



Hole in the Mountain Park Masterplan

2021

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Section A – Introduction and Overview

Lincoln County and the Lincoln County Parks Department, together with Development Services, Inc., the National Park Service, and WSB have established this Master Plan to identify the results of the planning process as well as to act as a guide for the operations, maintenance, and development of future projects at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. This Master Plan also highlights the details of the application for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park being designated as a Natural Resource-Based Regional Park by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission.

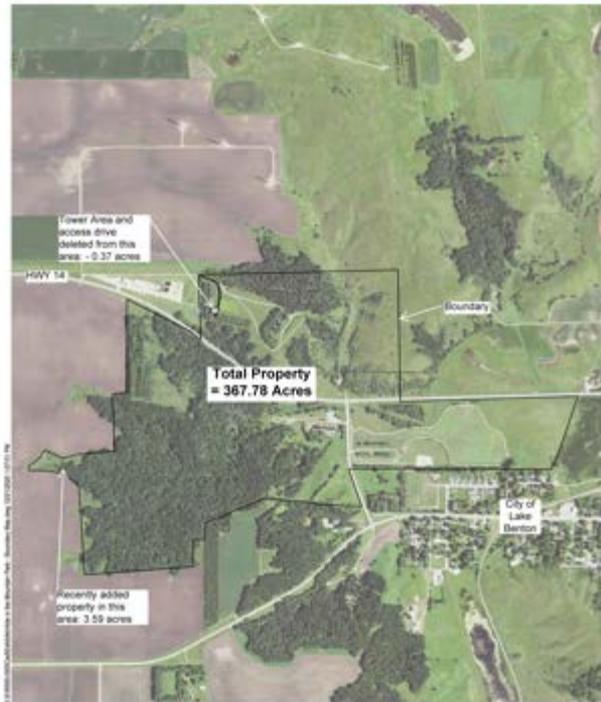
Located on Buffalo Ridge in southwest Minnesota, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, with 1,000 acres of woodland and prairie, is a regional treasure due to its topography, scenic landscapes, campgrounds, and trails. With its steep hills and rolling terrain, the park provides seven miles of challenging and scenic natural trails. Hole in the Mountain Park offers three campgrounds with a total of 60 campsites with water and electric. The park also has available more than 30 rustic tent sites. Each year, over 5,000 people visit the park. Whether its horseback riding, biking, hiking, fishing, or snowmobiling, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is in use spring, summer, fall, and winter – truly, a Four Season Funland.



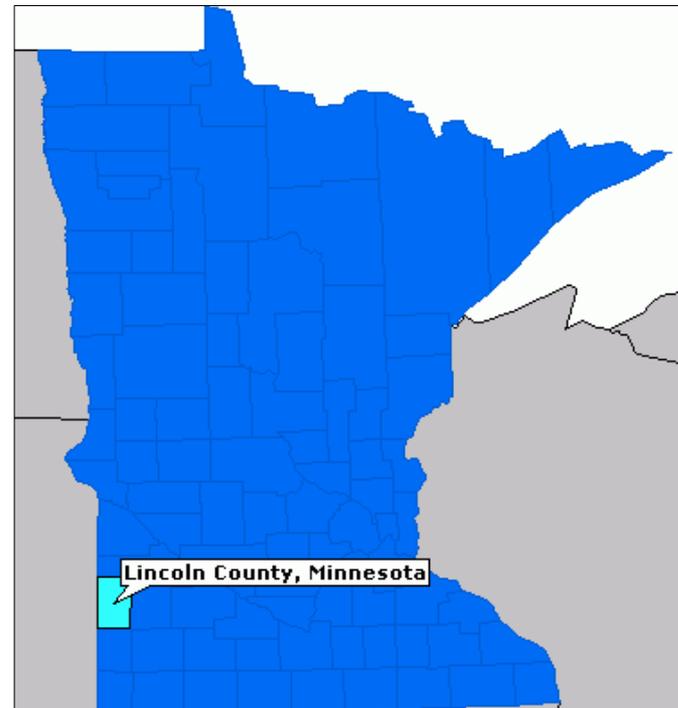
Section B – Proposer/Implementing Agency

Lincoln County, Minnesota is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, with the County Seat located in Ivanhoe, Minnesota. The Lincoln County Parks Department, an agency under the direction of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, has been designated to supervise the operation, maintenance, and development of the parks and recreation centers within Lincoln County. The Lincoln County Parks Department employs a full-time Park Director of 38 years experience who is familiar with the park's directive, operations, and history, and has built valuable relationships with park guests and visitors. The Lincoln County Parks Department also employs seasonal employees to assist during the peak summer season.

The goal of the Lincoln County Park System is to improve the quality of life for people of all ages and increase tourism in southwestern Minnesota by providing a regional park system offering year-round activities. Hole-in-the-Mountain Park offers a unique landscape for recreation, exercise, and family time while showcasing the region's beautiful scenic views and its natural beauty.



Hole in the Mountain Park - Boundary Map



Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Lincoln County, Minnesota is a rural county bordering South Dakota with agriculture and renewable energy as the dominant industries. As of the 2010 census, the population of Lincoln County was 5,896. Lincoln County, Minnesota, with a total area of 548 square miles, is home to five cities (Arco, Hendricks, Ivanhoe, Lake Benton, and Tyler), 15 lakes, and 15 townships.

Buffalo Ridge

Lake Benton is located on the Bemis Moraine, more commonly referred to as the Buffalo Ridge. The ridge is a moraine, which is a pile of sediment (silt, sand, gravel, and boulders), that were left at the edge of a glacier. There is a 1.6 kilometer-wide break in the moraine in Lake Benton. Buffalo Ridge, dividing the great watersheds of America - the Missouri and Mississippi, provides opportunities for overlooks and interpretation.



Buffalo Ridge is located within the Minnesota portion of the Coteau des Prairies, a highland represented by the light areas in this shaded relief image of southwestern Minnesota.

Lake Benton is nestled in the valley of the Buffalo Ridge and is known as the “Original Windpower Capital of the Midwest.” More than 600 wind turbines decorate the skyline along the Buffalo Ridge in Lincoln County, Minnesota. A 1990 study of Minnesota's wind energy potential by the Department of Public Service found that the Buffalo Ridge has enough wind to produce electricity well in excess of a full year's net electrical consumption in Minnesota. Buffalo Ridge provides the most constant wind speed, averaging 15-18 mph. Because of its high altitude and high average wind speed, Buffalo Ridge has been transformed into a place for creating alternative energy. Buffalo Ridge provides more high-grade wind resources than the entire state of California.

Buffalo Ridge is a large expanse of rolling hills in the southeastern part of the larger Coteau des Prairies, which is part of the inner coteau and is the highest point of the Coteau des Prairies in Minnesota. Buffalo Ridge is 60 miles long and approximately 10 miles wide. The ridge begins in northwestern Iowa and stretches 60 miles through Minnesota and into South Dakota, specifically through Lincoln, Pipestone, Murray, Nobles, and Rock Counties in the southwestern corner of Minnesota. With a peak of 1,994 feet above sea level, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is among the highest points of Buffalo Ridge which, at its peak, reaches 1,995 feet above sea level.

Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Hole in the Mountain Prairie

Hole in the Mountain Prairie, a 1,364-acre prairie and oak savanna wildlife preserve, is a remnant of what once was a 4,300 acre prairie area. The preserve is part of a larger glacial escarpment that runs from southwest Minnesota through northeast South Dakota. Native Americans called the half-mile-wide prairie valley "Mountain Pass" or "Hole-in-the-Mountain". Hole in the Mountain Prairie, spanning a valley of about a half-mile in width, begins at the south end of the City of Lake Benton, along U.S. Highway 75, and runs south toward the Altona State Wildlife.

Just south of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, visitors can find **Hole in the Mountain Prairie**, a tall grass prairie conservancy created, owned, and protected by the Nature Conservancy. It is located on the outer edge of Buffalo Ridge and is the headwaters of Flandreau Creek. It was created to preserve the diminishing tallgrass prairie and the insects and animals native to tallgrass prairies. Native plants within Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairie include six species of special concern: Prairie Moonwort, Small-Leaved Pussytoes, Small White Lady's Slipper, Red Threeawn, Soft Goldenrod, and Slender Milk-Vetch.

Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairie Preserve illustrates what the southern end of the larger 2.4 million-acre Prairie Coteau region might have looked like prior to European settlement. Today, roughly one million acres of the Coteau remains untilled and is primarily utilized as pasture and hayland for livestock. This site allows the Conservancy to showcase alternative prairie management programs. This area is noted as an MCBS Site of Biodiversity Significance.



Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Lake Benton City Trail System and Lincoln County Trail System

The City of Lake Benton has a 1.2 mile trail within the city limits that is connected to Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. Additionally, the Lincoln County Trails Task Force, has designed a plan to construct a Lincoln County Trails System. It is a 10-year multi-phase plan to build trails that would not only connect major points within Lincoln County, but would also connect Hole-in-the-Mountain Park to neighboring trails and amenities, as well as multiple communities, regions and potentially states.

According to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lincoln County, Minnesota, offers access to Regional trails through the following 9 trailheads:

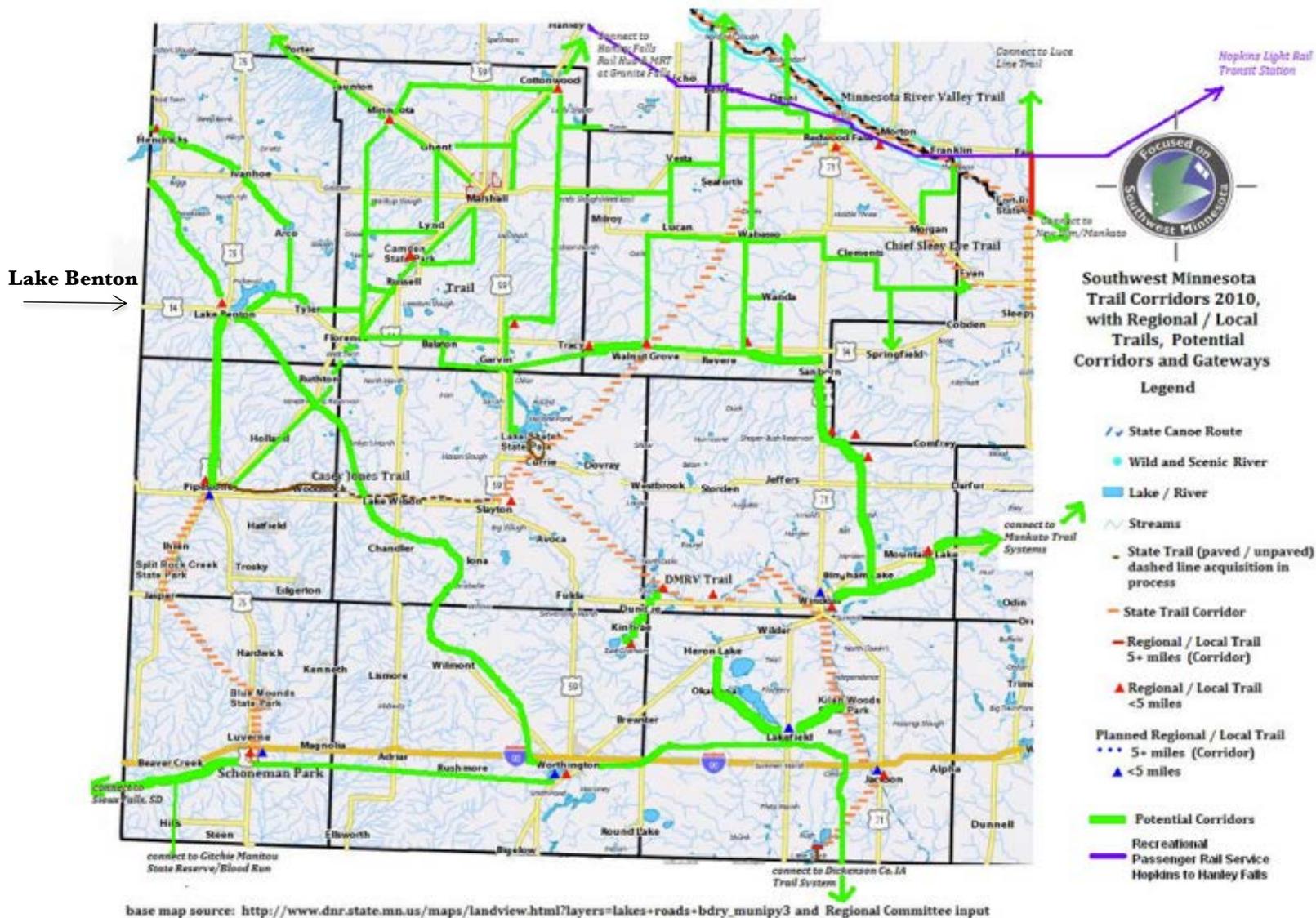
- * Hole-in-the-Mountain Park at Lake Benton
- * Norwegian Creek Park at Lake Benton
- * Picnic Point County Park at Lake Shaokatan
- * Stoney Point Park at the east end of Lake Benton lake
- * Lake Shaokatan County Park
- * Lake Hendricks at Hendricks
- * Midwest Center for Wind Energy
- * Anderson Park on Lake Stay lake in Arco
- * Gilson Field Campground at north end of Ivanhoe

The Lincoln County Drift Clippers, Lincoln County's own snowmobile club, maintain over 80 miles of groomed trails within Lincoln County, including Hole-in-the-Mountain's natural trails. The trail connects to the South Dakota trail system west of Hendricks, MN and to the Lyon County system near Florence, MN.

The Casey Jones State Trail is only 14 miles from Hole-in-the-Mountain Park and consists of three segments. The longest segment is 13 miles of former railroad grade between the City of Pipestone and the Pipestone/Murray county line. The first five miles from Pipestone are paved, with the remaining eight miles a natural-surfaced trail. The second small segment is a natural-surfaced 1.5-mile trail near Lake Wilson. The final segment is a 6-mile, paved loop between Lake Shetek State Park and the City of Currie.

The map on page 8 highlights a regional trail map of trail corridors, regional and local trails, potential corridors and gateways.

Section C – Setting/Regional Context



Section C – Setting/Regional Context



Lake Benton Lake

Located within a short walking distance from Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, Lake Benton lake, with more than 18 miles of shoreline, offers visitors ample outdoor recreational activities such as fishing, ice-fishing, swimming beaches, boating, water-skiing, tubing, canoeing, and more. Approximately seven miles long, Lake Benton lake is 2,875 acres in area and is the sixth largest lake in southern Minnesota. Throughout the years, Lake Benton lake has been known to be ranked among the 10 best walleye lakes in Minnesota. Blue gill, sunfish, and crappies are abundant and several trophy-sized have been caught as well as northern pike and some largemouth bass. The lake draws tourists from not only the local region but also from other regions throughout the Midwest, such as Nebraska, Iowa, and nearby South Dakota.

Lake Benton lake is home to two campgrounds: Norwegian Creek County Park Campground and Stoney Point Campground. Norwegian Creek Campground, located on the east side of Lake Benton, is owned by Lincoln County and managed by the Lincoln County Parks Department – the same entity that owns Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. Stoney Point Campground, a privately-owned campground, is located on the west side of the lake.

Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Hole in the Mountain

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is conveniently located along U.S. Highway 14, and U.S. Highway 75. It is 32 miles southwest of Marshall, MN (pop. 13,480), 28 miles east of Brookings, SD (Pop. 22,900), 66 miles northeast of Sioux Falls, SD (pop. 164,670), and 77 miles northwest of Worthington, MN (pop. 12,940).

With 30 water and electric hookup campsites, each site equipped with hitching posts, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park's Horse Hill Campground offers equestrian campers even more unique opportunities. Each year, hundreds of horse enthusiasts visit Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, enjoying not only the seven miles of natural trails winding through the woodlands and prairies, but to also experience the picturesque views offered by the surrounding Buffalo Ridge landscape. The park also offers additional campsites in the East and West Campgrounds.

Not only does Hole-in-the-Mountain Park offer some of the most diverse recreational amenities, breathtaking views and unique topography that Mother Nature has to offer, but it also provides a rich learning environment for educational opportunities and training programs. With its diverse natural environment and challenging terrain, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park offers a unique experience for students and trainees of all ages and from all walks of life.

South Dakota State University (SDSU), located in Brookings, SD, is only 28 miles west of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park.

- Students enrolled in SDSU's Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Science Department are among Hole-in-the-Mountain Park's annual visitors. The park is a regional treasure for student's to explore and Research the park's diverse and robust horticulture.
- Every year, students enrolled in SDSU's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program also take advantage of the unique training opportunities offered by Hole-in-the-Mountain Park's woodlands, trails, challenging terrain, and arduous topography. They particularly like to use the dense forest and steep terrain for night vision training.
- Throughout the year, members of SDSU's Bicycle Club are also among the visitors of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. The club makes the trip to Hole-in-the-Mountain Park to not only take advantage of its challenging trails, but for the breathtaking views of the scenic landscape as well.

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), located in Marshall, MN, is only 34 miles northeast of Hole-in-the- Mountain Park. **Sioux Falls, SD**, is home to numerous colleges, universities, technical institutes, and other training programs and is located only 67 miles southwest of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. Families, students, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts from the Sioux Falls area are also among the hundreds of visitors who travel each year to Hole-in-the-Mountain Park to experience the park's unique natural amenities.

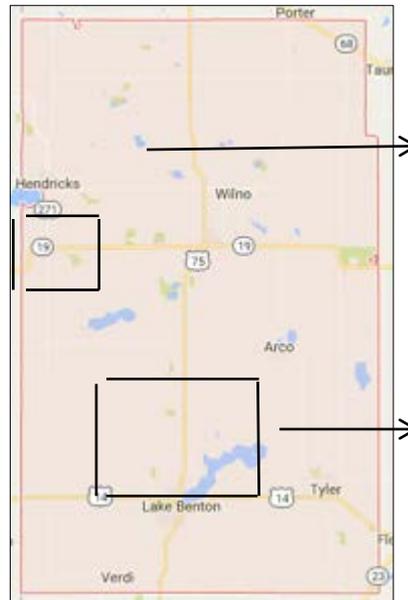
Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Other Lincoln County Parks:

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is one of three county parks owned and operated by Lincoln County, Minnesota, under the direction of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. In addition to Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, the Lincoln County Parks Department supervises the operation and development of Norwegian Creek County Park and Picnic Point County Park.

Norwegian Creek County Park – Lincoln County, Minnesota Parks is located one mile north and one mile east of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. With 128 acres, Norwegian Creek has 92 campsites with electricity and water service. Facilities include two picnic shelters, a bathhouse with showers, a fish-cleaning shed, an RV dump station, a swimming beach, and two boat launches (one of which is a DNR Class A boat landing).

Picnic Point County Park – Lincoln County, Minnesota Parks is located nine miles north, three miles west of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. The park is 43 acres and located on the southern side of beautiful Lake Shaokatan, adjacent to Suhr State Wildlife Management Area. Picnic Point offers 30 campsites with electricity and water service. Like its sister campgrounds, Picnic Point also offers numerous camping sites without electricity. The park offers a picnic shelter, a swimming beach, a floating T-dock, two boat launches, a fish-cleaning shed and an RV dump station.



Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Highways and Byways

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is located at the crossroads of U.S. Highway 75 (International Highway “King of Trails”) and U.S. Highway 14 (“Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway”) in southwestern Minnesota.

Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway - A segment of U.S. Highway 14, from Lake Benton to Mankato, Minnesota, was designated as Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway in 1994. Along the route, you will find signs at the entrance of each town. The towns along this designated route of U.S. Highway 14 have formed a coalition for the purpose of promoting the highway and their individual communities. Each town has identified specific sites that relate to the Ingalls era of the late 1800s. The Ingalls family traveled along this route from Wisconsin to DeSmet, South Dakota, settling for a time in Walnut Grove, Minnesota.

King of Trails State Scenic Byway - Historically, U.S. Highway 75 was known as the “King of Trails” before highways were numbered in 1926. The “trail” is marked from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Gulf of Mexico at Galveston, Texas. This trail was originally used by the Indians and early pioneers as a trade route. Although the present “King of Trails” does not follow the original exactly, large segments of the highway do include it, while the rest of the highway was constructed nearly parallel to it. A remnant of the original “King of Trails” is still visible today following the railroad tracks south of Lake Benton. The Minnesota Legislature designated U.S. Highway 75 the “Historic King of Trails” in 2001. Lake Benton Lake is the second largest freshwater lake along the King of Trails. Visit the scenic byway website at: <http://www.highway75.com/>

Other Area Amenities:

Heritage and Windpower Learning Center of Southwest Minnesota is located in Lake Benton. The primary focus of the Windpower Learning Center is to educate visitors on the numerous benefits that windpower has to offer. Visitors can see the wind turbine model and several interactive computers that provide detailed information on wind energy.



Section C – Setting/Regional Context

Lakeside Park – City of Lake Benton is located just east of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, on the shore of Lake Benton lake. This park has a picnic shelter, public restrooms, public access/boat landing, a fishing pier, and a unique shoreline with an access road used by many for some of the best shore fishing in the region. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has allocated funding to upgrade the public boat access at Lakeside Park to a Class A boat landing, complete with paved parking a boat wash station.

Beckers Resort

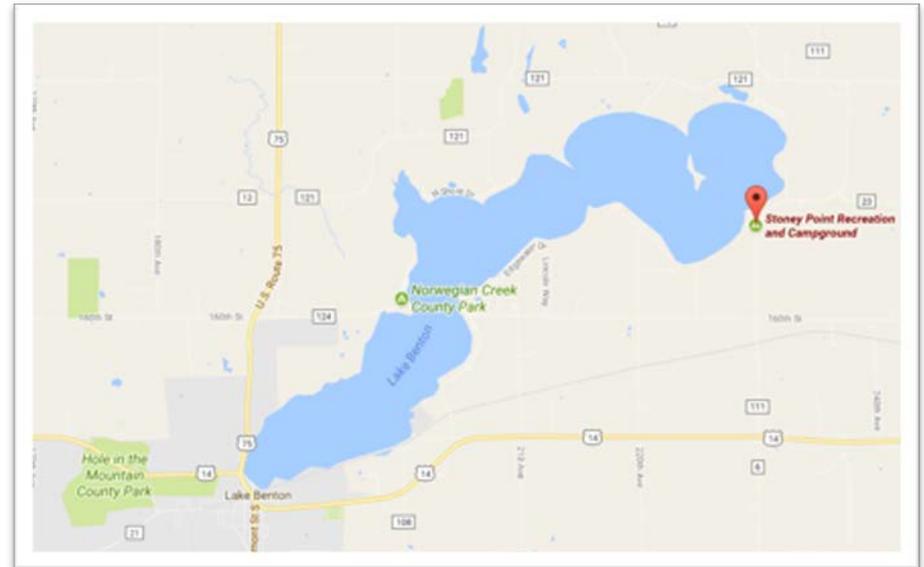
Beckers Resort is located 1.5 miles east of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. The 17-unit lake-side resort is located on the southwestern side of Lake Benton lake.

Stoney Point Campground and Recreational Center

The Stoney Point Campground and Recreational Center is located 7.5 miles east of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park on the western side of Lake Benton lake. The campground offers over 100 campsites with water, sewer, and electric service, and a public access/boat landing. Visitors to Stoney Point Campground also enjoy the amenities offered at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park.

The Opera House

The Opera House is a historic regional performing arts center. Every year, the Opera House season hosts at least 6 productions, including spring and fall plays, a summer musical, a vocal production of “Broadway Meets Lake Benton” in March, a children’s theatre in November, and a “Christmas Show” in December.



Section D – Site Information

Overview

Whether young or old, visitors are able to enjoy an ample variety of nature’s magnificent recreational opportunities and amenities offered in and around Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. Each year, more than 5,000 people visit the park. Among the natural amenities offered at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, appealing to outdoor recreational interest groups include:

- Provides facilities/amenities relevant to existing/common user groups and serves to broaden the appeal of outdoor recreation to new or expanded populations.
- Serves as a destination unto itself, attracting regional users and drawing tourists from outside the regional area.
- Provides quality experience to encourage visitors to return time and again.

Campgrounds

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park – West Campground
Hole-in-the-Mountain Park – East Campground
Hole-in-the-Mountain Park – Horse Hill

Natural Trails

Hiking
Mountain Biking
Horseback Riding
GeoCaching
Bird Watching
Snowmobiling
Cross-Country Skiing
Sledding
Snowshoeing

Hard-Surface Trails

Walking/Running
Bicycling

Lake Benton Lake

Fishing
Boating
Ice Fishing
Water Skiing
Water Tubing
Water Sports
Swimming
Paddle-boarding
Kayaking
Canoeing

Historic/Cultural Outdoor Amenities

Saddle Horse Holiday
Te Tonka Ha Rendezvous Celebration
Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairie Preserve
Buffalo Ridge
Local Places of Outdoor Historic/Cultural Education
Lake Benton Opera House

Section D – Site Information



Section D – Site Information

Campgrounds

With 1,000 acres of woodland and prairie, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park offers three campground areas with unique natural amenities. The East and West Campgrounds are located on the south side of U.S. Highway 14, while the upper campground, commonly referred to as Horse Hill, is located on the north side of U.S. Highway 14. Horse Hill, the upper campground area of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, is a regional treasure for equestrian enthusiasts. Horse Hill campground offers 30 campsites with water and electric service. Hitching posts and fenced-in areas are adjacent to campsites to accommodate horses. Numerous non-electric campsites are also available throughout the Horse Hill campground. Horse Hill Campground is also home to a kettle hole, a shallow, sediment-filled body of water formed by receding glaciers.

Visitors from across the region enjoy not only the seven miles of natural trails throughout Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, but many more acres of off-trail riding, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and other outdoor opportunities to experience beautiful, unique views of undulating woodland and prairie landscapes.

Two additional campground areas can be found on the main-level of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park main-level: the West Campground provides 20 campsites with water and electric service, and the East Campground provides an additional 12 campsites with water and electric service.

Snow Tubing/Sledding

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is home to the second highest elevation region in all of Minnesota. It's peak of 1,995 feet above sea level is the higher than any elevation within a 100-mile radius in southeastern South Dakota and is more than 200 feet higher than the highest point in Iowa. Hole-in-the-Mountain Park contains a 1,200-foot hill ideal for tubing and sledding. In past years this hill was used for skiing and tubing.



Horse Hill Campground



Sledding Hill and Chalet

Section D – Site Information

Trails

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park contains seven miles of natural trails for horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, and winter snowmobiling. In addition to the natural trails, Hole-in-the-Mountain offers a 1.141 mile hard-surfaced non-motorized loop trail, allowing runners, bicyclists, visitors, and pedestrians of all ages the opportunity to experience Hole-in-the-Mountain's picturesque landscapes.

In addition to the seven miles of natural trails winding throughout the park, Lake Benton/Hole-in-the-Mountain Park has been designated as trail head for a number of public trails:

- * Lake Benton is designated as a trail head for Public Hiking Trails (map of trail heads provided on DNR websites)
- * Lake Benton is designated as a trail head for Public Horse Trails (map of trail heads provided on DNR websites)
- * Lake Benton is designated as a trail head for Public Cross County Ski Trails (map of trail head provided on DNR website)

Chalet

Among the guest's favorite amenities is the Chalet building - with restrooms, showers, a 2-story gathering space for guests, and an indoor viewing deck on the second floor. The Chalet rests at the bottom of a 1,200 foot sledding hill, conveniently nestled between the East and West Campgrounds. Park guests enjoy the trails, exploring the woodlands and prairie of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park and the spacious camping area for outdoor games, bonfires, and visiting. Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, with its scenic landscape, is a great venue for reunions and weddings. During the winter, park visitors enjoy cross-country skiing, sledding, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling.

View of Chalet from Sledding Hill



Section D – Site Information

Community Events

Each year, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is the main stage for regionally unique celebrations including Saddle Horse Holiday and Benton-Fremont Days/Te Tonka Ha Celebrations.

Saddle Horse Holiday draws hundreds of visitors to the park. Some years as many as 800 horses and their riders have been drawn to the region to experience Saddle Horse Holiday at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. With its outdoor equine arena, Horse Hill is the perfect venue for the annual two-ring horse show as well as other equestrian events throughout the year. The day begins with a trail ride at 10:00 a.m. The scenic trails take the riders through beautiful rolling hills and concludes at the parade route. The horses are an ever-popular addition to the annual parade which takes place at noon. The parade has grown to include as many as 100+ units.

Benton-Fremont Historic Te Tonka Ha, also held at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, is an annual celebration that includes a weekend of entertaining pioneer re-enactments. The Te Tonka Ha Rendezvous weekend features a variety of historical, educational, and fun activities for the entire family. Go back in time when Minnesota was part of the Dakota Territory and the early explorers, Nicollet and John C. Fremont first came to the “Hole-in-the-Mountain”. They named Benton Lake in honor of Fremont’s fiancée, Jessie Benton, the daughter of Thomas H. Benton, a U.S. Senator from Missouri. In 1879, taking its name from the lake, the fast-growing community was named Lake Benton.

Geocaching

Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunting recreational activity using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location. Hole in the Mountain Park contains three geocaching locations.



Section E – Vision, Trends and Public Values

Vision Statement

The goal of the Lincoln County Park System is to improve the quality of life for people of all ages and increase tourism in southwestern Minnesota by providing a regional park system offering year-round activities. Hole in the Mountain Park offers a unique landscape for recreation, exercise, and family time while showcasing the region’s beautiful scenic views and its natural beauty.

Demographics

Lincoln County is a rural County located in Southwest Minnesota along the South Dakota border. With a population of 5,639 the County ranks 80 out of 87 in population size for Minnesota counties. The County land area covers 536 square miles and has a population density of 11 persons per square mile. The primary industries include agriculture, renewable energy, healthcare and education. The County is a statewide leader in wind power development, bringing significant levels of temporary construction employment as well as permanent jobs to the County each year. As a County rich in natural amenities and beauty, the area is a tourism draw for people wanting to enjoy fishing and recreational opportunities in area lakes, camping, hiking, horseback riding, and numerous other activities.

The population of Lincoln County is older than some of the neighboring counties as well as the State of Minnesota. Lincoln County has a median age of 45.8 compared to 37.9 for Minnesota. The percentage of residents age 65 and over is 25.1% for Lincoln County compared to 16.3% for Minnesota. The percentage of residents under age 18 is comparable for the County and State. This provides some opportunities to engage youth in the natural amenities that Lincoln County has to offer including Hole in the Mountain Park as a workforce retention strategy.

The median household income in Lincoln County is \$52,301 with approximately 10% of residents living in poverty. Hole in the Mountain Park offers four season opportunities for households of all income levels. Lastly, approximately 95.5% of the population is white alone, not Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 2.3% of the population is Hispanic or Latino. Many counties and larger cities surrounding Lincoln County are becoming increasingly diverse, providing opportunities to engage new visitors to the park.

Section E – Vision, Trends and Public Values

Recreational Trends and Public Health Values

A 2015 report conducted by Lauren Hoffman, Director of Marketing and Communications for NRPA summarized five trends that will impact the future of parks and recreation:

- Programs are key to great park attendance.
- The perceived value of distributed services results in agency functions assigned to various departments.
- Agencies are pioneering new funding methods.
- Infrastructure deficit means you'll have to fight harder for public dollars.
- Walkable cities draw Millennials, fueling a suburban exodus.

According to a 2016 University of Minnesota study related to outdoor recreation trends, the national outdoor recreation trends reflect 48% of Americans participate in outdoor recreation. Among 6-24 year-olds; 70% are White/Non-Hispanic. (As of the 2010 census, there were 6,429 people residing in Lincoln County. – with a racial makeup of 98.82% White).

The report also revealed:

- Trends in active recreation include: paddle sports, snow sports, trail running and adventure racing.
- Trends in passive and appreciative recreation include: viewing and photographing nature and attending wildlife festivals being on the rise; and
- Projected areas of growth: skiing, challenge activities, equestrian activities, motorized water activities, and viewing and photographing nature.

The 2016 Minnesota Department of Natural Resource study related to outdoor recreation trends for park planning described the State and Regional outdoor recreation trends indicated that visitor respondents valued “High service” items like park programs that cater to children, and opportunities to rent equipment, attend special events, and attend programs to develop outdoor skills.

The 2016 study found that introducing children (ages 5-18) to the outdoors is critical to active adult participation in multiple outdoor activities. Gateway activities such as running, jogging, trail running, bicycling, and camping are most popular youth (ages 6-24) activities (Outdoor Foundation 2015). Keeping seniors (ages 65+) active is also important. According to the study, the most popular activities among this age group include:

- Passive and appreciative activities such as: visiting recreation and historic sites, viewing and photographic nature.
- Wildlife festivals are becoming increasingly popular.

Section E – Vision, Trends and Public Values

Economic Development/Tourism Opportunities

Hole in the Mountain Park draws visitors from near and far with year round activities. A community survey conducted in Spring/Summer 2020 engaged existing and potential new park users from 45 different zip codes. This highlights the reach and importance the park has in drawing people into Lincoln County and also providing an asset to local residents. Economic development is more than drawing new businesses into a community. It is also about creating a place where people have housing, childcare, and amenities available that create an altogether live, work, play experience.

Lincoln County has long valued the importance and significance of tourism to economic development. Hole in the Mountain Park attracts numerous visitors from near and far each year to enjoy the diversity of activities at the park. Hole in the Mountain Park is rich with opportunities to bring additional visitors to Lincoln County each year, thereby infusing tourism dollars into the local economy. The Lake Benton Chamber of Commerce is the primary entity promoting tourism in Lake Benton. As part of their website, they prominently display information and promote Hole in the Mountain Park, Saddle Horse Holiday, and Benton Fremont Days.

Cultural opportunities can also influence tourism at the local level. As previously highlighted in the regional context, Lincoln County is home to a variety of historic and cultural places. Local highlights include the Burial Mounds, Osbeck House and Opera House.



View of Lake Benton Opera House



Outdoor performance at Lake Benton lake, across from Hole-in-the-Mountain Park



View of inside Lake Benton Opera House

Section E – Vision, Trends and Public Values

Statements

1. *Hole in the Mountain Park will make improvements to the existing infrastructure to provide a quality experience to a diversity of visitors.*
 - a. Improve existing trails to support a high demand for quality trails serving visitors interested in hiking and horseback riding.
 - b. Make improvements to Horse Hill including improved access and camping experiences.

2. *Hole in the Mountain Park will create expanded and new experiences for residents and visitors to the park.*
 - a. Expand camping operations to meet increased demand and bring new visitors into the park.
 - b. Expand recreational opportunities and increase physical activity through play pods, adventure areas, sledding/skating, and outdoor pavilions.
 - c. Expand trail systems to create additional opportunities to experience the park.
 - d. Provide educational nodes throughout the park that highlight the historic and ecological significance of the area.

3. *Hole in the Mountain Park will increase the safety for visitors throughout the park.*
 - a. Improve signage around the park to provide a better visitor experience and also improve safety for park visitors.
 - b. Develop improvements that will provide safer crossings for pedestrian, wildlife, and equestrian users of the park.

4. *Hole in the Mountain Park will support efforts that create connectivity to surrounding amenities and improve tourism opportunities for all of Lincoln County.*
 - a. Continue to work towards the Lincoln County Trails Task Force multi phase 10-year plan to build a trail system that will connect to major points within Lincoln County, including Hole in the Mountain Park.
 - b. The Sorensen Farm has been deeded to Lincoln County. Future planning will occur at a later date on the historical significance and opportunities for this site to enhance the visitor experience at Hole in the Mountain Park.

Section F – Regional Significance

Regional Significance Classification

When Lincoln County applied to the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission in 2017 for a status of regional designation for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, it had done so in order to fully satisfy the criteria within the designation category, Natural Resource Based Regional Park Classification. In this masterplan update, Lincoln County seeks to improve upon the earlier regional significance score it received. Accordingly, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park seeks to once again score highly in all four criteria for which a Natural Resource-Based park can be designated:

Criteria #1: Provides a High-Quality Outdoor Recreation Experience

Criteria #2: Preserves a Regionally Significant and Diverse Natural or Historic Landscape

Criteria #3: Well-located and Connected to Serve a Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination

Criteria #4: Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within the Region

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park’s Satisfaction of Evaluation Criteria for Designation

Criteria #1

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is large and diverse enough to support the simultaneous use of multiple types of outdoor recreation user groups without conflict. Hikers, trail runners, and horse riders have enough trails to choose from to find the solitude and scenic experience they seek. Those who wish to stay the night have camping facilities to use, with more on the way. The ecology of the park’s protected habitat supports species adapted to woodland, grassland, and edge (ecotones), as well as both upland and wetland environments, which means that birders and wildlife enthusiasts can see species here that they may not find anywhere else within a 90-minute drive. The park has a history and opportunity of supporting activities such as sledding/snow tubing, geocaching, and environmental education. These forms of recreation and enjoyment have a history at the park that Lincoln County recognizes and seeks to invest in as it looks to the future.

Since the very nature of the park lends itself to supporting a wide array of outdoor recreation experiences, and because area residents come to the park to enjoy themselves in ways that are compatible with the park, let it be recognized here that Hole-in-the-Mountain Park clearly satisfies this first criteria. Upon further planned investment by Lincoln County in the next few years, the outdoor recreation value of this park will increase.

Section F – Regional Significance

Criteria #2

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park conserves a remnant untilled grassland environment and an upland woodland environment of steep gullies and ridges. In this environment, seeps and spring flow, contributing to pockets of unique perennial wetland habitat with high water quality. There are no other locations in the region where upland forest can be found; the landscape character of the region is historically grassland, now largely converted to monocrop agriculture.

The park name, Hole-in-the-Mountain is a direct reference to the cultural significance of the landscape in that it is a location where travel up and down the Coteau de Prairie was easier compared to other locations. While the Coteau de Prairie is hardly a mountain, it is a large enough and steep enough feature to stand out as being mountain-like to both historic and current residents that are used to the relative flatness of the surrounding area.

By protecting an upland forest environment within a sea of agriculture, and giving visitors access to trails that ascend the entirety of the Coteau de Prairie, this park satisfied this criteria by preserving a diverse natural and historic landscape.

Criteria #3

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is bisected by US Highway 14. Travelers on this east-west corridor to or from Brookings, South Dakota have no choice but to travel through the park as part of traveling through Lake Benton. The park is 14 miles from State Highway 23 and the corridor between Marshall, Minnesota and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The park is directly north of Pipestone National Monument via travel on US Highway 75. Pipestone National Monument is 20 miles south.



Section F – Regional Significance

Due to park's proximity to high quality US and state highways and the populations centers they connect, Hole-in-the-Mountain Park can easily satisfy this criterion. Furthermore, the short distance that this park is away from the Pipestone National monument tourist destination means that with proper marketing, Lincoln County can ensure that the park lands on the checklist of destinations that visitors to the region want to see.

Criteria #4

Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is unique for the region in that it is a large enough landscape to support a diversity of outdoor recreation activities that are not found elsewhere in the region. Outdoor recreation enthusiasts are drawn to the park in part because of the opportunities that are afforded by the park's combination of somewhat steep & hilly topography and woodland cover. This scenic combination makes for terrain that draws horse riders, snowmobilers, snowshoers and geocaching enthusiasts. Additionally, the large sledding hill sees active winter use from area residents and is an activity that Lincoln County wants to officially invest in and support.

The only other important protected landscapes within the region that can support outdoor recreation are the Prairie Coteau Scientific and Natural Area southeast near Holland, the Pipestone National Monument to the south near Pipestone, and Camden State Park northeast near Russell. While Pipestone has some woodland and topography, the woodland is not expansive and the topography has been set aside as a Dakota sacred site and is not appropriate for many of the outdoor recreation activities that are supported by Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. Camden State Park is the largest forested landscape in the region, but it is a floodplain forest environment lacking the varied topography that many trail users prefer. Prairie Coteau Scientific and Natural Area is protected landscape that is primitive and closed to outdoor recreation activities other than dispersed hiking. Aside from these three locations, outdoor recreation activities in the region have to be sought in smaller city and county parks or within public right-of-ways in a mostly flat agricultural landscape.

When comparing what Hole-in-the-Mountain Park offers relative to other outdoor recreation alternatives, it is clear that the park satisfied this criteria. There few if any other places in the region where horse riding, sledding, snowshoeing, and geocaching activities can be found, let alone coexist together. In addition, the park has the ability to actively support many other types of outdoor recreation, such as mountain biking, cross-country running events, and primitive camping.

Section G – Public Engagement

Previous Engagement

Multiple canvassing efforts have been made in Lincoln County with the intention to garner the public’s input related to park and trail amenities within Lincoln County. These engagement efforts were important for informing the original application by Lincoln County to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park’s classification to a regionally significant park. A description and summary of the results from these four previous public engagement efforts between 2011 and 2017 are found below.

Public Meeting (2011)

The public meeting and survey, hosted in 2011, was intended to gather community input related to the Lincoln County Trail Commission’s 2011 Legacy Grant application. The findings from this meeting and subsequent survey were used to reflect the needs, concerns, and interests from guests and visitors of Lincoln County’s parks and trails (*see Appendix A for further details of survey results*).

The key findings from the 120 participants include:

- The primary activities of the participants: walking, hiking, walking pets, biking (road, mountain and recreational), and jogging/running.
- Activities that residents would like to be able to do on a trail in Lincoln County include: walking, hiking, jogging, biking (road, mountain, recreational), and walking pets.
- Residents are interested in using a trail for recreation, health and exercise, and spending time with friends and family.
- Trail activities that most people would be interested in include: walking, hiking, walking pet, jogging, running, horseback riding/equestrian.

Public Meeting (2014)

A public meeting and survey in 2014 was intended to gather community input related to the Lincoln County Trail Commission’s 2014 Legacy Grant application. The findings from this meeting and survey were used to reflect continued needs, concerns, and interests from guests and visitors of Lincoln County’s parks and trails.

Section G – Public Engagement

According to surveys taken from Lincoln County individuals and groups, the highest trail activity participation included walking, biking, and jogging or running. These were also the trail related activities that survey respondents participated in the most often. Hunting and fishing were next in popularity. People in Lincoln County also expressed their interest in utilizing park facilities that include snowmobiling, paddle sports, riding horses, riding golf carts or wheelchairs, and cross-country skiing/snowshoeing. The key takeaways from the survey include:

- **Walkers want:** firm and stable surface, operating space clear of hazards.
- **Joggers/Runners want:** surface clear of hazards, firm and stable surfaces – some prefer unpaved.
- **Bicyclists want:** smooth, hard surfaces clear of obstructions, avoid sharp turns, clear sight lines, prefer flat or rolling terrain without steep hills, safe road crossings.
- **Equestrians want:** adequate sight distances, passing/pull off spaces, hazard-free surfaces, structures, adequate for point loads of 800-1400 lb/horse, horizontal clearance on bridges and boardwalks, hitching posts, trailer parking.
- **Mountain Bikers want:** groomed trails designed for speed, access to rest stops and local services.
- **Cross-Country Skiers want:** groomed trails, flat or rolling hills, avoiding sharp turns, clearance for poles, shelter/warming house, clear mapping/sign system.
- **Snowshoers want:** unplowed, ungroomed surfaces are acceptable.
- **Hunters/Fisherman want:** short access trails to hunting and fishing locations to avoid carrying gear/catch long distances.
- **People with wheelchairs/Scooters want:** low-grade hills (5%), firm and stable surface, very few surface obstructions, no large surface gaps, railings or wheel stops, and plenty of turning space.
- **All trails users want:** Convenient access from home or work, adequate parking, trailheads/rest areas with restrooms and water fountains, clear mapping and signage.

Among bicyclists, there are many types of riders; there are child or family bicyclists, recreational, fitness and transportation bicyclists. Skill levels vary, ranging from children to adult, casual riders to racers. There are also a wide variety of bicycle styles: fat tire, mountain, hybrid, road, tandem, side-by-side tandem, bicycles with attached trailers or child carriers, and even a 4-person surrey. Each of these trail-user types have different preferences, and each of these bicycle types have different space requirements and work best under different conditions. The survey sought to consider the diversity of bicyclist types when asking questions about bicycling needs.

Section G – Public Engagement

Public Survey (Jan-March 2017)

In order to collect follow-up information from Hole-in-the-Mountain Park patrons (existing and prospective), a survey was launched in January 2017. This survey was sent to various patron groups (campers, city mayors, city and county clerks, chambers of commerce, boy and girl scout groups, 4-H, and other youth and church groups) located within 80 miles of Lake Benton, as well as Sioux Falls, Brookings, Dell Rapids, and Brandon, South Dakota.

The goal of this survey was to help identify the recreational and educational needs and interests in the Lake Benton region. The survey, including an informational brochure, was submitted to user groups through a variety of channels: direct mail, email, SoGo Online Survey, Survey Monkey, and as a handout to existing camper clientele. The response from this survey was low. However, responses were consistent with previous engagement efforts on outdoor recreation. Participants indicated that walking, hiking, camping, snowmobiling, sledding, tubing, and water sports are among the primary activities that parks users are looking for in our region.

Community Meeting (April 2017)

A community meeting was held April 6, 2017 in the City of Lake Benton. This meeting generated valuable and viable ideas for future goals and strategies both for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park and Lake Benton, as a whole. Meeting participants brainstormed ideas regarding future enhancement of the assets in and around Lake Benton, including improvement ideas for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. A few common themes became evident:

- A strong desire was expressed to incorporate more youth and teenager activities at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park.
- Expansion of the trail system within Hole-in-the-Mountain Park.
- Link Hole-in-the-Mountain Park and Norwegian Creek County Park with a trail.
- Developing employment opportunities for teens and young adults at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park.



Section G – Public Engagement

Current Engagement

The 2017 Masterplan for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park created as part of Lincoln County’s application to GMRPTC for the park to receive a Regional Park designation achieved this purpose, with a caveat; the Masterplan needed to be strengthened in order for the park to be competitive for funding that would further enhance the park. Lincoln County hired Development Services Inc. (DSI) to act as project manager for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park masterplan improvements.

DSI partnered with the Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service in late 2019 to develop a broad campaign to engage with hundreds of area residents around desired improvements for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. An in-person engagement campaign was planned for the spring and summer of 2020, but with the arrival of the unexpected COVID-19 global pandemic, plans were changed and the campaign went forward as a virtual effort, whereby community feedback was sought via electronic survey forms, Zoom webinar and Zoom focus group.

The community engagement campaign to gather public input about the future improvements for Hole-in-the-Mountain Park consisted of:

- 18 question online survey with paper copies made available at city hall and the public library .
- Interactive webinar of survey results and brainstorming suggestions for park improvements.
- Concept plan presentation and focus group session with WSB.
- Park Board review of concept plans and cost estimates.
- County Board review of concept plans and cost estimates.

Public engagement was challenged as a result of the altered work and social environments due to public gathering restrictions put in place by Lincoln County and the State of Minnesota. A good faith, broad-based, inclusive effort was designed and promoted for the first three engagement activities. A summary of those activities and their results follow below.

Online Survey

The goal of the online survey was to connect with 200 area residents about issues concerning HITM Park use, safety, desirability, and suggested improvements. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about the public’s sentiment regarding future investment in the park from a much larger sample of the local population than previous efforts had been able to. A large survey response was sought to provide a solid basis by which to make plans, develop cost estimates, and ultimately make funding requests from competitive funding sources.

Section G – Public Engagement

The online survey consisted of 18 questions that utilized ranking and short answer response type questions. This survey went live on May 5 and stayed active until June 30. The survey link was shared online via Facebook, Twitter, County website, and personal emails to trusted partners for distribution to their channels. The survey link was shared physically on 600 flyers that were provided to the grocery store in Lake Benton and a local dentist office. Flyers were included in the City Newsletter, distributed to local school district contacts, and also made available by county staff to campers and park visitors at Lincoln County parks. Paper copies of survey were made available but were never used by the public. The survey was promoted on radio and in print and digital copies of the local news media.

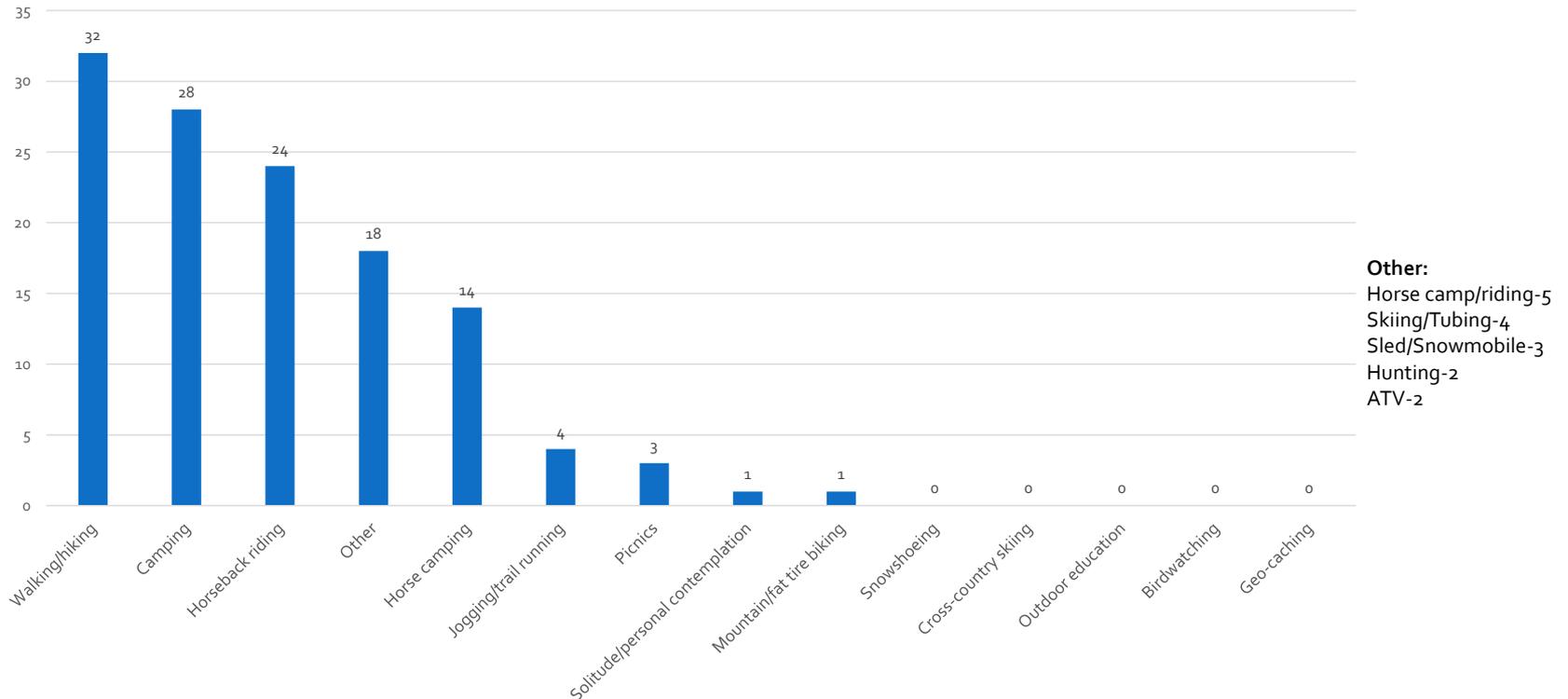
A goal of 200 participants for the overall community engagement was set. In the end, despite a broad and persistent campaign to recruit as much community input as possible, 125 survey responses were collected. We estimate that through the survey, focus groups, and other engagement efforts we reached an estimated 170 participants. Unformatted and raw responses of the survey are provided in the appendix. Some of the key insights from the survey process are highlighted in the pages that follow.



Section G – Public Engagement

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the recreational activities most closely associated with Hole in the Mountain Park. Walking/hiking, camping, horseback riding/camping, and skiing/tubing received the highest responses. In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to indicate how Hole in the Mountain Park compares to other destinations. The park scored well in the areas of camping, picnics and bird watching. Areas such as jogging/running, hiking/walking, and horseback riding did not score as well due to the condition of the existing trails following storm damage. The survey responses showed a strong interest for improvements to trails so these areas can be utilized again.

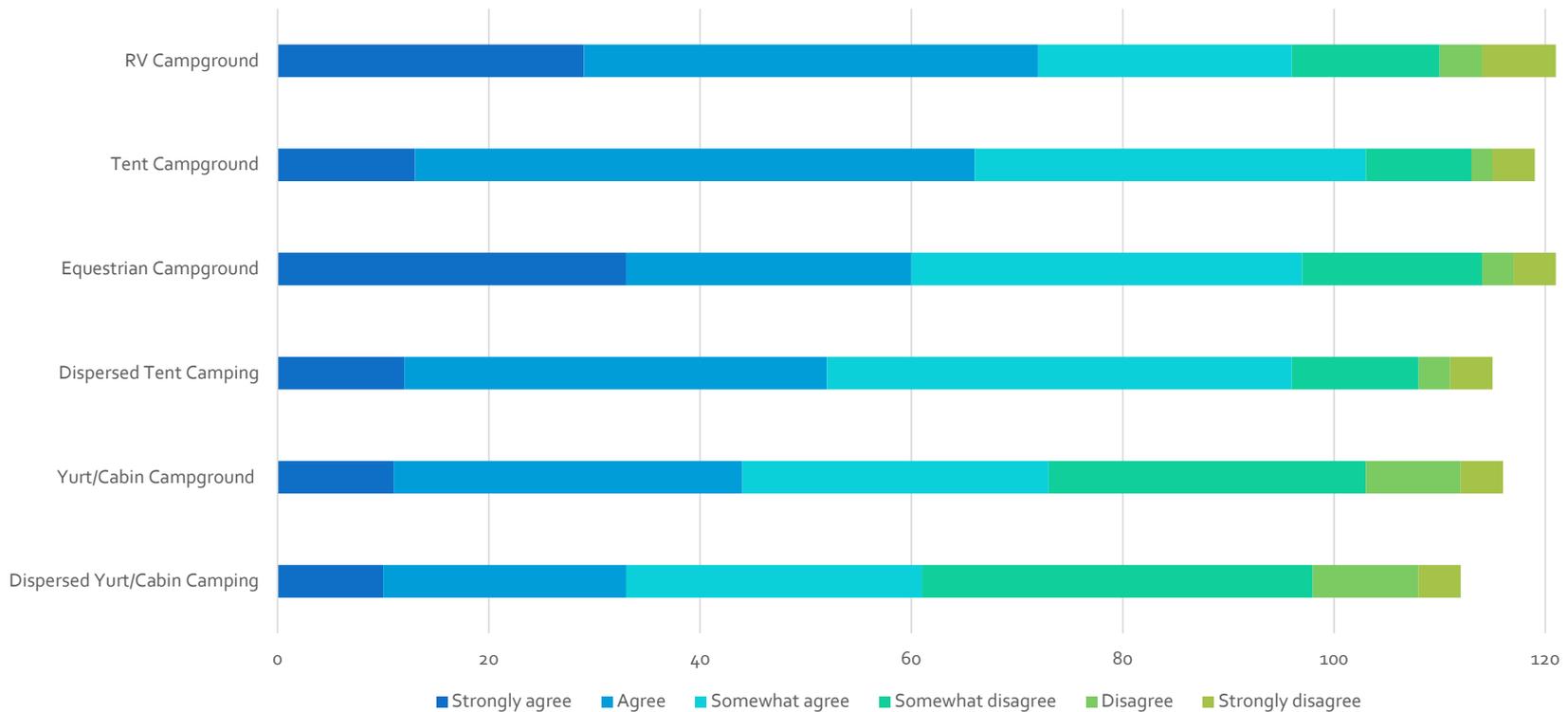
Q1: Recreational Activities Most Closely Associated with HITM Park



Section G – Public Engagement

Previous community engagement has illustrated a strong interest in additional campsite development at Hole in the Mountain Park. As part of the survey process, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the type of camping that should be added at the park. An RV campground received the highest number of responses for strongly agree and agree followed by tent camping. Equestrian camping also had a strong response. Overall, camping received a positive survey response as an important component of the park.

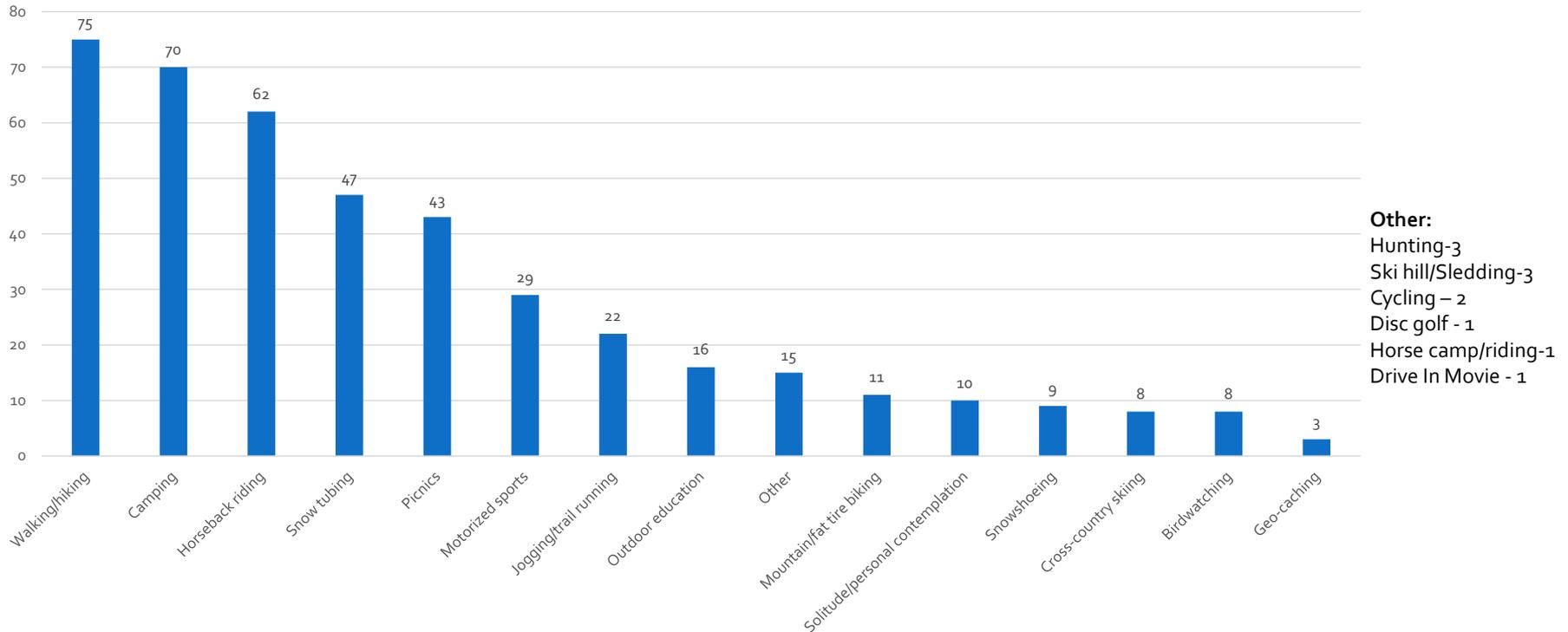
Q8: Type of additional camping most appropriate for HITM Park



Section G – Public Engagement

A final key insight from the community engagement highlights community input on areas in which Hole in the Mountain Park can become a premiere recreation destination. Respondents were asked to focus on one thing the park should do really well. Walking/hiking was the highest response followed by camping, horseback riding and snow tubing. The terrain and assets of the park support these activities and provide a unique experience for visitors. The survey data was vital for informing the concept plan process discussed in the following pages. Overall, survey respondents highlighted the uniqueness and significance of Hole in the Mountain Park and were excited about the opportunities that exist, but they also noted that significant upgrades are needed to make the trails useable.

Q11: If HITM Park should become a PREMIERE recreation destination/experience for doing one thing really well, what should it be?



Section G – Public Engagement

Interactive Webinar

A two-hour interactive webinar using the Zoom virtual meeting platform was hosted on August 5, 2020 and attended by 11 organizations. Attendees of this event were invited from a “wish list” of agencies and organizations that DSI developed in consultation with the National Park Service. The purpose of the interactive webinar was threefold; 1) to provide background on HITM Park, 2) share the results of the online survey, and 3) most importantly, to brainstorm ideas that would be used to inform the concept design phase of the HITM Park masterplan update.

The organizations that were invited to send staff to participate in the webinar were estimated to all have professional expertise or interest concerning landscape management and planning for the kind of large, public landscape that Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is. The organizations invited to participate were:

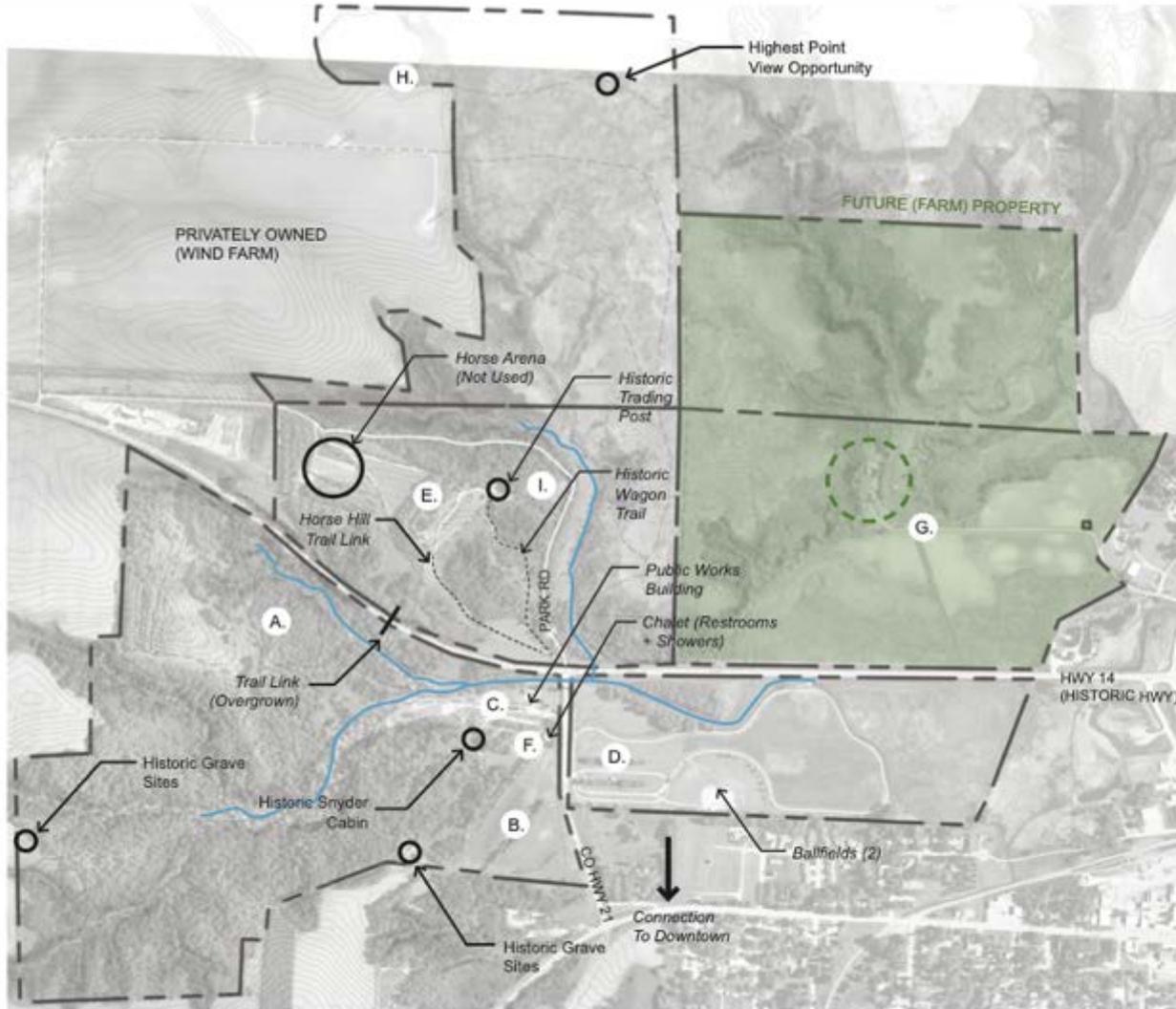
<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	<i>Sioux Tribe(s)</i>	<i>US Fish & Wildlife Service</i>
<i>MN DNR Forester, Willmar Office</i>	<i>MN DNR Parks and Trails</i>	<i>MN DOT</i>
<i>MN DNR Fish and Wildlife</i>	<i>Sportsmans Club</i>	<i>Drift Club Snowmobilers</i>
<i>City of Lake Benton</i>	<i>Lincoln County</i>	<i>Economic Development Authority</i>
<i>Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts</i>	<i>Local School Districts</i>	<i>Te Tonka Ha Events</i>
<i>Equestrians- Saddle Horse Days</i>	<i>Travel SW, Explore MN</i>	<i>Southwest Minnesota Arts Council</i>
<i>Bicycle Shops- Brookings, Marshall</i>	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	<i>Southwest Regional Development Commission</i>
<i>Bed and Breakfast</i>		<i>Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Commission</i>
<i>South Dakota State University (Landscape Architecture Dept., Bike Club, Natural Resources Dept. or clubs)</i>		

Focus Group Session

A focus group consisting of invitees who had previously participated in the online survey, interactive webinar, or responded from a public call for participants in the local newspaper convened on the Zoom virtual meeting platform on September 16, 2020. Eleven members of the public attended this event, including a member of the press from Buffalo Ridge Newspaper.

WSB presented three illustrative concept plans based on the analysis summary found on page 33 and from feedback obtained during the online survey and interactive webinar. After each concept plan was presented, focus group participants were able to ask questions and provide feedback both verbally and via the chat feature. All the feedback received was captured in notes by DSI or NPS staff and was forwarded to WSB. The concept plans were also posted at City Hall for review and comment with 10 people providing feedback. The comments received about the three concepts were used by WSB to create one refined concept plan.

Section G – Public Engagement



A. Trails:
Phased trail maintenance with Buckthorn removal is needed.

B. Sledding Hill:
Tow Bar system has been removed.

C. Western Campground:
20 Sites with electric and water. Located near chalet with restrooms and showers. Poor connection to East Campground.

D. East Campground:
12 sites with electric and water. Desired expansion.

E. Horse Hill Campground:
Has 30 sites with electric and water. Has previously held events at on-site horse arena. Use has declined in recent years.

F. Chalet:
Currently has restrooms and showers and could be expanded.

G. Future (Farm) Property:
Farm site could provide unique programming as working farm with routine farmers market events or historic operations.

H. Hole in the Mountain - Kettle Hole:
Also known as Glacial Pond. Currently has no access by trail.

I. Historic wagon trail and trading post could allow for an annual 'frontier day' program by re-creating historic events.

Hole in the Mountain Park - Analysis Summary

Lincoln County, Minnesota

August 27, 2020 | WSB Project number: 016593-000



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Section G – Public Engagement

Park Board & County Board Review

WSB completed a refined concept plan for HITM Park on October 26, 2020. This concept plan was based on feedback obtained from DSI Inc., the NPS, and from public input obtained during the September 16, 2020 focus group. Feedback and input for the refined concept plan was obtained from the Lincoln County Park Board on October 28, 2020. Feedback and input from the Lincoln County Board was obtained on November 3, 2020.

Comments from the Park Board and the County Board were a litmus test to ensure that the form of the design proposals was in keeping with the sentiment of the public that was determined during the aforementioned previous engagement activities. The review of the concept plans was also another opportunity to edit or tweak elements of the design before cost estimating construction and operational costs would begin. A summary of the feedback received from each board is below.

Lincoln County Park Board

The Park Board was very interested in placement of various elements and how those improvements would impact park use and function. The flow of the conversation was such that a board member would ask a question or raise concern about a proposed element, with the WSB landscape architect responding to the intent of the design decision and how such a change to the park would be an improvement. DSI staff members and NPS staff would also add comments to clarifications as needed. Topic areas discussed included, location of camping, location and function of sewer systems, trail access and use for all intended users, access and restriction of park to equestrian users, revenue opportunities, and phasing of development of the site.

Lincoln County Board of Commissioners

Most of the discussion about the park plans was positive with the major elements. Principle concerns among the board members were about construction costs and the steps the county will need to take to ensure match funds are available.

Park Board & County Board Review of Schematic Plan, Estimated Construction Costs, and Operational Cost Estimates

The information was presented to the Park Board on December 9, 2020. The Park Board had considerable discussion on the costs, areas of cost savings due to existing infrastructure and past experience with improvements, and priority areas. Some of the phases were downsized and reprioritized to create feasible projects relative to the County's budget.

The information was presented to the County Board on December 15, 2020. The Board did not have any concerns or changes. The discussion largely focused on the importance of budgeting additional resources on an annual basis to address the improvements outlined in the plan. Detailed information on construction and operational cost estimates are provided in Chapter L.

Park Board Review of Programming, Ecological/Resource Plan, and Research Plan

Staff from NPS led a discussion with the Park Board on various sections of the Master Plan including Programming, Ecological/Resource Plan, and Research Plan. NPS and DSI developed a survey on programming opportunities and this information was reviewed with the Board. NPS also facilitated a discussion on research opportunities and what information the Park Board would like to know in the future. Lastly, NPS facilitated a discussion with the Board on a strategy for protecting and managing the park's resources.

Full notes from each meeting are included within the appendix.

Section H – Development Masterplan

The development of the master plan reflects how Hole-in-the-Mountain Park has researched and is prepared to meet both the local and regional recreational interests and needs. The public process played an instrumental role in determining, and defining, regional interests and needs and the direction of the master plan. Having considered the public input, the Lincoln County Parks Board and the Lincoln County Commissioners have approved the development master plan as defined in this section. Section L highlights the cost estimates for the highlighted improvements. Lincoln County recognizes that as Hole in the Mountain Park is improved it will also increase the operations and maintenance costs for the park. These operational cost estimates based on the development phases are also addressed in Section L. As illustrated in the cost estimates, each phase includes specific project costs, in addition to general sitework costs, contingencies, and project fees (design, engineering, admin, staking/testing, etc).

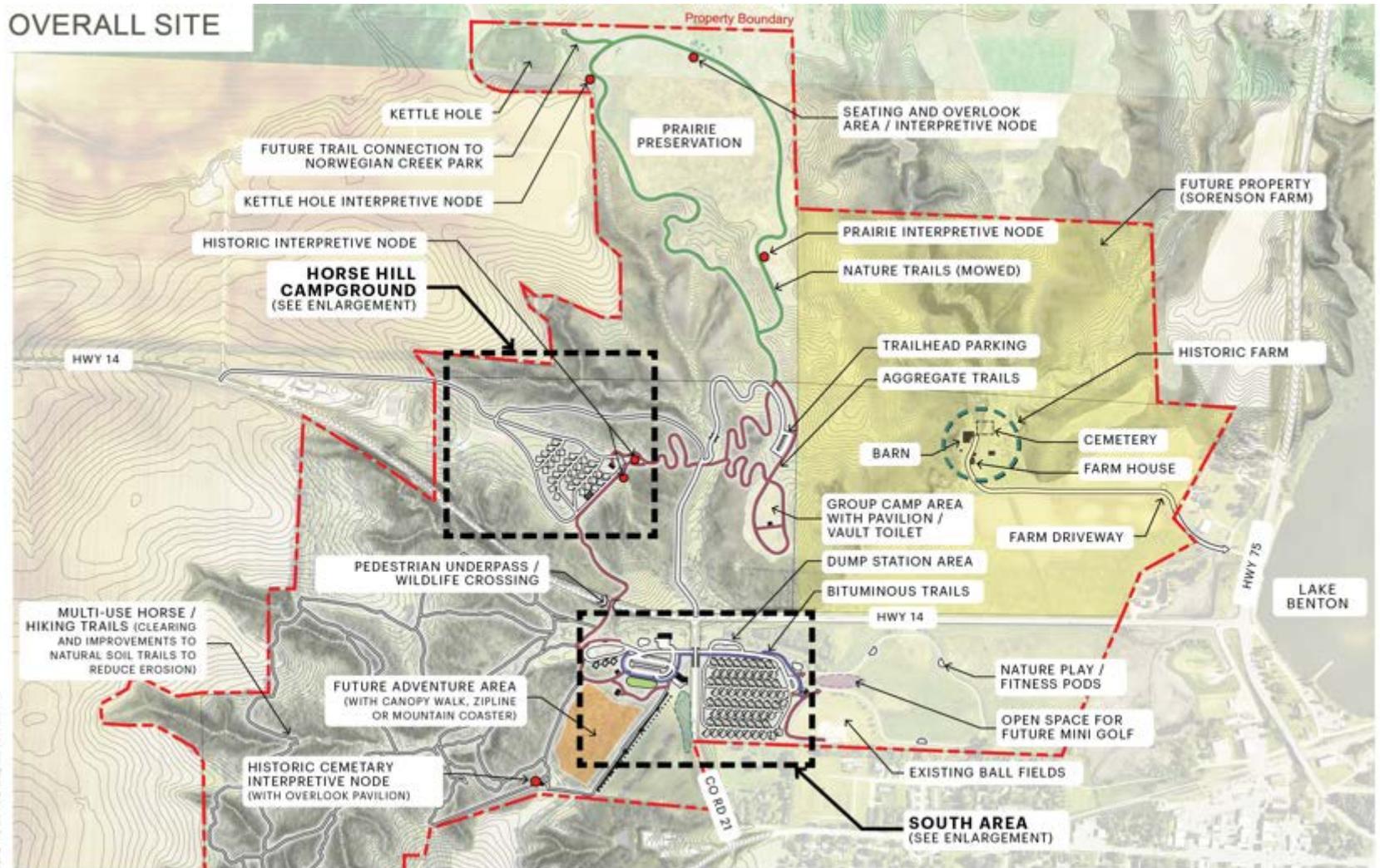
The master plan provides related recreational activities consistent with the vision statement as previously defined. The plan includes a five phased approach. Key elements of the plan include:

- Trail improvements and development including the cleanup of existing trail plus new trail development
- Three (3) phases to campground development – creating approximately 70 additional sites with electrical and water/sewer service, plus water/sewer service to existing sites
- Development of Sledding Hill
- Chalet improvements
- Development of future park property and trails



Section H – Development Masterplan

OVERALL SITE



Hole In The Mountain Park | Master Plan

Lincoln County - Lake Benton, Minnesota
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Section H – Development Masterplan

Phase 1 – South Area

Phase 1 focuses on trail improvements, sledding hill, improvement of 36 RV campsites, dump station, entrance monument, and shower/restroom for new RV campground.

Natural Hiking Trail Improvements

The natural hiking trail improvement project includes the cleanup of brush and washouts of the existing 7-mile natural trail and improvements to the natural soil trails to reduce erosion. This is a multi-use horse and hiking trail that once improved will provide a 5' wide trail with 7' wide clearance. Improvements will also create a 12' vertical clearing. The cleanup will include clearing trees from the road/trail, spraying buckthorn brush overgrowth, stabilizing the trail, and decommissioning restoring segments. Floods have caused damage to bottom-outs and 150-year-old trees are easily toppled with wind. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 1-2 years of the Master Plan approval.



Campgrounds Development

Hole in the Mountain Park currently has a West Campground with 20 campsites, East Campground with 12 sites and Horse Hill with 30 sites. As the County analyzed the demand for additional campsites and envisioned the opportunities to expand improvements and programming around the Chalet and sledding hill, the opportunity for campground growth was better suited in the East Campground vicinity. Overall, this area will add up to 70 new sites. Phase 1 of the campground development project includes the installation of water/sewer service to 36 campsites in the East Campground. Improvements will also include bituminous drives and parking. Each campsite will include aggregate pads with picnic table, fire pit and power pedestal. A new dump station will also be developed in this area.

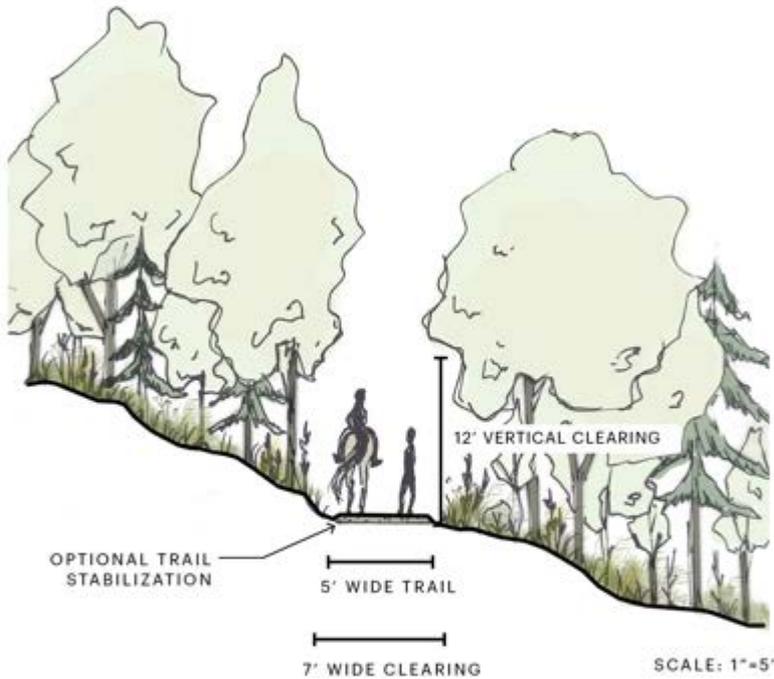
Development of the East Campground will also link Hole-in-the-Mountain Park to the City ball fields, trail systems and roads that lead into Lake Benton's downtown and other local amenities.

This phase is anticipated to be completed within 1-3 years of the Master Plan approval. To assist with operational costs, the County will continue to use a campground resident host site. These hosts assist with reservations, cleaning of facilities and enforcing park rules. In return they are provided with free/reduced cost of their campsite. The option will also exist for the County to eventually decommission the West Campground space for parking needs to accommodate the improvements to the sledding hill and Chalet.

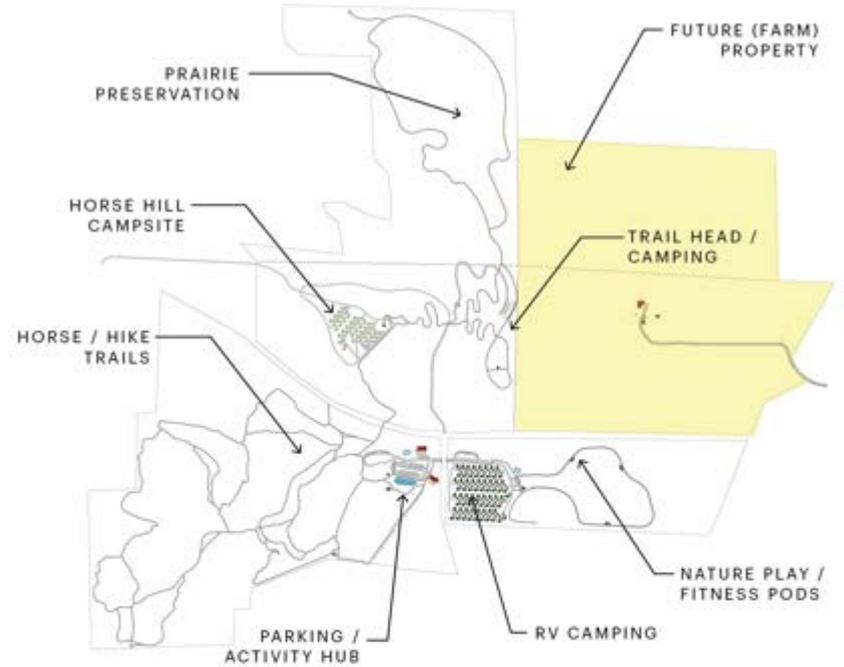
Section H – Development Masterplan

SITE FEATURES

MULTI-USE HORSE & HIKE TRAIL SECTION



OVERALL SITE PLAN



FITNESS POD EXAMPLE



NATURE PLAY POD EXAMPLE



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Section H – Development Masterplan

SOUTH ENLARGEMENT



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0' 20' 40' 80'
 GRAPHIC SCALE



wsb

1,200 foot sled/tubing hill as viewed from Horse Hill



Section H – Development Masterplan

Sledding Hill Development

The goal of the Sledding Hill is to rectify the unmet winter recreational needs for youth, teens, and families in the region by providing a sledding hill at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. This amenity will not only deliver recreational amenities during the long Minnesota winter months but will also provide employment opportunities for teens and young adults in the region, as well as increasing tourism. The community engagement process also identified other recreational improvements and programming that will complement the sledding hill such as a skating area and outdoor plaza. These will be developed in future phases. Phase 1 of the development of the new **Sledding Hill** will include the purchase and installation of a tow rope system, snow machine, and new lighting. It will also result in the development of a sledding hill berm to reduce sledding run-out onto the County Road. It will include the purchase of tubes and a storage area. Lastly, the County will look to develop an online reservation and ticket system for camping and sledding to ease the administrative time with in-person reservations.

The Lincoln County Parks Department estimates 5-10 jobs will be created for proper sledding hill operation. No additional insurance would be required as Lincoln County's existing insurance (MCIT) coverage would be sufficient. Net income from sledding operations is estimated at \$27,000/year. Estimated expenses of employment, equipment maintenance, water/sewer in Chalet, upkeep of Chalet are estimated at approximately \$41,000. Revenue from concessions and other programming and events is not included in the operational costs and would provide additional revenue opportunities if the County opts to directly oversee these activities versus partnering with a local organization.

The cost estimates also include options for upgrades to the tow rope system including a magic carpet or chair lift system. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 1-3 years of the Master Plan approval.

Section H – Development Masterplan

Phase 2 – South Area

Phase 2 focuses on the Chalet, parking and miscellaneous improvements.

Campground Area

Phase 2 will include the development of a new restroom building/pavilion in the East Campground. While most RV's include their own bathroom/shower facilities, the County feels it is important to have a primary restroom facility as eventually this area will house up to 70 campsites. This facility will include restrooms and showers with an attached pavilion. As previously mentioned, the campground resident host will assist with cleaning and operations of this facility. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 4-7 years of the Master Plan approval.

Chalet Area

Phase 2 involves a number of improvements to the Chalet Building and the surrounding area. To support the development of the sledding hill in Phase 1, this phase will include an expanded parking lot and trail system. The parking lot will create up to 94 stalls with 6 ADA compliant stalls. The trail system will improve access around the Chalet and sledding hill and expand access to trailheads, the historic Snyder Cabin, and future development opportunities such as the winter skating area. Lighting improvements will also be made in this area.

This phase also includes improvements to the Chalet Building. This includes updates to the interior and exterior and compliance with accessibility and plumbing codes. It would also include a building expansion to accommodate the increased number of visitors due to the sledding hill and other improvements and programming. The expansion would include a kitchen and space for additional viewing and eating. It would include improved restrooms and act as a warming house. An outdoor plaza would also be developed with a fire pit and building screen to sponsor outdoor events and movies. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 5-10 years of the Master Plan approval.



Section H – Development Masterplan

CHALET / EXPANSION ENTRANCE



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Section H – Development Masterplan

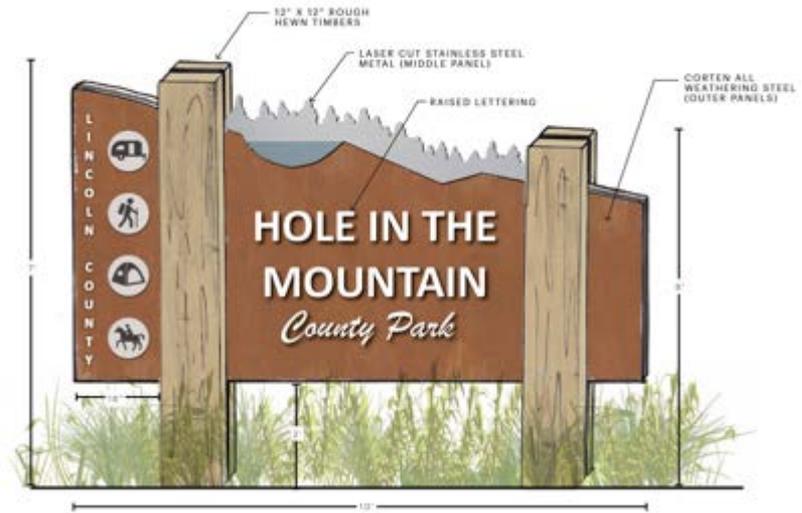


Historic Cabin and Signage

Lastly, Phase 2 includes stabilization to the Historic Snyder Cabin and an entrance sign. During the community engagement process it was discussed that the park lacks an entrance sign. This can result in lost visitors to the site that may not be aware of the park. The entrance sign will help guide visitors into the park and provide visual information on the amenities available. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 5-10 years of the Master Plan approval.



*Large Monument/Entrance Sign
Design courtesy of WSB*



Section H – Development Masterplan

Phase 3 – North Area

Phase 3 will move improvements to the North Area of the park including the horse hill campground, trail improvements, and a pedestrian underpass. During the planning process, it has been discussed that Hole in the Mountain Park has various entrances, most of which are unmarked. The access road to Horse Hill across from the main entrance is also in poor condition and currently unusable. To open up the northern access, the Master Plan identifies some road improvements that increase access and create a one-way entrance and exit into Horse Hill. Phase 3 improvements are highlighted in the concept plan on page 45.

Phase 3 includes trail, road, and parking upgrades to Horse Hill. It also includes water and sewer services for this area and a new restroom/shower building. This Phase will also create interpretive areas and a horse corral. Lastly, many equestrians enjoy access to the multi-use horse/hiking trails found on the south end of the park. Safety features have been incorporated that address safe crossing of pedestrians and horses across Highway 14. This includes a possible underpass and push-button crossing warning. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 8-12 years of the Master Plan approval.

Phase 4 – South Area

Phase 4 in the South Area includes improvements to the East Campground and creation of fitness stations and nature play pods. Sample designs of the fitness stations and nature play pods are located on the Site Features Map on page 38.

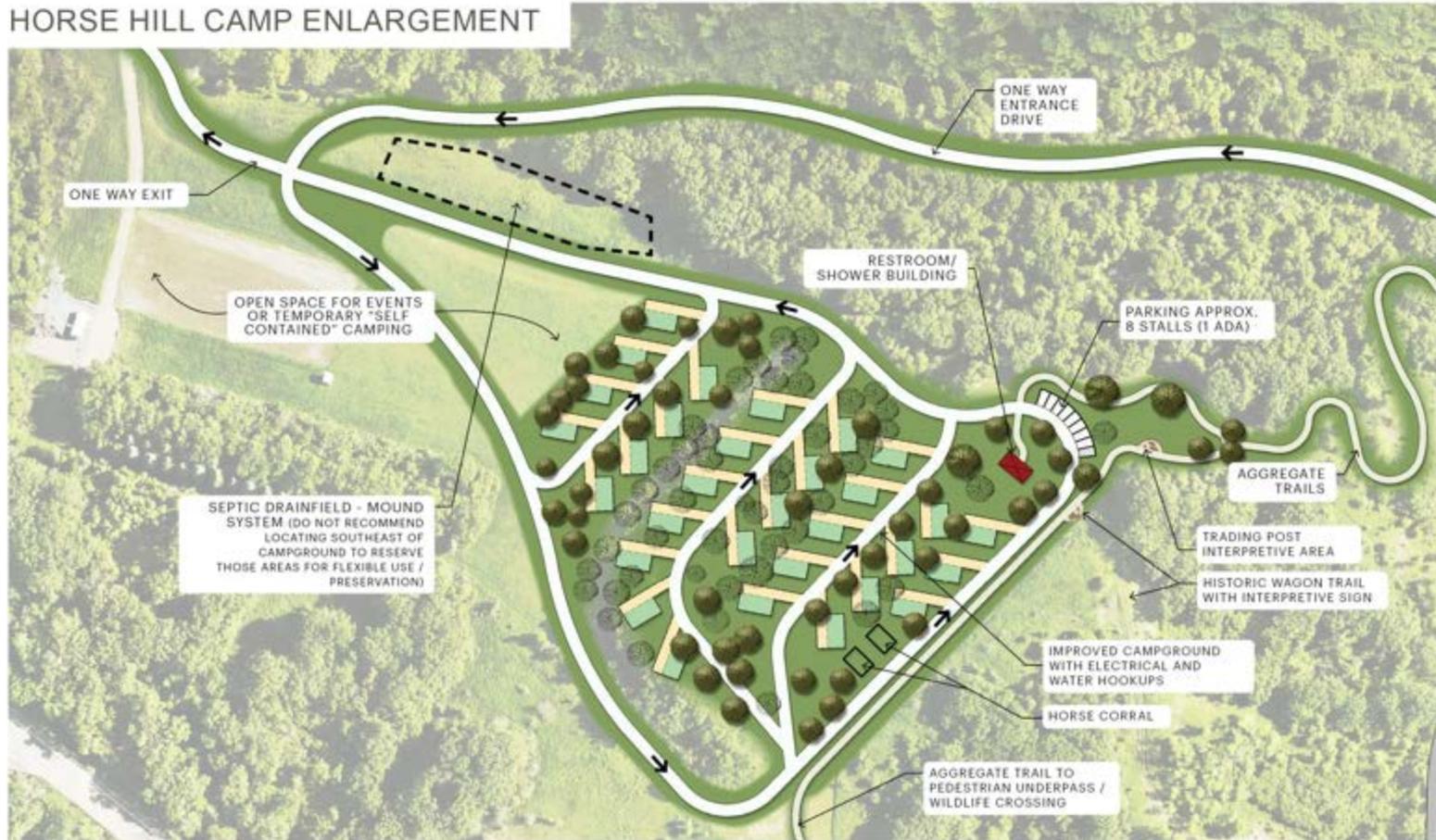
Phase 4 includes the addition of approximately 34 campsites to the East Campground. The exact size of this effort will be analyzed following the completion of additional campsites in Phase I. If sufficient demand exists for new campsites, this project will encompass addition roadways, water/sewer extension, and development of the campsites. Phase 4 also includes an overlook pavilion and historic cemetery interpretive station and playground equipment and exercise stations. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 10-15 years of the Master Plan approval.

Phase 5 – North Area

Phase 5 looks to expand roads, trails and camping to the north of Highway 14. This would expand access and usage of the prairie areas of the park. This project would include the development of a two-way drive and parking to the prairie trailhead. It would also create a primitive camping area and vault toilet. The effort would add interpretive nodes for the kettle hole, overlook, prairie area. It would also add some bench and seating areas near Kettle Hole. Lastly, there would also be space to add 3 optional tent campsites west of the Chalet. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 10-15 years of the Master Plan approval.

Section H – Development Masterplan

HORSE HILL CAMP ENLARGEMENT



Hole In The Mountain Park | Master Plan

Lincoln County - Lake Benton, Minnesota
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Section H – Development Masterplan

Sorensen Farm Expansion

Owner and lifelong resident of the farm site nestled adjacent to Horse Hill, James Sorensen has established a trust account naming Lincoln County Parks System as the sole beneficiary of his 160-acre property. It is provided in Mr. Sorensen's will that upon his passing, his property (land and buildings) be entrusted to, and become a part of, the Hole-in-the-Mountain Park system. Out of respect to Mr. Sorensen, exact uses and details of this site have not been planned. Also, since the property is not yet owned by the Lincoln County Parks System, the condition of the buildings cannot be determined, therefore the exact details and costs of redevelopment are unknown at this time.

The Sorensen Farm property includes a farm site that lies adjacent to the east end of Horse Hill and just across U.S. Highway 14, north of Hole-in-the-Mountain East Campground. The farm site includes a turn-of-the-century farmhouse, barn, cemetery, and a few out-buildings. While no plans have been created for the site, various ideas have been discussed including:

- Rehab and reconstruction of the barn. The barn could be remodeled into a state-of-the art lodge for use as wedding/reunion venues as well as a kitchen/lodging rental for visiting hunters/fishers.
- Construction of rustic cabins to be used as rental for visiting hunters/fishers.
- Transition of the turn-of-the-century farm home into a museum. It is Mr. Sorensen's adamant request that the house be left as-is and be made available to the public as a museum.
- Highlight aspects of a working farm for visitors.
- Trail connections to other areas of the park.

These phases are anticipated to be completed within 15 years of the Master Plan approval.

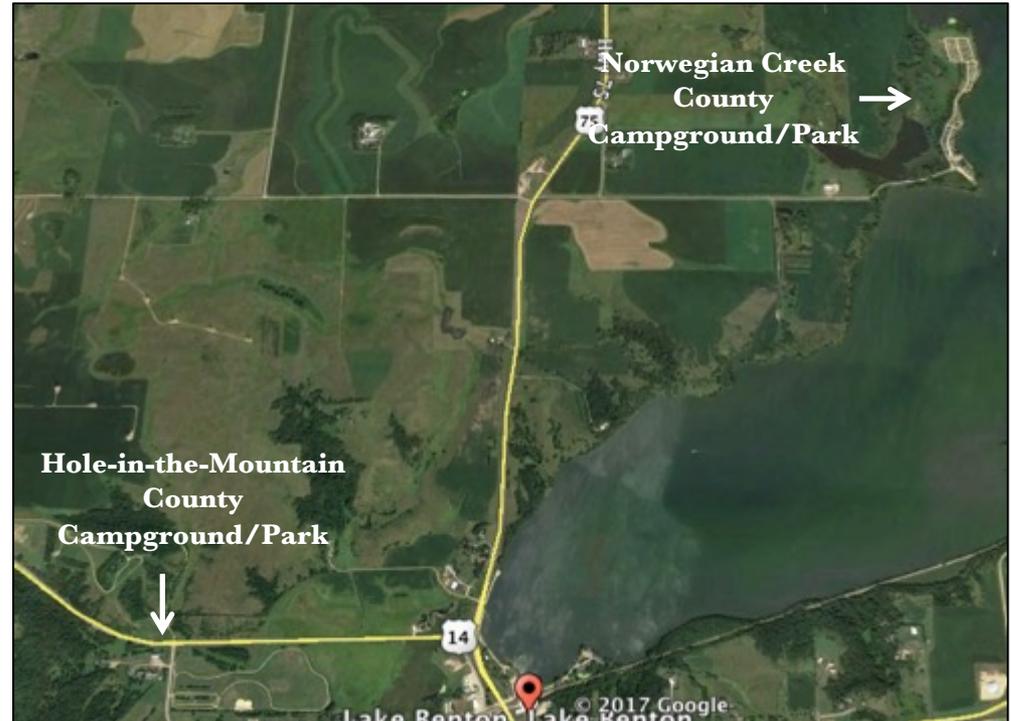


Section H – Development Masterplan

Other Expansion Items

The community engagement efforts sparked significant ideas for the park. Due to time and costs these items are not in the short-term development plan, but they provide some unique concepts that should be noted. These are items that can be incorporated as time and funds allow in the long term:

- Adventure Area near the sledding hill that include uses such as canopy walk, zipline, and/or mountain coaster
- Mini golf
- Trail connection to Norwegian Creek Park. The Lakeshore Property Trail would have the goal of connecting Hole-in-the-Mountain Park with Norwegian Creek County Park, thereby creating a safe trail system for all Lincoln County Park visitors to travel between the two county parks. This phase is anticipated to be completed within 20-25 years of the Master Plan approval.
- The owner of the CS Natural Health Center reached out during the community engagement process to indicate their site along Highway 14 would possibly be available for purchase to expand the visibility and footprint of the park. The land includes a building that could be used as a visitor center and ponds.



The cost projections enclosed in this master plan define the anticipated costs associated with the development of Hole-in-the-Mountain campground and trails. Costs are based on a combination of site-specific development requirements and projects of similar size and complexity. The cost figures are based on a master plan level. The cost figures indicated in this plan are intended to be used as general project budgeting. Actual costs are expected to vary depending upon the year that the projects are implemented and the economic conditions affecting the final project costs.

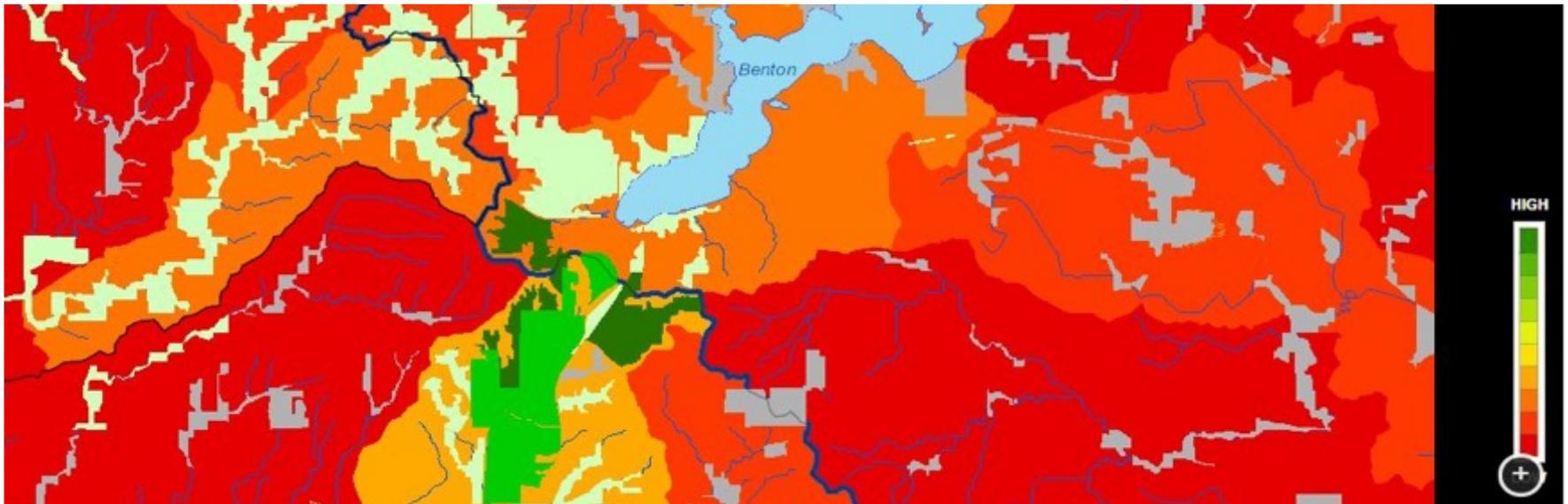
Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Lincoln County recognizes that Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, with its native plants, animals, and unique Buffalo Ridge landforms and gullies supports regionally significant biodiversity within the park. Lincoln County Parks Department recognizes that thoughtful, long-term strategic management will be important components of maintaining the value of this park as improvements are made and visitor use grows.

Natural Resources of the Park

Hole in the Mountain Park is located in the Lake Benton sub-watershed, which is part of the Redwood River catchment of the Minnesota River watershed. The Minnesota Biological Survey- Sites of Biodiversity Significance data (MBS-SBDS), in conjunction with a 2019 Crop Layer data and 2011 National Land Cover Database data, indicated that the Lake Benton sub-watershed has medium low terrestrial habitat quality. However, the overall terrestrial habitat quality of this sub-watershed is better than many of the adjacent watersheds. Within the MBS-SBDS data, Hole in the Mountain Park strongly contributes to this higher score compared to other surveyed sites. (See Map for details.)

Minnesota Biological Survey – Sites of Biodiversity Significance Data
Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

The park’s resources are considerable. Historic features include burial sites from the European settlement era, the Taylor Cabin, and a hundreds-of-years history of the Yankton Sioux and Red Rock Sioux (Očhéthi Šakówiŋ) using this location as an east-west passage up and down the Coteau des Prairies. Natural features are many; the park harbors more than 60 species of grasses, sedges, and rushes, 10 species of trees and shrubs and 200 species of wildflowers in a landscape complex of grasslands, forest and savanna. The park provides excellent habitat for rare prairie-dependent insects, including 25 species of butterflies, and nesting waterfowl, passerines and other grassland birds. Visitors may also catch glimpses of a suite of prairie birds, mammals, and other insects including a bald eagle, badger, coyote, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, red-tailed hawk, meadowlark, and bobolink.

Most unique to Hole-in-the-Mountain are its butterflies, thriving on the native grasses and forbs protected here. Notable species with a historical presence here include the Dakota Skipper, Ottoe Skipper and Uncas Skipper. The Dakota Skipper, a federally endangered species, is an inconspicuous butterfly with a wingspan of one to one-and-one-half inches, is yellow or straw colored, and has an erratic darting flight. It was first discovered near Volga, SD (approx. 35 miles from Hole-in-the-Mountain) and survives on only a few scattered virgin prairie habitats in the Dakotas, Iowa, and Minnesota. The Ottoe Skipper is a state endangered species similar in size and appearance to the Dakota Skipper. More information on these and other butterfly species, including their management needs can be found at www.butterfliesandmoths.org/

Besides endangered and threatened butterflies, there are several other species native to Lincoln County that are declining or threatened at the state level. See the ____ table for the full list of terrestrial species that need special care throughout Lincoln County.

Many of these at-risk species can benefit from thoughtful ecological stewardship and restoration activities at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park. Identification of the habitat needs of at-risk species will help provide insight into what kinds of stewardship activities are needed, whether this is managing for structural complexity, managing for plant species diversity, or managing for controlled disturbance. In the resource management section below, general strategies for managing park resources are shared, but it will be the partnership of Lincoln County Parks with wildlife biologists/ecologists/habitat specialists that will yield the best management guidance.



Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Common name	Scientific name	Group	State status
Great Plains Toad	Anaxyrus cognatus	amphibian	special concern
Acadian Flycatcher	Empidonax virescens	bird	special concern
American White Pelican	Pelecanus erythrorhynchos	bird	special concern
Forster's Tern	Sterna forsteri	bird	special concern
Henslow's Sparrow	Ammodramus henslowii	bird	endangered
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus	bird	endangered
Purple Martin	Progne subis	bird	special concern
Abbreviated Underwing	Catocala abbreviatella	insect	special concern
<i>Dakota Skipper</i>	<i>Hesperia dacotae</i>	<i>insect</i>	<i>endangered</i>
Iowa Skipper	Atrytone arogos iowa	insect	special concern
Leadplant Flower Moth	Schinia lucens	insect	special concern
Ottoo Skipper	Hesperia ottoe	insect	endangered
<i>Poweshiek Skipperling</i>	<i>Oarisma poweshiek</i>	<i>insect</i>	<i>endangered</i>
Regal Fritillary	Speyeria idalia	insect	special concern
Big Brown Bat	Eptesicus fuscus	mammal	special concern
Northern Grasshopper Mouse	Onychomys leucogaster	mammal	special concern
Plains Pocket Mouse	Perognathus flavescens	mammal	special concern
Prairie Vole	Microtus ochrogaster	mammal	special concern
Richardson's Ground Squirrel	Urocitellus richardsonii	mammal	special concern
Blanding's Turtle	Emydoidea blandingii	reptile	threatened
A Jumping Spider	Habronattus texanus	spider	special concern
A Jumping Spider	Phidippus pius	spider	special concern
Cutleaf Ironplant	Xanthisma spinulosum var. spinulosum	vascular plant	special concern
Dwarf Spikerush	Eleocharis coloradoensis	vascular plant	special concern
Few-flowered Spikerush	Eleocharis quinqueflora	vascular plant	special concern
Hair-like Beak Rush	Rhynchospora capillacea	vascular plant	threatened
Missouri Milk-vetch	Astragalus missouriensis var. missouriensis	vascular plant	special concern
Nuttall's Sunflower	Helianthus nuttallii ssp. rydbergii	vascular plant	special concern
Plains Reedgrass	Calamagrostis montanensis	vascular plant	special concern
Prairie Mimosa	Desmanthus illinoensis	vascular plant	special concern
Prairie Moonwort	Botrychium campestre	vascular plant	special concern
Red Three-awn	Aristida purpurea var. longiseta	vascular plant	special concern
<i>Italicized rows indicate species with federal designation.</i>			



prairie moonwort



Red threawn



slender milkvetch

Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Resource Management

Preservation of habitat into parks and reserves is the first step to protecting many kinds of habitat from unplanned damage due to human activity. As important as preservation is, it is not enough. Habitats, especially habitats that have a human pressure on them, must be actively managed to ensure the practical and intrinsic values of a protected place will persist over days, weeks, and seasons of use, year-over-year, indefinitely. Hole-in-the-Mountain Park's long-term ability to serve the public will depend on Lincoln County Parks planning for, funding, and implementing natural resource management across the entire park in a cyclical basis. Some areas of the park will receive cycles of attention on daily and weekly basis. Other areas of the park will need cycles of maintenance that are much longer, on the order of annual or semi-annual time periods. In the content that follows, ecological and land resources of the park are listed, as well as the kinds of management that are recommended for each resource (see table ____ on next page).

Some aspects of management of the park's ecological resources can be handled solely by the Lincoln County Park staff, but other resources will require larger teams. Lincoln County will need to develop relationships and agreements with specialists and service providers to assist with management activities that require bigger teams or coordination. Some of these land stewardship arrangements will be straight-forward, such as having an arborist with the equipment to provide tree care and management of tree canopy in heavy use areas. Other arrangements may involve larger teams or partnerships. One example would be ecological management of grasslands and woodland with applied fire. In this situation, a burn plan for the various areas of the park is developed and then executed year-over-year. Another example may be the need stabilize and restore stream corridor or drainage gullies where erosion has caused damage.

Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Resource	Concerns	Inspection Frequency	Management Strategy
Turf Fields	Blade height; root depth; mowing frequency; recovery from concentrated use; accumulation of litter	As needed as part of routine maintenance.	Mowing as needed. Fertilize as needed based on soil tests. Apply no-mow grass seed mix each spring. Herbicide 2-4D for weed species as needed. Aeration every 2-3 seasons.
Trees in High Use Areas	Limb fall; root damage; bark and branch damage	Annual inspection or after significant storm events.	Tree trimming. Subcontract for large limb removal or tree felling. Tree install, both nursery or soil and water conservation district, or park staff. Replant each fallen tree with 3-5 replacements trees, 6' or taller. Aim for tree diversity of 10-12 species over time.
Planting Beds	Infestation by weeds; accumulation of litter; plant mortality	Monthly inspection during establishment, otherwise two or three per season.	Non-seeding annual flowering species planted each season. Hand weeding planting beds monthly. Add new mulch annually.
Rain Gardens	Sedimentation; infestation by weeds; accumulation of litter; plant mortality	Three inspections during establishment, otherwise spring and fall	Remove litter as needed. Mow, weed-whack, or hand-pull weed species monthly. Replace dead plants each spring. Add mulch every 2-3 years. Remove accumulated sediment in inflow areas annually. Test soil pH annually, if the pH is below 5.2, limestone should be applied. If the pH is above 8.0, iron sulfate and sulfur should be applied. If raingarden plants are all woody shrubs, identifying weeds will be easier for staff and volunteers.
Grassland Environments	Intrusion of shrubs and trees; invasion by weed species	Annual survey while improving conditions, otherwise every three to five years.	Identify presence of Federally Endangered butterflies and avoid damage to host species or nursery areas if possible. If using applied fire for management, divide grassland into multiple “puzzle piece shaped” management zones and alternate burns on management zones over 3-4 years, ensuring that not all areas of the grassland burn at once, thereby ensuring refuge areas for butterfly and beneficial insect species. Can hand seed native plants after fire to increase species diversity and density.
Savanna Environments	Intrusion of shrubs and trees; invasion by weed species	Annual survey while improving conditions, otherwise every three to five years.	Remove berry producing plants first. Apply water based concentrated herbicide with dye to perimeter of cut stems. Applied fire, grazing with goats, and herbicide applied to foliage can be used to control germination from seed and re-sprouts. Heavy equipment such as a skidloader with brush cutter is used in winter when plants are dormant, and soils are frozen. Reseed and replant native species as invasive species show signs of being eliminated. Fire can be used as effectively in savanna as in grassland environments.

Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Forest Environments	Intrusion of shrubs and trees; invasion by weed species	Annual survey while improving conditions, otherwise every three to five years.	Remove berry producing plants first. Apply water based concentrated herbicide with dye to perimeter of cut stems. Applied fire, grazing with goats, and herbicide applied to foliage can be used to control germination from seed and re-sprouts. Heavy equipment such as a skidloader with brush cutter is used in winter when plants are dormant, and soils are frozen. Reseed and replant native species as invasive species show signs of being eliminated. Habitat piles can be constructed of cut woody brush. Protect valuable hardwood species's trunks from fire during wildfire operations.
Ridges, Gullies, & Watersheds	Accelerated soil transport due to erosion and deposition	Evaluate as part of trail inspection events.	Repair headcut and install appropriate siltation baffles within gullies. See USDA Technical Supplement 14P to address gullies (https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=17826.wba). Reseed or replant as necessary after brush removal. Special order species via native nurseries: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANT_MATERIALS/publications/ndpmcot8152.pdf
Seeps and Springs	Damage due to human visitation	Early spring or late fall inspection.	Partner with DNR on mapping and monitoring of springs and seeps and associated plant communities every 6-10 years. Remove non-native plant species that are colonizing these areas. Route trails away from springs and seeps where possible. Provide appropriate warning/educational signage at springs or seeps if visitor use cannot be avoided.
Channels and Streams	Changes in channel due to high-flow events; stream morphology changes	Inspect after high-flow events.	Consult with stream restoration specialists on repair or rehabilitation and implement within twelve months of damaging event. https://semspub.epa.gov/work/01/554360.pdf

Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Hiking and Horse Trails	Failure due to use; failure due to erosional forces; blocked or damaged due to tree falls	Two inspections per season or after heavy use/trail related events, and after significant precipitation events.	For horse trail damage, follow best practices in the Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/07232816/index.cfm For hiking trail damage, can follow US Forest Service best practices: https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails/trail-management-tools/trailplans
Mountain Biking Trails	Failure due to use; failure due to erosional forces; blocked or damaged due to tree falls	Two inspections per season or after heavy use/trail related events, and after significant precipitation events.	Consult with International Mountain Biking Association on troubleshooting & maintenance. https://www.imba.com/resource/guidelines-quality-trail-experience-gqte
Bridges, Culverts and Crossings	Failure due to clogging, erosion, slumping, heaving; wildlife mortality; weed species vector	Annual inspection and after significant precipitation events.	A US Forest Service document provides technical guidance on handling stormwater flows under and over roads and trails. Images, diagrams and costs are included: https://www.fs.fed.us/eng/pubs/pdf/BAERCAT/lo_res/Chap_4.pdf The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has a Wiki of best practices for slowing down stormwater flows. See info about check dams: https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Sediment_control_practices_-_Check_dams_(ditch_checks,_ditch_dikes)
Snowmobile Trails (ATVs not allowed)	Scouring and erosion on steep slopes as a result of thin snow cover or high intensity use.	Weekly inspection of high impact areas and steep slopes during snow season.	Snowmobile trails are groomed and separate from other trails. Trails remain open as long as minimum snow base (6-7" deep) is maintained on trail slopes that are at highest risk of eroding.
Cultural Areas	Decay of fences, stone monuments, erosion of foot traffic areas.	Annual inspection.	Signage maintained or installed when missing. Fencing updates as needed to ensure visitor safety. Groundcover is maintained in high impact areas.

Section I – Ecological/Land Resources Plan

Some of the conservation partners that possess expertise that may benefit Lincoln County’s management of the park include, but are not limited to:

<i>American Trails (Hiking and Equestrian)</i>	<i>Animal Road Crossings (ARC) Solutions</i>	<i>Applied Ecological Services</i>
<i>International Mountain Bike Association</i>	<i>The Prairie Enthusiasts</i>	<i>Pheasants/Quail Forever</i>
<i>Lake Benton Sportsman’s Club</i>	<i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	<i>Lincoln County Extension Office</i>
<i>Minnesota Conservation Corps</i>	<i>Minnesota River Basin Center</i>	<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>
<i>Lincoln Co. Soil & Water Conservation Office</i>	<i>Natural Resources Conservation Service</i>	<i>Fish and Wildlife Service</i>
<i>MN Department of Natural Resources</i>		
<i>South Dakota State University at Brookings- College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences</i>		

The Minnesota River Basin Center keeps a list of organizations located throughout the Minnesota River Watershed that are involved in regional environmental stewardship activities at this website: <https://mrfdc.mnsu.edu/nonprofit-organizations> . It should be noted that while this is a list of organizations that are likely partners, other organizations, including unnamed existing organizations, newly-forming organizations, and concerned individuals, are welcome to partner with Lincoln County in improving the natural resource qualities of the Hole in the Mountain Park.

When discussing the role of partners in helping take care of Hole in the Mountain Park, the sentiment among the Lincoln County Park Board was that this is a regional park that will thrive when all communities in the region see it as theirs to care for and not as something that is only for the city of Lake Benton. Therefore, the following municipal entities are encouraged to partner with Lincoln County Parks Department to engage with regional residents in work project planning and execution:

<i>Tyler</i>	<i>Ivanhoe</i>	<i>Elkton</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Ruthton</i>
<i>Florence</i>	<i>Bushnell</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Arco</i>	<i>Russell</i>
<i>Holland</i>				

The role of partners in helping the park achieve its full potential as a beloved and valued regional asset cannot be overstated. In the next chapter, the vision for how partnerships will work to responsibly increase the use of the natural resources discussed in this chapter will be discussed.

Section J – Programming Plan

Programming Overview

Programming is the act of providing a human-focused purpose to any space, landscape element, or structure that is invested in Hole in the Mountain Park. In short, it is the process of creating interest that attracts users for the park. One definition of programming as it pertains to parks comes from the Project for Public Spaces which says:

The presence of programmed activities or activity generators attract and increase positive use in a park. Depending on the location, size and features in a park environment, programming can include: recreational offerings; tours; exhibits; community gardens; cultural festivals; or special events such as music, dance or theatre. The presence of food concessions or a cafe is another key way to engage users. Wherever possible, programming and activity generators should be incorporated into a park environment because they reinforce the interconnection between use and safety.

The Lincoln County Park Board and Lincoln County Board of Commissioners were surveyed about their preferences regarding future efforts to support programming at Hole in the Mountain Park. The rest of this chapter is given over to the planning guidance these choices provide for Hole in the Mountain Park.

Programming Development

Two questions were asked of the Lincoln County Park Board and Lincoln County Board of Commissioners; those questions essentially asked, 1) How do you want to support programming? and 2) What kinds of programming is appropriate? To summarize, the responses were, 1) Develop programs in partnership with local community groups, and 2) With the exception of overnight stays in the Chalet, most of the suggested types of programming are appropriate. The long-form survey questions and answers that guide planning for this chapter can be found in the appendix.

Upon review of the survey results and within conversation about how to best develop programming for Hole in the Mountain Park, the Park Board was in agreement that the preferred way to cultivate programming is through a partnership-based approach. In this approach, the county identifies all the community partners that it wants to work with and invites those community organizations to take a leadership role in providing support for park activities that most interest them.

Section J – Programming Plan

Involving all of Lincoln County’s municipal entities into the programming development of Hole in the Mountain Park is an important priority. The Park Board understands that despite the park’s proximity to Lake Benton, that this is a county and regional park that has relevance for residents in every town and city across the region. Therefore, the Park Board invites staff from each of the municipalities within Lincoln County and neighboring counties to co-develop and implement programs.

Any programming priorities that cannot be met through partnership would fall upon the county to support. If this is the case, the Lincoln County may need to set aside resources for staff, interns or fellows to complete all programming that partnerships cannot support. When budgeting for a program manager, a program manager position can expect compensation at \$15-20/hour, with interns or seasonal staff in the \$11-15/hour range. Program managers that are permanent full-time or permanent part-time will be more effective at creating fresh, relevant and regular activities /events than a position that is rehired seasonally.

The Lincoln County Park Board feels the park is suitable for most activities and is open to programming to support most activities. Hole in the Mountain Park is a large and diverse enough landscape, that upon full completion of the multiphase buildout, will be able to support nearly any type of outdoor recreation forms of programming. The park will have the facilities to handle cultural events, various active and passive forms of recreation, as well as classes and education at the same time. Safety classes, interest-driven permit-based events, and passive recreation are the types of events that have strong support from park board and county commission members. Group skills and builder courses, and ‘on your honor” passive recreation activities like geocaching, disc golf, and snowshoe rental are also supported and while not shown on the physical plans, are activity areas that Park Board members are glad to explore. The programming areas that do not have support are organized overnight activities in the Chalet, motorized vehicles (snowmobiles are allowed in certain places only) access, concerts, and other program ideas that could pose insurance risks to the county.

In the table below, a list of programming activities, and potential partners who can share responsibility on implementation of particular programs with the county are listed. This is not an exhaustive list of what will be done, but an idea list of suitable activities that have support from the park board.

Section J – Programming Plan

Program Idea	Potential Partner in Implementation
<u>Passive Recreation</u>	
Disc Golf Course- permanent or seasonal.	Lincoln County 4H Club
Do-it-yourself snowshoe rental.	Lincoln County Parks
Geocaching.	Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, and High School Student Council
Community Birding- list of all bird species known to be found in park is placed on chalkboard at trailhead. As people identify them, they can mark which birds they saw.	Environmental Awareness Club at SMSU Lincoln County Parks
<u>Regionally Significant & Unique Events</u>	
Cross Country Race- host a meet or invitational event a few times each year.	Lake Benton, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, and Hendricks Public School Athletic Departments. Minnesota State High School League
Tournaments or fundraisers- Tug of War Tournament, Relay 4 Life, etc.	Community organizations relevant to fundraising need.
Nighttime luminary walks on special dates, such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Winter Solstice, New Year Eve.	Houses of worship Celebration organizing committees Interested individuals
Saddle Horse Holiday, Dog Day at the Park, Historic Re-enactments, and other kinds of interest driven events.	Organizing committees of particular activity
<u>Learning & Personal Enrichment</u>	
Day-long environmental education field trip collaboration with local schools.	Lake Benton, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, Hendricks, and Ivanhoe Public School Districts
Safety classes- hunting safety, chainsaw safety, etc.	Sportsmans Club Lincoln County Extension Office
Group classes for all ages, such as cross-country ski school, mushroom collecting, map and compass, etc.	Interested individuals Clubs- 4H or others... Lincoln County Parks
Folk school classes at the Chalet such as basket weaving, snowshoe making, fly leaf casting, etc.	Interested individuals Clubs- 4H or others... Lincoln County Parks

Section K – Research Plan

Research Plan Overview

The Lincoln County Park Board and the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners understand the importance of supporting data collection and research initiatives in a regionally significant park. In order to evaluate the success of improvements in the park over time and to ensure management and maintenance activities are responsive to the needs of the visiting public, a monitoring and reporting program will need to be established alongside physical improvements to the park.

Lincoln County will participate in research initiatives as requested by GMRPTC as they are developed and implemented over time. This may include visitor counts, visitor profiles, and recreational demands and trends. This information may be used to help further inform the development of the regional park system in Minnesota. Furthermore, Lincoln County understands the opportunity that exists in locally initiated data collection and monitoring. The Lincoln County Park Board and Lincoln County Board of Commissioners were surveyed about their preferences regarding future county-initiated efforts to collect data to benefit the park. A desire to use the park to collect information that will positively impact operational improvements was stated.

In this chapter, a vision for how data collection and research will be planned for is described. The survey questions and answers about data collection are located in the appendix, as are the meeting notes from when this topic was discussed.

Research Plan Development

Lincoln County and Lincoln County Parks Department will focus on partnering with other entities for purposes of collecting data or conducting research. Ideally, the type of data collection and research conducted would be decided in a collaborative way between the Lincoln County Park Board, the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission, and yet-to-be-determined research partners.

When considering what data needs to be collected, it is important that Lincoln County coordinate with GMRPTC to ensure the county can effectively participate in any data collection requests they have. The ability of Lincoln County to provide park-use data to GMRPTC may impact subsequent decisions to award more funding for park improvement. In addition to the reciprocal benefits of generating data for GMRPTCC, the county will need to identify which other data collection areas it wants to focus on for its own purposes.

Section K – Research Plan

Data collection opportunities are many; trail use, trail longevity, invasive species expansion or retreat, monitoring of species, year-over-year changes in visitation patterns, and returns on investment are examples of study areas. One comment received from park/county board members when specifically questioned on what type of data should be collected was a suggestion for the county to work on *“identification and summarization of Hole in the Mountain Park’s vegetation, and wildlife”*, as well as to *“study the park’s economic impact on the community and county”*.

The Lincoln County Park Board reviewed the results of the survey that they and County Commission members took, and in conversation on this topic, decided that an “all of the above strategy that included tracking visitation and wildlife” related metrics was appropriate. The initial focus will be on gathering visitor experience feedback. The community engagement that has taken place as part of this park plan update represents a good start to tracking visitation. The questions that were developed as part of the online survey can be used year-over-year by the county to track visitor experience. The county also can develop new questions or methods for tracking visitor experience scores. The Park Board expects that data collection/reporting on these focus areas will increase in capability at the same rate that improvements are made to Hole in the Mountain Park.

The tracking of visitors to the park as well as the services those visitors demand already happens in the area of overnight camping. The creation of a reservation system to manage bookings at any of the park campsites can improve the availability of data in this park operations area. The reservation system should also be flexible enough to accommodate rental of the Chalet, as well as handle snowtubing. Methods for tracking visitor use outside of park experiences that require payment also need to be developed. For day users of the park’s trails and picnic areas, visitor counts should be sought. For special events, classes, and programs, a reservation system as well as head-counts at the start of events may need to be standardized.

Research Plan Implementation

There are many methods by which Lincoln County can start a partnership-based data collection effort. The two preferred methods are:

- The County could choose to establish into a partner relationship with a select college, university, or extension service to work together on data collection and reporting.
- Making informal inquiries to businesses and organizations that the county already has a relationship with and seeking referrals to data collection partners from within the county’s existing business network.

Section K – Research Plan

The methods that are supported by the Park Board as a first course of action are outreach to universities, regional development councils or extension services to inquire about working together on data collection. The Park Board also supports conversations with existing vendors or other business partners on recommendations for how to proceed. GMRPTC is one such business partner that the Lincoln County Park Board can look to. Others may include the University of South Dakota at Brookings, the Center for Urban and Rural Affairs at the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities, the University of Minnesota Extension Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, and the University of Minnesota Lincoln County Extension office.

If a partnership is not possible for some or even all responsibilities of data collection, then the county should be prepared to take on the data collection tasks alone. One way for the county to develop the strategies and systems for collecting this information could be through a fellowship or public service offering. Developing a public service position through the Americorps State and National program would enable the county to get exposure to a nationwide talent pool. The county also has the ability to create a limited-term research fellowship and post the opening with teaching faculty at regional colleges and universities. Lastly, the county could hire staff with the needed expertise. Staff hires in this regard could be permanent seasonal full-time, or permanent part-time. The Park Board has an excellent opportunity to create a staff position that would handle the data collection and reporting needs identified in this chapter with the park programming needs discussed in the previous chapter.

It is difficult to forecast the annual operating costs of data collection. This effort will have a cost, but depending on the partnerships developed, systems implemented, frequency of collection, etc., it is difficult to know how to budget for these costs. If the Lincoln County develops an online or automated reservation system for camping and future snow tubing, then part of the data collection costs will be associated with this system. If online surveys and other forms of visitor feedback are utilized, those costs will stand alone and are easier to budget for. Going forward, as Lincoln County plans for park improvements, two actions will be important to take on a regular basis:

- It will need to it will be necessary to include a budget line-item for data collection system as part of park improvement cost estimates.
- Discretionary spending for research and data collection will need to be budgeted into the annual operating costs of the park.

The discretionary spending can take the form of support funds to be shared with partners who are cooperating on data collection. These funds can also be used to hire staff or fund Lincoln County' share of responsibility for supporting a research fellow.

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

The estimated construction costs listed in Table __ were prepared by WSB in 2020 as part of the Master Plan process. The information assumes implementation of each phase as a single project through a design/bid/build process. Costs are based on 2020 pricing at a site planning level suitable for budgeting purposes based on the vision of the development. Inflation should be applied over time based on economic factors. It should be expected that the costs will need to be refined through stages of the design process as more specifics related to the elements, products, and finishes associated with the project are considered in greater detail.

Phased development may be necessary based on available funding, priorities, and reasonable timeframe. The sequence of the phases identified in the table is suggested for consideration, but could be consolidated or broken into smaller pieces based on Lincoln County's preferences and available funding.

The following are some footnotes and alternative options to the information outlined in the cost estimates.

- Phase I Sledding Hill Area – the cost estimates include a tow rope system. Lincoln County could upgrade to a magic carpet system with a cost increase of \$200,000 or a chair lift system with a cost increase of \$1,450,000.
- Costs for water/sanitary sewer is based on average “prevailing wage” bid pricing in Greater Minnesota. The water system assumes the need to provide fire hydrants for fire protection in areas of new campground buildings, which will require increased water main size. If this is not required, or the project is not subject to prevailing wages typically required for state or federal grant funded projects, it is possible the construction costs could be decreased.
- Costs associated with the development of the Sorensen Farm buildings and trails on potential lake shore property are unable to be determined at this time as it is unknown as to when these lands will become the property of Lincoln County. Other potential future expansion opportunities that are not included in cost estimates include: adventure area (canopy walk, zipline, and/or mountain coaster), trail connection to Norwegian Creek Park, and mini golf.

Lincoln County is prepared to financially maintain Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, however, the timelines and/or costs of the larger development projects listed above will be dependent upon whether Lincoln County Hole-in-the-Mountain Park will be able to receive funding from additional leverage resources (e.g. LCCMR's Legacy funds, DNR's Outdoor Recreation Grants, among other funding resources) to maximize Lincoln County's financial commitments to these projects.

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Table __
Development Cost Summary

Phase 1						
Item	Description	Qty.	Units	Est. Unit Price	Estimated Cost	Estimated Total
General Sitework for Phase 1 Area						
1	Mobilization	1	LS	75,000	75,000	
2	Earthwork & Erosion Control	1	LS	62,500	62,500	
3	Selective Clearing and Grubbing	1	LS	20,000	20,000	
4	Removals	1	LS	12,750	12,750	
5	Vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding / signage, ada parking	1	LS	3,000	3,000	
6	Restoration - seeding	5	AC	7,000	35,000	
7	Tree/shrub plantings	1	LS	22,500	22,500	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>230,750</i>
Horse/Hike Trail Area						
8	Horse/Hike Trail Improvements (compacted natural soil trails - also includes decommissioning restoring segments)	23,204	LF	8	185,632	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>185,632</i>
Campground Area						
9	East Bituminous Parking/Drop off Pavement with Agg. Base	1,025	SY	30	30,750	
10	Aggregate RV Drive Pavement (east camp)	5,916	SY	10	59,160	
11	RV Campsite Aggregate Pads (36 sites) with Picnic Table, Fire Pit, Power Pedestal	36	EA	2,500	90,000	
12	Water main and service improvements for new campground	1	LS	175,750	175,750	
13	Sanitary Sewer main and service connections for campground	1	LS	237,000	237,000	
14	Dump Station - includes connection to sanitary sewer system, water service/hydrant for rinse down	1	LS	18,000	18,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>610,660</i>
Sledding Hill Area						
15	Sledding Hill Berm	1	LS	45,000	45,000	
16	Tow Rope system	1	LS	150,000	150,000	
17	Sledding Hill Lighting	1	LS	215,000	215,000	
18	1 Snow Machine (assumes existing water / electrical system and connection points are adequate)	1	LS	40,000	40,000	
19	Develop online reservation and ticket system for camping and sledding	1	LS	8,000	8,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>458,000</i>
					Phase 1 Subtotal	1,485,042
					Contingency (10%)	148,504
<i>Project Fees (Design / Engineering / Admin. / Staking & Testing / etc. 20%)</i>						326,709
					Estimated Phase 1 Total:	\$1,960,255

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Phase 2						
Item	Description	Qty.	Units	Est. Unit Price	Estimated Cost	Estimated Total
General Sitework for Phase 2 Area						
1	Mobilization	1	LS	85,000	85,000	
2	Earthwork & Erosion Control	1	LS	27,500	27,500	
3	Selective Clearing and Grubbing	1	LS	7,500	7,500	
4	Removals	1	LS	12,750	12,750	
5	Vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding / signage, ada parking	1	LS	1,500	1,500	
6	Restoration - seeding	4	AC	7,000	28,000	
7	Tree/shrub plantings	1	LS	12,500	12,500	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	174,750
Campground Area						
8	Restroom Building/Pavilion (east camp)	1	LS	600,000	600,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	600,000
Chalet / Sledding Hill Parking & Connector Trails Area						
9	8' Wide Aggregate Trail	1,500	SY	8	12,000	
10	8' Wide Bituminous Trail with agg. base	1,663	SY	30	49,890	
11	West Bituminous Parking/Entry Lot Pavement with Agg. Base	6,097	SY	30	182,910	
12	Parking Lot and Trail Lighting	1	LS	25,000	25,000	
13	Parking Lot Stormwater Treatment	1	LS	12,500	12,500	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	282,300
Chalet Area						
14	Chalet Building updates to interior/exterior, compliance with accessibility and plumbing codes	1,500	SF	130	195,000	
15	Chalet Building Expansion	1,000	SF	450	450,000	
16	Outdoor Concrete Plaza & walkways near Chalet	3,160	SF	8	25,280	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	670,280
Miscellaneous Items						
17	Stabilize historic cabin	1	LS	7,500	7,500	
18	Monument Entrance Sign	1	LS	20,000	20,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	27,500
					Phase 2 Subtotal	1,754,830
					Contingency (10%)	175,483
<i>Project Fees (Design / Engineering / Admin. / Staking & Testing / etc. 20%)</i>						386,063
Estimated Phase 2 Total:						\$2,316,376

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Phase 3						
Item	Description	Qty.	Units	Est. Unit Price	Estimated Cost	Estimated Total
General Sitework for Phase 3 Area						
1	Mobilization	1	LS	100,000	100,000	
2	Earthwork & Erosion Control	1	LS	75,000	75,000	
3	Selective Clearing and Grubbing	1	LS	25,000	25,000	
4	Removals (existing Trailer sites, camp, existing pavements, structures, amenities.)	1	LS	9,500	9,500	
5	Vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding / signage, ada parking	1	LS	3,000	3,000	
6	Restoration - seeding	13	AC	7,000	88,900	
7	Tree/shrub plantings	1	LS	25,000	25,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	326,400
Roadways & Horse Hill Campground Area						
8	8' Wide Aggregate Trails	2,886	SY	8	23,088	
9	Aggregate Roads	11,871	SY	10	118,710	
10	Aggregate Parking Lot	222	SY	10	2,220	
11	Camping Spurs at Horse Hill (includes power pedestal)	31	EA	2,500	77,500	
12	Restroom and Shower Building	1	LS	480,000	480,000	
13	Water main extension/services for horse hill campground	1	LS	220,750	220,750	
14	Sanitary sewer main extension/services for horse hill campground (assumes lift station)	1	LS	467,000	467,000	
15	Septic System for campground and restroom/shower building	1	LS	60,000	60,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	1,449,268
Miscellaneous Items						
16	Pedestrian Underpass	1	LS	390,000	390,000	
17	Push Button Horse/Ped Crossing Warning	1	LS	25,000	25,000	
18	Historic Trading Post and Wagon Trail Intrepretive Nodes - with bench / sign	1	LS	6,500	6,500	
19	Temporary Manure Storage Amenity	1	LS	4,500	4,500	
20	20x30 wooden horse corral (2)	1	LS	8,000	8,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	434,000
					Phase 3 Subtotal	2,209,668
					Contingency (10%)	220,967
					Project Fees (Design / Engineering / Admin. / Staking & Testing / etc. 20%)	486,127
					Estimated Phase 3 Total:	\$2,916,762

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Phase 4						
Item	Description	Qty.	Units	Est. Unit Price	Estimated Cost	Estimated Total
General Sitework for Phase 4 Area						
1	Mobilization	1	LS	36,500	36,500	
2	Erosion Control	1	LS	3,500	3,500	
3	Earthwork	1	LS	32,500	32,500	
4	Selective Clearing and Grubbing	1	LS	25,000	25,000	
5	Restoration - seeding	3	AC	7,000	21,000	
6	Tree/shrub plantings	1	LS	15,000	15,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>133,500</i>
Campground Expansion Area						
7	Aggregate roadways for campground expansion	1,704	SY	10	17,040	
8	RV Campsite Aggregate Pads (Remaining sites) with Picnic Table, Fire Pit, Power Pedestal	34	EA	2,500	85,000	
9	Water main extension & services for campground expansion	1	LS	167,500	167,500	
10	Sanitary Sewer main extension & services for campground expansion	1	LS	215,000	215,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>484,540</i>
Miscellaneous Items						
11	Overlook pavilion and historic cemetery interpretive station	1	LS	50,000	50,000	
12	Playground Equipment and Exercise Stations	1	LS	80,000	80,000	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>130,000</i>
					Phase 4 Subtotal	748,040
					Contingency (10%)	74,804
					Project Fees (Design / Engineering / Admin. / Staking & Testing / etc. 20%)	164,569
					Estimated Phase 4 Total:	\$987,413

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Phase 5						
Item	Description	Qty.	Units	Est. Unit Price	Estimated Cost	Estimated Total
Roads, Trails and Primitive/Group Camp Area						
1	Mobilization	1	LS	21,500	21,500	
2	Earthwork & Erosion Control	1	LS	45,000	45,000	
3	Selective Clearing and Grubbing	1	LS	22,500	22,500	
4	Restoration - seeding and minimal tree/shrub plantings	6	AC	7,500	45,000	
5	Aggregate 2-way Drive to Prairie Trailhead	4,666	SY	25	116,650	
6	Aggregate Parking Lot (prairie trailhead)	1,428	SY	25	35,700	
7	8' Wide Aggregate Trail Primitive Camping Loop	3,995	LF	20	79,900	
8	Tables / grills at primitive camping area	1	LS	10,000	10,000	
9	Culvert connection for agg. 2-way drive	1	LS	7,000	7,000	
10	Trailhead pavilion west of Chalet parking lot area	1	LS	63,500	63,500	
11	Vault Toilet	1	LS	40,000	40,000	
12	Vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding/signage, ADA parking	1	LS	1,500	1,500	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>488,250</i>
Miscellaneous Items						
13	Interpretive Nodes (kettle hole, overlook, prairie)	1	LS	9,500	9,500	
14	Bench / Seating area near Kettle Hole	1	LS	3,000	3,000	
15	3 optional campsites west of chalet parking lot (assume electrical only, no water or sewer hookups)	3	EA	2,500	7,500	
					<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>20,000</i>
					Phase 5 Subtotal	508,250
					Contingency (10%)	50,825
Project Fees (Design / Engineering / Admin. / Staking & Testing / etc. 20%)						111,815
Estimated Phase 5 Total:						\$670,890

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

General Operations and Budget

Lincoln County is committed to the long-term sustainability of the campground and trails in terms of operations and management. Lincoln County Parks Department will be the responsible entity for any, and all, development of the site. Lincoln County has established policies for the park and trail systems. Through their annual budgeting process the county provides operating funds for the park’s operation, maintenance, and development. Lincoln County Park Department’s Park Supervisor, appointed by the Lincoln County Commissioners, serves to oversee the campground and its trails.

Lincoln County Commissioners have an annual operations and maintenance budget for its parks and trails. Revenue generated from the campground is, and will continue to be, used to cover the costs of operations, maintenance, and development of the campgrounds and trails. Currently, all park revenue and expenses are tracked in one fund code for the entire parks system. As a result it is difficult to know the exact revenue and expenses generated by each park, although the current staff are able to provide approximate percentages. As Hole in the Mountain Park continues to grow and add revenue generating activities and programming, it may be beneficial that the County begins tracking revenue and expenses by park. Some grant sources may require operating numbers strictly for the park in which funding is being sought.

Table ___ highlights the estimated annual operations costs based on the phased site improvements outlined in the Master Plan. The operational cost estimates were prepared by WSB in 2020 and are based on assumptions made for the level of effort and resulting costs necessary to maintain the improvements annually following construction/implementation. Operational costs are based on 2020 estimates and should be suitable for basic operating budget assumptions. Inflation should be applied over time based on economic factors. It should be expected that costs will need to be refined through stages of the implementation process as more specifics related to personnel, actual improvements constructed, and materials/supplies associated with the project are considered in greater detail. Below is an overall summary of the costs.

Overall Summary		Estimated Expenses	Estimated Revenue
	Current estimated (2020)	\$ 177,216	\$ 121,200
	Phase 1 *	\$ 472,990	\$ 49,680
	Phase 2	\$ 7,704	\$ 3,900
	Phase 3	\$ 31,054	\$ 48,608
	Phase 4	\$ 34,354	\$ 65,856
	Phase 5	\$ 6,902	\$ 7,056

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Phase 1				
Item	Description	Estimated Expenses	Estimated Revenue	Notes
Park Operations				
1	Personnel Services	95,000		full time HITM park & program manager (includes wages & benefits)
2	Marketing	10,000		budget for advertising of park features and programmatic offerings
3	Professional services for online Reservation/Ticketing System	2,400		Maintenance, Hosting Fees, etc. (12 months @ \$200/month)
	Annual Subtotal	107,400	-	
Sledding Hill				
4	Personnel Services	30,240		4 Sledding Hill Operators, 2 Chalet Operators, 1 Maintenance Operator (36 Days @ 10 hrs./day @ \$12/hr)
5	Utilities	5,000		Lighting, Electric for lift & snowmaking & Water for Snowmaking
6	Garbage	600		4 months @\$150/mo.
7	Repairs & Maintenance	3,000		Annual Lift Inspections & Misc. Repairs
8	Supplies	2,500		Tubes, Signs, Equipments
9	Tickets - Daily Pass		27,000	36 Days @ 75 participants / per day @ \$10 ticket
	Annual Subtotal	41,340	27,000	
Chalet & Parking Area (west)				
10	Personnel Services	2,496		1 Maintenance Staff (52 weeks @ 4 hrs./week @\$12/hr)
11	Snow & Ice Removal	3,000		4 months @ \$750/month
12	Repairs & Maintenance	4,000		Facility Repairs & Maintenance, Includes HVAC & Mechanical Systems, Parking Lot/Sidewalk Maintenance
13	Supplies	1,000		Misc. Items
	Annual Subtotal	10,496	-	
East Campground Area				
14	Personnel Services	4,704		1 Maintenance Staff (28 weeks @ 14hrs./week @\$12/hr)
15	Utilities	17,500		Electric, Sewer and Water Service: 7 months @ \$2500/month (\$1500 electric, \$500 water, \$500 sewer-includes dump station)
16	Garbage	700		Increased Usage 7 months @ \$100/month
17	Parking lot	1,500		pavement maintenance / snow & ice removals
18	Repairs & Maintenance	2,000		Restroom Supplies, misc. maintenance tasks
19	Supplies	2,000		Replacement Tables, Fire Pits, etc.
20	Camping		22,680	Additional revenue from water/sewer hookups and seasonal (avg increase of \$15/day)
	Annual Subtotal	28,404	22,680	

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Trails and Roadways Maintenance				
21	Personnel Services	2,100		Monthly grading of trails and drive surfaces (assume county equipment is used, not included in estimate) 7 months @ 12 hrs./month @ \$25/hr
22	Repairs & Maintenance	2,000		2 applications of dust control on drive areas
23	Grounds Improvement	2,500		Additional aggregate: Washouts & annual maintenance
24	Supplies	500		Misc. Items
	Annual Subtotal	7,100	-	
Overall Park Natural Resource Management (does not include future farm property)				
25	Woodland management - buckthorn removal	262,500		175 acres @ \$1,500/acre (every year for first 3 to 4 years, then could be reduced to every other year)
26	Prairie management (prescribed burns)	15,750		105 acres @ \$150/acre (pro-rated estimated cost based on performing every 3 to 5 years on average)
	Annual Subtotal	278,250	-	
PHASE 1 Total Estimated Expenses and Revenue:		\$ 472,990	\$ 49,680	
Phase 2				
Item	Description	Estimated Expenses	Estimated Revenue	Notes
Chalet Improvements / Expansion & Campground Restroom Building				
1	Utilities	3,000		Increase in size and usage: 12 months @ \$250/month, Parking Lot & Trail Lights
2	Personnel services	4,704		1 Maintenance Staff (28 weeks @ 14hrs./week @ \$12/hr)
3	Chalet Rental		3,900	\$150/day @ 26 days per year
	Annual Subtotal	7,704	3,900	
PHASE 2 Total Estimated Expenses and Revenue:		\$ 7,704	\$ 3,900	
Phase 3				
Item	Description	Estimated Expenses	Estimated Revenue	Notes
Horse Hill Campsites				
1	Personnel Services	4,704		1 Maintenance Staff (28 weeks @ 14hrs./week @ \$12/hr)
2	Utilities	14,000		Electric and Water Service: 7 months @ \$2000/month (\$1500 electric, \$500 water)
3	Garbage	700		Increased Usage 7 months @ \$100/month
4	Repairs & Maintenance	3,000		Annual Septic Maintenance, Restroom Supplies, Manure Removal
4	Supplies	500		Misc. Items
5	Camping		48,608	20% occupancy for 28 weeks @ \$40/day with full hook ups
	Annual Subtotal	22,904	48,608	

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Trails and Roadways Maintenance				
6	Personnel Services	1,400		Monthly grading of trails and drive surfaces (assume county equipment is used, not included in estimate) 7 months @ 8 hrs./month @ \$25/hr
7	Repairs & Maintenance	4,500		2 applications of dust control on drive areas, Ped. underpass cleaning & maintenance
8	Grounds Improvement	1,750		Additional aggregate: Washouts & annual maintenance
9	Supplies	500		Misc. Items
	Annual Subtotal	8,150	-	
PHASE 3 Total Estimated Expenses and Revenue:		\$ 31,054	\$ 48,608	
Phase 4				
Item	Description	Estimated Expenses	Estimated Revenue	Notes
East Campground Expansion / Play & Exercise areas				
1	Personnel Services	4,704		1 Maintenance Staff (28 weeks @ 14hrs./week @\$12/hr)
2	Utilities	23,100		Electric, Sewer and Water Service: 7 months @ \$3300/month (\$2000 electric, \$650 water, \$650 sewer)
3	Garbage	1,050		Increased Usage 7 months @ \$150/month
4	Repairs & Maintenance	2,500		Restroom Supplies, playground, misc. maintenance tasks
5	Supplies	3,000		Replacement Tables, Fire Pits, playground parts, etc.
6	Camping		65,856	20% occupancy for 28 weeks @ \$40/day with full hook ups
	Annual Subtotal	34,354	65,856	
PHASE 4 Total Estimated Expenses and Revenue:		\$ 34,354	\$ 65,856	
Phase 5				
Item	Description	Estimated Expenses	Estimated Revenue	Notes
East Campground Expansion / Play & Exercise areas				
1	Personnel Services	3,052		Monthly grading of trails and drive surfaces (assume county equipment is used, not included in estimate) 7 months @ 4 hrs./month @ \$25/hr, 1 Maintenance Staff (28 weeks @ 7hrs./week @\$12/hr)
2	Garbage	350		Increased Usage 7 months @ \$50/month
3	Repairs & Maintenance	1,500		2 applications of dust control on drive areas, vault toilet maintenance
4	Grounds Improvement	1,000		Additional aggregate: Washouts & annual maintenance
5	Supplies	1,000		Replacement Tables/Grills
6	Camping		7,056	20% occupancy for 28 weeks @ \$40/day with full hook ups
	Annual Subtotal	6,902	7,056	
PHASE 5 Total Estimated Expenses and Revenue:		\$ 6,902	\$ 7,056	

Section L – Implementation, Management and Sustainability

Ordinances

Public use and enjoyment of public parks is controlled by local ordinance. A copy of the ordinance will be available through the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners.

Maintenance

Hole in the Mountain Park has utilized a “camp host” model to assist with critical functions of the park such as cleaning of the Chalet, assistance with registrations and enforcement of rules. The host in turn receives camping for free. This has been a cost effective model that will likely continue in the park.

Providing campers with a clean, safe, and enjoyable recreational experience is a paramount goal of Lincoln County Parks Department. Maintenance of the campground facilities is essential in attaining that goal. General maintenance includes mowing lawns, cleaning the Chalet and other facilities, trash pickup, maintenance of water and electrical services, and cleanup of campsites as needed.

Environmental Stewardship

The long-term environmental stewardship of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park is primarily dependent on the commitment of the Lincoln County Parks Department and the park visitors. Lincoln County Parks Maintenance Supervisor works closely with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Lincoln County Environmental Office to ensure environmental practices and requirements are observed at all times.

Lincoln County recognizes that Hole-in-the-Mountain Park, with its native plants, animals, and unique Buffalo Ridge land forms and gullies creates a rich ecological biodiversity within the park. Lincoln County Parks Department recognizes continuing its natural resource management, through active conservation measures and keen stewardship, are necessary in maintaining the protection of these unique natural resources.