



HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE MINI-MASTER PLAN

MAY 2022



Consultant:

SAS+ASSOCIATES, Inc.

Stakeholder Groups:

HAWK RIDGE BIRD OBSERVATORY
(HRBO)

Project Coordinator:

Cliff Knettel
Senior Parks Planner
Duluth Parks & Recreation
411 West First Street
Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: 218-730-4300
Email: cknettel@duluthmn.gov
www.DuluthMN.gov/parks

City of Duluth:**Mayor**

Emily Larson

City Council Members

Gary Anderson
Azrin Awal
Arik Forsman
Noah Hobbs
Janet Kennedy
Mike Mayou
Roz Randorf
Terese Tomanek
Renee Van Nett

Parks Commission

Amanda Crosby- President
David Demmer- Vice President
Natalie Chin- Secretary
Tjaard Breeuwer
Barbara J Darland
James Jones
Kala K Pedersen
Jennifer M Peterson
Britt Rohrbaugh

City Staff

Jessica Peterson, Parks Manager
Cliff Knettel, Project Manager
Jim Shoberg
Matthew Andrews
Jim Filby-Williams
Erik Birkeland



CONTENTS

01. SITE & ORGANIZATION HISTORY.....	4
HRNR MANAGEMENT TRUST AGREEMENT.....	5
02. PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	5
03. EXISTING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES.....	6
04. EXSITING SITE INVENTORY.....	9
05. PLANNING PROCESS.....	13
06. PROPOSED PLAN.....	14
07. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
08. FUNDING AND TIMELINE.....	20
09. PRELIMINARY PHASING & COST ESTIMATES.....	21
10. APPENDIX A.....	23
OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY.....	23
PUBLIC COMMENTS/ FEEDBACK.....	25

01. SITE & ORGANIZATION HISTORY

Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve (HRNR) is a 365-acre nature reserve located on the eastern part of the Skyline Parkway Scenic Byway in Duluth, MN. The early history of the land was once known as a place where people would practice target shooting of raptors (hawks, eagles, falcons), but today is known as one of the best places in the world to witness the amazing fall bird migration. In 1972, the Duluth Audubon Society through fundraising efforts and a loan from the Minnesota Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, donated funds to the City of Duluth to purchase 115 acres of the highest part of the Ridge. In 1973, approximately 250 acres were acquired through free conveyance from St. Louis County with conditions for the nature reserve. Today, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (HRBO), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, manages HRNR under a trust agreement with the City of Duluth, MN. Hawk Ridge has been helping monitor the health of our bird populations for 50 years with bird migration count and banding research, as well as educating tens of thousands of people from around the world each year about the ecological importance of birds and the bird conservation work being done at Hawk Ridge.

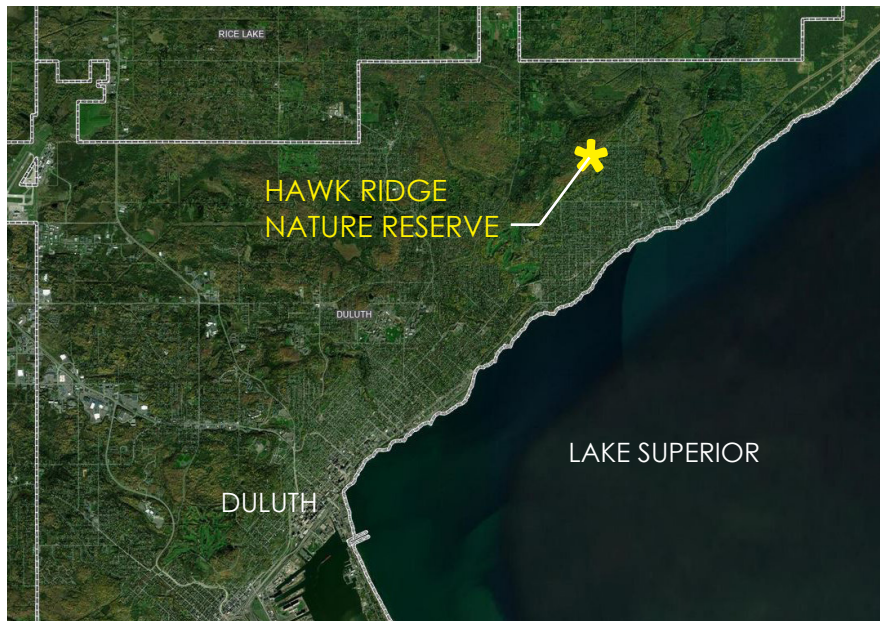


figure 1.1: LOCATION MAP



image 1.1: EARLY YEARS OF HRNR



HRNR MANAGEMENT TRUST AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF DULUTH AND HRBO:

In 2004, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory was established as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization to further the bird research, education, and stewardship efforts at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. Bird observatories are found throughout the world for study of bird migration and populations. The Duluth Audubon Society moved to transfer the management of Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve to Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory. City Council resolution (04-0663) transferred administration of the Trust Agreement for HRNR from Duluth Audubon Society to HRBO. The City of Duluth works in partnership with HRBO for many of the stewardship efforts at the site, such as trail maintenance, invasive species control, viewshed management, portable toilets, garbage/recycling, road safety, and cooperation with other user groups.

02. PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2009, the need for an additional education program space at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve was recognized and added to the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory Strategic Plan. As the numbers of visitors and education programming continued to grow, discussion about facilities issues and needed improvements continued. In 2016, the strategic goal expanded beyond the scope of just one additional education program space to improvements to education facilities. Key issues identified from discussions with Hawk Ridge Board, Committees, staff, volunteers and visitors were facilities improvements for education program space, visitor safety, and accessibility. In 2019, grant funding was received from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation and the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation to begin the planning process for facilities improvements.



image 2.1: EDUCATIONAL DEMONSTRATION ALONG SKYLINE DRIVE

03. EXISTING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory staff provides education to thousands of people of all ages, primarily during the fall bird migration at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve. While we are currently working on annual visitor counts with electronic eye/tally counter, we have over 15 years of estimated hourly visitor counts during the months of September and October equating to approximately 18,000 visitors. This includes public education and interpretation to general visitors (approx. 85% tourists) about the bird migration, but also providing visitor services in helping with questions about Duluth and the North Shore. Private education programs are delivered to school groups pre-K through college, adult groups, and other civic groups/clubs, etc. The general public also utilize and visit Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve year-round for outdoor recreation (birding, hiking, biking, dog-walking, running, snowshoeing, photography, astronomy, etc). With HRBO being the management entity of the site, it's important to address the following **3 major challenges** that emphasize the need for facilities improvements at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve.



image 3.1: MAKESHIFT EDUCATIONAL SPACE



image 3.2: FALL MIGRATION AT SKYLINE OVERLOOK

CHALLENGE #1: LIMITED ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES AND TRAILS AT HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Currently, the only facilities at Hawk Ridge consist of 2 portable toilets (July-Dec), observation platform, education program area, trails, and seasonal bird banding research station. Accessibility at any of these facilities is a challenge or non-existent. The only accessible viewing and education programming is off the roadside and at the education program area, which is a short gravel trail leading to open space with rows of wooden benches. With our current education programs for visitors and groups, we often have to be creative and utilize space off the side of the road or on the trails. However, programming on our trails is not accessible for all abilities. This plan addresses accessibility through improvements to existing facilities and additional accessible facilities and trails.



CHALLENGE #2: VISITOR SAFETY WITH VEHICLE TRAFFIC ON EAST SKYLINE PARKWAY

Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve is located off of East Skyline Parkway, a popular scenic byway, that is heavily traveled during open months May 1- Nov 30. The majority of visitors best view the migration along the roadside, which is especially a safety challenge during heavy visitation days, special events, and with large school groups. Despite our efforts with traffic signs, volunteers helping with traffic safety, and road signage, we still have vehicles passing through frequently at unsafe and sometimes deliberate high speed. Other users are also utilizing the roadway, trails, and main overlook area for outdoor recreation. Making facilities improvements at the main overlook and adjacent roadside for the safety of visitors is another need we are addressing with this plan.



image 3.3: VISITORS UTILIZING SKYLINE FOR VIEWING



image 3.4: EXISTING EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

CHALLENGE #3: LIMITED EDUCATION SPACE AND RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Programming at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve is primarily provided during the peak of the fall bird migration in September and October. This education takes place on the roadside, education program area, and trails. There is only one existing education program area that holds a maximum of 50 people. With increased demand for programs and numbers of people, that space does not meet the current need. Schools often want to bring an entire grade level on a single day for ease of transportation and scheduling. This can mean multiple classes of students, which is difficult to accommodate, if at all. Through the addition of education program areas and facilities, program opportunities and capacity can be increased. Guided and self-guided outdoor recreation and educational experiences at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve will also be enhanced. These improvements will also allow for more program income, which will help offset costs of management and maintenance of facilities. This plan addresses those challenges with outcomes for more capacity, more education and recreation opportunities, and more program income.

04.

EXISTING SITE INVENTORY

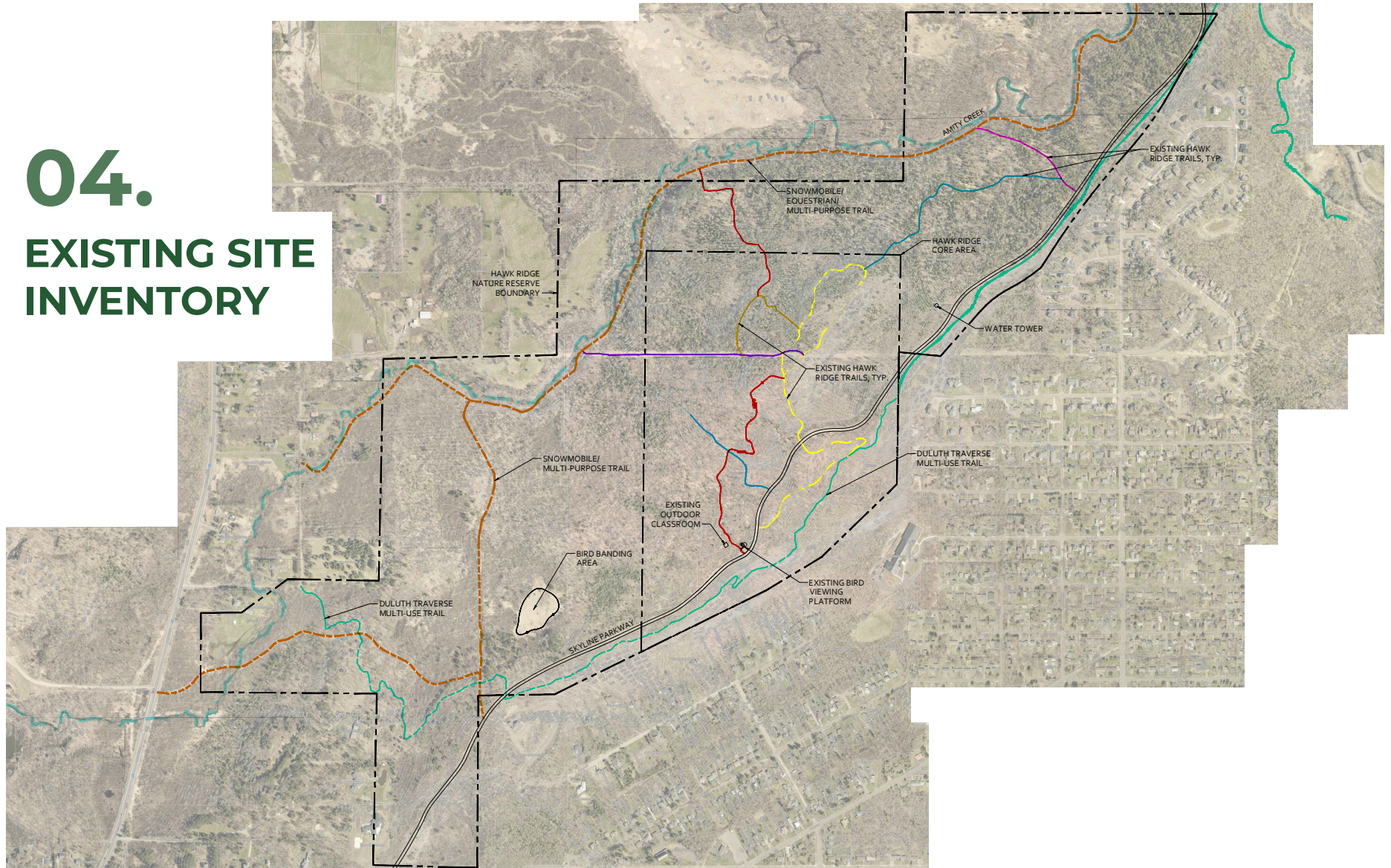


figure 4.1: EXISTING CONDITIONS & TRAILS WITHIN HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE
The strong trail network within the bounds of the HRNR presents many opportunities to improve the visitor experience for and strengthen existing partnerships with all types of users.

AS PART OF THE PLANNING PROCESS, EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS WERE EVALUATED TO ASSESS THE IMPACT ON BOTH NATURAL RESOURCES AND BIRD RESEARCH. OUR BREEDING BIRD SURVEYS (POINT COUNTS & MAPS) AND BANDING RESEARCH USE OTHER AREAS OF THE RESERVE, THUS WOULD NOT BE IMPACTED. OUR BIRD MIGRATION COUNT RESEARCH MOVED FROM THE ROADSIDE TO THE UPPER SIDE OF EAST SKYLINE WITH THE ADDITION OF A NEW PLATFORM IN 2010, WHICH ALSO HAS ROOM FOR VISITOR OBSERVATION BELOW. THE NEW PLAN WOULD IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY TO THAT VISITOR OBSERVATION AREA AND POTENTIALLY OPEN UP SOME OF THE VIEWSHED. VEGETATION SURVEY MAPS AT HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE SHOW NO CURRENT RARE OR SENSITIVE SPECIES EXISTING IN THE PROPOSED AREAS FOR FACILITIES. THIS SAME VEGETATION SURVEY WORK ALSO SHOWS THE DENSITY OF INVASIVE BUCKTHORN AND OTHER SPECIES IS HEAVIER IN THESE PROPOSED AREAS. HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-PLANT AREAS WHERE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS WOULD TAKE PLACE WITH NATIVE VEGETATION IS IMPORTANT TO US ECOLOGICALLY AND FOR INVASIVE MITIGATION. LASTLY, MANY OF THE AREAS PROPOSED FOR IMPROVEMENTS ARE ALREADY SPACES HEAVILY IMPACTED BY PEOPLE AND VEHICLE (MOTORIZED/NON-MOTORIZED) TRAFFIC. PRIOR TO ANY CONSTRUCTION, A FINAL ASSESSMENT OF NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE PROPOSED AREAS WILL BE COMPLETED.

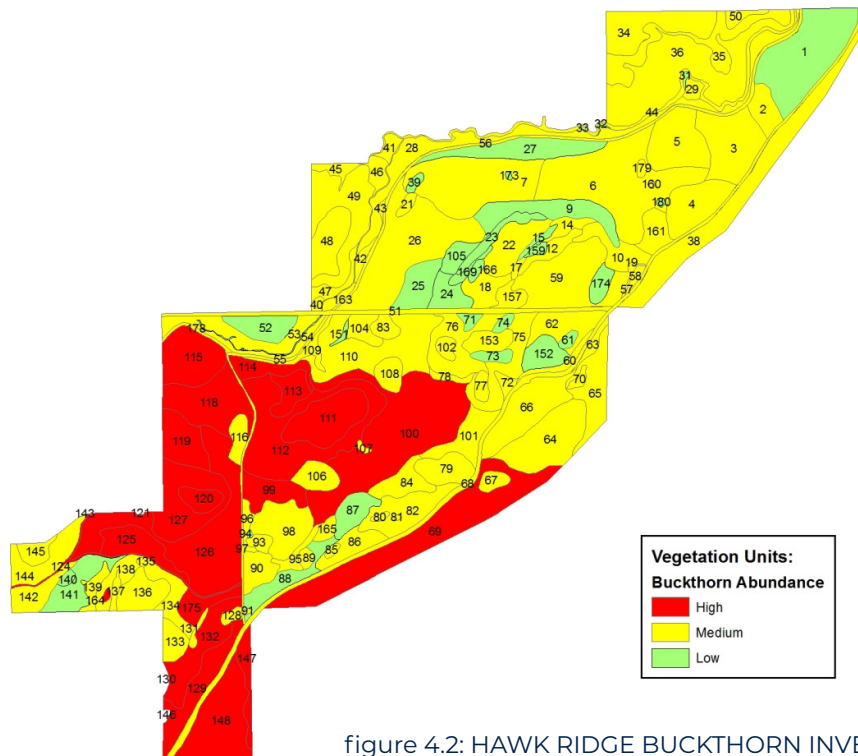


figure 4.2: HAWK RIDGE BUCKTHORN INVENTORY

Hawk Ridge Vegetation Units

Barb Delaney --- 27 Feb 2015

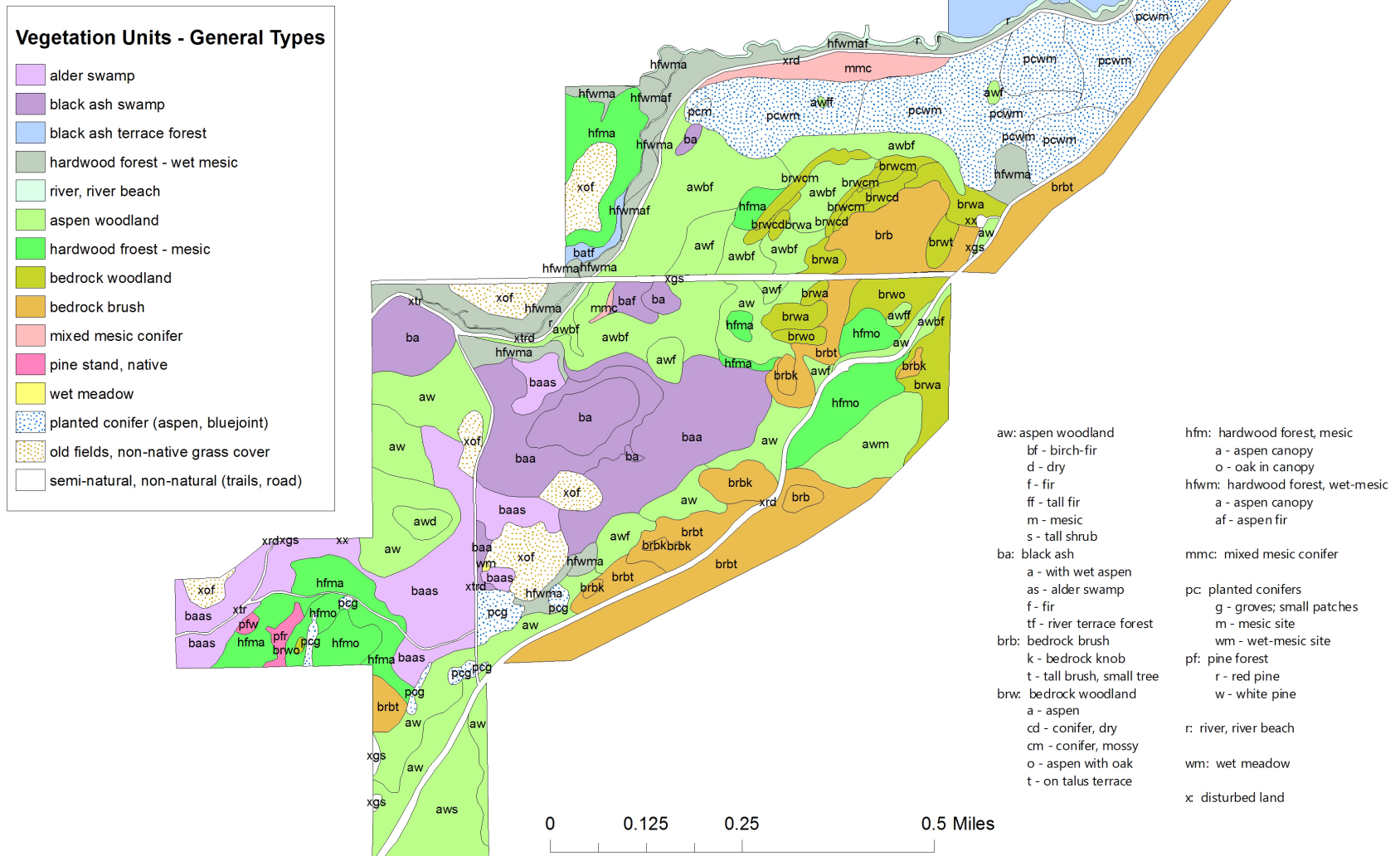


figure 4.3: HAWK RIDGE VEGETATION INVENTORY

Important Upland Forest Types

(some might be very disturbed)

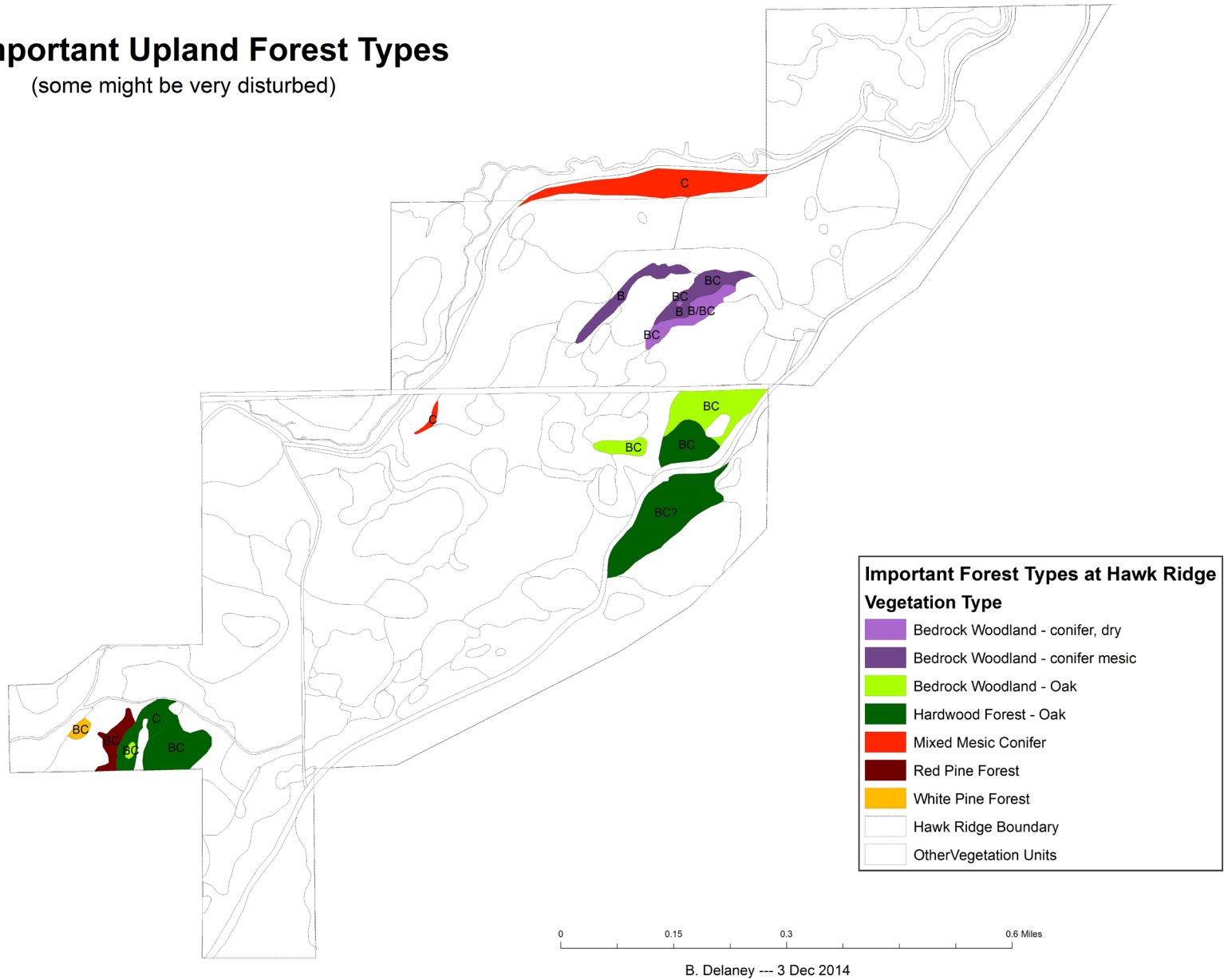


figure 4.4: HAWK RIDGE IMPORTANT FOREST TYPES

05. PLANNING PROCESS

2020

- HRBO met with City of Duluth Directors (Parks & Rec and Property & Facilities) to share initial planning ideas, which were well received.
- HRBO connected with local Landscape Architects SAS+ Associates to begin concept design work.

2021

- Focus group meetings were held April 5-7th to further discuss and gather comments on facilities improvement ideas. Focus groups consisted of staff, volunteers, board, committee members, and recommended community members with expertise in specific facilities improvement areas (ex. trail accessibility). Most focus groups had 6-10 participants and met 1-2 times to provide input on items, such as 1) Functionality (ex. user Groups, purpose of space, capacity), 2) Concept Design Components (ex. shape, size, signage, seating, storage, security, weather, landscape/vegetation), and 3) Maintenance/ Management (ex. costs, staff/volunteers needed, management, insurance, risk assessment).
- Adaptations were made to the concept designs based on focus group input. Further grant funding was also awarded from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation to complete the final planning and concept designs.

2022

- Work continues with SAS+ Associates and the City of Duluth to finalize this stage of planning and concept designs.
- A public open house for comment was held on March 3, 2022 at the Portman Community Center.
- Online public comment is also open on the City of Duluth website, which was shared via press release and throughout HRBO communication.
- A presentation was made to the City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Commission on March 9, 2022.
- Plans will be revised after PRC and Public comments have been received at which point they will go back to the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council for final approval.

PROPOSED PLAN 06.

THE CURRENT PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT PLAN ADDRESSES THE NEEDS OF HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY WITH NEW ACCESSIBLE TRAILS TO EDUCATION AREAS AND FACILITIES, AS WELL AS ENHANCEMENTS TO PORTIONS OF EXISTING TRAILS, PARKING AREAS, AND RESTROOMS

IMPROVED VISITOR SAFETY WITH ROADWAY ENHANCEMENTS, SUCH AS OBSERVATION VIEWING SPACE AND SEATING OFF THE ROAD, SAFER ROADSIDE WALKWAY, AND GROUP GATHERING SPACE. HRBO/SAS+ WILL CONSULT WITH STREETS/ENGINEERING AND CITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR ROAD SAFETY FEATURES ON EAST SKYLINE PARKWAY

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AREAS & FACILITIES

FOR INCREASED CAPACITY, MORE EDUCATION PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH GUIDED AND SELF-GUIDED VISITORS, AND PROGRAM INCOME. THE EDUCATION AREAS AND FACILITIES IN THE PLAN WILL BE CONNECTED BY THE NEW ACCESSIBLE TRAIL, AS WELL CONNECTING TO EXISTING EDUCATION PROGRAM AREA AND BIRD COUNT PLATFORM/OBSERVATION AREA. NEW EDUCATION FACILITIES INCLUDE TWO NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM AREAS, AMPHITHEATER, PICNIC AREA, PERMANENT RESTROOM, NATURE PLAYScape, AND EXTENDED VIEWING DECKS AND SEATING FOR INCREASED CAPACITY AND ACCESSIBILITY. HRBO IS IN THE CURRENT PROCESS OF UPDATING THE TRUST AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY, WHICH WILL ALSO OUTLINE HRBO MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES.

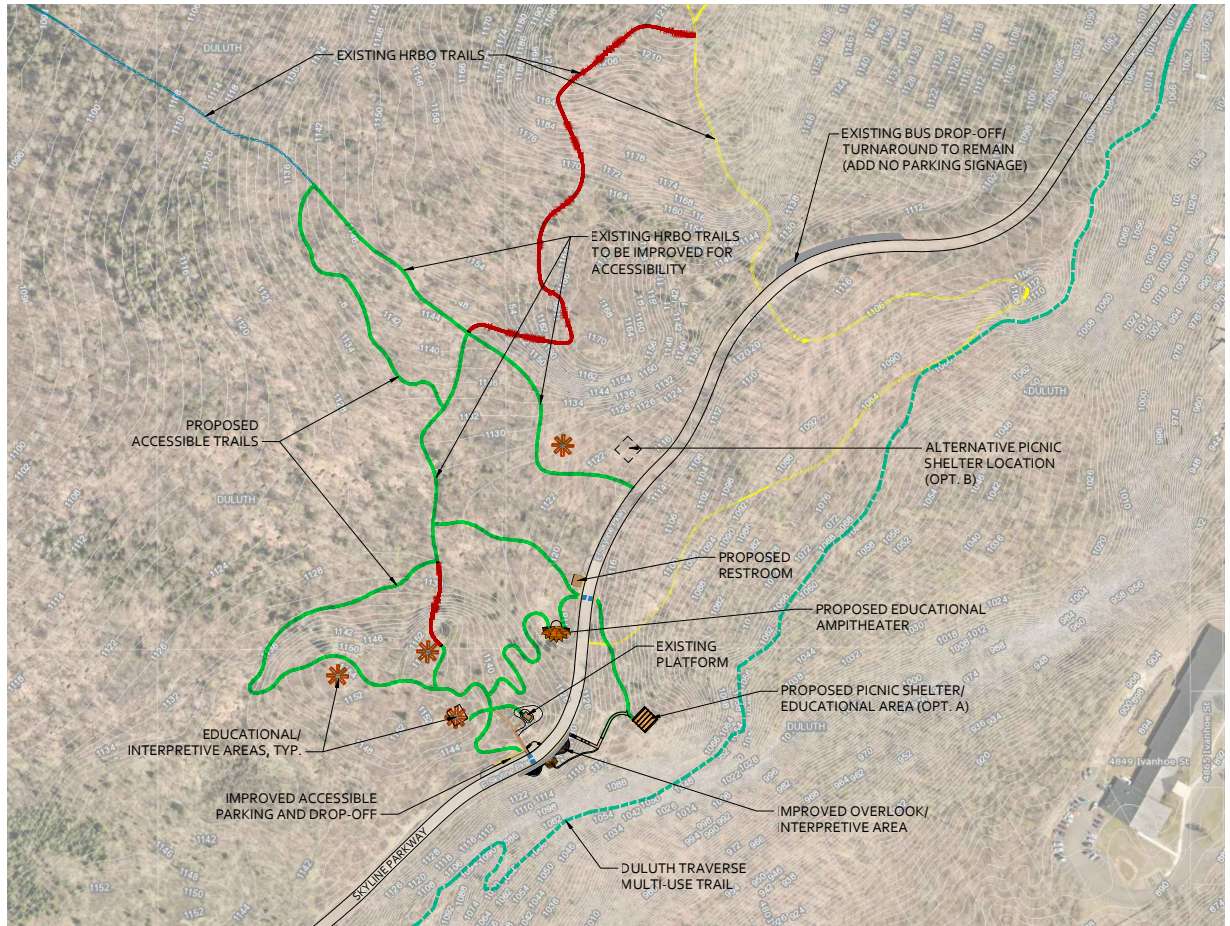


figure 6.1: PROPOSED FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS OVERVIEW

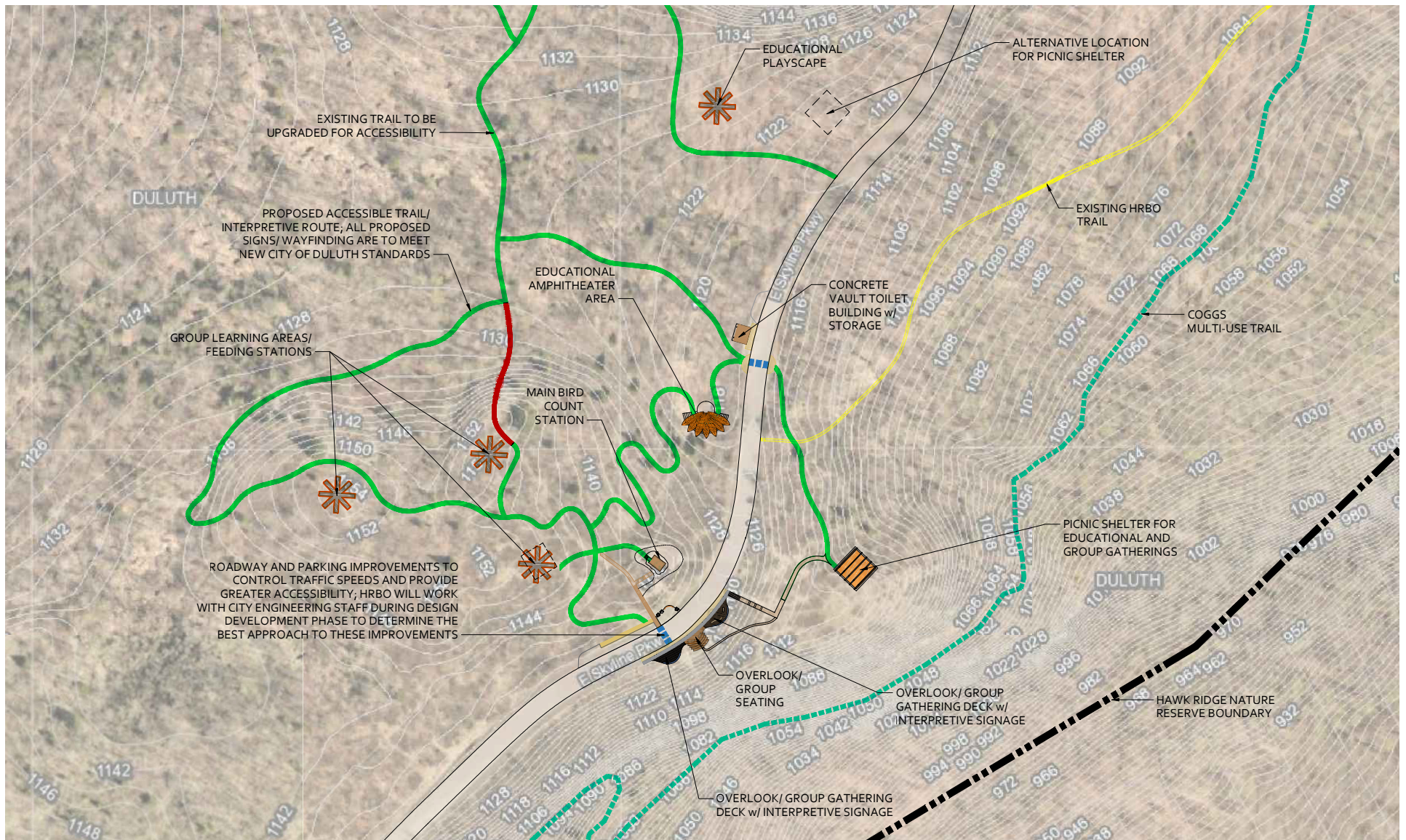


figure 6.2: CORE AREA PROPOSED HRBR FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

07. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

NATURE PLAYSCAPE

Multi-age, nature-based, hands-on/interactive exploration area, with bird-themed activities; for approximately 1-2 classes or 30-50 people.

ACCESSIBLE TRAILS

New trails with interpretive signs connecting the improved facility spaces to be used for guided education programming, as well as self-guided education and recreation. All new and upgraded trails will be designed to meet the accessibility standards outlined in the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and the sustainability guidelines in the MN DRN Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines.

PROPOSED NEW ACCESSIBLE TRAIL, BOARDWALKS TO BE USED AS NECESSARY TO CROSS LOW AREAS (TOTAL LENGTH APPROX. 2335 LF)



PROPOSED GATHERING AREAS/ EDUCATIONAL NODES



EDUCATION PROGRAM AREAS

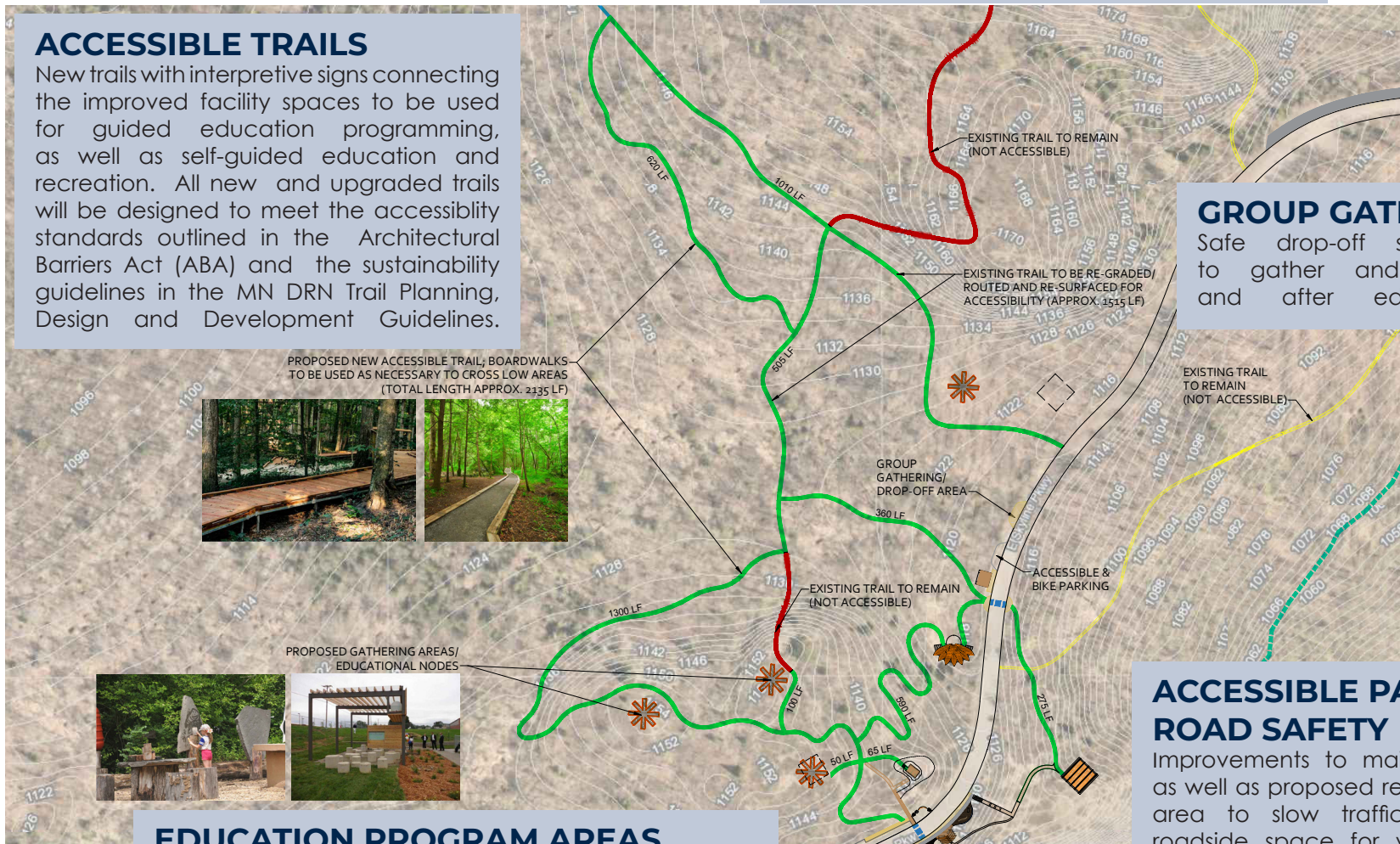
Smaller group gathering areas for 1 class of approximately 30-35 people, bird feeding station, seating, partial shade structure & storage for education supplies. Improvements made to existing program area with accessible trail connection and improved seating, shade, and storage.

GROUP GATHERING AREA

Safe drop-off space for groups to gather and organize before and after education activities.

ACCESSIBLE PARKING/ ROAD SAFETY

Improvements to main overlook area as well as proposed restroom/ trailhead area to slow traffic, increase safe roadside space for visitors, and add accessible parking. Final design of these elements will be done in coordination with City of Duluth Engineering and Street Maintenance divisions.

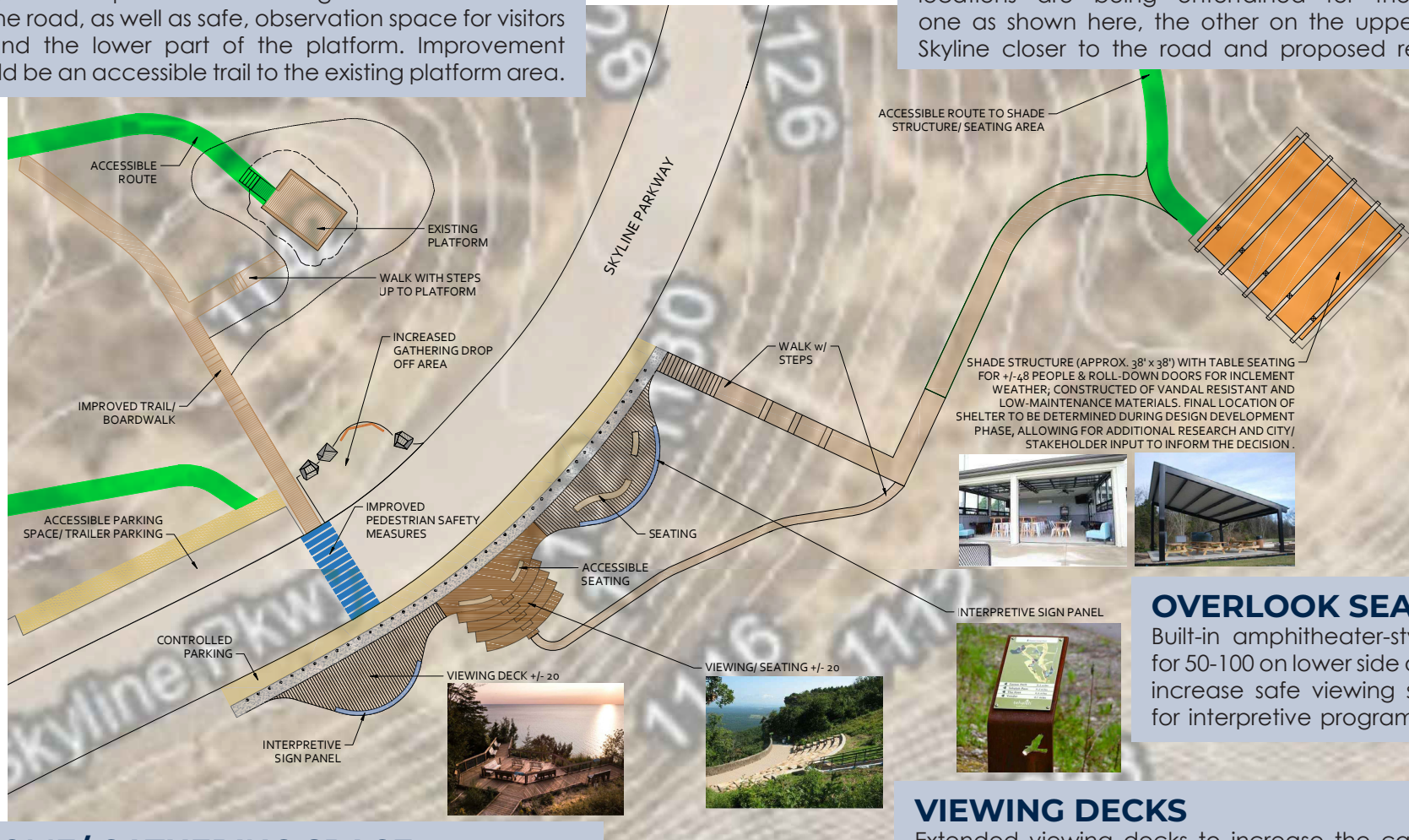


BIRD COUNT PLATFORM/ OBSERVATION AREA

An existing platform on site that was built in 2010 through MN Power Foundation grant and donations to provide safe, elevated platform for bird migration count research off the road, as well as safe, observation space for visitors around the lower part of the platform. Improvement would be an accessible trail to the existing platform area.

PICNIC SHELTER

Covered group gathering/ picnic area to promote longer visits, accommodate multiple visiting groups, provide shade/ shelter from inclement weather, 8 picnic tables that seat +/-8/table. Two locations are being entertained for the shelter; one as shown here, the other on the upper side of Skyline closer to the road and proposed restrooms.



WELCOME/ GATHERING SPACE

Improved welcome area with space for larger group drop-off and group activities, with interpretive signage for visitors about HRNR and HRBO, as well as seasonal visitor services (merchandise trailer, binocular rental, kid's activity cart, etc.)

VIEWING DECKS

Extended viewing decks to increase the capacity of safe, accessible viewing space for the fall bird migration, as well as scenic views to the lake. Viewing decks will be level with the current elevation of Skyline to maintain lake views from the roadway.

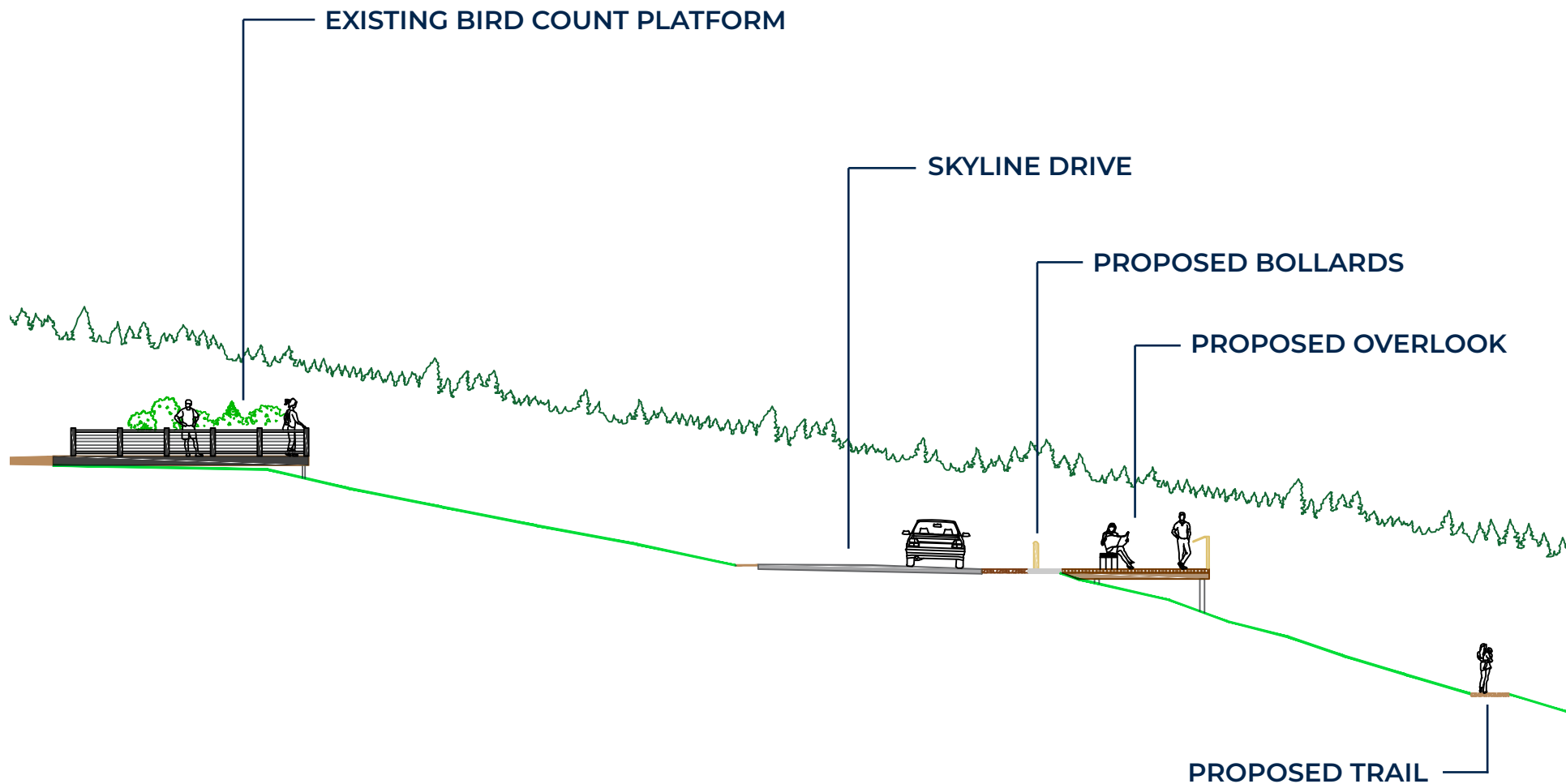


figure 7.1: SECTION VIEW OF PROPOSED FACILITY UPGRADES ADJACENT TO SKYLINE DRIVE

RESTROOM

Existing restroom has been limited to seasonal, non-accessible portable toilets; improvement would be a permanent, accessible concrete vault restroom with storage.



AMPHITHEATER

Large group gathering and program area to hold approximately 100-150 people; includes storage for program and A/V equipment; resource-efficient, such as solar panels for electrical presentation needs.

MANAGEMENT

Park rules will continue to be in accordance with the City of Duluth park policies. Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory will continue to manage and maintain facilities within Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, in cooperation with the City of Duluth.

08. FUNDING & TIMELINE



HRBO will lead the fundraising process for the proposed improvements, which will primarily include grants (government and private) and donations (corporate & individual). Some facilities improvements would be funded in conjunction/cooperation with the City of Duluth, such as the permanent restroom. A fundraising plan with timeline will be established in 2022-23. It's anticipated the project construction will be phased, based on priority and funding availability. An example of this would be the accessible trail, which will need to be constructed prior to the some of the facilities improvements, such as additional education program areas. Initial construction overall cost projections are estimated at \$2-2.5 million. A phased breakdown of these cost projections is included in the following "Preliminary Phasing and Cost Estimate" section.

09. PRELIMINARY PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

THE FOLLOWING PHASING PROJECTIONS AND COST ESTIMATES ARE FOR PRELIMINARY PLANNING WITH REGARDS TO THE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDED FOR HAWK RIDGE NATURE RESERVE. THESE ESTIMATES WILL HELP GUIDE FUNDRAISING THROUGH GRANTS AND DONATIONS. THE INCLUDED COST ESTIMATE ARE FOR CONSTRUCTION COSTS ONLY, BASED ON CURRENT CONDITIONS (2022). FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL COSTS, SUCH AS ADMINISTRATION, FINAL DESIGN, MAINTENANCE, ETC., WILL NEED TO BE ADDRESSED AS THIS PROCESS MOVES FORWARD.



image 9.1: VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREW

PHASE 1 IMPROVEMENTS would focus on accessibility upgrades, including construction of new accessible trails to existing and future site facilities (education spaces, viewing platform, etc) and installation of the permanent restroom facility. Anticipated construction would be within the first 1-2 years after project has commenced.

PHASE 2 IMPROVEMENTS would include visitor safety and educational space upgrades, such as improved pedestrian crossings, drop-off/ turnaround areas, main overlook construction and additional outdoor classroom space. Anticipated construction would be within 2-3 years after project has commenced.

PHASE 3 IMPROVEMENTS cover the additional site upgrades that will greatly improve the functionality and overall aesthetic of HRNR, but require more financing and long-range planning to implement, such as the amphitheater. Anticipated construction would be within 3-5 years after project has commenced.

Depending on funding sources or campaign, it may be possible to move certain facilities up in the construction process.

	Quantity	Unit	Amount	Total
PHASE 1				
Accessible Trail	3275	LF	\$10.00	\$32,750.00
Boardwalks	1460	LF	\$40.00	\$58,400.00
Interpretive Signage	1	LS	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Restroom Building	1	LS	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
	SUBTOTAL			\$161,150.00
PHASE 2				
Overlook w/ Seating	1	LS	\$800,000.00	\$800,000.00
Group Learning Areas	3	EA	\$25,000.00	\$75,000.00
Accessible Pullouts	4925	SF	\$5.00	\$24,625.00
Pavement Striping	1	LS	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Safety Gates	4	EA	\$3,000.00	\$12,000.00
Roadway Safety Improvements	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Bollards	42	EA	\$500.00	\$21,000.00
	SUBTOTAL			\$940,125.00
PHASE 3				
Amphitheater	1	LS	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00
Educational Playscape	1	LS	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Picnic Shelter	1	EA	\$470,000.00	\$470,000.00
Picnic Tables	8	EA	\$1,500.00	\$12,000.00
Interpretive Signage	1	LS	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Non-ADA Trails	180	LF	\$5.00	\$900.00
	SUBTOTAL			\$962,900.00
			TOTAL	\$2,064,175.00

10.

APPENDIX A

OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

PROJECT: Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (HRBO) Master Plan

TOPIC: Community Meeting/ Open House

MEETING DATE: 2 March 2022 – 6 PM

MEMO DATE: 3 March 2022

FROM: Luke Sydow

STAFF & CONSULTANTS PRESENT:	Cliff Knettel	City of Duluth
	Jessica Peterson	City of Duluth
	Matt Andrews	City of Duluth
	Janelle Long	HRBO
	Margie Menzies	HRBO
	Luke Sydow	SAS+ Associates
	Allison Adams	SAS+ Associates

An open house was scheduled to discuss facility improvement plans for Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory and establish priorities for the community in order to move forward with adoption of the master plan.

Staff and consultants were on hand to talk through plans (presented on large boards) and answer questions from attendees. Notes were taken to record comments/ concerns that were brought up, or attendees could write comments on large note pads under the following categories:

- Road and Traffic Safety
- Accessibility
- Visitor Viewing
- Education Program Space
- Other Facility Improvements

Comments recorded during conversations have been added to the appropriate category in the summary of comments below.

- **Road and Traffic Safety**
 - Consider a gate to close access after a certain time (e.g., 10pm) to prevent vandalism and drug use. Many dirty needles at Hawk Ridge.
 - Residents of Lakeside/ Lester Park want to help!
 - Consider a pedestrian lane for birders, counters, bicyclists? Keep cars separate.
 - Add additional turn-around for peak times outside closed barricades
- **Accessibility**
 - Restroom could be closer to main viewing area
 - Consider using recycled plastic decking for boardwalks?
- **Visitor Viewing**
 - Will platforms/ viewing areas be available for private/ commercial/ other uses? If so, who will manage?

- **Education Program Space**
 - Will final maps depict/ include the existing myriad trails recently signed with scout support? And what are HRBO/ City of Duluth's plans/ vision for those trails? (improve, expand, obliterate, formalize?)
 - Use outdoors as demo space for topics such as native plants/trees/shrubs vs invasive and Leave no Trace principles (bootbrushes, Play Clean Go signage)
- **Other Facility Improvements**
 - Bike parking/ racks
 - Replacing disturbed space with native plants
 - Potential connector trail from Duluth Traverse
 - Boot brushes

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS/ FEEDBACK (SUBMITTED ONLINE)

"I don't have any objections to the project, however, one items does concern me. Since I live right below Hawk Ridge on Norwood St. the picnic shelter below the Skyline Rd. is a bad idea. All of us already have problems with people hitting golf from Skyline Rd. We are always picking golf balls in our yard. Secondly, young adults are always shooting fire works, loud firecrackers, an sky rockets. Some have actually landed in our yard. Young adults have had parties and loud music and noise up there very late at night. I would like you to consider putting the picnic area above the road. Also, because of possible higher use, I would hope you would have more frequent police patrolling that area. Thank you for your understanding."

"I strongly support most aspects of the Master Plan with the exception of the covered outdoor picnic area. Late night partying and vandalism have been problematic in this area disrupting residences located below. A covered structure would be further encouragement for this undesirable behavior. If a structure of this type is deemed necessary, a location to the North of the road would be preferable to minimize the intrusion on the scenic beauty of the ridge and the adjacent neighborhood. In any case, the additional development would warrant additional patrolling by the Duluth Police Department."

"Hawk Ridge is a huge asset to the city of Duluth and to the greater Minnesota community. This expansion project will improve the accessibility of the site for visitors and will expand the educational opportunities available. Approving this project will allow even more students, locals, and visitors to enjoy the spectacular migration in the fall and the majestic beauty of Lake Superior year-round."

"Would like to see elimination of controlled parking opportunities at overlook/viewing platform areas. Cars and people don't mix well! It seems very dangerous to allow for parking which blocks sight lines at a narrow point where there is a high amount of pedestrian traffic."

"Please consider eliminating through traffic entirely."

"Please don't destroy the rocky, difficult trails to make easy ones."

"Leave nature be. Keep the area as is. Not enough parking for what already goes on. Let beautiful areas remain beautiful."

"This plan is wonderful. It provides opportunity for improving access and safety for the thousands of users, as well as educational experiences to develop a greater connection to the natural world. These amenities are sorely needed and will help all users."

"Please allow off leash dog walking area on the closed portion of Hawk Ridge. 70- 80% of the people walking there have dogs and normally 80%+ of the dogs are off leash. There are many areas for leashed dogs in the city but very few where a dog can get adequate exercise. Hawk Ridge is a perfect approximately 4 mile long area."

"There needs to be a trail between Skyline and Glenwood so that Hawk Ridge is accessible to bus riders. There used to be one which was destroyed."

APPENDIX A: **PUBLIC COMMENTS/ FEEDBACK** (CONTINUED)

"I would like to share that Hawk Ridge and staff is one of the greatest events ever and i have brought so many guests and recommend it enthusiastically as a must for all ages.

It is important that the safety of visitors is of highest importance and given the road conditions with continuous traffic flow through the site, it is really unpleasant at times to attend events. We have recently only come occasionally because of the traffic flow during events and we are very concerned that it is dangerous for people with the cars and many discourteous drivers, especially for children, elderly and vulnerable folks.

We don't know what can be done to make the events and observation area more safe but maybe there is a way. It is distressing to fight the continuous flow of traffic and even more disturbing to imagine a visitor being injured. The current practice of the traffic manager calling out to warn attendees of upcoming cars needs to improve for the safety of visitors."

"As both a native Duluthian who has birded Hawk Ridge since I was a teenager in the 1970's, and now a individual involved with birding in NE Minnesota, I am both supportive of Hawk Ridge's needs, but also have two questions: Do either the picnic area or amphitheater destroy much habitat? I love to bird below Skyline at Hawk Ridge in June for warblers, indigo buntings and other birds. From the map accompanying the proposal it was not possible (at least for me) to make these determinations, and the map did not show where the present counting platform is located. Thanks."

"Please limit any development to already disturbed areas and consider restoring areas that are disturbed. Ensure that any accessible trails are low impact and permeable. I like that the accessible trails will be limited to minimize the development footprint. Is there a way to limit single occupancy vehicles to the site? E.g. maybe a bus route that runs during migration?"

"Hawk Ridge is a popular place that is prime for investment/improvements as described. Providing the accessibility needs and education accommodations while staying true to the stewardship of the land will provide the community with another great resource for growing families like my own. I love the considerations of safety on the roadway, accessible trails, and improved education facilities."



Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory
P.O. Box 3006
Duluth, MN 55803-3006

www.hawkridge.org

218-428-6209

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory is
a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization.

