

# FPDCC CAMP MASTER

JANUARY 2013









“Come to the **woods**, for here is rest.  
There is no **repose** like  
that of the **green** deep woods.  
Sleep in forgetfulness of all ill.”  
— John Muir







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## FORWARD

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (District) was formed in 1914. Created by an act of the Illinois State Legislature, the District was the first county-wide unit of government dedicated to land conservation in Illinois and one of the first in urban America.

The District was created in anticipation of a population growth and a wave of urban development that would sprawl far beyond the city limits of Chicago and into the open prairies, forests, wetlands and farm fields. The District was created to preserve the natural character and sense of place, where city and suburbs could exist among vast expanses of open land following the natural mosaic of rivers, streams, prairies, marshes and woodlands that traverse Cook County.

From its inception, the mission of the District has been to acquire and maintain lands in the natural state with the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauties for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public.

## CONTEXT

Today, the District encompasses more than 68,000 acres, which is approximately 11 percent of Cook County's land mass. Cook County has a diverse population of 5.2 million and includes the City of Chicago. The District lands provide a tapestry of biodiverse ecological communities and a tremendous diversity of educational and recreational opportunities. Each year more than 40 million people use District lands and facilities to enjoy or study nature, bicycle, hike, canoe, fish, cross-country ski, picnic, golf, or simply relax in an area that leaves urban life behind. Facilities include picnic shelters, golf courses, driving ranges, swimming pools, boat houses, equestrian stables, nature centers and campgrounds.

## PURPOSE

As the District looks back on its first hundred years, it seeks to reestablish its role as a leader and innovator in the fields of conservation education and outdoor recreation. The district hopes to create a camping program that capitalizes upon the rich heritage of District lands and celebrates the cultural and natural landmarks within its holdings.

Camping has long been an offering in the District portfolio. Several of these sites were originally encampments or overnight facilities for a variety of original sources. The 2013 Camping Master Plan

looks to rebuild the program into a system-wide offering of the District. The plan outlines a strategy of offerings to serve youth, families, groups, and individuals of all ages, interests, and backgrounds. Further, the plan looks to respect the previous camping legacy on hallmark sites while broadening an array of new overnight offerings that work together as a series of related while diverse camping experiences.

## CAMPING IN THE FOREST PRESERVE

Camping has long been a treasured experience on District lands. For many years, organized youth groups (including the Boy Scouts and others) have gathered at Camps Sullivan and Falcon in the southern part of the county. To the north, Camp Dan Beard (named for one of the primary founders of scouting) has long been a destination of scouts. Little House of Glencoe has also offered overnight programs for various groups.

The District currently owns and operates four overnight camps that are rented out to organized youth groups. In addition to these camps, there are three overnight camps that are operated on District property by other organizations. Day camps are allowed on District property and there is one equestrian stables on District property that also runs day camps. The majority of these camps existed on properties before the District acquired the land and the District merely continued to make available the facilities that were at each site.

Other District properties began as encampments for workers (such as the island at the Skokie Lagoons which served Civilian Conservation Corps laborers building the lagoon system on the Chicago River as a flood control project). Others originally functioned as CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camps and later as P.O.W. camps (Camp Pine Woods on the Des Plaines River). Numerous other sites in the District portfolio have ties to camping over the years – from organized group sites to individual tent camping areas as well as day camping.

Many of these properties, however, have fallen into disrepair over the years or have otherwise struggled to maintain their relevance as outdoor trends and expectations have evolved. Budget limitations and rising costs have hurt the District's ability to maintain historic structures.

While the existing camps have provided a strong framework for previous campers, the District desires to analyze the effectiveness of the existing camps



and camp programs. The District also desires to investigate if there is a need for additional camping experiences and programs to engage broader populations (including families, retreat or reunion groups, day camps and special needs populations) and if so, what forms those opportunities might take.

Camping forges a unique connection with nature like none other. Watching the sun set, spotting wildlife from the cabin porch, sleeping under the stars, waking to the sounds of morning birds, sharing a meal cooked over an open fire - these are only some of the meaningful experiences that can make lasting memories. Such encounters with nature broaden our awareness of the environment and our role within it.

The overnight experience is a natural extension to the diverse array of programs already offered within District lands. A positive experience in the outdoors fosters an interest in nature and encourages a return visit for further exploration, relaxation, recreation, and enjoyment.

Within the context of current District offerings, camping extends the visitor's duration and allows a further depth of the experience for visitors. It will also attract new visitors to the preserves, encouraging them to come back to explore other sites within the system and enjoy this most unique County resource.

In June 2012, the District issued roughly \$110 million in General Obligation Bonds for the purpose of funding land acquisition and capital improvement projects. The District is proposing to bundle \$63 million in capital improvement projects in three capital programs (Buildings, Landscape & Civil Engineering and Campgrounds). All capital projects that are funded through these bonds must be designed and built by June 2015.

This Master Plan provides a conceptual framework for capital investment in the District's campgrounds with its immediate capital funding and future funding that may be identified in the next ten years.



Camp Reinberg



Camp Reinberg



Program Shelter



## PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

In October 2011, the District engaged the services of a team of consultants with national camp facility planning experience (led by Texas - based Studio Outside) to assist in developing this master plan. The planning team assessed existing camps, new camp site opportunities and sought input from the public and other potential camping partners through an extensive public engagement process. The process involved an online survey, public meetings, and a series of focus groups with representatives from youth organizations, congregations, research agencies, schools, non-government organizations, recreation groups and other governmental agencies. The consultant team also conducted market research that considered demographic trends, outdoor recreation and nature based recreation trends and information on other camp and cabin facilities within a day's driving distance of Cook County.

## ASSESSMENTS

The enormity of the data required a system by which to organize various determinants into a meaningful array of criteria for program, facility, and site evaluation. The planning team utilized the following "Three P" approach as a framework to understand the system. Various criteria were organized under the following headings in an effort to systematically understand the District land holdings as they would relate to potential camping programs:

**Purpose:** Why do visitors go to a particular site? This might include specific program or facility offerings that are available for a particular event or experience. Examples may include an equestrian trail, a canoe launch, or a picnic grove.

**Proximity:** The collection of determinants related to the context of a particular site. These criteria may include ease of accessibility or connections to public transit. Regional connections to other recreational or natural systems are also included here. Examples include a site that is easily accessible to another significant destination in the system (nature center near by) or its own geographic location within the county (inner city vs. west or south). This is important when considering how to leverage existing facilities to enhance the experience of new sites.

**Place:** The collection of attributes that distinguish one particular property from all others – i.e. the most unique elements of experience that perhaps are

available nowhere else. Examples would include a signature lake, a historically significant architectural structure, or a culturally meaningful destination (ex. Chicago Portage Site).

This approach should not be mistaken as a simple "a+b=c" formula process of "ranking" possible camp sites. Rather, it is a systematic means to evaluating potential properties in a consistent context of overarching determinants. Other extraneous factors do come into play, and some "trump" criteria weigh heavier in the consideration process than others.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

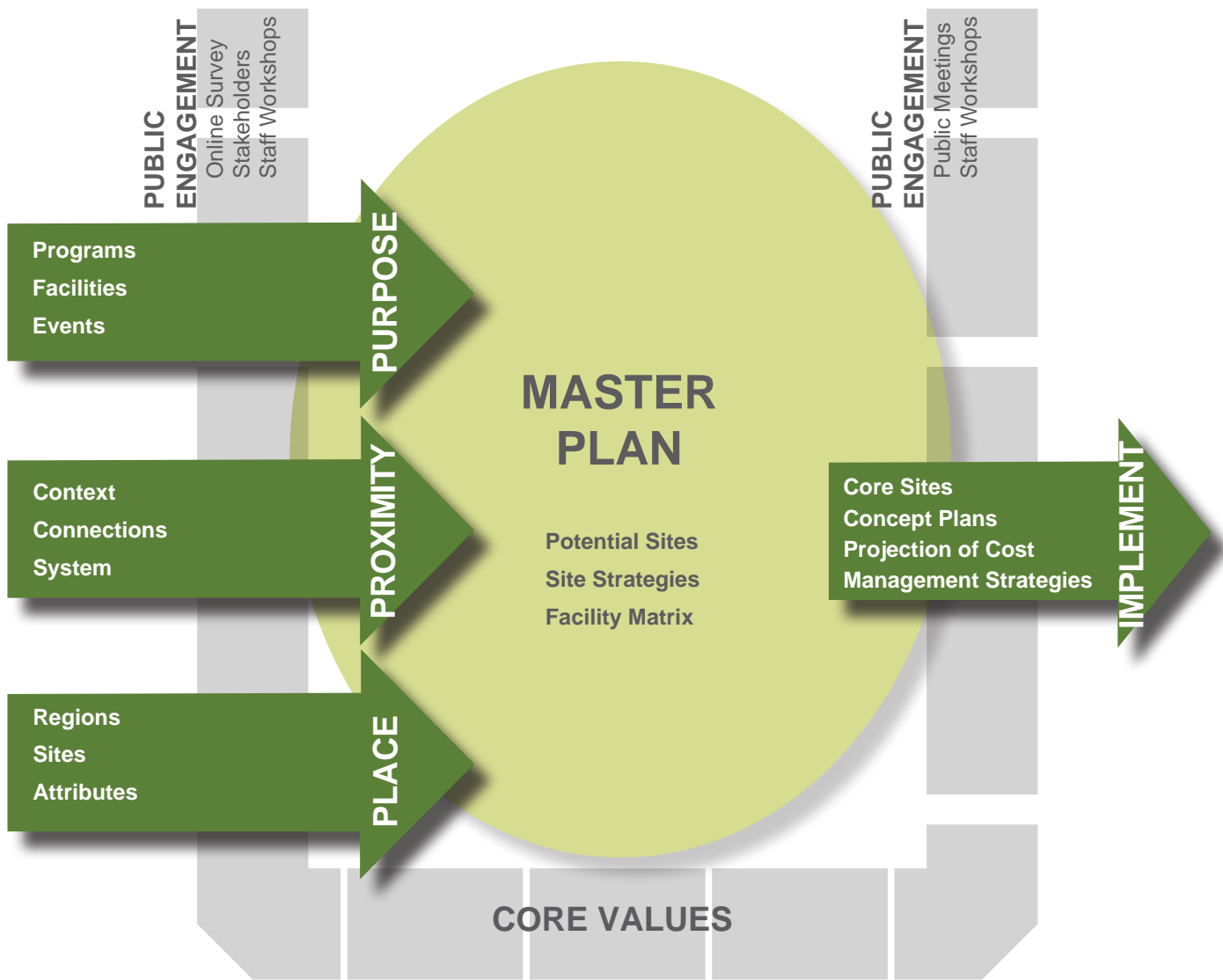
Parallel with property evaluations, the planning team worked with District staff to develop a public engagement process that would gather commentary regarding camping opportunities in the District. Important components of this outreach program included an Online Survey for the general public, Stakeholder Sessions with particular user groups, and a series of presentations to the general public.

## STAFF COLLABORATION

The planning team hosted a series of workshops with District staff to better comprehend District operations, programs, goals, and other attributes of the system that would affect a more robust offering of camp options. These were critical to project success, and resulted in a great understanding of the many diverse sites in the District system. Sites were discussed from different points of view, and camping typologies were considered to advance the array of District offerings.



Three P's Diagram



Process Flow Chart

## CORE VALUES

At the intersection of Staff Collaboration and Public Engagement lies an array of Core Values that serve as the guiding principles for subsequent steps. (A following section of this report elaborates more on these points.)

## PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

The staff collaboration process provided for a tremendous dialogue regarding program and facility offerings. Coupled with the public engagement input, the planning team prepared a list of programs and the facilities that are needed to serve them. The team further related these offerings to different user groups, emphasizing flexibility within the system and how particular elements may be leveraged to accomplish multiple initiatives and serve different groups.

## SITE SELECTION

Armed with this organizational framework for evaluating properties, and paired with the information gathered through the public input process and in the staff workshops, the planning team evaluated various

properties and their ability to host programs and facilities through the lens of the Core Values. This resulted in a working list of potential sites, which was then pared down through a series of workshop discussions centered on the “Three P” framework.

## MASTER PLAN

The planning team organized the camping experience into a series of five distinguishable districts within the county holdings. A framework of sites was defined within each district, and further review evaluated program relationships to each other and within each site’s limitations. Ultimately, a final list of sites and associated programs for each were identified.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The planning team further developed preliminary site plans for key properties. Cost projections and a proforma of operations costs sought to ensure a financially viable scenario for either District staff or a concessionaire to manage. A phasing strategy defines a 2013 Vision as well as future opportunities.







# GOALS



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In order to establish principal objectives for the project, the planning team implemented a community outreach program and also conducted a series of discovery workshops with District staff. The intent of this effort was to gauge public interests and perceptions surrounding the idea of camping in District lands. Three primary tools were utilized to attain public input at different stages of the project:

- Stakeholder Sessions
- Online Survey
- Public Presentations

**Stakeholder Sessions:** In order to instill a foundation of common understanding and investment in the project vision from the start, the team conducted a series of Stakeholder Sessions with some of the most active groups in the District programs. These were organized over a three day period in February 2012 and were distributed around several convenient

locations throughout Cook County. While additional summary information from these discussions appears in the appendix, these meetings gave the following primary direction to the planning team:

- Stakeholders were unaware of some of the diverse offerings in the existing District system.
- Security and Safety are paramount concerns
- Clean restrooms are essential
- Desire for clear stewardship expectations
- Strong desire from Scouting community for more camping opportunities
- Strong potential and desire for joint programs with nature centers
- Strong support from local school teachers
- Support for a bold marketing campaign to “sell” District offerings

Each of the fourteen stakeholder sessions marked up a map regarding their interests, and filled out a questionnaire. These are available in the appendix.



**GROUP 1**

Governmental Agencies/Non Forest Preserves  
National Youth Organizations  
Outreach Organizations/Congregations

**GROUP 2**

Research Agencies

**GROUP 3**

Non Governmental Organizations

**GROUP 4**

Local Youth Organizations  
Outreach Organizations/Congregations

**GROUP 5**

Non Governmental Organizations

**GROUP 6**

Individual Youth Groups/Campers

**GROUP 7**

Research Agencies

**GROUP 8**

Research Agencies

**GROUP 9**

Non Governmental Organizations

**GROUP 10**

Local Youth Organizations  
Outreach Organizations/Congregations

**GROUP 11**

Schools

**GROUP 12**

Recreation Groups

**GROUP 13**

Individual Youth Groups/Campers

**GROUP 14**

District Staff



Stakeholder Sessions





**Online Survey:** To reach a greater audience, an online survey was developed to seek input from across the county. The survey was advertised online, via radio, television news, in newspapers, and via social media. Over 1,200 individual responses revealed a great interest in various camping opportunities. While the complete responses are available in the appendix, key findings included:

- 90% interest in overnight camping
- Almost 70% interest in tent camping
- Strong interest in trails and recreation



Online Survey Advertisement Flyer

### 13. 10. Would you consider overnight camping in the FPDCC?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		90.6%	1,055
No		9.4%	110
answered question			1,165
skipped question			83

Online Survey Result Excerpt

### 15. 10b. What accommodations most interest you? (pick one)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Tent Campsite		68.9%	708
Family Cabin		10.7%	110
Group Cabin/Lodge		5.0%	51
Retreat/Conference Center		1.8%	19
RV campsite		13.6%	140

Online Survey Result Excerpt

**Public Presentations:** During the master planning phase of the project, the team hosted a series of evening and daytime public presentations that chronicled the planning process and described how previous public input had been incorporated into the final vision. One of these meetings was hosted online. Commentary at these public presentations was very positive.

Through the course of this process there was a keen interest from user groups and the general public to either rehabilitate specific lost camp sites for a new generation of users or build new ones on different properties.

**Staff Discovery Sessions:** Coupled with the public input process were a series of staff Discovery Workshops that provided a forum for discussion and “download” to the planning team of District mission, operations, goals, objectives, interests, and concerns regarding a camping program. Various means of facilitation were utilized. A “note card session” solicited a freeform posting of thoughts, suggestions, and concerns regarding camp development. These were organized under an array of broad headings and then discussed as a group.

A second segment of the workshop utilized a “sliding scale” exercise whereby participants recorded answers in a graphic format by placing dots on a bar scale depicting their “Degree of Agreement” (or disagreement) to particular statements. These immediately depicted the level of consensus among participants, and further discussion was held to vet the topics where there were differing opinions.

These two discussions, paired with the public input from the stakeholder sessions and online survey, were the foundation for the “Core Values” that would be a consistent filter in subsequent decision making processes of the master planning to follow. A full summary of the card session is available in the digital appendix.

**Ongoing Staff Collaboration:** Beginning with the Discovery Sessions described above, District in-house ecologists, wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists, security personnel, educators, and operations staff provided feedback and constructive commentary at each step of the planning process.



Staff Discovery Sessions



Staff Discovery Sessions





## CORE VALUES

The following value statements, derived from public input and staff collaboration, were consistently referenced during the master planning process and helped with site selection, program development, and facility concept design. They are organized under the critical headings of Place, Proximity, & Purpose in order to retain that framework of evaluation as a common thread through the planning process.



## PLACE

**District Significance:** Camps should celebrate the District's diversity of wildlife, plants, and habitats, and cultural landmarks, and highlight sites significant to the mission.

**Resource Sensitivity:** Camp development should be sensitive to natural habitats and "light on the land" – avoiding disturbance wherever possible, but embracing opportunities to engage with sensitive areas for educational purposes when possible with minimal impact.

**Integrity of Experience:** Camps should emphasize cultural and ecological themes to enhance the experience and establish a regional destination.

**Safety (Health, Safety, & Welfare):** Existing facilities must address all health, safety, and welfare concerns and all facilities must provide a cognitive sense of safety for all visitors.



## PROXIMITY & PARTNERS

**Partners:** The district should proactively develop strategic partnerships with other agencies to mitigate operational costs and leverage District visibility to a greater constituency.

**Underserved Populations:** The District should incorporate programs, facilities, and sites that foster a stronger connection with underserved populations.

**Connect to Greater System:** Camps should connect to surrounding District lands to expand program opportunities and garner greater system connectivity.

## PURPOSE

**Existing Facilities:** When appropriate, the District should leverage the value and investment of existing facilities within a holistic camping program.

**Mission:** Camps should embody the District mission to preserve, conserve biological diversity, educate, and provide recreation.

**Flexibility to Demand:** Camps should be designed with an emphasis upon flexible spaces to allow facilities to adapt and appeal to a variety of stakeholder groups and programs.

**Diversity & Compatibility:** Diverse camping programs and facilities should be compatible with District mission, existing facilities and programs, and site characteristics.

**Stewardship:** District must be a leader in sustainable development, with camp facilities providing program, education, and sustainable benefits.

**Operations:** Camp operations should be holistically self-sustaining. (although mission-critical facilities may consider alternate economic models to support program viability.)







# DISCOVERY

CHAPTER  
**3**



## DISCOVERY

For the proposed camping program to fit into the broad ecosystem and diverse array of District experiences, the planning team sought to comprehend the pattern of natural systems that connect the District's properties across the county. An overlay of District properties onto these regional patterns revealed significant land holdings of all major natural system experience: rivers, forests, prairies, lakes, wetlands, etc.

Programmatically, there was also an interest in providing camping opportunities in a manner that equitably served the public across the county. Critical to this aspect was providing opportunities to previously underserved sectors of the community. The planning team engaged in an extensive series of site tours in order to ground-truth the broader natural patterns and see how they exhibited themselves on individual sites. Attention was paid to consider if and how particular sites could support camp programs in context with the Core Values. The team organized five primary camp experiences as they relate to natural systems, and also correlated these relationships with particular camp types. The basis of Discovery began with a series of site tours.

## SITE TOURS

In order to gain a working comprehension of the vast landholdings and existing facilities in the District system, the planning team conducted an immersive series of site tours with agency staff. The team spread out across the county in three separate groups over the course of three days – each car paired with several District staff members from different departments – ecologists, planners, operations, maintenance, etc. This allowed for a tremendous dialogue to occur both on site and in the vehicles while driving between sites. High profile existing facilities were visited (nature centers), as well as little known ecological gems, existing camps (Sullivan, Falcon, Dan Beard, etc.) and others. The result was a system-wide cross section of developed and undeveloped properties.

Subsequent site tours through the planning process were conducted in a similar manner on at least two other occasions, further testing potential sites and program relationships. This iterative process, consistently tied with a dialogue regarding program, facility, and final site refinement, helped the planning team and staff (re)discover the District system of land holdings through the lens of a camp program to arrive at final list of proposed sites (process further discussed in a subsequent section).



Spring Creek Preserve

## REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Comprehending the District system of land holdings is a unique challenge due to the sheer quantity, quality, and distribution of parcels across the county. Ranging from uplands to river bottoms and from prairies to forests, the District portfolio of properties offers experiences a cross section of regional ecosystems.

The planning team sought sites to host camping that capitalized on connections within each region, the broader system, and that deepened the visitor experience of the District. Three of these regions are specifically tied to creek and river corridors, while two explore the upland forests and prairies. The five regions are:

**1- The Des Plaines River Corridor** – Traversing the county from north to south, the Des Plaines River is a dynamic corridor that is the spine of most natural systems in the county. Paddling via canoe or kayak, or paralleling its course on a variety of trails, the journey could provide a unique encounter with this treasured natural and cultural resource. The sequence of experiences is as accessible as it is welcoming to visitors from all areas.

Anchored on the north by Camp Dan Beard and on the south by the vast acreage of the Palos Preserves, the Des Plaines River could offer a linear camping experience of single and multi-day excursions. With a

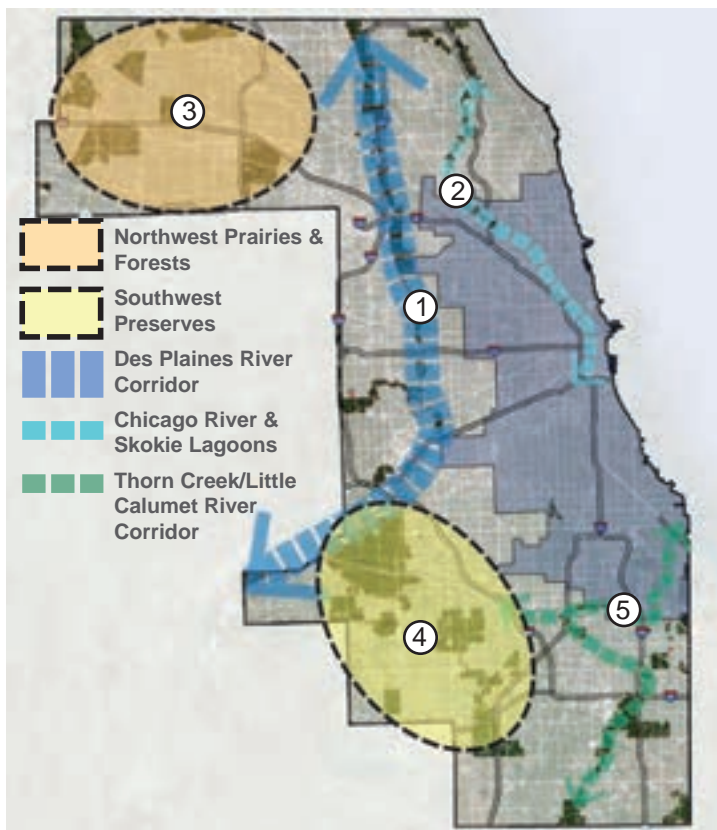
variety of facility options and numerous destinations distributed right through the heart of the county, the Des Plaines River seems poised to become an experiential jewel unique in the county's camping portfolio.

**2- The Chicago River** – Sites along the Chicago River provide different experiences to different user groups. Where the Skokie Lagoons offers a tremendous cultural storyline to interpret, the Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Resource Center provides a unique conference and meeting space within a restored architectural landmark. These are only two of several opportunities along this corridor.

**3- The Northwest Prairies & Forests** – Campers have enjoyed overnight stays at Camp Reinberg for many years. The planning team saw this property had great potential in a new camping program, perhaps with the ability to attract a broader cross section of the community. This site or another should be studied as an anchor starting point to explore other nearby preserves. Crabtree Nature Center and its surrounding acreage was also identified as a candidate for consideration of new programs.

**4- The Southwest Preserves** – Benefiting from a heritage camping program at Camps Sullivan and Falcon, the camping program in this region of the county will look to expand offerings to a broader audience.

**5- The Calumet & Thorn Creek Corridor** – Potential sites in this zone, primarily connected via bike and multiuse trails, welcome visitors to explore a collection of preserves through the Burnham Greenway, Plum Creek Trail System, and Thorn Creek Trail System.



Regional Characteristics Map

The planning team was impressed with the diversity and potential for overlapping storylines and interpretive opportunities that could be woven into a comprehensive camping program organized around these five zones. A camping program structured around this system framework could be promoted to the community in a manner that celebrates camping in all areas of the county, while also urging return campers to seek new experiences in different areas of the District.



## PROGRAMMING DIVERSE CAMPING EXPERIENCES

The planning team sought to further define and organize the types of camping experiences that may be offered within each of the five regional zones outlined above. Just as bringing a structure to the vast land holdings was critical to deliver a camping program that was scalable and meaningful in the greater context of District offerings, so too is an understanding of camping typologies that are critical to define programs and their necessary facilities. The blend of regions with associated offerings seeks to best serve different user groups from across the county.

These four “typologies” help potential visitors focus on the type of experience they are most interested in, and will also help the District market their offerings to different groups. Each of these typologies integrally supports the goals of the District mission and broadens an aspect of non-camping programs already being offered. Each typology seeks to capitalize on and celebrate the natural resources of each site in a different way, and engage different visitors in a manner that best appeals to their interests. These four primary typologies are defined on the following pages.

It should be noted that while this typology concept could serve as a framework to organize programs and supporting facilities for different user groups, all proposed programs and facilities should be flexible in

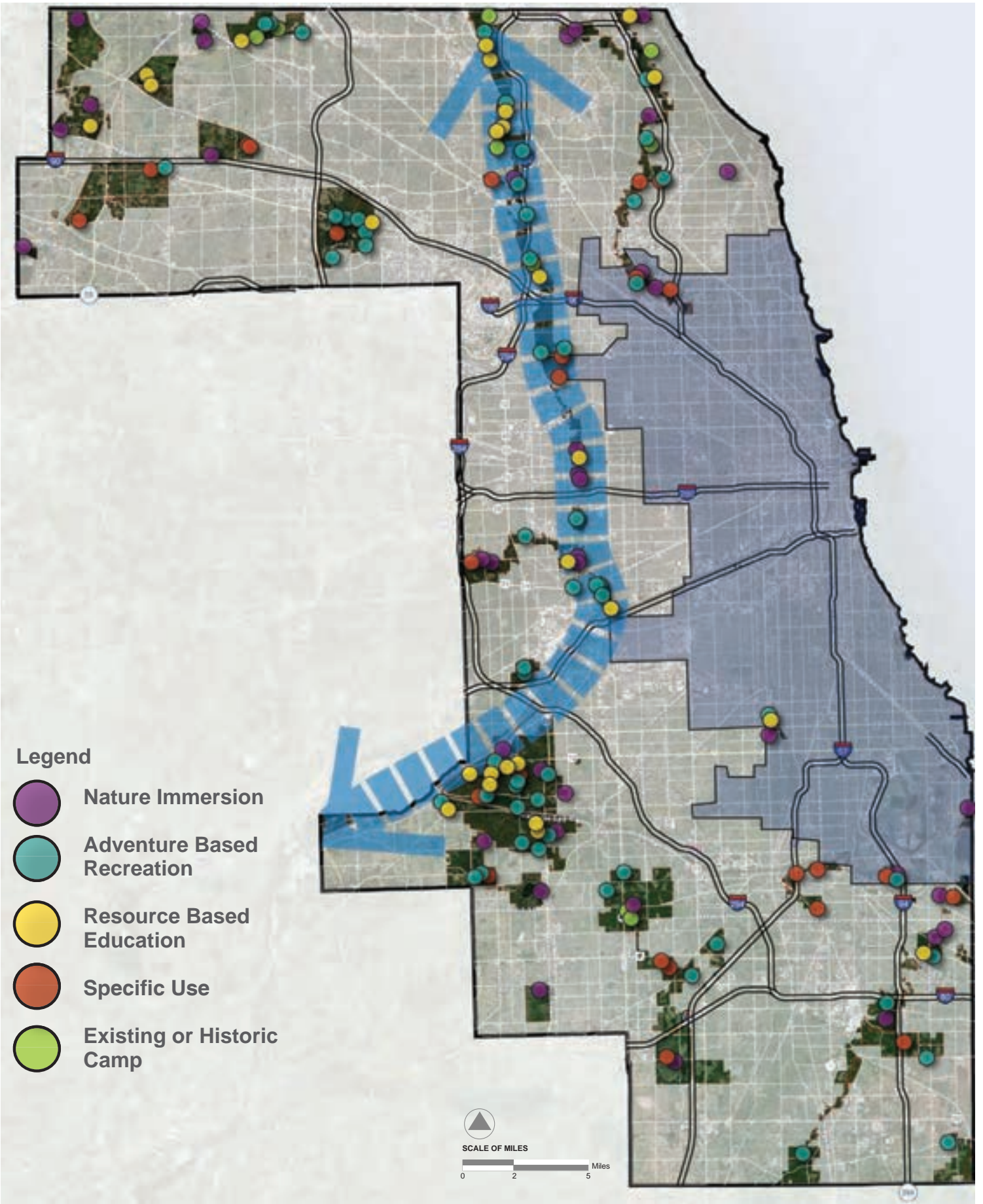
order to react to market changes and leverage the impact of development and operations expenditures. Noted categories do not preclude other activities from occurring on an individual site. All properties should be flexible and adaptive to the interest and needs of different groups to the extent that the individual site can offer experiences in a responsible manner given the particular natural resources in the area.

Different types of experiences could serve as a means to group and market facilities and program to potential visitors. Connections from different camp sites broaden these general experience categories and should be cross marketed. Four distinct types of experiences could appeal to different types of visitors.

Certain signature properties may transcend these typologies, however, in an effort to attract visitors with a diverse array of interests and expectations. A possible flagship District camping venue may operate different areas of the property in different ways during different seasons or different parts of the week, etc. All camp properties must be consistently programmed and marketed through their opportunity to reach beyond their “boundaries” and leverage other nearby District experiences. Connections via paddling, equestrian, cycling, and hiking trails expand the reach of these sites and seek to encourage visitation to other sites in the system over a longer duration.



Types of Camping Experiences  
\*See definitions on following pages



Regional Characteristics Map



## NATURE IMMERSION

These sites appeal to the casual camper who generally is seeking an un-programmed, passive overnight experience in the natural environment. Generally appealing to individuals, families, or small groups, Nature Immersion sites are most comparable to a traditional park campground and may consist of cabin or tent site camping and not necessarily an organized class or event. These are most likely to be used for seasonal weekend campouts. Typical connections may include hiking trails, a fishing pier, canoe launch, and a general variety of natural areas to explore. A body of water nearby is typically an asset attraction as a supporting natural feature to these casual campers, but not mandatory. Individual campsite or cabin amenities would include a fire ring and/or grill. General relaxation and nature enjoyment, hiking, and other passive unstructured activities are most appealing to these visitors.



## RESOURCE BASED EDUCATION

Resource Based Education sites celebrate and interpret the natural or cultural resources available at a particular location. A resource based camping experience would include educational program delivery as an expanded offering from a nature center or a specific lesson(s) hosted on site by interpreters or educators. The primary focus of these sites is education. These sites provide a distinct educational experience directly tied to the natural or cultural resources of a particular property. Supporting facilities generally require a series of outdoor classrooms targeting specific site features (lake, stream, forest, wetland, prairie, etc.), interpretive trails, flexible group educational shelters, and the like. Programs may include natural systems, geology, native & invasive species, wildlife observation, habitat management, water quality, and other site-specific educational lessons.



## ADVENTURE BASED RECREATION



Focusing on a particular outdoor recreation experience, these sites are more related to a specific activity that is not directly mandated by a particular property. The primary experience is more about the activity (ex. ropes course) rather than an educational one about broader topics. Ropes courses, mountain biking, team building, equestrian, hiking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and the like are examples of such activities. Outdoor skills and achievement of “merit badge” type activities would also fall under this general category. Visitors interested in this typology are primarily seeking a particular activity event or training rather than a strictly educational experience regarding natural systems. Offerings will include cabin and tent camping.

## SPECIFIC USE



Specific Use sites include facilities that offer a particular amenity or experience that responds to a specialized recreational interest (ex. Camp Kiwanis for equestrian camping). Other sites may respond to a particular friends groups or nature based organization. Several sites that maintain relationships with long term agreements fall under this category (ex. Izaak Walton League). Still other “specific use” sites expand the program offerings of the District to cater to the needs of corporate retreat and general conference / symposium events (ex. Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Resource Center). Due to the ultimate flexibility of meeting sites (that cater to the consistently shifting needs of different groups who may rent the facility each day), the conference sites do require an added level of management and staffing during events. The nuances of these sites and others are directly related to their facilities and setting, and are best described in detail in a subsequent chapter on a site by site basis.



The four typologies described on preceding pages outline a potential approach to marketing the camping experience to different groups of users and broad headings under which various programs can be grouped and aligned with existing District offerings. Specific types of programs and user groups are discussed below.

## PROGRAMS

**Educational programs** are a cornerstone component of the District camping program. Geared toward both organized groups and family camping, the primary educational programs will be an outreach of the existing nature centers. Particular offerings may include guided nature walks, nighttime hikes, group lessons on ecology, wildlife identification, invasive species workshops, merit badge events, astronomy, and other educational outreach that ties with District mission.

The key to success for the camping component of these educational activities resides in ensuring that the depth of offerings make the overnight stay as inviting as possible to user groups and families. Seasonality and ensuring that programs are engaging and relevant are also important. Participants from the stakeholder sessions were very positive about offering an overnight learning component. Marketing the educational component along with group rates and lodging options provides a turn-key item for schools and groups to consider.

**Adventure recreation** programs and opportunities abound. Urban outreach by District staff may take the form of introductory skill-building lessons or special events that encourage city dwellers to get into the preserves and try a new experience. Outfitters or concessionaires may be contacted for these events, as well as local enthusiast clubs.

Overnight offerings related to Adventure Recreation might include bundled options that include a class or event along with a campsite or cabin for the night or weekend. Paddling tours that might camp overnight along the Des Plaines River are but one specific example.

**Self Guided** activities in the preserves, as they relate to camping, focus on connections from the camp sites themselves to surrounding assets in the District system. A family looking for a weekend escape from the city might look for a campsite that offers flexibility for various outings from their “base camp” – a hike to a nearby nature center, a canoe trip, bicycling trails, and fishing, among others.

## USERS

Based on the public outreach input, the county and greater Chicago region offers as diverse a potential for visitor interests as about anywhere. While the District is very popular with its current array of users, there are many in the community that do not comprehend the diversity that the District has to offer – the camping master plan strives to offer a new array of options to visitors from all backgrounds.

### Youth Organizations

From recreational outings to environmental education classes, the master plan provides a well rounded array of offerings that are attractive to numerous youth organizations. Facilities should be flexible to accommodate different size groups, as well as different age of children. Particular elements to consider include the length of trail for “little legs” vs. older visitors, campfire safety, boardwalk handrail visibility, and delivery methods for educational programs. All overnight programs and facilities must accommodate safe-environment protocols for children.

### Schools

Program planning for school groups is similar to that of youth organizations, but timing is critical, especially with day camp. Bussing and the travel time between school and destination all factor into the layout of a typical “day” or extended stay at camp. Education for the educators in advance of their arrival is helpful. Cabins and bunkhouse style lodging are primary options for school groups.

### Families

From weekend campouts to a week-long vacation, family camping in the District is easily accommodated. Tents, cabins, and tent cabins are all popular venues for these outings. Flexibility in overnight stays is ideal, and bundling packages will help market the District offerings.

### Special Interest

Some programs are to be marketed to niche markets within the county field of outdoor enthusiasts. For example, equestrian and kayak/canoe camping both require special accommodations in order to create a meaningful and enjoyable experience.

Corporate retreats and meetings also fall in the category of “special interests” based on the level of service and special conditions that these groups require for their specific functions.

	SITE/FACILITY	PROGRAMS													
		ECO-TOURISM/CULTURAL	CONFERENCES/RETREATS	STRUCTURED EDUCATION/RESEARCH	NATURE STUDY/STEWARDSHIP	TEAM BUILDING/LEADERSHIP	INNER CITY OUTREACH	OUTDOOR SKILLS/ACTIVITIES	HIKING/DISCOVERY	NATURE SPORTS	REUNIONS/FAMILY GATHERINGS	HOSPITALITY LODGING	RESIDENTIAL CAMPING	PRIMITIVE CAMPING	DINING SERVICES
CHICAGO RIVER	Skokie Lagoons	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
	Blue Star Memorial Woods					•	•	•							
	Little House Of Glencoe		•			•									
	Bieszczat Volunteer Center		•				•								
THORNCREEK CORRIDOR	Plum Creek		•		•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	
	Glenwood Road Prairie					•	•	•							
	Shabbona Woods	•	•	•			•					•	•	•	
	King's Grove				•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		
	Egger's Grove				•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
DES PLAINES CORRIDOR	Camp Pine Woods	•				•		•		•		•	•	•	
	Camp Dan Beard				•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	
	Camp Fort Dearborn	•				•		•		•		•	•		
	Thatcher Woods					•	•	•		•					
	Isaak Walton League	•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•			
	Miller Meadow North	•			•	•		•							
	Stony Ford	•			•	•		•							
	McCormick Woods				•	•	•	•							
SOUTHWEST PRESERVES	Bull Frog Lake	•	•	•	•	•		•			•	•	•	•	
	Camp Sullivan				•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	
	Camp Falcon		•			•						•	•	•	
	Sagawau Conference Center	•	•	•	•	•					•	•		•	
	McGinty Slough				•	•		•	•				•		
	Columbia Woods	•			•	•	•	•							
	Camp Kiwanis							•	•				•		
	Dan Ryan Woods			•		•	•								
NORTHWEST	Camp Reinberg					•		•		•	•	•	•	•	
	Poplar Creek				•	•		•	•	•		•		•	
	Crabtree Nature Center	•		•	•			•							
	Busse Lake South					•		•		•	•				
	Camp Alphonse				•			•	•	•					



## EXISTING CAMPS

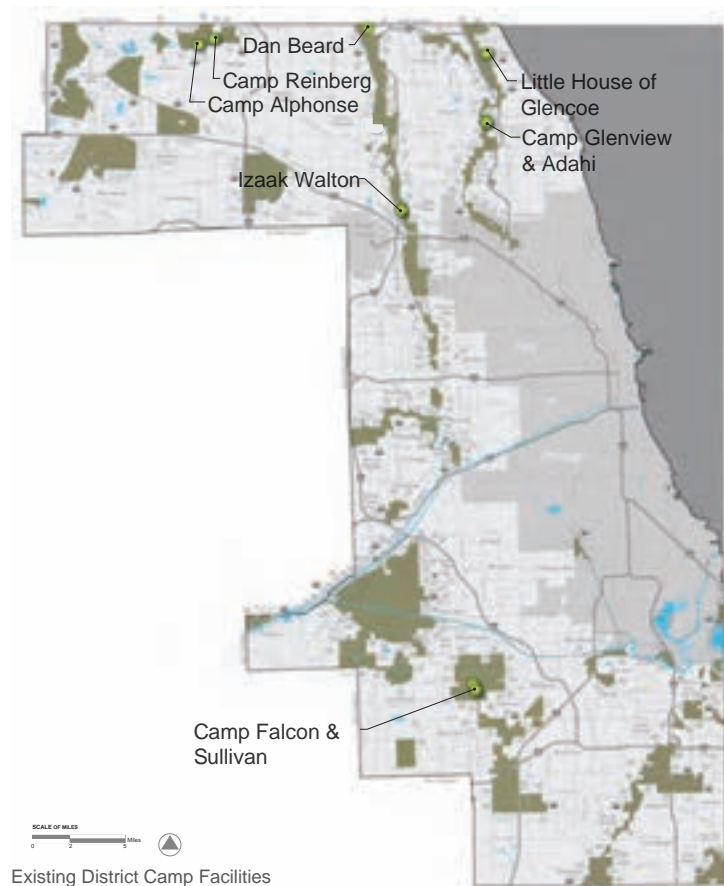
A critical component of the site tours described earlier was a visit to each of the existing facilities currently offering some kind of camping experience. The team evaluated each in terms of the Core Values and their capacity for expansion, rehabilitation, and other criteria.

The existing camp properties include several that are currently closed due to health, safety, and welfare concerns (Reinberg, Falcon, Adahi) and others that are actively being operated by partner agencies (Izaak Walton, Dan Beard). The public input process highlighted an interest in reopening or rehabilitating some of these historical camp sites for a new generation.

As mentioned earlier, there are also a number of historical camp properties that began as camps for one purpose or another but no longer have that use (ex. Pine Woods, Skokie Lagoons). Those are not included on the map of existing camps to the right, but were evaluated as part of the larger Master Plan.

Camping is only currently offered to groups. There is no individual “family “ camping or individual campsite rentals available. The existing District camps are used most heavily by various troops from the Boy Scouts (Dan Beard, Sullivan, and others). Other groups also have special agreements on particular sites (Izaak Walton League). These group camps generally have a miscellaneous collection of facilities that include

group cabins, cooking facilities, and various shelters. Previous agreements with partner user groups have had varying degrees of success, and maintenance has been a challenge for all parties.



EXISTING CAMPS	Recommendations for Existing Structures	2013 Vision	Future Vision
<b>Camp Falcon &amp; Sullivan</b>	retain bunkhouses and barn at Camp Sullivan; remove structures at Camp Falcon	renovate bunkhouses and barn; new tent cabins, tent sites, and toilet/shower building	New security/admin/infirmary, additional toilet/shower buildings
<b>Camp Reinberg</b>	retain dining hall, remove other structures	new tent cabins, tent sites, and toilet/shower building	New security/admin/infirmary, family cabins, program shelter
<b>Camp Alphonse</b>	NA	enhance site with day use	program shelter
<b>Camp Glenview/Adahi</b>	remove structures	close site and relocate activities to Camp Pine Woods	NA
<b>Camp Dan Beard</b>	remove structures	close site and relocate activities to Camp Pine Woods	NA
<b>Izaak Walton</b>		retain existing partner agreement	
<b>Little House of Glencoe</b>		retain existing partner agreement	



**EXISTING FACILITIES: Total Capacity = 72**

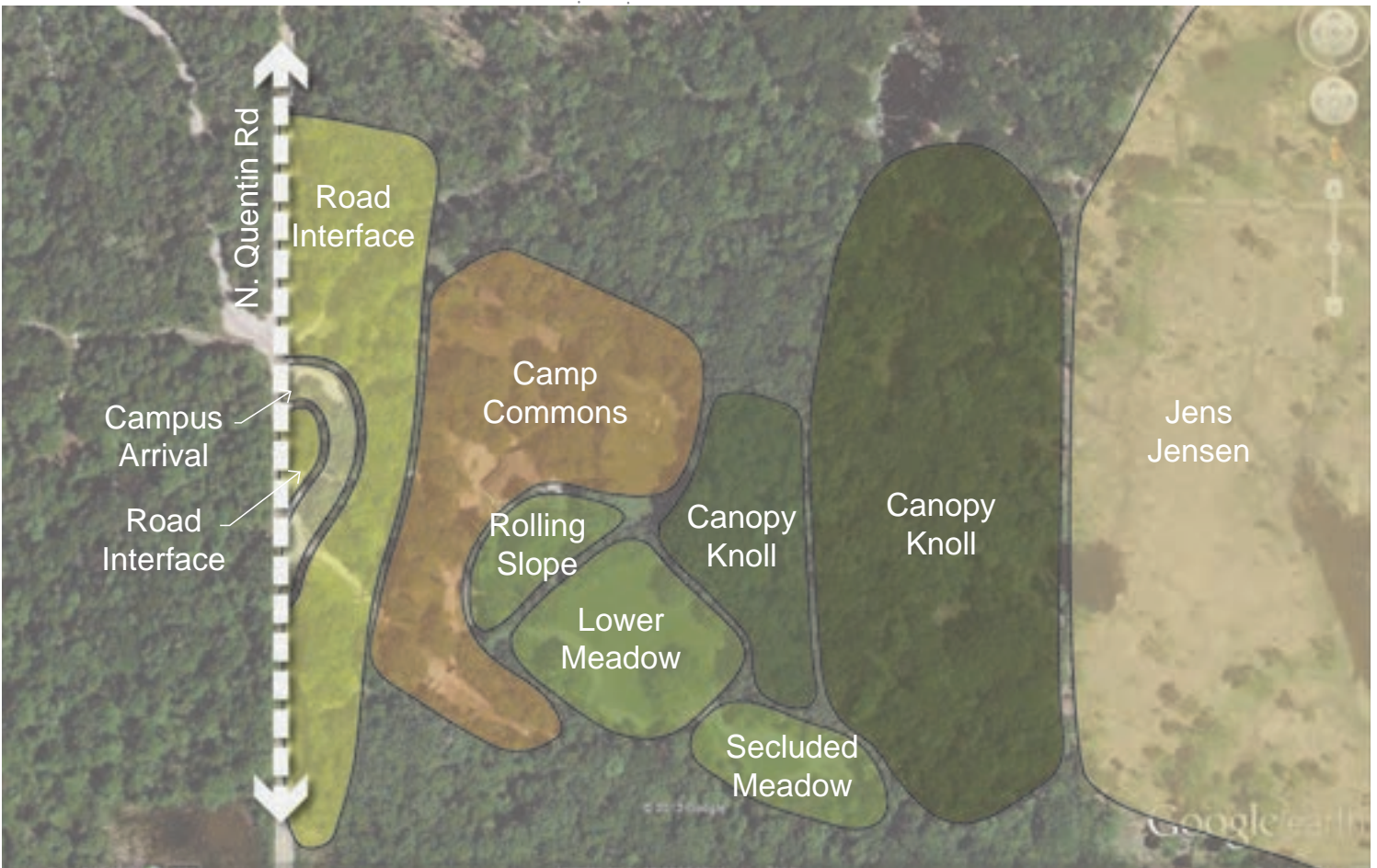
**FACILITY**

Cabins (heated w/ bathrooms)	6
Tent Site (by permit - no defined tent pads)	-
Dining Hall (de-tached from lodging)	1

**CAMP REINBERG**

Although the most ‘developed’ of all camping facilities within the District portfolio, the camp’s relationship to the road greatly comprises the experience. The camp does have a strong alumni base that desires a return to full operations. The camp does benefit from its adjacency to the Jens Jensen Preserve, as well as other District parcels. The immediate grounds of the developed area offer limited space for expansion. Due to the scale of its development and facilities, however, Camp Reinberg has strong potential to address a greater and more diverse audience.

The existing fabric of the site is affected by future plans to widen North Quentin Road. With the site’s already exposed feeling toward the road, this future roadwork will greatly impact the visitor’s experience.



Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Camp Reinberg





## CAMP SULLIVAN/ FALCON

Camp Sullivan is most notable for the distinctive barn that identifies entry into the camp. A cluster of cabins are located within tree drifts and series of meadows. This creates an interesting series of 'spaces' within the site form that positively contribute to the 'experience' of the camp. The existing developed area is compromised by its proximity to existing thoroughfares and retail establishments that limit the sense of removal from the surrounding city. Existing structures are worthy of rehabilitation, and the barn should be celebrated in the framework of the master plan.

Camp Falcon benefits from its secluded location but the existing structures would need significant costly repair. They are further negatively affected by highway noise. A singular access road provides a sense of decompression along the arrival sequence through woodlands and riparian corridors. Land to the south of the existing development is an asset and houses several remnant historic masonry elements.

### EXISTING FACILITIES: Total Capacity = 100

FACILITY	SULLIVAN	FALCON
Lodge (heated w/ bathrooms)	1	-
Bunkhouse (heated w/ bathrooms)	2	-
Cabins (not in use)	-	2
Tent Site (by permit - no defined tent pads)	-	8
Dining (kitchens in lodging)	3	1
Caretaker Residence (serves both sites)	1	1



Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Camp Sullivan/Falcon

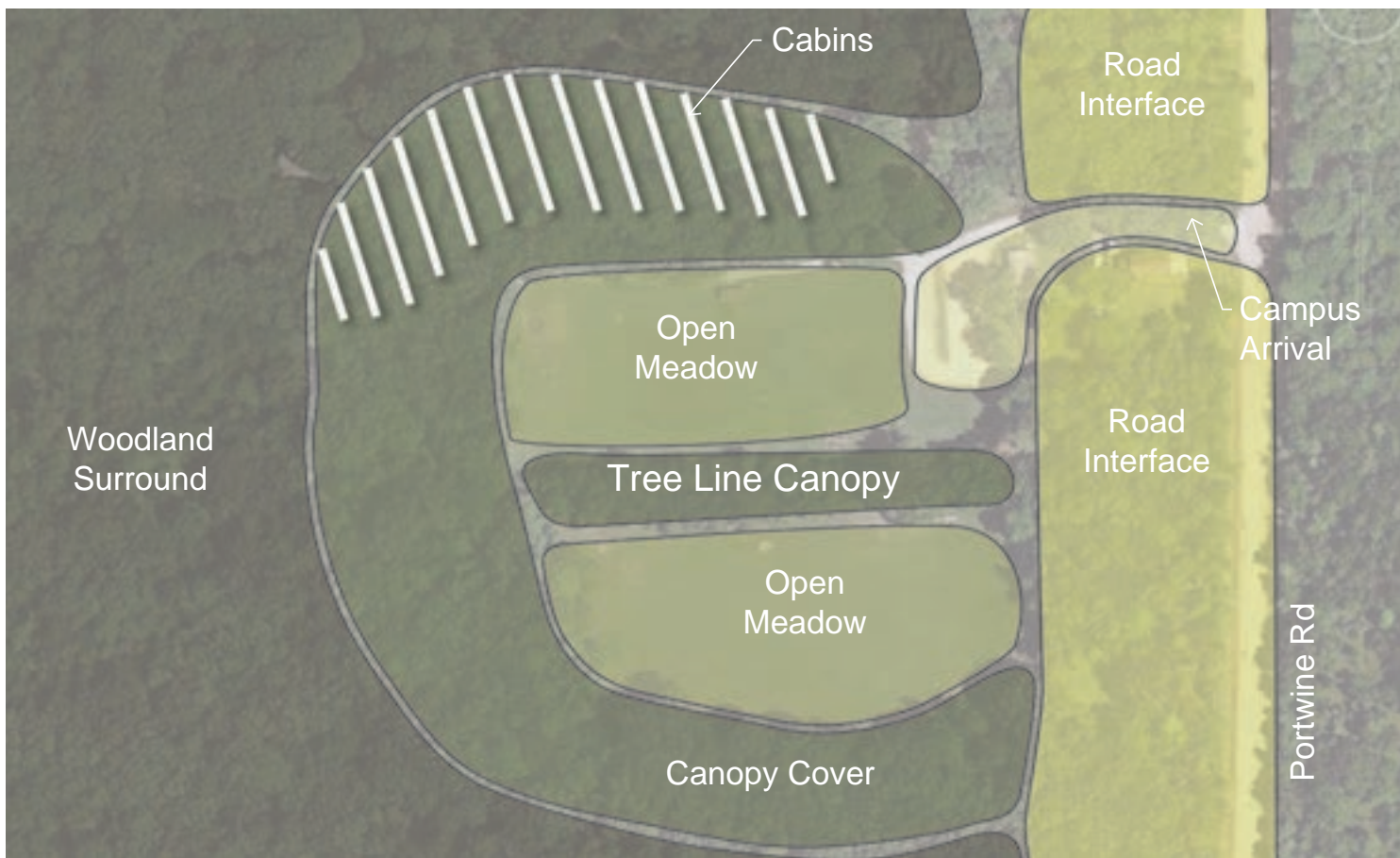




## CAMP DAN BEARD

Camp Dan Beard benefits from healthy buffers and edge conditions that minimize intrusion from the surrounding development. The camp has a diversity of habitats and a depth of 'experiential' zones. Camp Dan Beard has a strong tradition with scouting, serving as one of their primary destinations with the District. The existing cabins are in disrepair and cannot be utilized due to safety concerns and should be demolished. Facilities include cabins, a residence, remnant foundations, and miscellaneous support structures. The site has recently been used heavily in a tent camping capacity. The site is encompassed by woodland on all sides except for interruption on the east side by Portwine Road.

Camp Dan Beard is located at the northern tip of the Des Plaines River as it traverses through the District. This ideally situates the camp to connect to a greater selection of destinations and offerings that are associated with the river. The camp has also room to expand within its own boundaries if necessary. The camp has the ability to reach a greater audience.



Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Camp Dan Beard





## CAMP ADAHI AND GLENVIEW

Camp Glenview spatial framework is indiscernible to most users. With the lack of buildings and specific infrastructure, programs have occurred in day-use activities within the large open meadow. The site is compromised by the lack of separation from the hike and bike trail and the lack of recognizable structure.

Camp Adahi has very little experiential value as a camping venue. The building is adjacent to a service yard and major vehicular thoroughfare. There is little room for expansion and the buildings are in need of extensive repairs



Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Camp Adahi & Glenview



## LITTLE HOUSE OF GLENCOE

The Little House of Glencoe offers little experiential value as a District camping venue. Located within a residential neighborhood (at the terminus of a cul-de-sac), this site is very isolated and heavily impacted by its surroundings. An existing program building resides on the site (with ties to past camping heritage), but this facility is limited by the site and surrounding neighborhood. This property may continue to operate under current or re-negotiated agreements with the current partner.



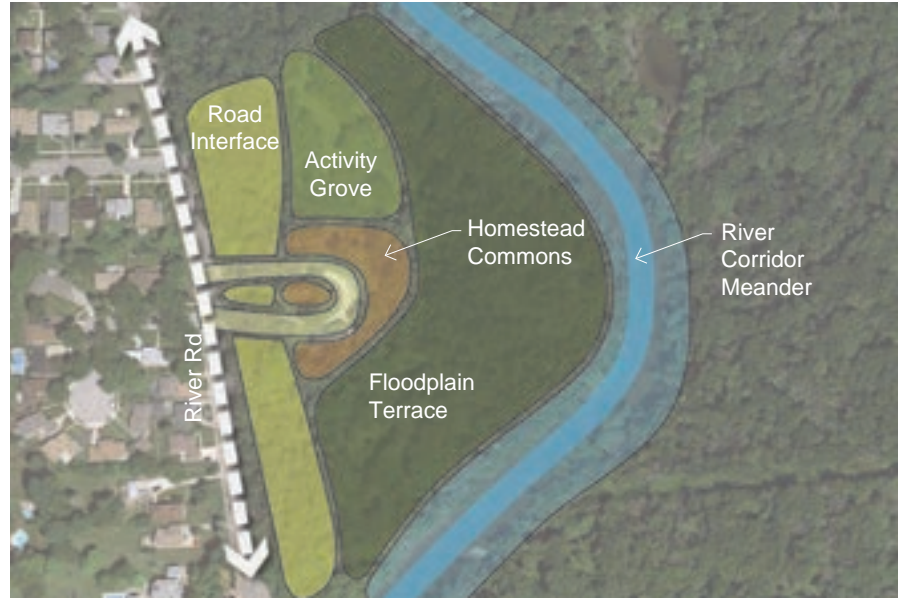
Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Little House of Glencoe





### CAMP IZAAK WALTON

The Izaak Walton League campus incorporates an interesting experiential dichotomy. The campus is an intricate tapestry of spatial rooms that positively contribute to the experiential qualities of the site. However, all of this is lost to the overwhelming impact of flight landing patterns associated with the nearby airport. An existing homestead is located on the property, which has/ can be repurposed for District uses, but once again must contend with the sound of the nearby air traffic. This property may continue to operate under current or re-negotiated agreements with the current partner.



Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Camp Izaak Walton



### CAMP ALPHONSE

This property has been functioning as a tent camping area only. There are no other permanent facilities. The short distance from Dundee Road results in an arrival that is directly into a parking lot. While connected to other District facilities, this program is very close to Camp Reinberg and there is a possibility of consolidation of offerings for better synergy of use and investment.



Map Depicting Spatial Experience at Camp Alphonse

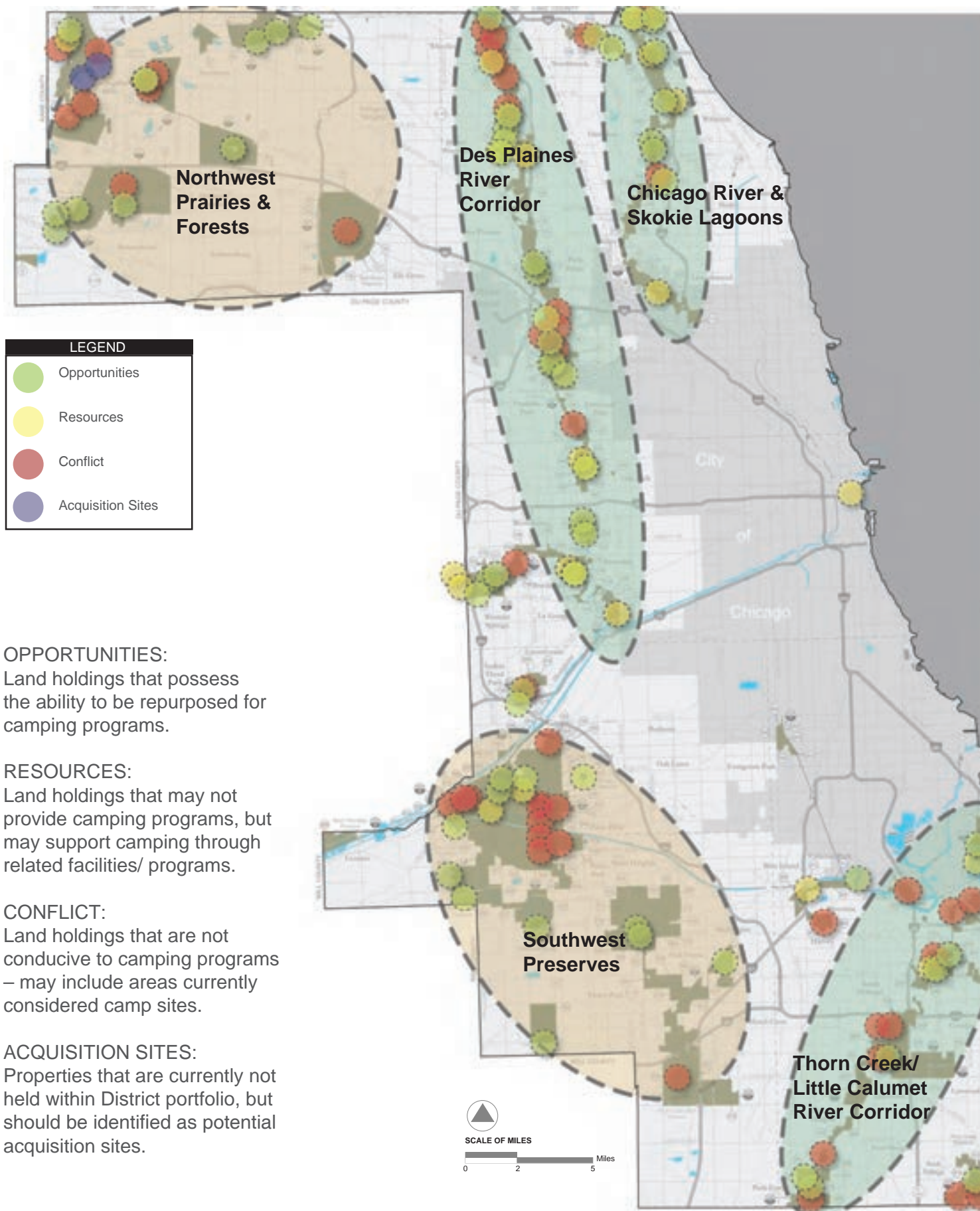


## OPPORTUNITY SITES

Through the initial rounds of site tours with District staff, public input, regional system mapping, and analysis, the planning team developed an initial list of properties for future investigation. This first instance of potential “Opportunity Sites” included a number of properties within each of the five natural system zones. The intent of this preliminary exercise was to open discussions with an list of sites at a manageable scale (vs. the hundreds of total properties in the District system) to begin to vet program goals and how a camping network may begin to take shape.

Collaboration with District staff was critical in immediately eliminating some of these properties from consideration for various reasons ranging from environmental concerns to cultural resources and access limitations. Similarly, additional sites were added to the potential list during the first review meeting. An important overlay to the discussion at this point was the concept of connections and leveraging existing facilities as support to a new camping program. A workshop format with staff utilized dots to record commentary on various parcels across the system, highlighting sites that fell into four primary categories: Opportunities, Resources, Conflicts, and Acquisition Sites.





**OPPORTUNITIES:**

Land holdings that possess the ability to be repurposed for camping programs.

**RESOURCES:**

Land holdings that may not provide camping programs, but may support camping through related facilities/ programs.

**CONFLICT:**

Land holdings that are not conducive to camping programs – may include areas currently considered camp sites.

**ACQUISITION SITES:**

Properties that are currently not held within District portfolio, but should be identified as potential acquisition sites.

Opportunity Sites - Derived from Staff Workshops







# MASTER PLAN & FACILITIES



## MASTER PLAN

This chapter outlines a broad strategy of how various sites capitalize upon the unique experiences of their geographic region to deliver program. An overview of potential facility types illustrates a family of structures that foster program delivery and identity of the system.

The camping master plan merges the regional landscape system concept (Des Plaines River, Chicago River, Northwest Prairies & Forests, Southwest Preserves, and the Calumet & Thorn Creek Corridor) with the four type so camping experiences (Nature Immersion, Adventure Based Recreation, Resource Based Education, and Specific Use) to create a diverse portfolio of program offerings and support facilities. Directly responding to Core Values, the master plan is built on the foundation of the assessments and community input garnered through the planning process.

Building on the mission of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, the camping vision respects the sensitivity of the natural environment as one of the primary considerations when considering the types of programs and facilities to offer and where to offer them. The plan also seeks to engage visitors in powerful experiences of education, recreation, and overall enjoyment in the natural environment. The plan capitalizes upon the depth of experience available to visitors across the vast acreage of land holdings throughout the county.

This is not only to reduce capital expenditures and repurpose existing structures, but also an effort to preserve as much of the natural environment as possible. Where new camping programs do propose to build on undisturbed areas, the intent is to build with the land rather than on top of it. A careful approach to

building in sensitive habitat zones matches the District mission while also serving as a learning tool that educates all those who come to camp.

Connections are also a core element of the plan that expand the impact of camping facilities by branching out to reach other District facilities. The following summary outlines the plan's response to, and suggestions to capitalize on, this concept that reinforces the identity of the District and offers a dynamic series of camping experiences.

## SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The camping program for District lands will engage visitors from across the county – from inner city youth to suburban seniors and everyone in between. School groups, community organizations, individual families, and research institutions (among other groups) all have something to gain by participating in camping activities on District lands. Both daycamp and overnight options are available to all user groups, with the hope that visitors will be drawn to one program and perhaps be enticed to return and explore a different facility or event. Day camp options are strategically placed closer to the inner city for ease of access, and “starter sites” will create camp “training” opportunities for “urban camping” – all with a goal for getting people comfortable and familiar with District lands with the hopes that they will return to explore other sites in the system. Families are encouraged to experience the District lands in a new light (via campfire or starlight), and organized groups are welcome to host educational, recreational, and a broad variety of other day camp and overnight programs on District camp properties. Connections are also a core element of the plan that expand the impact of camping facilities by branching out to reach other District facilities.

### NATURE IMMERSION

Camp Reinberg  
Camp Dan Beard  
Izaak Walton League  
Thatcher Woods

Miller Meadow  
Stony Ford  
Skokie Lagoons  
McGinty Slough  
King's Grove

### ADVENTURE BASED RECREATION

Poplar Creek  
Camp Pine Woods  
Camp Fort Dearborn  
McCormick Woods Day Use

Columbia Woods  
Camp Sullivan/Falcon  
Glenwood Road Prairie  
Plum Creek

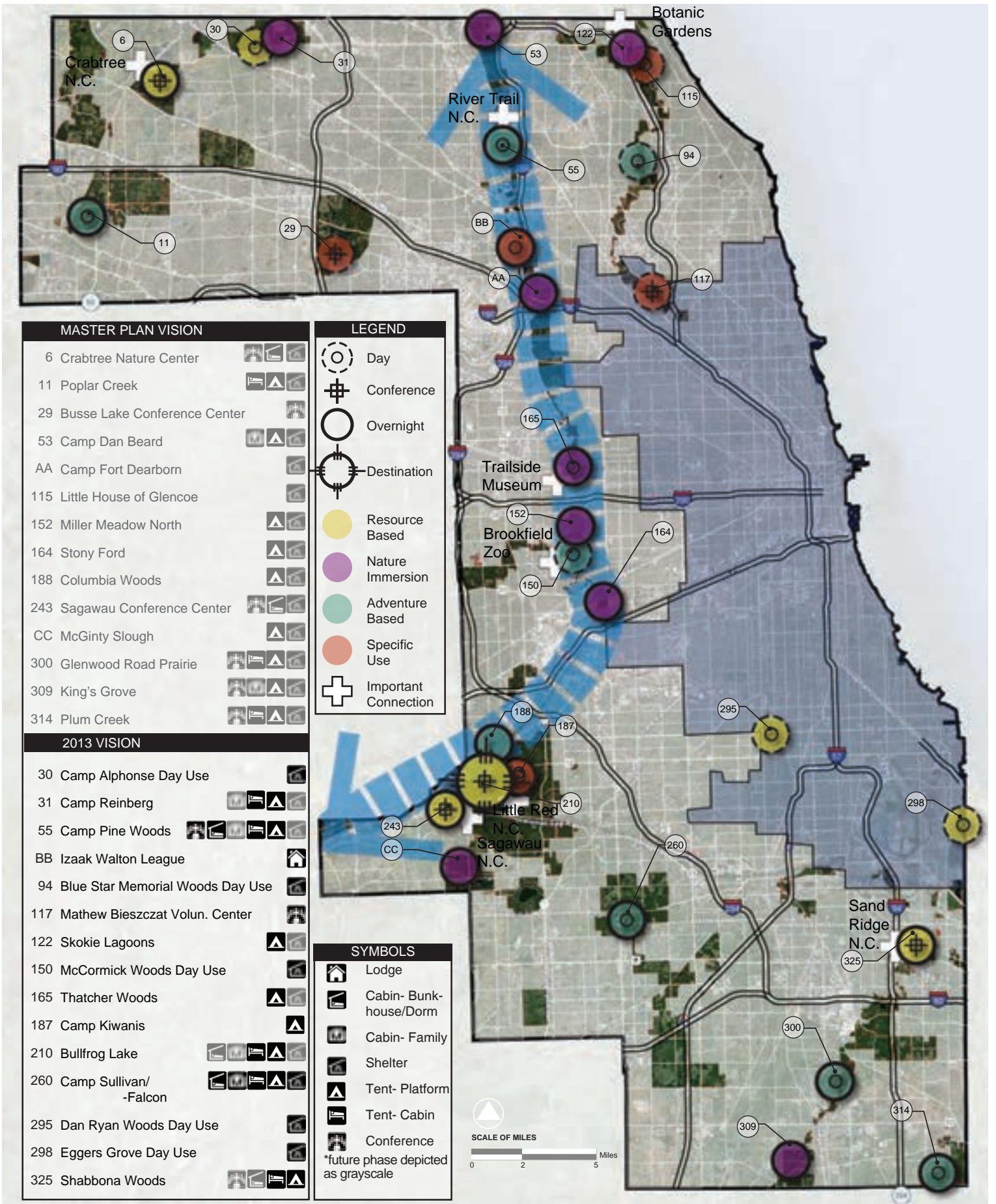
### RESOURCE BASED EDUCATION

Crabtree Nature Center  
Camp Alphonse Day Use  
Bullfrog Lake  
Sagawau Conference Center

Dan Ryan Woods Day Use  
Shabbona Woods  
Eggers Grove Day Use

### SPECIFIC USE

Busse Lake Conference Center  
Izaak Walton League  
Camp Kiwanis





As described in the Discovery chapter in this report, the county's geographic regions are distinct. The camping master plan celebrates this diverse ecology and the programs that each supports.

## NORTHWEST PRAIRIES & FORESTS

The northwest region of the county is comprised of a variety of disconnected properties with a very diverse collection of ecological habitat. The camping program is distinctly different here than on the Des Plaines, where the experience is primarily a linear one. The destination sites in the northwest each have a purposeful role to play in the overall constellation of camping program offerings, and each seeks to build on the experience of existing sites that have either a legacy of use or an existing program that is poised for expansion. Highlights include the Crabtree Nature Center (future site) and Camp Reinberg.

## SOUTHWEST PRESERVES

The Southwest Preserves region consists of a number of properties that sit at the downstream end of the Des Plaines River. The greatest land mass is the Palos Preserves, of which the proposed Bullfrog Lake Camp and the Little Red Schoolhouse are major components. Significant reinvestment is proposed at Camp Sullivan & Falcon, the historic camps in the middle of the region. Other sites that support these primary anchors include: Sagawau Environmental Learning Center (conference), McGinty Slough (tent camping), and Dan Ryan Woods. While a trail system does connect these to other District lands, they are not connected to each other. That said, each of these properties have a meaningful role in the overall District camping system.

## THORN CREEK/LITTLE CALUMET RIVER CORRIDOR

The southeast area of the county is comprised of a collection of properties that are primarily connected through a network of trail systems. While the linear experience is not as strong as the Chicago and Des Plaines rivers, these sites do follow the creek system and are punctuated by several large land parcels along the corridor. Future trail connections are planned to help further link disconnected properties. The system is legible, and the overlapping storylines of how these multiple water courses merge and connect with Lake Michigan should be celebrated. Key sites included in this region include: Shabbona Woods (proposed for bunkhouses and tent cabin in connection to the Sand Ridge Nature Center), Kings Grove, and Plum Creek.

## CHICAGO RIVER

The Chicago River Corridor is a dynamic ribbon of nature and recreation through the north east area of the county. Anchored on the north end by the Chicago Botanic Garden, the corridor allows a rich variety of activities along the river and lagoon system. These sites offer an urban camping experience that is easily accessible for many urban populations. Linked by the hike & bike trail or by paddling the river itself, these sites offer casual weekend excursions without straying too far from the central city.

## DES PLAINES RIVER CORRIDOR

Spanning the county from north to south, the Des Plaines River Corridor is the spine of the camping experience. Proximity to the city makes a number of options easily accessible to a broad cross section of the community. There are several ways to camp along the Des Plaines:

Destination Sites create two primary anchors on the corridor: Camp Pine Woods to the north & Bullfrog Lake at the south. Each is capable of hosting multi-day experiences with both cabin and tent options to serve family and groups. Bullfrog Lake capitalizes upon its nearby connections to Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center and the many other experiences within the vast Palos Preserve area. Camp Pine Woods, as the northern anchor, is even more accessible to the northern and central areas of the county and inner city.

Stop-over Sites organize a framework of "stations" where campers may enter the system at one site (ex. Camp Dan Beard) and then paddle or hike to another campsite (ex. Camp Pine Woods) exploring the depth of District holdings along the way. Other interim sites will be much smaller scale and may only consist of several tent platform campsites (Miller Meadow South, Thatcher Woods, etc.). Campers may spend the night, and then continue the journey the next day, exploring further destinations. Facilities are primarily rustic tent shelters but would include restroom facilities nearby. Given the variety of locations, each stop-over site will provide a unique experience depending on the bend of the river and the community context. While some will certainly provide an "urban" camping experience, others do offer a deeper sense of removal from the city. These sites will be designed to serve the needs of paddlers, cyclists, and hikers. The storyline of the Des Plaines should be celebrated through these camp sites in a manner that is legible to visitors regardless of where they enter the system and which directional sequence they are travelling.

The storyline of the Des Plaines should be celebrated through these camp sites in a manner that is legible to visitors regardless of where they enter the system and which directional sequence they are travelling (upstream or down). Highlights of the sequential experience may include the National Portage Site, Swallow Cliff Woods, Camp Pine Woods, and many others.

Working with current District holdings along the Des Plaines, the distance between most proposed camp sites averages about 4.5 miles. It would be ideal to locate one additional stop-over site somewhere downstream of Stony Ford and upstream of Columbia Woods. District should work with other public agency land owners along the river to locate a site that could fill this potential gap in the system to increase the flexibility of possible excursions and better serve paddlers who may be looking for a shorter distance route in that area of the county.

The following pages of this report outline a series of facility examples that may be developed at different sites within the array of camp offerings. These images depict an aesthetic and programming intent and begin to develop a vocabulary of form and materials. The concepts shown are preliminary and need refinement and further study to define a final camp vernacular that is distinct while complimentary to the broader District system.



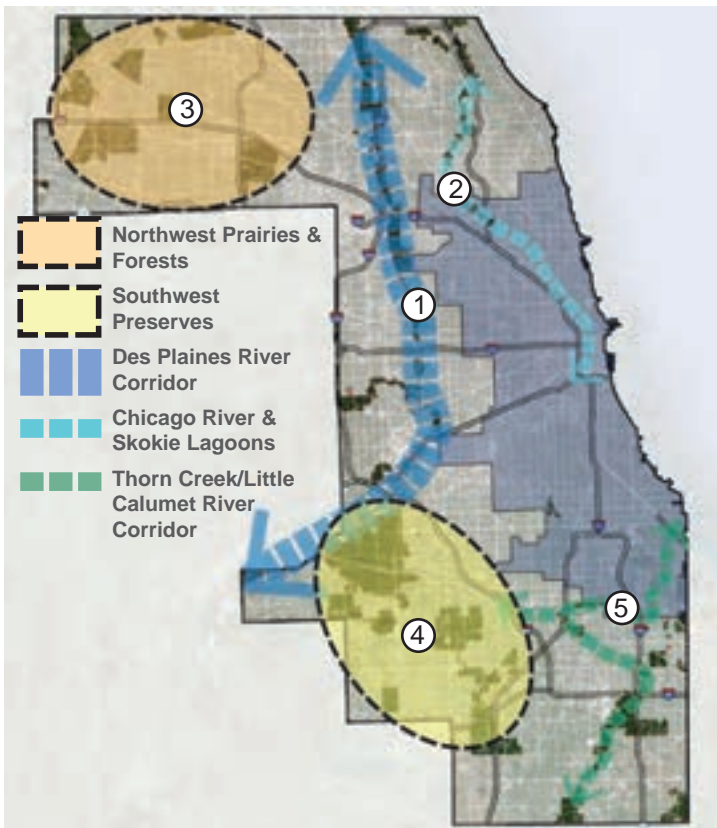
Pulaski Woods - Southwest Preserves



McGinty Slough - Southwest Preserves



Crabtree Nature Center - Northwest Prairies & Forests



Regional Characteristics Map





## FACILITIES

A major influence on the camping experience are the facilities and how well they respect and blend with the natural environment. This chapter provides guidelines on key characteristics and types of facilities for the District's campgrounds, both in the immediate term and in the longer term future.

### Authentic

Authentic building and landscape design reflects the authenticity of nature and the camping experience. Authenticity includes expressing function with structural form and by using natural materials.

Historically, camp structures have expressed structure, exposing building structural framing systems, creating simple, modest, and understated structures.

The rich Civilian Conservation Corps legacy found throughout the system provide excellent examples of design that incorporates authentic use of materials.



### Reflect Place

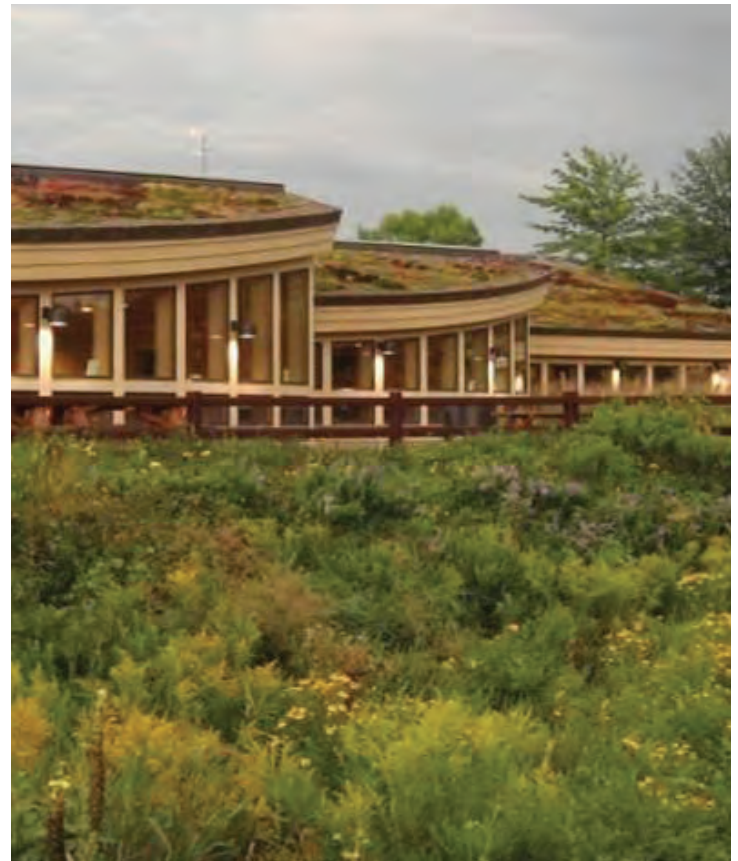
Sense of place is gained through an emotional connection to the unique combination of place and institution. Connections can be enhanced through: use of color found on the landscape; building form and detail inspired by local vernacular and/or expressive of natural landscape features; materials native to and/or culturally significant to the landscape; indigenous vegetation; and interpretive exhibits.

### Reflect Function

Reflecting function in building form and design is both intuitive and authentic.

Facility design should also facilitate function. Flexible design accommodates current programmatic requirements, but also to anticipated future programmatic needs. Power, data and telecommunication wiring must be accessible and changeable. Column and beam building structure and systems enable future space re-configuration to respond to future programmatic requirements.

Building design must also optimize efficient use of staff, equipment and space for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.



### **Jens Jensen Influence**

The work of Jens Jensen is relevant and powerful in the District. Utilizing some of his philosophical themes are of use when planning effective and experiential spaces for camps.

Known for his “prairie style” design work, Jensen’s designs would often consist of open spaces and pathways, allowing one to stay in the shade while viewing the light.

### **Spaces**

Flowing meadows surrounded by sculptured masses of native vegetation were part of Jensen’s designs for public parks and private estates. Where the groves met the meadows, he planted flowering trees at the woodland margins.

### **Vistas**

Jensen felt that changing views brought visual unity to spaces while encompassing the seasonal and daily variety of nature. From vantage points in the shade of a meadow’s edge, the eye was led across sunlit openings or towards the setting sun.

### **Movement**

Paths in Jensen’s landscape always moved in gentle naturalistic curves rather than straight lines; following the lay of the land drawing the traveler forward with a sense of anticipation to investigate what lies beyond.

### **Sustainable**

Site and building development significantly impacts our environment. According to USGBC, in the United States, buildings account for 62% of the total electricity consumption, 36% of the total primary energy use, 30% of the total greenhouse gas emissions, 136 million tons of construction and demolition waste (approximately 2.8 lbs./person/day), 12% of potable water and 40% (3 billion tons annually) of global raw materials use.

Ecologically sustainable design is consistent with the mission of District, and by integrating interpretation, will provide a model of how campers can live in balance with their environment.

Diligent programming optimizes building size and maximizes flexibility and multi-use. Appropriate design minimizes ecological impact and often minimizes life-cycle costs. Impact on the land is minimized. Water conservation and quality are maximized. Interior and exterior air quality is maximized. Energy use is optimized by minimizing energy load, integrating appropriate HVAC systems, maximizing use of renewable energy sources, and by proper building operation. Biodiversity is maximized by using materials that have minimal embodied energy. Minimizing construction waste encourages recycling and reduces landfills. Incorporating interpretation maximizes opportunities to model sustainable strategies.



## TENT PLATFORMS OR TENT SITES

### General

Tent platforms or primitive tent pads provide inexpensive seasonal lodging with very low impact to the land. They also provide overflow lodging. Vehicle access will be provided at tent pad groupings with two parking spaces per pad.

For primitive tent pads, water service will not be provided and users will pack in all materials on a trail. (primitive camping).

### Users

Users groups include: groups and individuals that desire a rustic experience while still remaining close by to development; those that do not own camping gear; single family or multi-family (multiple groupings); organized groups (multiple groupings); smaller organizations that do not require a lodge.

### Sleeping

Tent platforms shown below accommodate tents for four occupants, but could be larger to accommodate large tents or be replaced with simpler at grate tent sites.

### Toilet/Shower/Lavatory

Toilet shower and lavatory facilities are provided in a common facility remotely, within 500 feet. Water will be provided at tent cabin groupings.

### Gathering

Arrangement of platforms can be in small groups of four to six with central fire ring and rustic seating. An individual primitive remote pad can be created for more integration into nature.

### Comparable Examples

Comparable examples include Wilderness Inquiry Apostle Islands Base Camp at Lake Superior.



Definted Tent Pad



Tent Platform



Definted Tent Pad



Tent Platform w/ Fire Ring

# TENT CABIN

## General

Tent cabins provide inexpensive seasonal lodging with very low impact to the land. They also provide overflow lodging. Vehicle access will be provided at tent pad groupings with two parking spaces per pad.

## Users

Users groups include: groups and individuals that desire a rustic experience while still remaining close by to development; those that do not own camping gear; single family or multi-family (multiple groupings); organized groups (multiple groupings); smaller organizations that do not require a lodge.

## Sleeping

Tent cabins accommodate eight campers and two counselors on bunks.

## Toilet/Shower/Lavatory

Toilet shower and lavatory facilities are provided in a common facility remotely, within 500 feet. Water will be provided at tent cabin groupings.

## Gathering

Arrangement of tent cabins can be in small groups of four to six with central fire ring and rustic seating.

## Comparable Examples

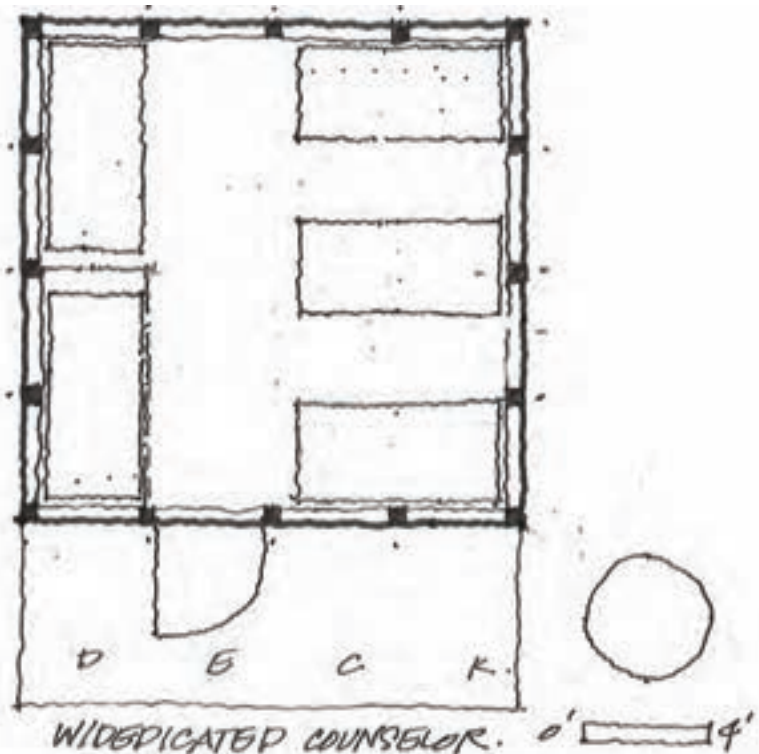
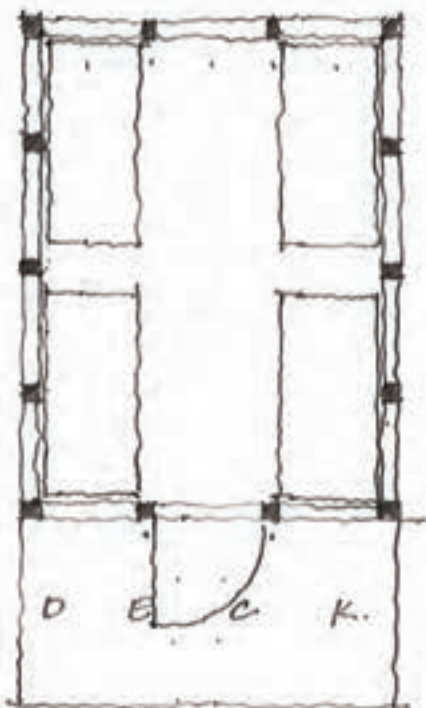
Comparable examples include Camp Tanadoona in Excelsior Minnesota.



Tent Cabin



Tent Cabin



## Tent Cabin Floor Plan Options



## DORM CABINS

There are two capacity levels provided for dormitory style lodging. The first (listed below) is a dorm cabin and can accommodate up to sixteen. The second (on opposite page) is a bunkhouse that can accommodate up to thirty-two.

### General

Chaperones and counselors are required to sleep in each cabin to provide adequate supervision. The attached screened porch can be used for seasonal sleeping space.

### Users

User groups include: Organized groups which desire a moderate level of comfort; retreats; reunions; and youth groups.

### Sleeping

Bunk room will accommodate up to sixteen occupants on eight bunks. Upper bunks can be pull-down bunks fastened to wall, enabling them to be placed in the

upright position if a higher level of finish and less beds are desired.

### Toilet/Shower/Lavatory

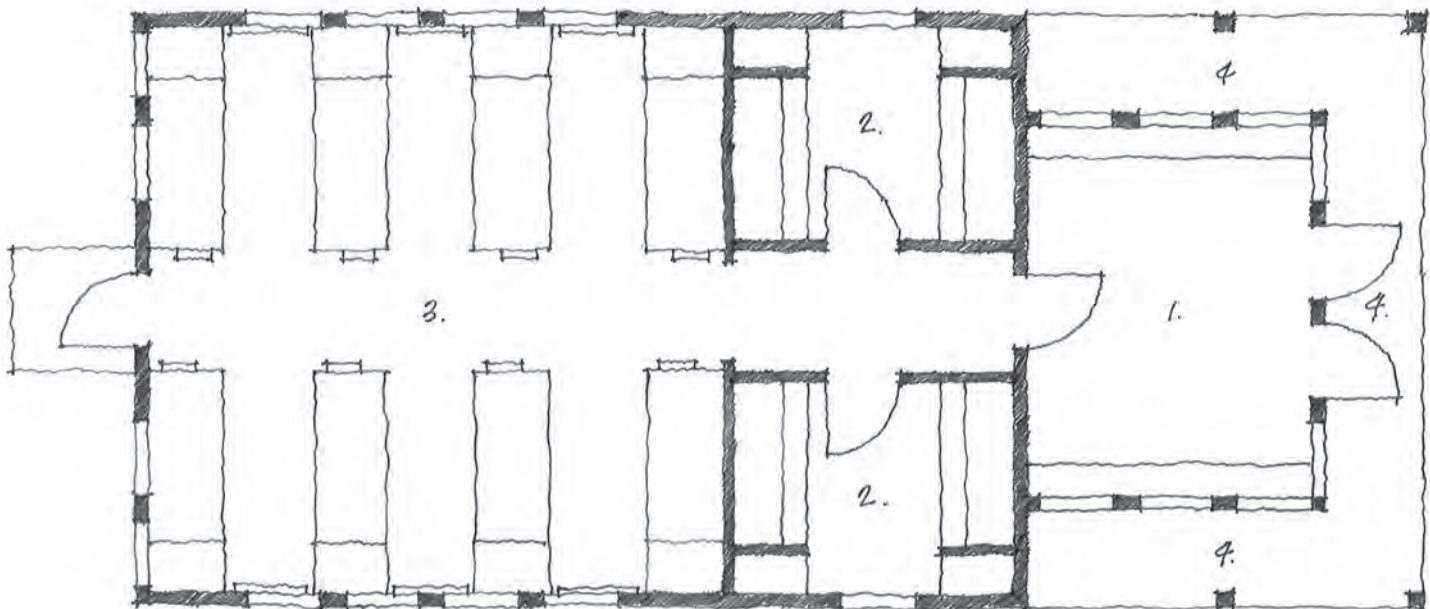
Toilet, shower and lavatory facilities are provided in a common facility, typically not in each cabin. The facility should be within a 500 foot walk from cabins.

### Gathering

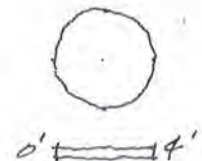
An attached screened room provides flexible gathering space(s). Cabin dorms can be grouped together on site to create a larger outdoor gathering area with firepit/amphitheater space

### Comparable Examples

Comparable examples include Herzl Camp in Webster Minnesota, Camp Tanadoona in Excelsior Minnesota, and Collin County Adventure in Dallas, Texas.



1. SCREENED PORCH
2. STAFF/COUNSELOR
3. CAMPER'S BUNK ROOM
4. CORRIDOR
5. PORCH



## Dorm Cabin Floor Plan

# BUNKHOUSE

## General

The Bunkhouse provides flexible sleeping and meeting space under one roof. Supervision by chaperones is easier due to ability for chaperone to observe several rooms from one location in a common corridor. Grade school children can prepare for sleeping prior to attending an end-of-day program after which they can walk to their room without being energized by outside air.

## Users

User groups include: grade school residential environmental education program participants; Elderhostel program participants; retreats; conferences; family reunions.

## Sleeping

Sleeping rooms will accommodate up to thirty-two occupants on eight bunks. Upper bunks can be pull-down bunks fastened to wall, enabling them to be placed in the upright position if a higher level of finish and less beds are desired.

## Toilet/Shower/Lavatory

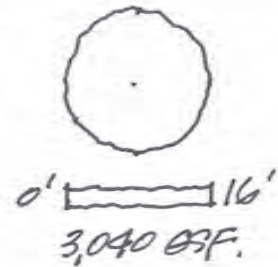
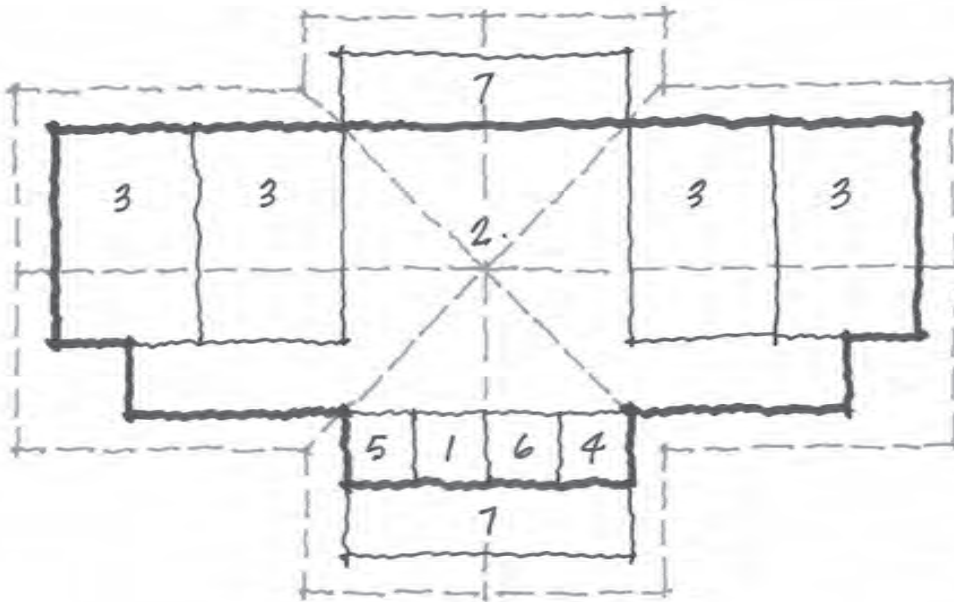
Toilet, shower and dual lavatory facilities are available in each sleeping room and are separated for simultaneous use.

## Gathering

A flexible gathering space is provided for environmental education/outdoor skills training, small group meetings, and dining.



- 1. VESTIBULE
- 2. COMMONS
- 3. GUEST ROOM
- 4. UNISEX TOILET
- 5. MECHANICAL/ELEC.
- 6. KITCHEN (SERVING)
- 7. PORCH



Bunk House Floor Plan



## **POSSIBLE FUTURE FACILITIES: FAMILY CABINS**

Priority sites include primarily “primitive” lodging listed on previous pages. Additional facility concepts have been provided if future funding expands. These facilities are provided on the following pages.

### **General**

Chaperones/counselors are required to sleep in each cabin to provide adequate supervision.

No family cabins are proposed in the initial priority phase of improvements funded by the current bond, primarily due to cost. In the initial phase, the planning team is very aware of concern of bringing in a large number of new structures in the District. Sites where cabins are identified for future phase

### **Users**

User groups include: Elderhostel program participants; retreats; conferences; and family reunions.

### **Sleeping**

Three separate sleeping rooms will accommodate up to four occupants on two bunks per room. Two additional occupants can sleep in the common area. Upper bunks can be pull-down bunks fastened to wall, enabling them to be placed in the upright position if a higher level of finish and less beds are desired.

### **Toilet/Shower/Lavatory**

Toilet, shower and lavatory facilities are available in each cabin.

### **Gathering**

An attached screened space provides flexible gathering space(s). Flexible gathering space is provided in the common area for environmental education/outdoor skills training, small group meetings, and dining.

### **Comparable Examples**

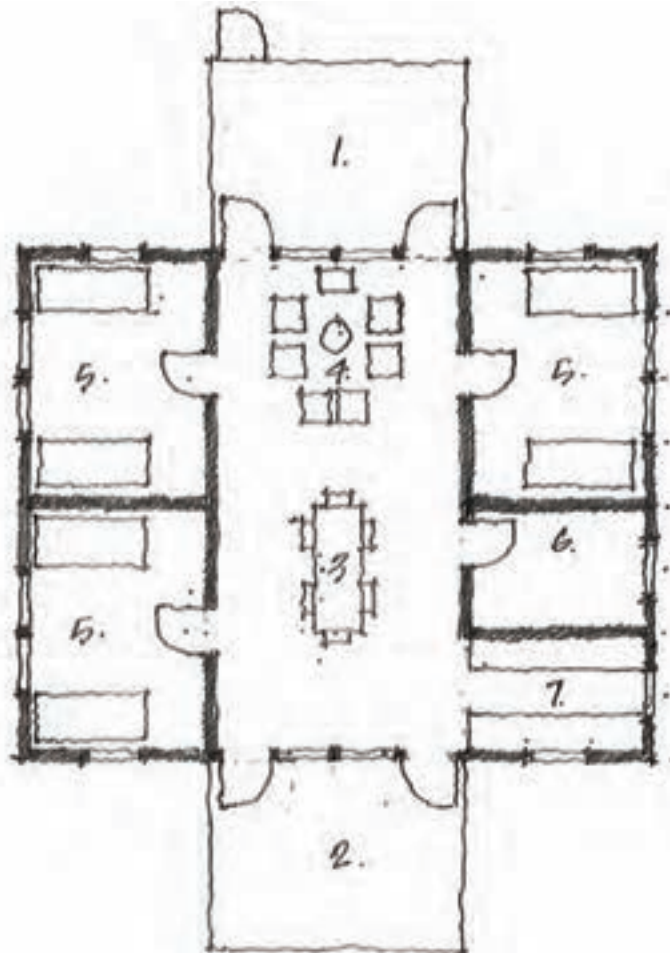
Comparable examples include: Camp Tanadoona in Excelsior Minnesota and Denali Education Center in Denali, Alaska.



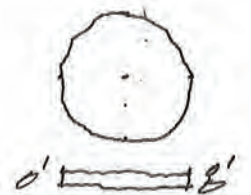




Family Cabin Elevation



- 1. SCREENED ROOM.
- 2. DECK
- 3. DINING
- 4. SITTING
- 5. BEDROOM
- 6. TOILET / SHOWER
- 7. KITCHEN



Family Cabin Floor Plan



## MULTI-PURPOSE LODGE

### General

The Multi-Purpose Lodge provides flexible sleeping and meeting space under one roof. Supervision by chaperones is easier due to ability for chaperone to observe several rooms from one location in a common corridor. Grade school children can prepare for sleeping prior to attending an end-of-day program after which they can walk to their room without being energized by outside air.

### Users

User groups include: grade school residential environmental education program participants; Elderhostel program participants; retreats; conferences and family reunions.

### Sleeping

Sleeping rooms will accommodate up to 16 occupants

on 8 bunks. Upper bunks can be pull-down bunks fastened to wall, enabling them to be placed in the upright position if a higher level of finish and less beds are desired.

### Toilet/Shower/Lavatory

Toilet, shower and dual lavatory facilities are available in each sleeping room and are separated for simultaneous use.

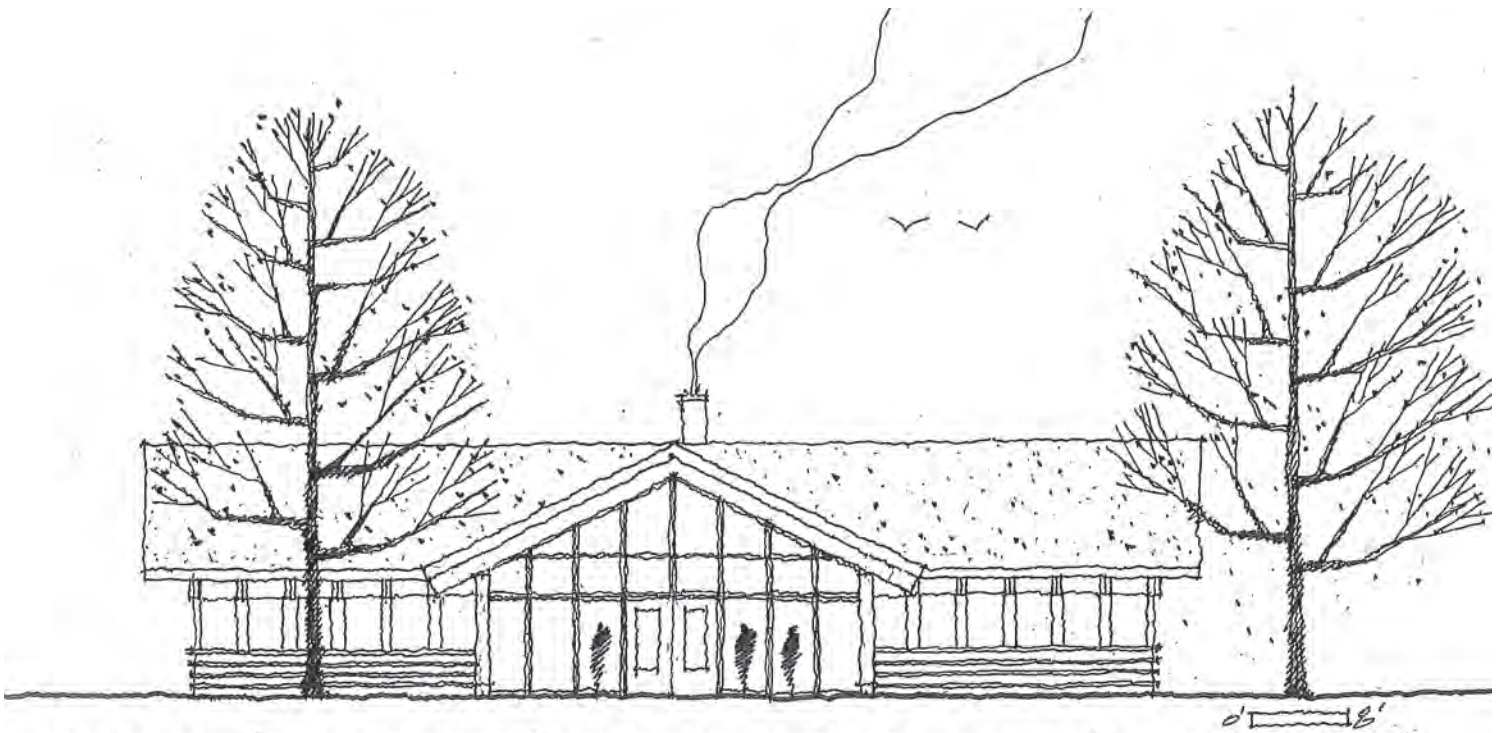
### Gathering

Flexible gathering space(s) are provided which provide space for environmental education /outdoor skills training, small group meetings, and dining.

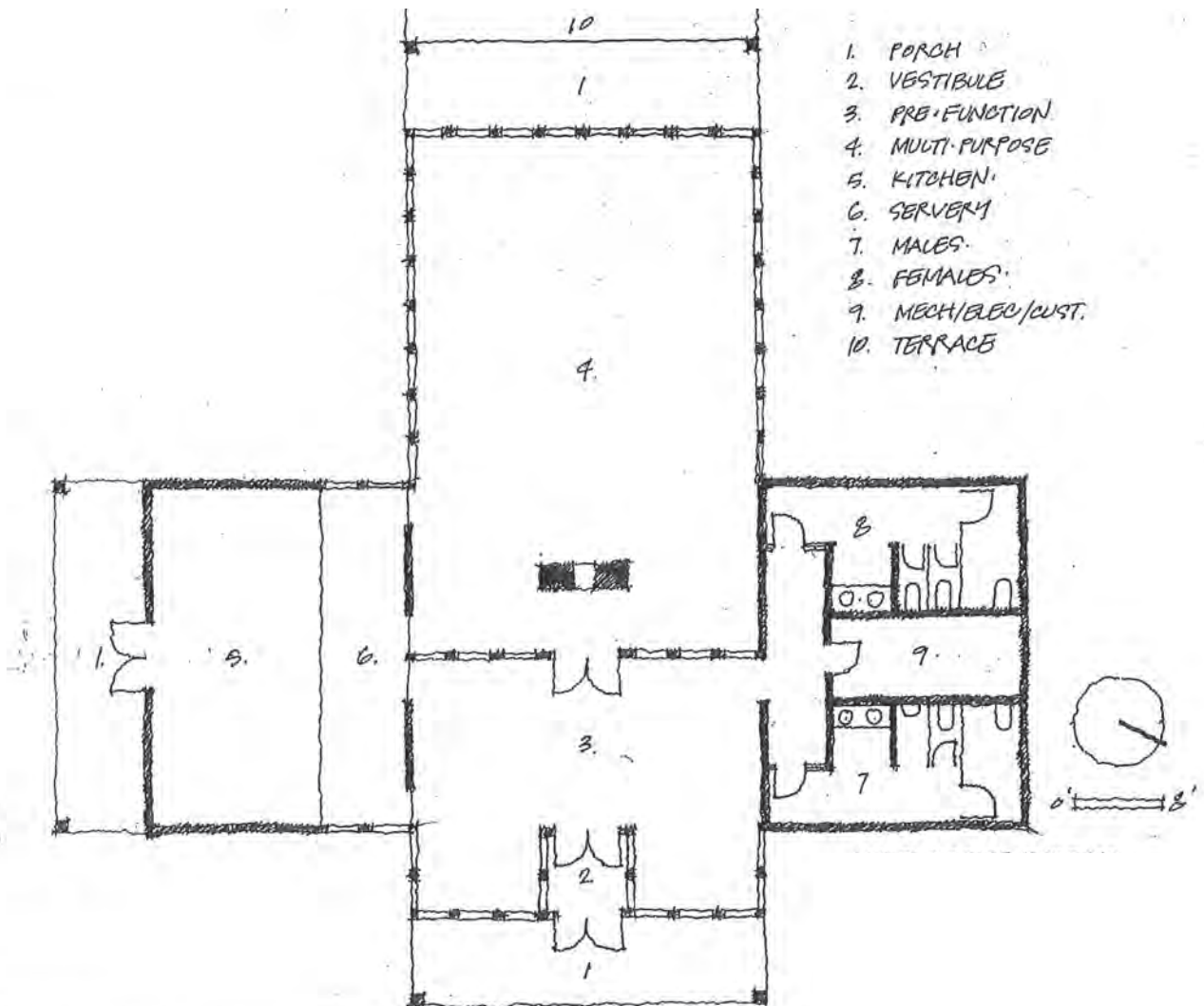
### Comparable Examples

Comparable examples include: Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in FPD of Will County; Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Audubon Center of the North Woods in Sandstone, Minnesota; and Long Lake Conservation Center in Palisade, Minnesota.





Multi-Purpose Lodge Elevation



Multi-Purpose Lodge Floor Plan



## PROGRAM SHELTER

### General

Effective program spaces can vary greatly in their level of refinement. Program space can greatly facilitate to the intent of camps to connect people in nature through immersion.

Interior program space often serves as a staging area for pre and post outdoor study activities. Program space can be located in a central area, i.e., classroom building, from which participants disperse to areas throughout the landscape. Program space can also be dispersed throughout the landscape.

Traditionally, various program activities such as art and nature study have been housed in a dedicated building or space. Flexible program houses enable programs to be delivered at various locations based on program content. Ideally program houses are dispersed based on landscape type, enabling study of various landscapes such as water, prairie, forest, etc. or other unique natural feature.

### Users

User groups include: organized groups who desire a moderate level of comfort; church retreats; family reunions; and youth groups.

### Toilet/Shower/Lavatory

Toilet, shower and lavatory facilities are provided in a common facility remotely within 500 feet or toilets and hand-washing could also be provided with adjacent composting or vault toilets.

### Gathering

The facility should be open air to accommodate flexible programming. A future phase can incorporate enclosure for year round use. The facility can be screened for seasonal sleeping bag use.

### Comparable Examples

Comparable examples include: Camp Tanadoona in Excelsior, Minnesota.





## SUPPORT FACILITIES

### Toilet/Shower Facilities

When utilities connections are nearby and available, toilet and shower facilities should be provided for sites that contain overnight camping. Ideal walking distances are one-eight mile from campsite or lodging feature.

### Compost Toilets

When utility connections are not feasible or too costly, sites should utilize compost toilets. This is most evident in tent pad camping nestled into wooded, remote sites.

### Check-In Posts

When sites house a large capacity and multiple groups or organizations are programmed, a check-in building should be utilized to control egress and ingress.

### Security/Admin/Infirmary Building

On larger programmed sites a security building might be utilized. This is a multi-purpose building containing a residence or office for a guard as well as administrative and medical features.





	FACILITIES											
	CAPACITY	MULTI-PURPOSE/LOGGEE 100 CAMPERS	BUNKHOUSE- 32 CAMPERS	FAMILY CABINS - 8 CAMPERS	TENT CABIN - 8 CAMPERS	TENT SITE - 4 TO 6 CAMPERS	DINING HALL	CONFERENCE FACILITY	MIK SUPPORT STRUCTURES	LEARNING CENTER	SECURITY/ ADJUVANT INFRASTRUCTURE	
PRIORITY SITES	CAMP REINBERG	394 (INITIAL) 42 (FUTURE)	-	-	4 (32) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	20 (120)	UTILIZE EXISTING DINING	UTILIZE EXISTING DINING	PROGRAM SHELTER (1) FUTURE	ADJUVANT TO CAMPERS	(1) FUTURE
	CAMP SULLIVAN AND FALCON	468	-	8 (INITIAL) EXISTING 2000 8 - NEW (2012)	-	12 (96)	40 (240)	UTILIZE EXISTING BUNKHOUSE/SPRINKLER	-	TOILET/SHOWER (1) INITIAL TOILET/SHOWER (2) FUTURE	OFFICE TO LITTLE RED	(1) INITIAL
	CAMP PINE WOODS	380 (INITIAL) 500 (FUTURE)	-	1 (32) INITIAL 1 (32) FUTURE	8 (64) (FUTURE)	16 (128) INITIAL 8 (64) FUTURE	20 (120)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	TOILET/SHOWER (1) INITIAL TOILET/SHOWER (2) FUTURE PROGRAM (1) FUTURE	RIVER TRAIL NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	(1) INITIAL
	BULLFROG LAKE LEGACY SITE	(1) (32) INITIAL 64 (FUTURE)	-	-	8 (64) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	12 (72)	(1) NEW DINING (FUTURE)	UTILIZE DINING RM FUTURE	(1) TOILET/SHOWER (1) COMPOST TOILET (INITIAL)	LITTLE RED	(1) INITIAL
	SHABBONA PICNIC GROVE	126 (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	2 (64) (FUTURE)	-	8 (64)	12 (72)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	(1) TOILET/SHOWER (1) PROGRAM (INITIAL)	SHABBONA NATURE CENTER	(1) INITIAL
SECONDARY SITES	SKOKIE LAGOONS	96	-	-	-	12 (96)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(1) COMPOST TOILET (1) PROGRAM (FUTURE)	SHABBONA NATURE CENTER	-
	THATCHER WOODS	42	-	-	-	7 (42)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(1) COMPOST TOILET (FUTURE)	SHABBONA NATURE CENTER	-
	CAMP KIWANIS	40	-	-	-	8 (64)	8 (64)	BY PERMIT	CAMPFIRES	20 (NO CAPACITY) TRAILER PARKING	LITTLE RED	-
LONG RANGE FUTURE SITES	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER WATCHMAN SITE	116	-	2 (64) FUTURE	2 (16)	-	6 (36)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	-	(1) COMPOST TOILET (1) PROGRAM (FUTURE)	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	-
	POPLAR CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	CAMP DAN BEARD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	CAMPFIRE RINGS	REPAIR EXISTING FACILITY	-	REPAIR EXISTING NATURE CENTER (PLAN FOR SITE IMPROVEMENT)	-
	MILLER MEADOW NORTH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	STONY FORD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	REPAIR EXISTING CENTER	-
	COLUMBIA WOODS	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	SAGAWAU CONFERENCE CENTER	16	-	1 (16)	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	SAGAWAU NATURE CENTER	-
	McGINTY SLOUGH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	SAGAWAU NATURE CENTER	-
	GLENWOOD ROAD PRAIRIE	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	MEETING ROOMS	-	-	-
	KINGS GROVE	68	-	-	4 (32)	-	6 (36)	-	MEETING ROOMS	-	-	-
PLUM CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-	
DAY USE	BLUE STAR MEMORIAL WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-
	CAMP FORT DEARBORN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	EGGERS GROVE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-
	DAN RYAN WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-
	McCORMICK WOODS - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	BOOKFIELD JOC	-
	CAMP ALPHONSE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	PROGRAM SHELTER	-	-
	BUSSE LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER- DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	MATHEW BIESZCZAT RESOURCE CENTER - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ISAAC WALTON LEAGUE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	LITTLE HOUSE OF GLENCOE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MASTER PLAN SUB TOTALS	2286	0	10 (340)	26 (240)	168 (672)	171 (1026)	1	5	20(40)			7
2013 INITIAL PRIORITY SUB TOTALS	1204	0	4 (164)	0	52 (416)	104 (624)	0	0	0			4



## MASTER PLAN FACILITY SUMMARY

Synthesizing public input and staff commentary with the natural regions, core values, possible sites, and potential offerings, the planning team developed this framework of sites that work together to provide a network of camping experiences. Ranging from small sites for tent camping to large properties with a host of overnight facility options, the system provides a hierarchy that is legible, functional, scalable, and inviting.

The chart to the left outlines specific facilities for each site in the camping program. The plan defines a diverse portfolio of program opportunities, and these in turn craft a series of experiential storylines that are highlighted in the following chapter.

The following pages of this report outline a series of broad camp programming initiatives and how particular sites work together to accomplish them. Each initiative includes at least one “case study” of how that vision might be realized, but it should be noted that other properties are proposed within the system with similar program offerings that are not developed to the same level of detail in this report.









# IMPLEMENTATION



In order for the programs and facilities to efficiently deliver program and consistently offer a diverse array of experiences to the county, a number of operational and logistical components must be considered. Equally important, the broad vision of the master plan must be prioritized and divided into achievable projects of a fundable scale. Finally, an operational model must be established that provides a viable economic scenario and staffing approach that is sustainable and meets the District expectations for revenue and cost. This chapter highlights several operational and management-related components of the plan that will affect implementation and realization of the vision.

## SERVICE WINDOW

### Overnight

Overnight camping opportunities vary in size, scale, price, and format across the county. Flexible facilities are envisioned to appeal to individuals, families, and groups. While specific proposed facilities of each site will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the following outlines the general approach of the overnight camping program.

Groups seek an overnight experience in nature for a variety of reasons. Youth may come as part of a natural science or environmental education curriculum (schools, research, etc). Some may come for the challenge and enjoyment of adventure based activities in a group setting. Still others simply seek a change of venue for their individual program in a retreat or conference type setting. Highlight facilities for groups are bunk style rooms, a dining facility, and flexible gathering spaces in addition to the variety of outdoor experiences that each site may offer. Group camping, especially for youth, demands a distinct operational, programmatic, and facilities approach. The primary season for group camping, especially as it pertains to youth, parallels the school calendar, notably the fall and spring seasons.

### Day-Use

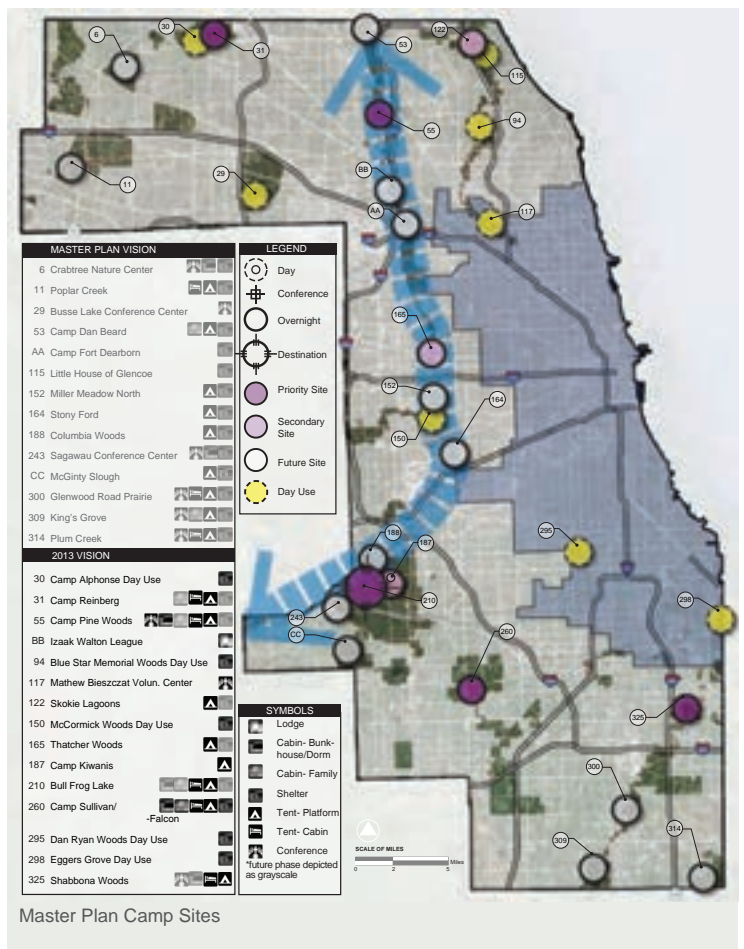
A parallel offering to the overnight experience is the expanded role of day camp and conference offerings on District lands. As a destination for many summer and seasonal programs, District has been offering day camp facilities via various picnic groves and other shelter rentals throughout the county. The camping master plan proposes to expand the role of day camp offerings as a means to introduce new groups to the District lands, and encourage return visits for other programs or to hopefully consider extending their experience via an overnight program.

Regardless of their particular program interest, attending a day camp in the District creates an awareness of the system and encourages return visits. The master plan leverages existing facilities and does not preclude any picnic grove from being casually rented to a day camp group. The plan does, however, organize the premier day camp sites and outlines a strategy for facility expansion to better respond to day camp group expectations.

The plan also looks to expand day use offerings by offering conference center venue opportunities to a broader audience. Certain facilities, including the Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Center, already offers a tremendous experience in a historic facility but are not currently being marketed as such.

### Year Round and Seasonal Use

As mentioned above, the school group market and the family vacation markets overlap during the spring and fall but differ in the winter (few families) and summer (no school groups). The District should seek a partner organization and concessionaries who are adept at working within these seasonal trends. It is possible that a broad ranged educational overnight facility could evolve into a year round endeavor, but regional trends parallel the school year. Some level of security and maintenance on these facilities is still required during the “off-seasons.”



## PRIORITY SITES

New general obligation bond funding of roughly \$26 million will be invested primarily in five locations to reinvest and revitalize existing camps, create new camping destinations, create special event camp sites near nature centers:

*Camp Reinberg (existing)*

*Camp Sullivan (existing)*

*Camp Pine Woods (new)*

*Camp Bullfrog Lake/Pulaski Woods (new)*

*Shabonna Woods (new)*

More modest investment would occur at “second tier” sites to create specialized user group camps and linear camps:

*Camp Kiwanis (equestrians)*

*Chicago River (linear)*

*Des Plaines River (linear)*





## OPERATION STRATEGY

As a part of the Camp Master Plan process, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County conducted extensive outreach to potential camp concessionaires to secure their feedback on the draft plan and inquire about opportunities for management services. The research was completed by District staff and over 100 camping organizations and companies were contacted in Illinois, the Midwest and a few national groups. The responses provided insight into camp operations and management needs such as size of campgrounds, level of staffing required and amenities to offer in addition to camp sites. Through this process, the District was able to identify several management approaches and possible camp program managers.

The proposed camping program for District seeks to provide a broad array of programs supported through a range of facility offerings for individuals, families, and groups. Operationally, there are several ways that such an aggressive mix of offerings may be managed. The master planning team evaluated and proposes the following options for program delivery and site management. It should be noted that other forest preserve districts in the region primarily operate their own facilities on a seasonal basis, and sometimes at a financial loss. A proforma estimate of potential revenue and expenses was developed for the priority sites by the consultants that indicated positive projections under a concessionaire model.

Security concern is one of the biggest challenges for overnight camping. Each of the priority sites except Shabonna Woods would have a new Admin/ Security/ Maintenance building that ideally would be staffed 24/7 during peak camping season. Each priority site would also have perimeter fencing and controlled access. In all scenarios below, the District is assumed to construct all facilities.

Ultimately, final design of all camp facilities will respond to the nuance of each site – including specific habitat requirements, seasonality concerns, and other influences that will contribute to a final appropriate development scenario. The District's rules for campfires, vehicles, access, etc. must be tailored to each site's unique context and operational concerns.

## POTENTIAL MODELS

The planning team identified the following models for the District to consider in the ongoing management of camp facilities:

### Operational Partner

This operational model suggests that the District construct the facilities with an agreement in place for an outside partner to facilitate operations and day-to-day management of the property and program delivery. Critical to success of this model would be having the partner on-board during the design process to ensure that their program delivery goals are in sync with the District and that a collaborative decision making process is ensured.

Primary examples of this model include:

- Dunes Learning Center -- constructed by the National Park Service as part of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and operated by a non-profit.
- Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center – constructed by a government agency and operated as a non-profit 501(c)(3), is a residential learning center and school

### District Full Operations & Delivery

This model puts the full responsibility for construction, operations, maintenance, and program delivery on District staff. Outside groups may rent facilities and bring their own programming in some instances.

Primary examples of this model include:

- Forest Preserve District of Will County – Environmental Learning Center (owned and operated by the Forest Preserve)
- Danada Equestrian Center of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (owned and operated by the Forest Preserve)
- Forest Preserve District of Kane County Camp Tomo Chi-Chi Knolls- (owned/operated by the Preserve)

### Concessionaire

A concessionaire model for family campground sites and cabins as well as potential for rented day use facilities such as meeting space, covered picnic sites, or shelters. In general, concessionaire management companies provide operational maintenance but not major repairs, and require a 10-15% profit margin. A concessionaire is generally adept at serving the needs of youth and school groups. Potential management companies include:

Recreation Resource Management, American Land and Leisure, and California Land Management.

Primary Examples of this model include:

- Pines Point (in Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan)
- Bowman Bridge Campground & Benton Bridge Campground (in Michigan along the Pere Marquette National Scenic River)
- Two Lakes Campground (Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin)

### Summary

At time of this report finalization, the final operational mode is still being considered by the District, but the intention is to find a concessionaire to operate most of the campgrounds across the County.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES & FUNDING NEEDS

The site strategies and facilities chapters of this plan include many additional future opportunities for expanding the district's camping system that do not currently have funding. General obligation funding is expected to be exhausted by mid 2015. Partnerships and private fundraising will likely be part of the District's Centennial Campaign.

## NEXT STEPS

The Camp Master Plan is intended as a conceptual framework for improvements over the next 10-20 years. It will serve as a starting point for more detailed architectural and engineering design for shorter-term priority projects and basis for more detailed planning and fundraising for long-term projects.

### Immediate Next Steps

Starting in early 2013, the District will secure design teams for the five priority camp projects and the three second tier projects. In addition to the design firms, the District will hire program management teams to manage the camp construction. Each camp project will have a project schedule and an engagement strategy developed with a timeline. Key stakeholders and community members will be identified for each site to engage in the review and development of the schematic designs. Lastly, the camp operation needs will be developed and a concessionaire or an operational partner will be selected.

### Mid and Long Term

*Develop fundraising materials and strategies for unfunded sites and facilities.*

*Prioritize capital plan to build additional camp sites and enhance camp sites constructed in 2013 plan*

*Identify stakeholders and partners for building additional camp sites and enhancing camp sites constructed in 2013 plan*

The priority campground sites will go into a schematic design process after the plan is approved. The exact siting of the infrastructure will be identified in that process. In addition to the priority campground sites, the District has longer term plans for the Campground Master Plan that are not yet funded, but may be built in the future.

*For more information and to download the complete Camp Master Plan go to <http://www.fpdcc.com/camping>*









# CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER  
**6**



## MASTER PLAN GOALS

This chapter provides an overview of priority sites where the District will focus its existing funding. Sites identified as future sites, where the District can expand its outreach and system, will come into effect when funding becomes available. Priority sites will achieve immediate goals to:

### **Bullfrog Lake/Pulaksi Woods as Legacy Site**

As a component of the 100 year anniversary of the District system, the master plan seeks to start a new tradition by developing a new camping program at Bullfrog Lake. Carefully selected from other sites, the Bullfrog Lake property stands out for its rolling topography, beautiful views, and surrounding forest. Its dramatic and secluded Palos Preserves location is seen as an embodiment of the spirit and mission of the District system while still being reasonably accessible within the county's suburban fabric.

Hopefully as the District celebrates its second 100 years, Bullfrog Lake will be a shining gateway icon to District overnight camping and to the greater Palos Preserves region.

### **Des Plaines Anchors**

The Des Plaines River Corridor sought a northern counterpart to its southern anchor at Bullfrog Lake. The linear camping experience (described further in subsequent pages) along the river needed a site with some depth and mass, as well as extensive river frontage, in order to create a meaningful destination for larger groups to camp and experience the river

and surrounding forests. Camp Pine Woods was an easy match for these criteria. The relatively flat site and naturalized open meadow would be fairly easy to develop.

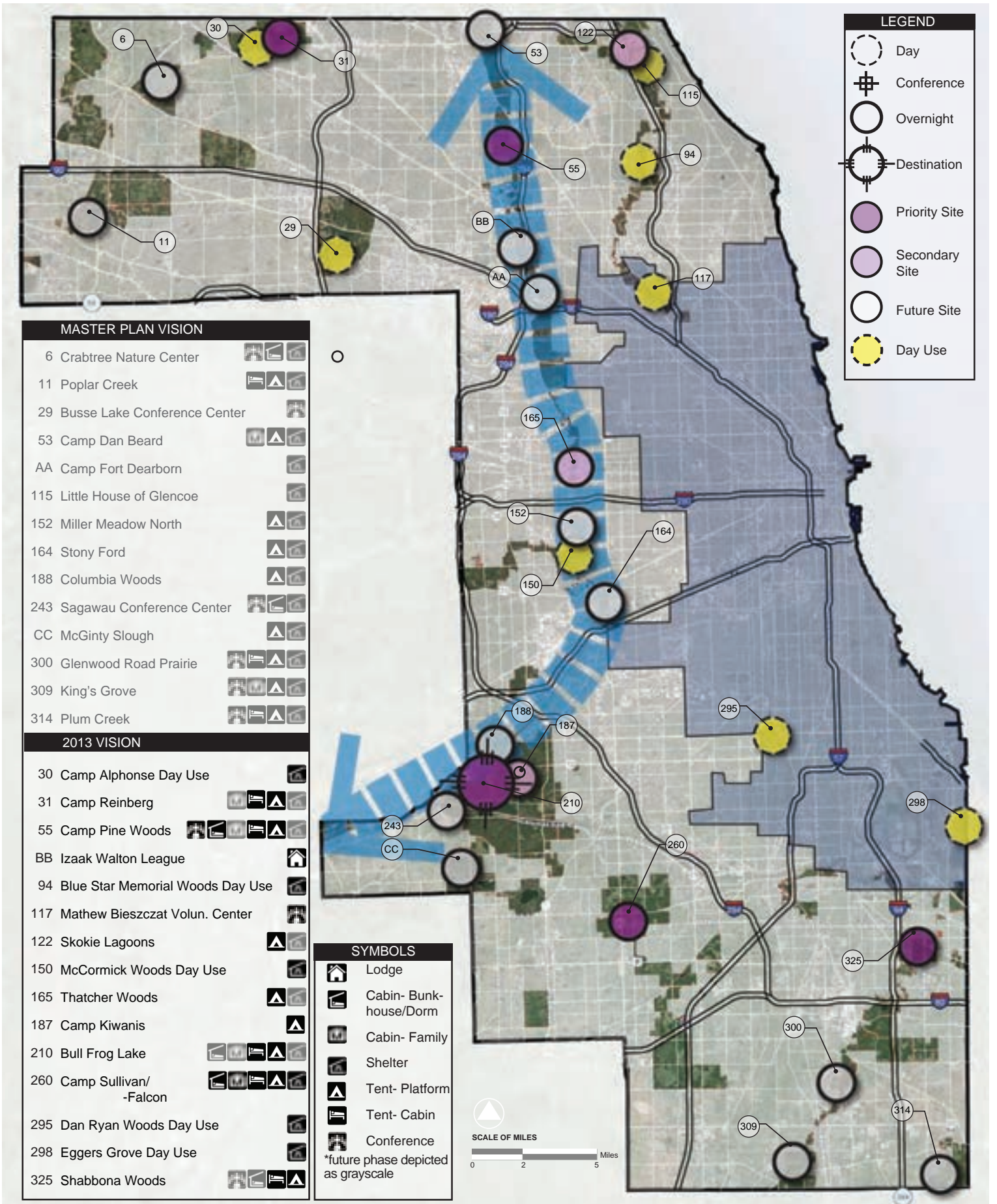
As a northern destination anchor on the Des Plaines River Corridor, the master plan seeks to return Camp Pine Woods to its former camp program yet under a different context. The site was originally developed as a CCC camp and later used as a German POW camp during WWII and then as a boy and girl scout camp destination. These storylines should be documented and celebrated as component of the new camping program.

District is currently evaluating sites for a new police sub-station in this region of the county. This site could easily house this program and facilities, and a shared administration / law enforcement office should be considered in the interest of shared investment and leverage of fiscal resources. Camp Pine Woods will offer a flexible array of facilities and programs that touch on three of the primary camp typologies (Nature Immersion, Resource Based Education & Adventure Based Recreation).

### **Nature Centers as Overnight Sites**

The existing nature centers are the heart of the educational outreach for the District. Recent investment has resulted in several prominent destinations, and capitalizing on their momentum is a tremendous opportunity to expand their programming options. In fact, several nature centers have already





LEGEND	
	Day
	Conference
	Overnight
	Destination
	Priority Site
	Secondary Site
	Future Site
	Day Use

**MASTER PLAN VISION**

6 Crabtree Nature Center	
11 Poplar Creek	
29 Busse Lake Conference Center	
53 Camp Dan Beard	
AA Camp Fort Dearborn	
115 Little House of Glencoe	
152 Miller Meadow North	
164 Stony Ford	
188 Columbia Woods	
243 Sagawau Conference Center	
CC McGinty Slough	
300 Glenwood Road Prairie	
309 King's Grove	
314 Plum Creek	

**2013 VISION**

30 Camp Alphonse Day Use	
31 Camp Reinberg	
55 Camp Pine Woods	
BB Izaak Walton League	
94 Blue Star Memorial Woods Day Use	
117 Mathew Bieszczat Volun. Center	
122 Skokie Lagoons	
150 McCormick Woods Day Use	
165 Thatcher Woods	
187 Camp Kiwanis	
210 Bull Frog Lake	
260 Camp Sullivan/ -Falcon	
295 Dan Ryan Woods Day Use	
298 Eggers Grove Day Use	
325 Shabbona Woods	

**SYMBOLS**

	Lodge
	Cabin- Bunkhouse/Dorm
	Cabin- Family
	Shelter
	Tent- Platform
	Tent- Cabin
	Conference
*future phase depicted as grayscale	





been experimenting with special overnight events, and a more robust offering of actual lodging would play well with youth groups and families alike.

Previously discussed were connections to Little Red Schoolhouse (via Bullfrog Lake) and River Trail (via Pine Woods) that serve families and groups. A future overnight facility at Sagawau Environmental Learning Center may attract a more research or higher education based level of visitors.

While overnight facilities are suggested within easy access all of the existing nature centers, connections to Crabtree and Sand Ridge (via Shabbona Woods) are explored as case studies here. Camping at Crabtree Nature Center is a long range future site.

### **Preserve Cultural Heritage in County**

Camping has long been a cherished experience on Forest Preserve lands. Several generations of youth have grown up camping at Camps Reinberg, Dan Beard, and Sullivan, just to name a few. But the roots of camping go even farther back – with several sites being work camps for WPA/CCC crews (Skokie Lagoons), POW camps (Pine Woods), and other facilities over the years. Even beyond camping, there are numerous legacies and historical remnants to be overlaid into the storyline of camp properties.

There are several old stonework examples from previous outdoor amenities at Camp Falcon, for example, that could be interpreted to visitors there. Similarly, Camp Reinberg sits just across the street from Deer Grove West, the oldest preserve in the District system. Numerous other examples abound in the Palos Preserve area near Bullfrog Lake and along the river corridors. These stories should be celebrated, and even a “heritage camping” program could be established. The following case studies are just several examples of how this goal might be achieved.

### **Des Plaines Canoe/Kayak Excursion**

As mentioned above, a core experience of the camping program is the collection of overnight sites along the Des Plaines River. Visitors are encouraged to experience the essence of this river spine through the county at their own pace – one night or a multiple day excursion. Beyond the two anchors (Pine Woods and Bullfrog Lake), the following sites offer a primary assortment of tent campsites accessible by the trail system and the river alike:

- Camp Dan Beard
- Camp Pine Woods (northern anchor)

- Camp Fort Dearborn
- Thatcher Woods
- Miller Meadow North
- McCormick Woods Day Use
- Stony Ford
- Columbia Woods
- Bullfrog Lake (southern anchor)

While the sites listed above offer the actual camp site, the myriad of other interesting sites along the way should not be forgotten. Branching out from these overnight locations, trail connections expand the experience to the Zoo, the Chicago Portage Site, and numerous other District and other destinations.

### **Extend Camping Opportunities**

As mentioned previously, the master plan seeks to reach out to new segments of the community that might not be currently engaged with District program offerings. Similarly, the plan looks to get existing visitors interested in new experiences beyond what they are already enjoying on District lands. The diverse array of camp lodging types, couples with opportunities for “starter camp” training and “urban camping” experiences are all testament to this level of outreach. Particular events should be established and partnerships forged with like-minded user groups to further this mission element. The options for paddling, equestrian, bikers, and other recreational activities paired with a camping experience all exhibit this intent. The same is true for the outreach associated with the nature centers. Two case studies that exhibit this concept include Camp Kiwanis and Glenwood Prairie.

### **Utilize Day Use to Connect**

Camping is not just overnight. The Master Plan outlines an array of sites to be utilized for day use events such as picnics, family reunions, environmental education, and other activities. As mentioned previously, the day use program (either hosted by District staff or as a group rental-only option) introduces visitors to the broader concept of the Preserves while they come for one specific use event. Hopefully they will be drawn back to further explore District offerings or overnight experiences as well. To this end, many day use sites utilize existing picnic grove facilities and merely require a different type of marketing this option to the public. These sites should be very flexible and designed to accommodate many different sizes of groups and a diverse collection of activities, connections, etc. Many day use sites are located closer to underserved communities in order to provide experiences that are easily accessible by these communities. It should not be forgotten that

all of the Nature Centers also fall into this category at some level, as most are offering different types of programs that expose visitors to the deeper offerings of the district. Please note that not all of these sites are in the initial 2013 vision. Refer to the facility matrix on page 54.

Day use sites include:

- Blue Star Memorial Woods
- Eggers Grove
- Dan Ryan Woods
- McCormick Woods
- Camp Alphonse
- Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Center

Overnight Sites with Day Use Component:

- Bullfrog Lake
- Camp Pine Woods
- Thatcher Woods
- Crabtree Nature Center
- Shabbona Woods
- Camp Sullivan/Falcon
- Glenwood Road Prairie
- Camp Kiwanis

The following sections of this chapter outline a tiered approach to site development, and include an overview of immediate goals and projects to advance the broader vision of the master plan.

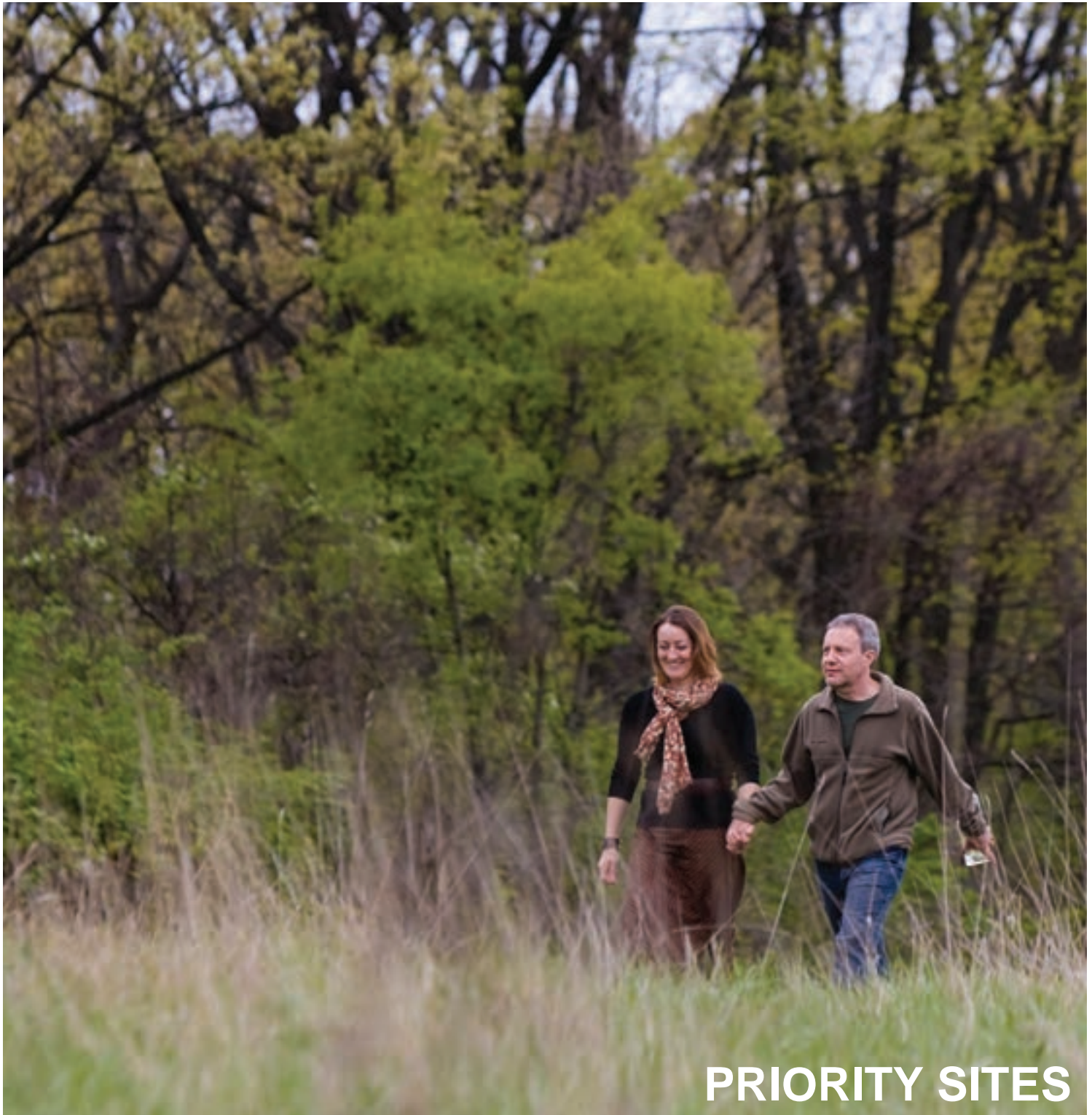




		FACILITIES										
		CAPACITY	MULTI-PURPOSE/LOGGEE 100 CAMPERS	BUNKHOUSE- 32 CAMPERS	FAMILY CABINS - 8 CAMPERS	TENT CABIN - 8 CAMPERS	TENT SITE - 4 TO 6 CAMPERS	DINING HALL	CONFERENCE FACILITY	MISC SUPPORT STRUCTURES	LEARNING CENTER	SECURITY/ ADJUVANT INFRASTRUCTURE
PRIORITY SITES	CAMP REINBERG	384 (INITIAL) 42 (FUTURE)	-	-	4 (0) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	20 (120)	UP/USE EXISTING DINING	UP/USE EXISTING DINING	PROGRAM SHELTER (1) FUTURE	WATER TOWER/PIPE	(1) FUTURE
	CAMP SULLIVAN AND FALCON	468	-	8 (INITIAL EXISTING) 6 (NEW) (0)	-	12 (96)	40 (240)	UP/USE NEW/EXISTING BUNKHOUSE/COMMON ROOMS	-	TOILET/SHOWER (1) INITIAL TOILET/SHOWER (2) FUTURE	OFFICE TO LITTLE RED	(2) INITIAL
	CAMP PINE WOODS	380 (INITIAL) 360 (FUTURE)	-	1 (0) (INITIAL) 1 (0) (FUTURE)	8 (64) (FUTURE)	16 (128) (INITIAL) 8 (64) (FUTURE)	20 (120)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	TOILET/SHOWER (1) INITIAL TOILET/SHOWER (2) FUTURE PROGRAM (1) FUTURE	RIVER TRAIL NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	(2) INITIAL
	BULLFROG LAKE LEGACY SITE	136 (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	-	8 (64) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	12 (72)	(1) NEW DINING (FUTURE)	UP/USE DINING IN FUTURE	(2) TOILET/SHOWER (1) COMPOST TOILET (INITIAL)	LITTLE RED	(1) INITIAL
	SHABNONA PICNIC GROVE	136 (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	2 (8) (FUTURE)	-	8 (64)	12 (72)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	(1) TOILET/SHOWER (0) PROGRAM (INITIAL)	SHABNONA BAYOU TRAILS	(2) INITIAL
SECONDARY SITES	SKOKIE LAGOONS	96	-	-	-	12 (96)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(1) COMPOST TOILET (1) PROGRAM (FUTURE)	WATER TOWER/PIPE GARDEN	-
	THATCHER WOODS	42	-	-	-	7 (42)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(1) COMPOST TOILET (FUTURE)	TRAILHEAD PROGRAM	-
	CAMP KWANIS	40	-	-	-	8 (40)	8 (40)	CAMPFIRES	-	(1) 40-CAPACITY TRAILER PARKING	LITTLE RED	-
LONG RANGE FUTURE SITES	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER WATCHMAN SITE	116	-	2 (8) (FUTURE)	2 (16)	-	6 (36)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	-	(1) COMPOST TOILET (1) PROGRAM (FUTURE)	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	-
	POPLAR CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	CAMP DAN BEARD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	CAMPFIRE RINGS	BUNKHOUSE/COMMON ROOMS	-	WATER TOWER/PIPE LUMBER FOR SITE IMPROVEMENTS	-
	MILLER MEADOW NORTH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	STONY FORD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	WATER TOWER/PIPE CONCRETE	-
	COLUMBIA WOODS	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	SAGAWAU CONFERENCE CENTER	36	-	1 (16)	-	-	-	-	UP/USE EXISTING	-	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	-
	McGINTY SLOUGH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	WATER TOWER/PIPE CONCRETE	-
	GLENWOOD ROAD PRAIRIE	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	WATER TOWER/PIPE	-	-	-	-
	KINGS GROVE	68	-	-	4 (32)	-	6 (36)	WATER TOWER/PIPE	-	-	-	-
PLUM CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-	
DAY USE	BLUE STAR MEMORIAL WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UP/USE EXISTING	-	-
	CAMP FORT DEARBORN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	EGGERS GROVE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UP/USE EXISTING	-	-
	DAN RYAN WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UP/USE EXISTING	-	-
	McCORMICK WOODS - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UP/USE EXISTING	SHOCKFIELD ZOO	-
	CAMP ALPHONSE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	PROGRAM SHELTER	-	-
	BUSSE LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	MATHEW BIESZCZAT RESOURCE CENTER - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ISAAK WALTON LEAGUE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	LITTLE HOUSE OF GLENCOE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MASTER PLAN SUB TOTALS		2286	0	10 (340)	26 (240)	168 (672)	171 (1026)	1	5	20(40)		7
2013 INITIAL PRIORITY SUB TOTALS		1204	0	4 (164)	0	52 (416)	104 (624)	0	0	0		4

The Master Plan suggests that the five Priority Sites be developed in a manner that immediately gives a legible structure and depth to the array of District offerings. This strategy capitalizes upon several existing sites (Camp Reinberg & Camp Sullivan/Falcon) and three new ones (Camp Pine Woods, Bullfrog Lake, and Shabbona Picnic Grove). These immediate projects will set precedence for future work and establish a level

of expectations for the public – therefore it is critical that this first phase be thoughtfully considered and constructed. The Priority Sites are meaningful step in realizing the overarching goals described on the previous pages.







## CAMP REINBERG

Long a camping destination in the District system, public input clearly depicts an interest in a retuned camp opportunity here. The property enjoys a dramatic stand of old growth trees and an existing dining hall that is suitable for continued use. Connections are integral to the draw of this property as well – with close proximity the Jens Jensen preserve, Deer Grove East & West, and others via the extensive trail system. A pedestrian underpass is critical to safely leveraging the experience to these facility connections.

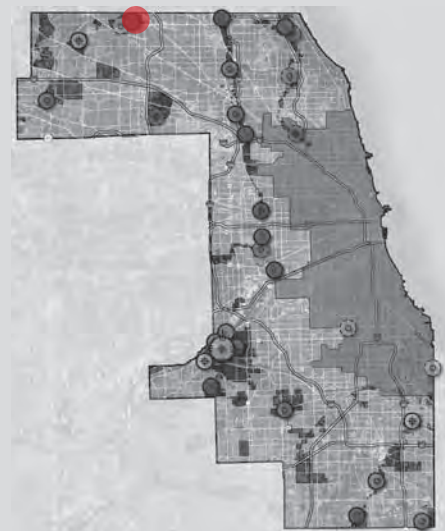
The master plan proposes new cabins to the east of the existing dining hall, and a re-forestation of the buffer area between the dining hall and Quentin Road. Cabin rentals extend the season, and the draw of the nearby sledding hill, cross country skiing, and other winter activities are somewhat unique in the overall camping system.







### KEY MAP

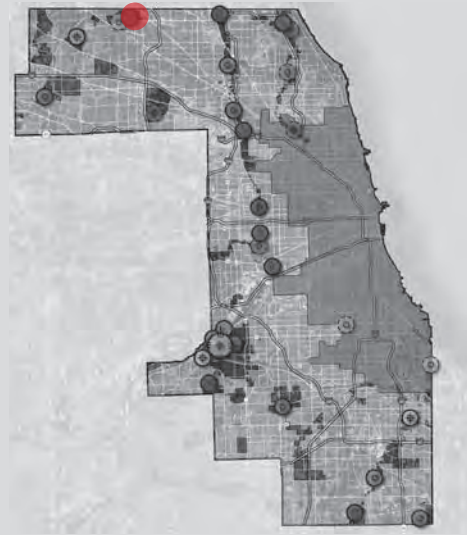








## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Total Capacity = 184

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Admin/Infirmary	-	1
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	-	Toilet/Shower Bldg	1	-
Family Cabin	-	4	Compost Toilet	-	-
Tent Cabin	8	-	Program Shelter	-	1
Tent Site	20	-	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	ext	ext	Day Use	-	-
Security Building	ext	ext			

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Hiking
- Low Ropes Course
- School Group Outdoor Education (off-site connection to Crabtree Nature Center)
- Youth Group Merit Badge
- Youth Group Outings/ Events
- Interest Group Gatherings (small capacity)
- Environmental Education (connect to Crabtree Nature Center)

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- None

### POTENTIAL

- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific curriculum)
- Habitat Management/ Restoration
- Team Building – High Ropes Course

# CAMP REINBERG - 2013 PLAN





## CAMP SULLIVAN

Camps Sullivan & Camp Falcon have long had a history of overnight use – with the Boy Scouts and youth, and previously dating back to its original roots when built as a CCC compound in the early to mid 1900's. The cultural legacy of this property runs deep, and there are remnants of the site in its prime period evident on the property – namely a significant barn (Camp Sullivan) that is an icon at the existing entry drive, and a collection of stonework that was a prominent water feature years ago.

The master plan suggests that these two sites be significantly reorganized and renovated to serve a diversity of users (youth, families, and schools). Camp Falcon area will be merged with Camp Sullivan into one cohesive camping program. Programs may

include environmental education, outdoor skills, and adventure based experience (similar to the scouting interests and other groups that have used this site for many years). A new entry from 143rd Street would provide a better arrival experience and sense of decompression from the highway. The existing cabins at Camp Falcon should be demolished.

New or renovated overnight facilities at Camp Sullivan and Falcon are to include several types of cabin, lodge, and tent camping, in addition to renovation of the existing facilities.

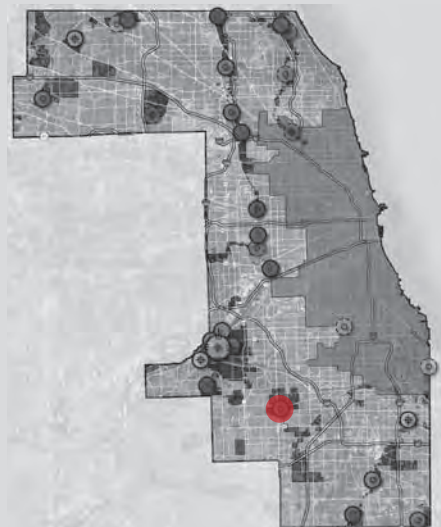
The new camp would include an array of outdoor program amenities that may include a ropes course, equestrian, flexible shelters, and other gathering areas to support various interests. This new camp would be



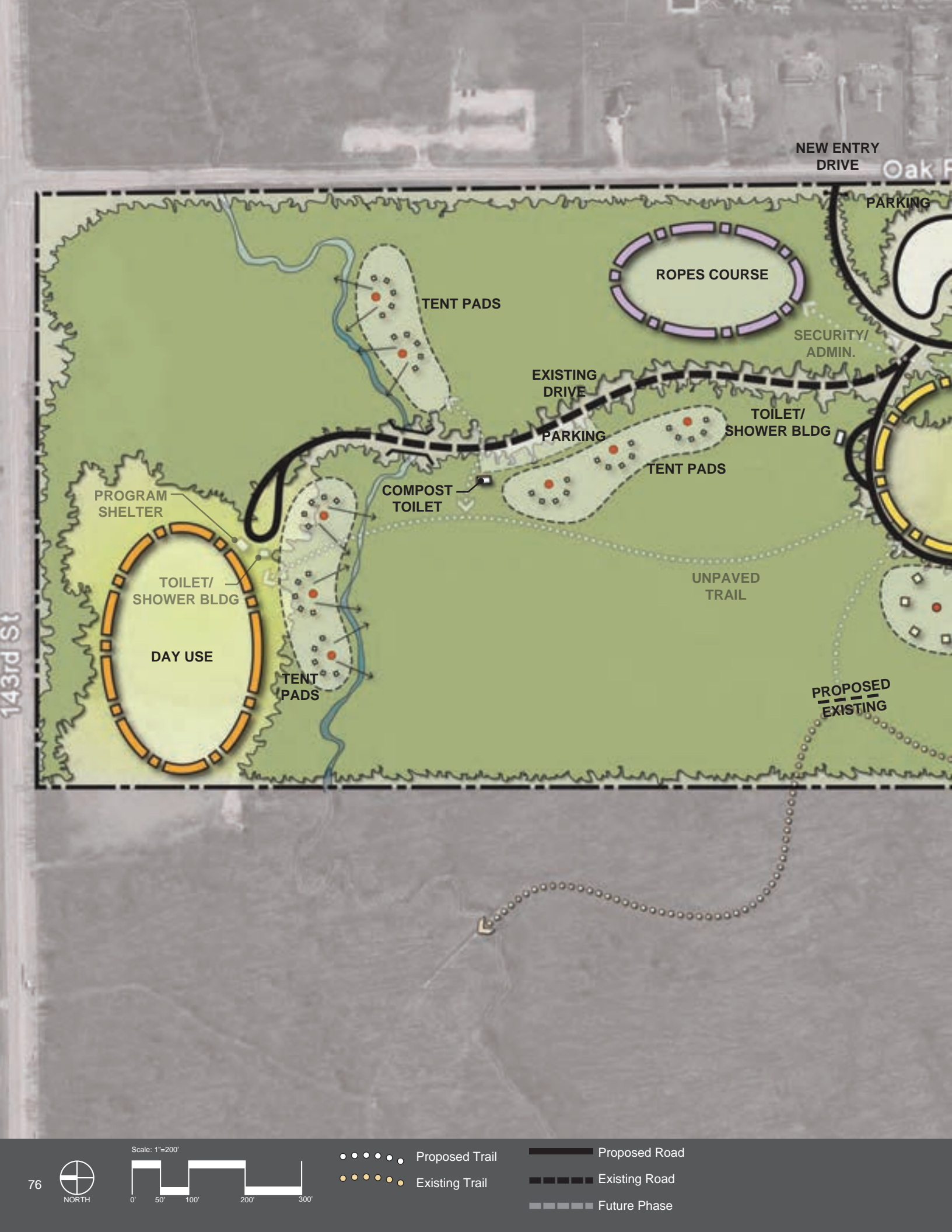


a prime opportunity for a strategic partner organization with a compatible mission to the District. Such an alliance might allow for program delivery by this partner rather than the camp being merely a facility-rental only.

## KEY MAP







NEW ENTRY DRIVE  
Oak P...

PARKING

ROPE COURSE

SECURITY/  
ADMIN.

EXISTING DRIVE

PARKING

TOILET/  
SHOWER BLDG

TENT PADS

COMPOST TOILET

UNPAVED TRAIL

PROGRAM SHELTER

TOILET/  
SHOWER BLDG

DAY USE

TENT PADS

PROPOSED  
EXISTING

143rd St

Scale: 1"=200'

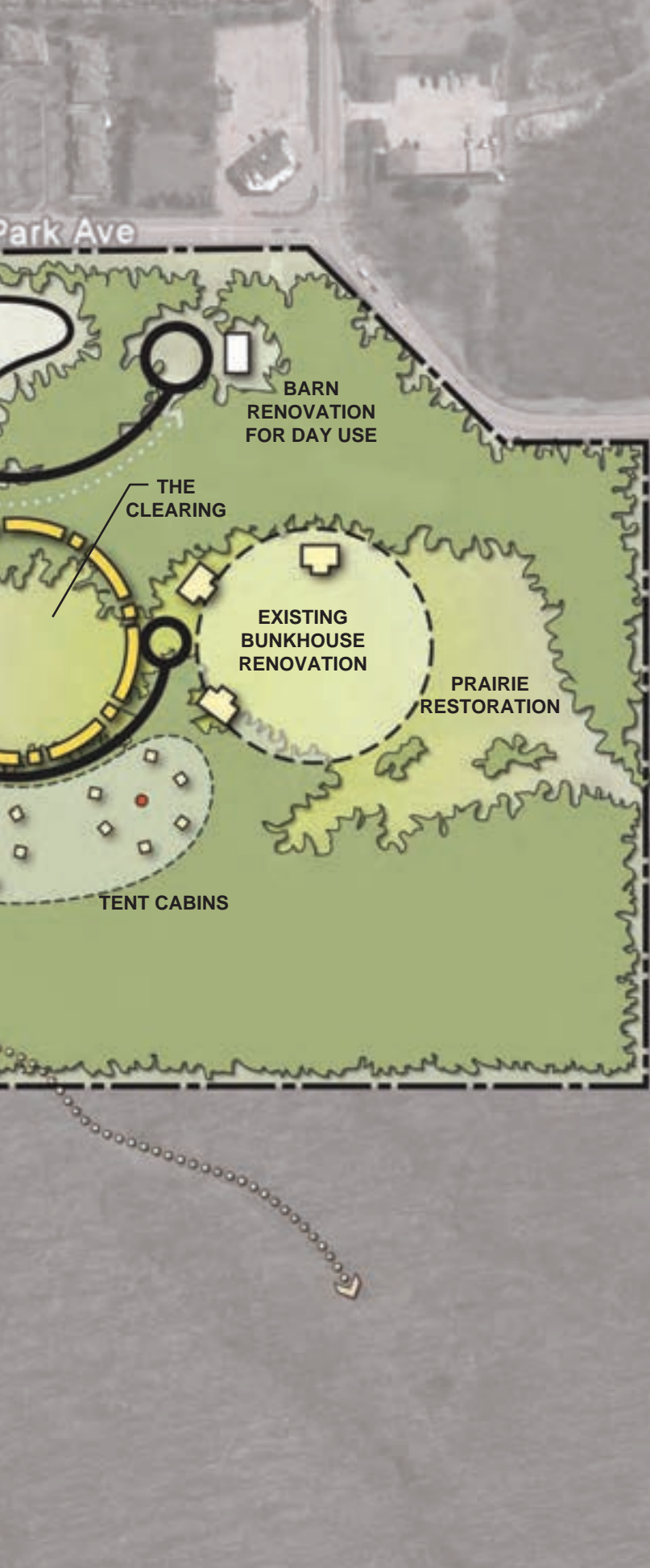
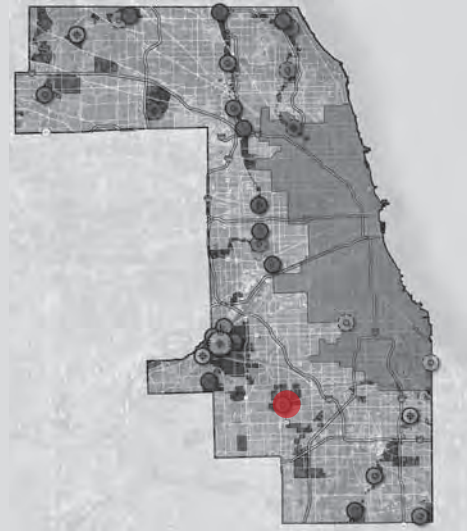


- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- Proposed Road
- Existing Road
- Future Phase



## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Initial Capacity = 468

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	-	1
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	3	-	Toilet/Shower Bldg	1	1
Family Cabin	-	-	Compost Toilet	1	-
Tent Cabin	12	-	Program Shelter	-	1
Tent Site	40	-	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	yes	yes

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Hiking (off-site connection to Pulaski Woods)
- Biking
- Equestrian Trails (off-site connection to Tinley Park)
- Low Ropes Course/Meadow Activities/ Frisbee Golf
- Conferences And Seminars
- Family Camping
- Family Reunions (extended event)
- Youth Group Merit Badges
- Youth Group Outings/ Events (large capacity)
- Interest Group Gatherings (large capacity)
- Nature Study

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- High Ropes Course
- Zip Line





## CAMP PINE WOODS

The site will welcome paddlers as the second camping destination within the county when travelling along the river or trails from the north. Serving families and organized groups, Camp Pine Woods offers appealing programs to a diverse cross section of the community. The tent cabin pods on the river are organized to easily accommodate individual families or groups of several families or classes. Larger groups will enjoy the bunkhouse and other lodging options. The trail system connects to River Trail Nature Center, Beck Lake, and other destinations north and south along the Des Plaines River Corridor.

An active program is proposed here, with tent cabins, family cabins, and tent sites. A site restoration initiative would surround new development, and flexible open

spaces and shelters support a dynamic offering of recreational and educational programs, including ropes course. Camp Pine Woods should be phased in as the camping program builds throughout the county. A tiered approach to construction will allow critical mass to evolve as demand does for facilities for this unique property.

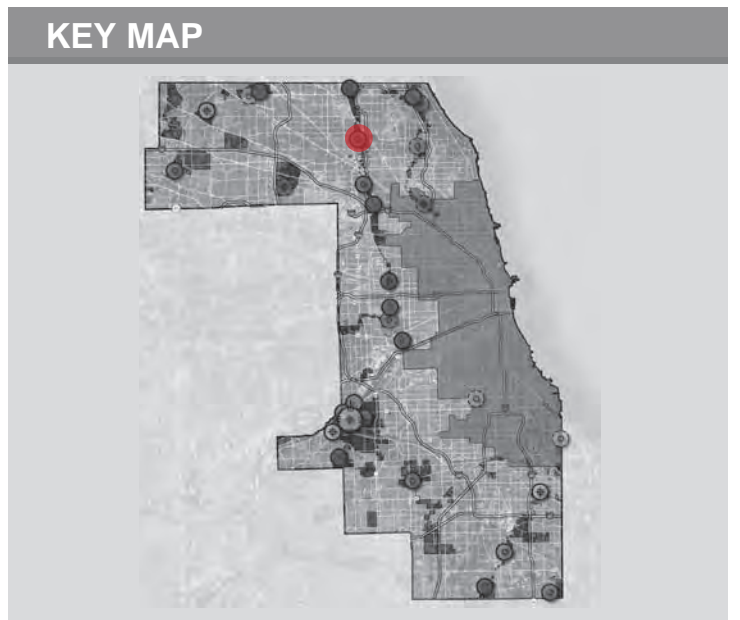




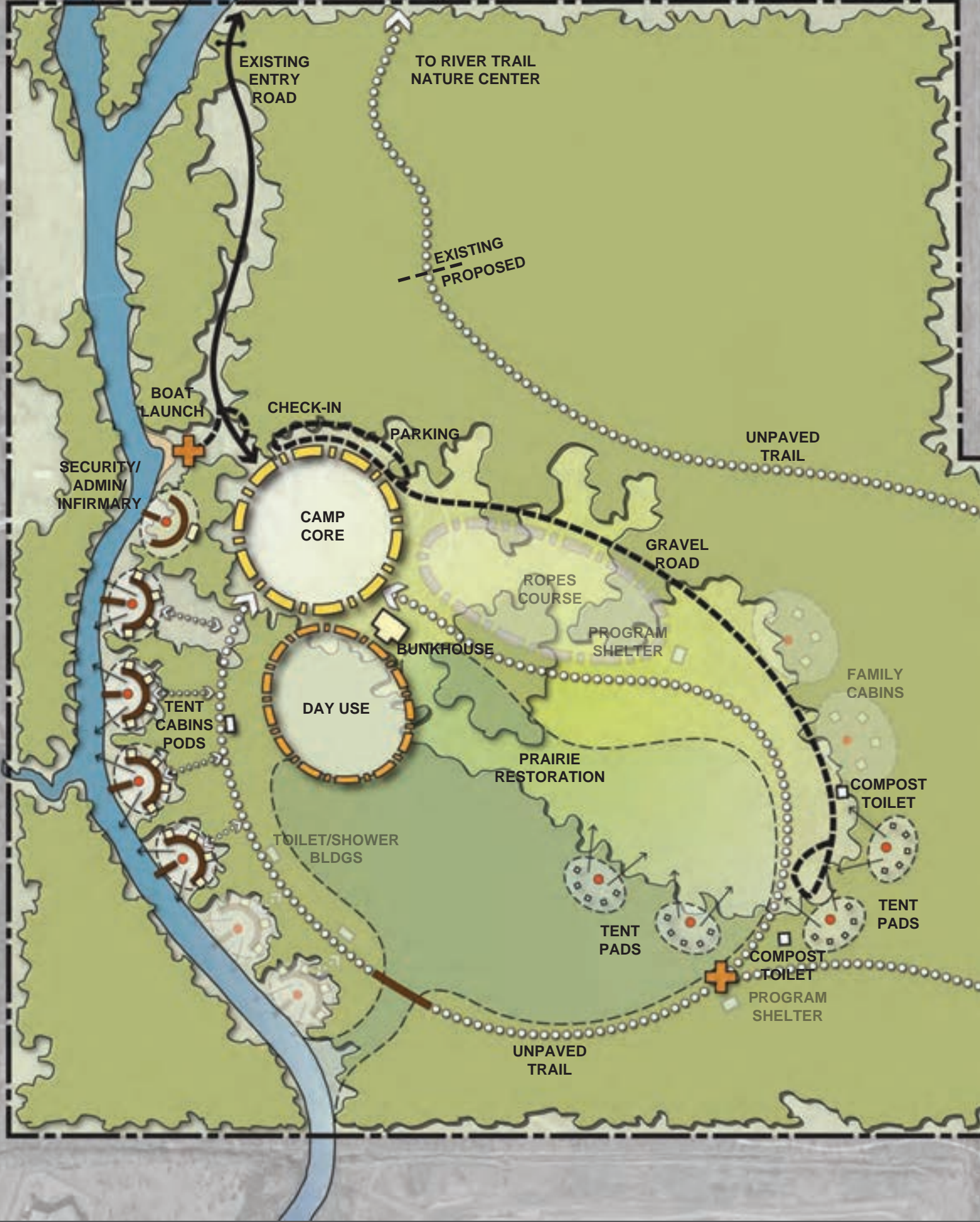
Historic Aerial - Camp Pine Woods



KEY MAP





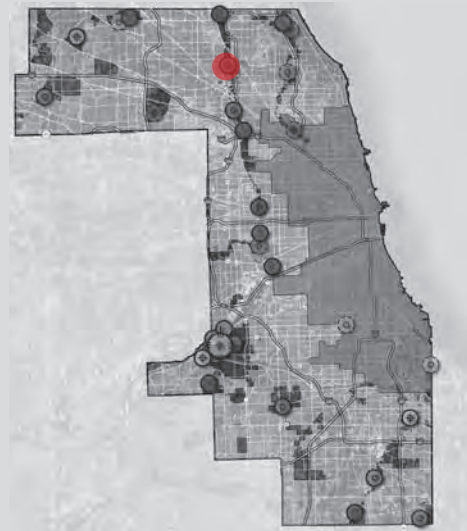


Scale: 1"=200'



- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Road
- Existing Road
- Future Phase

## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Initial Capacity = 280

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	1	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	1	1	Toilet/Shower Bldg	1	2
Family Cabin	-	8	Compost Toilet	2	-
Tent Cabin	16	8	Program Shelter	-	3
Tent Site	20	-	Canoe Launch	1	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	yes	yes

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Fishing & Paddling (connection to Beck Lake)
- Hiking (connection to Des Plaines Regional Trail)
- Frisbee Golf, Low Ropes Course, Meadow Activities
- Cultural Interpretation (heritage of camping at site)
- Conferences And Seminars/Retreats/Family Camping
- Family Reunions (extended event)
- School Group Outdoor Education (River Trail)
- Youth Group Merit Badges
- Youth Group Outings/ Events (large capacity)
- Interest Group Gatherings (large capacity)
- Adventure Based Camping (Des Plaines River, etc.)

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- High Ropes Course
- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific)
- Des Plaines River Canoe/ Kayak Tours (guided)

# CAMP PINE WOODS - 2013 PLAN





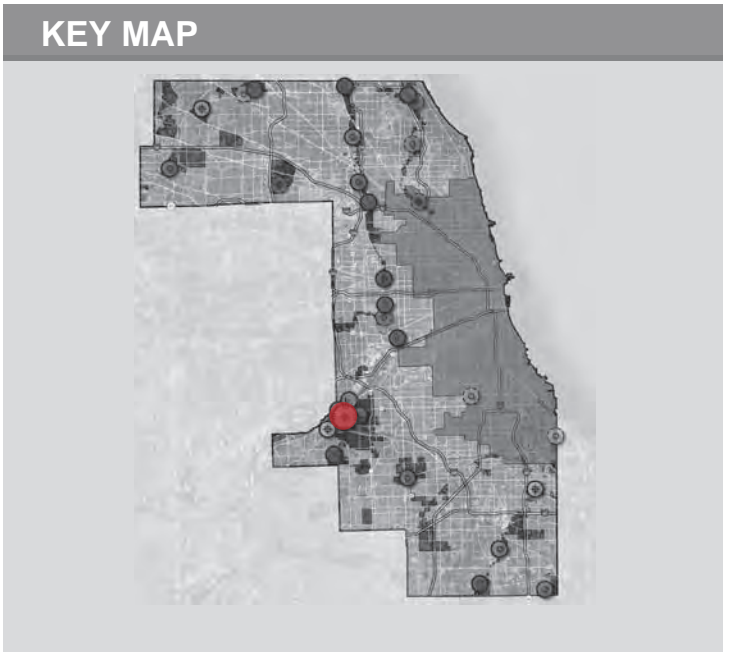
## **BULLFROG LAKE/PULASKI WOODS**

The site fully surrounds Bullfrog Lake, and has regional connections to Maple Lake. The Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center provide nearby destinations for exploration. The site is the downstream anchor of the Des Plaines River camping corridor, accessible via canoe launch at Columbia Woods. Bullfrog Lake was also selected since it is already somewhat disturbed, allowing for construction on a less delicate area and preserving the more sensitive habitat zones for low impact trail interpretation.

The site itself has potential for flexible meeting spaces, tent cabins, family cabins, tent camping, and a broad array of outdoor activities. These lodging options are able to serve organized groups and individual families

throughout the year. While the lake itself is a hub of activity, the surrounding woodlands will house a ropes course, nature trails, and various other educational and recreational activities.









Scale: 1"=200'

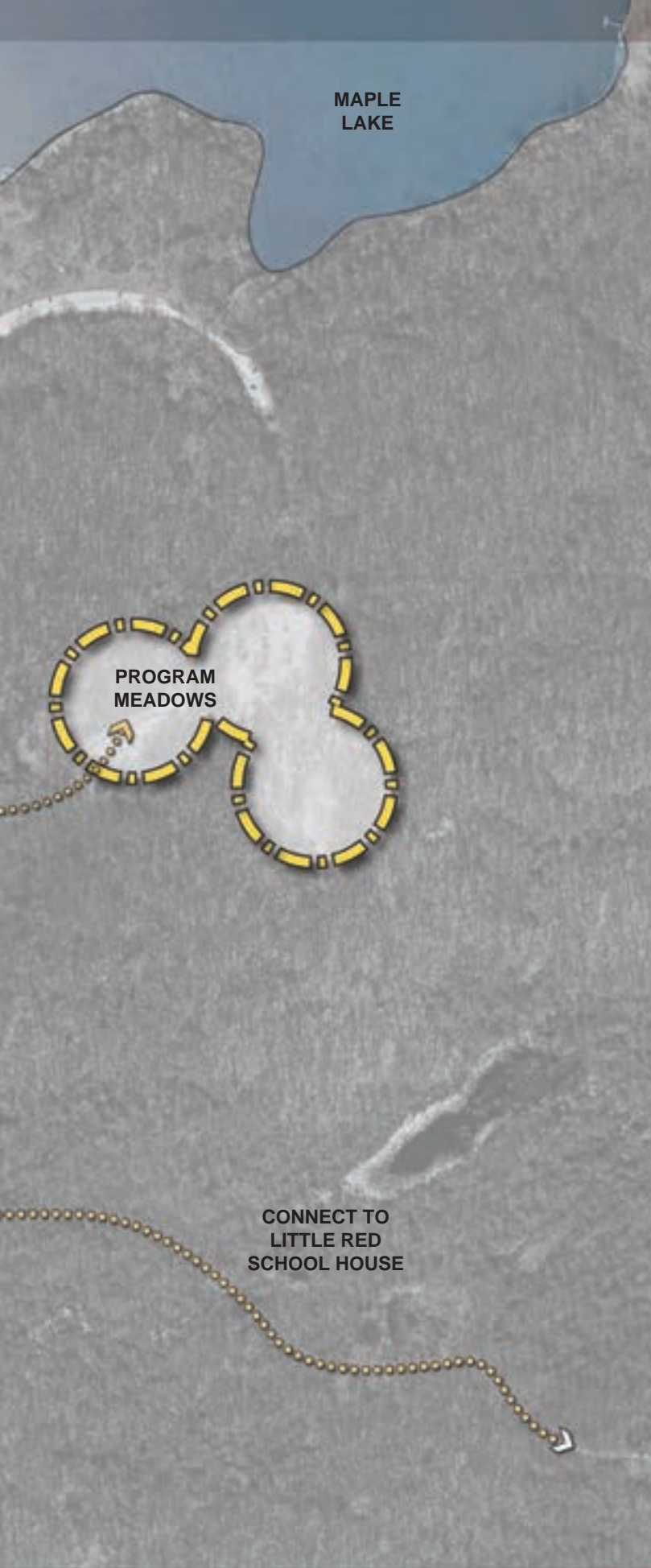
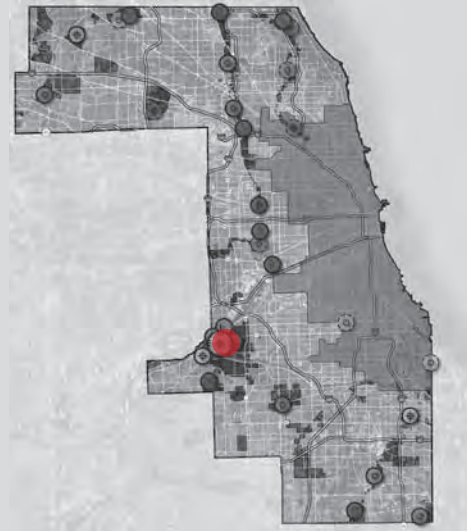


- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- Proposed Road
- Existing Road
- Future Phase



## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Initial Capacity = 136

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	1	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	-	Toilet/Shower Bldg	1	-
Family Cabin	-	8	Compost Toilet	1	-
Tent Cabin	8	-	Program Shelter	-	-
Tent Site	12	-	Canoe Launch	1	-
Dining/Meeting Space	-	1	Day Use	yes	yes
			Boat House	1	-

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Fishing & Paddling
- Mountain Biking (off-site connection to Mtn Bike Trails)
- Equestrian Trails (off-site connection to Equestrian Trails)
- Low Ropes Course
- Meadow Activities, Frisbee Golf
- Conferences And Seminars
- Family Camping
- Family Reunions (extended event)
- School Group Outdoor Education (connect to Little Red Schoolhouse)
- Youth Group Merit Badges (connect to Pulaski Woods & Maple Lake)
- Interest Group Gatherings (large capacity)
- Adventure Based Camping (mountain biking, Des Plaines River, etc.)
- Environmental Education (connect to Little Red Schoolhouse)

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- High Ropes Course/Zip Line
- Ice-Skating, Sledding, Cross Country Skiing
- Adventure Training (Mtn Biking, Orienteering, Etc.)
- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific curriculum)
- Shuttle Service to Columbia Woods





## CAMP SHABBONA WOODS

An important environmental education overnight facility in the Thorn Creek & Little Calumet Corridor is to be a new outpost near Sand Ridge Nature Center at Shabbona Woods. Sited on a previously developed picnic grove “cul de sac” road, the facilities proposed here will have easy access to the nature center, but approach Sand Ridge from the east rather than from the west. Building camp facilities on previously disturbed areas will keep new impacts to a minimum. Closing Shabbona Woods to unscheduled or unprogrammed day use will also hopefully curtail security issues that have been an operational control.

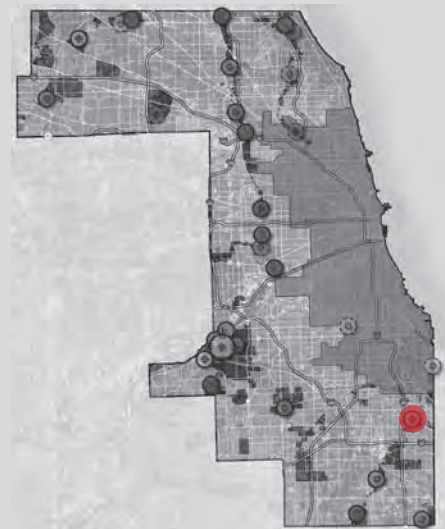
Trail connections to Sand Ridge will allow an easy operational expansion of programming from the existing facility. This site is geared to serve small school and organized youth organizations seeking a

nature-based education experience. Several lodging types plus tent camping options are available. An expanded trail system would serve both nature center visitors and the new camp. The master plan calls for Shabbona to be a primary outreach site for youth.





## KEY MAP







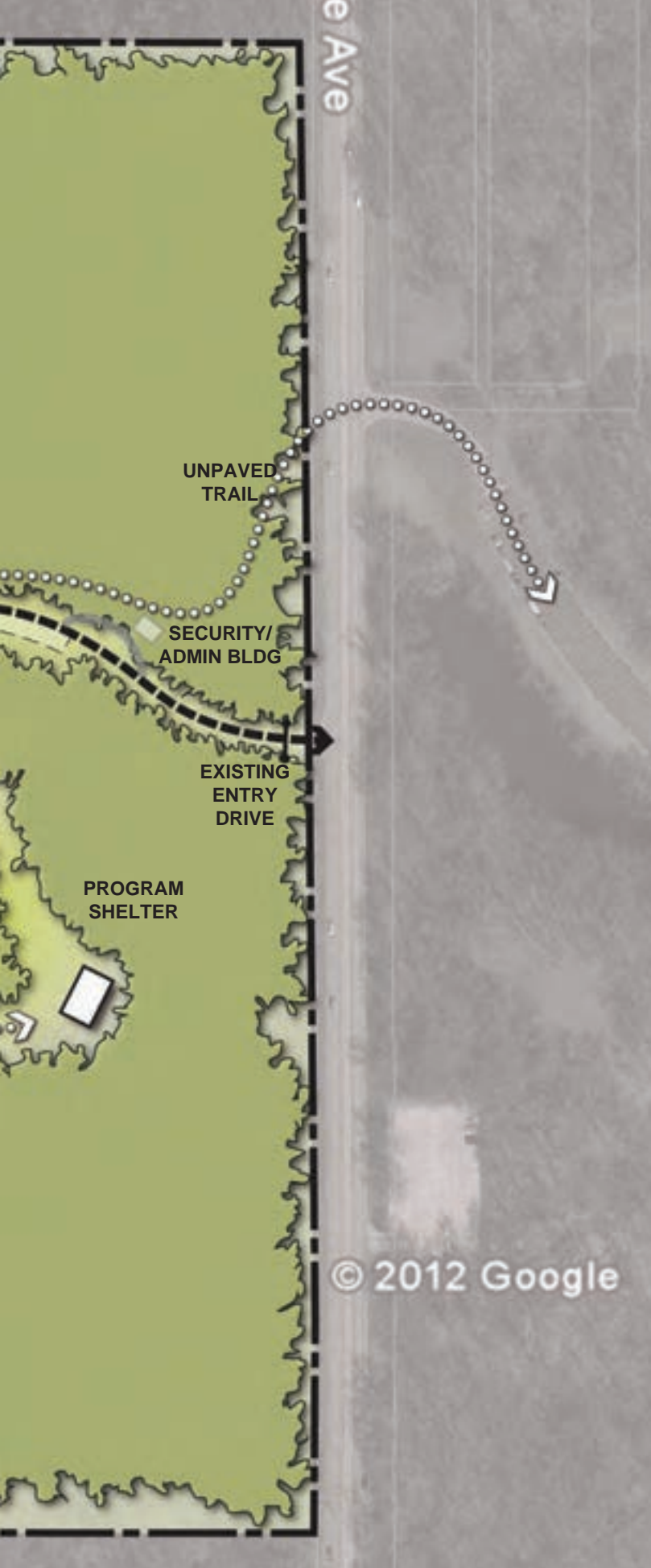
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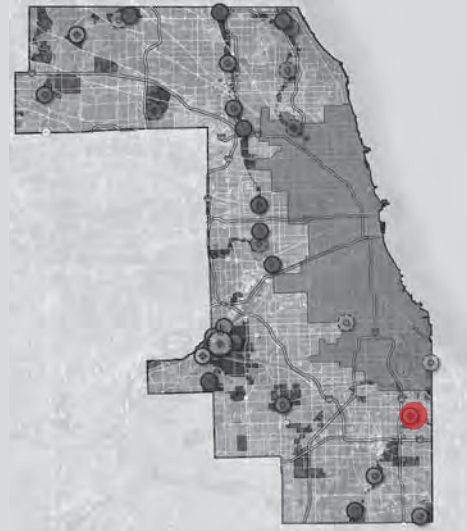
- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- Proposed Road
- - - Existing Road
- - - Future Phase





## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Initial Capacity = 136

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	1	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	2	Toilet/Shower Bldg	1	-
Family Cabin	-	-	Compost Toilet	-	-
Tent Cabin	8	-	Program Shelter	1	-
Tent Site	12	-	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	yes	yes

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Swimming (off-site connection)
- Hiking
- Low Ropes Course
- School Group Outdoor Education (connection to Sand Ridge Nature Center)
- Youth Group Merit Badge
- Youth Group Outings/ Events
- Interest Group Gatherings (small capacity)
- Environmental Education (connect to Sand Ridge Nature Center)

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific curriculum)

# CAMP SHABBONA WOODS - 2013 PLAN



		FACILITIES											
		CAPACITY	MULTI-PURPOSE/LOGS 100 CAMPERS	BUNKHOUSE- 12 CAMPERS	FAMILY CABINS - 8 CAMPERS	TENT CABIN - 8 CAMPERS	TENT SITE - 4 TO 6 CAMPERS	DINING HALL	CONFERENCE FACILITY	MOCK SUPPORT STRUCTURES	LEARNING CENTER	SECURITY/ ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	
PRIORITY SITES	CAMP REINBERG	384 (INITIAL) 42 (FUTURE)	-	-	4 (20) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	20 (120)	UTILIZE EXISTING DINING	UTILIZE EXISTING DINING	PROGRAM SHELTER (2) FUTURE	WATER STORAGE	(2) FUTURE	
	CAMP SULLIVAN AND FALCON	468	-	8 (MINOR) EXISTING LOGS 8 - 1000 (2012)	-	12 (96)	40 (240)	UTILIZE EXISTING BUNKHOUSE/ KITCHEN	-	TOLLETS/SHOWERS (2) INITIAL TOLLETS/SHOWERS (2) FUTURE	OFFICE TO LITTLE RED	(2) INITIAL	
	CAMP PINE WOODS	380 (INITIAL) 340 (FUTURE)	-	1 (20) INITIAL 1 (20) FUTURE	8 (64) (FUTURE)	16 (128) INITIAL 8 (64) FUTURE	20 (120)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	TOLLETS/SHOWERS (2) INITIAL TOLLETS/SHOWERS (2) FUTURE PROGRAM (2) FUTURE	WATER TREAT, NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	(2) INITIAL	
	BULLFROG LAKE LEGACY SITE	130 (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	-	8 (64) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	12 (72)	(2) NEW DINING (FUTURE)	UTILIZE DINING RM FUTURE	(2) TOLLETS/SHOWERS (2) COMPOST TOILET (INITIAL)	LITTLE RED	(2) INITIAL	
	SHABNONA PICNIC GROVE	130 (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	2 (80) (FUTURE)	-	8 (64)	12 (72)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	(2) TOLLETS/SHOWERS (2) PROGRAM (INITIAL)	WATER TREAT NATURE CENTER	(2) INITIAL	
SECONDARY SITES	SKOKIE LAGOONS	96	-	-	-	12 (96)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(2) COMPOST TOILET (2) PROGRAM (FUTURE)	SHRUBBERY/ WETLAND GARDEN	-	
	THATCHER WOODS	42	-	-	-	7 (42)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(2) COMPOST TOILET (FUTURE)	TRAILER HUBWAY	-	
	CAMP KIWANIS	40	-	-	-	5 (PERMIT)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(2) (NO CAPACITY) TRAILER PARKING	UTILIZE RED	-	
LONG RANGE FUTURE SITES	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER WATCHMAN SITE	116	-	2 (80) FUTURE	2 (16)	-	6 (36)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	-	(2) COMPOST TOILET (2) PROGRAM (FUTURE)	CAMPFIRE NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	-	
	POPLAR CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-	
	CAMP DAN BEARD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	CAMPFIRE RINGS	WATER STORAGE FACILITY	-	WATER TREAT AND NATURE CENTER FOR SITE RESTORATION	-	
	MILLER MEADOW NORTH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-	
	STONY FORD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	WATER STORAGE DINING	-	
	COLUMBIA WOODS	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-	
	SAGAWAU CONFERENCE CENTER	24	-	1 (16)	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-	SHRUBBERY NATURE CENTER	-
	McGINTY SLOUGH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	SHRUBBERY NATURE CENTER	-
	GLENWOOD ROAD PRAIRIE	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	WATER STORAGE	-	-	-	
	KINGS GROVE	68	-	-	4 (32)	-	6 (36)	-	WATER STORAGE	-	-	-	
PLUM CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-		
DAY USE	BLUE STAR MEMORIAL WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-	
	CAMP FORT DEARBORN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	EGGERS GROVE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-	
	DAN RYAN WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	-	-	
	McCORMICK WOODS - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTILIZE EXISTING	BROOKFIELD ZOO	-	
	CAMP ALPHONSE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	PROGRAM SHELTER	-	-	
	BUSSE LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	MATHEW BIESZCZAT RESOURCE CENTER - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	ISAAC WALTON LEAGUE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	LITTLE HOUSE OF GLENCOE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MASTER PLAN SUB TOTALS	2286	0	10 (340)	26 (240)	148 (672)	171 (1026)	1	5	20(40)			7	
2013 INITIAL PRIORITY SUB TOTALS	1204	0	4 (164)	0	52 (416)	104 (624)	0	0	0			4	



Three Secondary Sites provide opportunities for expansion that are flexible to respond to demand that may evolve as the camping program gains momentum in the community. While investment at these sites in the initial stage of development is not as high as the Priority Sites, each does play a meaningful role in broadening the diversity of offerings available to the public. Several of these sites also respond to camping

interest from specific user groups (equestrian and canoe camping) as a means of encouraging new users to build a relationship with District holdings.



## SECONDARY SITES







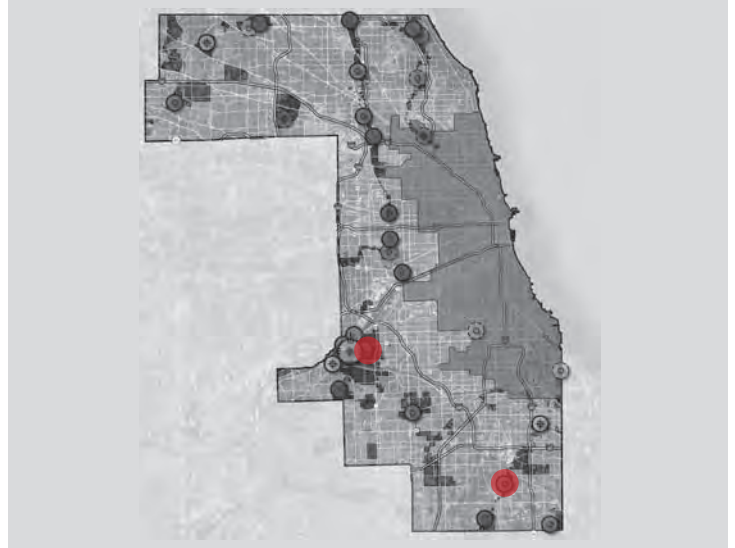


## CAMP KIWANIS

Camp Kiwanis was once a camping outpost in the Palos area and sits across the road from the Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center. Adjacent to one of the District regional maintenance centers, the site is currently used to access the equestrian trail system.

The site's connection to Tuma lake is one that could be capitalized on via trail connections. Primary features would include two turnouts, trailer parking, and tent camping facilities specially conceived to be equestrian friendly.

## KEY MAP







Scale: 1"=400'

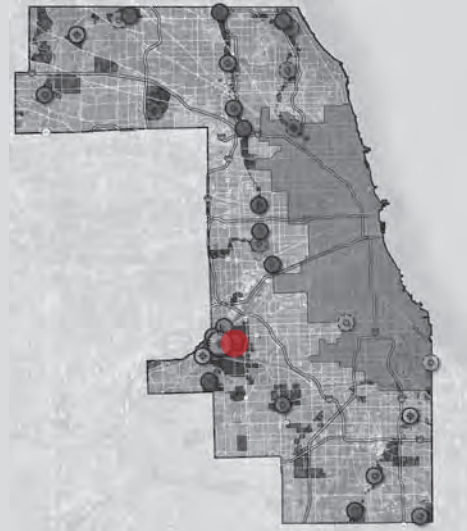


- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- Proposed Road
- Existing Road
- Future Phase



## KEY MAP



### FACILITIES LEGEND: Initial Capacity = 40

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	-	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	-	Toilet/Shower Bldg	-	-
Family Cabin	-	-	Compost Toilet	-	-
Tent Cabin	-	-	Program Shelter	-	-
Tent Site	permit	permit	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	yes	yes
Horse Trailer Parking	20	-			

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Hiking (off-site connection to Pulaski Woods)
- Equestrian Trails (off-site connection to Equestrian Trails)
- Youth Group Merit Badges (off-site connection to Pulaski Woods & Maple Lake)
- Adventure Based Camping (Equestrian)
- Environmental Education (connect to Little Red Schoolhouse)

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- Riding Lessons/ Programs
- Equestrian Trail Rides (guided)
- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific curriculum)





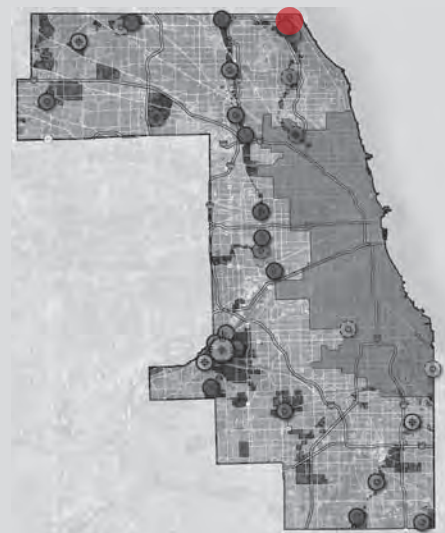




## SKOKIE LAGOONS

The story of the Skokie Lagoons is a tremendous chapter of Chicago history. Given the periodic flood inundation, the site is best suited for low-impact tent camp opportunities. The island in the lagoons offers an overnight experience like none other. Elevated boardwalks and tent pads of varying sizes might accommodate one to three tents in clusters. A permitting strategy will be critical yet worthwhile in developing these unique sites in the floodplain. Easy connections to the Chicago Botanic Garden and other nearby destinations on the Chicago River expand the reach of this site.

### KEY MAP







Scale: 1"=200'



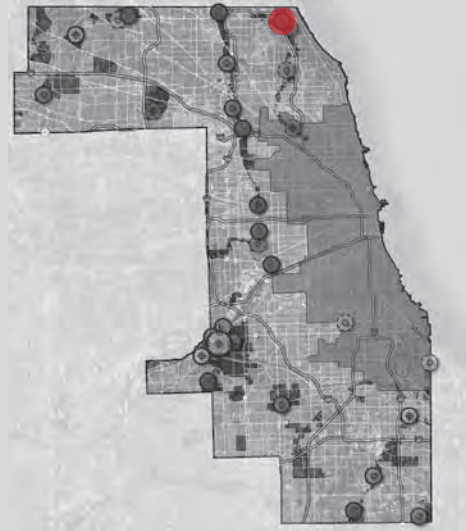
- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- Proposed Road
- Existing Road
- Future Phase





**KEY MAP**



**FACILITIES LEGEND: Total Capacity = 48**

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Admin/Infirmary	-	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	-	Toilet/Shower Bldg	-	-
Family Cabin	-	-	Compost Toilet	-	1
Tent Cabin	-	-	Program Shelter	-	1
Tent Site	12	-	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	-	-
Security Residence	-	-			

**PROGRAM**

**CONNECTIONS**

- Paddling
- Hiking (off-site connection to Skokie Lagoon Trails)
- Cultural Interpretation (restored bunkhouse interpreting CCC era influence on Skokie Lagoons)
- Family Camping
- Youth Group Merit Badge
- Youth Group Outings/ Events
- Interest Group Gatherings/ Events (small capacity)
- Adventure Camping (Skokie Lagoon)

**CONCESSIONAIRE**

- Skokie Lagoon Canoe/ Kayak Tours (guided)
- Outreach Programs In Association With Chicago Botanic Garden

**SKOKIE LAGOONS - 2013 PLAN**









Regional Water Trails Map

## THATCHER WOODS

Thatcher Woods is near the mid point of the Des Plaines River’s course through the county, this site is well poised to serve as a launch point for underserved inner city populations. The size of the property allows for a secluded, quiet, and great urban “escape” for overnight camping among some large Cottonwood trees. Proximity to the inner city may support more of a beginner / training opportunity for camping and canoe/kayak experiences. With the ongoing fieldhouse renovation, there is already some investment and this program use will build on that momentum. The Trailside Museum is also an important cultural amenity in the immediate vicinity.

The initial proposed facilities include incorporating seven tent sites in an organized pod oriented toward the River.

## KEY MAP







Scale: 1"=200'



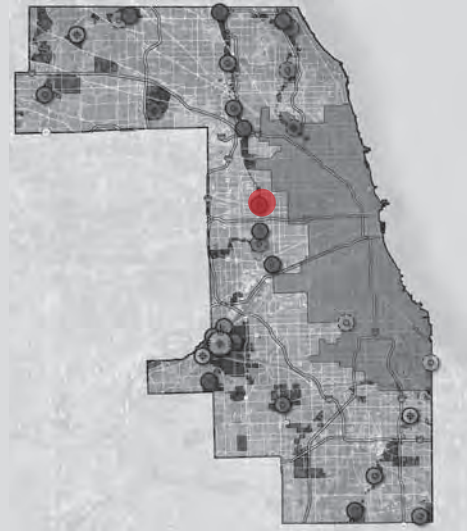
- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail

- ▬ Proposed Road
- ▬ Existing Road
- ▬ Future Phase





## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Initial Capacity = 42

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	-	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	-	Toilet/Shower Bldg	-	-
Family Cabin	-	-	Compost Toilet	-	1
Tent Cabin	-	-	Program Shelter	-	-
Tent Site	7	-	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	yes	yes

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Paddling
- Hiking (connection to Des Plaines Regional Trail)
- Meadow Activities
- Family/ Beginner Camping (urban camping)
- Adventure Based Camping (Des Plaines River, etc.)
- Environmental Education (connect to Trailside Museum)

### CONCESSIONAIRE

- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific curriculum)
- Des Plaines River Canoe/ Kayak Tours (guided)



		FACILITIES										
		CAPACITY	MULTI-PURPOSE/LOGS 100 CAMPERS	BUNKHOUSE- 12 CAMPERS	FAMILY CABINS - 8 CAMPERS	TENT CABIN - 8 CAMPERS	TENT SITE - 4 TO 6 CAMPERS	DINING HALL	CONFERENCE FACILITY	MIK SUPPORT STRUCTURES	LEARNING CENTER	SECURITY/ ADJUVANT INFIRMARY
PRIORITY SITES	CAMP REINBERG	384 (INITIAL) 42 (FUTURE)	-	-	4 (32) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	20 (120)	UTLIZE EXISTING DINING	UTLIZE EXISTING DINING	PROGRAM SHELTER (2) (FUTURE)	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	(2) FUTURE
	CAMP SULLIVAN AND FALCON	468	-	8 (64) (INITIAL) 8 (64) (FUTURE)	-	12 (96)	40 (240)	UTLIZE EXISTING BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN	-	TOILET/SHOWER (2) (INITIAL) TOILET/SHOWER (2) (FUTURE)	OFFICE TO LITTLE RED	(2) (INITIAL)
	CAMP PINE WOODS	384 (INITIAL) 360 (FUTURE)	-	1 (12) (INITIAL) 1 (12) (FUTURE)	8 (64) (FUTURE)	16 (128) (INITIAL) 8 (64) (FUTURE)	20 (120)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	TOILET/SHOWER (2) (INITIAL) TOILET/SHOWER (2) (FUTURE) PROGRAM (2) (FUTURE)	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY, NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	(2) (INITIAL)
	BULLFROG LAKE LEGACY SITE	(2) (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	-	8 (64) (FUTURE)	8 (64)	12 (72)	(2) NEW DINING (FUTURE)	UTLIZE DINING IN FUTURE	(2) (TOILET/SHOWER) (2) (COMPOST TOILET) (INITIAL)	LITTLE RED	(2) (INITIAL)
	SHABONA PICNIC GROVE	(2) (INITIAL) 64 (FUTURE)	-	2 (24) (FUTURE)	-	8 (64)	12 (72)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN	BUNKHOUSE COMMON ROOMS	(1) (TOILET/SHOWER) (PROGRAM) (INITIAL)	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	(2) (INITIAL)
SECONDARY SITES	SKOKIE LAGOONS	96	-	-	-	12 (96)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(2) (COMPOST TOILET) (2) (PROGRAM) (FUTURE)	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-
	THATCHER WOODS	42	-	-	-	7 (42)	-	CAMPFIRES	-	(2) (COMPOST TOILET) (FUTURE)	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-
	CAMP KIWANIS	40	-	-	-	-	81 (PERMIT)	CAMPFIRES	-	(2) (NO CAPACITY) TRAILER (PARKING)	LITTLE RED	-
LONG RANGE FUTURE SITES	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER WATCHMAN SITE	116	-	2 (24) (FUTURE)	2 (16)	-	6 (36)	BUNKHOUSE KITCHEN, CAMPFIRE RINGS	-	(2) (COMPOST TOILET) (2) (PROGRAM) (FUTURE)	CRABTREE NATURE CENTER CONNECTION	-
	POPLAR CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	CAMP DAN BEARD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	CAMPFIRE RINGS	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY FACILITY	-	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY, LITTLE RED SITE IMPROVEMENTS	-
	MILLER MEADOW NORTH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	STONY FORD	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-
	COLUMBIA WOODS	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-
	SAGAWAU CONFERENCE CENTER	16	-	1 (16)	-	-	-	-	UTLIZE EXISTING	-	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-
	McGINTY SLOUGH	36	-	-	-	-	6 (36)	-	-	-	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-
	GLENWOOD ROAD PRAIRIE	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-	-	-
	KINGS GROVE	68	-	-	4 (32)	-	6 (36)	-	ADJUVANT INFIRMARY	-	-	-
PLUM CREEK	68	-	-	-	4 (32)	6 (36)	-	-	-	-	-	
DAY USE	BLUE STAR MEMORIAL WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTLIZE EXISTING	-	-
	CAMP FORT DEARBORN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	EGGERS GROVE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTLIZE EXISTING	-	-
	DAN RYAN WOODS- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTLIZE EXISTING	-	-
	McCORMICK WOODS - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	UTLIZE EXISTING	BROOKFIELD ZOO	-
	CAMP ALPHONSE- DAY USE ONLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	PROGRAM SHELTER	-	-
	BUSSE LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	MATHEW BIESZCZAT RESOURCE CENTER - DAY USE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	ISAIAK WALTON LEAGUE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	LITTLE HOUSE OF GLENCOE- EXISTING PARTNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MASTER PLAN SUB TOTALS		2286	0	10 (340)	26 (240)	168 (672)	171 (1026)	1	5	20(40)		7
2013 INITIAL PRIORITY SUB TOTALS		1204	0	4 (164)	0	52 (416)	104 (624)	0	0	0		4



Two final groups of camp facilities are further identified here: Long Range Future Sites and Day Use. The Long Range sites include properties that, if added to the system, significantly augment the corridor offerings (ex. Stony Ford on the Des Plaines Corridor). Others further expand offerings in remote areas of the county (Plum Creek) or otherwise diversify programs in the future as demand evolves. Identifying these sites as potential expansion opportunities also keeps them within the master plan as sites that could fulfill the need of a future operational or program partner that is

yet undefined. If a mission-compatible group were to inquire in the future, these sites could be the first to spark potential partnership conversations.

This section also defines a collection of day use sites that are an important part of the overall camping program. The District is already offering several sites and picnic groves as day camp options, and these sites are important options for underserved segments of the community. Day Camp sites also introduce new user groups to District holdings, with the hope that they will return to further explore the system.



## FUTURE SITES & DAY USE

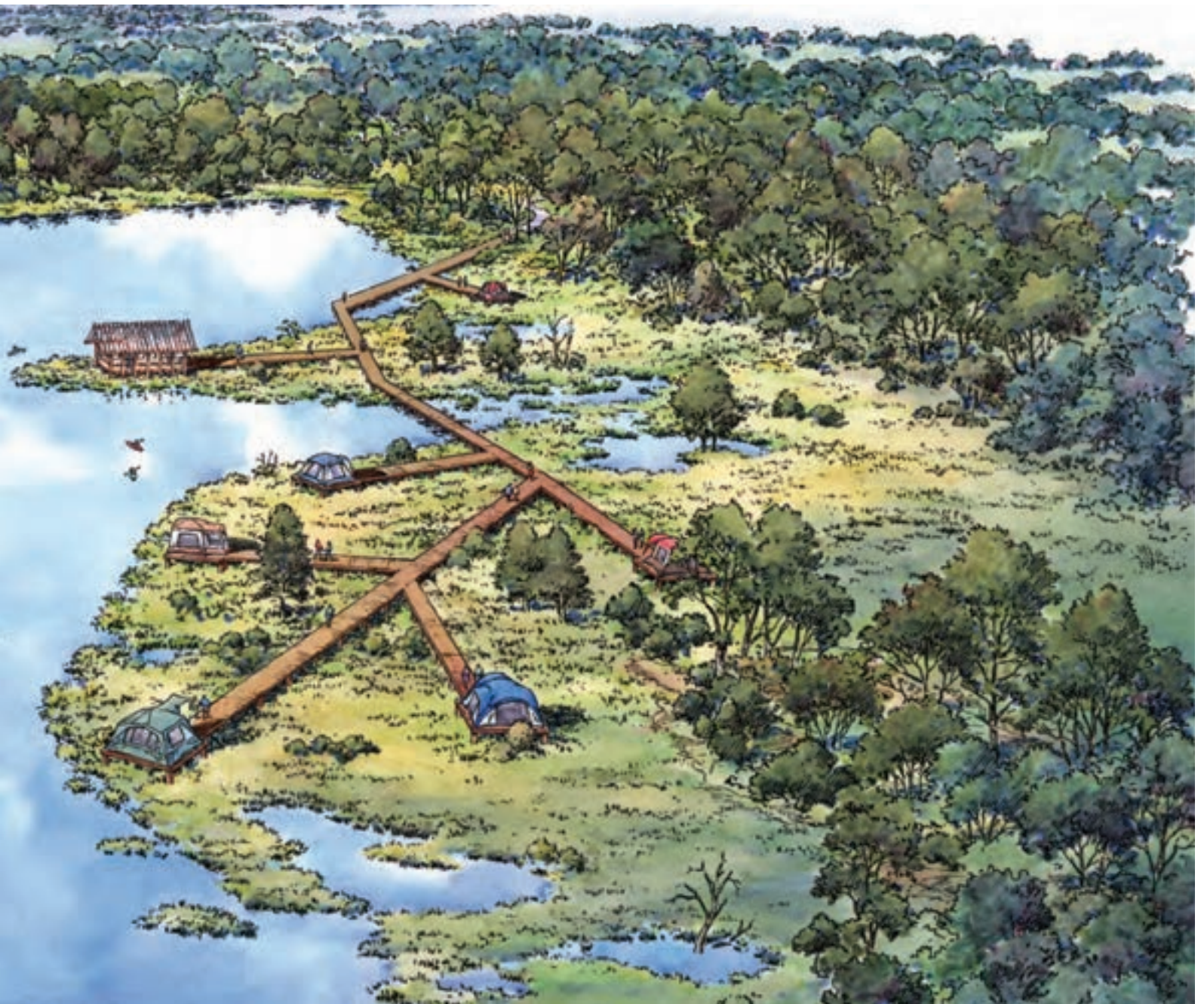




The Camp at Crabtree Nature Center



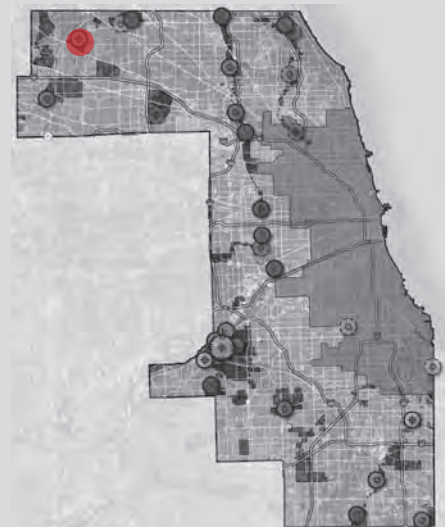




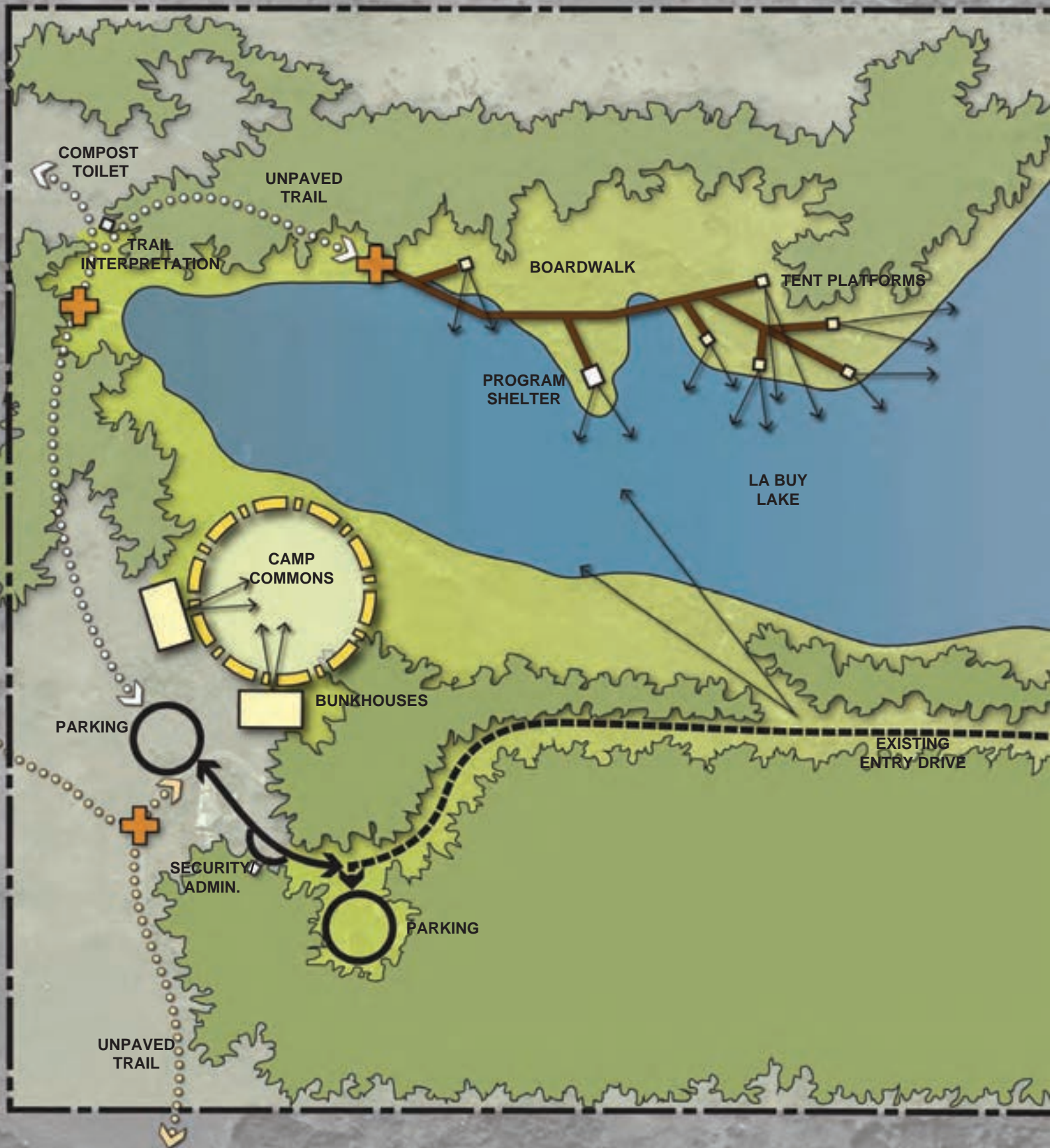
## CRABTREE NATURE CENTER

An environmental education overnight facility in the Northwest Prairies is to be a new outpost at the Crabtree Nature Center. Sited on a previously disturbed site to the northeast of the nature center complex, the facilities proposed here will have easy access to a previously undeveloped lake, and are within walking distance of the existing center. Offset from the road, an existing driveway offers a great sense of decompression from the surrounding suburban development. The lake is sizeable enough to support boating and fishing. The camp commons would claim the western end of the lake with two bunkhouses. Tent platforms and educational program shelters are to be organized along a series of boardwalks on the north shoreline. Programs would focus on prairie management, forest ecology, wetlands and water quality, as well as trail recreation, canoeing, and the like.

## KEY MAP

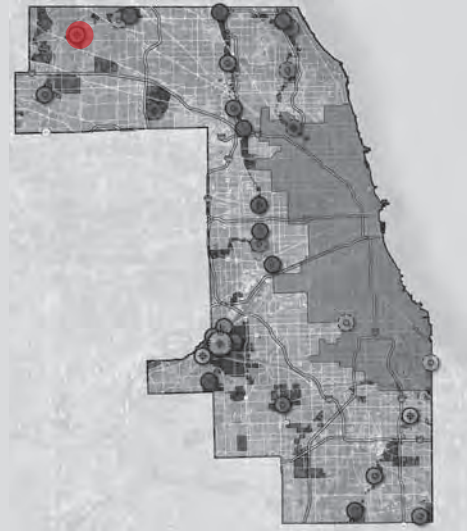








## KEY MAP



## FACILITIES LEGEND: Future Capacity = 100

FACILITY	INITIAL	FUTURE		INITIAL	FUTURE
Lodge	-	-	Security/Admin/Infirmary	-	-
Dorm Cabin/Bunkhouse	-	2	Toilet/Shower Bldg	-	-
Family Cabin	-	-	Compost Toilet	-	1
Tent Cabin	-	-	Program Shelter	-	1
Tent Site	-	6	Canoe Launch	-	-
Dining/Kitchen	-	-	Day Use	yes	yes

## PROGRAM

### CONNECTIONS

- Fishing
- Paddling
- Hiking
- Low Ropes Course
- School Group Outdoor Education (off-site connection to Crabtree Nature Center)
- Youth Group Merit Badge
- Youth Group Outings/ Events
- Interest Group Gatherings (small capacity)
- Environmental Education (connect to Crabtree Nature Center)

### POTENTIAL

- Environmental Outreach (overnight-specific curriculum)
- Habitat Management/ Restoration
- Team Building – High Ropes Course



# CRABTREE NATURE CENTER - FUTURE





## POPLAR CREEK

This site is a future phase cabin and tent camping venue in the northwest region of the county. The acreage and habitat diversity are prime for both casual family camping and outdoor adventure recreational experience for groups. Development must be respectful to the sensitive creek habitat. Facilities would include both tent cabins and tents. A strong equestrian component is desired here to tie to the nearby trail system. The property is seen as a seasonal facility during summer months and possible shoulder seasons.



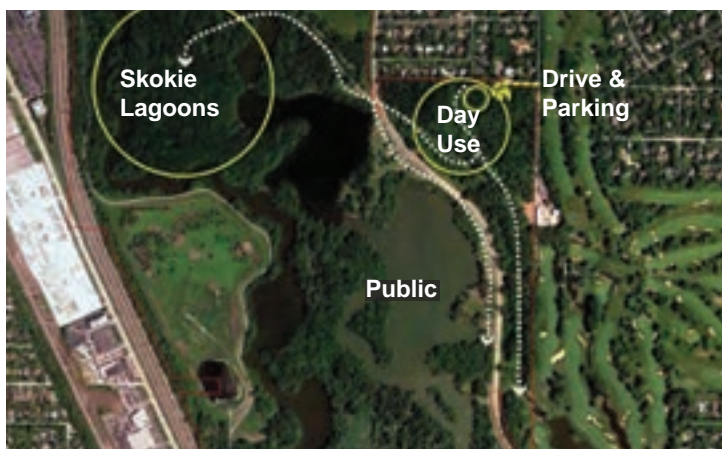
## BUSSE LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER

Rounding out the offerings in the Northwest, the proposed conference center at Busse Lake will cater to a corporate and community group meeting audience. This flexible facility is proposed on the south shore of Busse Lake at existing picnic grove #34. Accessed from the southern entry to the preserve, this location feels remote and secluded in comparison to the other heavily visited and programmed areas of the overall Busse property.



## CAMP DAN BEARD

At the northern entry from Lake County, Camp Dan Beard is a gateway facility that welcomes visitors entering along the Des Plaines River Corridor via paddling or the regional trail system. It will also serve as northern terminus to the District system for those headed north on longer excursions. Regardless, this portal into the county should be celebrated as a point of orientation and interpretation. The master plan opens the property to all aspects of the community, and the District should amend its agreement with the scouts to find an appropriate and perhaps more useful site for scouting activities in addition to the Dan Beard site.



## LITTLE HOUSE OF GLENCOE

Originally a Girl Scout facility, a non-profit organization operates the property as a rental event facility. The "house" serves as a community meeting hall for birthday parties, special events, and the like, hosting various size events depending on set up. Group tent camping is also allowed on site. The house is only a five minute walk to the Skokie Lagoons and 15 minutes from the Chicago Botanic Garden. Due to site challenges, namely its size, secluded presence, road separation, and grades, this property should continue with the current management from the Little House of Glencoe. This site's heritage (a community destination since 1949) should be celebrated.



## CAMP FORT DEARBORN

Camp Fort Dearborn was historically a Boy Scout camp but has long since closed. The site is just off of I-90 near O'Hare Airport. Approximately five miles north of Thatcher Woods, Camp Fort Dearborn is an ideal stop-over site between Thatcher Woods and the larger Camp Pine Woods to the north. Facilities would be very similar to several other stop-over sites and will include launch canoe/kayak facilities, trail access, and tent platform camping opportunities. The cultural history of the scout camp is well known in the community. This site would be the third stop over point coming from the north.



## MILLER MEADOW NORTH

This site is near the mid point of the Des Plaines River's course through the county. Its proximity to the river makes an ideal canoe launch point. It will provide an important stop-over site in the system. It is well buffered from the road and has good connections to Miller Meadow south and the River. The site is seen as an interim station point along the river rather than a long-term multi-night destination for tent campers. The site will best serve families or small groups travelling together.



## STONY FORD

Stony Ford is an important stop-over site on the Des Plaines River Corridor, within close proximity to the Chicago Portage National Historic Site. The site is seen as an interim station point along the river rather than a long-term multi-night destination for tent campers. The site will best serve families or small groups travelling together.



## COLUMBIA WOODS

This site is a critical gateway to the Palos Preserves from the Des Plaines corridor and offers a shuttle service to Bullfrog Lake. Vehicular circulation and pedestrian safety need to be carefully planned in correlation with the railroad and other trail and circulation routes in the vicinity. The site is long and narrow and is seen as an interim station point along the river rather than a long-term multi-night destination for tent campers. Site development is envisioned to add several tent platform sites at the southern / western end of the existing parking lot, closer to the river than to the railroad.







## SAWAWAU CONFERENCE CENTER

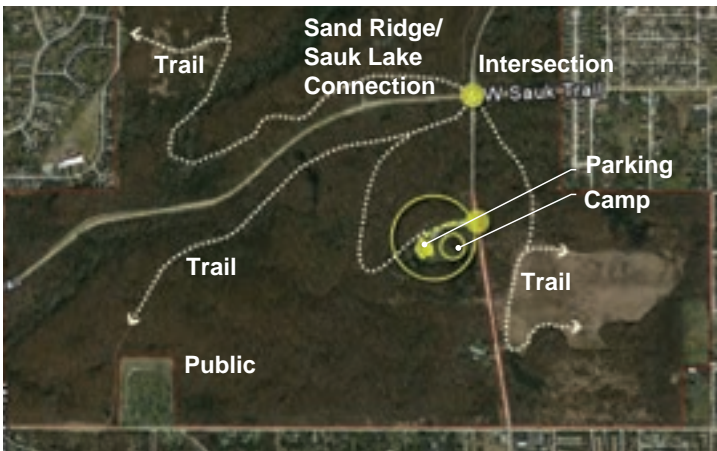
The depth of this site's current offerings could be expanded for certain groups by marketing the multipurpose room as a meeting space. Overnight facilities here would cater to a more sophisticated learning experience, including educators and college interns. This facility will not house as many participants as other group camps in the system, and is not seen as a consistent rental facility. New construction is not proposed to extend past the previous limits of disturbed "footprint" in the vicinity of the existing farmhouse. All existing programs are to remain.



## MCGINTY SLOUGH

The McGinty Slough property surrounds the slough itself – a meandering water body that has a mix of surrounding prairie and woodlands. An osprey nest also exists on the south side of the slough and there is an existing loop trail system that ties into the regional network.

Proposed primarily as a casual camping destination, the site has potential for ecological based programs to supplement the experience. Youth groups, families, and nature oriented organizations will all find this site an appealing camping destination.



## KINGS GROVE

Similar to Shabbona Woods, the King's Grove site is situated on a previously developed picnic grove drive and cul de sac. This site represents a terminus site for the most southern point in the Thorn Creek & Little Calumet corridor. Utilizing previously developed and disturbed land, King's Grove maintains a low impact environmentally. It is intended that the site will cease use as a traditional picnic grove, but still be open for public rentals with controlled entry and security fencing.



## PLUM CREEK

The Plum Creek site is one of the largest in terms of area. Plum Creek has tremendous potential as a multi-use destination camp that would offer both environmental education and adventure recreation programs. Envisioned to serve school groups, youth organizations, and family campers, the Plum Creek facility is proposed as a year round facility with a diverse offering of overnight accommodations. The site itself would house conference and overnight facilities, as well as equestrian and other outdoor program amenities.



## EGGERS GROVE

Eggers Grove is an existing day use site that should continue to serve the needs of day-camp user groups. The site has ample capacity to potentially host multiple groups at once, with the use of several shelters, and the large meadow onsite. A recent renovation to the historic structure creates a handsome architectural icon as a day camp headquarters. The property has ample depth to feel removed from the adjacent roadway. Educational and recreational experiences are possible here, and future trails could meander through the woods to the water.



## MATTHEW BIESZCZAT CENTER

This tremendous resource in the District system should be better integrated into the camping system as a support facility for day conference use. While not an overnight facility, this interesting historic structure has recently been restored and can accommodate 100 people. With views out over a buffered natural view of the golf course, the center is well removed from the road and is a great corporate retreat or conference setting. When cross marketed with other facilities, this site is sure to become a sought after destination in the District system.



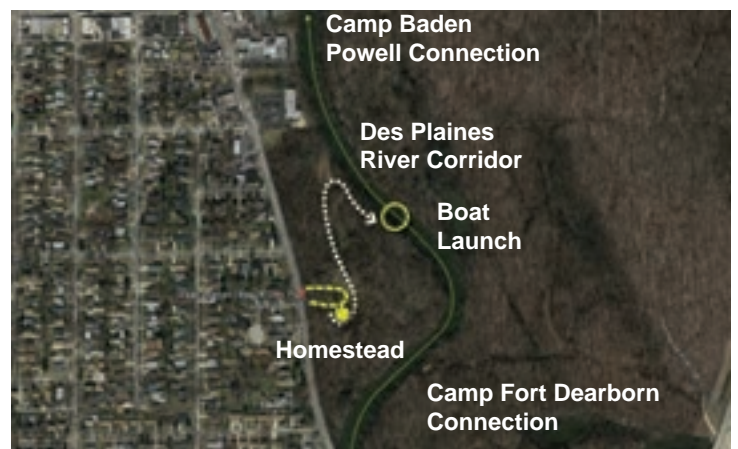
## MCCORMICK WOODS

Sitting across the road from the Brookfield Zoo, the site has frontage on the Des Plaines River. This site is proposed as a day-use outreach site for activities that may be offered by the zoo. Adventure based and environmental educational day excursions from this site may include a canoe trip as a component of a zoo-based day camp. Existing facilities should be utilized for program delivery. This is not proposed as a public canoe launch, but only as part of a zoo-sponsored daytime program.

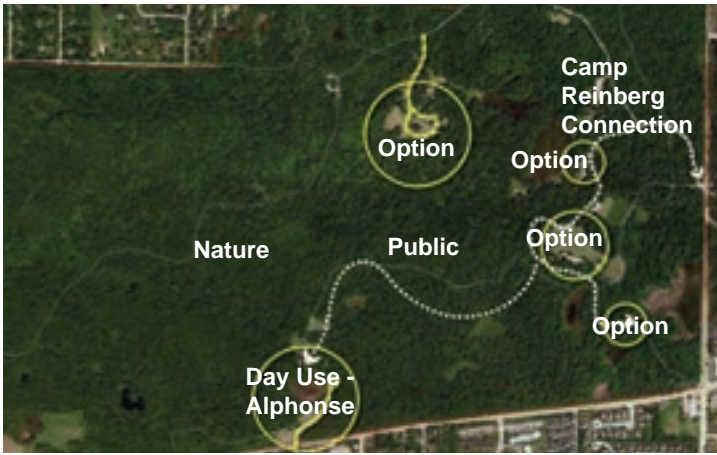


## IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE

This property has had a long standing relationship with the Izaak Walton League, a non-profit organization that has a long history in the Chicago area. Due to the challenges of this property, namely its secluded presence, lack of connectivity, and distractions of O'Hare Airport flight patterns, this property is proposed to retain its special use agreement. Izaak Walton is not proposed for future investment as a prominent role in the camping program.







## CAMP ALPHONSE

While this property has been offering tent camping to organized groups, the master plan suggests a conversion to a day-camp facility instead. There are stronger experiences for overnight use elsewhere, including, the nearby proposed renovation of Camp Reinberg. The site's proximity to the road inhibits its ability to deliver a meaningful overnight experience. Day camp could be served out of several group program shelters with an accompanying restroom. Connections to the Deer Grove array of amenities and outdoor recreation significantly elevate the potential day use experience.



## DAN RYAN WOODS

The Dan Ryan Woods site is proposed to deliver day camp facilities with a focus on environmental education and adventure recreation. As one of the closest sites to the central city, Dan Ryan Woods is well positioned to expand its role in serving the underserved populations of urban communities. While the site does not have significant connections to the larger District system, its role as an urban outpost is significant in the county. Investment should be made here to expand its capacity and function.



## BLUE STAR MEMORIAL

About two thirds of the way along the Chicago River Corridor District collection of landholdings, the Blue Star Memorial Woods is a high capacity picnic grove that works well for day camp programming. This site is connected to other sites along the Chicago River and ultimately the Skokie Lagoons by the primary corridor hike and bike trail. The master plan proposes a day-camp rental facility with possible upgrades. The existing meadows are flexible to accommodate large gatherings, even with temporary tents for special events.











# MARKET ANALYSIS



## MARKET ANALYSIS

This section provides important market and economic conditions affecting potential camping and other outdoor recreation related development opportunities for the District. This research included the following.

- Review of all pertinent District documents and all associated literature pertaining to the existing District facilities and education programs.
- Site tours of some of the key properties.
- Review of important economic, demographic, and other trends that influence demand campground, lodge and cabin use.
- Contacted and reviewed a selection of comparable campgrounds, considering the potential demand for various facilities, programs, and opportunities for outdoor recreation and education within similar market conditions.
- Conducted revenue and cost assessment and forecast that estimates potential revenue and costs specifically for the District, including a financial projection under a scenario in which a private concessionaire would manage and service a selection of the key sites.

## OUTDOOR RECREATION & NATURE-BASED EDUCATION TRENDS

- National trends indicate strong interest in outdoor recreation and nature-based programs and activities.
- Non-motorized boating has been experiencing tremendous growth over the last decade, with an influx of new boaters and increasingly frequent activity from those already participating in the sport.

## NEARBY CAMPING FACILITIES

Lodging and campground fee information that indicated the market conditions of campground and cabin facilities currently available in or within a day's driving distance of Cook County were reviewed. In addition, when available seasonal data with specific attention other nearby Forest Preserve District campgrounds and facilities, as an indicator of season use patterns was analyzed. Information from private campgrounds was also gathered to further ascertain the magnitude of demand and market conditions. Finally, meeting and conference facilities were reviewed, with specific attention to lodging properties that offer opportunities for educational learning programs.

Below are key points that pertain to the potential for camping opportunities on District lands.

- Those 65 and older will become a much more significant population segment in the state.
- The number of children (under age 14) will also continue to grow, though at a much slower rate, whereas the baby boomer generation, those currently 45-64, will level out.
- The number of children and youth is expected to remain relatively stable through the next decade and beyond.
- There is evidence of significant numbers of school age youth in poverty living in close proximity to the District.

## NEARBY CAMPING FACILITIES

Family campgrounds in the areas surrounding Cook County range from approximately 60 sites suitable for tents, trailers and motor homes upwards to 130 with full water with electrical hook-ups available for each site. At minimum, family camping sites require individual sites with gravel parking pad, a fire ring, and a picnic table. In addition, these sites are generally within walking distance of restrooms, running water, and trash and containers (see Forest Preserve District of DuPage County). They may or may not offer electrical hook-up for each site (though most do). In addition to the facilities described above, private campgrounds also tend to provide recreation amenities such as playgrounds, recreation halls, golf and access to swimming. In general, other Forest Preserve District campgrounds do not offer additional recreation amenities, though trails and nature centers are often nearby. Other recreation opportunities include boating access and a stocked fish pond (see Kane County Forest Preserves).

## YOUTH GROUP CAMPING FACILITIES

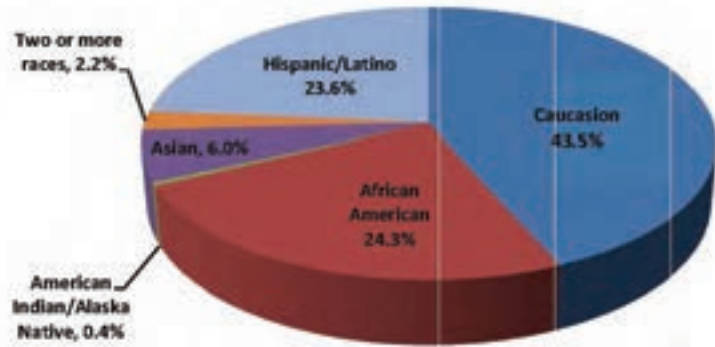
Youth group campgrounds tend to accommodate between 60 to 100 youth campers and often include some built structures such as cabins and lodge facilities, used for cooking and meeting activities. Camping sites may be more primitive (tent only) and tend to be more oriented toward group space (rather than individual sites). Group camping facilities may also include platform tents, yurt, and/or cabin like structures for sleeping in small groups. Built structures offer more options for use during times of inclement weather. Youth group camping sites and facilities tend to be located near trails suitable for hiking, biking or equestrian use and outdoor recreation areas and may be tied directly to or built specifically for opportunities with nature and/or education type programs that are offered.



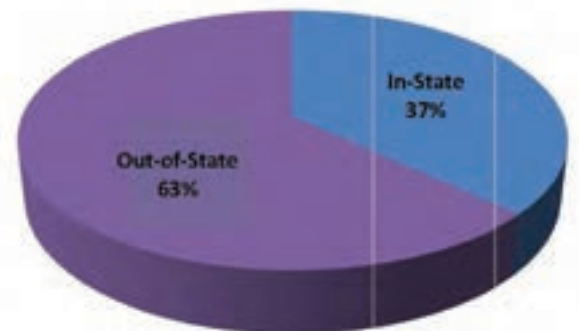
## SEASONALITY

Family Camping: May through September with heavy demand on weekends, especially three-day holiday weekends that include Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, and Columbus Day.

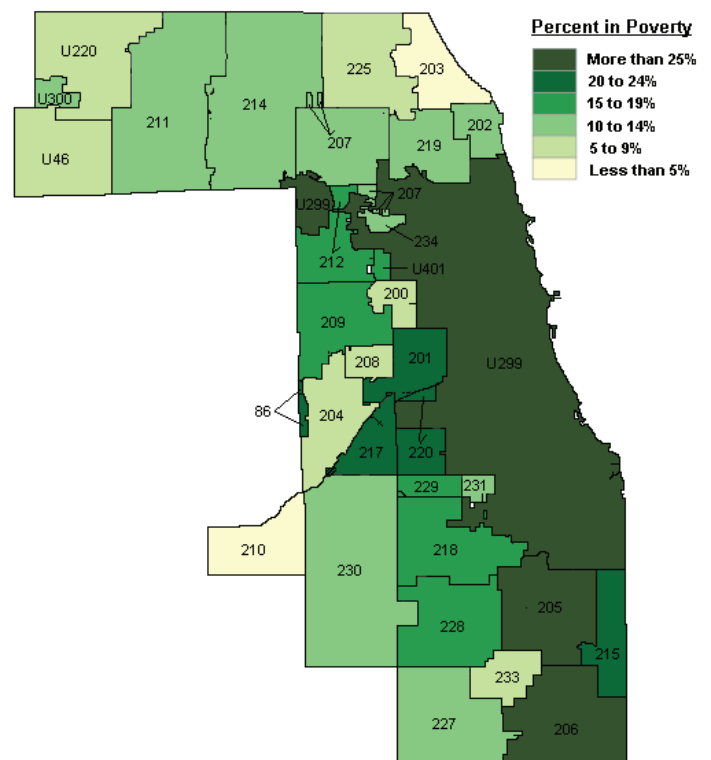
Youth Group Camping: Fall, winter, and spring months (generally not during the summer months).



Ethnicity Diagram



Illinois Travel: In State vs Out of State Visitors



Percent of Youth Ages 14-17 in Poverty, by High School District







# CREDITS





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County gratefully acknowledges the contributions of staff, multiple stakeholder groups, and individuals who offered their input, concern, and overall passion about the master plan made a lasting contribution to the future legacy of this special resource.

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The following individuals participated in various workshops, meetings, and charrettes throughout the planning process.

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#### DISCLAIMER:

Maps prepared by the planning team for the District, are for planning purposes only. Data collected from multiple public domain sources at multiple scales. No claims are made to the accuracy of this collected data or to the suitability of this data for a particular use. Depicted property boundaries are for representation only. Master Planning vision is a concept and subject to change - including program and facility design. All aerial photography is sourced from Google, inc. 2012.



# studioOutside



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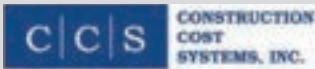
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# About the Forest Preserve District of Cook County

Established in 1914, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County is the oldest forest preserve system in the nation, maintaining more than 68,000 acres of open land for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public. The District strives to protect and restore the county's diverse ecosystems, so all our unique native plants and animals can live and thrive. Each year, millions of people use these lands and facilities to enjoy or study nature, bicycle, hike, fish, cross-country ski, picnic, golf, canoe or simply relax in a large preserve that leaves urban life behind.



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Toni Preckwinkle, President

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