

ARTHUR E. AND MILDRED H. WOOLLAM NATURE PRESERVE

MASTER PLAN

JULY 2023

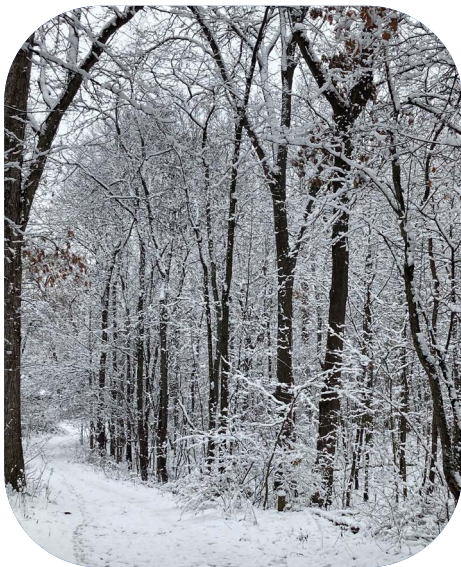


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PROJECT GOALS

The goal of the planning process is to develop an initial site master plan that will enable the County Parks to:

OPEN THE PARK FOR PUBLIC USE

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL FEATURES

INCREASE NET OPERATING REVENUE

PROVIDE FACILITIES/RECREATION USES THAT WILL MEET VISITOR NEEDS.

212 ACRES



7060 FEET
WATER FRONTAGE

15 ACRES
WETLANDS

60+
STRUCTURES

PROJECT TIMELINE

DECEMBER 2021

KALAMAZOO COUNTY, JOHN WOOLLAM, AND SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY (SWMLC) FINALIZE CONSERVATION EASEMENT.

MARCH 2021

KALAMAZOO COUNTY PURCHASES THE PROPERTY FROM BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

FALL 2022

KALAMAZOO COUNTY ISSUES A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR MASTER PLAN.

JANUARY 2023

OCBA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS KICKS OFF THE PROJECT

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS WITH INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING: KVCC, CITY OF KALAMAZOO, YMCA, BOY SCOUTS, AND OTHERS.

FEBRUARY 15, 2023

PUBLIC BRAINSTORMING SESSION

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT BY DESIGN CONSULTANTS, REVIEWS WITH COUNTY PARKS STAFF

JUNE 22, 2023

PUBLIC REVIEW SESSION FOR DRAFT MASTER PLAN

FINAL MASTER PLAN BY DESIGN CONSULTANTS

SUMMER 2023

FINAL MASTER PLAN DELIVERED TO KALAMAZOO COUNTY PARKS

SUMMER/FALL 2023

DEMOLITION AND CLEANUP OF PROPERTY

FALL 2023

WOOLLAM PRESERVE OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

ONGOING 2023-2024

DEMOLITION, CLEANUP, DESIGN, AND CONSTRUCTION

SUMMER 2024

ADDITIONAL AMENITIES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The Parks Director and the design consultants held eight (8) stakeholder meetings with the following interested parties: City of Kalamazoo, the neighbors on Bass Lake, Texas Township, YMCA, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC), Discover Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), the Kalamazoo County Parks Board, and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

During these meetings, the design consultants provided an overview of the project, the site and its easements restrictions, and invited discussion about possible partnerships, desired amenities for each organization, and potential operations coordination. Several common themes surfaced, including:

- » Recognition of a community asset with many opportunities.
- » Access to and preservation of the natural features such as Bass Lake, Scouters Pond, and the wetlands.
- » Concern for water quality.
- » Desire for passive recreation, specifically hiking and walking trails to be used by individuals and organizations.
- » Interest in complementing the Texas Drive Park improvements and Al Sabo Land Preserve.
- » Need for shelter for all activities, events, and trips.
- » Desire for access to Wi-Fi for educational uses.
- » Interest in day camps, field trips, and class visits.
- » Need for restrooms throughout the property.
- » Potential for partnerships in native planting, invasive species control, maintenance, and general improvements.
- » Need for way-finding signage.

CITY OF KALAMAZOO

The City supports passive recreation that will not negatively impact water quality within the adjacent Al Sabo. In the past, other organizations (SWMMBA and BSA) have maintained Al Sabo trails, and the City is open to continued similar partnerships. There is interest in partnering with the County for security and enforcement, including gate closures.

NEIGHBORS

The neighbors have in-depth knowledge and involvement in the conservation easement and the property's history and are in full support of passive recreation, preserving water quality through watercraft limitations, and minimal shelters and facilities. They asked for consideration of traffic flow and enhancement of hiking and walking trails, including frequent seating opportunities.

TEXAS TOWNSHIP

The Township supports typical park facilities that would complement the Texas Township Park across the street, which will soon include a splash pad. They noted that it could be a good day camp field trip location as well as an opportunity for catch and release fishing. The Township has also been challenged with security and management of Al Sabo with not enough resources to monitor the property. They reviewed the need to meet township zoning requirements and site plan review.

YMCA

The Kalamazoo YMCA noted the potential for future overnight camps, day camps, specialty camps, or day camp field trips; they currently offer out-of-school programming at Portage schools. General park facilities would support all these programs, specifically accessible paths, outdoor covered space, indoor space for severe weather, stage, restrooms, and outdoor flexible space such as a low ropes course. For day camp field trips, a prep kitchen is sufficient; if a full or regular day camp, a commercial kitchen would be required. There is also a need for WiFi and internet.

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY (SWMLC)

SWMLC is the qualified holder of the land conservancy. The Land Protection Branch will primarily be monitoring that the easement is enforced, reviewing improvement plans; the Stewardship Branch will be partnering with the County for ecological restoration including invasive species removal, and potentially coordinating with volunteer groups. They also may pursue additional conservation easements on the surrounding properties.

KALAMAZOO VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (KVCC)

KVCC sees potential in using the preserve as a learning environment for the new horticulture program and other environmentally-based programs and clubs. They voiced a need for way-finding and established boundaries and trails. Interest in an outdoor classroom space was also expressed.

KALAMAZOO COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

The Parks Commission supports various facilities, including: tent camping, restrooms and showers, hiking trails, converting the dining hall to an event facility, nature play, nature playschools, disc golf, and connection to Al Sabo's mountain biking network. They also suggested a connection to the greater road biking network, opportunity for food trucks, a swimming beach with an accessible entrance, fitness loops, and exploration of deconstructing and selling the riflery range building. The Commission reiterated the need to celebrate natural beauty and to rent out facilities for financial viability.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA (BSA)

The Boy Scout representatives emphasized the desire to have access to the existing facilities for select events, overnights, field trips, and potentially day camp. These would include: cabins, gaga pits, ropes course, BB target area, fire rings, and the Appledorn trail (1, 3, and 5 mile marked distance). They noted that the flat space northeast of Oaks Pavilion is the most heavily used camping space and that there is a beautiful lake view near the cub scout fire ring.

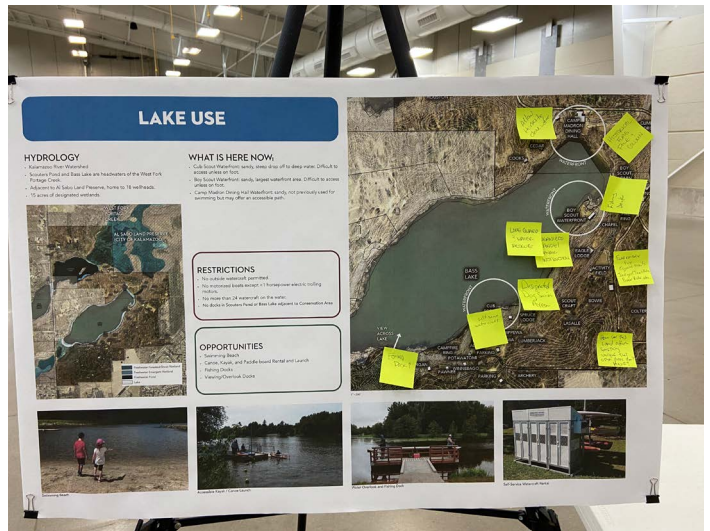
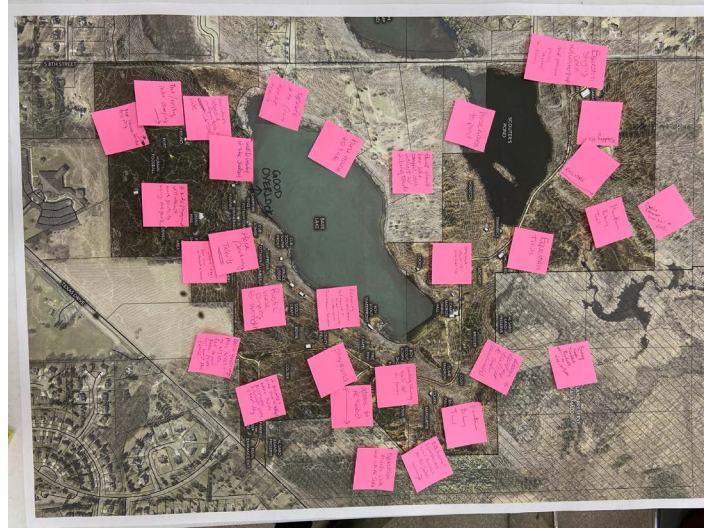
Scouts have specific safety requirement for a swimming beach to establish different levels for swimmers and non-swimmers. The Boy Scout Waterfront has the most shallow area but it difficult to access barrier-free. Scouts need to accommodate both boys and girls troops in separate housing and have a strict adult vs child ratio. Some events potentially hosted here could include weekend events requiring tents and cabins, single day training programs in the dining hall, day camp with parental transportation, Court of Honors, and camp-o-rees. Priority buildings identified are: 1) Cub Scout Dining Hall, 2) Trapper, 3) Fort, 4) Indian. Eagle Lodge is large with storage, and both firebowls have issues with bees and hornets.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The Kalamazoo County Parks staff, Parks Commission, and design consultants hosted a two-hour public input open house which had eighty-six (86) attendees. The input session included eight information and idea stations to gather input as well as a survey for each attendee.

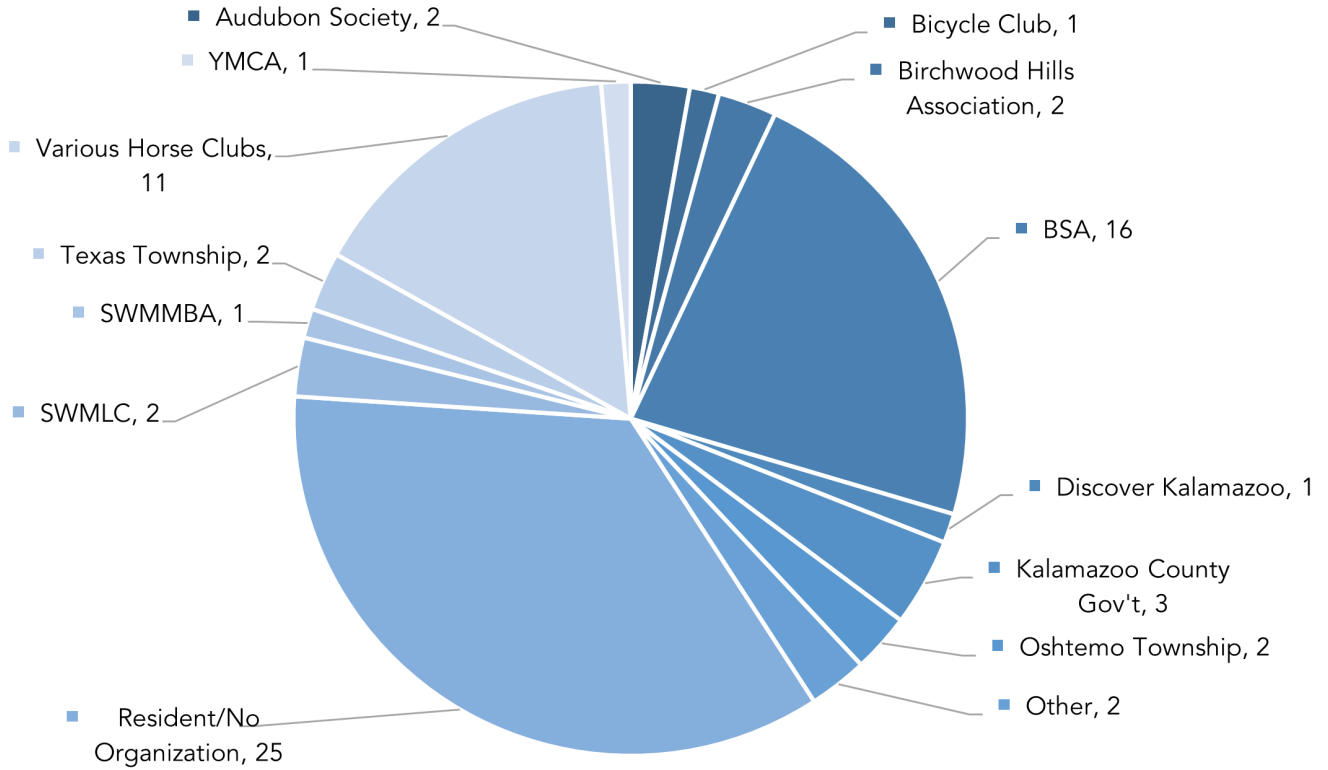


FEBRUARY 15, 2023 PUBLIC INPUT SESSION AT THE KALAMAZOO COUNTY EXPO CENTER

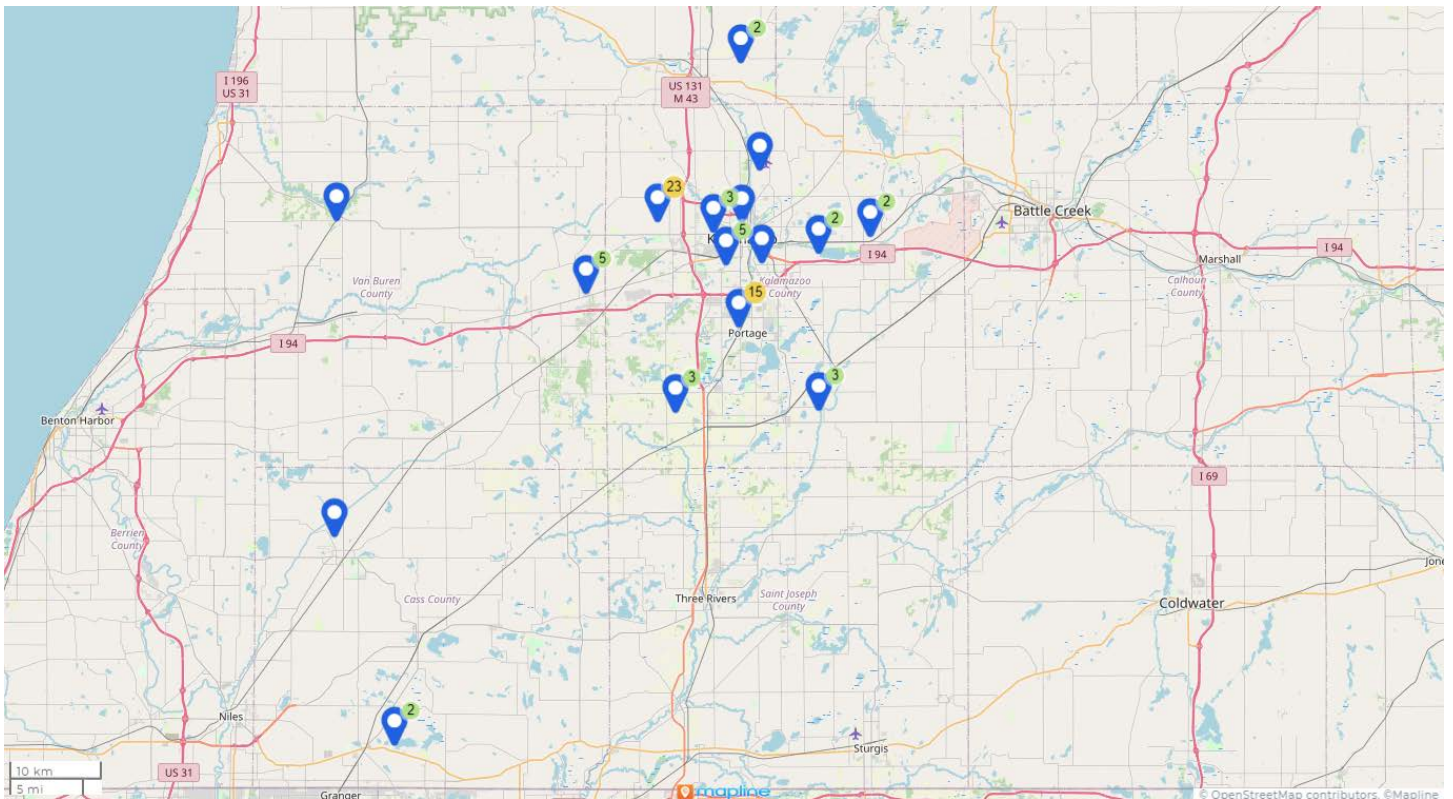


STATIONS HAD STICKY NOTES IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES AND FEATURES.

Organizational Representation



1/3 OF ATTENDEES DID NOT LIST AN ORGANIZATION. BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICAN AND VARIOUS HORSE CLUBS HAD A STRONG SHOWING, WHILE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS HAD 1-3 REPRESENTATIVES.



ATTENDEES WERE PRIMARILY FROM THE KALAMAZOO AREA WITH SEVERAL FROM OTHER COUNTIES.



INPUT SESSION BOARDS INCLUDED SITE INFORMATION AND POTENTIAL USES.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey requested attendees to rank each potential amenity as:

- » 5 (I am willing to promote),
- » 4 (I support),
- » 3 (I can live with/am indifferent),
- » 2 (I need more information to decide), or
- » 1 (Veto with strong opposition).

Many attendees ranked some but not all amenities, and some wrote in additional amenities in the "other" option.



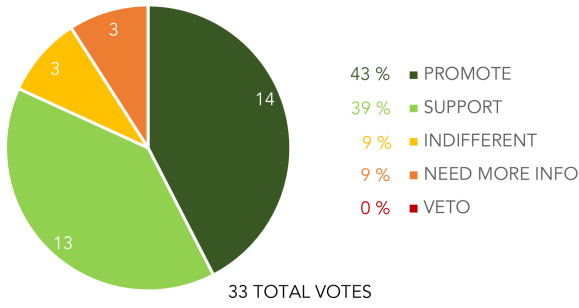
OCBA
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Please rank the following activities and/or amenities:

	5 (I am ready to promote)	4 (I support)	3 (I can live with/ am indifferent)	2 (I need more information to decide)	1 (Veto with strong opposition)
LAKE USE					
A. Swimming Beach					
B. Paddleboard, Kayak, Canoe Rentals					
C. Fishing Docks					
D. _____					
YOUTH PROGRAMMING					
A. Day Camp					
B. Overnight Cabins					
C. Nature Playschool					
D. _____					
PARK USE					
A. Traditional Playground					
B. Nature Play					
C. Walking/Hiking Trails					
D. Dog Walking					
E. Fitness Stations					
F. Mountain Biking					
G. Cross-Country Skiing					
H. Yard Games					
I. Disc Golf					
J. Open Space					
K. Picnic Shelters					
L. Banquet Spaces					
M. Amphitheater Space					
N. Camping: Tents					
O. Camping: Cabins					
P. _____					
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM					
A. Nature Center					
B. Birdwatching					
C. _____					

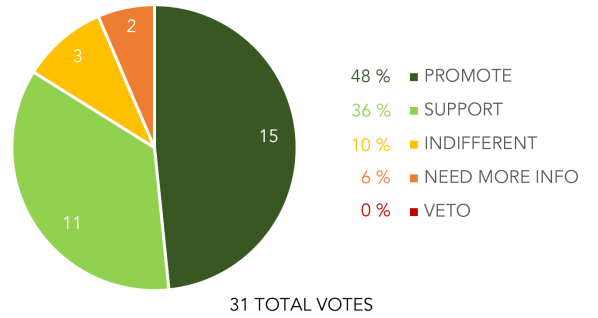
LAKE USE

Paddleboard, Kayak, Canoe Rentals

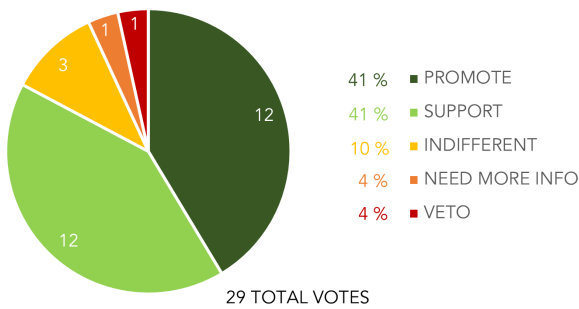


YOUTH PROGRAMMING

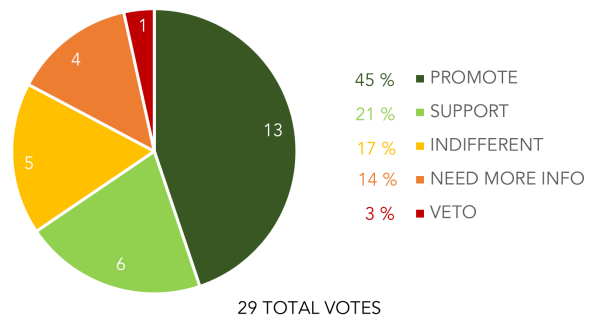
Day Camps



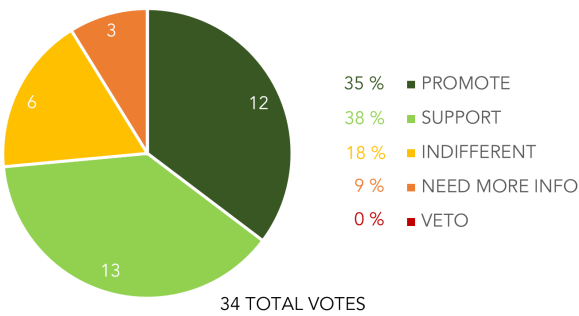
Fishing Docks



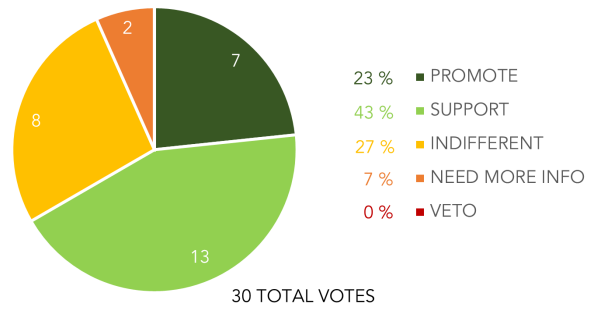
Overnight Camp



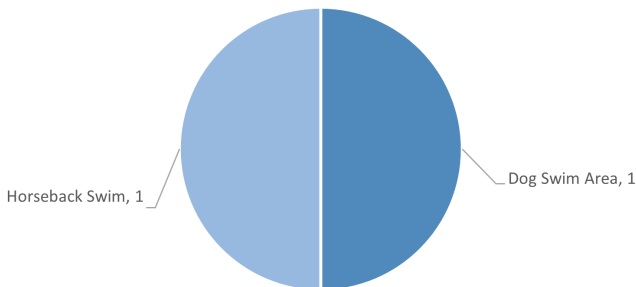
Swimming Beach



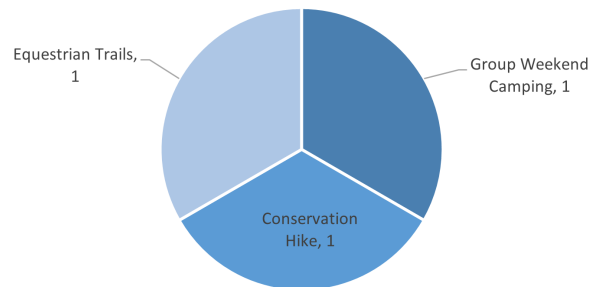
Nature Playschool



Other Lake Use Suggestions

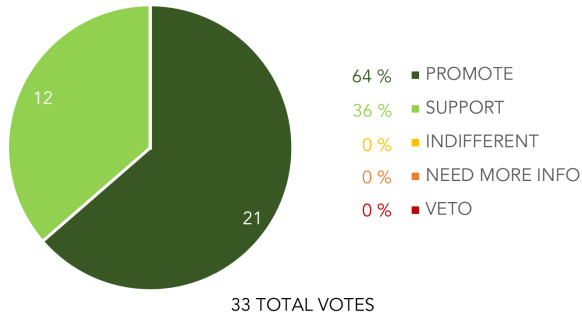


Other Youth Programming Suggestions

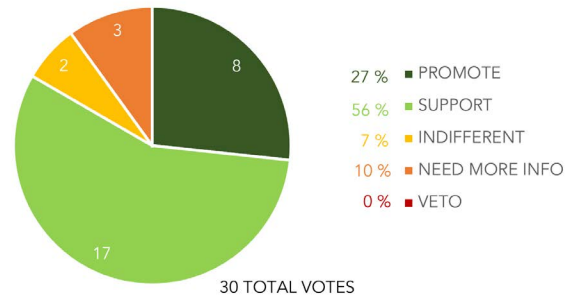


PARK USE

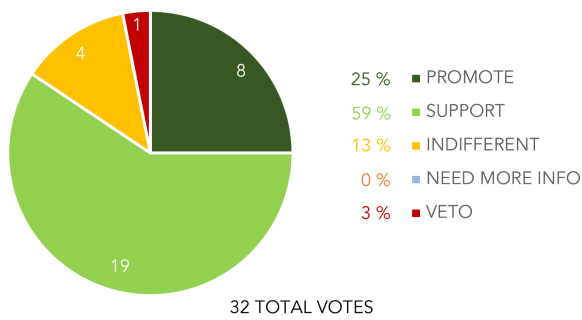
Walking/Hiking Trails



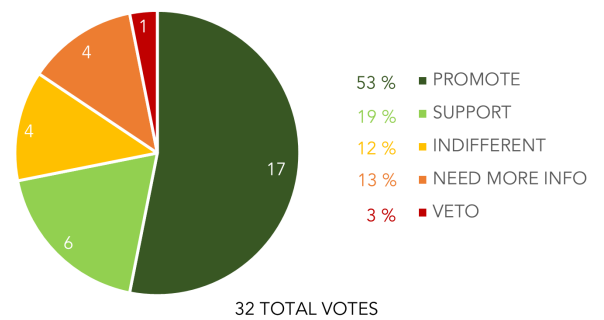
Nature Play



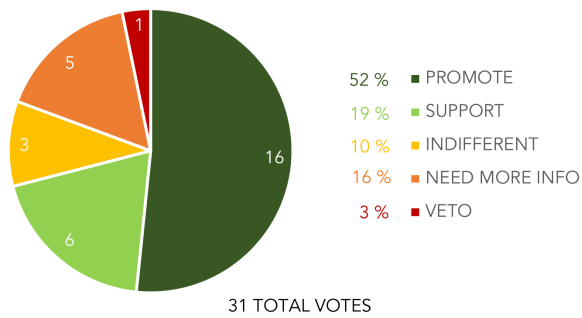
Picnic Shelters



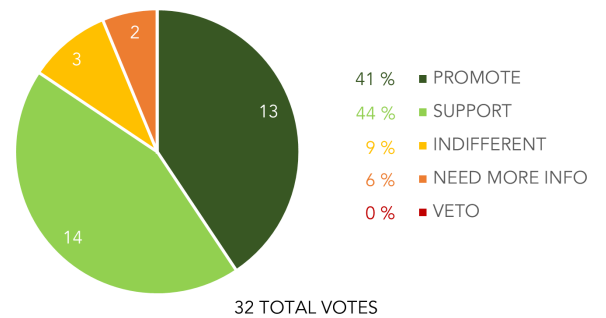
Camping - Tents



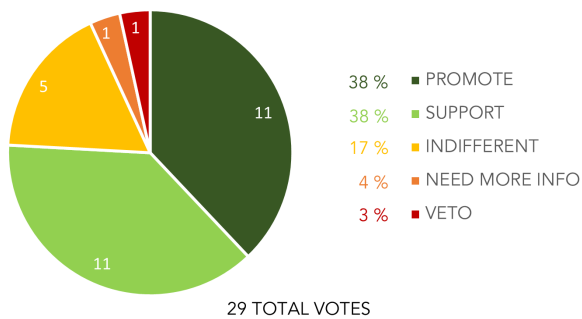
Camping - Cabins



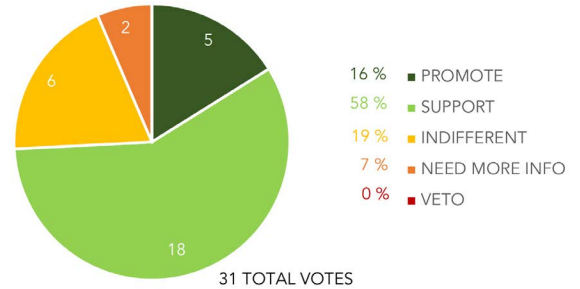
Open Space



Amphitheater Space

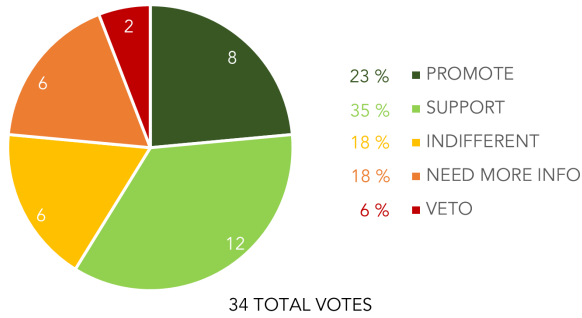


Cross-Country Skiing

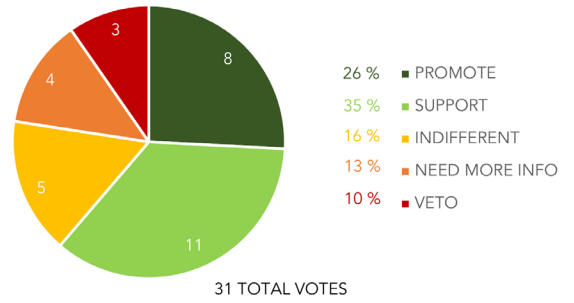


PARK USE (CONT'D)

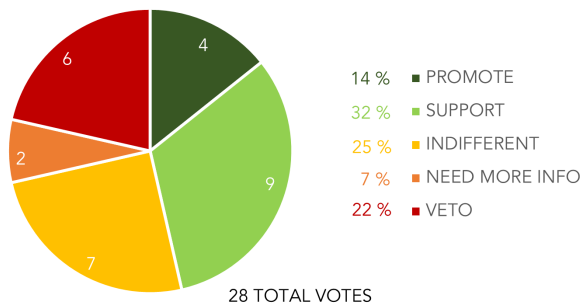
Dog Walking



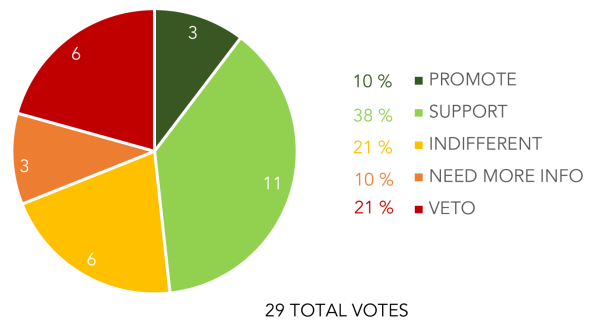
Banquet Spaces



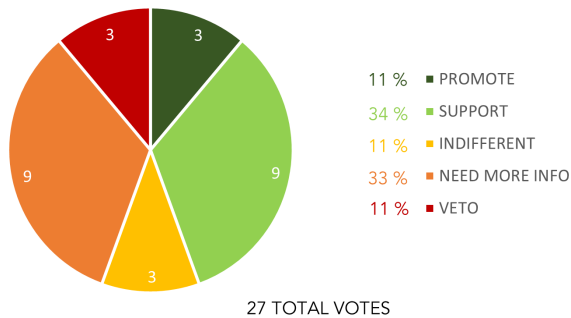
Traditional Playground



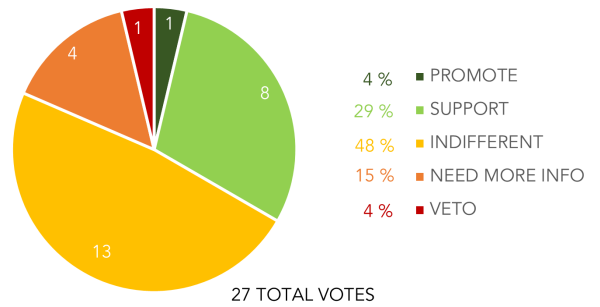
Disc Golf



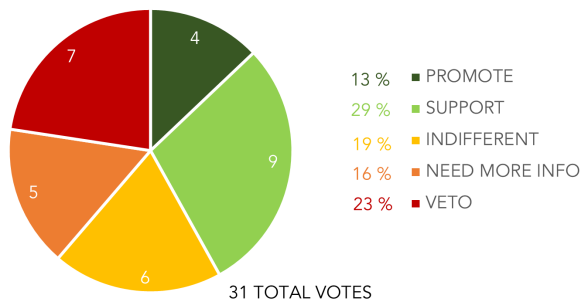
Yard Games



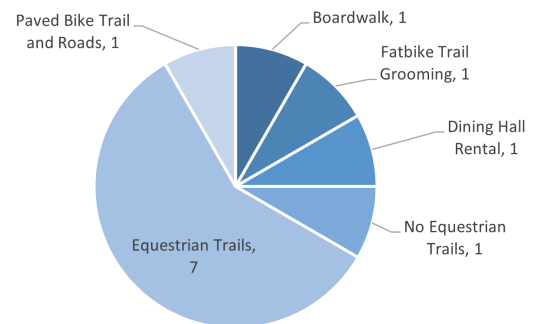
Fitness Stations



Mountain Biking

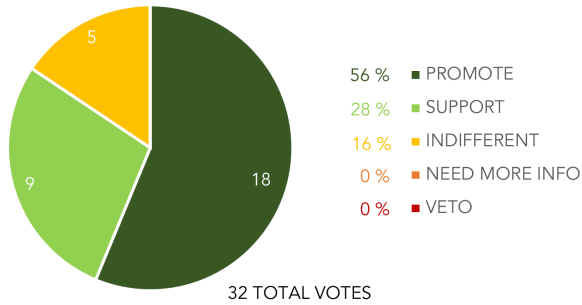


Other Park Use Suggestions

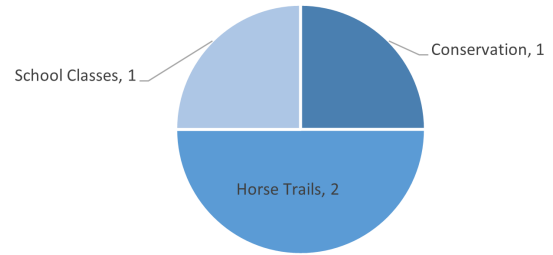


ENVIRONMENTAL

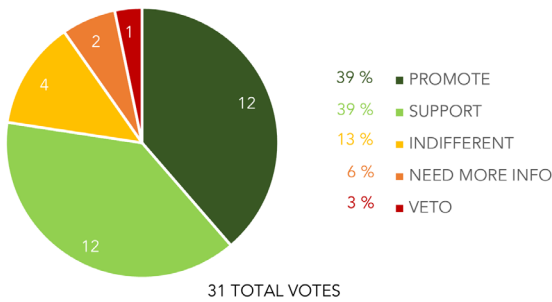
Birdwatching



Other Environmental/Conservation Suggestions



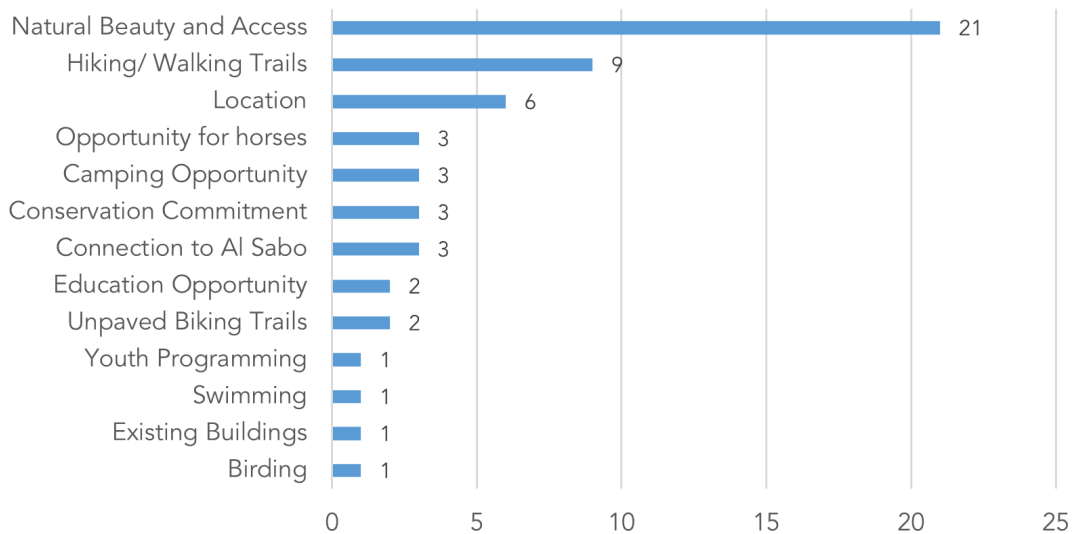
Nature Center



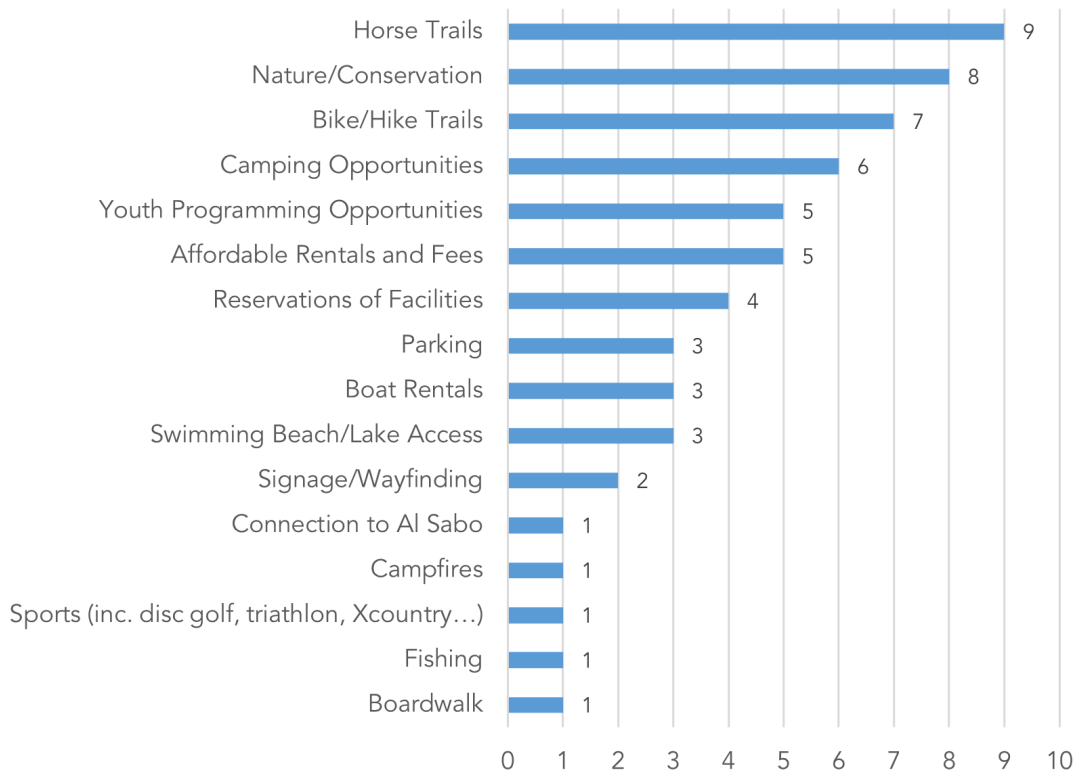
OPEN RESPONSES

Responses to the three open questions were categorized into common themes.

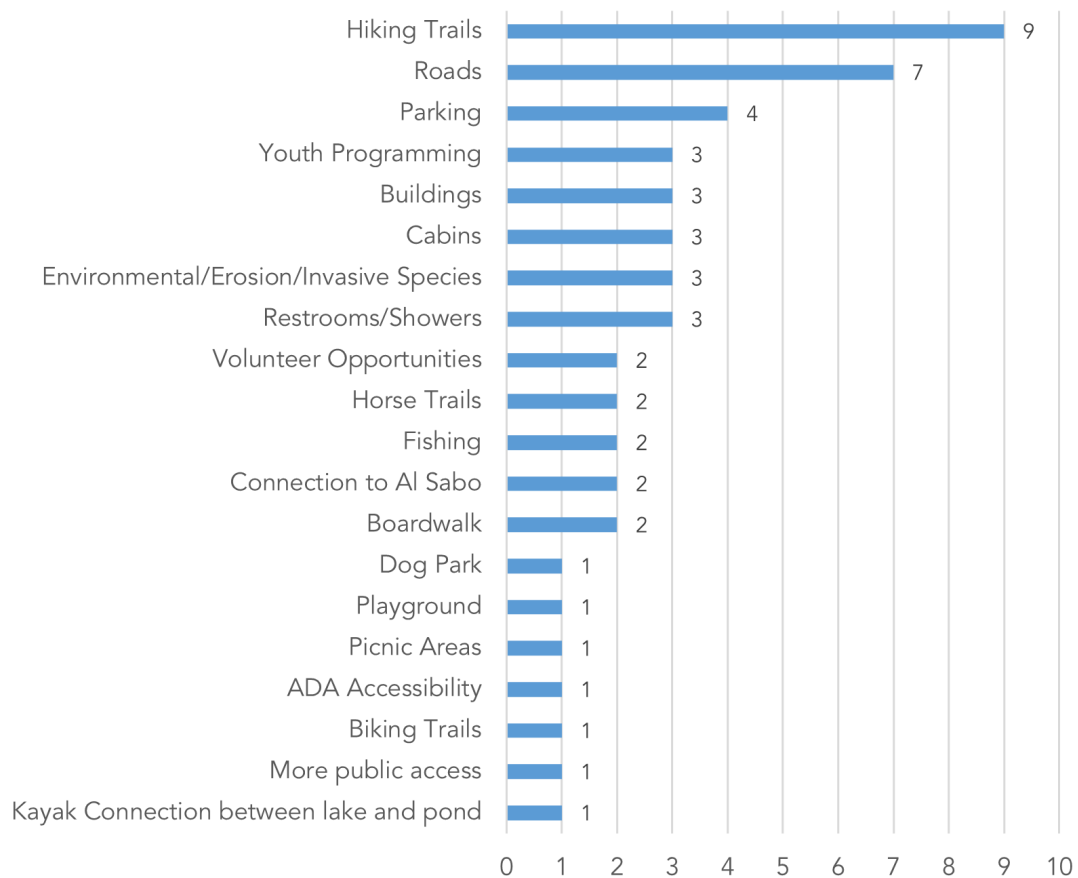
What do you like most about the site?



What do you want to see most?



What would you like improved?



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

BUILDING RE-USE SUGGESTIONS

- » Bird watching at the existing riflery range and the Rookery on Scouters Pond.
- » Welcome Center and parking at main entrance
- » Cabin rentals for family use
- » 'Freund' camping and cabin should remain.
- » Maintain lodges and camping on the Cub Scout side.

LAKE USE SUGGESTIONS

- » Accessible catch-and-release fishing dock NE of existing Boy Scout Waterfront.
- » Program locations for canoe/kayak instruction and lifeguard training
- » Swimming area: best location is at Boy Scout Waterfront, include a designated dog swim area.
- » Boardwalk for access to plant ecology viewing, could be for biology/ecology course.
- » Self-serve watercraft
- » Kayak trails through wetlands

YOUTH PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS

- » Program for youth riding/education classes
- » Canoe/kayak instruction and lifeguard training.
- » Ecology classes from KVCC, WMU, KZoo Public Schools
- » Tillers International
- » Orienteering Course
- » Scout Camping
- » YMCA Day Camp programming
- » Camping (summer and winter)
- » Bring back the Seahorse Triathlon

TRAIL SUGGESTIONS

- » Trail to KVCC
- » Connecting trail to Al Sabo
- » Mountain bike trail to Al Sabo
- » Consider bike traffic interaction with walking trails
- » Alternate direction of bike traffic daily to maintain trails.

EXISTING FEATURES

- » White pines by dining hall are from the 50s, one remaining chestnut is on the property.

PARK USE SUGGESTIONS

- » Boardwalk through wetlands
- » Sledding hill
- » Air-soft battalion course
- » 6am bird watching club
- » Volunteer invasive species removal
- » Playground or nature playscapes
- » Groomed cross country trails
- » Tent camping (public and Boy Scouts)
- » Welcome Center and Parking
- » Picnic shelter and toilets at West Entrance
- » Consider how an entry gate fee will impact Al Sabo and 'jumping the fence'
- » Keep human foosball

HORSE-RELATED SUGGESTIONS

- » Allow use/access to water for horses
- » Potentially partner with Michigan Horse Council
- » Re-use some facilities for horse shelters, trailer camping, and overnight camping with horses.
- » Equestrian staging area and trailer parking site at West entrance with trails connecting to Al Sabo.
- » Jenny Cook and others provided a list of 377 riders including Yankee Springs Trail Riders Association, Fort Custer Horse Friends Association, and Crazy Horse Trail Rides interested in increased equestrian opportunities at Woollam Preserve, accompanied by a letter of support. It is their desire to expand local opportunities in the Kalamazoo area for recreational and therapeutic riding, and asked for consideration of including equestrian riding trails, a gravel staging area for parking, a manure pit, and pump water.

ENVIRONMENTAL/CONSERVATION SUGGESTIONS

- » Boardwalk trails
- » Ecological/biology classes from KVCC
- » Plant and animal ID signage
- » Consider limiting biking trails to deter damage to the parks.
- » Consider rotating tent camping areas to preserve park nature and being overrun by overuse.
- » Wildlife viewing in the shallows.
- » Invasive bittersweet vine trail to KVCC

INPUT SUMMARY

Based on the input received from stakeholders and public comment and survey results, the following priorities have been identified:

OVERALL PRIORITIES

- » Preserve **natural beauty** of the site while **increasing access** for the public and for organizational use.
- » **Enhance trail system** with distinct distances and access to picnic shelters, scenic overlooks, and environmental features.

MOST SUPPORT + PROMOTION

- » Hiking/Walking Trails with boardwalk
- » Picnic shelters and open space
- » Birdwatching
- » Kayak/paddleboard/canoe rentals
- » Catch-and-release fishing
- » Facilities that support day camp opportunities (prep kitchen, passive recreation, severe weather shelter)
- » Nature play
- » Connection to Al Sabo and surrounding bike routes

SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT

- » Camping: tents
- » Camping: cabins, Fort complex are the preferred cabins to remain
- » Equestrian trails and facilities
- » Cross-country skiing

INDIFFERENCE

- » Swimming beach
- » Programming: overnight camp
- » Programming: nature playschool
- » Fitness stations
- » Amphitheater
- » Nature center

MOST OPPOSITION

- » Traditional playground
- » Disc golf
- » Mountain biking
- » Yard games
- » Horse trails
- » Banquet spaces
- » Dog walking

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

The existing facilities include several shelters, lodges, restrooms, and storage buildings of varying condition and architectural styles. Through discussions and site reconnaissance, the following buildings were determined to be demolished or protected.

Structures whose renovations were not deemed financially viable or with no County benefit/purpose were identified to be removed. Structures that could be renovated to meet code and offer new functions were identified to remain.



EX. RIFLERY RANGE



FLAGPOLE AND PARKING AREA



SCOUTERS POND NORTH OVERLOOK



MADRON DINING HALL

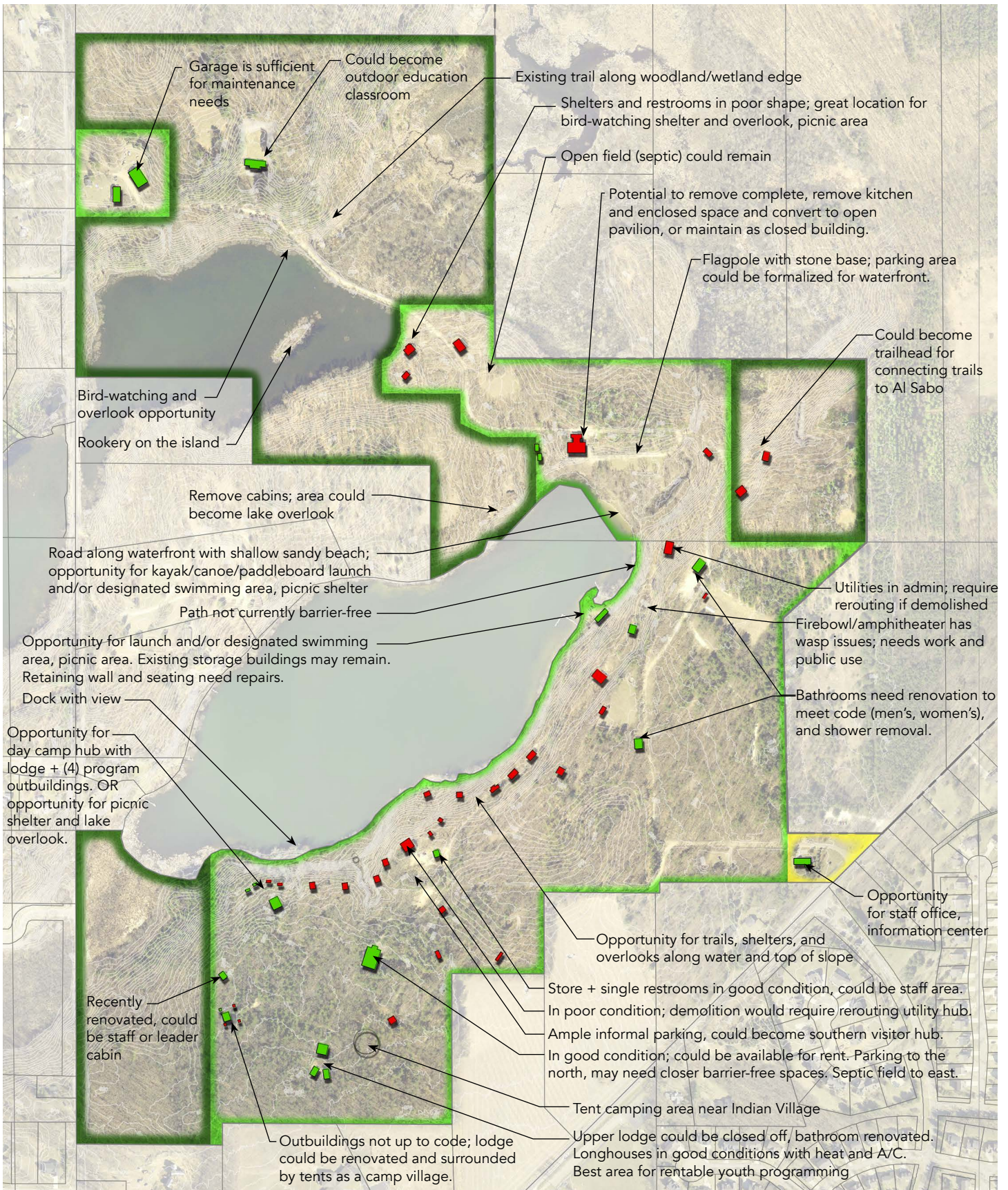


FREUND CABIN



FORT LODGE AND OUTBUILDING

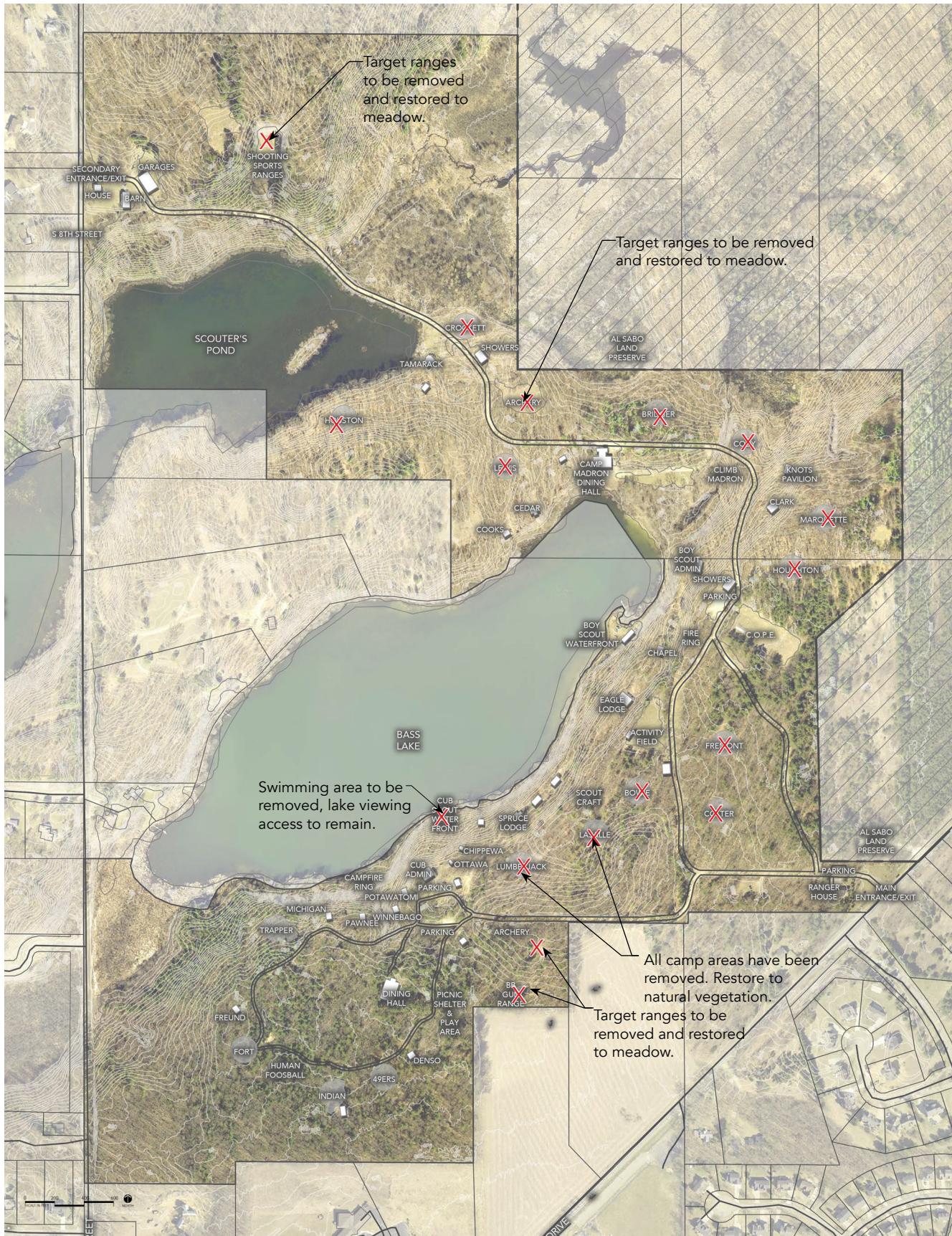
INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS MAP







- STRUCTURES TO REMAIN
- STRUCTURES TO BE REMOVED
- STRUCTURES TO BE DETERMINED

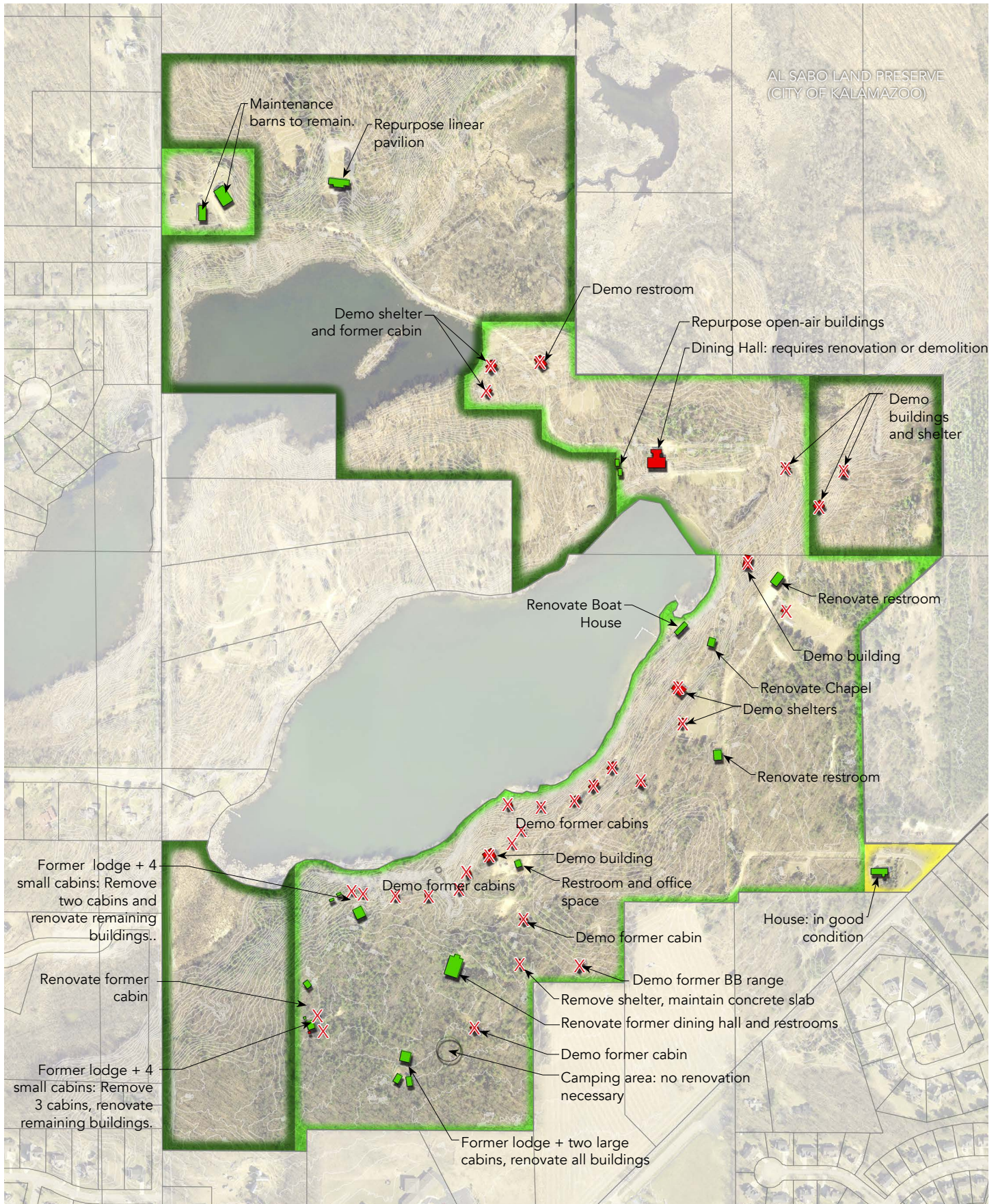
DEMOLITION PLANS

SITE DEMOLITION



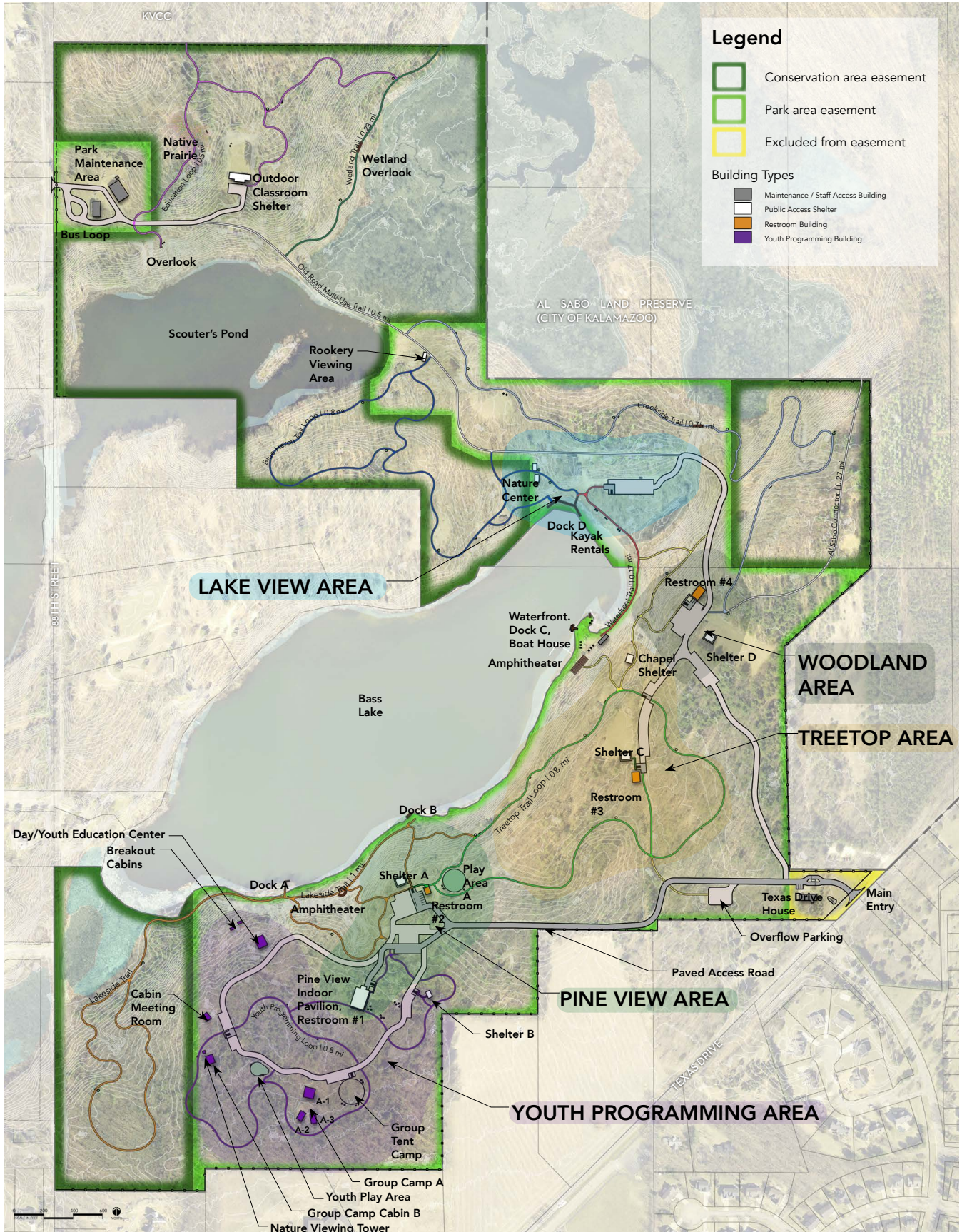
-  EXISTING BUILDING
-  EXISTING CAMP AREA
-  EXISTING ROAD
-  DEMOLITION AREA

BUILDING DEMOLITION



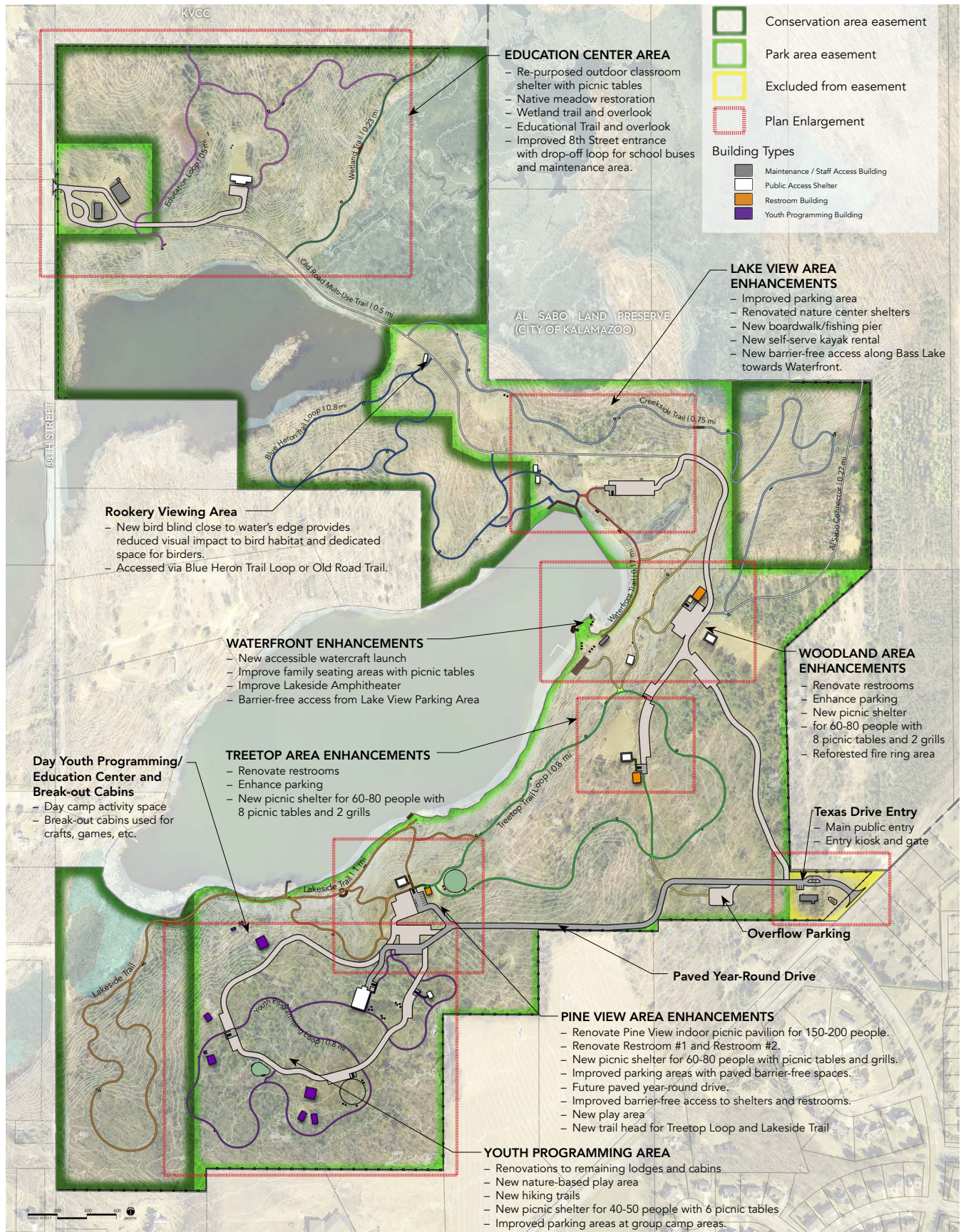
- STRUCTURES TO REMAIN
- STRUCTURES TO BE REMOVED

PARK MAP

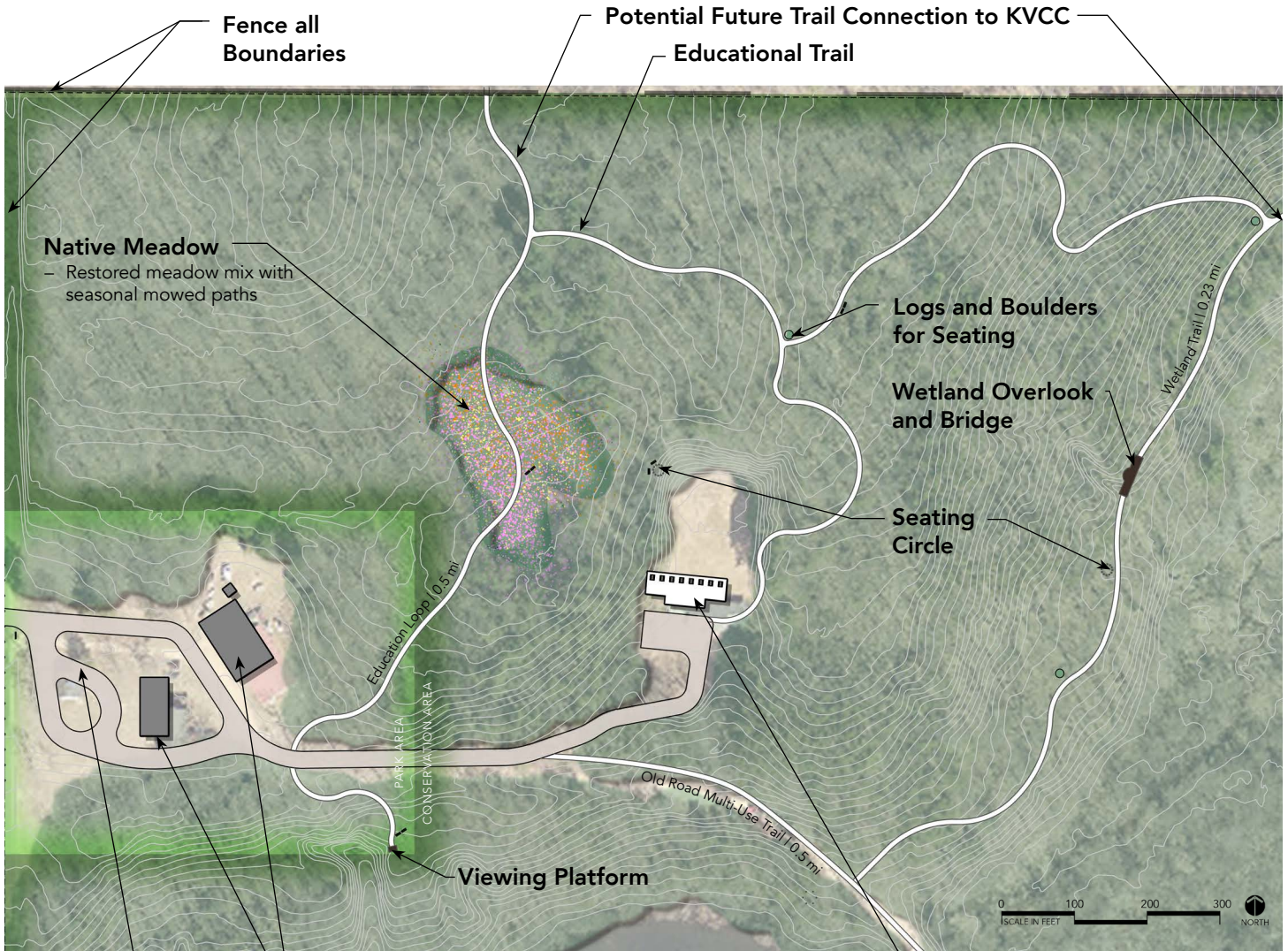


THE FINAL MASTER PLAN INCLUDES 4 FISHING DOCKS, OVER 6 MILES OF TRAILS, 5 PICNIC SHELTERS, 3 RESTROOMS, SEVERAL PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES, AND AMPLE PARKING.

OVERALL MASTER PLAN



OUTDOOR EDUCATION AREA ENHANCEMENTS



Existing Maintenance Buildings

8th Street Entrance

- Entrance for maintenance and school groups only
- Maintenance barn
- Bus turnaround loop

Outdoor Education Shelter

- Re-purpose outdoor classroom pavilion with informal parking
- Flexible open space for learning and activities
- Screened port-a-john



Overlook Bridge



Stump Seating Circle

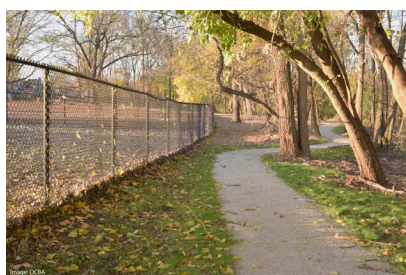
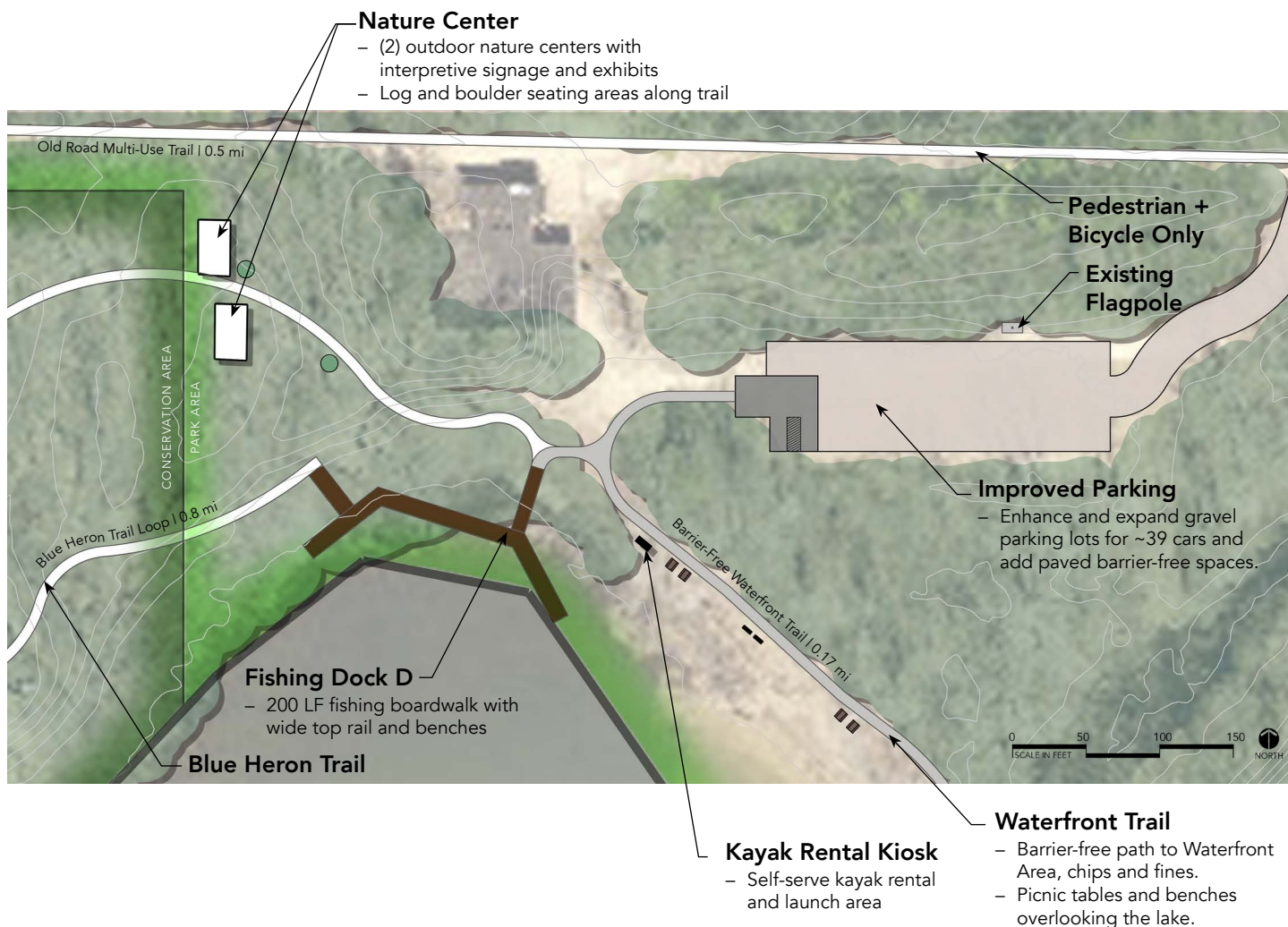


Trails for Cross-country and Snowshoeing



Birdwatching Opportunities

LAKE VIEW AREA ENHANCEMENTS



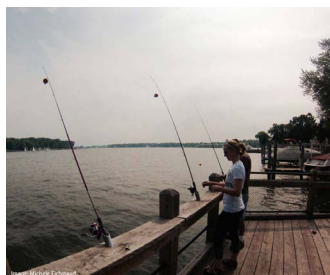
Chips & Fines Waterfront Trail



Hammock Tree



Natural Split-Log Benches along Trails



Fishing Dock Boardwalk



Fishing Dock Boardwalk

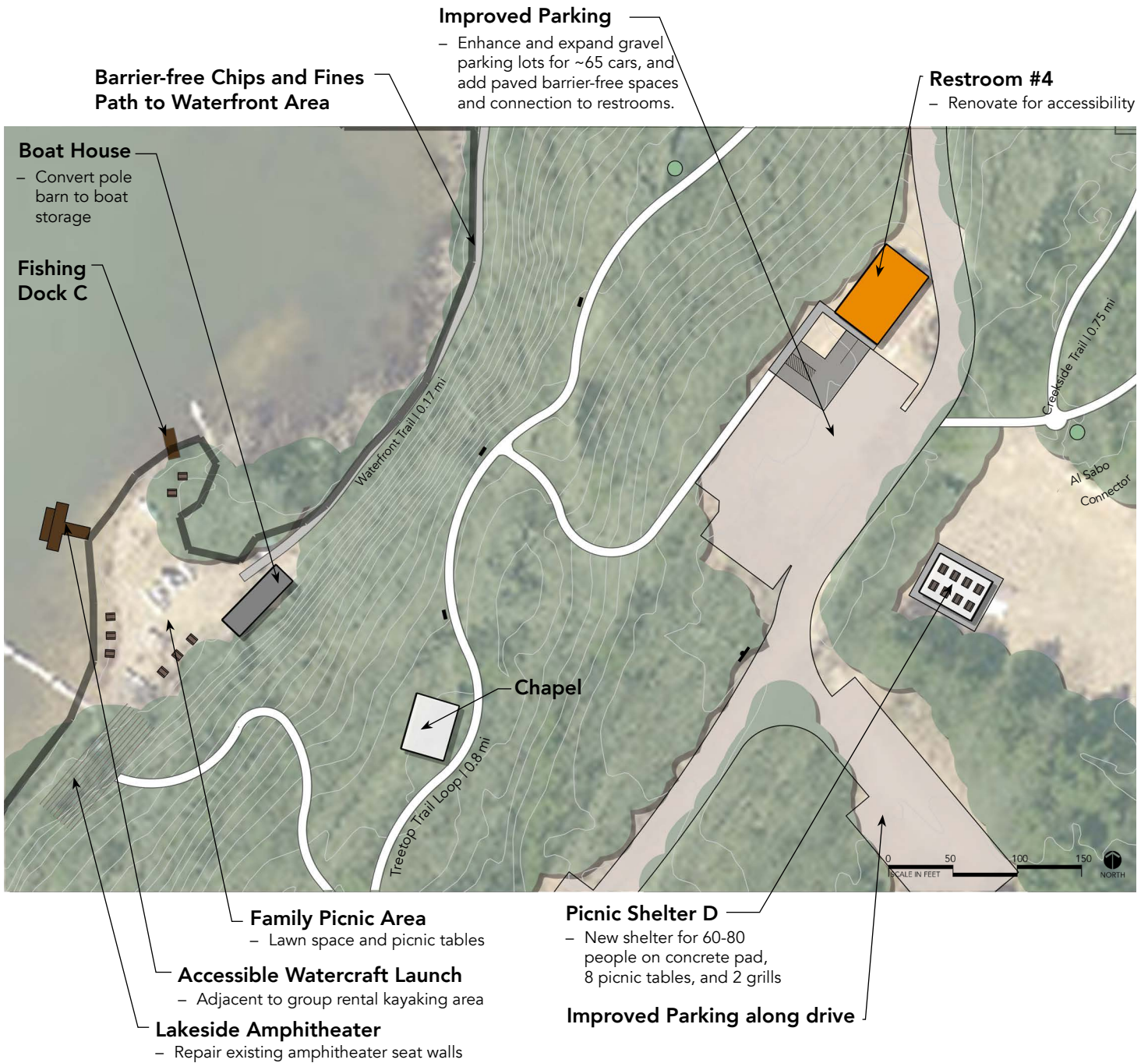


Nature Shelter



Nature Shelter

WOODLAND AREA AND WATERFRONT ENHANCEMENTS



Accessible Kayak Launch



Self-Serve Kayak Rental



Fishing Dock



Accessible Kayak Launch

TEXAS DRIVE ENTRY AREA ENHANCEMENTS



TREETOP AREA ENHANCEMENTS



Staffed Entrance Kiosk

Improved Parking

- Enhance and expand gravel parking lots for ~32 cars, including paved barrier-free spaces

Picnic Shelter C

- New shelter for 60-80 people on concrete pad with 8 picnic tables and 2 grills

Restroom #3

- Renovate for accessibility

PINE VIEW AREA ENHANCEMENTS

Picnic Shelter A

- New shelter for 60-80 people on concrete pad, with 8 picnic tables and 2 grills.
- Relocate utilities into new shed

Central Play Area

- 2-5 and 5-12 year old playground with nature theme and neutral colors.
- Picnic tables, benches, and stump circles



Small Amphitheater

- Informal gathering space along Lakeside Trail

Restroom #1

- Single restrooms and rentable classroom space.

Paved Winter Access Road

- Asphalt drive to barrier-free spaces

Improved Parking

- Enhance and expand gravel parking lots for ~77 cars.
- Paved barrier-free spaces near both shelters and restrooms.

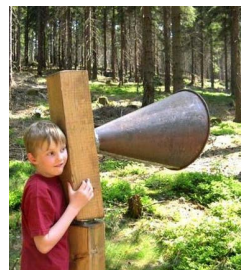
Youth Programming Loop Drive



Log Bike Stand



Fireplace for Indoor Pavilion



Trail Stations



Trail head with Maps and Information

YOUTH PROGRAMMING AREA ENHANCEMENTS

Day Youth Programming/ Education Center and Break-out Cabins

- Day camp activity space
- Break-out cabins used for crafts, games, etc.

Cabin Meeting Room

- Building for park staff/leadership to organize youth programming activities

Year-Round Paved Access

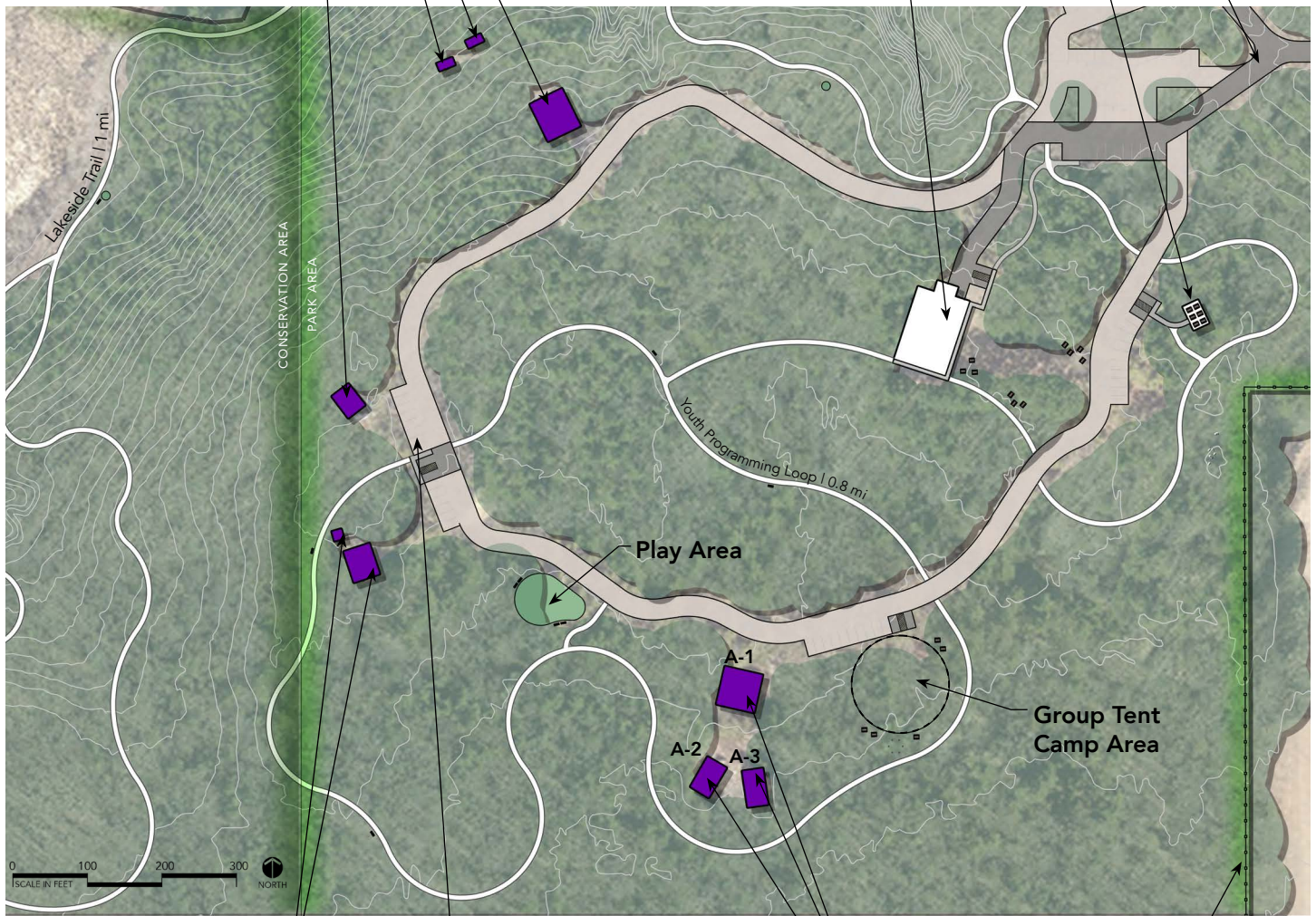
- Paved access road to Pine View parking area and Pine View Pavilion.

Picnic Shelter B

- New shelter for 40-50 people on existing concrete pad with 8 picnic tables

Pine View Indoor Picnic Pavilion

- Renovated structure for 150-200 people.
- Renovate restroom #2
- Outdoor picnic area in open field.



Overnight Group Camp Cabin B and Nature Viewing Tower

- Renovate Cabin B
- Nature viewing tower provides view of wooded area to the west

Additional Parking

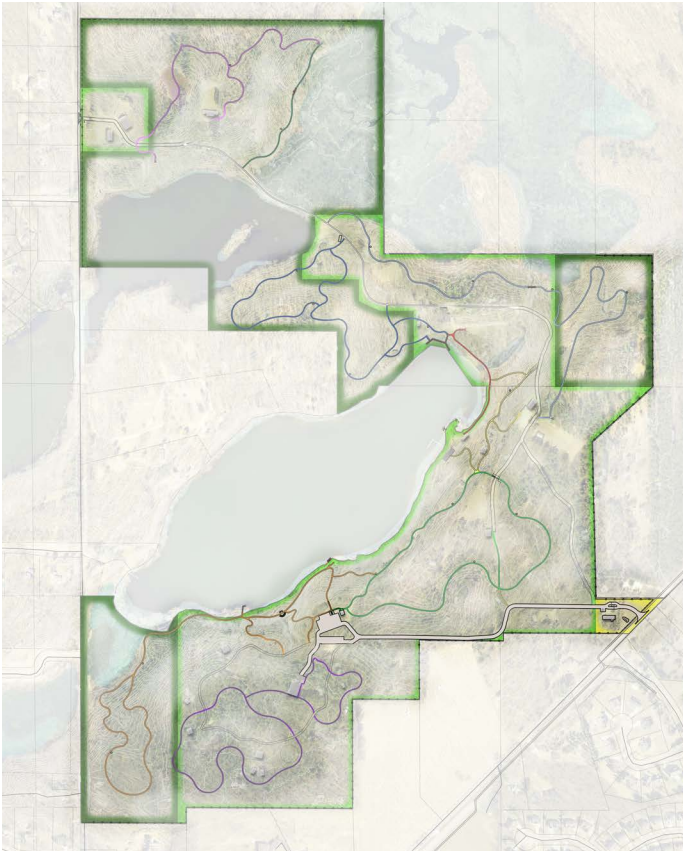
- Enhance and expand gravel parking lots throughout youth area for ~42 cars in three areas, with paved barrier-free spaces at each.

6' Galvanized Chain Link Fence

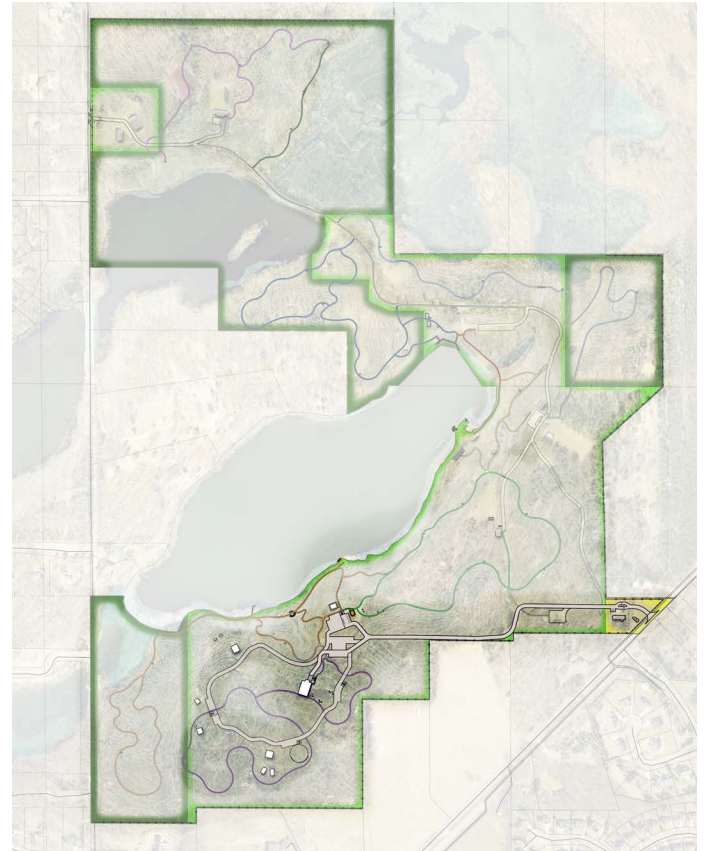
Overnight Group Camp Cabins A-1, A-2, and A-3

- Renovate all cabins.

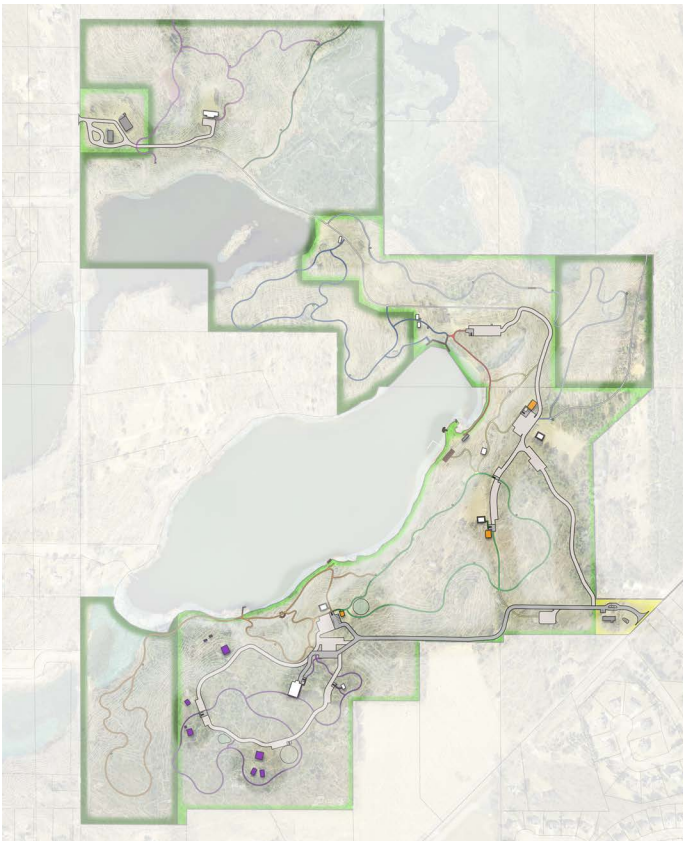
PHASING PLAN



**PHASE 1A: COMPLETE FOR PUBLIC OPENING
FALL 2023**



**PHASE 1B: NEW AMENITIES IN PINE VIEW AREA
SUMMER 2024**



PHASE 2: FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

PHASING TIMELINE

- SUMMER 2023**
FINAL MASTER PLAN DELIVERED TO
KALAMAZOO COUNTY PARKS
- FALL 2023**
PHASE 1A COMPLETE
WOOLLAM PRESERVE OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

 - Improvements including:
 - Fencing and gates
 - Demolition of buildings and former camp areas
 - Enhance main entry (texas drive)
 - Parking
 - Hiking Trails
- SUMMER 2024**
PHASE 1B COMPLETE

 - Additional amenities including:
 - Pine View area enhancements
 - Barrier-free parking areas
 - Renovations to Restrooms #1 and #2
 - Picnic Shelter A
 - Renovations to Pine View Indoor Pavilion
 - Improvements to Youth Programming Area
- 2025 AND BEYOND**
FUTURE PHASES

 - ADDITIONAL AMENITIES AND RENOVATIONS INCLUDING:
 - New picnic shelters, trail and trail head improvements, restroom renovations, youth cabin renovations, road paving, parking lot expansions, amphitheater improvements, and playground.