



# YELLOW BANKS PARK MASTER PLAN

JANUARY 12, 2011



WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION PLANNING COMMITTEE AND POLK COUNTY STAFF. WE WOULD ESPECIALLY LIKE TO THANK THE PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS THAT ATTENDED THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The master plan for Yellow Banks Park provides a clear development plan for the 517-acre park. The year-long planning process began in the Spring of 2010 and has involved local public park users, the Polk County Conservation Advisory Board, RDG Planning & Design consultants and Polk County Conservation staff through public workshops, working sessions, and ongoing meetings.

Acquired in 1980, Yellow Banks Park is one of Polk County Conservation's youngest major parks. Rare loess soil bluffs and rich Native American heritage make it one of the most sensitive and culturally significant properties within our park system. Park development is challenging due to steep topography, erosive soils, and protected archaeological sites. Anchored by the waters of the Des Moines River, lower regions of the park are susceptible to routine flooding. Higher regions lend themselves well to breathtaking vistas and birdwatching, along with some traditional recreation experiences such as camping, hiking, fishing, and picnicking.

Bisected by a steep hill just beyond Campground #2, the southeast portion of the park experiences limited use as a result of less modernized facilities and restricted vehicular access during the winter months. Anglers that choose a pond setting over a river setting enjoy the quaint 5-acre pond that also sits in the back of the park. Access to this pond is very limited and challenging for most users.

Public input and park managers have identified a variety of park needs in response to the changing amount and type of users. These needs include improved quality and management of the pond, woodlands, and prairie; recreational enhancements to the campgrounds, nature trail system, pond area, and cabin development; access to and within the park, accessibility for visitors with disabilities and enhanced cultural interpretation.

Several improvements are recommended in the master plan. A reroute at the main entrance will provide better traffic circulation, and be more user-friendly and aesthetically pleasing. An additional result of this reroute will be the creation of a large open green space near the entrance of the park that can be used for special events and programming. Repairs to the old service road at the corner of 72nd and 32nd will address the lack of emergency and construction vehicle access and winter use to the back of the park. Year-round entry to the back of the park strengthens plans to construct cabins near the pond area and provide better fishing access, along with modernizing facility utilities. Expanded and connected hiking trails will also benefit park users and provide access to less visited areas within the park.

LEGEND			
	YELLOW BANKS PARK		PARKING - EXISTING
	PONDS		PARKING - PROPOSED
	EXISTING MAJOR ROADS		TRAILER SITES - EXISTING
	EXISTING PARK ROADS		TRAILER SITES - PROPOSED
	PROPOSED PARK ROADS		MAINTENANCE/STORAGE - PROPOSED
	MAJOR AND MINOR STREAMS		RESTROOMS - EXISTING
	EXISTING TRAILS		RESTROOMS - PROPOSED
	PROPOSED TRAILS		SHOWERS - EXISTING
	TRAILS - EXISTING		SHOWERS - PROPOSED
	TRAILS - PROPOSED		BALL FIELD - EXISTING
	CAMPGROUND - EXISTING		PLAYGROUND - EXISTING
	CAMPGROUND - PROPOSED		OVERLOOK
	SHELTER - EXISTING		FISHING PIER - PROPOSED
	SHELTER - PROPOSED		FULL SERVICE CABINS - PROPOSED
			PRIMITIVE CABINS - PROPOSED

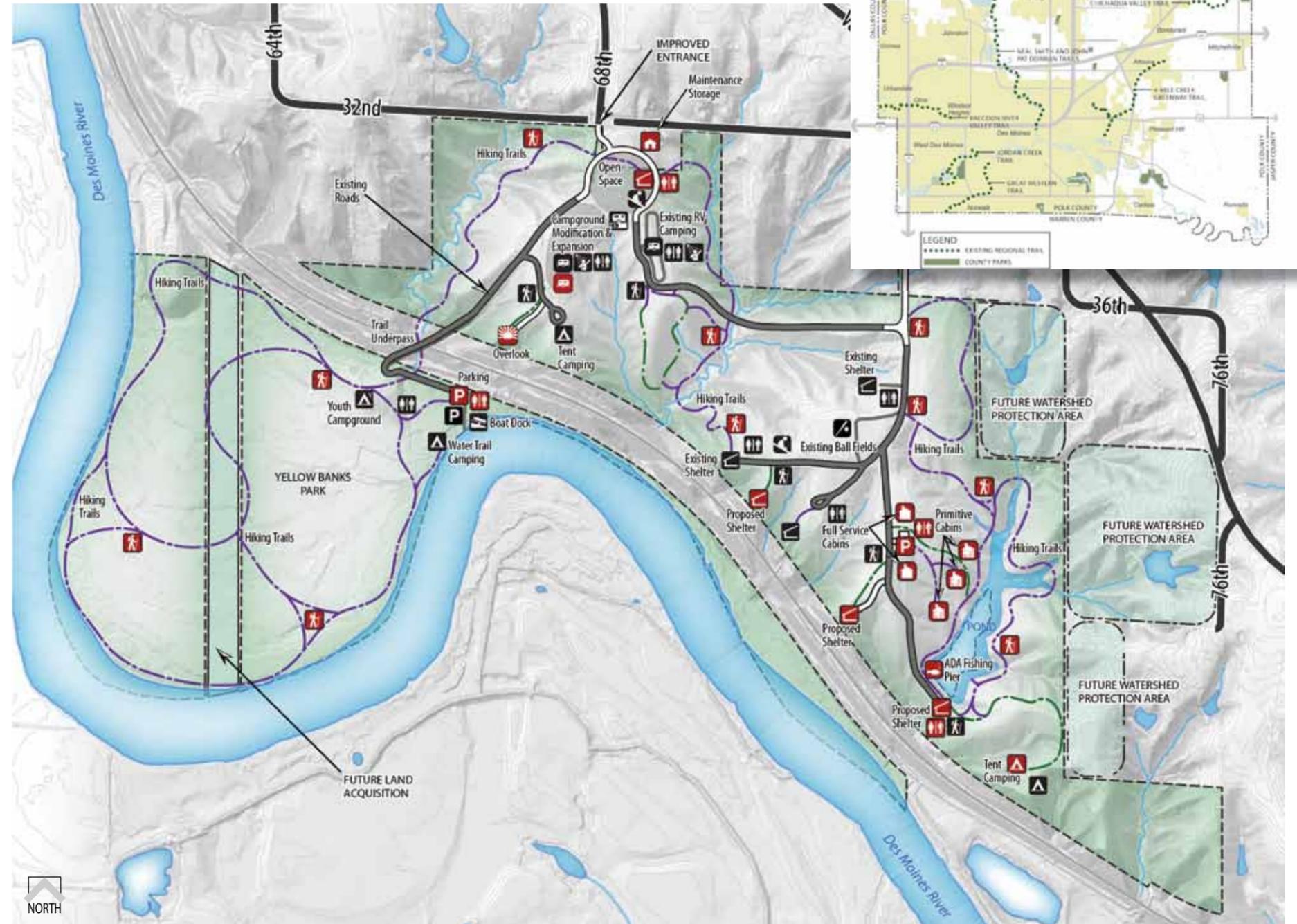
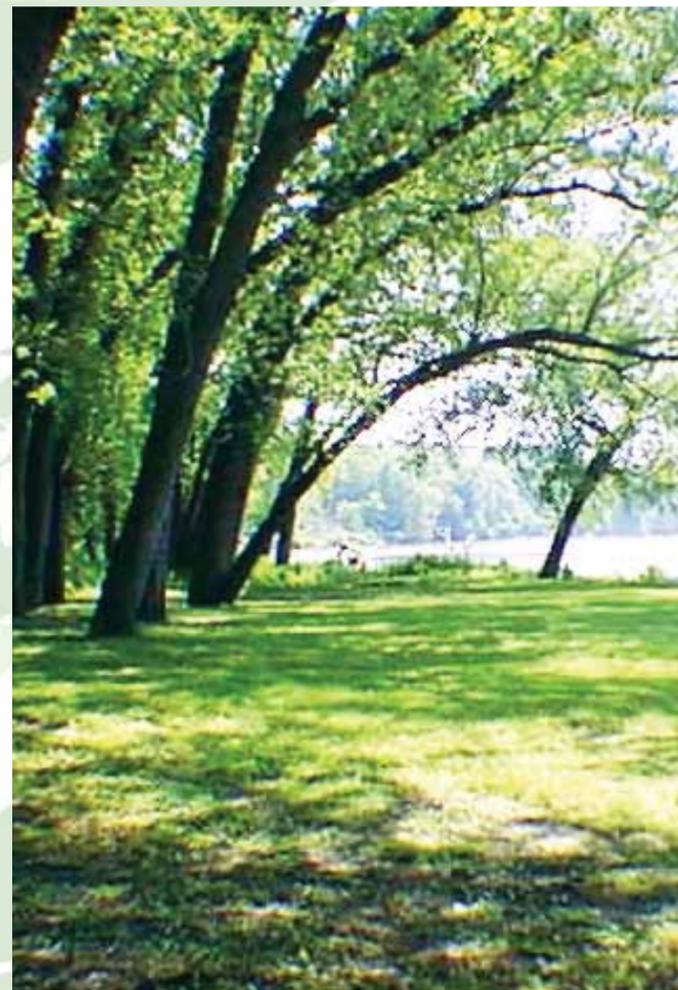


FIGURE 0.1

The Yellow Banks Master Plan is the result of a years' worth of work including public meetings, staff analysis, and finally recommendations. The master plan above illustrates existing facilities with black symbols and new, enhanced or renovated facilities in red.



## PURPOSE

The Yellow Banks Master Plan provides a clear development plan for the 517 acre park. Park master plans provide a means to determine the best uses for a park and to optimize management of the park's natural and anthropogenic resources. The Yellow Banks Master Plan will serve as a general guide for future appropriate park uses and their approximate location within the park. The Plan will provide a long range vision (10-20 year time frame) for future development and programming. The Plan is conceptual in nature and is not intended to address detailed issues related to site planning, facility designs or park operations.

## PROCESS

The Yellow Banks Master Plan process was initiated in the spring of 2010. An initial public meeting was conducted in June 2010 to gather input from park users, neighbors and other interested individuals. A Polk County Conservation (PCC) planning committee was developed to oversee the planning process. The Committee completed an assessment of the physical and natural resources of the park and surrounding areas.

A second public meeting was conducted in November to provide feedback and preliminary recommendations to the public regarding their initial input and share the findings from the resource assessments. Based on the input received, a draft master plan was prepared and presented to the Polk County Conservation Board at their January 2011 public meeting. The Board approved the Master Plan the following month at their February 2011 public meeting, concluding a year-long planning process.



## GOALS

Preliminary goals were identified to guide the planning process. These goals were based on concerns and opportunities identified by the public, other agencies and staff. The goals can be summarized as:

- Provide additional overnight stay opportunities
- Improve vehicular access to the east end of park
- Improve the quality of aquatic habitat and recreation
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian access to the east side of the park
- Increase and improve park trail access
- Respond to the increasing demand for additional RV camping
- Provide improved accessibility for visitors with disabilities
- Improve access pond
- Aggressively manage the prairie, savanna and woodlands
- Improve river access

Additionally, the following outcomes were identified as products from the process:

- Emphasize sustainable construction and improvements
- Prioritize recommended improvements
- Reduce operating costs where feasible



FIGURE I.1

Polk County staff with members of RDG walked the park during preliminary analysis and again during final master plan review to assess issues and opportunities.



## HISTORY

Human interactions with Yellow Banks began more than 7,200 years ago by the Paleo-Indians (the first humans that lived in the state). Then came the hunters and foragers of the Archaic Period (5,500 years ago), the people of the Woodland tradition (2,000 years ago), and the Oneota who lived in the region 1,000 years ago.

The Des Moines lobe of the Wisconsin glacier ended near the state capitol in downtown Des Moines. The melt water and soil moved down the Des Moines River. Eventually large dry mud flats were exposed, and strong winds uplifted the glacial dust and piled it into 20-40 feet bluffs along the river. Yellow Banks Park is a miniature version of Western Iowa's Loess Hills.

During the mid-1850's, travelers commented on 40 feet of loess soil on 125-150 foot tall bluffs. Yellow Banks Park is named after this unusual soil deposit of yellow loess.

In 1966, the railroad came through Yellow Banks Park and destroyed a large cave, an Indian burial mound, and numerous artifact mounds. Most of the artifacts from Yellow Banks were collected at the tent camping site. This collection includes projectile points, pottery shards, banner stone, scrapers, grinding stones, and a nine-pound stone ax.

Polk County Conservation acquired 398-acres of Yellow Banks Park land in 1980. Additional parcels of land have been added since then and now the park is 517-acres in size.



FIGURE 2.1

Yellow Banks was named based on the unique loess deposits exposed along the Des Moines River.

## Natural Resources

Yellow Banks Park is located in the SE quadrant of Polk County on the north Bank of the Des Moines River Valley. The park is characterized by wooded bluffs rising above the flood plain of the Des Moines River. The steep topography is the result of Pleistocene glaciers which have repeatedly covered the landscape over hundreds of thousands of years. 5-300,000 years ago the Illinoian glacier left broad expanses of silty mud behind which was stirred by the wind and then deposited on the uplands as a "yellowish" material known as loess. Early settlers used these "Yellow Banks" as a landmark while traveling up river and the high bluffs retain that name today. 10 to 13,000 years ago the water and wind erosion of the most recent ice "event", the Wisconsin glaciation, carved the Des Moines River Valley and the dramatic bluffs and valleys of today's Yellow Banks.

The presettlement vegetation of Yellow Banks was a mixture of prairie on the exposed bluffs and savanna and oak woodland where the topography protected the trees from the frequent prairie fires and drying winds. The diversity of wildlife within the park is as varied as the topography. Migratory birds make extensive use of the Des Moines Valley and adjacent riparian woodland as a corridor in their seasonal travels. The deep valleys and oak woodland are home to many increasingly uncommon wildlife and native plant communities. Remnant natural communities within the park are undergoing active restoration to savanna and prairie.

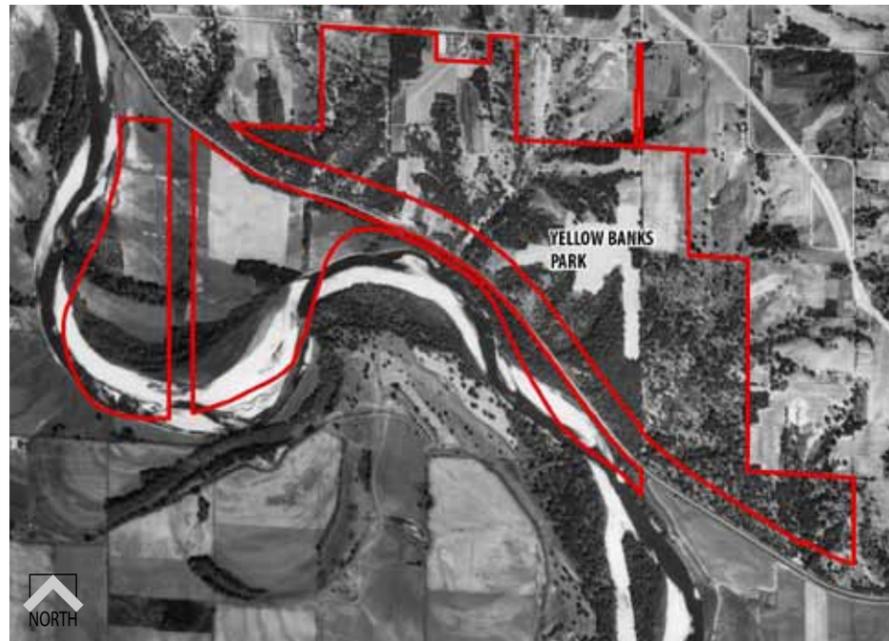


FIGURE 2.2

This aerial from the 1950's reveals land cover of the areas that will become Yellow Banks Park.

## Environmental Education

Yellow Banks is a difficult place to do programming because the park is so segmented. Most of our programs are based on the natural resources. The savanna trail has nice resources but is fairly short in length.

Park Improvements that would enhance educational opportunities

- Trail connectivity
- Improved access to the pond
- Access to the whole park during winter months
- Amphitheater between camp area 1 and 2 near the playground for programming
- Public educational access to the cultural artifacts
- Small shelter/gazebo at the pond
- Loess soil interpretation

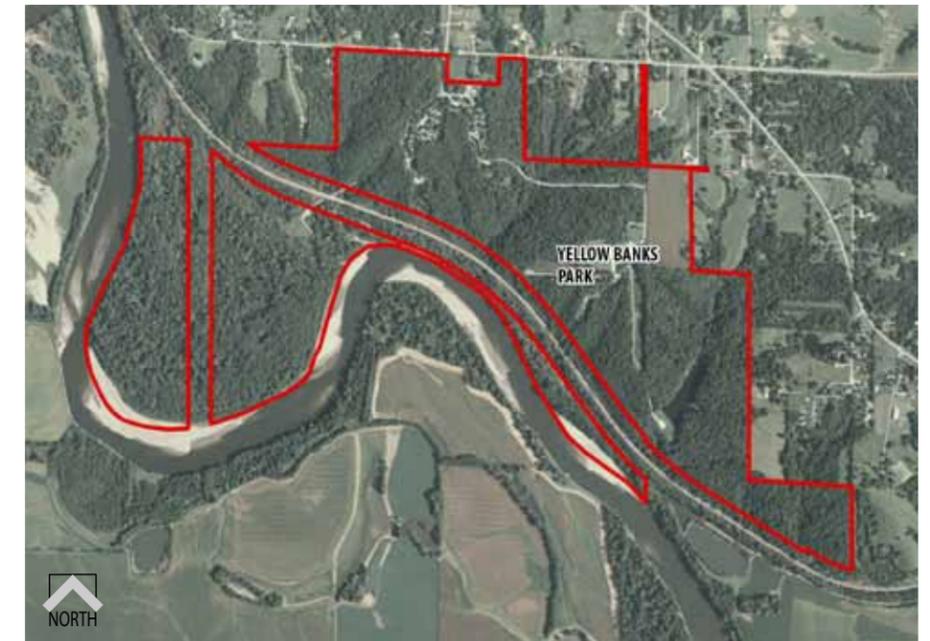


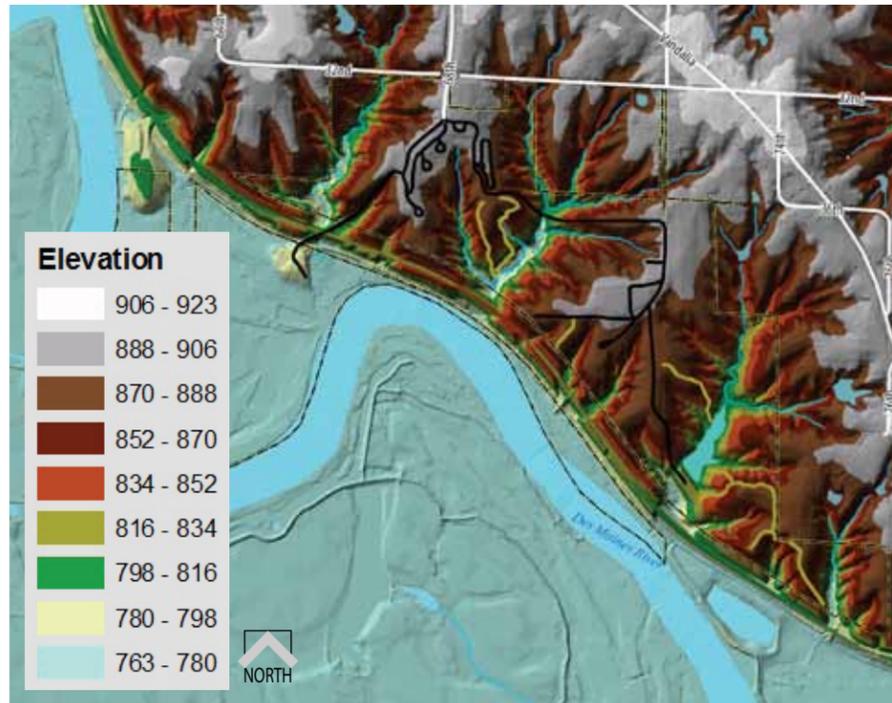
FIGURE 2.3

This aerial from the 2009 shows current land cover of Yellow Banks Park.



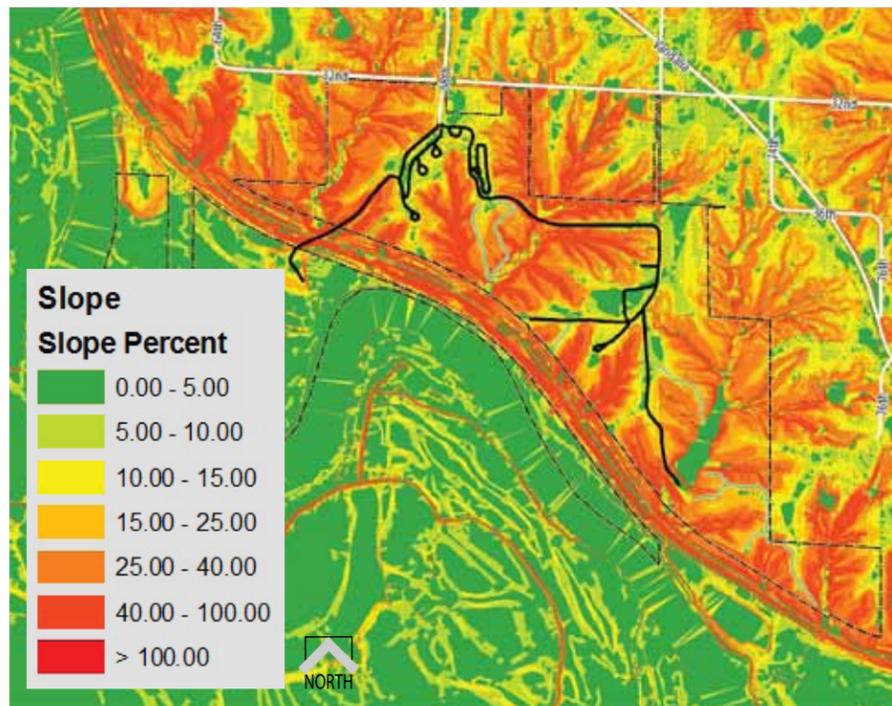
**FIGURE 2.4**

This map illustrates the location of Yellow Banks Park and its proximity within Polk County. It also illustrates the location of the terminal moraine and its proximity to Yellow Banks Park.



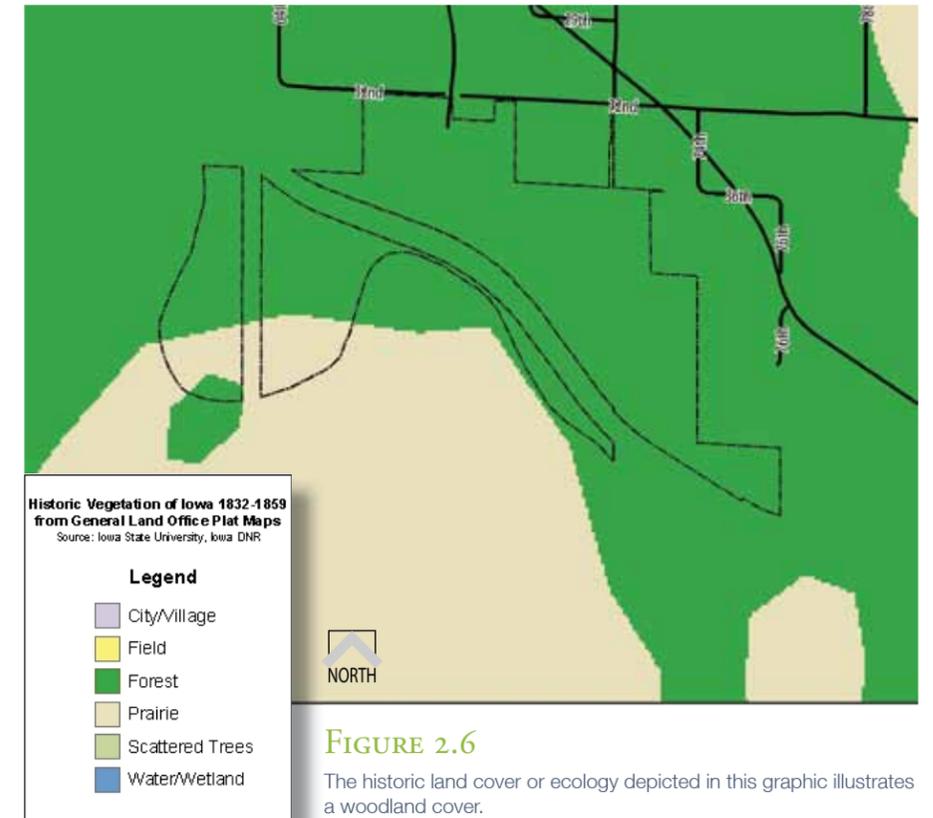
**FIGURE 2.5**

There is significant elevation change throughout the park. This limits the available land that can be developed.



**FIGURE 2.7**

This diagram illustrates the severity of slopes. Over time, water has carved a series of deep ravines creating a landscape of ridgelines and valleys.



**FIGURE 2.6**

The historic land cover or ecology depicted in this graphic illustrates a woodland cover.



**FIGURE 2.8**

View of the Des Moines River.

## Recreation Amenities

Yellow Banks is a 517-acre park 5 miles east of Des Moines. The park averages around 180,000 visitors per year which ranks it third for visitors in the county system. There are many recreational opportunities for the park users. The park offers:

**Camping:** 48 electric campsites, 13 tent sites, 5 water trail campsites, youth campsite, and 5 backpacking campsites.

**Picnicking:** 3 picnic shelters are available by reservation or on a first come first serve basis. The park also has grills and picnic tables scattered throughout the park.

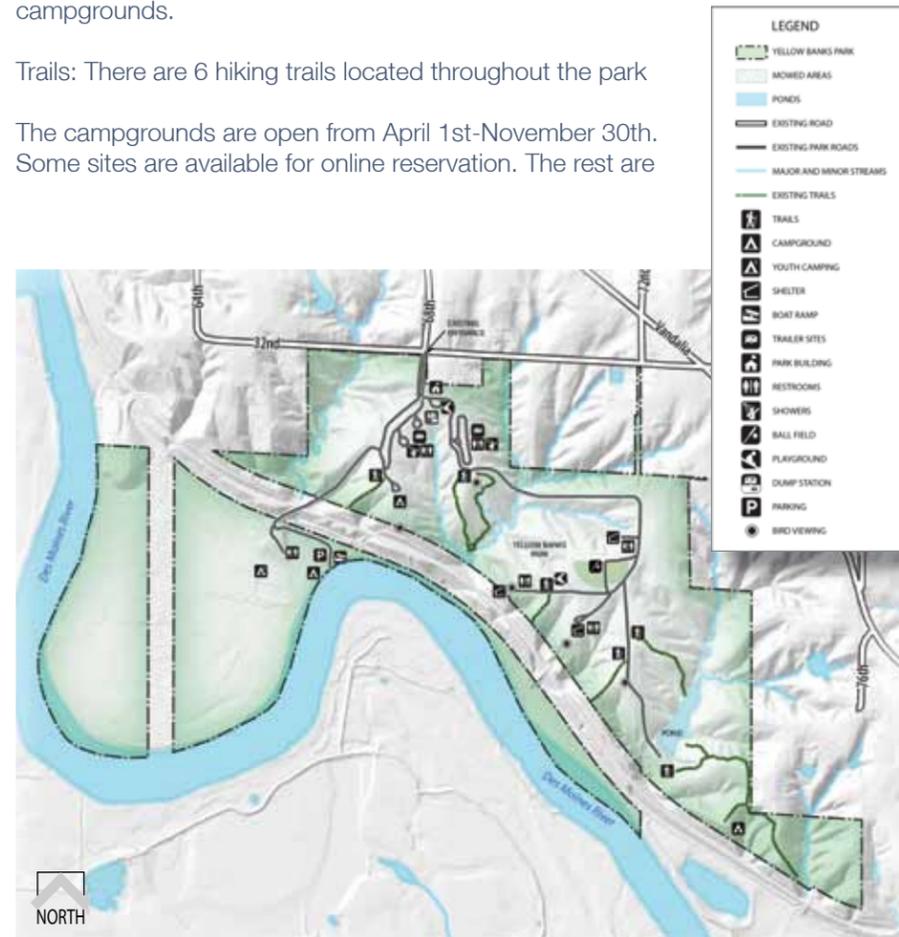
**Fishing:** The Des Moines River is the south border of the park, with a boat ramp to the river. There is also a 5 acre stocked pond.

**Ball field:** There are 2 ball fields open to the public when not reserved.

**Playground:** There is one located near the ball fields and one located between the campgrounds.

**Trails:** There are 6 hiking trails located throughout the park

The campgrounds are open from April 1st-November 30th. Some sites are available for online reservation. The rest are



**FIGURE 2.9**

This diagram illustrates the existing facilities within Yellow Banks Park.

“first come first serve”. Most (90%-95%) of the campsite usage is from people who live within 20 miles of the Des Moines area.

There are three picnic shelters at Yellow Banks, they are available to reserve online or on a first come first serve basis. Compared to the other shelters in the county, Yellow Banks shelters are under utilized. Most shelters in other areas are reserved on the weekends. Upgraded utilities make them more rentable (water, electricity, lights etc.). There are also six other picnic sites scattered throughout the park. They include a grill and picnic table. They are used most weekends by park users.

Yellow Banks 5-acre pond is used year around, from open water fishing to ice fishing. An amenity that would increase angler usage would be improving access to the pond. The only areas that can be easily accessed from shore are a picnic area on the northwest side of the pond and the dam face. Better access would increase usage.

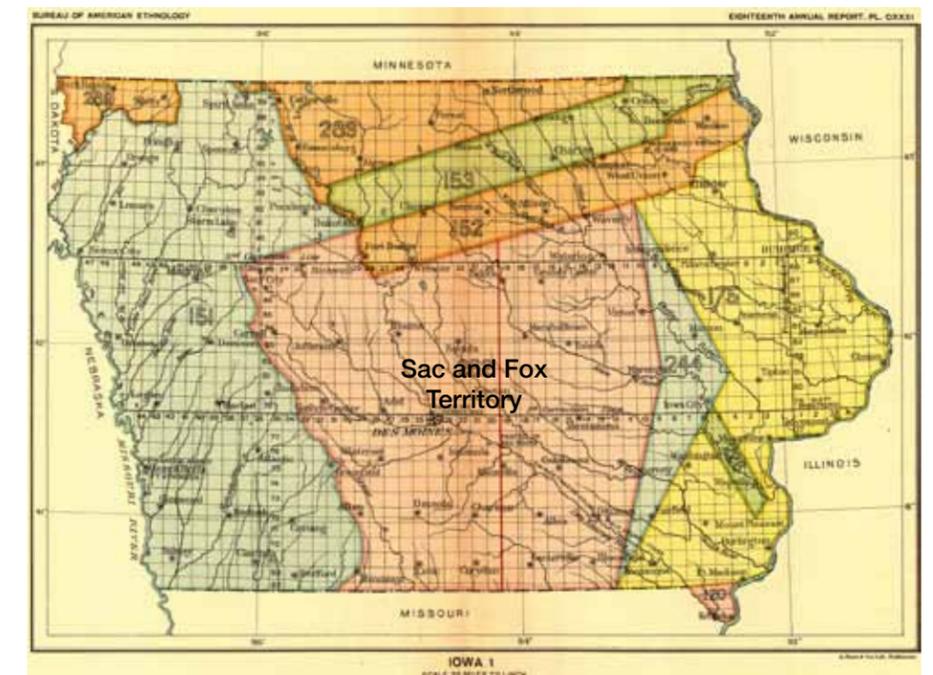
The park shares it’s south border with the Des Moines River. The boat ramp in the park is utilized from spring to fall. In the winter the boat ramp area is used to view migratory waterfowl and bald eagles.

The ball fields are reserved for the Four Mile Little League from April to July. The little league has all practices and games at the two fields.

There are two playgrounds in the park. One is located in the back of the park near the ball fields and is the larger of the two playgrounds. It’s well used all summer from families picnicking to daycare providers taking the children out to play. The other playground is located in between the two electric campgrounds. It has the highest use due to its proximity to the campgrounds, but is too small to accommodate the amount of users.

## Cultural Resources

The rich resources and physical shelter afforded by the protective landscape of the park drew aboriginal peoples to the bluffs and valleys, just as the beauty and serenity of the land draws modern lowans. This portion of the Des Moines Valley was extensively used by prehistoric peoples. Evidence of their occupation has been recorded nearly everywhere within the park boundaries and an extensive collection of artifacts has been compiled. Artifacts representative of the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, and Oneota cultures have been documented. Most of the sites located within park boundaries are eligible to be recorded in the National Register of Historic Places.



**FIGURE 2.10**

Polk County was part of the land acquisition with the Fox Indian Tribe in the 1840's.

## Maintenance

Yellow Banks Park has a broad scope of challenges and needs as it relates to maintenance. Many of the park's facilities have been in place for over 15 years. There have been a variety of updates to many of the areas to allow the facilities to keep up to standards. However, there are some areas that will need attention in the future. The archaeological significance over a large area of the park will continue to be a hurdle on future updates and progress. Listed below are future challenges and needs as they relate to maintenance operations.

### Sewer Systems

- The park currently has the original septic tanks systems with concrete distribution boxes and cast iron piping. The box and outflows were recently replaced on one of the systems, but a leach field is failing. The remaining systems will need to be addressed in the future.

### Playgrounds

- The amount of use that the park receives is substantial for the size of the playgrounds. The playgrounds themselves are also starting to become out of date in accordance with the new safety standards that are continually being put into place. The soft fall material surrounding them also needs constant tilling and filling in order to comply with the standards.

### Split Rail Fencing

- The park has thousands of feet of split rail fencing. Although it is aesthetically pleasing, it has been in the ground long enough that posts are rotting and fences have shifted.

### Asphalt

- The gravel parking areas and roads within the park require grading and new rock to maintain them. Potholes are a constant burden along with the dust that naturally occurs. The largest concerns are the roads within the campgrounds.

### Buildings

- The majority of the buildings within the park are in good shape. They are coated with cedar siding which requires re-sealing or staining every 5 years. The wood exterior is also subject to abuse from animals and users and requires repairs from breaking and vandalism.

### Boat Ramp

- The boat ramp provides public for access to the Des Moines River. Fluctuations in the river require cleaning to remove the silt that deposits there. It is below a seal-coat parking lot that only accommodates 5-6 vehicles with trailers. This leads to parking issues as it is a popular fishing spot.

### Storage

- As the park and recreational opportunities expand, more room is needed to store equipment, tools, etc. Currently the shop houses one maintenance vehicle, tractor, and three mowers. There is not room for the remaining equipment and materials used for routine maintenance.



FIGURE 2.11

View of the maintenance yard just north of existing playground.



FIGURE 2.12

Fire is another form of maintaining prairie.



# Chapter III: Public Involvement



## PROCESS

Public input and involvement in developing the Yellow Banks Master Plan was an essential and important aspect of the master plan process. Initial public meetings were held in Spring of 2010. The first meeting involved park users, neighbors, and staff. The second meeting involved the Polk County Conservation Advisory Committee. The purpose of these initial meetings included developing goals and priorities, identifying improvements to existing park facilities, and proposing facilities or services to be added to the Park.

A follow-up public meeting was held in late fall of 2010. The purpose was to share information staff had gathered and to obtain additional input from the public. During this meeting some of the key issues identified by the public in the Spring were further defined. These issues included adjacent park land uses, natural resources, vehicular and trail circulation, recreational facilities, overnight opportunities, signage, administration facilities, and improvements to programs and services.

## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Key elements that came from these two public meetings are listed below.

- Compatible land use around park
- Year round vehicular access to the east side of the park.
- Effectively manage the woodlands, savanna and prairie
- Provide more accessible trails
- Improve RV camping opportunities and circulation
- Develop affordable cabin opportunities
- Provide additional nature trails
- Develop more shelters with scenic views
- Enhance interpretive park signage
- Provide shelter, restroom and fish pier and cleaning station and ADA access to the pond
- Reconstructed service road is very important for fire access
- A discussion of the potential for equestrian trails

Public response to the proposals was received and considered in preparing the final recommendations.

The draft master plan was presented to the Polk County Conservation Board at their January 2011 meeting. The final master plan was approved by the Board at their February 2011 meeting.

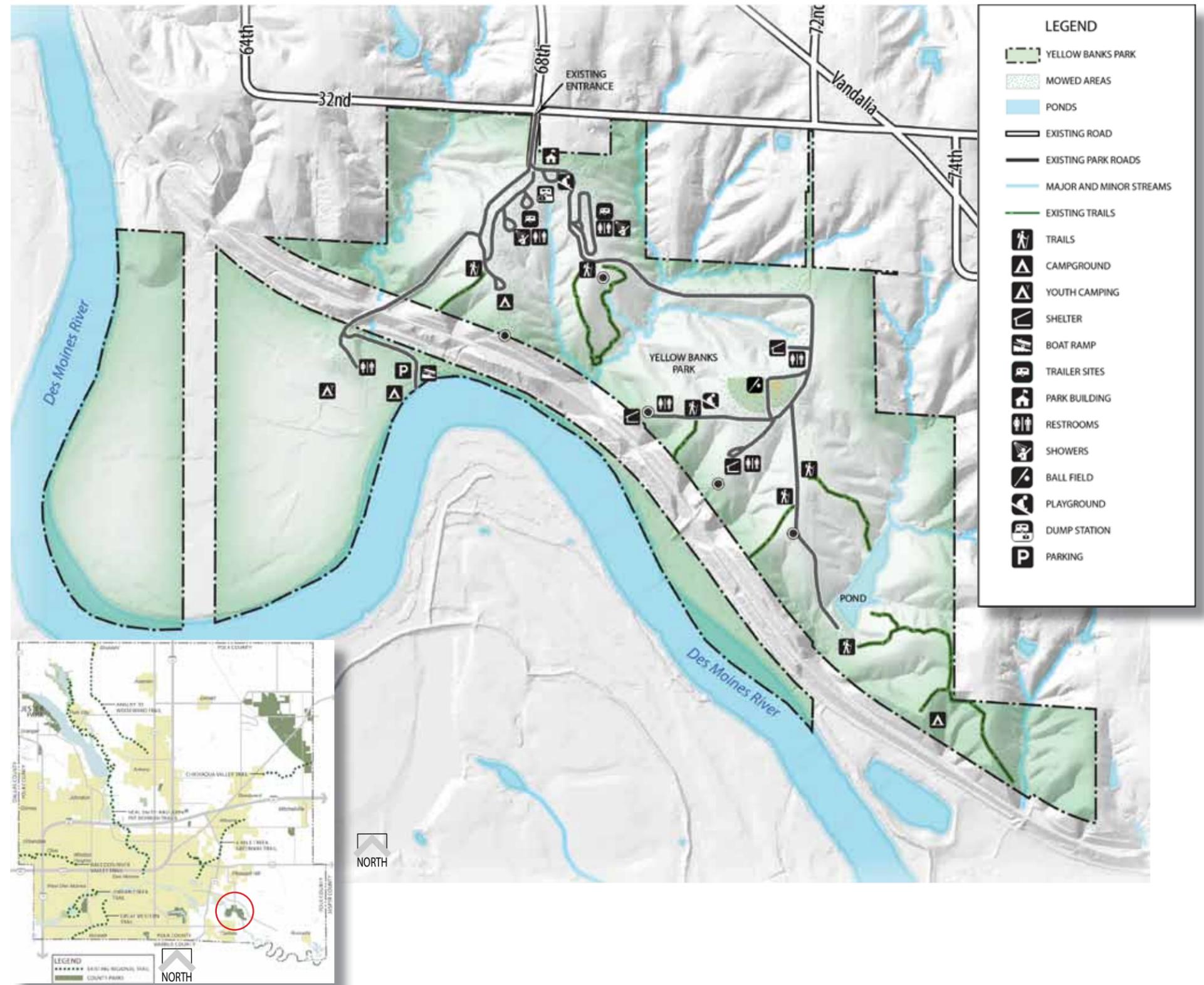
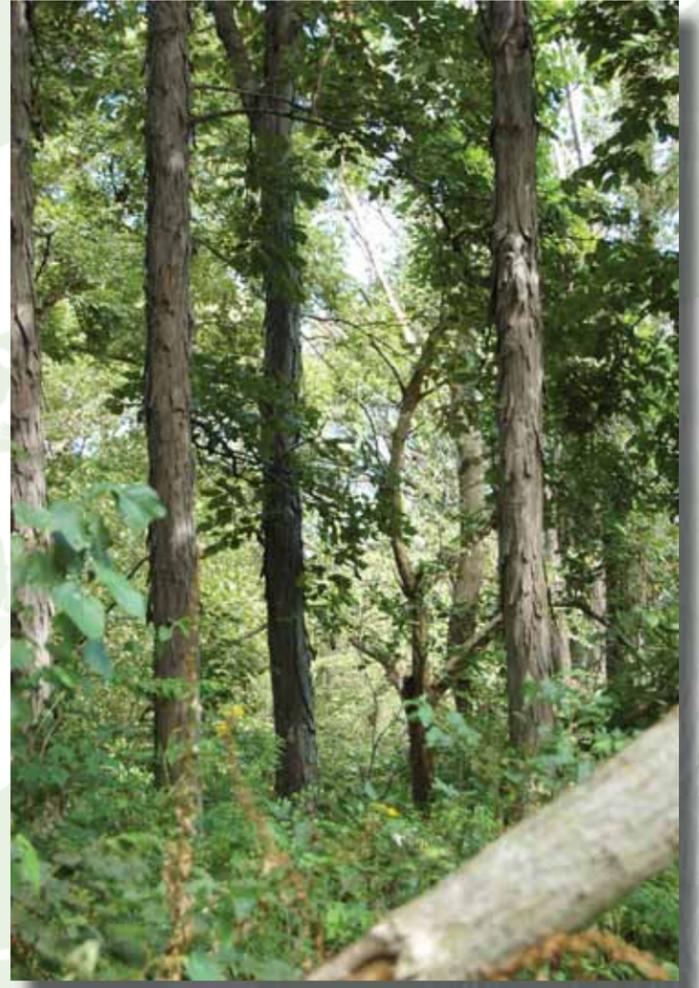


FIGURE 3.1

Yellow BanksMap - Existing Facilities



## EVALUATION OF CURRENT AND FUTURE PARK NEEDS

The process of identifying the current and future needs of Yellow Banks Park involves a synthesis of the information received throughout the process. This information was gathered through public meetings, input from other governmental agencies, natural resource assessments and additional data obtained by the staff and consultants. The needs can be organized into six categories. They are as follows:

### LAND USES

- Identify partners and sites adjacent to the park for watershed protection, buffering and vegetation management

### NATURAL RESOURCES

- Improve wildlife habitat
- Manage woodland areas and steep slopes
- Manage invasive species
- Protect and preserve cultural resources
- Improve scenic overlooks

### VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

- Improve internal park system roads
- Review current entry alignment
- Increase parking
- Review winter access opportunities at 72nd and SE 32nd
- Improve parking configuration for the boat ramp area

### TRAIL CIRCULATION

- Increase hiking trails opportunities
- Improve access around pond
- Support efforts to connect the park to existing and proposed regional trail systems

### RECREATION FACILITIES

- Improve scenic overlooks
- Improve pond access
- Provide additional restrooms
- Expand and enhance the primitive tent camping
- Develop 4-6 rental cabins
- Expand the number of electric campsites
- Enhance existing park shelters
- Improve layout of entrance facilities
- Provide additional shelters
- Continue to maintain and improve the little league baseball fields

### INTERPRETATION/ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES

- Enhance interpretive park signage
- Relocate Ranger residence and maintenance facility

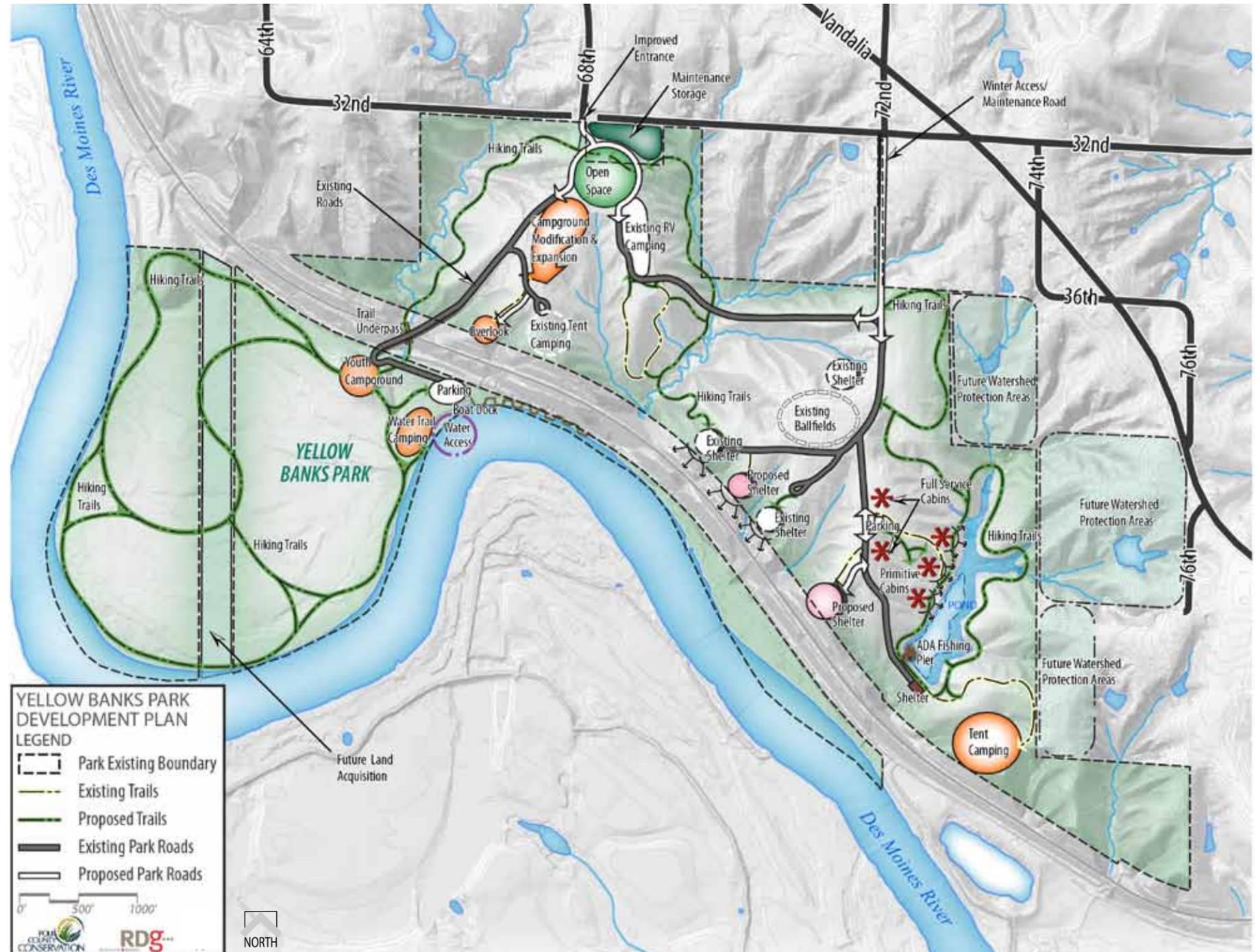
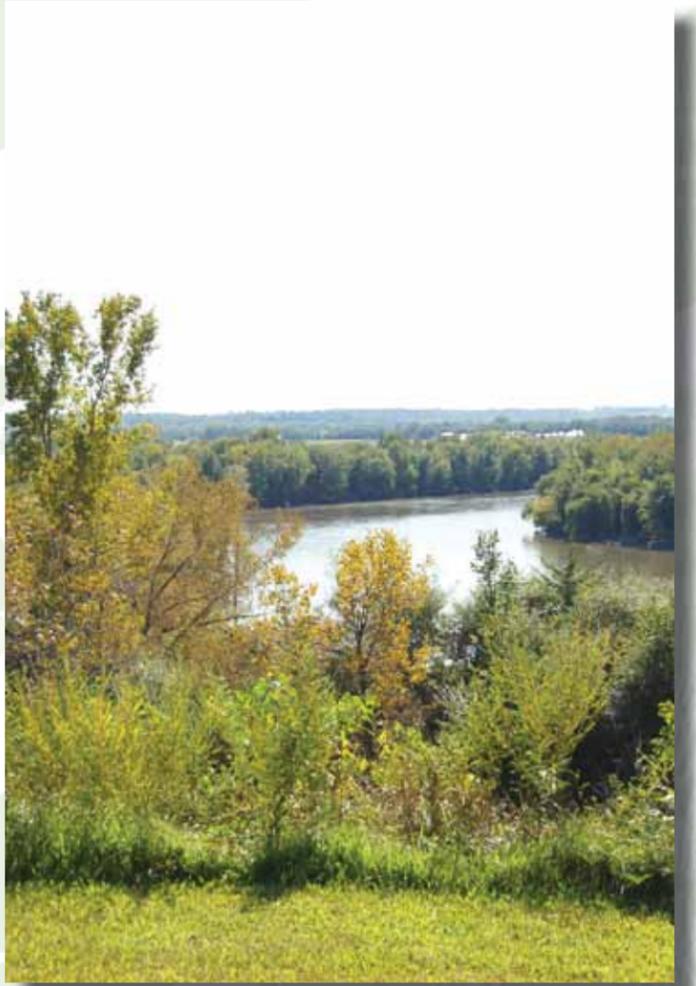


FIGURE 4.1

Yellow Banks Park Concept Development Plan

# Chapter V: Recommendations



## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The key outcomes of a master plan are the actions that are proposed as a result of the planning process. Recommendations were determined after considering a range of alternatives. The recommendations respond directly to the needs identified through the planning process and shape the future for how the park will be improved. The recommendations are grouped by category, and are as follows:

- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Vehicular Circulation
- Trail Circulation
- Recreational Facilities
- Interpretive/Administrative



FIGURE 5.1

Master Plan Legend

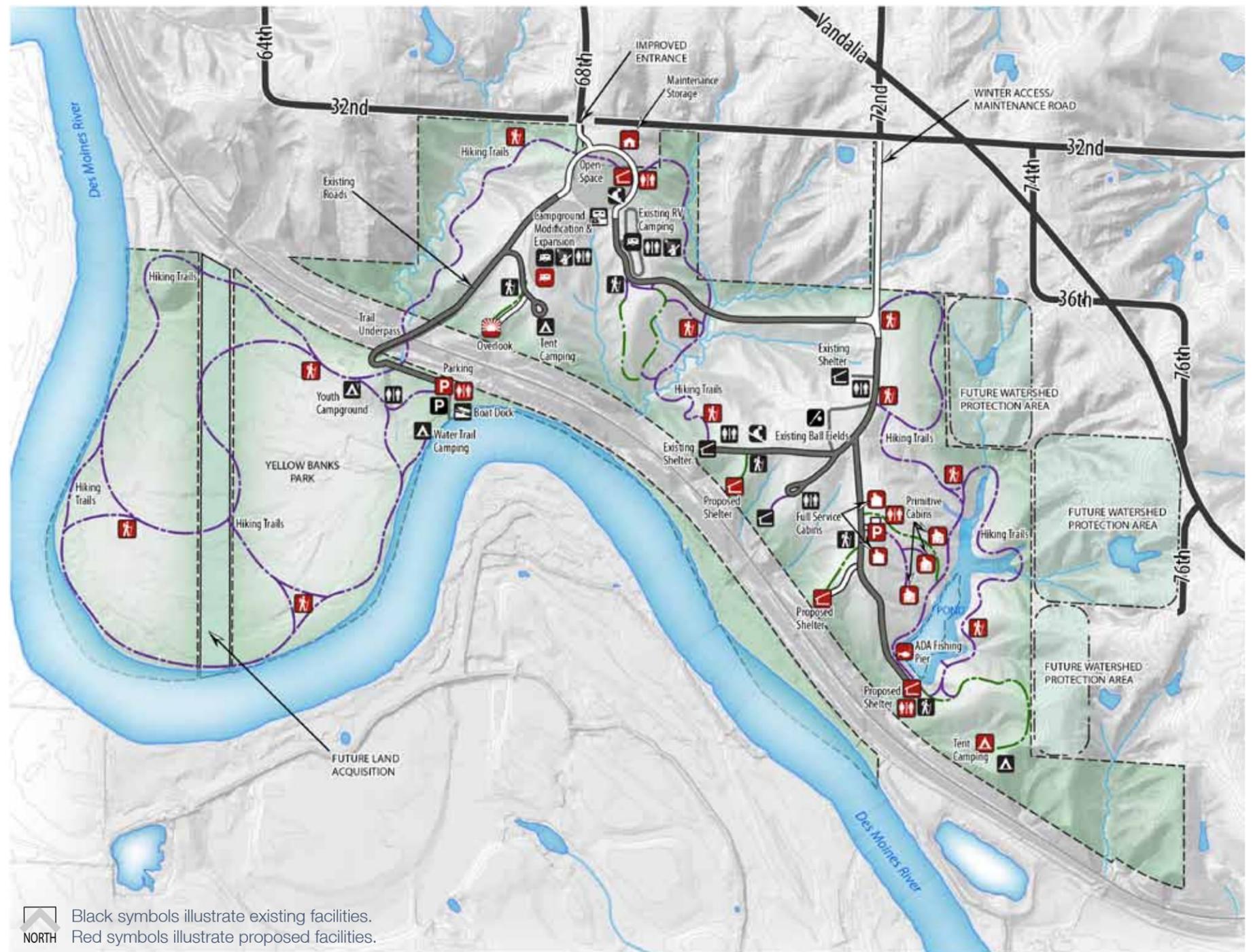
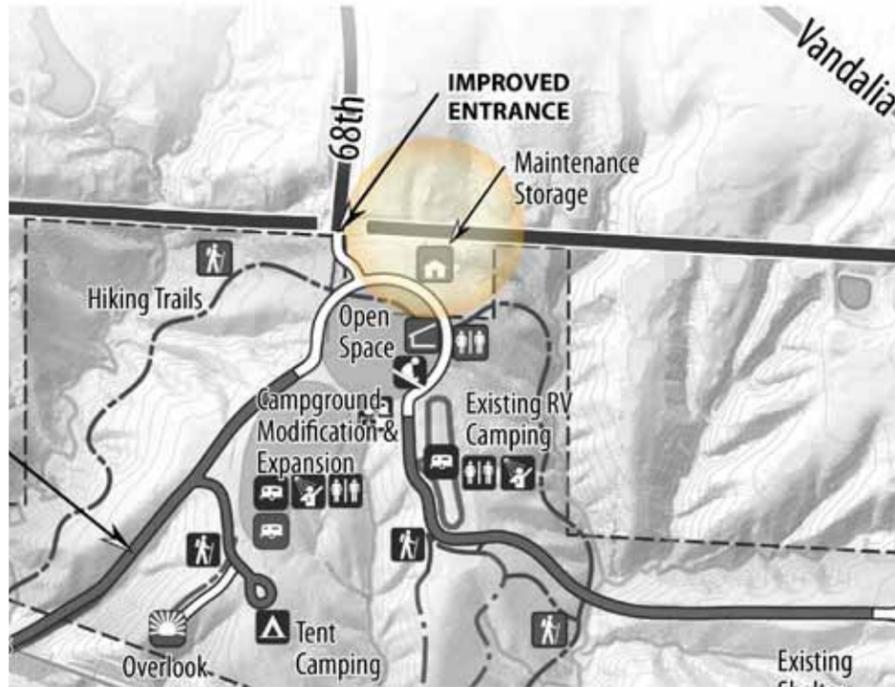


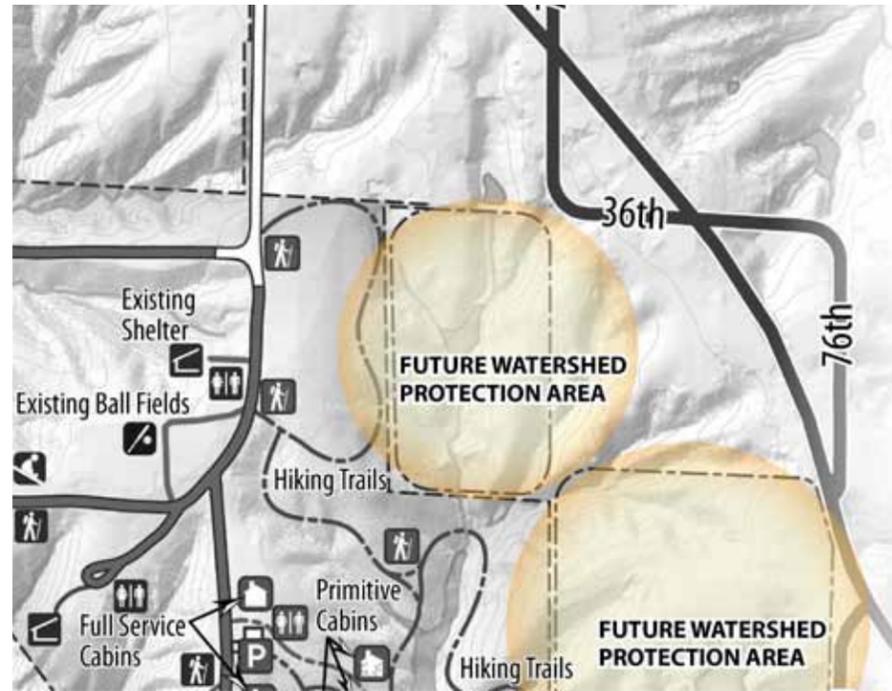
FIGURE 5.2

Yellow Banks Master Plan



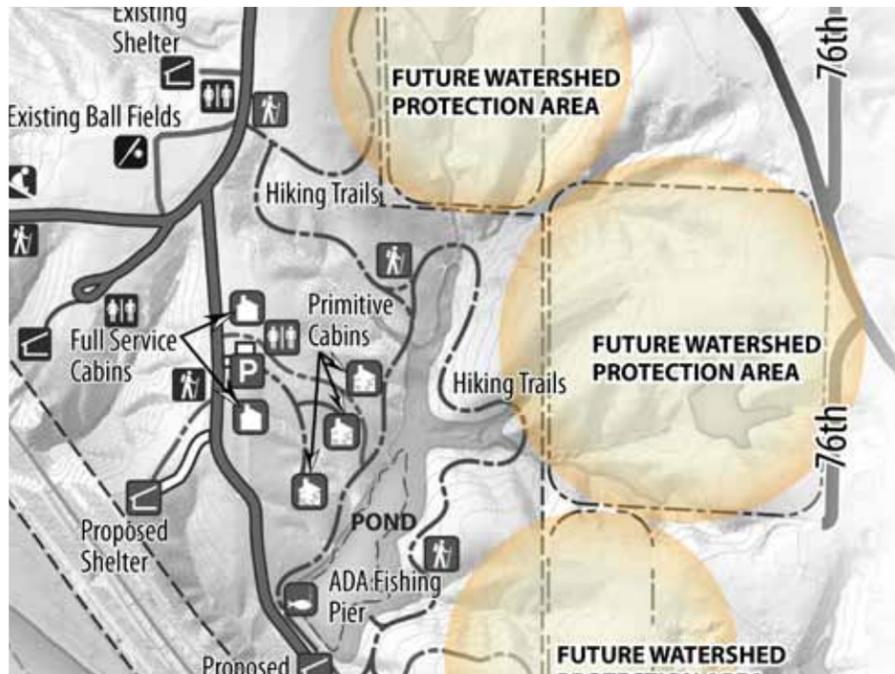
**FIGURE 5.3**

To improve park access, circulation, and wayfinding the park entrance may be redesigned. This could include the acquisition of the property adjacent to the current entrance. This consideration will be further reviewed in the future.



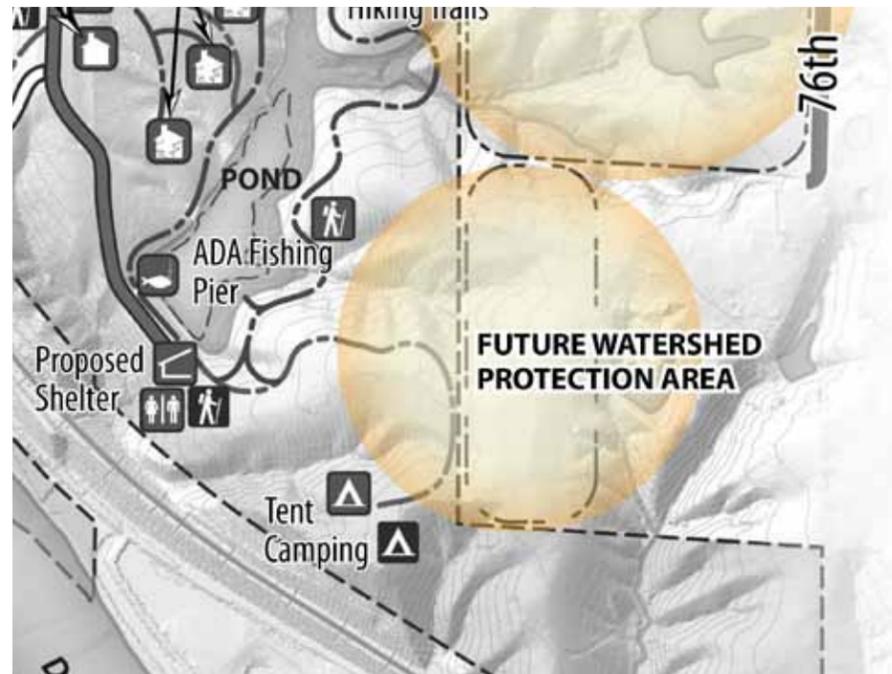
**FIGURE 5.4**

Polk County staff will work with adjacent property owners to identify best management practices to enhance water quality



**FIGURE 5.5**

Create a watershed protection area to the east of the pond to help improve water quality to the pond.

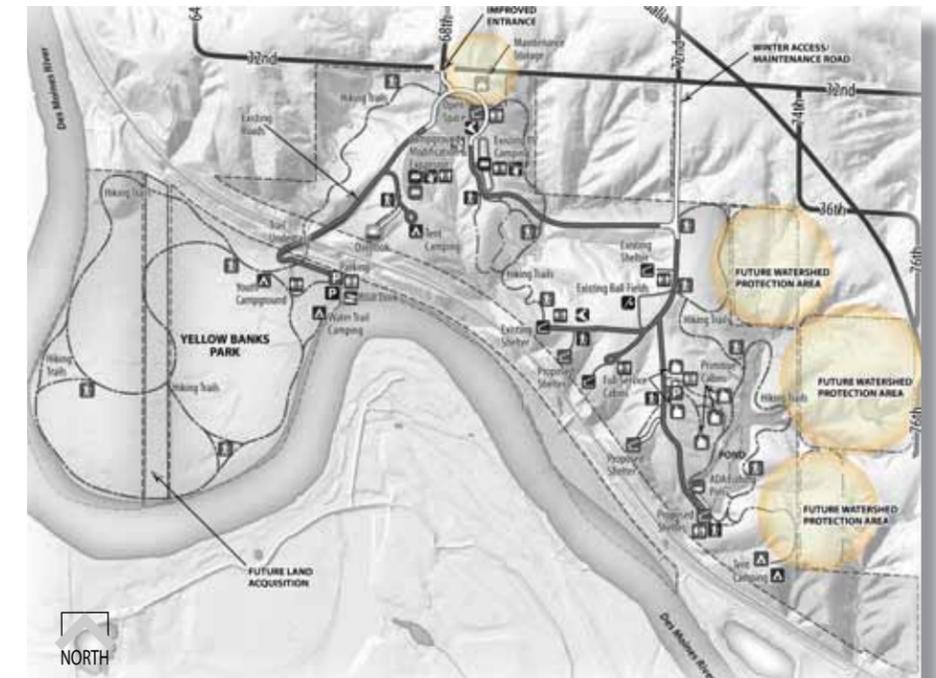


**FIGURE 5.6**

Several adjacent properties to Yellow Banks Park and specifically to the pond on the east side of the park are important watershed protection areas and are critical to improving water quality and enhancing the park user experience.

**LAND USES**

- Provide protection areas surrounding the park through acquisitions, easements or “set aside programs” to protect the water quality and integrity of the park.



**FIGURE 5.7**

To improve the water quality and provide buffer to the park, it will be important to work with adjacent property owners in the creation of watershed protection area both within the park and outside of park boundaries.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

- Manage woodland areas and steep slopes to maintain healthy vegetation and minimize erosion
- Actively manage invasive species to reduce occurrences and promote native species
- Improve perennial and intermittent stream beds through bank stabilization and vegetation management
- Expand the pond to improve access and fishing opportunities
- Enhance aquatic resources to provide improved habitats and support recreation and environmental education opportunities
- Inventory and protect cultural resources
- Actively manage scenic overlooks within the park



FIGURE 5.9  
Woodland before fire management.



FIGURE 5.10  
Woodland after fire management.

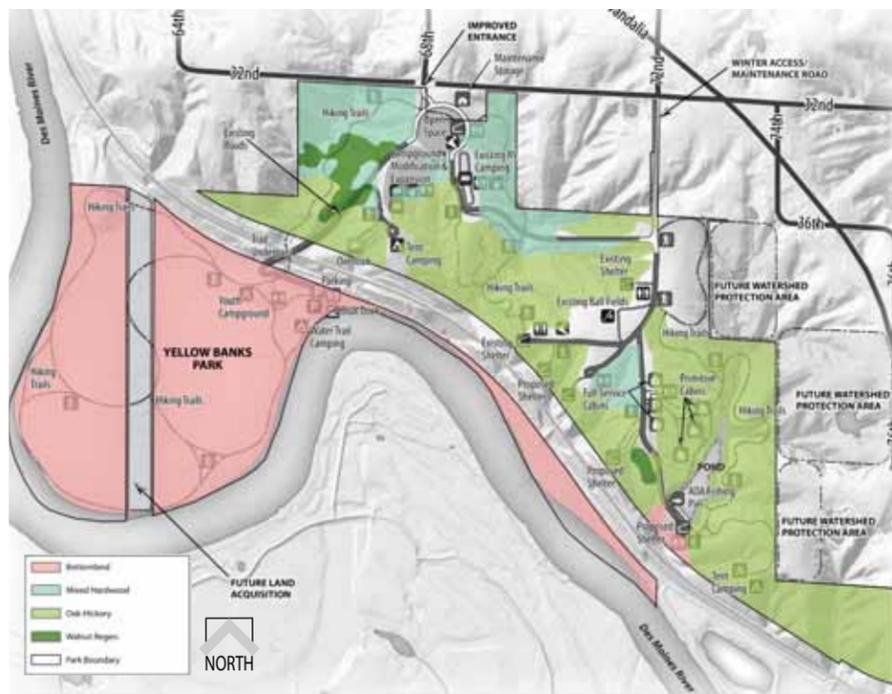


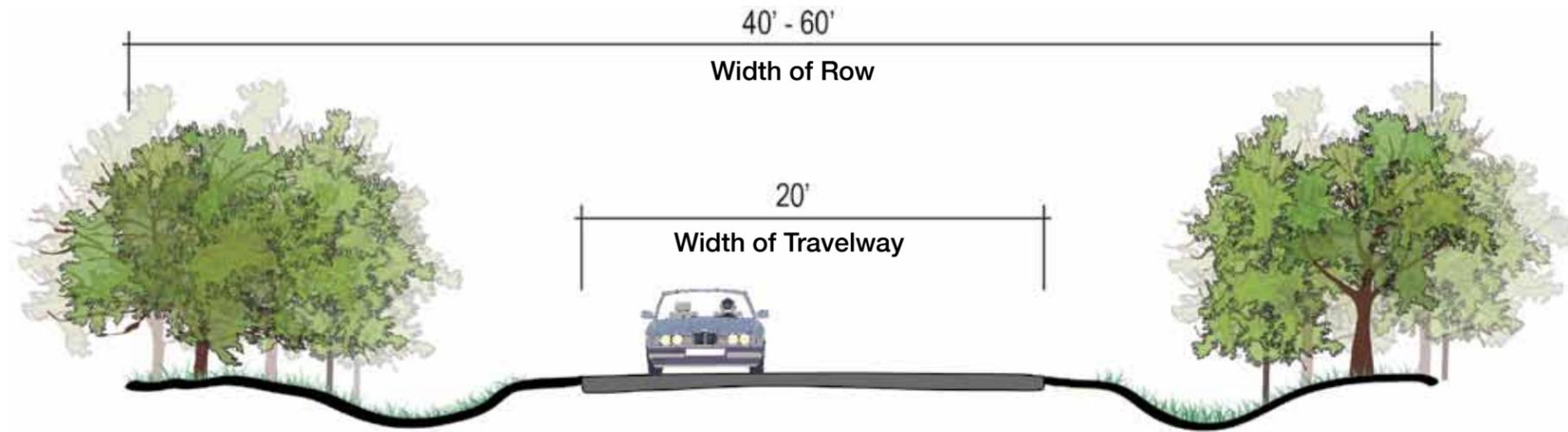
FIGURE 5.8  
Natural Resources Map



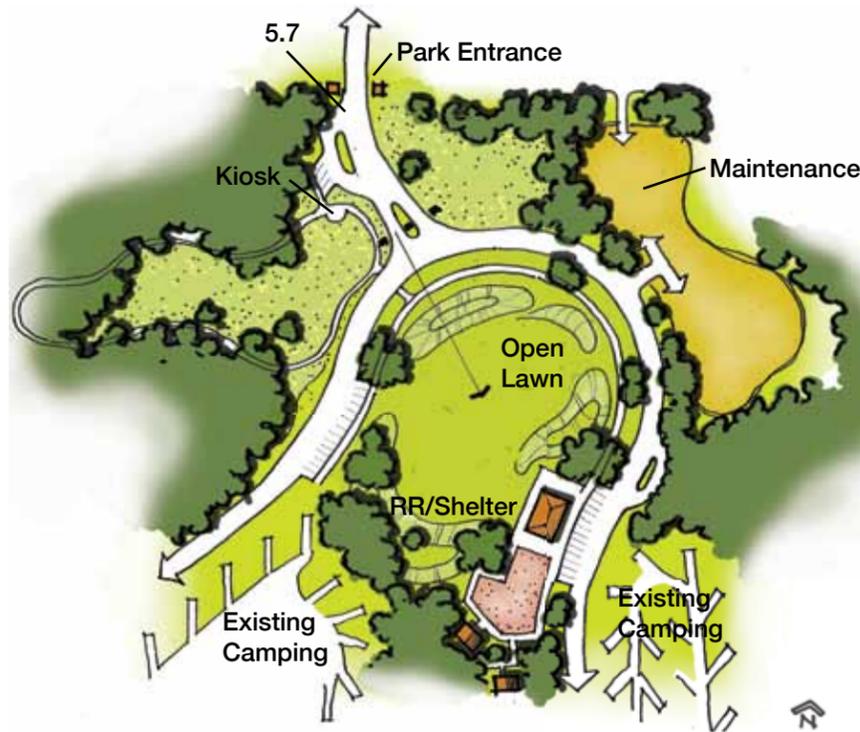
FIGURE 5.11  
Manual removal of evasive species.



FIGURE 5.12  
Areas with loess soils that are heavily eroding due to no bank stabilization.



**FIGURE 5.13**  
Cross section A-A of service road.



**FIGURE 5.14**  
Proposed entry layout.



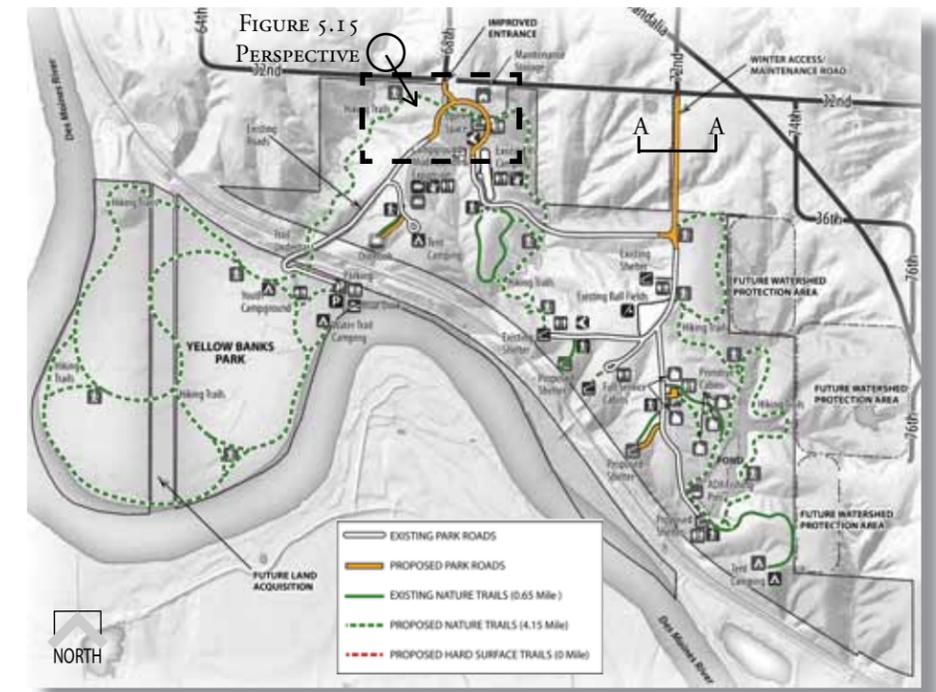
**FIGURE 5.15**  
Perspective of proposed entry.

### VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

- Improve internal park system roads including paving, widening shoulders, realignment and signing to provide safer and more efficient travel
- Reroute the main entrance to provide better traffic circulation and improve aesthetics
- Provide additional parking at park facilities in response to increased use site impacts and safety concerns
- Develop a winter access/maintenance road on the corner of 72nd and SE 32nd that would allow access to the back of the park during the winter months and for park maintenance
- Redesign parking configuration for the boat ramp area

### TRAIL CIRCULATION

- Develop additional hiking trails to improve connections between park facilities, enhance interpretive opportunities and provide increased hiking opportunities
- Develop a trail around the Pond and an accessible fishing dock to provide additional opportunities for people with disabilities and environmental education
- Develop a hiking trail system in the lower park area within the Des Moines River floodplain
- Support efforts to connect the park to existing and proposed regional trail systems



**FIGURE 5.16**  
Circulation Map

## RECREATION FACILITIES

- Improve scenic overlooks for birders, hikers, and general park users
- Install permanent vault toilets near the cabins, pond, and tent camping area to provide improved services to users at these locations
- Expand and enhance the primitive tent camping area in the park's southeast corner
- Develop 4-5 rental cabins to provide additional overnight recreational opportunities in the park
- Expand the number of electric campsites in response to growing demand
- Provide electric and water upgrades to existing park shelters
- Develop a larger open space near the front entrance in between the campgrounds that allows space for an enlarged play area, shelter, and special event area for public programs
- Construct one to two more shelters overlooking the Des Moines River
- Construct a shelter on the pond dam for park users and public programs
- Continue to maintain and improve the little league baseball fields in cooperation with the Four Mile Creek Little League

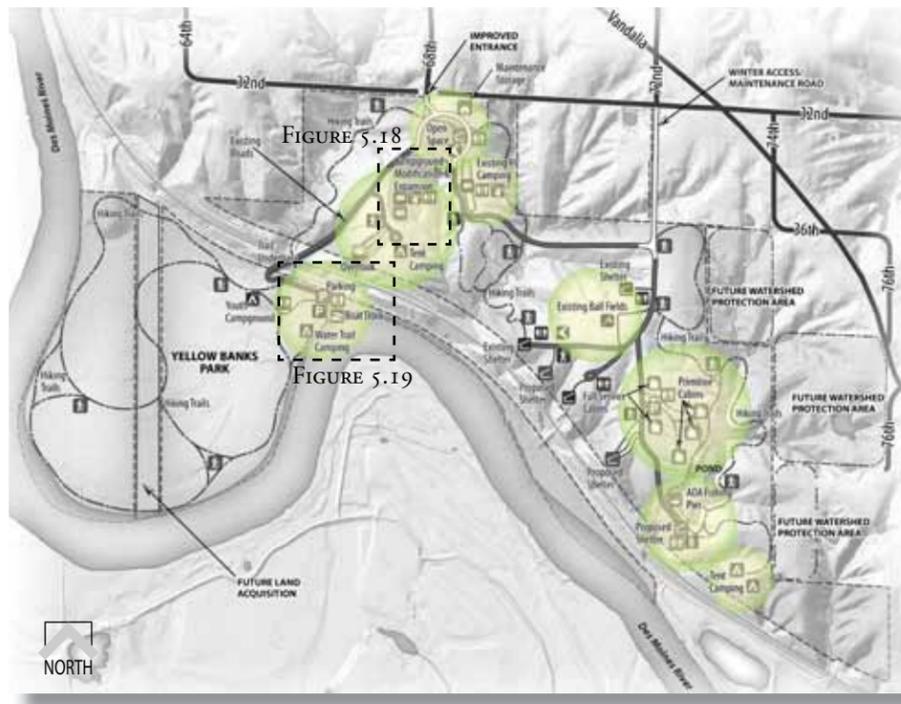


FIGURE 5.17

Recreational zones in Yellow Banks.

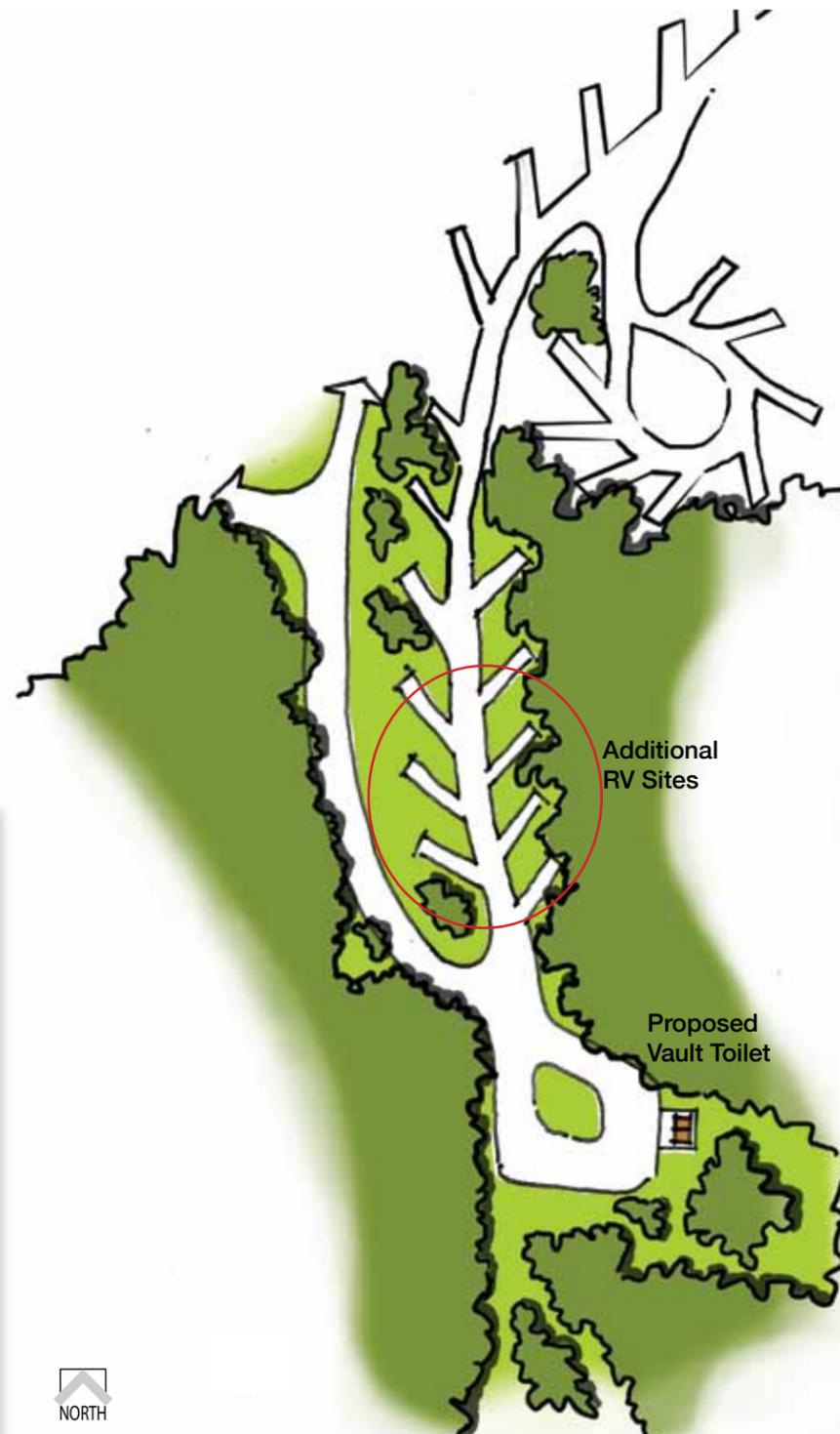


FIGURE 5.18

Expansion of the west campgrounds. This would provide an additional six RV campsites.

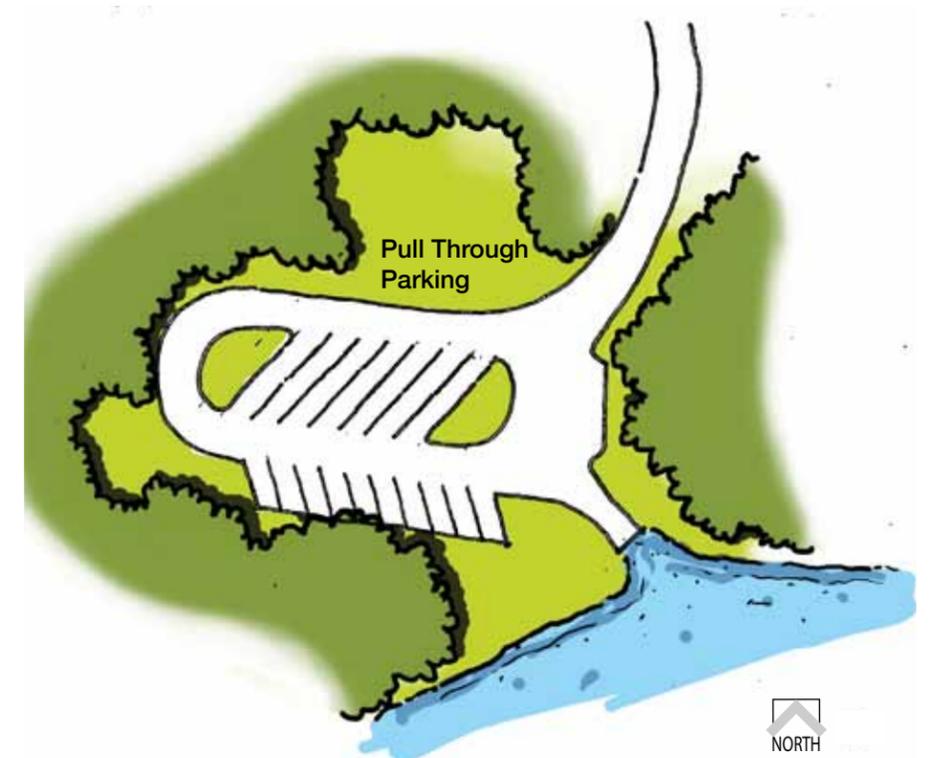


FIGURE 5.19

Existing boat parking and river access is limited and would be greatly enhanced with defined parking and circulation.



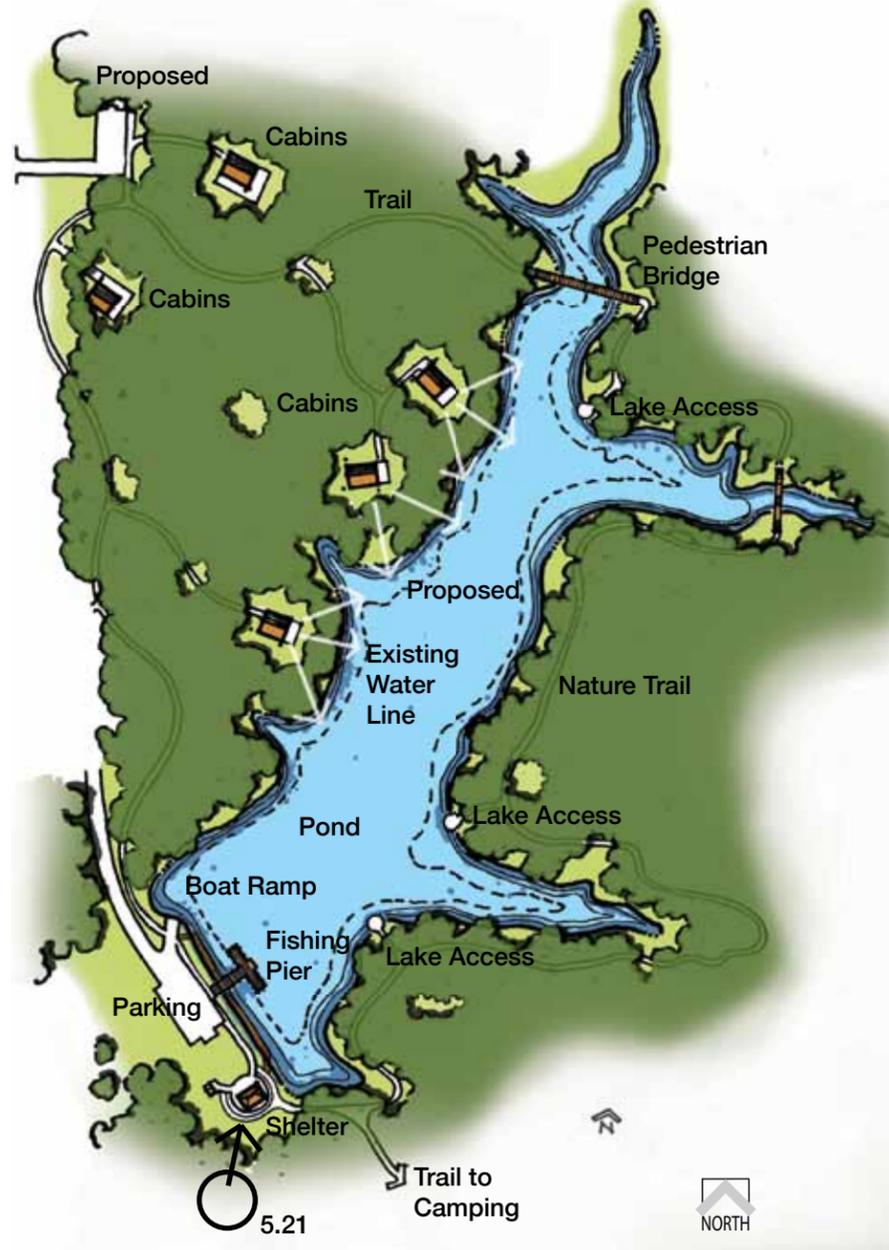
**FIGURE 5.20**

This image illustrates greater water access with a fishing pier and shelter on the south side of the pond.



**FIGURE 5.21**

Perspective of proposed cabins and circulation on the west side of pond.



**FIGURE 5.22**

Proposed layout of pond enhancements.

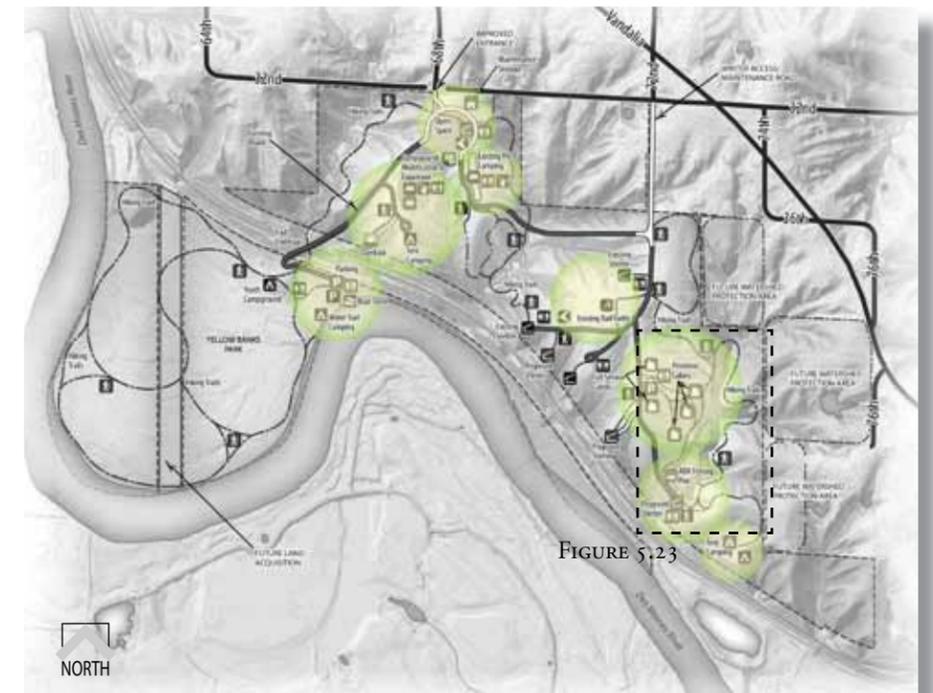
**INTERPRETATION/ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES**

- Enhance interpretive park signage (pond, woodland/savanna, river, prairie, cultural)
- Relocate Ranger residence and maintenance facility northeast of its current location to remove park operations from the entrance



**FIGURE 5.23**

View to the pond.



**FIGURE 5.24**

Recreation Map





## TIMING

The recommended improvements identified in this plan are anticipated to be implemented over time. Some recommendations require more detailed planning and design which would extend implementation of those recommendations. Projects that require less planning and design and can be done with limited funds may be completed earlier.

## PRIORITIES

Higher priorities are assigned to those recommendations that are more responsive to the goals of the plan. Projects related to improving trails, camping and environmental education opportunities are considered high priority. Additionally, those projects that improve park access, provide greater accessibility for people with disabilities and generate increased revenues are considered a higher priority.

## COST ESTIMATES

Cost estimates have been developed for each recommendation within this plan. These estimates are intended for budget planning efforts only and will be updated over time. The following cost estimates are summarized by category. Projected costs for implementing this plan in its entirety range from \$6-7 million. These estimates are current year costs and do not reflect future year inflation. Projects completed in-house may result in cost savings. Annual operations and maintenance costs associated with the existing facilities are not included in these estimates. More detailed cost estimates will be developed when planning and design is completed on individual projects and as funding becomes available.

<u>IMPROVEMENT CATEGORY</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
Watershed protection area	\$ 1,200,000.00
Reduce invasive species	\$ 150,000.00
Expand pond, improve access and fishing	\$ 35,000.00
Enhance aquatic resources	\$ 15,000.00
Inventory and protect cultural resources	\$ 10,000.00
Manage scenic overlooks	\$ 7,500.00
Improve roads and signage	\$ 375,000.00
Additional parking	\$ 75,000.00
Develop winter access road	\$ 75,000.00
Redesign parking at boat ramp	\$ 30,000.00
Additional hiking trails	\$ 10,000.00
Trail system within Des Moines River floodplain	\$ 10,000.00
Improve scenic overlooks	\$ 7,500.00
Install vault toilets	\$ 50,000.00
Expand and enhance tent camping area	\$ 15,000.00
Develop 4-5 cabins	\$ 400,000.00
Expand electric campground	\$ 75,000.00
Upgrade shelters	\$ 65,000.00
Front entrance	\$ 200,000.00
Construct 1-2 more shelters	\$ 200,000.00
Construct a shelter at pond	\$ 25,000.00
Maintain and improve baseball fields	\$ 88,500.00
Enhance interpretive signage	\$ 25,000.00
Relocated residence and maintenance	\$ 400,000.00

## FUNDING STRATEGY OPTIONS

The proposed improvements within this plan for Yellow Banks Park must be integrated into the overall budget/program needs of Polk County Conservation. As master plans are completed for other parks within the Polk County Conservation Park System, the proposed improvements will be considered comprehensively across the entire system. Additionally, the needs associated with maintaining the existing facilities within the park system will be considered along with the proposed improvements.

Some recommendations may be completed through the annual program of work as part of the continuing operations and maintenance of Polk County Conservation parks.

Potential funding sources include annual appropriations, grants, partnerships and long-term public financing.



FIGURE 6.1

Re-aligned entry into Yellow Banks Park from the north



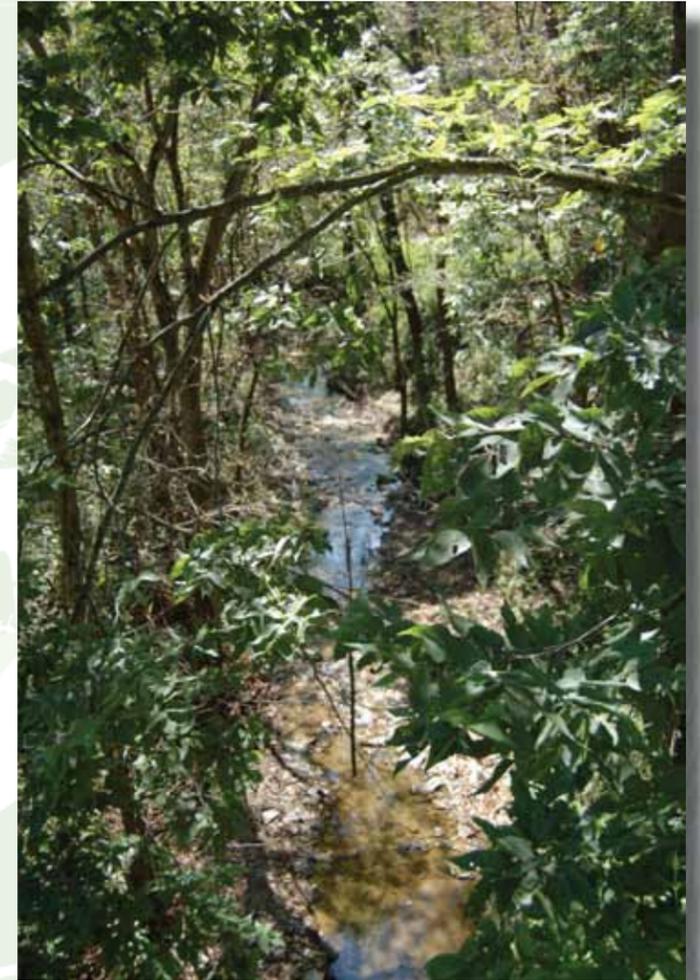
FIGURE 6.2

New facilities at the existing pond.

## RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	
			<b>LAND USES</b>
			· Provide protection areas surrounding the park through acquisitions, easements or “set aside programs” to protect the water quality and integrity of the park
			<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>
			· Manage woodland and prairie areas and steep slopes to maintain healthy vegetation and minimize erosion
			· Actively manage invasive species to reduce occurrences and promote native species
			· Improve perennial and intermittent stream beds through bank stabilization and vegetation management
			· Expand the pond to improve access and fishing opportunities
			· Enhance aquatic resources to provide improved habitats and support recreation and environmental education opportunities
			· Inventory and protect cultural resources
			· Actively manage scenic overlooks within the park
			<b>VEHICULAR CIRCULATION</b>
			· Improve internal park system roads including paving, widening shoulders, realignment and signing to provide safer and more efficient travel
			· Re-route the main entrance to provide better traffic circulation and aesthetics
			· Provide additional parking at park facilities in response to increased use site impacts and safety concerns
			· Develop a winter access/maintenance road on the corner of 72nd and SE 32nd that would allow access to the back of the park during the winter months and for park maintenance
			· Redesign parking configuration for the boat ramp area
			<b>TRAIL CIRCULATION</b>
			· Develop additional hiking trails to improve connections between park facilities, enhance interpretive opportunities and provide increased hiking opportunities
			· Develop a trail around the Pond and an accessible fishing dock to provide additional opportunities for people with disabilities and provide additional environmental education opportunities
			· Develop a hiking trail system in the lower park area within the Des Moines River floodplain
			· Support efforts to connect the park to existing and proposed regional trail systems
			<b>RECREATION FACILITIES</b>
			· Improve scenic overlooks for birders, hikers, and general park users
			· Install permanent vault toilets near the cabins, pond, and tent camping area to provide improved services to users at these locations
			· Expand and enhance the primitive tent camping area in the park’s southeast corner
			· Develop 4-5 rental cabins to provide additional overnight recreational opportunities in the park
			· Expand the number of electric campsites in response to the growing demand
			· Provide electric and water upgrades to existing park shelters
			· Develop a larger open space near the front entrance in between the campgrounds that allows space for an enlarged play area, shelter, and special event area for public programs
			· Construct one to two more shelters overlooking the Des Moines River
			· Construct a shelter on the pond dam for park users and public programs
			· Continue to maintain and improve the little league baseball fields in cooperation with the Four Mile Creek Little League
			<b>INTERPRETATION/ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES</b>
			· Enhance interpretive park signage (pond, woodland/savanna, river, prairie, cultural)
			· Relocate Ranger residence and maintenance facility northeast of its current location to remove park operations from the entrance area





## REFERENCES - MASTER PLANNING DOCUMENTS (FEATURED ON PAGE 14)

- Dunbar Jones Partnership. (1995). *Central Iowa Greenways Framework Plan: Making Central Iowa More Liveable*
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources. (2006). *Outdoor Recreation in Iowa: A Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*
- Leon Younger & PROS, LLC, Ciaccio Dennell Group and ETC/Leisure Vision. (2002). *Polk County Conservation Board: Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Findings Report 2002*
- Polk County Conservation Board. (2006). *Polk County Comprehensive Plan: Polk 2030*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (2002). *ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.access-board.gov/recreation/final.htm>
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources. (2006). *2006 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*. Retrieved from <http://www.iowadnr.gov/grants/scorp.html>
- Lancaster, R.A. (Ed.). (1990). *Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Polk County Conservation Board. (2006). *Polk County Comprehensive Plan: Polk 2030*. Retrieved from <http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/PublicWorks/PDFs/CompPlan/3LandUsePlan.pdf>

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## PUBLIC MEETINGS (REFERENCED ON PAGE 16)

- Public Meeting 1: January 2009  
*To obtain Meeting Minutes, contact Polk County Conservation*
- Public Meeting 2: May 2009  
*To obtain Meeting Minutes, contact Polk County Conservation*

Document Prepared by:



