

Montrose Point  
Site Improvements

Phase I  
Implementation of  
the Montrose  
Point Master Plan

Lincoln Park  
Chicago, Illinois

# MONTROSE POINT SITE IMPROVEMENTS



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# AGENDA

**Introductions**  
**Review of Master Plan**  
**Existing Conditions**  
**Problematic Conditions**  
**Pathways**  
**Entries**  
**Fencing**  
**Water Feature**  
**Landscaping**  
**Other Potential Features**  
**Discussion**

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# INTRODUCTIONS

## Chicago Park District

**Jason Steger, Natural Areas Manager**  
**Lauren Umek, Project Manager**  
**Naureen Rana, Project Manager**

## Wolff Landscape Architecture

**Ted Wolff, Principal**  
**Matthew Strange, Senior Associate**  
**Grace Zhao, Designer**

## ecology + vision, llc

**Andy Stahr, Principal**

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# REVIEW OF MASTER PLAN



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## EXISTING CONDITIONS - VEGETATION

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**Existing Conditions - Vegetation**



# FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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## Facilities Improvement Plan



## Management Units

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## Management Units



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### 5. vision

#### 1. Entrances

Entrances are an opportunity to shape visitors' perceptions of Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary so that they treat the habitat within with appropriate respect. Gateway features, clearly posted rules, and interpretive signage will mark the transition from the typical, urban park setting of Lincoln Park to the unique, world-class bird habitat within Montrose Point. Directional signage will be added to make it clear how the site is to be accessed. In order to prevent cyclists from riding through the park, accessible stiles could be installed at all entrances.

##### Primary Entrance

*Features:* A bird-themed, artisan designed and built gateway structure would highlight the unique habitat within. The section below provides one possible example of the type of structure that could be installed.

*Location:* Primary public access will be from West Montrose Drive.

##### Secondary Entrances

*Features:* Every entrance should have signage that welcomes visitors, provides interpretive information, and clearly communicates the park's rules.

*Location:* The number of entrances to Montrose Point should be limited to prevent the creation of informal paths and protect the habitat. Most existing entrances will be maintained, but a few will be abandoned.



primary entrance: an example of the type of arching gateway and interpretive signage that could be located at the primary entrance

### Entrances

Primary Entrance: Bird-themed, artisan designed gateway with identity signage

Secondary Entrance: Identity and wayfinding signage

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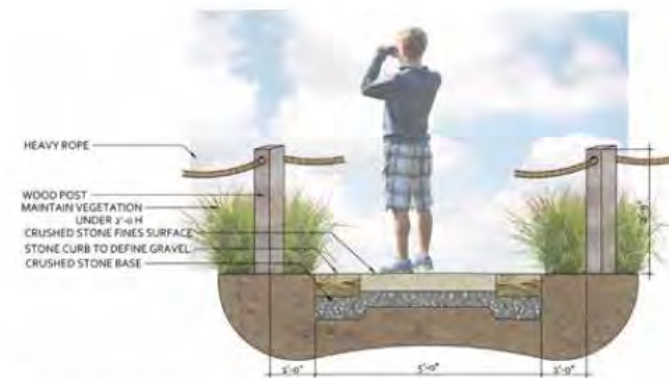
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### 2. Trails and Accessibility

The proposed trail system follows the alignment and layout of existing paths. Paths will be enhanced and stabilized according to use and accessibility. Some existing paths will be closed to create larger, contiguous habitat areas.

#### Primary Path: Crushed Stone (0.8 miles)

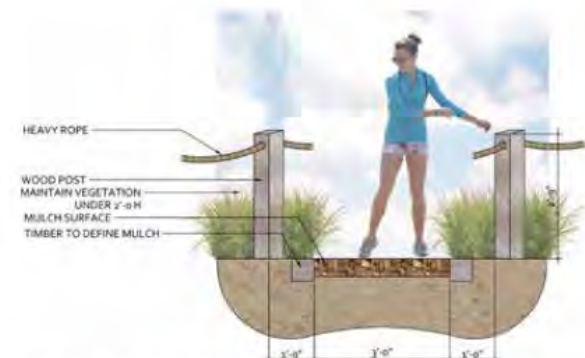
*Features:* Compacted, finely graded, crushed stone provides a stable, easy to navigate surface in wet and dry conditions. Stone or concrete block should be used to define the edge and keep the crushed stone in place.



primary accessible path: compacted gravel

#### Secondary Path: Mulch (0.6 miles)

*Features:* Wood mulch provides a soft walking surface that fits with the natural setting of Montrose Point and prevents excess erosion along foot paths. Mulch will need to be replaced every two to five years, but this may not be problematic since wood mulch is readily available to the Chicago Park District. Timbers can be used to define the edge of the mulch paths.



secondary path: mulch

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### Trails and Accessibility

Primary Trails: 7' wide, fencing, ADA compliant

Secondary Trails: 4' wide, fencing as appropriate



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### 3. Fencing and Edge Treatments

A wide variety of fencing materials are in use currently at Montrose Point. This plan proposes more durable types of fencing to define the perimeter of the area and to protect and control access to various restoration areas within the site.

#### Perimeter Treatment

*Features:* The perimeter treatment fencing is intended to identify the edge of Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary and to direct visitors to enter the site only at designated locations. Split rail fence is currently used to define the western edge of Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary. Precast concrete post and board fence would provide a more durable alternative in keeping with the current aesthetic.



precast post and board fence

#### Fencing to Define Trails

*Features:* Heavy manila rope suspended between wooden posts should be used to limit access to sensitive habitat areas. This type of fencing is intended to provide a cue to typical park users such as birders and photographers to respect these landscapes. Rope fencing like this is currently used to protect restoration efforts in other locations within Lincoln Park. The cross-sections on the proceeding page show how the rope fence could be located in relationship to the trails.

Rope fencing may not prevent illicit use of natural areas at Montrose Point. However, it will clearly mark which areas are appropriate for public use so that security personnel and other park users can easily identify when individuals are making inappropriate use of the park.



rope fence protecting a prairie restoration in Lincoln Park

### Fencing and Edge Treatments

Perimeter Fencing: Precast concrete post and board fence

Trail Fencing: Wooden posts and heavy manila rope

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### 5. Open Water Element

The existing water feature, commonly referred to as the “bird bath,” provides an important component of the habitat as well as the visitor experience. The open water and adjacent wet landscapes provide water source for birds to drink and bath in, as well as varied soil moisture that supports greater plant diversity.

In order to sustain over time, the water feature and associated landscape should be stabilized and become reliant on local water sources and renewable energy. In terms of the physical structure of the birdbath, stakeholders suggested a prairie stream to create a variety of habitat conditions for diverse bird species.



prairie stream habitat to be constructed at Montrose Point

#### Prairie Stream

Prairie stream will include a open water pond area surrounded by a wetland shelf with occasional limestone outcroppings to define the perimeter. The emergent wetland shelf will also serves as a safety ledge around open water. The pond should be deeper than the typical frost depth in the Chicago area (four feet) in order support aquatic life over winter. The pond and stream should be lined with clay in order to ensure that pond holds water. Other alternatives that could be explored during a detailed design phase include concrete and rubber liners.

Water will be pumped from the pond to the head of the stream via a solar powered pump. The stream should include shallow rocks and sandy areas for birds to interact with water. Birds and people will be attracted by the sound of water falling over riffles and shallow rocky areas along the stream.



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### Open Water Element (Expanded Water Feature)

Increased size

“Pond” and “stream” components

Improved user access with boardwalks over water



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Main entrance off of West Montrose Harbor Drive lacks presence and sense of arrival.



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The arrival space beyond the main entrance, past the “Magic Clump” on the right, with the “Magic Hedge” on the left, and the meadow beyond, is open and inviting.



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The wide woodchip path on the east side of the Magic Hedge is the most heavily used path on Montrose Point.



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A deadfall tree provides an excellent bird perch adjacent to the wetland.



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The wildflower meadow is spectacular by mid-summer, and would only be improved with a smoother, more regular, all-season, ADA compliant walking surface.



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Tree canopies span pathways and create natural ceilings above the paths and provide welcome shade.



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A dirt pathway and tunnel through the dense tangle.



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Dappled sunlight and shade on the woodchip pathway and understory vegetation create an inviting woodland environment.



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Tree groves act as thresholds and frame the view to the sweep of the southern meadow and the long view across the lake to the downtown skyline.



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The perimeter wood chip pathways border the woodland and the “protected area” on one side and the stunning wildflower meadow on the other side, with views of the high-rise wall along Lake Shore Drive and the Chicago skyline.



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Dune grasses and massive limestone blocks form the border between the perimeter concrete sidewalk and the Montrose Point Natural Area, on one side, and the Montrose Dune Natural Area, on the other.



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The butterfly meadow, which was seeded and plugged in spring 2017, has filled in well within less than one growing season.



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# PROBLEMATIC CONDITIONS



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The main entrance is marred by visual clutter, with a proliferation of interpretive, informational, and regulatory signage in a variety of sizes, styles, formats, fonts, and mounting.



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Dogs are prohibited within the natural area, and, despite extensive signage indicating that they are not allowed, they are a frequent and ongoing problem.



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Bicycles are prohibited within the natural area, and, despite extensive signage indicating that they are not allowed, they are also a frequent and ongoing problem.



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# **PATHWAYS**



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### **Gravel (“Bike Trail Mix”) with Steel Edge**

*Visual* – Blends with natural settings

*Environmental* – Natural Material

*Accessibility* – Erodes with steep grades

*Cost* – Medium, primarily due to edging

*Maintenance* – Erosion, weeding, re-set steel



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### **Concrete**

*Visual* – High glare

*Environmental* – Retains heat

*Accessibility* – ADA compliant, adapts to grade change

*Cost* – High

*Maintenance* – Minimal; 10-20 year life



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### **Asphalt**

*Visual* – Blends with natural settings

*Environmental* – Oil based material

*Accessibility* – ADA compliant, adapts to grade change

*Cost* – Medium

*Maintenance* – Minimal; 5-10 year life



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### **Asphalt**

*Visual* – Blends with natural settings

*Environmental* – Oil based material

*Accessibility* – ADA compliant, adapts to grade change

*Cost* – Medium

*Maintenance* – Minimal; 5-10 year life



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### **Woodchip (with no edge retention)**

*Visual* – Blends with natural settings

*Environmental* – Natural Material

*Accessibility* – Not ADA compliant; erodes easily

*Cost* – Low

*Maintenance* – Replenish every 1-2 years



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### **Woodchip (with timber edge retention)**

*Visual* – Blends with natural settings

*Environmental* – Natural Material

*Accessibility* – Not ADA compliant; erodes easily

*Cost* – Medium (Primarily due to Edging)

*Maintenance* – Replenish every 1-2 years



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### **Dirt**

Remove or replace with alternative material



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### **Desire paths**

Remove and restore to natural condition with signage, barriers, and planting.





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## Existing Pathways and Entries





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## Existing Paths and Entries to be Removed





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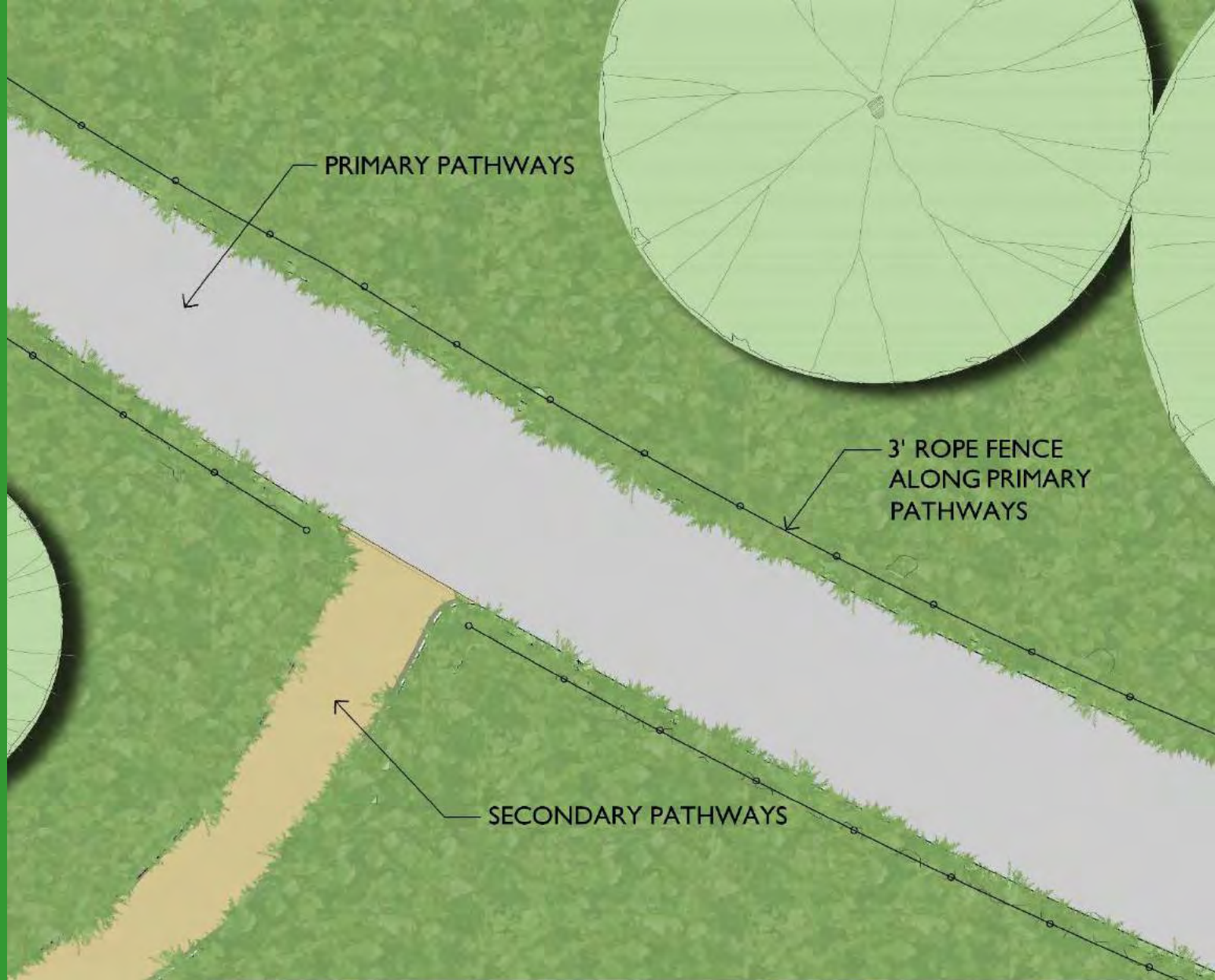
## Proposed Pathway Alignment and Materials



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## Pathway Plan Enlargement



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## Primary Pathway Section



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## Secondary Pathway Section



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# **PATHWAYS SUMMARY**

## **Simplify Circulation**

### **Remove Redundant Pathways**

### **Remove Desire Pathways**

**Pave Primary Pathways with Long Lasting, ADA Accessible, and Low Maintenance Material (Asphalt Recommended)**

**Pave Secondary Pathways with Lower Cost Natural Material (Woodchip with Timber Edging Recommended)**

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# ENTRIES



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Main entrance off of West Montrose Harbor Drive lacks presence and sense of arrival.



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The main entrance is marred by visual clutter, with a proliferation of interpretive, informational, and regulatory signage in a variety of sizes, styles, formats, and mounting.



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East of the main entrance is another, nearly redundant, entrance. This entrance should be removed for clarity, identity, and simplicity.



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Further east is another, secondary, entrance. Due to the connection to the important perimeter path this entrance should remain.



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On the south side is a secondary entry through the “revetment meadow,” which is a good connection between Montrose Point and the lakeshore, but lacks identity, sense of arrival, and signage.



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On the east side is a secondary entry from the perimeter concrete walkway. It lacks identity, sense of arrival, and signage, there is extensive erosion, and the forked pathways are confusing. This entrance should be removed.



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On the northeast is a secondary entry from the perimeter walkway. It lacks identity and signage. The limestone steps are good, and it provides a direct connection to the dunes natural area. Signage and identity improvements are recommended.



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On the north is a secondary entry from the perimeter walkway. It lacks identity and signage. The limestone steps are good, but there is erosion on the path. Signage and identity improvements are recommended and measures to reduce erosion.



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On the north is a secondary entrance to the Butterfly Meadow. This is an important entrance, but it lacks identity and signage. Signage and identity improvements are recommended.





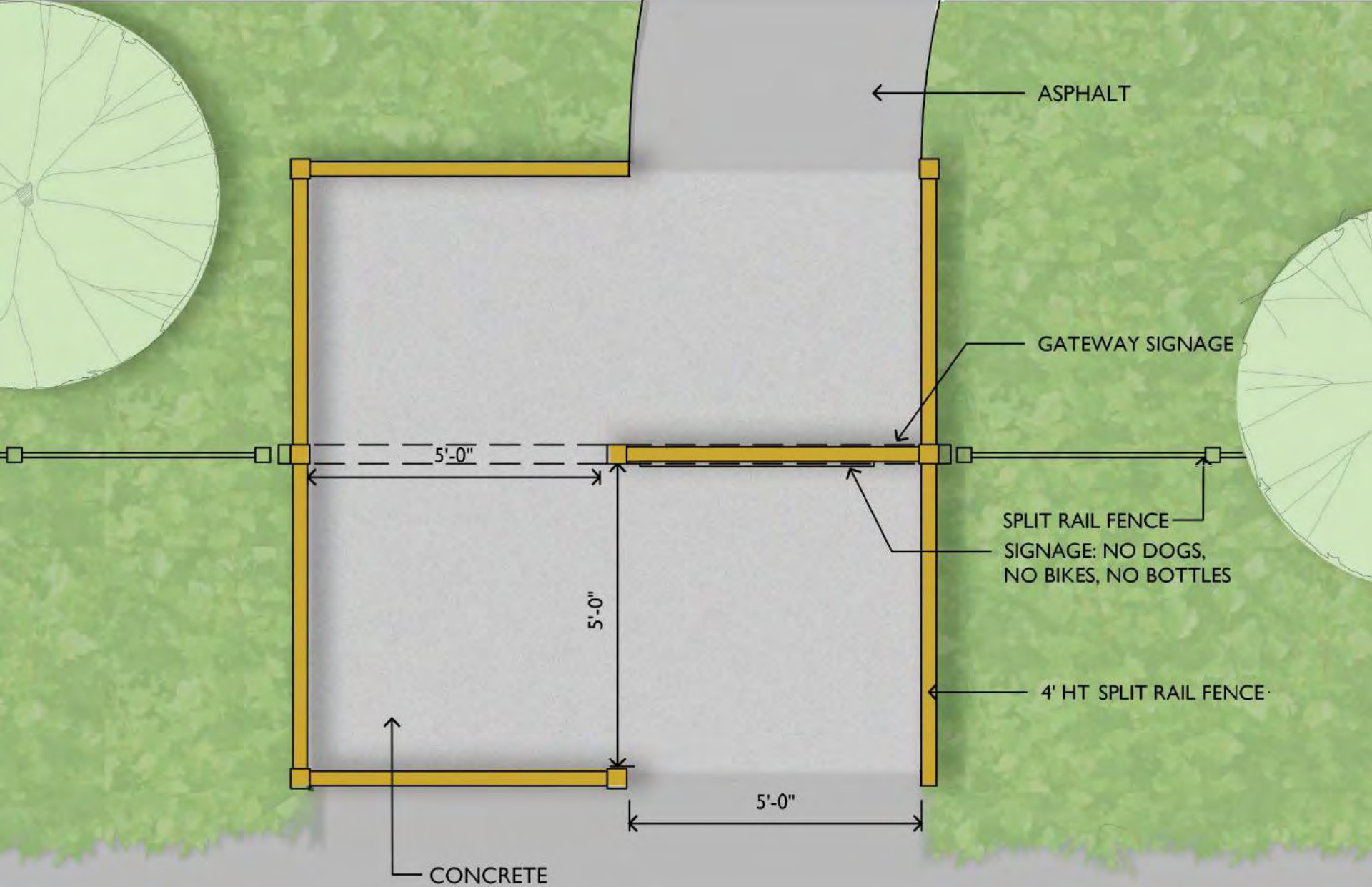
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## Proposed Entrances





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**Primary Entrance Plan:** Indirect pathway to discourage bicycles, ADA compliant, tied into perimeter rail fence.





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**Primary Entrance Perspective:** Overhead identity signage, indirect pathway to discourage bicycles, ADA compliant, large and visible symbols overhead summarizing prohibited activities, and detailed rules and regulations below.



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# **ENTRANCES SUMMARY**

**Reduce the Number of Entrances**

**Establish One Primary Entrance**

**Reduce to Five Secondary Entrances**

**Bike Deterrent and ADA Compliant Entrance Design**

**Simplified Signage Highlighting Prohibited Activities**

**Comprehensive Signage Listing All Rules and Regulations**

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# FENCING



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**Existing Rail Fence**



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**Existing Metal Post-and-Rope Fence**



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**Existing 4' Wire Mesh Fence (Temporary Construction Fence)**



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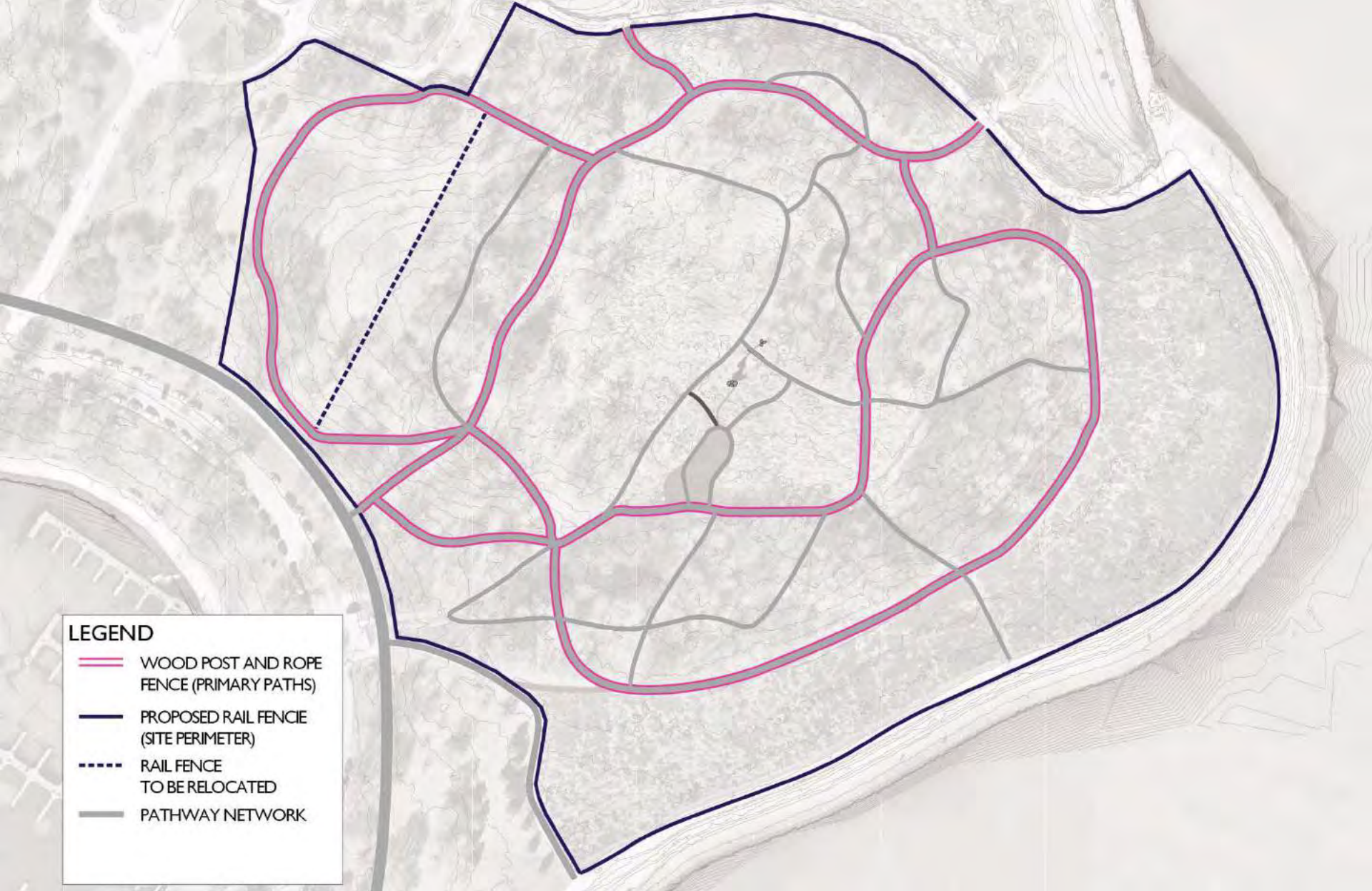
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**Existing Rabbit Fence**





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## Proposed Fencing



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**Proposed Wood Post-and-Rope Fence**



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### **Proposed Wood Post-and-Rope Fence With Painted Caps**

Painted fence post caps could serve as a wayfinding device, for example, the “Red Trail”



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**Proposed Wood Post-and-Rope Fence With Numbered Caps**

Numbered fence post caps could serve as a location device, for example, “The sedge wren was last seen in the grass fifteen feet in from post #7”



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# FENCING SUMMARY

**Rail Fencing Around Entire Site Perimeter**

**Wood Post-and-Rope Fencing Bordering All  
Primary Pathways**

**No Fencing Along Secondary Pathways**

**Potential for fencing to contribute to wayfinding and as a  
location device**

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# **WATER FEATURE**



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### **Existing Water Feature**



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Tall summer vegetation makes the water feature difficult to view.



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The water feature is visible in spring before the plants grow to their mature size, but it is relatively small.



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A nearby deadfall tree provides an excellent bird perch. The adjacent utility box is an eyesore.



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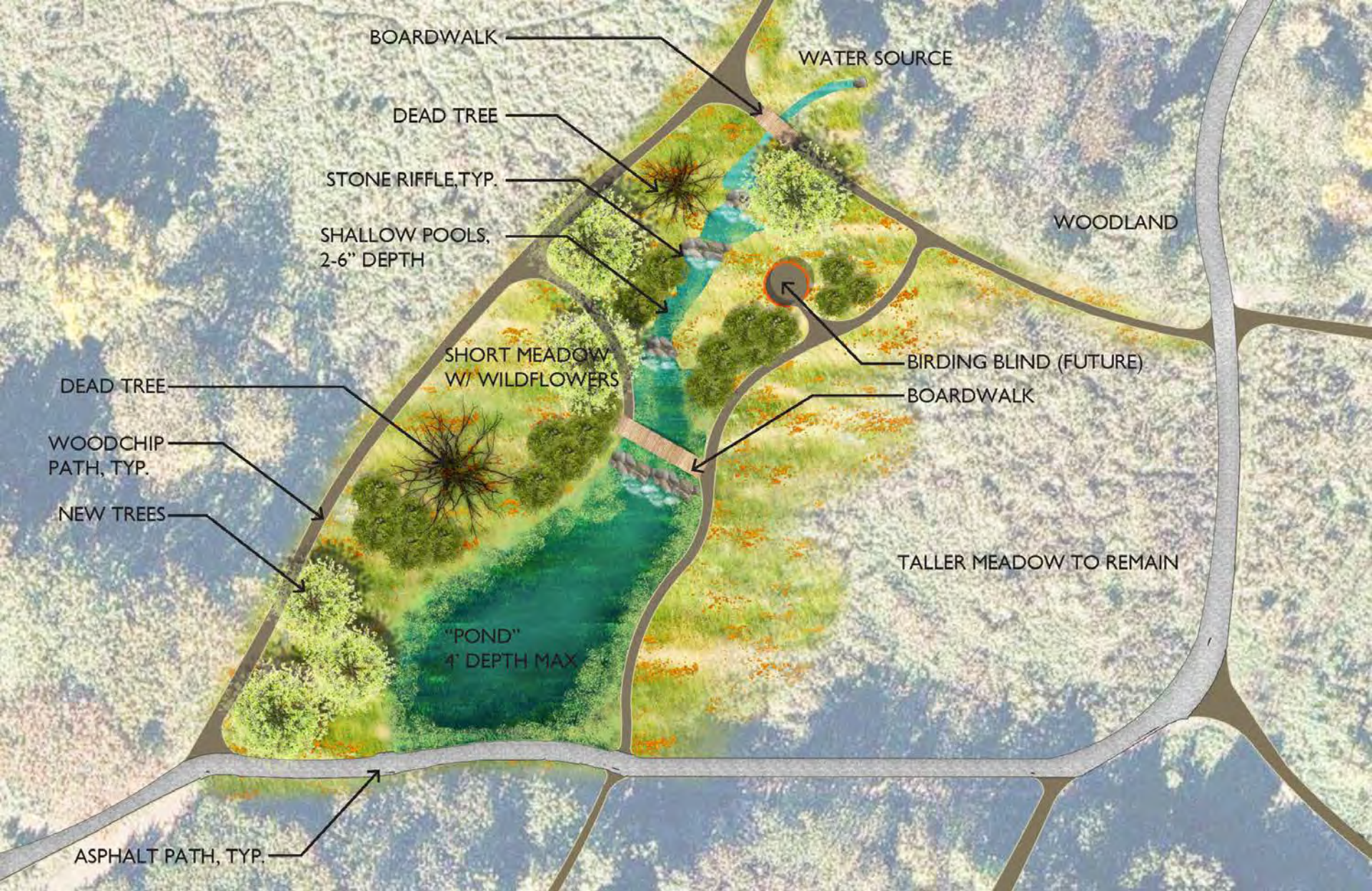
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The adjacent woodland in the background provides an opportunity to conceal the water source of the expanded water feature.





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## Proposed Expanded Water Feature





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## Proposed Expanded Water Feature Perspective



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The source or “stream” feeding the water feature could appear from the shade and depth of the woodland.



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The water feature would have open water, stone weirs or riffles to create and define pools, and vegetated edges.



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Terraced wetland pools provide bird bathing, drinking, and foraging opportunities.



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A boardwalk over the source “stream” or the main body of the water feature would allow users to interact more closely with the habitat.



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Area surrounding the water feature could be planted as a short grass meadow for greater visibility.



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The water feature basin itself could be planted with a mix of sedges and forbs.



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# **WATER FEATURE SUMMARY**

**Enlarged Water Feature Area**

**Range of Water Depths**

**Water Feature to be More Visible**

**Water Feature Source or “Stream” Begins at Hidden  
Location within Adjacent Woodland**

**Enhanced Bird Viewing and Perching Opportunities**

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# LANDSCAPING



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**Previous: Lawn with trees**



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**In progress: Butterfly meadow**





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**Current:** Eurasian Meadow and Tallgrass Prairie Restoration



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**Current:** Tallgrass Prairie with Tall Forbs



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**Vision:** Shortgrass Prairie





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**Current:** Degraded Woodland



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**Current: Degraded Woodland**



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**Vision:** Open Woodland with Diversity of Structure and Ephemerals





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**Current:** Dense Woody Thickets

**Vision:** Phased shrub replacements





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**Current:** Magic Hedge and Magic Clump

**Vision:** Ongoing invasives control by volunteers





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**Current:** Revetment Prairie and Foredune

**Vision:** Ongoing Management



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# **LANDSCAPING SUMMARY**

**Butterfly Meadow creation – in progress**

**Central Prairies – reduced height, increased diversity**

**Invasive species management led by volunteer stewards**

**Phased shrub replacements as individuals age out**

**Strategic shrub placement to support pathway changes**

**Ongoing management of established habitats**

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# OTHER POTENTIAL FEATURES



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## Special Feature Opportunities



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## Heavy Timber Benches at Nodes



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Fallen trees can provide an inexpensive natural sculpture and a bird perch, while also adding verticality to a meadow.



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A birding tower could provide an elevated perspective from which it would be easier to view birds in the tree canopies.



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Overlook areas create destinations within the natural area.



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A sculptural bird blind is both a birding amenity and artwork.



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A leaking water pipe along the magic hedge provides a small, *ad hoc* water feature that is attractive to birds, and could be expanded into a greater feature if the path were realigned around the wet area.



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# NEXT STEPS

## Seeking Funding Opportunities



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# DISCUSSION



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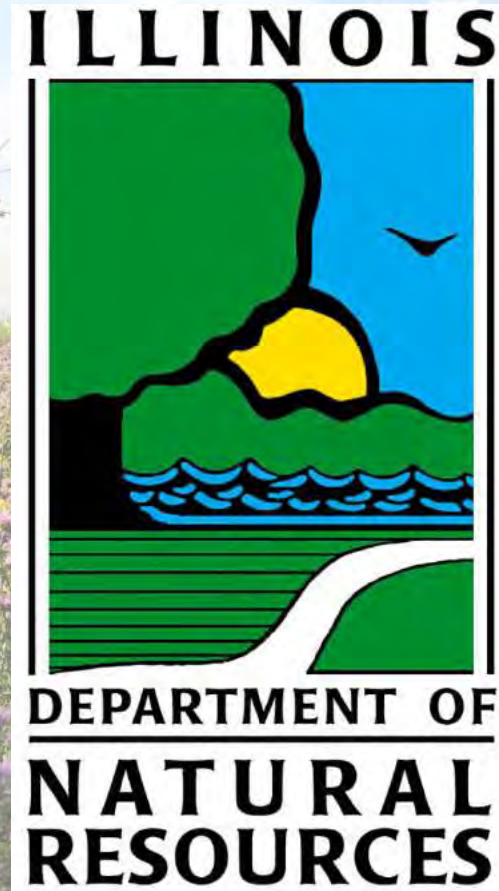


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**THANK YOU!**



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