- Outdoor amphitheater presentations and performances;
- Indoor and outdoor classroom space;
- Guided tours and lessons;
- Interpretive presentations and tours; and
- Service learning/stewardship through habitat restoration & maintenance.

Total Acreage

The total acreage proposed for purchase is 174.55 acres. An additional 25 acres to the east have been identified for possible future expansion.

Acquisition and Development Status

The proposed park consists of three parcels owned by one private property owner totaling 174.55 acres. - Portions of one parcel owned by Frazee Golf, Inc. totaling approximately 25 acres have been offered for sale, but the access is by private road. The golf course property is indicated on the Concept Plan for potential future expansion, if a suitable access can be found and if demand or conservation goals warrant park expansion. The primary property owner is a willing seller for the park. The private property owner bought the parcels in about 2017 when the City started discussing the park potential of the property during public comprehensive plan discussions.

The City and Frazee Community Development have discussed purchasing the properties with the owner, and the owner has declared a verbal asking price. The City and Frazee Community Development have kept the property owners informed of the GMRPTC timeline, and so far he has indicated a willingness to wait until permanent land acquisition funding is secured.

In July 2020 the City and County applied for purchasing assistance from the Parks & Trails Council of MN. The Council accepted the project and are willing to purchase the property and hold it for the park temporarily until a permanent funding source is secured, if necessary. The Parks & Trails Council can also advise the City and County on landowner negotiations and the purchasing process. The City and County intention is to apply for land acquisition funding through GMRPTC as soon as possible. Other funding sources such as State LCCMR/Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund funding will also be pursued.

Regional Context

Wannigan Regional Park will contribute to the need for a regional park in Becker County and for a park that complements the City of Frazee's efforts to rebrand itself as a trail town. The proximity of the Park to the City of Frazee allows the City to utilize the existing and unique natural and cultural resources of the site (significantly, the Otter Tail River) to interconnect with two trails of national/statewide significance (Heartland Trail and North Country Trail). Recreational utilization of the park will be highly varied: walking, biking, hiking, river recreation, fishing, camping, xskiing, snowshoeing, sightseeing, and birding. The Park will also afford the opportunity to partner with the local school district to introduce nature-based curriculum for students and the community.

In addition to the local historical and recreational connections to the land and the natural beauty of the Park, its regional emphasis is reflected in its ability to provide connections to three unique trail systems - which in turn create opportunities for strengthening local and regional connections between existing and proposed park and trail systems. While the City and Wannigan Park provide for a convergence of recreational trail accesses, the trails themselves have different histories whose increasingly interconnected future within the Park, has regional implications.

The Otter Tail River (OTR) is a case in point, as use of this river has changed from a historical utilization for transport of goods and people to one of receiving a State recreational designation for canoes and kayaks. In order to more fully realize the recreational opportunity afforded by this resource, incremental improvements will be explored to create river access within the Park, remove obstacles downstream of the Park and provide connections to local lakes that are connected to the river via an old flood control and canal system constructed during the WPA project building era of the 1930's. In the Otter Tail River Master Plan developed by the River Keepers with input from local stakeholders, many opportunities and obstacles were identified, but it is the ongoing recreational push and enthusiasm that will foment the necessary ongoing changes to improve recreational access and use of the river along its regionally connecting corridor.

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) shares a similar connective intent to the OTR, but its ambitions are lengthier as the trail, when completed, will be the longest walking trail in the United States. Regionally, the trail makes its way through Itasca State Park and slices through parts of Tamarack National Wildlife Refuge before winding its way to Wannigan Park. This trail is dependent on volunteers for its development and ongoing maintenance. In recent years, the local Laurentian Lakes Chapter of the NCT Association has successfully reached out to the County for strategic assistance in helping keep these trails open for public use, and creating new trail segment and connections such as proposed for Wannigan Park.

The regional vision of connecting communities extends to either side of the Heartland Trail. To the East of Frazee, the aim is to connect into the Cities of Wolf Lake, Osage and Park Rapids. In Park Rapids the Trail continues on towards the City of Walker and a new segment has been planned that will connect Park Rapids to Itasca State Park to the north. From Detroit Lakes the Trail blends into the community providing passage from the outskirts of town to its beautiful lakefront before proceeding south and west to Dunton Locks County Park,

and then the aim is to bring the trail further south and west along lake communities like Lake Sally, Lake Melissa and Pelican Lake before turning north to Middle Cormorant and the City of Lake Park before winding its way farther west towards the City of Lake Park and Hawley. Having identified this preferred pathway within the County Master Trails Plan has created an opportunity to eventually interconnect via Hwy. 9 to Pelican Rapids and Maplewood State Park. Interestingly, MNDOT has recently proposed a bike lane from Pelican Rapids, which may be routed along Hwy. 9 to just south of Pelican Lake, creating a regional opportunity to connect these trails to each other, and providing access for further connection via trails to parks and communities located in Otter Tail County. As the Trail heads north and then west from the Lake Park area to Hawley, that city plans to utilize the Heartland Trail to connect with Buffalo River State Park prior to proceeding westward to its final terminus in Moorhead.

Of the three recreational trails referenced above, the Heartland Trail seems the most dynamic (certainly the most capital intensive) as a recreational arterial for connecting our local and regional destinations, communities and counties.

The Heartland Trail is a relative newcomer to our area, but the time from inception to planning and initial construction of the 1st connecting segment between Detroit Lakes and Frazee has gone relatively quickly, with a timeframe to date of approximately 14 years. This initial segment of the Heartland Trail connecting the two communities is anticipated to be completed in 2022. In 2021 the Heartland trail was extended to Acorn Lake near Frazee. Construction is currently underway on the 8 mile segment from Detroit Lakes to Frazee. Other intercity segments from Frazee along Hwy. 87, and near Detroit Lakes along Hwy. 22, will be constructed in the next two years.

Detroit Lakes and Perham are two of the major cities within or near a 30-mile radius of Wannigan Park, both of which hold their own parks and recreational opportunities. Wannigan Park will offer another location in the region to experience outdoor and recreational activities on both a regional and local scale. At a larger scale, Wannigan Park will complement certain outdoor recreational activities from Fergus Falls, the next major city in the area. Located a little over the 30-mile radius of Wannigan Park, Fergus Falls includes various recreational facilities in its parks such as athletic fields, walking & biking trails, boat & kayak access, landscaped grounds, picnic areas, ice skating, and swimming. Although Fergus Falls has a diverse use of recreational activities, it is beyond a 30-mile radius from Wannigan Park and Detroit Lakes, limiting the use of these amenities and activities to those in the area. Wannigan Park will add to the outdoor recreational activities within this radius for people to enjoy.

Wannigan Park will complement Detroit Lakes' recreational activities by expanding the scope of outdoor recreation activities between the cities such as trails (paved and natural), campground opportunities, picnic areas, and an amphitheater. Although Detroit Lakes has a well-used bandshell, Wannigan park will provide an amphitheater that will be a larger alternative to the bandshell. Wannigan Park will also provide the opportunity to kayak or canoe in the Otter River Trail which will bring a unique feature into the local area. Furthermore, Wannigan Park's connection to the Heartland trail will facilitate more traffic between Frazee and Detroit Lakes' recreational facilities and activities.

Maplewood and Glendalough are the two state parks that fall within the 30-mile radius of Wannigan Park. Maplewood is the closest state park southwest of Wannigan Park in Pelican Rapids. Some of the park highlights include camping, fishing, hiking, and horseback. Glendalough falls straight south of Wannigan Park in Battle

Lake. Some of the park's highlights include cart-in tent camping and yurts, hiking & biking, wildlife observation, heritage fishing/large panfish, canoeing and a swimming beach. Wannigan Park will complement the activities offered at these State Parks by providing additional and much needed campsites, the long-distance water and land trails, and the experience of a scenic river corridor. By offering some of the same activities as these parks, such as the most popular recreational activities of hiking and biking, regional residents and visitors will be able to experience a variety of landscapes in the region.

The maps below shows the proposed Wannigan Regional Park near Frazee with two of the planned regional trails – park interconnections: the Heartland Trail and the North Country Trail. For a higher resolution map, see the Becker County Master Trail Plan at this link:

https://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/parks_recreation/PDFs/projects/MTP/12681_BeckerCountyMasterTrailPlan_HighRes.pdf

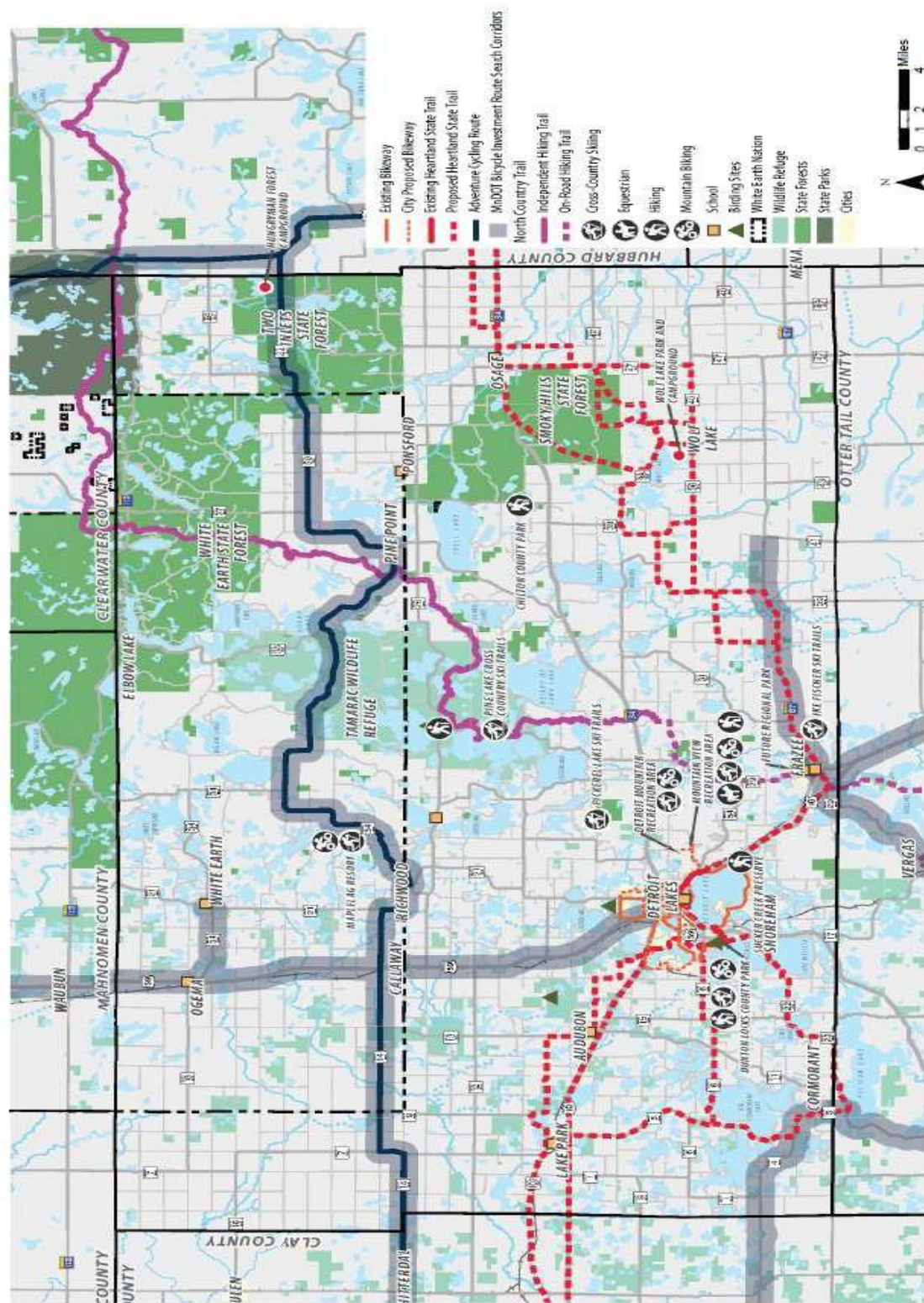


Figure 3: Existing and Planned Non-Motorized Trails and Destinations

SITE INFORMATION TAB

Facilities Listing

- **Existing facilities: 0**
- **Proposed facilities:**
 - **General camping: 1 area; the site will include a restroom/shower facility, and electric & water hook-ups (1)**
 - **Primitive and group camping: 1 primitive, 1 group camping area with permanent or portable satellite toilets and potable water spigots**
 - **Parking (6 sites):**
 - **1 for the interpretive center, trailheads and general park use (SW corner entrance – main)**
 - **1 for the main boat launch**
 - **2 for picnicking and amphitheater use (East of River)**
 - **1 for trail use as a trailhead (North entrance) with limited access to tent camping areas**
 - **1 for group camping**
 - **Picnic Sites (4 Shelters)**
 - **Interpretive Center**
 - **Emergency Shelters as required (combined with other buildings)**
 - **One canoe/kayak boat launch area**
 - **Outdoor amphitheater**
 - **Paved and natural surface trails and ADA access routes**
 - **Demonstration native gardens and a demonstration fruit orchard**
 - **Other infrastructure (utilities, roads, sewage pump out station)**

General Site Characteristics

The planned park site is vacant land that has not been used by the property owners for over a decade. It is characterized by rolling hills of scattered wooded sections interspersed with open fields that were originally prairies or were cleared long ago for pastures. Because Frazee is located at the meeting point of three major biomes, this site is a good example of the transition from coniferous and deciduous forest lands to the east to the prairies to the west. The park site displays some of each habitat.

The primary unique feature that gives the park its sense of place is the Otter Tail River, which winds from the northeast corner of the park site to the southwest corner. Of note, the Otter Tail River/trail is ranked as a high priority for the region (GMRPTC Park District 3) and is a natural, cultural, and recreational amenity/special feature that flows through the middle of the

park. Large wetlands extend inland from the river, and smaller wetlands are scattered through the rest of the property. The river undulates, forming steep bends in the river with points of land in between. The riverbanks are predominately steep, up to 25 feet high in places, offering views of the river and lands beyond. Since the soil is predominantly sandy loam and sand, the soil layers can be seen from the river. This particular stretch of the Otter Tail State Water Trail, called the “Frazee Reach”, is great for canoeing and kayaking due to its modest stream flow, clean water, and safe depth (about six feet at the park site). The site is good for birdwatching, since it is on a major flyway through the “prairie pothole” region, and the river and wetlands provide resting and feeding areas for birds and waterfowl. A fifty foot wide, natural buffer along the entire river will preserve the wild character of the riverfront when viewed from the water or land.

About 47 acres of the total park site, or about one-quarter of it, is wetlands, many of them dominated by trees and shrubs, and some with emergent plants that are good for wildlife viewing. The wetlands have been avoided in the development plan, so the park will be preserving a significant number of acres of this important ecological feature. The planned trail system includes spur trails to overlooks of the river and viewpoints of the wetlands.

The former landowner gave permission to the adjacent K-12 public school to use the site for environmental education, so part of the southern end of the site has markers on it from that use. A private, very low volume gravel road that serves two farmsteads and the park property runs generally from North to South on the east (not west) side of the river. It is owned by the owner of the park site and will be purchased as part of the park. A second, private gravel road on the park site will be used as a park road. This road features a picturesque railroad boxcar that was converted to a bridge over the river by former owners. The bridge is a landmark, with sentimental value for local people, and may be moved to an adjacent, parallel trail and retained and rehabilitated to meet regional trail standards.

The forested areas are primarily in the southeastern portion of the site and include clusters of red and white pine and white spruce, as well as deciduous stands of green ash, bur oak and white oak. The development planned for the site minimizes disturbance to the forested areas. The planned interpretive center and interpretive outdoor signs will describe the importance of the area and the site during the logging era, and well as tell stories of environmental features.

A major feature of the developed park will be the meeting of the three significant trails: the Heartland Spur trail connecting just outside of the park with the Heartland State Trail, the North Country natural surface trail directly through the park, and the Otter Tail River State Water Trail. The site will be a meeting place for a variety of types of trail users. This will also contribute to the sense of place for the park. Because the development is sensitively planned to retain the major existing natural features of the park by building around them, the feeling of the wide open prairie/oak savannah meeting the forest edge will be preserved. Planned habitat restoration activities will enhance the ecological quality of the site.

Site Characteristics Images Upload

Looking South - Wannigan Regional Park proximity to Frazee



Looking North – Covered Bridge (to the left of the River will be West Side park entrances (No./So.), parking, camping, restrooms and interpretive center)



Main East-West pathway (pictured looking east from the area of the covered bridge)



TRENDS/PUBLIC VALUES TAB

- [Public Involvement Summary](#)

The Wannigan Park concept was developed about fifteen years ago and was publicly discussed during the City of Frazee's comprehensive planning process in 2018-19. There was much public input on the park idea during the planning process and the Park is included in the City Comprehensive Plan adopted in October 2019. The Plan entitled "The Frazee Comprehensive Plan 2035" includes strategies to "identify and safeguard valuable natural resources and outdoor heritage through education, preservation and conservation efforts." In the Plan, the Wannigan Park site, referred to as the "Ness property", was identified for a future park. The strategy states, "Continue to work on regional or state park designation for the Ness property." Other Plan strategies that Wannigan Park will help implement are:

- "Develop and maintain the Otter Tail river system as a primary recreation area,"
- "Increase access points for recreational uses",
- "Improve opportunities for river related recreation",
- "Enhance preservation of native plants and habitat protection efforts for wildlife",
- "Better connectivity between parks and trails locally and regionally",
- "Connect to the Heartland Trail",
- "Identify proposed regional park",
- "Identify property for kayak/canoe storage" where local residents could rent a space to store their personal boat, and
- "Work with SHIP on a rental program for kayaks/canoes."

Upon completion of the Frazee Comprehensive Plan 2035, the City and County staff formed a committee that began to meet in 2019 and was composed of elected officials, volunteer citizens, and, importantly, staff from the National Park Service, who played an essential and central role in helping the committee develop the Wannigan Park from a concept to a Master Plan/reality. In addition, the County's Recreational Advisory Committee also was a sounding board for the park concept during this time. The Wannigan Park Committee met regularly from Fall 2020 to Spring 2022. A draft Master Plan was reviewed at public meetings with the Frazee City Council, Burlington Township Board of Supervisors, and with adjacent landowners in January and February 2021, and the Master Plan was approved by the Frazee City Council on March 15, 2021 and the Burlington Township Board of Supervisors on March 11, 2021. The City submitted the application for regional significance to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) in Spring 2021 with the adopted master plan attached. The GMRPTC ranked Wannigan Park high in July 2021, making it eligible for funding consideration.

When the proposed partnership between Becker County and Frazee to own and manage the park did not materialize, the Park Committee found new volunteers to take over as board members of the inactive non profit organization, the Frazee Community Development Corporation, Inc. (FCDC), with a new focus: to develop Wannigan Park. FCDC will develop, manage and operate the regional park with the City of Frazee as the owner. The Park Committee has continued to hold monthly meetings that are open to the public. In January 2022 Committee members met with interested neighbors to update them on the park progress and hear their concerns.

As part of the planning process, public outreach included the development of a twelve question online survey advertised through the City and County websites and via notices put into local utility bills. The County sponsored the survey. The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey, and was open for one month in August & September 2020. The survey received 121 responses, 44% of which reside in Frazee, 25% from rural areas in Becker and Otter Tail Counties, 19% in Detroit Lakes, a regional center 10 miles north of Frazee, 14% from smaller towns in the vicinity, and the remainder from elsewhere. This is considered an adequate response rate, since the population of Frazee is about 1400, and the survey had responses from the two-county surrounding area. Respondents were between 12 years old and 65+, with the most responses from 25 – 34 year-olds (31% of respondents), then 35-44 year-olds (27%), and 45-54 year-olds (17%). The least represented in the survey were the three youngest categories, from ages 12 to 24. An encouraging sign is that 16 of the respondents said that they would like to be involved in the Wannigan Park effort and were contacted and offered participation opportunities. Highlights of the survey findings are:

- 1) Primary activities people would like to do in Wannigan Park are: walking (90%), picnics (73%), bicycling on paved trails (61%), camping (55%), birdwatching/nature viewing (46%), jogging/trail running (45%), attend a concert or presentation at the amphitheater (43%), solitude/personal contemplation (43%), and cross country skiing (41%).
- 2) Amenities that should be built at the park garnered these responses, from most requested to least requested: picnic tables, restrooms, paved trails, natural surface trails, gazebos/covered picnic shelters, parking lots, campsites for tents, campsites for RVs, outdoor amphitheater, and interpretive center.
- 3) 92% of respondents said that they would take an automobile to get to the park, 44% would bicycle, 33% would walk, and 24% would canoe or kayak. (7% had other answers.)
- 4) 48% of respondents use the North Country National Scenic Trail now, and 84% say they will sometimes or often use the trail once it is constructed and open through Frazee. 48% of respondents use the Otter Tail State Water Trail now, and 68% will use it once the new access and amenities at Wannigan Park are open. For the Heartland State Trail, 75% use it now, and 88% say they will use it when it is open through Wannigan Park.

5) When asked what type of camping should be available in the park, 82% thought tent camping was desirable, 57% wanted RV camping, 48% wanted camping for backpackers, 45% wanted camping for canoeists/kayakers, 39% for bicycle camping, 29% for rustic camper cabins, 28% for yurts or other unique shelters, and 15% for “glamping” facilities.

The Park Committee has engaged youth in the process as well. The Future Farmers of America club in Frazee and a high school class are committed to participating in Park planning activities monthly through the 2020-21 school year. The youth participated in the survey, created site design drawings of the park, and will read and comment on this park plan.

A second public interest survey was launched in February 2022 in partnership between the City of Frazee and FCDC, and was open for online responses for a month. A postcard announcing the survey and the open house was mailed to almost 5,000 households and businesses with a special focus on the White Earth Band of Ojibwe. 221 responses were received, of which 70% were from Becker County, 1% from Otter Tail County and 0.5% from Wadena County. The age range of respondents were adults from age 19 to 65+, mostly over age 25. Highlights of the responses included:

- 1) Recreational activities respondents would like to experience in the park: walking (87%), picnics (68%), bicycling on trails (62%), kayaking/canoeing (58%), and birdwatching/nature viewing (51%).
- 2) Amenities that should be built in the park: restrooms (94%), walking/biking paths (87%), picnic tables/gazebos (85%), outdoor amphitheater (43%) and interpretive center (36%) (the public water access was not included in the multiple choice question.)
- 3) Ninety percent of respondents planned on getting to the park by car, 37% by walking, 43% by biking, and 16% by canoeing/kayaking.

The Public Draft Wannigan Park Master Plan will be made available online for public review and comment on the City and County websites. A summary slide presentation of the plan will be available on the websites as well. An open house will be held. Presentations and discussions, likely virtual, will be held with various community groups, such as the Lions Club, VFW, Sportsmen’s Club, and Frazee Area Community Club. The plan will be reviewed by the Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee (RAC) and discussed at a meeting that is open to the public. Poster sized maps of the proposed site plan will be displayed in various locations in Frazee.

Summary of Public Plan Review Meetings 2022

Jan. 12, 2022	Frazee City Council Meeting: City/FCDC agreement discussion and Funding for appraisal
Feb 2, 2022	Frazee Park & Recreational Committee: Review of final draft City/FCDC Agreement
Feb. 3, 2022	Frazee Planning & Zoning Committee: Review of final draft Agreement
Feb. 8, 2022	FCDC Board Meeting: Agreement with West Central Initiative to assist

	In managing the capital campaign
Feb. 17, 2022	Burlington Township Board Meeting: Review of Draft Master Plan
Feb. 24, 2022	Public Open House: approximately fifty people in attendance with overwhelmingly positive comments
Feb. 28, 2022	Frazee City Council Meeting: Cooperative Agreement with FCDC
Mar. 2, 2022	Frazee Park & Recreational Committee: Review of Draft Master Plan
Mar. 8, 2022	Burlington Township Annual Meeting: Opportunity to review & discuss Public Review Draft Master Plan
Mar. 9, 2022	Frazee Planning & Zoning Committee: Review of Draft Master Plan
Mar. 10, 2022	Burlington Township Board Meeting: Resolution of Support Approved
Mar. 15, 2022	FCDC Board Meeting
Mar. 21, 2022	Frazee City Council Meeting

- [Public Involvement Support Material](#)
See Appendix for Surveys
- [Regional Demographic Information](#)

The Wannigan Park site is in Becker County, MN, on the border of the City of Frazee in Burlington Township (see the Location Map). It is 10 miles south of Detroit Lakes, the largest city in the County, and ½ to about 1 mile north of the County’s southern border with Otter Tail County. Frazee has a population of 1390, a 3% increase since 2010. Becker County has 34,423 residents, a 5.9% increase since 2010, which averages to 25 people per square mile in a county of 1315 square miles. Population estimates show a steady growth in population from 2010 to 2018, with a slight leveling off between 2018 and 2019. In fact, five counties of the seven county region around Becker experienced population growth from 2010 to 2018, with Becker showing the 2nd highest growth rate. County and Frazee City staff have also noticed increased permitting requests for residential development in recent years. This data suggests that the Wannigan Park site should be acquired soon, before it is lost to residential development. It also suggests that there will be increased demand for parks as the region’s population grows.

The median age in Becker County is 41.8, which is about in the middle of median ages in the surrounding counties. This is higher than the 37.9 median age in the US and Minnesota. Thirteen percent of the county population are age 70 or over, compared to 10% statewide. When comparing the Becker County age distribution to that of the state, Becker County has a slightly higher percentage of residents under twenty, a lower percentage of people between ages 20 and 60, and a higher percentage of people over 60 than the state as a whole. This data suggests that Wannigan Park should offer opportunities for all ages, including children, teens, and older adults.

County residents are 87% White, 8% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% Hispanic/Latino and less than 1% Black and Asian, with 3% of the population being 2 or more races. The American Indian population in the county is significant; the state as a whole only has about 1.1% American Indian residents. A portion of the White Earth Reservation is in northern Becker County. While the main part of the Reservation is about 50 miles from Frazee, there are scattered tracts of Tribal land in between, with the closest parcels about ten miles away. Wannigan Regional Park intends on recognizing the American Indian history of the area in the planned interpretive center and will be conducting an archaeological survey prior to development to ensure no archaeological artifacts are disturbed. The Park Committee is seeking input on regional park design from tribal members. While the non-white population is small in the County, this may grow with the projected growth in minority populations within the US in general. Wannigan Park is being designed to offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to appeal to and serve the needs of a diverse array of interests.

Serving a Regional Population

Otter Tail County, south of Becker, includes the regional center of Fergus Falls, and has a population of 57,992, about 50 miles from Frazee. Clay County, west of Becker, has 62,801 residents, and includes Moorhead, MN, part of the Fargo/Moorhead metropolitan area. The Fargo/Moorhead area has grown by 34% between 2000 and 2015 to 233,836, and is a major cultural, retail, health care, educational and industrial center. In fact, the Fargo area has had the fastest-escalating residential land prices in the Upper Midwest, rising 74% from 2012 to 2017. At about an hour's drive from the Wannigan Park site, the Fargo/Moorhead area residents are expected to make up a large portion of park visitors. The area has two universities and a private college and is home to one of Microsoft's biggest corporate campuses outside the Seattle area. The per capita gross domestic product is close behind Minneapolis/St. Paul's.

Some of the population growth in Clay and western Becker Counties may be people who work in Fargo/Moorhead but want to live in a more rural area in Minnesota and find cheaper housing and land prices there. Only 58% of Becker County residents work in the same city or place as they live. A great part of the appeal of Becker County are the lakes and forests—a different ecosystem from the prairies around Fargo/Moorhead. Furthermore, there are 209,949 residents in the eight Minnesota counties surrounding the Wannigan Park site. These residents are within about a 15 minutes to 1 hour drive of the park site, so will also be served by the park.

Frazee's median household income is \$50,238, which represents a 52% growth rate since 2010. Median household income in Becker County was \$59,278 in 2018, and 11.1% of residents lived in poverty. From 2017-18, the total number of people employed in the county rose 3.5%. In contrast, the median household income in the Fargo/Moorhead area is \$62,820, and the median in Minnesota is \$70,315, and \$83,698 in the Twin Cities. Considering this data, Wannigan Park is being developed to offer low cost recreational opportunities, such as camping, hiking and biking, and low cost or free programming is planned.

Becker County already draws visitors from the entire state of Minnesota and beyond to its lakes, forests and amenities. Seasonal homes surround lakeshores in the area. Visitors to the county are predominately from the nearby Fargo Moorhead Area and North Dakota in general (responsible for approximately 65% outstate visitation and 2nd summer homes). The population of the County roughly doubles in the Spring-Fall months and there is a heavy use of available lakes, parks and rivers. Wannigan Park will add amenities to entice current visitors to stay longer in the area, and, as the hub for the North Country, Heartland and Otter Tail Water Trails, is expected to draw state and national visitors as well.

- [Demographic Support Material Upload](#)

See Appendix for US Census Data

- [Public Health Values](#)
 - [Promotes Physical Activity](#)
 - [Promotes Healthy Lifestyle](#)
 - [Connects People to the Outdoors](#)
 - [Enhances Mental Health](#)
 - [Encourages Social Interaction](#)

In an online survey conducted in August/September 2020, 121 respondents from Frazee and surrounding area in Becker and Otter Tail Counties rated the five public health values on a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (extremely important). Of these five values, respondents valued “enhancing mental health” highest, with an average score of 8.70, and 58% of respondents gave this value a 9 or 10 rating. “Connects People to the Outdoors” ranked second with an average score of 8.67, where 66% of respondents gave the value a 9 or 10 score. This value also received the most “10—extremely important” ratings with 52%. Next was “Promotes Healthy Lifestyles”, with an average rating of 8.30, then “Promotes Physical Activity” with a 8.27 average score, and least important was “Encouraging Social Interaction” with an average score of 7.36. It is interesting to note that this survey was taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, when indoor activities, large gatherings, and travel has been restricted. Parks and trails around the state and nation have seen significant increases in visitation. This may explain why connecting to the outdoors and the mental health benefits of the outdoors are appreciated at this time.

[Public Health Values Additional Information](#)

Wannigan Park will help meet all of the public health values listed above. It will connect people to the outdoors by providing a destination that can serve as a base for exploring the Heartland, North Country and Otter Tail River trails. It will promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles by offering a convenient trailhead with camping facilities to explore the three state & national trails, where people can participate in a variety of physical activities. Wannigan Park will enhance mental health by offering on-site natural and hard surface trails and other recreational

facilities in a natural setting. Research has shown that being in nature positively impacts mental health, especially the sound of birds, the views and sounds of water, and green vegetation. Wannigan Park, by retaining and restoring native habitat and through its location on the Otter Tail River, will offer all three of these features. Finally, the Park will encourage social interaction through its interpretive center, which will draw people to learn about the area's history and nature. Programming will also be offered, such as interpretive walks as well as more active programs to explore the trails, which will bring people with similar interests together. Amphitheater programs, such as presentations and concerts, will likewise encourage social interaction.

- **Public Health Values Support Material Upload**

See the answers to question 6, p. 7-9 of the Wannigan Park Survey in the Appendix.

- **Economic Development/Tourism Opportunities**

The Frazee Comprehensive Plan 2035, adopted in October 2019, includes a goal to “retain and increase the number of visitors that come to Frazee.” Strategies include: “Continue to leverage trails and trail development to promote Frazee as a trail town”, “Encourage development that promotes and enhances tourism” and “Leverage the Trail Town model of economic development.” The development of Wannigan Park will help the City achieve this goal.

Becker County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 includes an economic development goal to “Manage public lands to support the growth of recreation and tourism through sustainable natural resource management.” The public lands goal is: “Becker County will manage its administered lands for a diversity of uses that sustain the County’s environmental, economic, and community value for future generations.” The trails goal is: “Becker County will develop and maintain recreational trail systems throughout the County.” A strategy is: “Support the creation of permanent non-motorized trails in the County and work with other local, Tribal, State, and Federal agencies to create regional, non-motorized trail systems.”

According to the 2010 American Community Survey, the largest employment sectors in the county are: Management, business, science & arts with 29% of the employed population, sales and office occupations with 25%, then service occupations with 17%. The industries with the most workers in the county are: Educational service, and health care and social assistance with 23% of employees. Manufacturing and retail trade ties for 2nd with 13.5% of the county’s employees each. Construction is 4th with 9%, and the arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation & food services is 5th with 7.5% (1173 employees).

Becker County’s median household income is \$59,278, which is higher than most surrounding counties, but lower than the Minnesota median of \$70,315. The County’s July 2020 unemployment rate was 5.7%, much lower than the US rate of 10.2%, and lower than the 10.6% County rate in January 2010.

Becker County is the fourth highest in gross tourism sales for the northwest region. The county brings in

nearly \$72 million in gross sales and \$4.5 million in sales tax.

Approximately 31% of households in Becker County are seasonal homes. Key reasons people buy vacation homes in Becker County were peacefulness (63 percent), scenic beauty (57 percent), water quality (48 percent), family ties to area (33 percent), proximity to family (33 percent) and proximity to recreational amenities (32 percent).

Seasonal households spend an average of \$120 a month in groceries and liquor, \$74 in dining and bars, \$74 in gas, \$95 in home maintenance, \$75 in entertainment and recreation, and \$1,066 in construction and remodeling.

In a University of Minnesota Tourism Center study done in 2004, specific to Becker County visitors, 27 percent of tourists from outside the County were from the Minnesota metro area. North Dakota visitors and non-metro Minnesota visitors each made up 23 percent. The remaining visitors reported were from Iowa and other locations in the United States (6 percent each), Nebraska, Illinois and Indiana (3 percent each), Wisconsin and South Dakota (2 percent each) and local and Canada (1 percent each).

A 2007 University of Minnesota Tourism Center survey showed that 85 percent of tourists are repeat visitors. The primary reason they come to this area is for pleasure or recreation (43 percent). Other reasons included combined business and pleasure (10 percent) and festivals or special events and visiting friends or relatives (8 percent each).

- [Economic Development/Tourism Opportunities Support Material Upload](#)

- [Recreational Trends Information](#)

Recreational trends have not been researched at the regional, multi-county level in west central Minnesota, so regional trends must be surmised from national and statewide data and some local information. Nationally, the Outdoor Industry Association annually quantifies the outdoor recreation trends. Their “2020 Forecasting Report” identifies the main societal trends affecting outdoor recreation as:

- 1) Rise of Millennials and aging Boomers
- 2) Urban migration
- 3) Obesity
- 4) Heightened attention on health; and
- 5) Hispanic/Latino growth.

It identifies that the outdoor recreation participation has reduced by 2% in the last ten years. The overall number of outings has reduced by 7.4% from 2018-19, and youth outdoor outings reduced by 1.4% in the past three years. However, female participation increased 3.2% from 2018-19, and Hispanic participation is stronger. They found that people tend to recreate within

1 to 10 miles from their home. Participation is skewed male; the mean age is 36.2, and outdoor participants tend to be educated with above average household incomes. The most popular outdoor recreation activities nationally in 2019 were: running, jogging, trail running, fishing, and biking (road, mountain and BMX). By ethnicity, outdoor recreation participation rates are highest for Asian/Pacific Islanders, then Whites, Hispanics, then African Americans, but 49.5% of Americans did not participate in outdoor recreation at all. They reported that people are getting outdoors less. Some positive national trends include: slightly more participation by women in outdoor recreation, and more participation in car camping, backpacking, BMX biking, kayaking, sailing, stand up paddleboards, and wildlife viewing. It must be noted that this study was conducted before the COVID-19 restrictions were put in place in Spring 2020.

Within Minnesota, a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) “2019 State Trail Visitor Study” found that trail visitors were older, had higher incomes and had higher educational attainment and were more often identified as white compared to the MN adult population. 70% of State Trail users were aged 45 or older. The trail users surveyed suggested better surface conditions, better maintenance of the overgrowth and debris along the trail, cleaner and more bathrooms, more water fountains, and more trail mile markers as ways to improve trails. The median distance of trail outings were 20 miles for cyclists and 3 miles for walkers. The closest State Trails to the Wannigan Park site are the Heartland and Paul Bunyan. The Heartland, measured in Nevis, MN, had an average daily traffic (ADT) of 132, and the Paul Bunyan, measured in Brainerd, had 122. Some segments near population centers had over 500 (ADT). The summer months of June, July and August accounted for 63% of use, and the shoulder seasons of Spring and Fall represented 29% of trail use. The permanent trail traffic counters on the Heartland Trail in Nevis, MN showed a 263 ADT in summer, with 347 ADT on summer weekends and holidays. Trail users were 74% bicyclists and 26% walkers. The Paul Bunyan trail counter in Brainerd showed 189 ADT in summer, with a 227 ADT on summer weekends/holidays. Trail users were 59% bicyclists and 42% pedestrians.

In a 2019 Otter Tail County Summer/Fall Visitor Profile by the University of Minnesota, the most frequent activities of visitors were: dining out, shopping, local festivals, golfing, hiking, state parks and sightseeing. Favorite activities were: lake activities, fishing, and boating. Biking and camping were popular in summer. There was a need indicated for kid-friendly activities. In a 2019 Bemidji Visitor Profile, visiting friends and family was the top reason for coming to the area. Most frequent activities of visitors were: dining out, sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, scenic byways, and Itasca State Park. Favorite activities were lake/waterfront/beach activities. Major draws were lakes, fishing, state parks, boating, biking, and hiking. Shopping, restaurants and breweries were also mentioned as tourist draws. This suggests that the proposal to develop Wannigan Park with camping and trails will match with visitor interests in the area. It also suggests that developing water access should also be a draw. Providing for fishing on the river will also attract tourists.

In 2016 the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) identified recreational trends and themes in their Strategic Plan. They suggest that novelty will entice users, and quality keeps them returning. They recommend creating vibrant regional parks and

trails through siting them in high quality settings that are well positioned and using high quality design.

In the Spring of 2020, everything changed. When restrictions were put on gatherings and indoor activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, park and trail managers from all over the country started noticing huge surges in outdoor recreation participation. With many people out of work or isolated at home, more people felt the need to get outdoors for their health. Members of the Minnesota Park and Recreation Association reported great increases in park and trail use all over the State. Campgrounds have been at capacity, the Boundary Waters received soaring permit requests, and retailers sold out of outdoor recreation and camping gear. Camping has especially boomed, as people look for safer lodging options than hotels, motels and resorts. Cities closed streets to motorized vehicles to make more room for walkers. No data is yet available on the surge in outdoor activity in west central Minnesota around the Wannigan Park site. It appears that people are valuing outdoor recreation opportunities more. It will be interesting to see whether long term participation rates continue at higher levels after the pandemic is over. It could be that people will form habits that they choose to continue after life returns to “normal.” It could also be that more people are trying activities, such as camping or bicycling, and decide that they enjoy the new activity and continue the activity after the pandemic.

In seeking to anticipate trends the County and its cities have been actively planning (over the last 14 years) to expand trail opportunities and park infrastructure to accommodate current and anticipated future recreation and nature based needs. As referenced in the Economic Development Section we know people are moving to or visiting our area with recreation in mind. We know that walking and biking are popular and in need of infrastructure support. The County has had no major State/Federal Trails until the advent of the NCT and the Heartland Trail. Implementation/development for both trails are ongoing. It is difficult to subscribe a trend to trail development when the network itself takes decades to develop. What we do know is that recreation and the need/demand for recreational opportunity and related infrastructure in the County continues to grow as does our population and visitors to our area. Becker County is a rural area seeing steady growth and there is a consensus, a trend that has developed into strategies, that seeks to provide more recreational amenities, and to strategically link communities in order to create more livability and resiliency within the local economy, which is strongly tourism based, and which attracts people to Becker County to live, work and play.

Additional regional trail context is provided by the County Master Trail Plan completed in late 2019 and note the NCT (purple) and the Heartland Trail (red) below in Fig. 2. In particular, the Heartland Trail is an arterial trail and so various routing options are provided as we continue to vet routes that maximize the opportunity for community linkage and use.

One recreational area in the County where we see an important state level trend/opportunity is with the recreational use/restoration of rivers. Both DNR and MNDOT are very aware of the opportunities of rivers relative to projects that they undertake. The Otter Tail River Water Trail

will be accommodated in a current MNDOT project to modify the bridge spanning the Otter Tail River at Hwy 87 in order to improve recreation for canoe and kayak. MNDNR is purchasing land adjacent to the Straight River to protect the river habitat- temperature/trout population and act as a buffer and provide more recreational access. Likewise, DNR and the Pelican River Watershed will be removing numerous dams between Detroit Lakes and Pelican Rapids (Bucs Mill Dam and Pelican Rapids Dam) to improve fish passage and provide recreational opportunities (fishing, canoe/kayaking and potential walking/bike trail alongside river within the City of Pelican Rapids). As referenced previously, rivers are a high priority recreational experience that has been identified for District 3 with resultant efforts aimed at maximizing their utility for fish passage and recreation opportunities.

The Frazee Comprehensive Plan 2035, adopted October 2019, includes a section on trends, and notes that: “Locally, residents indicated the need for more investments made in multimodal efforts specifically walking and biking. This follows regional trends where communities have highlighted the need for an interconnected trail system and improved nonmotorized amenities.” (p. 19)

Regarding natural resources, the comprehensive plan survey indicated strong support for natural resources. 67% of respondents believe that protection of wildlife and habitat is very important, and only 3% feel it is “not at all important”. Water quality is very important to 84% of the respondents, as is air quality to 76% of respondents. The overall natural environment was very important to 78% of respondents, and “important” to 16%. Only 5% believed it is “not at all important.” (p. 23)

In June 2012 Becker County conducted a Recreational Activities survey of randomly selected county households, of which 254 people responded. This was a generalized sample with a confidence level of 95% and an error rate of plus or minus 6%. The survey found that the most important factors contributing to respondents’ recreational experiences are natural resource protection, scenery and aesthetics, and the environmental impact. Sixty-five percent of respondents said they are willing to travel at least 20 miles within Becker County to participate in recreational activities, and 18% said they would travel 60 miles or more. Fifty-nine percent of respondents said that Becker County should expand its park system, for reasons including more and safer trails on which to run, walk, bike and roller-skate. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being “very important”, walking ranked as the #2 activity with a score of 4.43, just behind fishing. Camping ranked as the #5 most important activity with a 3.88 score, and bicycling #6 out of 15 activities with a score of 3.84. Walking ranked #1 in the question of whether respondents had participated in certain warm weather activities in the past two years, with 89.7%. Hiking/backpacking/picnicking was #4 with 69%, bicycling #5 with 67.4% participation, bird & wildlife watching/nature photography #6 with 60.7% participation. Canoeing/kayaking/tubing had 55.7% participation, and camping 54.9% participation. Wannigan Park will provide a place to do all of these popular recreational activities. (“2012 Recreational Activity Study for Becker County, Minnesota: Results of a June 2012 Survey of Becker County Residents.”

Attached is the Regional Trail Context map from the Becker County Master Trail Plan. For a higher resolution copy see this link:
https://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/parks_recreation/PDFs/projects/MTP/12681_BeckerCountyMasterTrailPlan_HighRes.pdf

- [Recreational Trends Support Material Upload](#)



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See the Appendix for the MNDNR “2019 Minnesota State Trail Visitor Study” and the “2020 Forecasting Report” from the Outdoor Industry Association.

Nature-Based Outdoor Recreation - National Trends¹⁵

U.S. Outdoor Recreation: national percentage change in growth days for those activities over 10% (from 2000-2007).

Fastest Growing Outdoor Recreation Activities Applicable to our Region (from 2000-2007)	> 10% Growth Change in Participation Days and # of People Participating
View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.,	77.8
View/photograph natural scenery	60.8
Off highway driving (motor vehicles)	56.1
View/photograph other wildlife	46.9
View/photograph birds	37.6
Kayaking	29.4
Visiting water (other than ocean beach)	28.1
Backpacking	24
Snowboarding	23.9
Visiting nature centers	23.2
Mountain climbing	20.5
Sightseeing	14
Visiting wilderness	12.8
Outdoor Recreation Activities that have Experienced Growth in Participation Days from 2000-2007	% growth change in participation days
Walking for pleasure	14
Attending family gatherings	16
Visiting farms and agricultural settings	100

Table 7: Annual Outdoor Recreation Participation by Minnesotans in Minnesota and Elsewhere, 2004 (Population 20 years and older)

Activity	Number of Participants (000's)	Percent of Population
Walking/hiking (Outdoors for pleasure or exercise)	1,896	54%
Boating of all types, including fishing from a boat	1,493	43
Boating of all types, excluding fishing from a boat	1,237	36
Swimming or wading	1,423	41
Driving for pleasure on scenic roads or in a park	1,300	37
Picnicking	1,245	36
Fishing	1,054	30
Biking	1,011	29
Visiting outdoor zoos	957	27
Camping	899	26
Visiting nature centers	884	25
Nature observation, photography	844	24
Golfing	820	24
Outdoor field sports (soccer, softball/baseball, football)	737	21
Visiting historic or archaeological sites	721	21
Sledding and snow tubing	642	18
Outdoor court sports (volleyball, basketball, tennis, horseshoes)	612	18
Hunting of all types	556	16
Running or jogging	497	14
Ice skating/hockey outdoors	402	12
Inline skating, rollerblading, roller skating, roller skiing	394	11
Offroad ATV driving	357	10
Snowmobiling	342	10
Downhill skiing/snowboarding	313	9
Gather mushrooms, berries, or other wild foods	302	9
Cross country skiing	227	7
Horseback riding	157	5
Snowshoeing	146	4

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. (2005). *Outdoor Recreation Participation in Minnesota*

Total Trip Spending by Activity for MN's Northwest Region¹⁶

<u>Regional Rank</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Non Residents</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>State Rank</u>
1. Walkers/hikers	\$84,207	\$162,503	\$246,709	1
2. Snowmobilers	\$30,235	\$10,450	\$40,686	3
4. Bicycle Riders	\$14,967	\$16,226	\$31,193	2
3. ATV	\$18,441	\$9,029	\$27,470	4
5. Running	\$2,531	\$8,759	\$11,291	5
6. Cross Country Skiers	\$1,401	\$3,889	\$5,291	7
7. Horseback Riders	\$2,262	\$1,545	\$3,807	6
8. Inline Skaters	\$985	\$2,167	\$3,151	8
9. OHM	\$1,161	\$871	\$2,032	9
10. ORV	\$547	\$342	\$889	10
TOTAL		\$372,519 Million		

Highlighted areas indicate most money spent by resident/non resident in a particular activity.

¹⁶ Univ. of MN Tourism Center, *Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use in Different Regions of MN* (2009) total spending by activity in the Northwest Region, p.20-101.

Trail Use In Each MN Region¹⁷

Statewide, some 208.2 million person-days were spent in the 10 trails. Walkers/hikers in outdoor trails had the highest total participation at 133.6 million person-days, or two of every three days of trail use. Local trail users (within 30 minutes from home) accounted for nearly three-fourths of the walker/hiker total days. Slightly more than one-half of these local users were in the metro area.

Total trail use in Minnesota, by activity and by region, 2008 UMN Survey (thousand-person-days)

TRAIL ACTIVITY	Northwes t	Northeas t	Central	Metro area	South	State
Walking/hiking	16,003.6	22,521.0	15,461.8	53,157.5	26,417.0	133,560.9
Bicycle riding	2,163.8	3,614.8	4,045.3	13,793.2	6,475.5	30,092.8
Running	1,321.4	2,484.6	2,077.6	15,116.2	5,668.7	26,668.4
In-line skating	353.9	515.3	587.5	3,852.2	573.2	5,882.1
ATV	1,015.7	1,228.9	825.7	130.0	886.2	4,086.5
Snowmobile	1,053.7	1,440.5	497.2	306.7	696.6	3,994.6
Cross-country skiing	180.8	491.6	181.8	862.7	124.2	1,841.2
Horseback riding	156.9	142.5	621.2	280.3	507.6	1,708.4
OHM	59.6	78.6	62.3	30.2	42.8	273.7
ORV	32.0	42.2	12.0	6.3	20.4	112.9
Total	22,341.4	32,560.0	24,372.3	87,535.3	41,412.2	208,221.5

Bicycle riding and running in outdoor trails were the next largest user of trails, albeit each at less than one-fourth of the walking/hiking days (30.1 million and 26.7 million person-days, respectively). The next groups had sharper drops in person-days inline skating (5.9 million) and ATV(4.1 million). The remainder of the trails categories had less than 2.0 million person-days: cross country skiing (1.8 million), OHM(0.3 million), and ORV (0.1 million).

¹⁷ Univ. of MN Tourism Center, *Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use In Different Regions of MN* (2009) total spending by activity in Central Region, p.21

CLASSIFICATION DETAILS TAB

1. Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience

Frazee lies in a unique part of MN where the 3 major biomes: prairie, deciduous and coniferous forests are close together. The park site includes some of each landscape. The site is highly scenic with a gently rolling mix of open prairie & forests with the Frazee Reach of the Otter Tail River running through the center. The park includes wetlands to attract wildlife & is on a major migratory bird flyway. The site is ideal for environmental & historical interpretation & education; on the edge of the pine forest, Frazee was a center for milling.

There are 3 trails of statewide/national significance that will intersect with the park: The Heartland State Trail (bike/pedestrian/snowmobile), The North Country National Scenic Trail (walking/hiking), and the Otter Tail River State Water Trail (canoe/kayaking). Each of these 3 trails offer distinct recreational experiences. The park will also include: a campground for tents to RVs, shower/restrooms, an interpretive center, public canoe/kayak access, and natural and hard surface, accessible trails open to non-motorized uses. An outdoor amphitheater is also being considered. Winter use of trails within the park or specific purpose trails could accommodate winter bikes, walking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. As the Otter Tail River seldom freezes in winter there will be open water opportunities for fishing along the river.

Looking South: Proximity to Frazee (right/west)



2. Preserves a Regionally Significant and Diverse Natural or Historic Landscape

The meandering Frazee Reach runs through the center of the park, a regional crown jewel for water quality & recreation providing moderate current, frequent accesses and high water quality. The depth of the river is approximately 6 feet deep, with the riverbed easily discerned when looking down at the moving water. The eastern portion of the park has never been disturbed, including some rare native prairie and forested wetland. Scattered forested areas add variety. Former pasture has restoration potential for butterflies; a butterfly habitat is 1 mile away. The 200 acre site (including areas for future expansion) will allow for protection of sensitive areas and development of non-sensitive areas for recreational use.

Scattered forested areas within park



Looking East, morning – Otter Tail River segment within Wannigan Park



3. Well-located and Connected to Serve a Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination

Wannigan Regional Park is on the northern border of Frazee, a growing city 10 miles east of Detroit Lakes, which is the region county seat with 9,200 people and also Vergas which lies to the south and the City of Perham which lies 10 miles to the east. Becker Co. (where the Park is situated) has a population in excess of 34,000 people and is a major tourist destination, as is Otter Tail Co. which is located directly south of Frazee. Becker County's population roughly doubles during tourist season. Fargo/Moorhead (pop. 245,000) is 50 miles away, an easy afternoon trip. An estimated 65% of tourists that vacation in Becker County are from the Fargo/Moorhead area and North Dakota more generally. The Park will be accessible from local communities & neighborhoods via the North Country hiking trail & the Heartland State Trail, biking or walking from Moorhead or even from Park Rapids, Bemidji, Walker or even Brainerd. It will also be accessible by canoe/kayak via the Otter Tail River. Importantly Frazee's proximity to the Park and trails will be an important factor in its use as evidence suggests that convenience and access are strong correlative factors to gauge frequency of use.



4. Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region

Wannigan Regional Park will provide a connection point for 3 trails of regional/state significance. The Otter Tail River State Water Trail that flows through the park is viewed as an emerging recreational opportunity as increasing recreational use of local rivers is among the highest recreational priorities for our region. Additionally, MNDOT has revamping its Hwy 87 bridge that spans the Otter Tail River (as part of road/sidewalk reconstruction that will incorporate the Heartland Trail through town) to better enable canoe and kayak use of the River. The "Frazee Reach" that starts north of Frazee and Hwy 34 and extends south of Frazee and Hwy 10 is considered one of the premier recreational segments of the Otter Tail River.

The nearest state or regional park & campground with a natural setting and of this size is Maplewood State Park, 20 miles to the southwest. In a previous study developed by the DNR, they concluded that there is a need for an additional regional park within Becker County to meet related park/recreational capacity-needs. Wannigan Regional Park will be closer to the Detroit Lakes & Fargo/Moorhead regional centers & will be a hub for 3 national/state trails. Northwest MN is the region with the fewest state trail miles, so Wannigan Regional Park, serving as a major trailhead for all 3 trails as they develop, will fill a significant gap in trail recreation in the region.



DEVELOPMENT/ACQUISITION TAB

Development Plan Overview

The vision for Wannigan Park is:

Wannigan Park is a premier destination for outdoor recreation and cultural preservation that improves quality of life and the land through open space, trails, and storytelling.

The overall development plan is to purchase the planned Wannigan Park site, which is comprised of three parcels owned by a private individual that total 174.55 acres. After acquisition, invasive species removal and habitat restoration will begin on areas that will remain natural and will continue in phases as funding allows. For park development, a consulting team will be hired to complete a site plan, engineering drawings and permitting. All proposed features will meet regional design and applicable accessibility standards. The first phase of development will include a portion of the planned short term camping areas, the canoe/kayak access and amenities, the picnic shelters, rehabilitation of the existing trail bridge, access roads and parking areas, and trail development. The outdoor amphitheater will be Phase 2 and the interpretive center building will be developed in phase 3. A restroom building will be built in the RV camping area in Phase 1 as well as permanent toilets or portable toilets and water spigot in the tent and group camping areas. Additional camp sites will be added in Phases 2 or 3 as demand warrants.

All construction will incorporate sustainable and energy efficient design to the extent feasible. The acquisition and complete development are expected to take 10 years. WiFi is planned for the Park, since trends suggest this is important to modern visitors.

There is currently one area that has potential for future development: a portion of the current golf course property on the east side of Chilton Road. Because Chilton Road is a private road, vehicular access is not available to this parcel at this time, so it is depicted as “potential future expansion” on the Concept Plan. Access to the property may be possible in the future if an easement or right-of-way can be negotiated and purchased to cross Chilton Road so that access could be built to connect the Phase I land to the golf course property. The City, FCDC and the County will continue to explore acquisition and access options as well as the demand for additional facilities.

The only existing structure on the site is the bridge over the Otter Tail River. It was constructed by a previous landowner from a railroad car and is several decades old. It needs a structural assessment and likely renovations to improve it to safe conditions. In addition, there are three narrow gravel roads on the property. One leads from County Road 29 on the west side of the site east into the park. This road is on City property and accesses some private properties as well as the park site. There is also a north-south gravel road on the Ness property (park site) that intersects with the road mentioned above. This is a private road within the park site, but also accesses two neighboring properties. A third gravel road exists that starts at Chilton Road, east of the Otter Tail River and between the Ness property and the existing golf course property. The road runs west across the Otter Tail River via the railroad car bridge to meet up

with the two other gravel roads on the property west of the river. This is a private road belonging to the current property owner and will be used as a park road when the property is converted to a park.

Accessibility:

This plan will meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, where applicable. For outdoor developed areas, the City and FCDC will follow the most current version “Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas” (the 2013 version at this writing).

Access Routes: Accessible, hard surface routes will be provided between all parking lots and the major amenities, including the interpretive center, picnic shelters, amphitheater and restroom buildings. Except for the amphitheater, the listed amenities are to be developed on relatively level ground, so meeting the running slope requirement will not be a problem. For the amphitheater, an accessible seating area will be provided at the bottom of the hill to avoid climbing a steep slope. The width, openings, clearance and obstructions requirements will be met.

Trails: The paved trails in the park will be designed to meet or exceed ADA standards, keeping the running slope to 5%, or providing level rest areas at required intervals where that slope cannot be met (up to 12%). The width will be 10 ft, exceeding the 60 inch width requirement (36 inch requirement plus passing spaces). Openings in the surface of the trail will be ½ inch or less (on boardwalks or bridge approaches.) The cross slope will be 2% or less. Tread obstacles will not exceed ½ inch. The planned surface is asphalt to meet the “firm and stable” requirement.

The natural surface trails will meet the ADA standards to the extent feasible. Exceptions for specific circumstances are allowed, but it is not anticipated that an exception will be needed. This situation may change when more detailed trail design is undertaken. The trails are planned to be four feet wide, exceeding the minimal 36 inch width. Passing intervals at a minimum of every 1000 feet will be designed. Openings on boardwalks or bridges will be no more than ½ inch. The running slope will be between 0 and 12%, as required, and resting intervals will be provided at the required intervals if the slope is between 5% and 12%. Tread obstacles will be a maximum of two inches high, as allowed on natural surface trails.

At least 20 percent but no less than one of the outdoor constructed features, such as benches, picnic tables or trash receptacles along the trails will meet accessibility standards. The viewing area at the pond near the main entrance will be accessible.

Parking Lots:

The required number of accessible parking spaces will be provided at each parking lot, with appropriate sizes and signs. All of the parking lots are intended to be gravel, as are the roads, so pavement marking will not be possible.

Camping and Picnic Facilities:

Picnic tables will include the required space for seating for people in wheelchairs, one space per

24 linear feet. The required number of camping units with mobility features will be provided. For phase 1, 3 units will be developed, including at least one RV space with hookups and one tent space. The tent pad/platform will have a 2-5% maximum slope, and will be no more than 19" high if raised.

Buildings:

The interpretive center, restroom/shower facilities, and permanent or portable satellite toilets will be accessible. They will follow the guidelines for access routes, turning radii, protruding objects, etc. The building design will include exhibits to accommodate people with visual or hearing impairments to the extent feasible.

Development Plan Images Upload

Wannigan Park Concept Plan

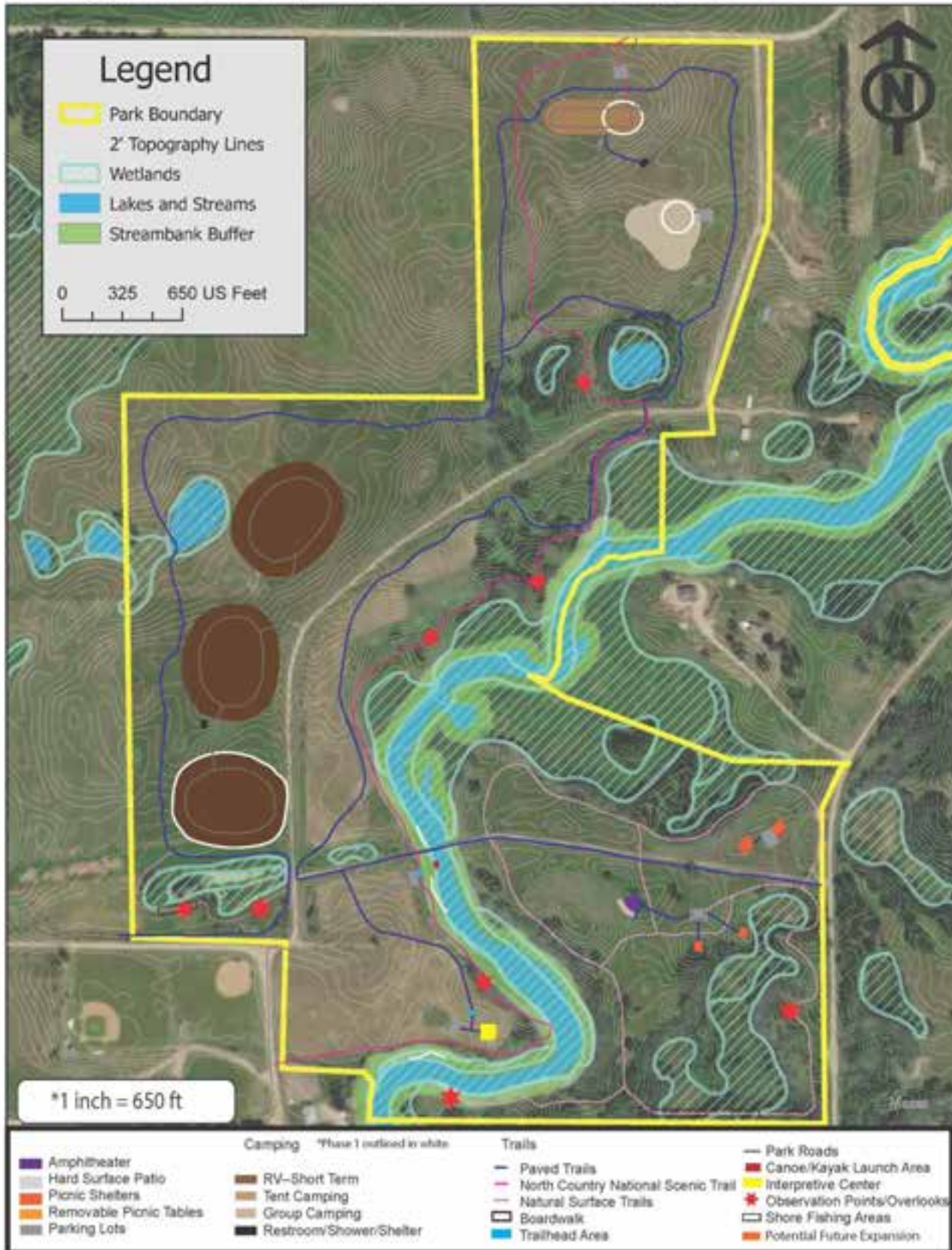
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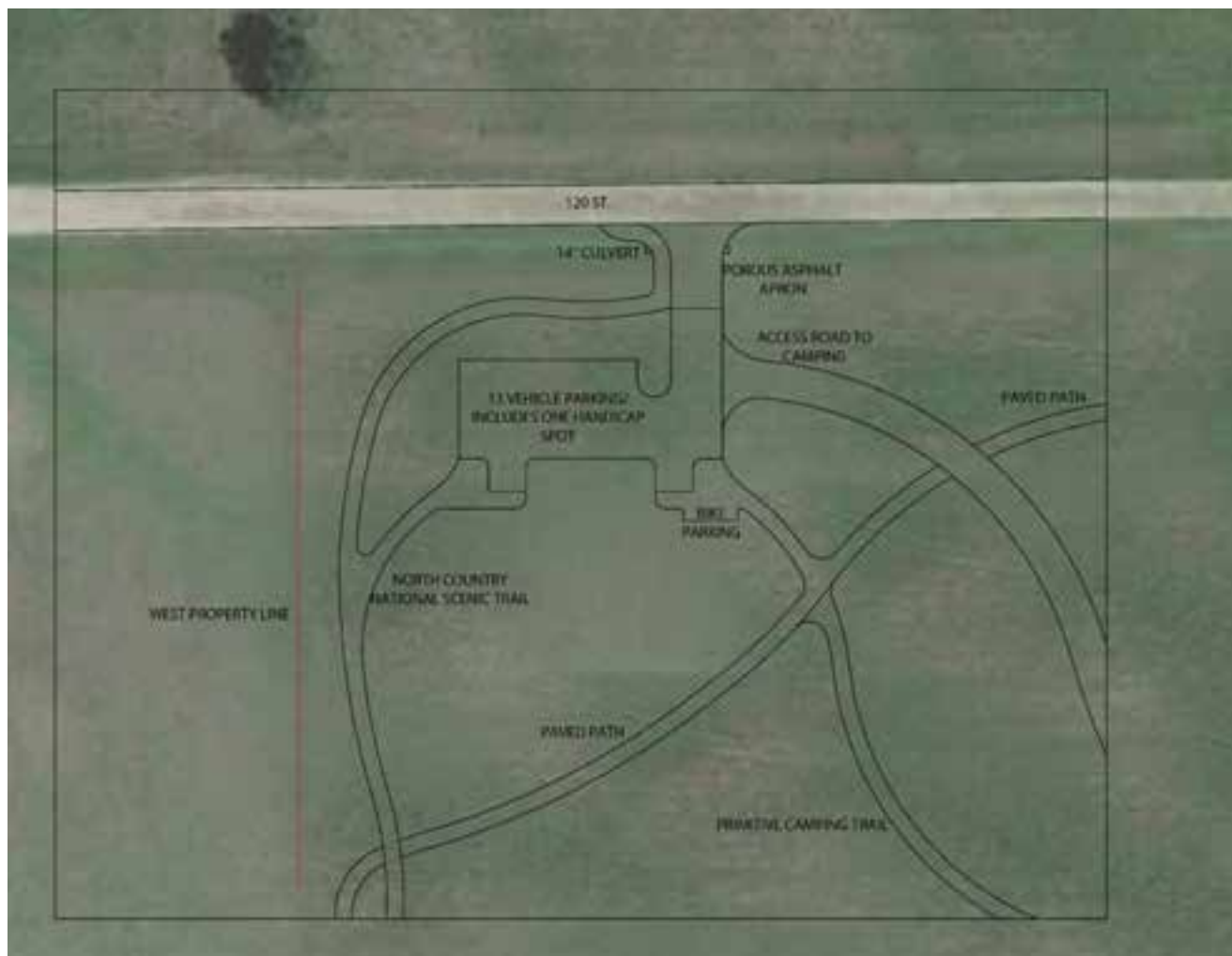


Amphitheater	Camping	Trails	Park Roads
Hard Surface Patio	RV--Short Term	Paved Trails	Canoe/Kayak Launch Area
Picnic Shelters	Tent Camping	North Country National Scenic Trail	Interpretive Center
Removable Picnic Tables	Group Camping	Natural Surface Trails	Observation Points/Overlooks
Parking Lots	Restroom/Shower/Shelter	Boardwalk	Shore Fishing Areas
	Vault or Portable Toilets	Trailhead Area	Potential Future Expansion

*NOTE: ELEMENTS ARE NOT TO SCALE. THEY ARE SHOWN LARGER FOR EASIER VIEWING

Wannigan Park Concept Plan -- 2-7-22 *Draft Map to Scale





Concept Drawing for Northern Trailhead



Existing bridge over the Otter Tail river, made from a railroad boxcar



Looking southwest from the east side of the Otter Tail River



Forested area on Wannigan Park site



Accessible water fountain



Accessible tent platform, Coronado National Forest. Timbers or other materials can be used for the platform walls.



Accessible picnic tables, grill, and access route. A small number of accessible facilities are required if the facilities are funding by State or Federal funds.



Accessible boardwalk with wheel stops (edging). This picture depicts the minimum 36" width with a passing space, required when the trail width is under 60".

Acquisition Plan Overview

- **Acquisition Plan**

Opportunities:

The proposed Wannigan park site is on two parcels of land that have not yet been acquired. The access road to the site from the west is on a narrow strip of City and School District owned land between County Road 29 and the park site. One private landowner owns the two parcels. The landowner is a willing seller and is eager to sell. Acquisition should be pursued as soon as possible. The property owner has stated that he will sell the property for the park but wants to see progress made on park development. His stated alternative is to develop the property for single family homes. The properties are zoned for Agriculture, however, and fall under the County's jurisdiction for zoning. Current owners would need to apply for zoning changes if they want to plat and develop at higher densities. The acquisition plan is to acquire the two park site parcels at once, due to the eagerness of the property owners to sell, and the threat of loss of the property to residential development. The City will purchase the property and the Frazee Community Development Corporation will conduct fundraising, marketing, management and operations for the park through their new Agreement, attached.

In Summer 2019 the City applied to the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota (PTCM) for assistance with land acquisition. The application was accepted, and PTCM has committed to assisting the City and County with the land acquisition process. Most significantly, PTCM also agrees to provide temporary funding to acquire the park site if the landowners insist upon earlier acquisition than the City & County can raise funds through other means, including a GMRPTC grant. The PTCM funds would need to be paid back to them at such time as a permanent funding source is found.

Constraints

One current land issue is the question of archaeological resources on the site. The southern end of the site is thought to have been part of the sawmill and logging activities in the early days of Frazee, although the sawmill itself was on the adjacent property to the south. In addition, a hill exists that has a slight possibility of being an Indian mound. The State Archaeologist was consulted, and she believes that the hill is too large to be a mound. Nevertheless, the City of Frazee has obtained a MN Historical Society grant to conduct a Phase 1 archaeological study on the site, which will be undertaken in 2022, to find out if further archaeological studies are warranted. If further studies are needed, funding will be pursued for them through the MN Historical Society, and the master plan and site plan will be revised to protect any archaeological resources.

The park site includes several wetlands, in which development should be avoided due to State and Federal law. A 50 foot wide buffer on each side of the Otter Tail River is required by State

law. No development is to take place within the buffer. These environmental constraints are considered to be assets that contribute to the natural beauty of the site for park visitors to appreciate. The Master Plan avoids development in these areas. The site is large enough to accommodate all of the desired elements as well as to avoid developing in environmentally sensitive areas, and to restore and maintain additional natural areas as well.

Acquisition Costs

The current landowner bought three parcels in 2017 for a purported price of \$550,000. He bought them after the City made public its intention to buy the parcels for a park during their Comprehensive Plan discussions. The owner had asked for \$780,000 plus the cost of the property taxes since he bought the land for the three parcels that totaled 174.55 acres.

One of the three parcels, a 16.8 acre parcel at the north end of Chilton Road, is not suitable for public use at this time due to lack of access, however the landowner wishes to sell all three parcels together. The parcel will be purchased and retained for conservation purposes. Public use may be reconsidered in future park development phases if the access situation changes. - The 2020 taxable market value for the two parcels planned for the park is \$214,000, according to the County property records. No appraisal has been done that is publicly available, but FCDC has received the land appraisal.

o Acquisition Plan Items/Images Upload

Attach the City of Frazee/FCDC Signed Agreement here



Old logs from sand dam



Looking south from existing road/trail east of the river. Area planned for trails. picnic shelter sites in background.

Development Features

Development Feature #1: short term camping

Two campground areas are proposed in the northern and western sections of the park on the west side of the river. This area is primarily old pastureland with some small forested areas. The camp sites will be developed on the pastureland, and the forested areas will be retained. The western area will have RV sites with electric and water hook-ups, and the northern area will have individual tent sites and a group camping area without hook ups. A few unique shelters will be offered that are based on the traditional Ojibwe design. This will meet the growing demand for unique camping experiences. The City will work with the local White Earth Band of Ojibwe and the Native American Club at Frazee High School to create an authentic design with durable and sustainable materials. There are examples of tipis available in public and commercial campgrounds, but no examples of Ojibwe style “wigwams” for camping have been found. This will be a truly unique experience that can be made educational as well.

For the RV camping, the area will have traditional pull in sites and a few back in sites, based on the campground research done. Each site will have a separate car space in case they would like to detach their car from the RV (if they bring one). These RV sites will be spread out enough to have vegetative screening between them for privacy and to make sure it is a comfortable environment for each camping unit. One indoor restroom/shower building will be built for the western camping area, supplemented by outhouses and drinking water spigots as necessary to meet Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requirements. Each RV site will include a fire pit and a picnic table as well as electric and water hook ups. The RV camping area is divided into up to three “pods” to fit in with the natural hilly terrain and place the camping sites on the more level areas. The Phase 1 development will include 28 RV sites. If demand warrants, more sites will be added in Phases 2 and 3.

The tenting areas will be located in the north end of the park, separated from the RV areas to reduce noise for the tent campers. Part of the tenting area will be for groups, described in Development Feature 3. The sites will be spaced to meet the minimum MDH standards and will be spaced farther apart with vegetative screening placed between sites to meet campers’ preferences for privacy. The tent camping sites include a space for a tent, parking, picnic table and a fire pit. In Phase 1 the restroom/shower/emergency shelter will be located and built so that all campers will be able to use it. Permanent or portable satellite toilets are anticipated to remain in place to be used by trail users during the winter. For Phase 1, ten individual tent sites will be built, with accessible permanent or portable satellite toilets and potable water spigots within the required maximum distance by the MDH. In Phase 1 the restroom/shower/emergency shelter will be located and built so that all campers will be able to use it. Permanent or portable satellite toilets are anticipated to remain in place to be used by trail users during the winter. The tenting

area, like the RV camping area, is designed in “pods” to fit with the natural landscape and require minimal site grading, and also to provide a less crowded feel to the campground.

All campsites will be connected to the park’s road for easy access. The sites will be rented on a nightly basis. The interpretive center (described below) will also serve as the campground office. A sewage pump out station for RVs will also be built on site. The campground areas will be on the north and west side of the private, existing north-south entrance road, separated from the primary day use area. Wetlands within the campground area will be preserved. Gravel access roads are included in the plan.

The campground development will be phased. A portion of the RV short term sites will be developed with the majority of the park facilities in the Phase 1 development. Need for additional campsites will be assessed based on demand, management capacity, etc., and may be added to the park in development phases 2 or 3, or may be added in future years.

Development Feature Support Material

Development Feature #1 support material:

Development Feature #2: Group Camping

In the northern section of the park will be a group camping area. The campsites will be tent only, intended for overnight paddlers on the Otter Tail River State Water Trail, groups hiking or biking on the NCT or Heartland Trail, or other groups for which Wannigan Park is their destination. Campsites will be distributed on the former pastureland. This area will be served by vault toilets and water spigots during Phase 1, and a restroom/shower building will be built to be shared among all campers during Phase 2. At build-out three group camping “pods” are planned. Each group camping pod will include dispersed tent pads for ten-tents, and several picnic tables and a large fire pit in a central area. One parking area will be constructed for the group camping area to provide a more natural ambience. Campers will walk a short distance to their group site. Trees and shrubs will be added within and between the group pods for shade and vegetative screening. Group camping pods will be connected to the restrooms/toilets via trails.

Development Feature #2 Support Material:

Development Feature #3: Trails

Both natural surface and hard surface trails will be developed in the park. The hard surface, paved trails will meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines for accessibility and DNR guidelines. The Heartland State Trail segment from Detroit Lakes to Frazee is funded in the 2020 State Bonding bill and will enter Frazee from the northeast along State Highway 87,

which becomes Lake St. N. through downtown Frazee. A connecting trail spur will be built to link Wannigan Park to the Heartland Trail. It will be an on-street route on low volume roads from the Heartland Trail to the main park entrance at County Road 29 north of the high school on the west side of the park. A paved trail will be built along the entrance road into the park going east. Within the park the trail link connecting to the Heartland Trail will continue east along the existing gravel road, which will be converted into a non-motorized trail to the interpretive center and the river. The Heartland Spur trail will be paved, 10 feet wide, with level shoulders. Within the park a paved loop trail will be developed that encircles the day use and campground areas on the west side of the river. This asphalt trail will be ten feet wide with two feet wide level shoulders and will meet the grade requirements for accessible trails, with most of the trail under 5% slope. The loop trail will pass wetlands, and the high point of the park with a view of the river and will follow the river. It will provide access to some of the interesting natural features of the park while avoiding development on environmentally sensitive areas. The in-park hard surface trail system will also include an east- west trail on the existing private road across the river. The existing covered bridge on the road, made from a railroad boxcar, will be used for the trail crossing. A gravel road and bridge will be built parallel to the trail in Phase 2 to access the picnic area, amphitheater and trails on the east side of the river (trail access from the west side will be provided in Phase 1.) Hard surface accessible “outdoor recreation access routes” will be developed where required from parking areas to the main activity areas of the park, such as picnic shelters and the amphitheater, to provide internal circulation and meet ADA guidelines. The hard surface trails will be open to bicyclists, walkers, roller skaters, and people using assistive motorized devices.

A natural surface trail system will also be developed in the park. The North Country National Scenic Trail will be aligned through the park. The tentative alignment for the NCT extends from the northern boundary at 120th St. south past wetlands to the park’s high point, then will follow the top of the steep bank of the river, past the covered bridge, staying on the west side of the river, to exit the park at North River Drive near the School District’s ballfields. The standard design is a two foot wide natural surface trail with a four foot wide clear zone. It will pass the Interpretive Center/day use area, which will serve as the trailhead, with water, restrooms and parking available. The NCT is open to hikers. This trail will be constructed by the North Country National Scenic Trail Association and National Park Service as a separate, integrated project. The final alignment will be determined during the design stage for the Trail in coordination with the National Park Service’s North Country National Scenic Trail staff.

A system of connected natural surface trail loops will also be developed on the east side of the river, accessed from the NCT via the trail across the covered bridge. The natural surface trail will meander north and south of the amphitheater and picnic areas on the east side of the river to high points, through forested areas and past wetlands. Short spur trails will provide access to scenic views and shore fishing locations. The natural surface loop trails will be open to pedestrians only; no mountain biking will be allowed (they are accommodated in other parks in the vicinity.) The internal park natural surface trails will be four feet wide to better accommodate side-by-side walkers and groups.

In winter both cross country skiing and/or snowshoeing/hiking trails will be created from a combination of the hard surface and natural surface trails to make a looped system.

Development Feature #3 Support Material:



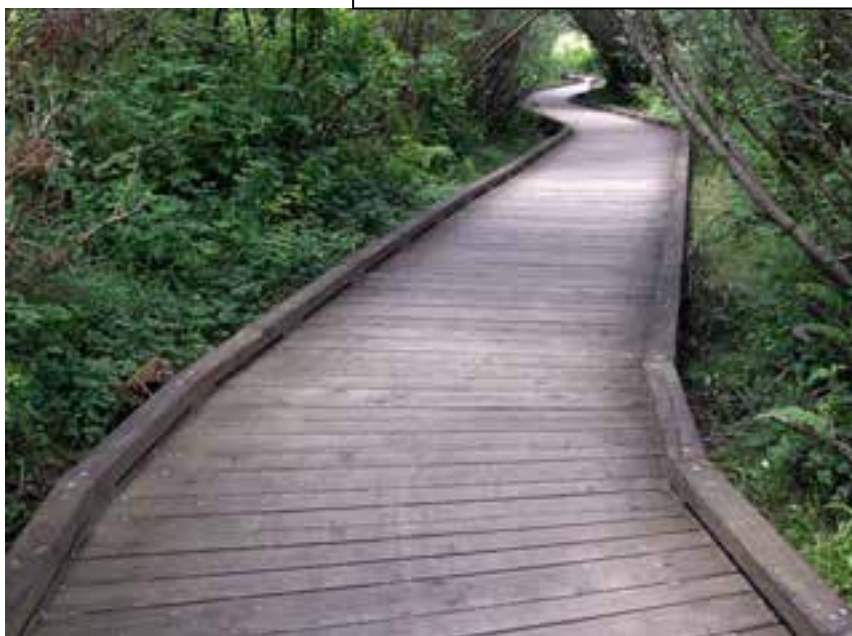
East Bridge entrance. This bridge is a landmark in the area and will be refurbished for safety. The existing old road across it will be converted to a paved trail.



Hard surface bituminous trail. The hard surface trails in the Park will be similar to this, with natural vegetation in the shoulders and surrounding corridor.



Natural surface trail: an example of the look of the internal park natural surface trails: dirt or other natural surface, four feet wide with a narrow clear zone. Major rocks and roots have been removed for a surface with minimal obstructions.



Boardwalk is proposed for a few areas in the park, along the natural surface trails at the edge of a wetland and to cross a small portion of wetland. The boardwalk will be the same width as the trail leading to it, four feet, with wheel stops for accessibility



Observation areas/rest areas along trails: On the left, a bench along walking trail in Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, Wirth Park, Minneapolis, MN. On the right, a wildlife observation platform at the University of Minnesota's Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, MN. A simple viewing platform may be built along the natural surface trail along the wetland frequented by wildlife near the western park entrance.

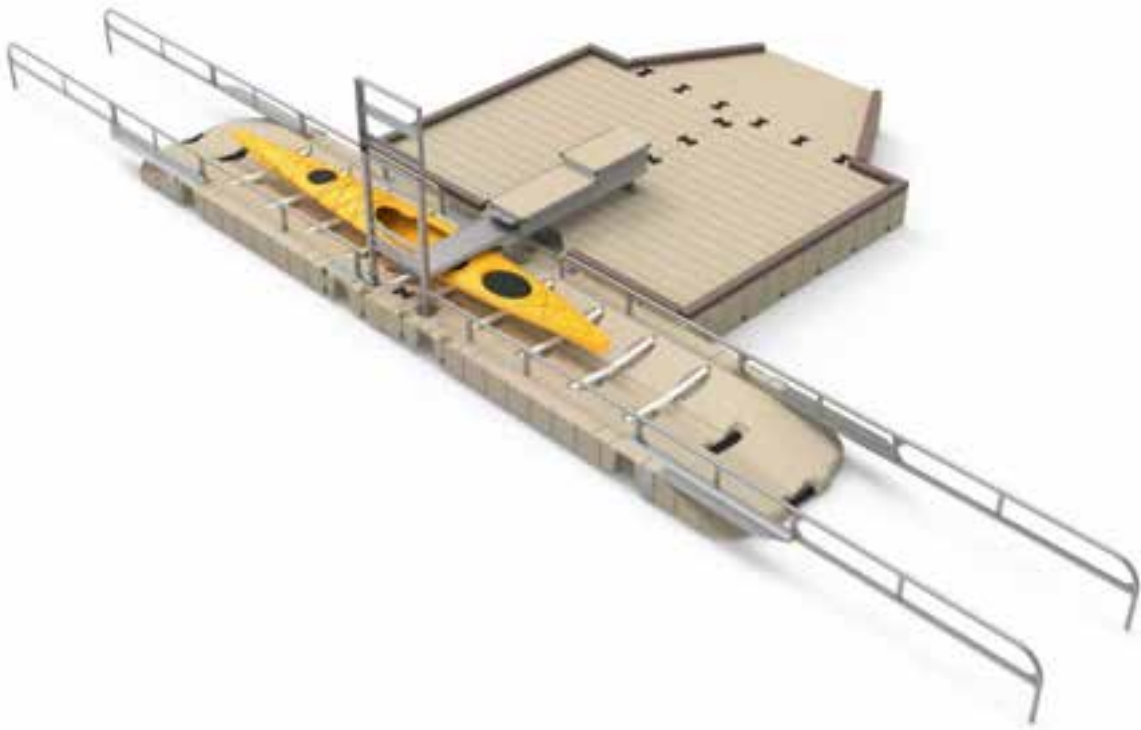
Development Feature #4: Canoe/Kayak Public River Access

The primary public river access site will be in the day use area on the west side of the river, south of the covered bridge. Due to steep riverbanks and sharp river bends, the best location will be immediately south of the existing bridge, along a straight section of river. If this site does not prove feasible upon further investigation, a second optional location is along the straight section before the southernmost river bend on the property. The access will be a carry-in launch for non-motorized canoes and kayaks only. The access will include a hard surface (likely gravel) road from the park entrance road off of County Road 29 to the canoe/kayak launch area. The road will include a turnaround large enough for cars and trucks with trailers. It will include ample cleared area along the river front for staging groups of canoes/kayaks, and provide for aquatic invasive boat cleaning for those taken out. Parking will be provided for cars as well as some spaces for vehicles with boat trailers. This and all parking lots will meet ADA accessibility guidelines. The launch site will include a kiosk with river maps, a park map, relevant watercraft safety information, aquatic invasive species information, and interpretive information about the river. Racks for seasonal storage of private canoes and kayaks may be

installed near the launch area in the future, for rent by the season, if there is sufficient demand. Water and restrooms will be available at the nearby interpretive center. A portable toilet or permanent outhouse may be added at the access at a later date, depending on demand. The access will be a natural surface, since backing a trailer with large boats will not be necessary. It will be located at a site with a gradual slope to the water, a gradual drop-off in the water, and a sandy river bottom, if possible. The selected location includes an existing concrete retaining wall, which helps stabilize the riverbank. It will be located on a straight section of river so paddlers taking out or putting in can be seen by those on the river, and collisions can be avoided. A straight section is also better for giving paddlers time to get settled in their boat after launching before they need to maneuver around a river bend, where they may get swept to shore or into other boats if they are not paying attention.

Note that there is a constraint in the river about 1 mile south of the park where it goes under the East Main Bridge and currently requires a portage around a stormwater pipe that spans the river directly south of the bridge. The City is working on solving this issue. In the meantime, before the access is opened a hazard warning signs will be installed up and down river from the pipe, and a portage will be developed and signed. Paddling downriver from the northeast and taking out at Frazee will be encouraged.

Development Feature #4 Support Material:



EZ Launch, accessible canoe/kayak launch, made in Red Wing, MN. An accessible structure such as this makes launching easier for everyone.

WANNIGAN PARK

FRAZEE, MN





Looking south from bridge at main canoe/kayak launch area. Shore fishing areas in background.



Looking South from bridge at canoe/kayak launch area & in background shore fishing area



View looking east from west park entrance. Area planned for an access road to the canoe/kayak launch, and trails. The site for a water trail trailhead with parking, information kiosks and launch area is in the background.

Development Feature #5: Picnic Areas

The picnic area will be in the southeast section of the park, accessed from the existing private covered bridge across the river . Parking areas will be on the north & south sides of the existing gravel road. Two larger shelters that will hold 10-12 tables. The one closest to the road will include a small kitchen and attached restrooms. Two smaller picnic shelters will be built in this area as well, which will hold two to four tables. Outdoor Recreation Access Routes that meet ADA guidelines will be built from the parking area to the shelters. Single picnic tables will be scattered farther from the parking area. Because a 50 ft. buffer along each side of the river is required by the State, only removable picnic tables will be placed within the buffer, in already cleared areas.

Development Feature #5 Support Material:



Looking southeast from bridge toward Chilton Road. Area planned for picnic shelters, amphitheater and trails.



Example picnic shelters:

Top left: small shelter reminiscent of a log cabin

Top right: Standard small shelter

Bottom left: Standard, medium sized shelter

Bottom right: creative steep roofed shelter

Development Feature #6: Interpretive Center

The interpretive center will be developed at the western end of the park entrance road off of County Road 29, on the west side of the river. The building will include exhibits, a meeting area for classes and presentations, the campground office/registration, and a small kitchen. It will include a fireplace, and seating area which may serve as a warming area in the winter. A small separate warming hut building may be considered as an alternative. Public restrooms will be accessible from inside and outside, so that they can be left open when the building is closed. Part of the building will be available for the public to rent for special events. A small sales area may be included for camping necessities and gifts. Proceeds would go to offset maintenance and habitat restoration costs of the park. Kayak and/or canoe rentals offered from the interpretive center will also be considered, based on demand, likely with a private vendor. The interpretive center would have enough space to

hold about 100 people and would be about 4,000 – 6,000 square feet. A nature based playground with edible gardens will also be considered for the Interpretive Center grounds. The City and County will work with the County Historical Society and the White Earth Band of Ojibwe to develop the exhibits. Leasing space for food trucks during high demand times in the interpretive center parking lot area will be considered, with private operators. The interpretive center is a Phase 2 development priority. The building will be designed with sustainable materials to be energy efficient, including passive solar heat. Natural materials such as stone, and wood are preferred, with a modern style yet reminiscent of the log buildings during early European settlement days.

Interpretive themes include the following and will be explored through exhibits and programming:

- Overview of the Park: facilities & activities available and safety information;
- Native American and logging/settlement history in the area;
- Early European settlement habitation, lifestyle and travel;
- Forest and Prairie as resources:
 - Logging, river rafting and sawmills
 - Farming in the early days;
- Otter Tail River and its many uses, and environmental characteristics & benefits;
- Movement to modern day habitation, lifestyle and travel;
- Waterfowl prairie pothole flyway and the importance of conservation lands; and
- Conservation and future use of the land and river:
 - Habitat restoration on site, including adaptations for climate change; and
 - Pollinators.

These themes will be explored in indoor exhibits as well as outdoor wayside exhibits at key sites within the park.

Development Feature #6 Support Material:



Sustainably built visitor center with green roofs, Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Dakota Co., MN. The Wannigan Park interpretive center will strive for sustainable design.



Sketches of planned Estes Trail Center, Glendalough State Park, MN. Similar in size to the building planned for Wannigan Park

Ash River Visitor Center, Voyageur National Park, MN, in an historic log cabin. Wannigan Park may use design elements of historic log cabins in design of park elements such as the interpretive center, picnic shelters, or kiosks.



Looking east at Wannigan west (main) entrance toward interpretive center site in background right

Development Feature #7: Amphitheater:

An amphitheater for presentations, performances, movies and concerts will be developed on the east side of the river in the southern section accessible by vehicle from Chilton Road. A hill with a natural slope exists south of the existing gravel road, between the road and the river. This area will include a covered stage with electricity and storage, and some ADA accessible seating and locations for people with wheelchairs. The remaining seating will be informal, for people to bring their own blankets or chairs. A terraced seating area is preferred, but the design will depend on cost and other factors. A portion of the seating will likely be open lawn. An accessible outdoor recreation access route will lead from the parking lot to the amphitheater. A patio is planned for the top of the hillside seating area with a few picnic tables. A portion of the patio would be open for set up of portable booths or grills for events, for sales of food or drink or the distribution of promotional materials. The amphitheater is a Phase 3 or long term project.

Development Feature #7 Support Material



Amphitheater site, east side of river



Rendering of proposed amphitheater, proposed for Phase 2 development. Final design may be different from this example.

Development Feature #8: Trailside interpretive signs

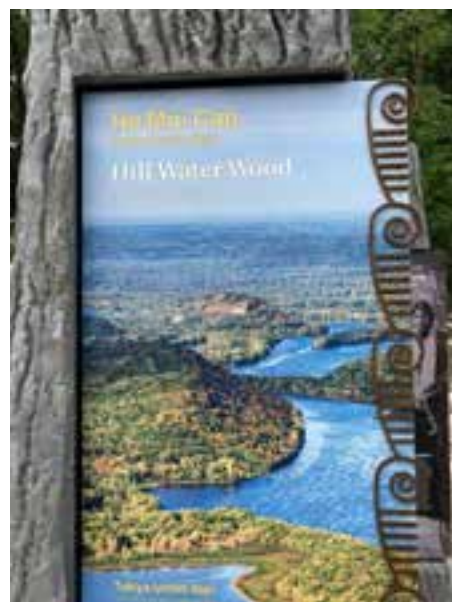
In addition to the interpretive center, interpretive signs or “wayside exhibits” are planned to be placed along trails and access routes at significant locations, such as overlooks, noteworthy natural features, and archaeological features, when appropriate. The interpretive themes will follow those listed under #7: Interpretive Center. The City and County will coordinate with subject matter experts to create the materials for the signs, and will use durable, vandal and fire resistant materials for the signs. Trailside interpretive signs will be developed at the same time as the interpretive center, so are part of the Phase 2 project.



Example trailside interpretive signs: From left, Water themed pillar, Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, MN; Brown's Creek State Trail, Stillwater, MN; Lake Phalen Regional Park, St. Paul, MN



Artistic sculptures can be interpretive elements to draw trail users' interest. Sculpture along paved trail, Bois Forte Reservation near Tower, MN



Red Wing River Bluff Park interpretive sign, Red Wing, MN

Development Feature #9: Trailhead Features

The park will include trailhead elements for the Heartland State Trail, the North County National Scenic Trail, and the Otter Tail River State Water Trail. The primary trailhead for the land trails will be near the interpretive center in the day use area in the southwest end of the park. The interpretive center will include restrooms and water fountains available from the outside of the building when the interpretive center is closed. Parking for trail users will be included in the parking areas for the interpretive center and boat ramp. They will include parking for vehicles with trailers, and will be available for longer term parking for those trail users who are leaving on multi-day trips. The trailhead for the land trails will be separated from but near the interpretive center, and will include a kiosk with trail maps and information, a bicycle fix-it station, bike racks, benches, and a water fountain. Until the interpretive center is built, portable toilets will be provided at the trailhead. People will have the option of using the indoor restrooms in the campground as well. The trailhead for the water trail will be at the primary public river access described in #5 above. A small, alternative trailhead for land trail users will be built in the northern section of the park with an entrance off of 120th St, a Township Road, and will include a small parking lot, and a kiosk with map and information. Restrooms will be available in the northern campground area, accessible from the trailhead via the trails. All trailhead elements will be developed when the trails are developed as part of Phase 1.



Dero Fix It station for trailheads, made in Minneapolis, MN



Trailhead kiosk, Brown's Creek State Trail, Mahtomedi, MN



Benches can be creatively designed, and will be placed at scenic overlooks and elsewhere along the trail. At left, a medicine wheel design at Red Wing River Bluff Park, Red Wing, MN. Sculptural elements add interest and educational value at trailheads.

Development Feature #10: Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters will be built in the park as required by law. The Interpretive Center will be built to meet shelter specifications to provide shelter in the southwest portion of the park. The restroom/shower buildings at the campground areas will also be built to meet shelter requirements if required by law. One of the large picnic shelters on the east side of the river will be built to shelter amphitheater users and picnickers on that side of the river. If necessary, a fourth shelter will be built at the tent/group campground. Exactshelter provision will be finalized during the design phase of the park.

Development Feature #11: Park Roads

The main entrance to the park will remain on the public road north of the school property, entering the park from the west from County Road 29. However, the City & County will

negotiate with the School Board to request moving the road farther south onto school property to provide more distance between the road and the private house to the north.

The existing private road that begins at the main entrance road, travels north and then northeast to intersect with 120th St. on the north side of the park. This road will serve as a park road from its southern terminus to this private road. The road serves two private properties on the northeast side of the park and the full length of the road will remain open. Limited access to the primitive campsites is anticipated to be through the trailhead on the north side.

The existing north-south private road off of 120th Street is owned by the current landowner of the park property. It is anticipated that ownership of this private road will transfer along with the park land from FCDC to the City.

The picnic area, amphitheater and trails planned for the east side of the river will not be accessed from Chilton Road. Although the current owner of the planned park property has an easement on Chilton Road, a private road, the existing easement is not believed to accommodate a change in use as is proposed. The eastern portion of the park will therefore be accessed from the existing gravel east-west private road that crosses the Otter Tail River on the covered bridge. This private road is entirely on the planned park property and ownership would transfer to the City/County upon purchase. A new bridge will be built to accommodate the vehicular traffic on the road, and the old covered bridge (old railroad boxcar) will be moved to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic on a new paved trail that will parallel the road. If the covered bridge cannot be moved in its entirety, as much of the historic character of the bridge as possible will be retained or restored. It is not listed as a historic structure on the National Register, nor state or county lists.

IMPLEMENTATION TAB

- **Implementation Plan**

The acquisition and development strategy will entail one acquisition phases and three development phases.

The acquisition and development will be implemented by a partnership between the City of Frazee and the Frazee Community Development Corporation (FCDC), a tax-exempt non profit organization that was established in 1998_ and has successfully developed community projects in and around Frazee. The City will own the property and FCDC will conduct fundraising, and manage and operate the park. Their mission is to crate healthy opportunities in the Frazee Area to make it a thriving place to work and visit. See the Agreement between the City and FCDC, and a fact sheet about FCDC in the Appendix.

Acquisition & Development:

1. Purchase the three parcels for the park, approximately 174.55 acres, by 2024.
Acquisition costs will be based on accepted appraisal practices, and the acquisition process will conform to the State of Minnesota’s public property acquisition appraisal practices, if State funding is used.
2. Phase 1 Development—2024-2026: Design, engineering, permitting and construction. Elements in this phase include a portion of the short term campground, the group camping area, hook-up camping area, the canoe/kayak river access/boatlaunch, trailheads, hard and natural surface trails, and picnic shelters and areas.
3. Phase 2 Development—2028-2030: Design/engineering, permitting and construction. Elements in this phase include interpretive center, a restroom, shower, and emergency shelter, and interpretive signage . More campsites will also be developed if demand and feasibilitywarrants it.
4. Phase 3 Development—2031-2032: Design, permitting and construction. Elements in this phase include the amphitheater and-possibly additional campsites.

Summarize Acquisition and Development Costs to Date

While negotiations have taken place between the City and the landowner, prices and timelines have not been agreed upon. The landowner is a willing seller. Staff and Economic Development Authority Board members have done the negotiations so far, at no cost to the City beyond Staff salaries. Both the City and County have invested time into the planning process for the park by staff, Council/Commission members, Board members and volunteers. No expenditures have yet been made on acquisition and development.

Investments to Date from Various Sources

- Investments to Date from Various Sources
 - o Parks and Trails Legacy Funding
 - Acquisition 0
 - Development 0
 - Total 0
 - o Local and Other Funding Sources
 - Local Funding 0
 - Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund 0
 - Other Funding 0
 - Total 0
 - o Grant Total Investments to Date – All Sources Listed Above 0
 - o Non-Parks and Trails Legacy Funding
 - Arts & Cultural Heritage Legacy \$10,000 for archaeological survey
 - Clean Water Legacy Funding 0
 - Outdoor Heritage Legacy Funding 0
 - o Local and Other Funding Sources
 - Local Funding 0
 - Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund 0
 - Other Funding \$10,000
 - Total \$10,000
 - o Grant Total Investments to Date – All Sources Listed Above \$10,000

Acquisition and Development Cost Projections

- Acquisition and Development Cost Projections

Acquisition Costs

Purchase price (landowner asking price) \$703,000*

Appraisal fees: \$7850

Other fees: \$10,000

Total Purchase, 174.55acres: **\$810,000**

TOTAL ACQUISITION COSTS: \$827,850

*Note: depending on the appraised value, the acquisition cost may be less than this.

(Cost estimates were developed by Ulteig Engineers Inc., Detroit Lakes)

Development Subtotal: \$8,472,500

Design & Engineering (20% of construction cost) \$1,694,500

DEVELOPMENT TOTAL \$ 10,167,000

Phase 1 Development Total: \$3,561,000

(includes 28 RV sites, an Ojibwe camping experience facility, 9 individual tent sites, 1 group site with 10 tent pads and all other development EXCEPT the amphitheater and interpretive center, and the roads, utilities and additional restrooms that would be needed if the campgrounds are expanded in future phases). Also includes natural resources restoration, and 20% design & engineering.

o Cost Estimate Support Information Upload

Acquisition and Development Phasing Plan

1. Acquisition: Purchase the land described above and depicted on the map for the park, approximately 174.55 acres, by 2024. The Parks & Trails Council of MN has agreed to assist with the land purchase negotiations, and, if necessary, to purchase the properties and hold them temporarily, to be reimbursed later when permanent funding is secured. The City and Frazee Community Development Corporation (FCDC) intends to apply for LCCMR and GMRPTC Legacy funding for land acquisition in 2022, for 2023 dollars. If the landowners demand that the purchase take place sooner, then the Parks & Trails Council will purchase it for the park. If permanent funding is not obtained in the 2022 solicitation, then the City and FCDC will continue to apply in subsequent years for GMRPTC and LCCMR funding until permanent funding is obtained. The FCDC is committed to raising matching funds, described in more detail below.
2. Phase 1 Development—2024-2026:
 - a. Design, Engineering and Permitting: The City and FCDC will contract with a consultant to complete the design phase of the project. The site plan will include details for all Phase 1 development and will leave space for the Phases 2 and 3 development elements. Site design may begin once acquisition is committed.
 - b. Construction: Elements in this phase include some of the short term, seasonal and group campgrounds; the canoe/kayak river access/boat launch; trailheads; hard and natural surface trails; and picnic shelters/areas.
3. Phase 2 Development—2028-2030: Elements in this phase include the interpretive center and outdoor interpretive signs. Additional campsites may be added based on a cost/benefit analysis.

4. Phase 3 Development—2031-2032: Elements in this phase include the amphitheater. Additional campsites will be added based on a cost/benefit analysis.

Acquisition Strategies:

1. Purchase the park land before December 31, 2023
2. Phase I private capital campaign goal of \$500,000 raised from corporate and private funding sources.
3. Goal of \$50,000 on hand before June 24, 2022 to meet matching goal for GMRPTC submission
4. Goal of \$450,000 on hand before February 28, 2023
 - i. Potential Sources of \$500,000 goal:

Cost Projections for Implementation Plan

- Cost Projections for Implementation Plan
- Acquisition

TOTAL ACQUISITION COSTS: \$827,850

- Development

DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	\$ 10,167,000
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- **Projected Acquisition & Development Grand Total \$ 10,994,850**

OPERATIONAL PLAN TAB

Joint Organizations Responsibilities

An agreement between FCDCB and the City of Frazee has been created to develop, maintain and operate Wannigan Regional Park. The Agreement lays out the intent to acquire lands and develop, maintain and operate the Park over time with the overall aim of providing a high quality outdoor recreational experience for visitors to the park. See the attached agreement for details.

The City of Frazee has initiated a City Park Board, and the City will utilize the Frazee Park Board as an organizational umbrella that will provide administrative oversight for the Park.

Maintenance/Operations Plan

The FCDC will be fully responsible for management, operations and maintenance of the park.
Estimated Maintenance Costs

Estimated Camping Revenue

Important to the ongoing operation and maintenance of the park will be revenue derived primarily through camping. Revenue figures were derived in consultation with the Small Business Development Center at the University of Minnesota in Moorhead.

For Phase 1 there will be a total of 49 campsites, comprised of 10 tent campsites at \$20 per night, which will include 10 group spaces, and 29 RV spaces at \$49 per night with 1 RV site for the campground host (\$0 per night.)

Campsite Type	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
RV	\$121,500	\$153,900	\$172,125	\$189,388	\$208,271
Tent	14,580	17,280	19,440	21,384	45,000
Group	5,100	7,050	8,850	9,735	45,000
TOTAL	\$141,180	\$178,230	\$200,415	\$220,456.5	\$298,271

Additional revenue sources

Anticipated expenses include personnel and benefits, administrative costs and website, grounds maintenance, and utilities, as follows:

Expense Type	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Personnel & benefits	\$65,000	\$66,950	\$68,959	\$70,027	\$73,158
Admin & website	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
Maintenance	10,000	10,320	10,650	10,991	11,343
Utilities	7,000	7,210	7,426	7,649	7,879
TOTAL	\$49,180	\$90,660	\$110,197	\$127,511	\$202,515

Maintenance/Operations Strategies:

Strategy 1: Build and manage a volunteer corps for Wannigan Park to assist with programming, stewardship and other operations.

Strategy 2: Create a “Friends of Wannigan Park” organization to help fundraise and support park development, programming and operations.

Strategy 3: Work closely with the business community to determine opportunities for coordinating park related services and operations with the help of the private/non profit sectors.

Strategy 4: Develop a marketing plan for Wannigan Park to ensure that people are aware of its existence, the amenities and recreational opportunities that it provide

Ecological/Land Resources Plan

General Overview of Property

The proposed site for Wannigan Park is located north of the City of Frazee and comprises approximately 158 acres. The proposed site sits within the 2,000 square miles of the Otter Tail River watershed. The Ecological Classification System developed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources classifies three ecological provinces within Becker County: Laurentian Mixed Forest, Eastern Broadleaf Forest, and Prairie Parkland. Within the Eastern Broadleaf Forest province, the Wannigan Park property would be classified within the Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal Section and the (222M) and the Hardwood Hills (222Ma) Subsection.¹

While the park will offer new possibilities for outdoor recreation amenities it is also an opportunity for preserving open space and conserving important natural resources. In Frazee's Comprehensive Plan for 2035 the city stated "quality of life in Frazee is tied to the natural and historic features of the area. Wetlands, open space, river, and lakes comprise much of the city's area. Natural resources play a part in the city's public wealth and should be managed as any other asset."² Understanding the natural resources and environmental features at the Wannigan Park site can help city planners, stakeholders, and local residents understand the value of preserving this area for future generations.

Existing Conditions

Soil Types

The planned Wannigan Park area is in an area of sand and sandy loam soils on a glacial outwash plain near the Otter Tail River valley. Soils tend to be well-drained sandy soils with hydric soils present in the riparian zone along the river and in emergent wetland areas. The upland soils are generally suitable for development, except in areas where slope results in erodibility. The hydric soil areas are generally unsuitable for development due to water table and wetness. Soil types within the park boundary include:

Map Unit	Soil Name	Acres in Area	Percent of Area	Hydric
1250C	Abbeylake-Verndale complex	61.9	39.7%	No
	6 to 12 percent slopes			
A1C	Eagleview and Menahga soils	27.2	17.5%	No
	3 to 15 percent slopes			

¹ <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecs/index.html>

² <https://frazeecity.com/>

753D	Abbeylake loamy sand	17.0	10.9%	No
	12 to 20 percent slopes			
1113	Haslie, Seelyeville and Cathro	12.4	7.9%	Yes
	Ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes			
1111 & 1136	Nidaros muck	19.8	12.7%	Yes
1131B	Verndale-Abbeylake complex	7.0	4.5%	No
1015 & 1027	Cut and fill land	8.8	5.6%	No
753E	Abbeylake loamy sand	1.8	1.1%	No
	12 to 20 percent slopes			

Water and Wetlands

The Frazee area has five nearby lakes (Albertson, Brink, Gebo, Town, and Trieglaff) with Albertson, Brink, and Town Lake all being fed into by the Otter Tail River. The total surface area of these five lakes combined is 314.93 acres and all are protected and characterized as healthy warm-water aquatic communities. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has mapped out three freshwater ponds, one riverine area, five freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, and four freshwater emergent wetlands within the planned park area.^{3,4} The National Wetland Inventory classifies wetlands within the Wannigan Park area as PEM1C, which can be generalized as dominated by trees and shrubs with persistent vegetation present for most of the growing season and with seasonal standing water.

Vegetation Survey

Pre-settlement vegetation of the Hardwood Hills Ecological Subsection included landscapes characterized by maple-basswood forests interspersed with oak savannas, tallgrass prairies, and oak forests. “Irregular topography and presence of numerous lakes and wetlands provided a partial barrier to fire, resulting in woodland or forest rather than prairie vegetation” in addition to a mosaic of tallgrass prairie, aspen-oak land, and oak openings or savanna.⁵ Agricultural production and farming have been major land uses while wetlands and lakes provide various types of wildlife habitat. Some upland forests remain, particularly adjacent to lakes or on steep landscapes.⁶ Most of the Wannigan Park area is cleared grassland while small strands of wooded acres are interspersed throughout. Common tree species observed in these wooded areas include Green Ash, Burr Oak, White Oak, White Pine, Red Pine, and White

³ <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/Mapper.html>

⁴ <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/location/CN3AT4DECSHJVD5OLICH4DKXMI/resources#wetlands>

⁵ <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecs/index.html>

⁶ <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecs/index.html>

Spruce. In the Habitat Management plan for the Detroit Lakes, the area is described as an ecotone “between the tallgrass prairies and deciduous forests in the eastern (and portions of the southern) District”. This type of ecosystem was highly influenced by fire and the glacially deposited soils and may be more open air with larger trees and a tallgrass prairie understory or they may have denser shrub understories, closer to a chaparral type ecosystem. Within that understory, sedges and forest forbs may also be found.⁷

An inventory in the Fall, 2020 indicated the majority of the grass and forb community is non-native and dominated by smooth brome. Most of the area west of the river has been cultivated in the past and used for row crops – recently it has been used for grass/alfalfa hay. There is not much evidence onsite or in historic imagery that the area east of the river was ever cultivated, but it has been grazed heavily in the past and it is not a diverse plant community.

Native grasses and forbs identified this year include Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum* L.), Canada goldenrod (*Solidago altissima* L., *S. canadensis* L.), Cattails, Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca* L.), Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* Vitman), Heath aster (*Symphyotrichum ericoides* L.), Horesetail spp. (*Equisetum* spp. L.), Evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis* L.), Gray goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis* Aiton), Sky-blue aster (*Symphyotrichum oolentangiense* (Riddell) G.L. Nesom), Gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa* (Pursh) Dunal), Daisy fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus* Muhl. ex. Willd.), Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum* (Pursh) Kuntze), Vetch spp. (*Vicia* spp. L., Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa* L.), and Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia* L.).

Nonnative grasses and forbs identified during the survey include Smooth brome (*Bromus inermis* Leyss.), Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea* L.), Cattail spp. (*Typha angustifolia* L., *Typha x glauca* Godr.), Sweet clovers (*Melilotus* spp. L.), Blue flax (*Linum lewisii* Pursh), Red clover (*Trifolium pretense* L.), Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus* L.), Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* L.), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.), Goatsbeard (*Tragopogon dubius* Scop.), Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula* L.), and Knapweed species (*Centaurea* spp. L.).

Invasive Species

The Becker County Soil and Water Conservation District where County Agricultural Inspector (CAI) is placed lists 23 plant species that are prohibited noxious weeds which should be eradicated or controlled according to Minnesota state statutes. The CAI enforces the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law and works with all landowners on control management practices.

The planned Wannigan Park area has been part of Becker County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) since 2006. Burlington Township, Section 26, has known infestations of Spotted Knapweed and Leafy Spurge. Section 26 has been part of both the CWMA Cost-Share program with landowners from 2008 to present and is also part of the biological control program for both Leafy Spurge and Spotted Knapweed control. The area is part of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Grant Program in Meadow Knapweed region which was found on State Highway 34. The site has been inventoried and both Spotted Knapweed and Leafy Spurge are mapped in scattered locations along the roadway and the southwest corner of the proposed site.

Eradicate List: Black Swallow-wort (*Cynachum loisea* Kartesz & Grandhi), Brown Knapweed (*Centaurea jacea* L.), Diffuse Knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa* L.), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera*

⁷ <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/DownloadFile/132341>

japonica Thunb.), Palmer Amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri* S. Watson), Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.)Swingle), Yellow Starthistle *Centaurea (solstitialis L.)*, Grecian Foxglove (*Digitalis lanata* Ehrh), Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus* Thunb), Japanese Hops (*Humulus japonicas* Siebold & Zucc.), Dalmation Toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica (L.) Mill.*), Common Teasel (*Dispsacus fullonum L.*), Cut-leaved Teasel (*Dispsacus laciniatus L.*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Meadow Knapweed (*Centaurea xmoncktonii*), and Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).

Control List: Bohemian Knotweed (*Polygonum x bohemicum*), Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula L.*), Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense L. Scop*), Plumeless Thistle (*Carduus acanthoides L.*), Common barberry (*Berberis vulgaris L.*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria L.*), Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa L.*), Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare L.*), Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe L. ssp. Micranthos [Gugler] Hayek*), Narrowleaf Bittercress (*Cardamine impatiens L.*), Giant Knotweed (*Polygonum sachalinense*), Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), Absinthe Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*, Horary Alyssum (*Berteroa incana*), Houndstongue (*Cynoglossom officianale L.*), Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*), Yellow Hawkweed (*Hieracium caespitosum*), and Non-Native Phragmites (*Phragmites australis (Cav.) Trin ex Steud. ssp. australis*).

Wildlife Survey

In Becker County, only two federally-listed species are known to occur: the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*; USFWS 2019).⁸ The gray wolf, a threatened species, is found both as a transient and resident of the County. The northern long-eared bat, in the very northeast corner of the County, uses maternity roost trees in spring and summer. No known northern long-eared bats are present in the proposed park area.

During the 2012 Detroit Lakes Birding Festival approximately 52 bird species were observed near the Wannigan Park site. These included some species listed by the State of Minnesota as birds of special concern, such as Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and Threatened Species such as the Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). Bald Eagles, once listed on the Federal Endangered Species list, may be protected by the Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act.⁹ The prairie to woodland ecological transition area in Becker County contains both grasslands and forested habitat for various wildlife. Expanding this habitat would improve nesting and feeding areas for multiple bird species.

Throughout Minnesota, there are Wildlife Action Networks with scores determining how viable they are. The Frazee area's score ranges from low-medium to medium-high. With mainly aquatic but also some terrestrial types of networks, the Frazee area is shown to have populations of Species of Greatest Conservation Needs despite there being no Conservation Focus Areas nearby. The number of Species of Greatest Conservation Needs ranges between one and five species. According to Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan for 2015-2025, the taxonomic groups of greatest concern are mussels and reptiles, whereas those of least concern are bees and leafhoppers. Overall, while the approximate total number of species in Minnesota

⁸ <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/lists/minnesot-cty.html>

⁹ <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

is greater than 2,124, there are 210 state and/or federally listed species. In contrast, the Wildlife Action Plan has determined that there are 346 species of Greatest Conservation Need, resulting in an estimated 16% of the total species of Minnesota needing conservation action.¹⁰

Eco-Conscious Design

Design

FCDC and the City of Frazee will strive for a sustainable design for the park, as demonstrated in the attached Concept Plan. Amenities in the park will be designed to minimize disturbance to the existing natural landscape by limiting development in the park. This design approach will minimize impervious surfaces in the park while preserving natural systems like the wetlands along the river for water filtration. Wetlands and a fifty foot wide river buffer are depicted on the Concept Plan, and the developed elements have been placed away from these sensitive environments. Likewise, disturbance to the wooded areas of the park has been minimized. The Concept Plan depicts a design that works with the landscape, placing the planned developed elements on more disturbed, level areas, and leaving the slopes with minimal disturbance. Trails and new roads have been designed to gradually climb slopes rather than running straight down to minimize erosion. Major restoration of natural vegetation is planned for the park, in all areas where development is not planned. Invasive species will be removed, and replaced with native seed and plants. This will increase habitat for wildlife.

The park's design will incorporate its natural space to its infrastructure such as using its topography for the development of the amphitheater. The amphitheater is intended to be integrated along a large hill in the park in order to use the hill's natural slope as placement of the seating, supporting the natural integrity of the topography and easier development of the stage. Trails have been aligned in the Concept Plan to be sustainable and lower maintenance, following the contours of the land, avoiding wetlands, and aligning them in disturbed portions of the park land. The trails will be aligned in the design stage to follow these sustainable trail building principles to reduce erosion, and minimize disturbance to sensitive natural areas. Boardwalks are planned in the few areas where a trail is planned to cross a wetland edge. Furthermore, the park is designed to integrate outdoor experiences such as river access and bird watching to support the natural environment with little disturbance. This will give opportunity for protection of wildlife such as nesting and resting birds passing through as well as provide a chance for visitors to witness and enjoy the environment.

Design of the park will also strengthen a sense of place for visitors by including interpretation and exhibits on Native American and early European settlement history in the area such as interpretation of an old sawmill that existed on the current school property adjacent to the park. This theme will be reflected in the interpretive center where it will function as a center designated for historical story-telling, indoor physical movement and classroom conferences.

Construction

FCDC will extend an eco-conscious approach to the infrastructure construction of the park. We will do this by applying environmental sustainability to all phases of construction. Construction will be managed so that costs and environmental problems are minimized in

areas such as water and waste treatment, pollution, inefficient energy use and traffic congestion.

For the construction of the park facilities, materials that are salvaged, recyclable, bio-based, and locally sourced will be considered in order to reduce carbon emission and net waste production during construction. For material that cannot be reused, building material will be sourced from locations of short distance and of low hazard/pollutants. Careful decision of materials for construction will help prevent any addition of pollutants or waste to the park's ecosystem.

Construction for the park will also limit its environmental impact by managing erosion hazard and maintaining soil and plant integrity. Erosion from construction can increase the amount of sediment and other pollutants in runoff water that can contaminate bodies of water. Controlling erosion during the construction of Wannigan Park can significantly reduce the amount of pollutant into the river and soil. Topsoil destruction is also a concern during construction as it can amplify run off water and reduce absorption of water. Topsoil return will be an important component that will be considered in order for the soil and land vegetation to remain healthy after construction of the park facilities.

Location of construction will take into account existing utility lines and suitable building site in order to limit construction overall and environmental impact.

Operations

FCDC will extend a robust eco-conscious approach to the ongoing operations of the park. Park management will feature landscaping with native plants. Landscape management will follow sustainable practices, with a "do less" approach to maintenance. Waste materials will be recycled with an extensive system of recycle bins throughout the park. Park water usage will be minimized by following best practices for water conservation. Electric power will be used for the majority of park operations and will be generated from onsite renewable energy installations.

To conserve energy operations in the park, buildings such as the interpretive center will have passive windows that will face towards the south in order to use natural warming effects on the facilities, ultimately reducing the net carbon emissions emitted by the park. Simultaneously, this operation will also let in natural light that will limit the use of the power in the facilities. The use of light bulbs would also be considered to choose the most efficient bulbs such as LED lights.

Preserving the wetlands in the park will provide a natural infiltration system that will support the health and chemistry of the river for the wildlife in the area. Wetlands natural processes will reduce some maintenance costs and efforts for the river by filtering certain pollutants into the stream and enriching nutrients needed for the soil and river. Additionally, protecting the wetlands will help with water management by limiting flood and rainwater in the park.

Recycling and compost systems in the park will also help benefit the health and reduction of pollution in the land and river.

¹⁰ https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/nrplanning/bigpicture/mnwap/mndnr_wildlife_action_network_description.pdf

Land Parcel Zoning. There are three complete parcels that comprise the proposed area for Wannigan Park. They are Becker County parcels 030237003, and 030239001 and 030234000. The parcels are currently zoned as Agricultural Districts. Becker County Parcel Information sheets list the acreage for the privately owned parcels (including the 16.8 acre parcel for “possible future expansion” on the north end of Chilton Road) by the following land types: pasture (70.22 acres), tillable (50.69 acres), woodlot (44.49 acres), waste (11.75 acres), and marsh (1.73 acres).

Stream Buffer Compliance. The Minnesota state legislature signed Minnesota Statute 103F.48 (commonly known as the “Buffer Law”) into effect in June of 2015 with the goal of enhancing the protection of waters and riparian zones. Master planning documents for Wannigan Park will need to take this regulation into account when planning recreation amenity areas and future land use. The Becker Soil and Water Conservation District describes these buffers as “riparian filter strips adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland that help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment” and which are important conservation practices for helping to maintain water quality.¹¹ The current Buffer Zone regulation requires buffers with an average 50-foot width and a minimum 30 feet of perennial vegetation adjacent to public waters. Any trail or recreation improvements within Wannigan Park should be planned for outside the 50-foot buffer of the Otter Tail River in order to protect sensitive riparian areas.

Land Management Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Adopt practices from the Becker County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMW) Plan to remove invasive species and improve native plant establishment.

Objective 1.1: Conduct a comprehensive inventory of invasive species within the park.

Objective 1.2: Develop a prioritized plan for removal of invasive species.

Goal 2: Restore natural species in the park areas not intended for development to improve wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity.

Objective 2.1: Protect natural areas within 50 ft. of the Otter Tail River

Objective 2.2: Protect wetlands areas within the park boundary, prevent access from trails into wetlands

Objective 2.3: Enhance and develop natural areas with native plants and pollinators

Goal 3: Develop a long-term management plan for ongoing natural resources stewardship.

Objective 3.1: Complete a Agreement between the City of Frazee, FCDC and Becker County to determine roles, responsibilities, and commitments pertaining to natural resource conservation.

Objective 3.2: Partner with Becker County Soil and Water Conservation District to identify complementary natural resource conservation priorities and collaboration opportunities.

Objective 3.3: Identify opportunities for residents, community groups, and stakeholder organizations to support the ongoing restoration and stewardship.

¹¹ https://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/soil_water/programs.aspx

Objective 3.4: Identify natural resource planning considerations from the appendix that are priorities for short-term, mid-range, and long-term planning.

Natural Resources Strategies

1. Before construction verify if there are any native stands remaining and mark sites for preservation.
2. The Pre-settlement vegetation of the Hardwood Hills Ecological Subsection include landscapes characterized by maple basswood forests interspersed with oak savannas, tall grass prairies and Oak forests. The site is well set for Hardwood Hills Ecological Subsection on east side of Otter Tail River and establishing tall grass prairies on the west side.
3. Prairie grass and forbs will be collected from native sites in the surrounding region. Becker County also has two native seed collection businesses that could be utilized. FWS collect their seed from native sites in the region.
4. Phase 1:
 - Prepare and seed 3 wetland areas for native planting with FWS native seed harvest
 - Plant soybean fields (Appendix 3: Section A, B & D) into cool season grass and alfalfa for haying that could provide income (Appendix 5). Plant native grass after camping areas is established (Appendix 7).
 - Plant native tree and shrub buffer as shown in (Appendix 3: Section E).
 - Native grass & forb planting in Oak Savannah area on east side of river (Appendix 4).
 - Plant butterfly and pollinator gardens by observation points.
 - Appendix 8, 9 and 10 show grass and forb species that may be in collection along with cool season species that will need to be purchased for FWS projects. .
5. Following Phases: Establishment of Interpretive Center & Amphitheater, Camping Sites and Trails. Incorporate additional native plants along trails in addition to Butterfly Gardens and Bird Observation areas.

Native Planting Cost Estimates

- On the low end of species diversity, costs are around \$150/acre, including seed and a vendor to seed it. Any additional site preparation would be extra (tillage, herbicide, etc.) and extra expense.
- For more diverse seedings (40+ species), which should be the goal for a site like this, costs will be in the range of \$300-\$500/ac for seed and seeding.
- Seedbed preparation will need to be determined. (Ex: tilling, burning and clipping)

Possible Financial Assistance for Habitat Restoration

1. NRCS: Natural Resource Conservation Service-Federal
 - CRP is only available for private landowners not for public owned property. If property is enrolled prior to the City of Frazee purchasing property the contract would be cancelled and city would be required to reimburse Farm Service Agency 100% of CRP expenses plus liquidated damages.

- Assist with specie selection for seed mixes.
 - (Appendix 3: Section A, B and D) Establish cool season grasses and legumes to provide soil cover and to reduce erosion. May be used for haying to provide funds to improve and maintain livestock/wildlife nutrition and to provide funds. Cost estimate for grass and legume mixture: (Appendix 5 & 6)
2. MN DNR + Becker SWCD: Clean Water, Land and Legacy Outdoor Heritage Fund, Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Program
 - MN has one of the few programs like this in the US.
 - Geared for projects such as Wannigan Park (must be public ownership or permanent easement).
 - Example: Sucker Creek Native Planting Area project. 10-15% Match.
 - After Campsites and Interpretive Center are established: Seed the Tall Native Grass Prairie into areas that were established to grass/legumes: refer to Appendix 3: Section A, B and D and Appendix 7 & 8
 3. Shoreline Area
 - DNR grants
 - Becker SWCD Shoreline program possible 75 percent match for shoreline restoration projects.
 4. Rain Gardens
 - Becker SWCD Shoreline program possible 75 percent match to create rain gardens.
 4. USFWS-Detroit Lakes Office
 - Can provide plant material: FWS harvest native grass & forb seed from local ecosystems every fall. The 2021 harvest is excellent for mesic area and upland area is good.
 - Additional seed will need to be purchased for spring blooming native forbs for the areas that are not supplied by FWS seed mix.
 - Wetland and Savannah Area: refer to Appendix 4 for Wetland and Savannah Area
 - LSOHC and Federal Funding: Upland (Savannah) planting \$400/acre for seed & labor (Appendix 3: Section C)
 - Federal Funding: Wetland planting \$1000/acre for seed and labor (Appendix 4: 3 - Wetland Plantings).
 5. BWSR- Becker SWCD
 - Otter Tail Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (AKA 1WIP)
 - Plan will not be complete until 2023
 - There may be cost share available to establish buffer along Otter Tail River. Native plantings, and shoreline restoration that could possibly fit the water quality protection

and restoration goals of the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

- Native Tree & Shrub Planting Site. Becker SWCD can provide a planting plan, trees, cost estimate and possible planting. The SWCD sells tree and has a tree planting service. (Appendix 3: Part E)

See the Wannigan Park Natural Resource Native Planting report, Becker County Soil and Water Conservation Service in the Appendix for more details.

**Annual Routine Maintenance and Operations Cost Total: \$ 49,180 1st year
\$202,515 by year 5**

PROGRAMMING PLAN TAB

- **Programming**

Programming is an important part of the vision for Wannigan Park. It is envisioned that informal and more formal educational and recreational programming will connect park visitors to the history and natural resources of the area, and to the park itself. Exposing people to the outdoor environment, then educating them about what they're experiencing are steps in building an active community of stewards who will help care for the park. Because of the variety of outdoor recreation facilities planned for the park and the natural and historic setting, many types of programs are possible for the general visitor and for formal school classes. The amphitheater will provide space for presentations about the park themes: area history and natural resources. The amphitheater will also be used for concerts and other entertainment.

These events will likely be organized by other business and organizations, and the space will be rented for the event. The interpretive center will offer exhibits for self-guided learning. The interpretive center will also include a group gathering space for indoor presentations. Interpretive signs at key locations along the park trails will offer additional education on the park themes. Picnic shelters as well as the public portions of the interpretive center will be rented for private events. Programming will be offered through a combination of volunteers who are trained and organized through the Friends of Wannigan Park, fee for service activities provided by the Friends or the City/County, and private businesses.

Inspirational Programming List:

Frazee-Vergas Educational Programming Opportunities at Wannigan Park

- Pre-kindergarten through 6th grade classes utilizing the space for physical education and science classes.
- Recreational fitness classes utilizing trails, river access for canoeing and kayaking, snowshoeing club utilizing trails, construction trades classes working with park management to build picnic shelters and picnic tables, washroom facilities, and other buildings.
- Agriculture classes learning about horticulture, forestry, and animal science. Environmental science classes learning about native and invasive plant species, water and soil quality and assisting with monitoring both.
- Providing a location for students to possibly experience camping for the first time. FFA utilizing the space for meetings and competitions, as well as learning about different areas of agriculture.
- Access to the river would be an asset to science classes, especially Environmental science

- Nature trails along the river could be used by various classes including Art, Writing, Science and Agricultural/Natural Resources
- Amphitheater used by classes for musical or theater performances, student presentations
- Native American Club and environmental science classes to plan revegetation of native species
- Opportunities for Community Engagement at Wannigan Park

The following activities would draw people into the community and park:

- Plant an apple orchard and host Apple Day where all Frazee residents come to the park to receive free apples and experience the park.
- Hold a Plant a Pine Tree Day and give every visitor a free pinecone with instructions to sprout and plant a pine tree.
- Cross Country team utilizing the trails for hosted meets and invitationals. Performances and presentations taking place in the amphitheater.
- Snowshoeing club hosting community snowshoeing days with campfires and hot chocolate
- FFA hosting competitions.
- FFA hosting informational sessions for younger students and the community.
- Community events to give away tree seedlings, locally grown apples.
- Bring in music clinicians or authors who present/perform in the amphitheater.
- Native American Club to share projects with the greater community - snow snakes, crafts.
- Community Education classes on snowshoeing, nature journaling, nature photography, plant identification, camping, canoeing and kayaking, orienteering, bird watching, astronomy.
- Yoga classes.
- Snowshoeing or cross-country skiing by candlelight.

Formal Education/Programming: The park is located adjacent to Frazee Elementary and High Schools, so outdoor classes in the park will be within walking distance. The City will work with the High School teachers to develop outdoor lessons. Actually, the park site has been used for many years already as an outdoor classroom, in an arrangement with the former private landowner. Students have built birdhouses, and location markers already exist identifying interesting natural resources for learning. The Agriculture teacher and Future Farmers of America (FFA) leader is already involved in Wannigan park planning and has engaged students and FFA members in activities related to the master plan development. They are ready to help with habitat restoration and other park improvement projects once the site is acquired. The School District has an active RiverWatch Program and Adopt-A-River program related to the Otter Tail River, which will continue. A Native American Club exists at the School District, and is also interested in being involved in the park.

Another opportunity is for physical education classes to use the park. Frazee High School already has enough snowshoes for a large group to use, but they do not get much use now. PE classes could introduce students to the lifelong sports of snowshoeing, cross country skiing, bicycling, hiking, and canoeing/kayaking to encourage healthy, active lifestyles. Outdoor natural classroom settings do not need to be limited to science and PE classes. The outdoors can be inspiring settings for English, art and other subjects as well. Lessons created with Frazee high school can be shared with other area schools, and field trips to the park from other schools will also be encouraged.

Informal Education/Programming: For informal education for park visitors, kiosks, maps and volunteers will provide an overview of the park, especially during the first year. In-person presentations and guided tours or walks will be offered on the park themes through volunteers. Concerts and theatrical entertainment will be provided in the amphitheater through a partnerships with arts and community organizations (see lists below.) Lessons in canoeing, kayaking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing will be offered periodically through volunteers recruited from recreational and community clubs.

Partnership Opportunities for Recreational Activities:

Becker County Energize, REI Co-op, Winona Canoe & Current Designs Kayaks (made in Winona, MN), Bicycle Alliance of MN, American Hiking Society, North Country Trail Assn. & National Scenic Trail, Sierra Club Outings, Minnesota Canoe Association & River Ramblers Recreational Canoe Group, Maplelag Resort (cross country skiing specialty), North Stars Ski Touring Club, high school cross country ski team coaches, Parks and Trails Council of MN, MnDNR Hiking & Passport Clubs, Children & Nature Network, Audubon Society Outings, MN Rovers, other local & regional clubs.

Partnership Opportunities for Educational & Stewardship Activities:

Becker County Historical Society, MN Historical Society, local amateur historians, White Earth

Band of Ojibwe, Master Naturalists (MnDNR), Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Freshwater Society, Land Stewardship Project, MN Association for Environmental Education, MN Native Plant Society, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Audubon Society, MN Tree Trust, Tamarack Wildlife Refuge, Becker County Soil & Water Department.

Partnership Opportunities for Volunteer Recruitment:

Local clubs, including Lions Club, Sportsman's Club, Veterans Associations, Future Farmers of America, 4-H Clubs, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Boy and Girl Scouts, Frazee High School Native Club, high schoolsports teams and service clubs, and the organizations listed above. Seasonal residents/cabin owners in the area are often overlooked source for volunteers and fundraising. Lake associations are a way to reach seasonal residents: Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations.

Programming Goal:

Provide opportunities for park visitors to enjoy outdoor recreation and learn about the natural landscape and history of the area, in order to encourage healthy, active lifestyles; to educate people about nature, history and their connections to them; and to build a stewardship ethic. Develop and hold programming that invites everyone to use the park through physical movement, being in the natural environment. FCDC will take THE lead to organize all programming.

Objective 1: Short term, years 2023-2024:

Strategy 1: Create healthy programming to develop healthy life skills through use of the park and physical activity

Strategy 2: Seek grants for programming from: State grants (Explore Minnesota, State Health Improvement Program), and other sources.

Strategy 3: Beginning in 2024 or when the campground is open, part of the camping Revenue will be allocated to the programming budget.

Strategy 4: Invite all Frazee School District children, grades K-12 to experience the park two times in the '23-'24 school year and measure school use of the park.

Strategy 5: Invite all regional residents, workers and visitors to experience the park a total of four times in 2023 and 2024 at City-wide events and Community Education events.

Action 5A: Hold a City-wide physical activity event series targeting adults with children., as a partnership between FCDA and the Frazee Community Club, including an indoor winter yoga event, a walk/run race (Spring or Fall), and other events.

Action 5B: Hold a Learn to Fish event on the Otter Tail River in winter, involving FCDC, Boy Scouts, the Sportsman's Club, and possibly MNDNR and fish related non profit organizations.

Objective 2: 2024 and Beyond: Expand programming to introduce and teach park visitors

about cultural history, the natural world, canoeing and kayaking, and the arts.

Strategy 1: Coordinate with Frazee High School and other schools in the area to provide formal outdoor classroom experiences at the park.

Action 1A: Continue the partnership with Frazee High School to develop and encourage outdoor classroom activities at the park.

Action 1B: Provide indoor and outdoor classroom space and amenities to accommodate school groups, as seen in the development plan

Strategy 2: Coordinate with community clubs in Frazee and Becker County, and recreational clubs statewide to recruit and train volunteers for programming activities in the park.

Action 2A: Work with local clubs, such as the Sportsman's Club, Lions Club, Veterans Associations, Future Farmers of America local chapter, and the 4-H Club, as well as state- and regionally-based organizations to recruit park volunteers and create programs.

Strategy 3: Partner with the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, the Native American Club at Frazee High School to educate visitors about the Native American culture, history and modern life. Create in-person programs, interpretive outdoor exhibits, activities, and indoor exhibits for the interpretive center.

Strategy 4: Educate park visitors about the European settlement history of the area, the logging industry and the former nearby sawmill, in partnership with Becker County and Otter Tail County historical societies and the School Cultural liaison.

Strategy 5: Hold events to teach adults and children how to kayak and canoe. Possible Partners include: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the Frazee Sportsman's Club, the Minnesota Canoe Association, Riverkeepers, etc.

Strategy 6: Hold special events to reach regional residents at least twice per year. Ideas Include:

- Learn to grow trees class: Coordinate with the Becker County Soil & Water Board and the Otter Tail River Watershed to give away pine cones or seedlings.
- Learn to grow fruit: Coordinate with Becker County Soil & Water Board, the Otter Tail River Watershed, orchard owners, and fruit crop instructors to teach people how to grow fruit trees in the region's climate. The Park will have a demonstration orchard.

Strategy 7: Educate visitors about the natural environment, including the forest and prairies biomes that meet in the area. Teach visitors about the benefits of native plants and how to integrate them into their yards and gardens. Coordinate with Becker County Soil and Water Board, the University of Minnesota Forest Ecology Department, Cooperative Extension, etc.

Strategy 8: Offer service learning opportunities in the park, and educational volunteer opportunities, such as a stream monitoring program using the Isaak Walton League's Save of Streams model; formal outdoor classroom activities focused on water quality, wildlife, river ecology, or native restoration of disturbed land and shorelines. These offerings would be coordinated with the Frazee and other regional School Districts, the Izaak Walton League, the Otter Tail River Watershed, and other agencies and non profit organizations. Coordinate with School Districts to have the outdoor lessons incorporated into the science curriculum. Share results with other interested parties.

Strategy 9: Create both recreational and educational informal programming to take place at the park.

Action 3A: Develop a canoe and kayak rental program to be operated through a part of the interpretive center.

Action 3B: Offer snowshoes in the winter on loan

Action 3C: Offer canoeing, kayaking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing lessons to encourage people to try new outdoor activities.

Action 3D: Offer indoor and outdoor presentations about the park themes to park visitors, utilizing the amphitheater and interpretive center

Action 3E: Offer guided outdoor educational activities, such as guided hikes, or guided paddles to expand visitors' knowledge of and interest in the park and area. These would be offered through a combination of private businesses, by the City/County as a fee for service, or for free to park visitors.

Action 3F: Create a shuttle service for bicyclists and canoes/kayaks to give visitors the option of a one way ride/paddle. This could be an entrepreneurial opportunity for a local business, or provided by the City/County as a fee for service.

Action 3G: Coordinate with partners to offer concerts and theater entertainment at the amphitheater as a way of drawing people to the park, providing a community service, and as a source of revenue to offset park operations costs. . Possible amphitheater shows include: the Wannigan Native American Music Ceremony, the Fargo Moorhead Children's Orchestra, and Frazee High School music programs.

- **Annual Programming Cost**

The park is not developed yet, so there is no current cost for programming.

- **Annual Revenues from Programming and Fees/Charges**

Camping Revenues (a portion will be dedicated to programming) Amount to be determined
Programming fees from participants to be determined

See operations plan for additional revenues.

The park is not developed, so there are no current revenues. Projected revenues from programming include:

Canoe/kayak rental: \$800/year (\$20/day for 1 rental 2 days/week May – Sept.)

Amphitheater events: \$500/year from renting space and paid tickets.

Due to the anticipated funding sources for the park acquisition and development being government grants, any revenues from the site must be used for a public purpose. The revenues will be used to fund the park's operations, management, and long term facility upkeep.

- **Outreach and Marketing Plan**

Because the park is in the planning stage, the outreach has been limited. The project concept received attention in the city of Frazee during its comprehensive planning process in 2019. The current outreach includes the Becker County Parks and Frazee City websites, which offer brief information about the park project. The park survey conducted in Summer 2020 was advertised on these websites and through the City of Frazee's utility bills. The survey received 121 responses, including 16 respondents who wanted to keep informed of the project's progress.

After the Master Plan process, the outreach and marketing efforts for the park will include marketing through tourism organizations, web presence, social media, and printed material through local, regional, and statewide media. Some specific free or low cost marketing outlets include: Chamber of Commerce Board, City and County websites, Explore Minnesota, and using the local schools to help promote the park and conduct volunteer activities. A possible marketing slogan is: "Three Trails, Four Seasons of Adventure."

Outreach and Marketing Goal 1: Promote the concept of Wannigan Park to potential funders,

volunteers and supporters to create a strong coalition of supporters for the development of the park.

Strategy 1: Develop public support for the Wannigan Park development project

Action 1A: Establish a committee/team to work with a marketing consultant, and engage a marketing consultant by May 31, 2022

Action 1B: Establish a six month marketing plan for FCDC, approved by the FCDC Board by June 30, 2022

Action 1C: Redesign the Wannigan Park website by July 31, 2022

Action 1D: Create an introduction to FCDC by August 30, 2022

Action 1B: Engage who people who responded to the park survey in February 2022 and expressed interest in being involved.

Action 1C: Increase web and other social media presence of the park development activities and keep them updated.

Action 1D: Increase partnerships with local, regional and state organizations and businesses that can assist in implementing the Master Plan.

Action 1E: Develop a video promoting park development to display on social media.

Action 1F: Provide press releases and marketing material to traditional media: local newspapers, television, radio, and tourism bureau printed materials such as annual magazines.

Action 1G: Since word of mouth is an important method of communication in this area, provide presentations and project updates to local and regional clubs and groups

Strategy 2: Develop political and governmental support for the park development project.

Action 2A: Inform local government officials and state and federal legislators about the project, invite them to significant events, and keep them informed

Action 2B: Join the Parks & Trails Council of MN's Friends Group, and participate in legislative activities promoting parks and trails in the state

Action 2C: Inform key state and regional government staff who deal with parks and trails issues about the project and keep them informed.

Outreach and Marketing Goal 2: Promote Wannigan Park to local and regional residents as well as to statewide and national/international audiences through a variety of media in order to increase awareness and use of the park once it is developed.

Strategy 1: Use traditional, newer, and unique promotional methods to promote the park.

Action 1A: Host on site events to build awareness at of the park, including an opening celebration

Action 1B: Continue to keep legislators, government officials and key government staff informed of happenings at Wannigan Park.

Action 1C: Use social media and traditional media to update and inform the public about activities at the park

Action 1D: Use tourism materials produced by others, such as travel blogs, Explore Minnesota website, campground and trail directories, and local and regional tourism bureau marketing to promote the park.

Action 1E: Consider partnering with the Heartland Trail, the Otter Tail River Water Trail or the North Country Trail to offer an annual ride, walk or paddle event to build broader awareness of the park. It could be a fundraiser to support park operations or programming.

- **User Metrics and Research Plan**

As the park develops it will be important to find out what is happening in the park. Since the park will be a major trailhead for three important trails, trail use surveys can also provide useful data. Research and surveying are necessary to find out who is using the park and why, where they come from, and how well the park serves their needs. This information can be used to:

- determine management priorities for the park, such as maintenance and signage needs,
- determine amenities desired
- determine whether the park is having the intended positive impacts on residents health, and on the tourism economy
- help regional and statewide organizations promote park development and funding
- help other park friends groups document regional park needs
- help document park and trail benefits and use when applying for park or trail grants
- include in local and regional comprehensive plans

A variety of types of park user surveys can be done: in-person surveys, trail counts by automatic counters or by volunteer surveyors, online surveys, etc. To gauge the percentage of residents or visitors are using the trail, surveys can be done: at lodging establishments, in residents utility bills, at community meetings and events, etc. To gauge the economic benefits, surveys can be done through the Chambers of Commerce, tourism bureaus, or other business organizations. Surveys of local businesses can estimate local park-related spending. Trail data would be gathered in coordination with the trail management agencies/organizations.

Park & trail usage questions may include:

Number of park/trail users

Day/time/season of use

Types of use: camping, paddling, event watching, interpretive center learning, bicycling, runners, walking, etc.

Distance travelled to get to park

Frequency of use

Reasons for park/trail use

Likes/dislikes about the park/trail

Amenities desired

Adequacy of maintenance

Number of days staying in area for overnight trips

Relative importance of park/trail for visiting the area

Amount spent in local area on park/trail related trips

Location of origin for visitors

Distances travelled on the trails per day, per trip

Ages of park/trail users

As Wannigan Park develops the City and FCDC, in coordination with trail and other partners, will periodically conduct user counts and/or surveys, and economic studies. The Board will participate in surveys conducted by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and other regional or statewide trail or tourism organizations.

User Metrics and Research Goals, Strategies and Actions:

User Metrics & Research Goal: Evaluate park use and impacts periodically to: 1) assist in managing the park to accommodate park user needs, and 2) to demonstrate the positive park impacts in order to promote the park and encourage funding.

Strategy 1: The City/FCDC will participate in surveys conducted or requested by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission, upon request.

Strategy 2: The City/FCDC will conduct park use surveys or counts periodically, at least every five years, and adjust management strategies accordingly.

Action 2.1: Conduct park user counts using automatic counters on park entrance roads and internal park trails.

Action 2.2: Utilize annual picnic shelter permitting, event revenue, and campground use data to assess park management success and adjust management accordingly.

Action 2.3: Conduct park user surveys periodically, either in person or through social media or other means, to assess more detailed information about park users.

Action 2.4: Complete a report after park user surveys are completed, and assess management practices to consider the findings, altering practices as necessary.

Action 2.5: Distribute the report to regional and statewide park management organizations for use in studies and reports to encourage regional park development and funding.

Strategy 3: Conduct surveys periodically of local & regional governments and residents to assess attitudes toward the park by the general population

Action 3.1: Conduct periodic surveys of the general population through local government surveys, local government Council/Board meetings or the like, and adjust park management policies accordingly, such as marketing and promotions.

Strategy 4: Track volunteer hours and manage the volunteer program to increase the number of total volunteer hours for the park by twenty percent annually.