

Chapter 5: Development Plan

Introduction

The discussions with stakeholder groups included review of the expansion or addition of park facilities and activities that relate to the following categories:

- Natural and cultural resource protection and restoration
- Natural and cultural resource interpretation
- Camping
- Picnicking
- Water-based facilities
- Trails
- Miscellaneous facilities

The input received during the process has helped to shape planning and design concepts that relate to each of the categories. In addition to stakeholder input, an understanding of current recreation demands and area demographics, as discussed in Chapter 2, is critical in verifying the appropriateness of planning and design concepts. Finally, an assessment of existing park conditions including built facilities, topography, soils, drainage and vegetation is important in identifying the problems and opportunities posed by the site. Refer to the section in this chapter titled Inventory and Analysis of Existing Site Conditions and to Chapter 4 - Natural Resource Stewardship for review of current park features and characteristics.

Recommendations for park improvements are included in the Development Concepts Section of this chapter and on the Development Plan found on Figure 5.2. Refer also to Chapter 3 - Cultural Resource Stewardship and Chapter 4 - Natural Resource Stewardship for information and recommendations related to park development.

Inventory and Analysis of Existing Site Conditions

Paragraphs included in this section provide an overview of existing facilities and conditions in Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Photographs on pages 5.1 through 5.8 depict key features in the park.



North Picnic Shelter



Modern Campground



Group Campground



North Farmstead Barns



Farmstead Ruin near Eagle Point Lake



Red Barn at Brown's Pond



Brown's Pond



Earthen Dam



Drainage Pond at Earthen Dam



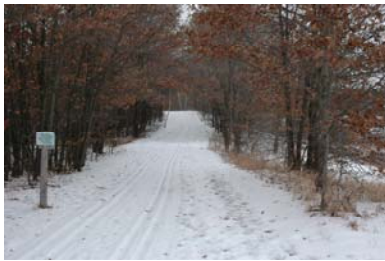
Fallow Field near North Farmstead



Woodland Edge



Corn Field



Oak Woods

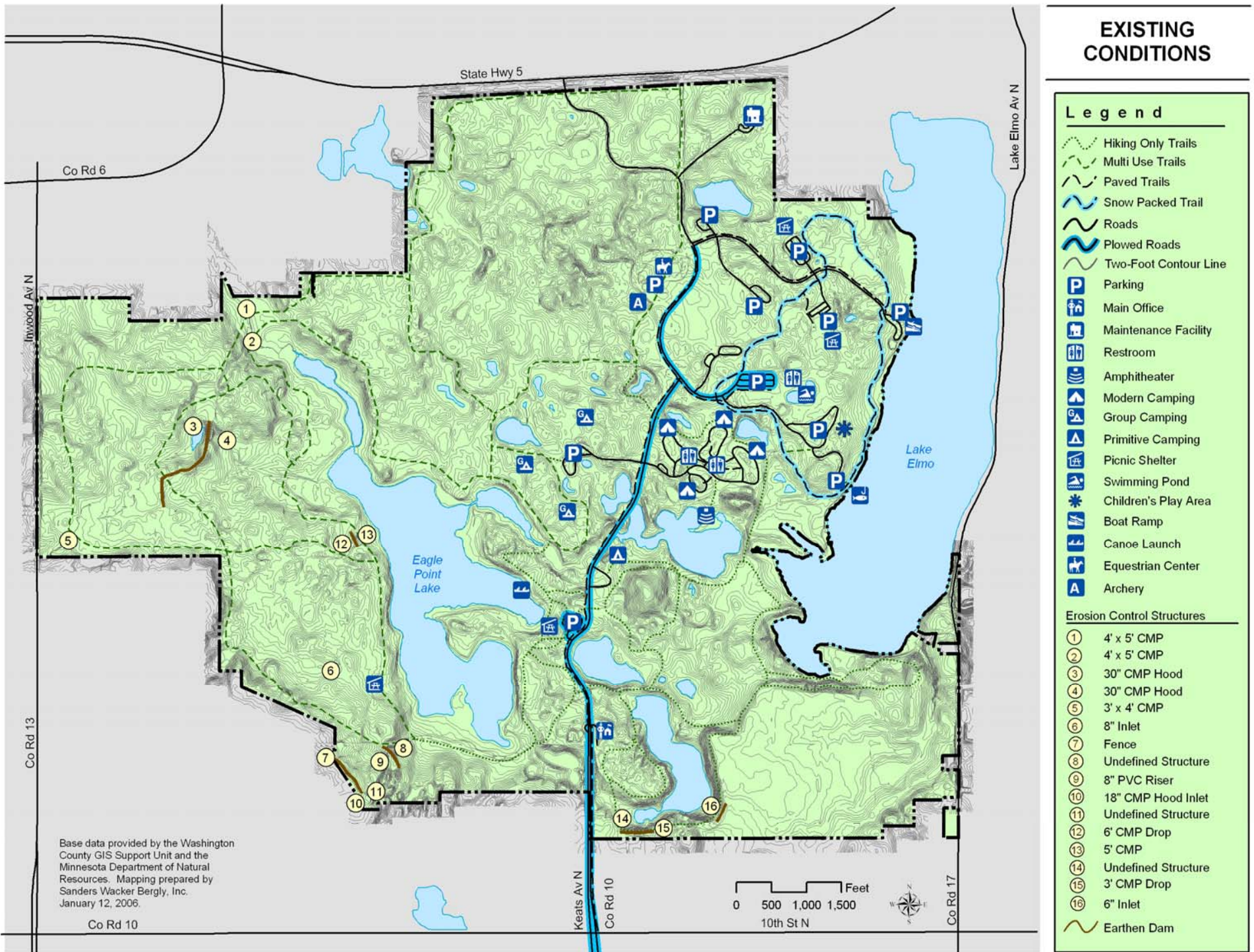


Figure 5.1



Amphitheater at Modern Campground



Oak Savanna



Cross Country Ski Trail

Park Location and Access

Lake Elmo Park Reserve is bounded on the north by State Hwy. 5, on the west by Inwood Ave. (County Road 13), on the south by 10th Street N. (County Rd. 10) and on the east by Lake Elmo Ave. (County Rd. 17). General vehicle access to the park is limited to Keats Ave. N. at 10th Street N. as shown on Fig. 5.1 and additional access for park maintenance vehicles is provided on Hwy. 5. Existing trail access is limited to Keats Ave. N. at 10th Street N.

Roads

Roads are limited to a primary visitor access road that enters the park on Keats Ave. N., as shown on Figure 5.1, and extends on a northerly route into the park. The road provides visitor access to park facilities and continues, as a service road only, to Hwy. 5. The primary access road is bituminous; it was resurfaced in 2005 and is generally in good condition.

Trails

Existing trail alignments are shown on Fig 5.1 and include the following:

- Multi-use, grass-surfaced trails are used primarily for cross country skiing, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. Horseback riding and mountain biking are permitted only on trails located on the west side of the primary access road. The trails are maintained by mowing and are generally in good condition. Some wear spots are evident in low spots and on slopes particularly where horseback riding and mountain biking use is frequent. One area of concern is the east side of Eagle Point Lake where soft soils are present in several locations.
- Paved trails are used primarily for biking, in-line skating and hiking. In winter, snow is packed on a small trail loop to accommodate winter hiking. The extent of the paved trail system includes a trail that parallels the primary access drive, loops around picnic areas, swimming pond and play area in the northeast area of the park and passes near the west shore of Lake Elmo. The trails are generally in good condition.

Buildings

Park building locations are shown on Fig. 5.1 and include the following:

- A contact station is located near the park’s visitor entry. The structure is wood frame and includes a public service counter and offices for the Parks Manager and support staff.
- A barn is located near Brown’s Pond on a site to the east and across the pond from the contact station. The structure is a good example of early century barn architecture and is in good condition. It is currently unused.
- A ski shelter is located on the east side of Eagle Point Lake. The masonry structure has no amenities and is in marginal condition.
- Two restroom buildings serve the Modern Campground. The masonry structures are equipped with running water and electricity and are in good condition.
- A metal-clad pole building is located at the equestrian campground. The structure is in good condition and is used for storage of maintenance equipment.
- A restroom building with small, attached picnic shelter is planned for construction in 2006 at the large play area. The masonry building will be equipped with running water and electricity.
- A beach building serving the swimming pond is in good condition and includes rest rooms, changing rooms and food stand. The masonry building is equipped with electricity and running water.
- A maintenance building is located in the northeast corner of the park and is the main operations base for parks located in the northern half of Washington County. The pre-cast concrete panel building is in good condition and includes storage areas, maintenance shop space and offices.
- A house and three barns are located at the north end of the park near the Hwy. 5 service entrance to the park. Two of the barns are good examples of early century barn architecture. The buildings are generally in good condition. One barn is currently used for storage by Sentence to Service crews. The other barns are used on a limited basis for storage of park maintenance equipment. The house is currently unused.

Other Recreation Facilities

The existing recreation facilities are located where shown on Fig. 5.1 and are described as follows:

- Modern campground: Eighty camping spurs with support facilities including a dump station, two restroom buildings, picnic tables, fire pits, electrical hook-ups, guest parking, play area and small amphitheater. The campground is a popular, high quality recreation facility
- Group campground: Three group campsites with support facilities including parking lot, one picnic shelter, fire pits, picnic tables and a small amphitheater. The campground is in need of amenities to better serve the camping needs of group campers.



Fishing Pier



Boat Landing



Lake Elmo Shoreline north of Fishing Pier



Swimming Pond



Lake Elmo Shoreline south of Fishing Pier



Eagle Point Lake

- Equestrian campground: Twenty camping spurs with support facilities including guest parking, hand water pump, fire pits and picnic tables. The spur layout does not serve the needs of the large truck/trailer rigs that are typical to this type of facility.
- Primitive campground: Five remote tent campsites with support facilities including fire pits, picnic tables and a parking lot. The campsites provide a pleasant walk-in camping experience.
- Swimming pond: Man-made pond with filtered/chlorinated water and 1/5th mile of sandy beach. Support facilities include restrooms, changing rooms, food stand, parking lot and nearby picnic area with tables and grills. The pond is a popular, high quality, family swimming facility.
- Large picnic shelters: Two large, 4,000 sq. ft. shelters. Support facilities include hot plates, grills, electrical outlets, serving counters, running water, sinks, picnic tables, restrooms (separate building) and parking lots. The shelters are popular, high quality, large group picnic facilities.
- Fishing pier: Pier on Lake Elmo typical of the type installed by the DNR to provide shore fishing opportunities. The pier is a popular facility for family fishing.
- Canoe launch: Launch on Eagle Point Lake with support facilities including a courtesy dock.
- Boat launch: Boat ramp on Lake Elmo. Support facilities include a car/trailer parking lot with capacity for 20 vehicles. The layout of the access drive to the ramp and parking lot do not function efficiently.
- Archery range: The range includes 8 shooting stations with target bales set-up in an open field at various shooting distances. Support facilities include an elevated shooting platform at one station and a parking lot. The range is a popular but basic facility.
- Orienteering courses: Three separate courses are designed for different skill levels. Support facilities include permanent markers at control points and a parking lot.

Topography

The landform in Lake Elmo Park Reserve is characterized by gently rolling topography, as shown on Fig. 4.3, with the highest point in the park at 1022' above sea level and the lowest at 882'. Slopes are typically gentle with the steepest gradients generally occurring at the edge of or near lakes and wetlands. Slopes exceeding 18% are identified on Fig. 4.2 which helps to suggest that these locations are not suitable for construction of structures, trails or other facilities. Refer to Chapter 4 for more discussion about topography.

Soils

Soils in the park vary considerably with poorly drained, silty materials typically found at low elevations near lake and wetland edges and well-drained, granular materials generally found at higher elevations as

shown on Fig. 4.2. The poorly drained soils are usually not suitable for construction of structures, trails and other facilities. There are significant park areas that, do to conditions of soil and topography, are of questionable suitability for development, however, the vast majority of the areas that have been cultivated have good soil structure and desirable characteristics for supporting built facilities. Refer to Chapter 4 for more discussion about soils.

Vegetation

Refer to Chapter 4-Natural Resource Stewardship for information on existing vegetation.

Development Concepts

Refer to the Development Plan on Figure 5.2 for the locations of facilities proposed in this section.

Natural and Cultural Resource Protection and Restoration

The majority of the land in Lake Elmo Park Reserve has been disturbed by farming or other activity as indicated on Figure 4.1. Approximately 279 acres are currently under cultivation, however, all tilled fields are expected to become fallow during the next 10 years. The design concept for the field acreages includes methodical restoration of woodland, prairie and wetland plant communities. The planting and landscape management practices, discussed in Chapter 4 – Natural Resources Stewardship, will essentially speed-up the process of natural succession. The efforts will help to expand woodlands, create rich plant diversity at woodland edges, encourage oak savanna, native prairie, and wetland vegetation to thrive and provide improved habitat for birds, mammals and other wildlife.

Many areas of the park where vegetation has been allowed to progress without active management have been invaded by non-native plants such as buckthorn, knapweed, purple loosteife and reed canary grass. Landscape management practices have included control of invasive species and will continue to focus on removal of the nuisance plants and replacement using native plant varieties. Refer to Chapter 4 for additional information about invasive plant control.

Cultural resources in the park include farmsteads with buildings and remnants of buildings remaining. There are four existing barns in the park that have been maintained by the Parks Division. The barns are in good condition and three of the structures are excellent examples of Midwest barn architecture from the early 20th century. Two of the barns are currently used for storage and two are empty. The structures will remain and are identified for specific uses as described in other paragraphs in this chapter. Refer to



Archery Range



Ski Shelter



Large Play Area



North Farmstead House



Bituminous Trail



Multi-Use Trail

Chapter 3 - Cultural Resources Stewardship for additional information about European settlement in the area and suggestions for management of related cultural resources.

Evidence of Native American activity was found in two locations in the park by an archeological survey completed in the 1980's. Because of the numerous water bodies and historically diverse wildlife habitat, there is a high probability that additional American Indian archaeological sites are present. The shores of Lake Elmo and Eagle Point Lake should be considered high priority for additional archeological surveys. Information generated by survey work would be used to prepare interpretive displays describing the pre-settlement history of Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Survey data would also be considered in the preparation of designs for new park facilities. Refer to Chapter 3 - Cultural Resources Stewardship for additional information about Native American activity in the area and suggestions for management of related cultural resources.

Natural and Cultural Resource Interpretation

There is growing public interest in learning about nature and cultural history. There are several nature/interpretive centers in the regional park system that include educational displays and programs relating to wildlife, plant communities, ecology and archeological discovery.

A nature/interpretive center for study and instruction about Lake Elmo Park Reserve's natural and cultural resources is planned for construction on the east shore of Eagle Point Lake as shown on Figure 5.2. In addition to its interpretive function, the structure will serve as a trailhead and as an information center describing park programs and facilities. The facility will function well as a major focal point in the park with appeal to a broad spectrum of visitors. The total floor area is expected to be 5,000 to 7,000 sq. ft. and interior spaces will be designed to include uses indicated on the diagram shown in Figure 5.3. The building site is significantly higher in elevation than Eagle Pt. Lake and provides an opportunity for the building design to provide visitors with a commanding view of the lake and its environs. The design should also include a deck or outdoor gathering space that offers views to the lake.

A small amphitheater with a seating capacity of 200 to 250 is planned in proximity to the interpretive center. The facility will serve as an outdoor venue for educational programs related to nature study and cultural history. It will be easy to access for all park visitors and will provide somewhat more seating capacity than the existing program areas located at the modern and group campgrounds in the park.

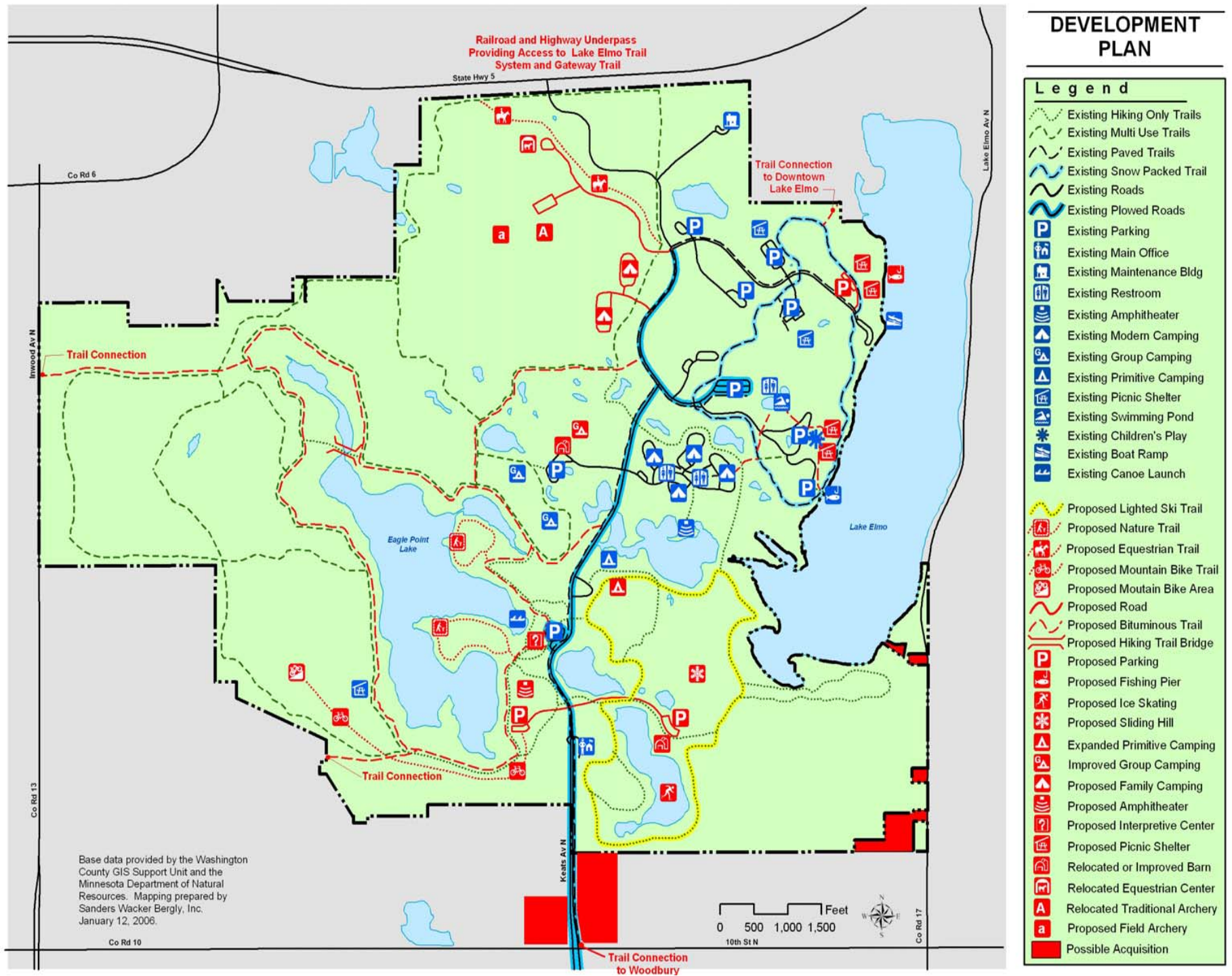


Figure 5.2

Interpretive signs and displays will be placed at selected locations in the park to describe natural and cultural features. The intent of the displays will be to assist visitors in understanding the ecology, geology and cultural history of the park site. Refer to Chapters 3 and 4 for additional information related to interpretive displays.

Wildlife blinds and nature trails will be constructed to provide access to high quality habitat areas in the park. The facilities will supplement similar existing facilities in providing opportunities for nature-oriented activities such as birding, photography, orienteering and nature study. Care will be taken to minimize adverse impact on the habitat areas.

Camping

Family camping: The existing modern campground is extremely popular and is consistently filled on weekends during the fair-weather camping season. The equestrian campground is frequently used as an overflow facility to help meet the demand for family camping opportunities and is little used for equestrian camping. The plan proposes converting the equestrian campground into a modern campground; adding approximately 40 additional family camping spurs in that general location. The new camping loops would be located closer to the edge of the woods west of the existing campground to create a more appealing setting for campers. The spurs will be equipped with water hook-ups and electrical service designed to accommodate the high amperage required to effectively serve large trailers and motor homes.

Equestrian camping: The ‘camping spur’ design of the existing equestrian campground does not function well for the truck and trailer rigs used by equestrians. Riders have also expressed a concern about the safety of sharing a campground and trailhead with other campers. The plan proposes to redesign the equestrian campground and trailhead and move the facilities to a different location. The proposed location is the north farmstead area, which offers a barn that could be used as part of this development. The layout of the campground will be similar to a traditional group campground design that provides more flexibility for general circulation and use of the facility.

Group camping: The existing group campground is popular and improvements are proposed for the facilities. Campsite #1 will be relocated to improve the setting and parking will be placed near the site to provide for groups requiring more convenient access to their campsite (existing parking is remote from the sites). One of the barns will be moved from the north farmstead to the group campground to provide space for restrooms and gatherings. Trees and canopies will be added throughout the camping areas as required to offer shade in the relatively open setting of the campground.

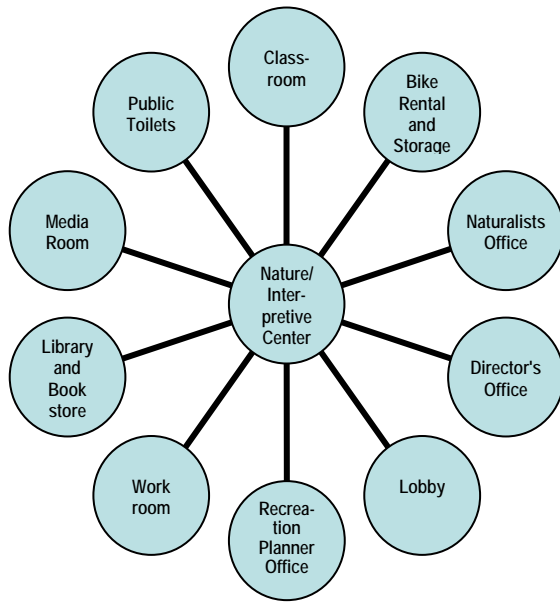


Figure 5.3 – Nature/Interpretive Center Facilities

Primitive camping: Walk-in campsites will be added to the existing, high quality primitive campground. The plan proposes improvements to the parking area and installation of potable water service for campers.

Picnicking

The large, existing picnic shelters are extremely popular and are consistently rented on weekends during the picnicking season. Large groups are served well in the park, but additional facilities for smaller groups are proposed. Small shelters with a capacity of 4 to 10 tables will be placed in locations that will work well in serving visitors that are using other facilities in the park. One or two shelters are planned near the destination playground and existing fishing pier where existing parking lots will serve the parking need. One or two shelters are also planned near the existing boat launch and proposed fishing pier where a small parking lot will be provided to serve the new picnic area. Some tables will be placed in the open park areas near the new shelters to provide additional picnicking opportunities.

There are existing, small picnic areas in the park that are located in settings that have few mature trees and consist of open tables with no shelters. The areas are underutilized and would be more appealing if shelters were added to provide shade and strengthen the sense of place at these locations. The plan recommends adding small shelters (first come first serve) with a capacity of 4 to 10 tables to enhance the picnic areas and provide more choices for park visitors seeking a pleasant gathering place.

Water-based Facilities

The existing fishing pier on Lake Elmo is used heavily by families and other park visitors. A second pier is planned for a location north of the existing boat launch. The lake bottom drops-off fairly quickly at this location and fish habitat is deemed to be good. Support facilities will include a small parking lot.

Circulation patterns at the existing boat ramp, access drive and parking are not efficient. The layout of the facilities will be modified to shorten the time it takes to launch boats and park vehicles and to help avoid conflicts between boating visitors. The capacity of the parking lot will remain the same.

Trails

Lighted ski trails: The existing cross country ski trails in the park are high quality and varied in the challenges that they offer. Lighted ski trails have proven to be popular in Three River's Park District, Ramsey County and Stearns County. Some of the trails are lit with light poles that are 15' to 20' high and others are lit with low level lights approximately 3' to 4' high. The low level lights are proposed for use

in Lake Elmo Park Reserve to minimize glare and visibility of the lights from other locations in the park and from the surrounding area. The lighted trails offer extended use for skiers that are working during most of the winter daylight hours and for ski teams that spend a great deal of time practicing their sport. A lighted trail is proposed for existing trail loop C at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. The use of snow-making machines is proposed to compensate for reduced snowfall; an apparent trend for Minnesota winters.

Snowshoeing and winter hiking: Additional snowshoeing and winter hiking trails will be provided in response to a high demand for outdoor winter exercise opportunities. More trails designated for these activities will help to reduce conflicts between skiers and walkers.

Mountain biking: Mountain biking is currently allowed on multi-use trails in the park. The contemporary designs for mountain bike trails, constructed recently in several Metro Area parks, are highly technical and offer challenges that have proven to be extremely popular with bikers. Trails should be constructed in conformance with design standards established by the International Mountain Bicycling Association to avoid problems with soil erosion and to minimize impacts on vegetation and other natural resources. A trail designed specifically for mountain biking (it would also accommodate snowshoeing in the winter) and a trailhead parking lot are proposed in the vicinity of the south end of Eagle Point Lake. The trail length will be 3 to 5 miles.

Equestrian trails: Equestrian trails will be modified by eliminating equestrian use of the trail segments on the south and southwest sides of Eagle Point Lake. The change is made to protect soft erodible soils existing in this area of the park. In addition, a trail segment, similar in length to the segment to be deleted, will be added at the north end of the park to provide connections between the trail system and the proposed location for the new equestrian campground and trailhead.

Paved trails: Bituminous-surfaced trails provide barrier free access to users of all ages and all levels of physical ability. They provide a safe and comfortable walking surface in most weather conditions and have proven to attract more trail users (hikers, bikers, in-line skaters) than ‘soft’ trail surfaces in all types of park settings. Bituminous surfacing is proposed for park trails connecting to access points serving the Cities of Lake Elmo, Oakdale and Woodbury. A paved trail is also proposed to encircle Eagle Point Lake; joining the existing multi-use trail and providing all trail users the opportunity to experience the lake environs. Finally, bituminous trail connections will be added between park facilities as required. For example, improved connections are needed between the swimming pond and nearby camping, picnic and play areas.

Park access: Trails providing access into the park will be paved and designed to provide convenient connections to the cities of Lake Elmo, Oakdale and Woodbury. A number of alternative park entrance locations were considered and the following were chosen as preferred options:

- Connections convenient to Oakdale will likely occur at the location of the existing snowmobile trail on Inwood Ave. and at North 15th Street.
- A connection to Downtown Lake Elmo will likely occur near Klondike Street (the exact location will be coordinated with the City).
- The existing trail access on Keats Ave. is convenient to Woodbury.

Where new trails are proposed for connection to city-owned trail segments, the construction will occur after the city segments are complete. This will help to ensure that placement of the park trails is consistent with city trail design objectives.

Hwy. 5 underpasses: Construction of underpasses beneath Hwy. 5 and the railroad tracks on the north side of the park is proposed to provide access to the City of Lake Elmo trail system and the Gateway Trail. The precise locations for the underpasses have not yet been determined.

Snowmobiling: The Washington County Star Trail Association is permitted to maintain snowmobile trails that pass within the park along the southwest and northwest boundaries. Trail access points are located on Inwood Ave. and on Highway 5. The trail use will be allowed to continue in the park as long as adjacent communities permit such use and there is no conflict with park operations or negative impact on wildlife.

Miscellaneous Facilities/Activities

The existing traditional archery target range is heavily used. The range will be relocated to a site south of the north farmstead and the number of targets will be increased. A field archery range will be constructed near the same location. The field range will include targets and shooting stations designed to simulate hunting conditions. The archery ranges will be designed in conformance with standards established by the National Archery Association and the National Field Archery Association.

The Brown’s Pond area will be developed to include winter skating, sledding facilities and cross-country skiing and snow shoeing trails. Summer use of the area will include hiking and nature appreciation. The existing barn at the site will serve as a trail head and multi-use activity center with spaces provided to accommodate activities shown on the diagram in Figure 5.4. A deck will be constructed on the west side

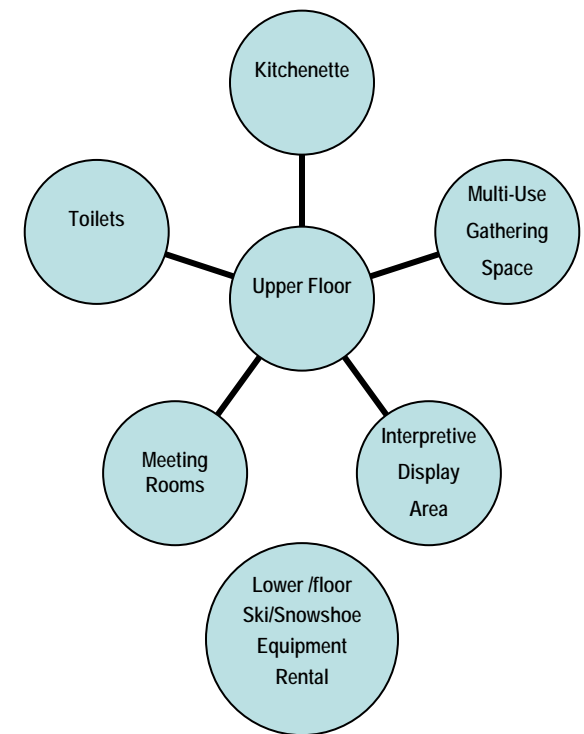


Figure 5.4 – Brown's Pond Multi-Use Activity Center

of the barn to provide an outdoor activity space with views to Brown’s Pond. Windows will be installed in the west barn wall to allow viewing of the pond from interior spaces. A parking lot will be constructed to serve the facilities in the area.

Dog field-trial events are currently conducted twice per year in open, short-grass, field areas of the park. The events may continue until native plant communities have been restored in the park to the extent that suitable space for the trials is no longer available.

Acquisition of inholdings and other property is being considered on the southeast shore of Lake Elmo, at the southeast corner of the park and along Keats Avenue at the main entrance to the park. Refer to Chapter 6-Park Boundaries and Acquisition for additional information related to the properties.

Facilities and Considerations Discussed & Omitted

‘Reserve’ Status of Lake Elmo Park Reserve

The park’s ‘reserve’ status, according to Metropolitan Council policy, limits development to 20% of the total area within the property boundaries. The County Parks Division discussed the possibility of recommending to the Metro Council that the designation be changed to ‘regional park’ status because the Council has traditionally placed higher priority on appropriating funds for recreational development to regional parks than to regional park reserves. As a result, ‘regional park’ status would probably allow the county to implement development proposed in the Master Plan at a faster pace.

The developed area of the park is measured, in accordance with Metro Council standards, by calculating the area covered by all built facilities including buildings, parking lots, roads, trails, etc. and all areas that are maintained as lawn by frequent mowing. Using this methodology, the current developed area of Lake Elmo Park Reserve is approximately 149 acres or 6.9% of the 2,165 park acres and the proposed development would cover approximately 49 acres or 2.3% of the total acreage (includes upland area and the areas of all water bodies surrounded completely by park land). If all proposed facilities are developed as planned and if all existing facilities unaffected by the plan continue to be maintained as they are, the total developed area will be approximately 198 acres or 9.1% of the total park area.

The input received from the public supports continuation of the park’s ‘reserve’ status. Residents stated frequently during the planning process that high priority is placed on controlling the level of development to help maximize the quality of natural areas. They are concerned that, although new development in the current plan will increase the developed area to only 9.1% of the park site, changing the park’s status would pose no development limitations for future administrators/stakeholders who may pursue more

expansive development goals. In response to input received from area residents, the plan recommends that Lake Elmo Park Reserve remain a ‘reserve’.

Off-leash Dog Area

It was determined that an off-leash dog area is not consistent with the county’s mission in providing recreation opportunities for park visitors. The off-leash activity is known to have adverse impacts on natural features and wildlife habitat and is considered to be a better fit within a local park setting that supports intense recreational activities such as a ‘community park’ or ‘community playfield’ as classified in the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Open Space Policy Plan. In addition, it was observed that the needs of off-leash dog area users are best served by facilities provided in parks that are sited in several locations throughout a city. This provides convenient access for frequent users. Off-leash areas are not recommended for development in Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

Winter Vehicle Access to Lake Elmo

It was determined that vehicle travel on Lake Elmo during winter months does not relate to other facilities or programs existing or planned for Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and winter activities on the Lake are beyond the ability of the Parks Division to monitor or control. An access drive onto Lake Elmo is not recommended for development in the park.

Disc Golf

It was determined that disc golf is not consistent with the county’s mission in providing recreation opportunities for park visitors. The activity is known to have adverse impacts on natural features and is a better fit within a local park setting that supports intense recreational activities such as a ‘community park’ or ‘community playfield’ as classified in the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Open Space Policy Plan. A disc golf course is not recommended for development in Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

Undeveloped Facilities Included in the 1978 Master Plan

The original Master Plan for Lake Elmo Park Reserve includes recommendations for two major facilities that have not been implemented to date. The first is a children’s farm planned for development at the north farmstead and the second is a swimming beach planned for the southwest shore of Lake Elmo.

Recommendations from the current planning process include the omission of the children’s farm concept. It was observed that the high cost of implementing and maintaining a children’s farm at Lake Elmo Park Reserve may diminish the development and maintenance of other important facilities in the park. Additionally, there are similar facilities operating in the Metro Area that offer high quality educational experiences related to the “small farm” lifestyle once common in this region. Finally, the concept ranked extremely low in a recent county-wide recreation survey. Interpretation of farm structures, artifacts and general settlement history of the park land is proposed in lieu of development of a working farm.

It is recommended that the swimming beach proposed on Lake Elmo be omitted from the park improvement program. The existing swimming pond is heavily used and provides high quality swim facilities for park visitors. At the time that the existing pond was planned, it was determined that the lake bottom and shoreline conditions within the park were not suitable for beach development. The current planning process supports that finding.

Serving Special Needs

Accessibility

Washington County is committed to designing, managing and maintaining park facilities for universal accessibility. All existing and proposed built facilities intended for public use are or will be designed to conform to Federal and State ADA Guidelines. Existing paved trails provide access to many key natural areas in the park. The master plan amendment recommends three additional paved trail connections to serve surrounding communities and recommends construction of a paved trail around Eagle Pt. Lake to make the park environs accessible there.

Serving Diverse Ethnic Groups

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has absorbed the immigration of many different ethnic groups. Some cultural, recreational and traditional practices require minor adjustments in management and maintenance services to effectively accommodate the diverse needs of the various groups. Washington County is committed to serving user needs that are consistent with the codes and ordinances that apply to normal operations and services in the park system.

Use and Development Conflicts

The gun club in operation south of the park generates a great deal of gunfire noise that can be heard throughout LEPR. The sound is loud enough in most park areas so it is a noticeable irritant but not a

significant conflict. The conflict is significant, however, with camping use which is evidenced by a history of complaints from campers. It is understandable that long term exposure to the noise experienced by campers becomes less tolerable than the relatively brief exposure by visitors enjoying shorter stays in the park.

The gun club has been a long standing land use in the area and is a valued member of the City of Lake Elmo community. Historically, the Parks Division has described the gun club facility and use to park visitors to make them aware of the club. The plan recommends that the county continue the practice and that the noise be considered when final designs are prepared for future facilities.

Residents in neighborhoods surrounding the park have created random trail access points around the park perimeter and the Parks Division policy has been to restrict access to designated trails. The plan recommends construction of additional accesses, as described earlier in this chapter, to correspond with Lake Elmo, Oakdale and Woodbury trail system plans. Providing more designated accesses will help to mitigate the tendency for residents to create their own.

Public Services

Public services and infrastructure needed to serve LEPR and its visitors are largely established, effective and complete. One exception, is trail access to the park which the plan proposes to augment as described in the paragraph above and earlier in this chapter.

