



**BUFFALO BILL RANCH STATE HISTORICAL PARK
AND STATE RECREATION AREA MASTER PLAN
2022- 2032**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park (SHP) and State Recreation Area (SRA) are in the northwest area of North Platte, Nebraska, specifically at the intersection of Scout's Rest Ranch Road and North Buffalo Bill Avenue (Figure 1). The parks were once the home of the famous William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Today, the parks capture the life and career of the famed Pony Express rider, Army scout and buffalo hunter-turned-showman.



Aerial photo of Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.

William Cody was born in Iowa on February 26, 1846. At age 7, his family moved to Kansas, where they were among the first settlers. At age 9, Cody started working for Russell, Majors and Waddell, a freighting firm out of Kansas that also started the Pony Express. He later served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Following the war, Cody earned his nickname, "Buffalo Bill," while supplying bison meat for the Kansas Pacific Railway.

When originally purchased by Buffalo Bill in 1886, Cody named the ranch Scout's Rest Ranch. The property consisted of approximately 4,000 acres of prairie. The Second Empire-style house, also known by locals as "The Mansion on the Prairie," was constructed in 1886 and was the largest house in North Platte in the late 19th century. It was Buffalo Bill's home from 1886 to 1913. A large barn was built in 1887 to house Cody's ranch horses and stallions. Scout's Rest Ranch was used as a place for Buffalo Bill and his family to produce livestock, and as a place for him to rest between his show tours. He also entertained guests at the ranch, and it provided a place for his show performers to rehearse.

After 1913 Cody sold the ranch to a private landowner, who in turn sold 23 acres to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in 1961 for designation as a State Historical Park. Since being established as a state historical park in 1965, the mansion and barn have been restored and a wealth of Cody memorabilia has been acquired and placed on display. The mansion contains many displays and artifacts used by Buffalo Bill, his family and many of the guests he hosted. The mansion is open to the public for self-guided tours from late spring until early fall.

The barn currently contains many of the original stallion stalls, and the front area of the barn contains displays depicting events hosted by Buffalo Bill and activities that occurred on the ranch. These include a exhibits of saddle making and blacksmithing. A display of wagons used on the ranch by the Buffalo Bill family and staff wagons used during this era are also located in the barn. Due to the historical significance of the property, the state historical park was placed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historical Places in 1978 and was established as a National Historical Landmark in 2021.



Historical photo of Scout's Rest Ranch.

Directly adjacent to the state historical park is the 233-acre Buffalo Bill Ranch SRA. This land was also historically part of Buffalo Bill's Scout's Rest Ranch. This parcel was donated to the Commission in 1989 and abuts the North Platte River. Since the establishment of the SRA, many recreational opportunities have been developed, which include RV and tent camping, trail hiking, equestrian trail rides, an archery range and wildlife viewing. Both parks are full of natural history and the natural heritage of the North Platte area. The next section describes the purpose of this master plan for the Buffalo Bill Ranch SHP and SRA.

PURPOSE

Since being acquired by the Game and Parks, the parks have provided many historical and recreational opportunities representing the heritage of Buffalo Bill Cody for park guests. Many of the facilities and infrastructure are in need of upgrades and renovation. Park division staff are also mindful of park guests' increased needs and recognize the need to create opportunities to increase visitor use. These things have allowed Park division staff to acknowledge the purpose for creating a master plan for both parks.

The purpose of this master plan is to guide Game and Parks in improving the recreational, historical and educational programming opportunities for park visitors. This master plan will assist staff in efficiently managing and operating the facilities of Buffalo Bill SHP and SRA into the future. The master plan process started with an inventory of existing infrastructure at the park, which is described in the next section.

PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

To establish a baseline understanding of park amenities and facilities, a site inventory and assessment was completed by Planning division and Park division staff. This assessment also provided an opportunity for Park division staff to present the Planning and Programming division staff with

information to better understand the areas and facilities that are in need of improvement, renovations or upgrades to better meet the needs of park guests and users into the future. This section describes the location and current condition of amenities and facilities offered at the parks.

Park Circulation and Traffic Pattern

The first thing to assess when looking at the park is the availability and ease of access for park guests. The parks can be accessed by two different means (Figure 2). The SRA can be accessed by travelling north on North Buffalo Bill Avenue and is identified by a log entrance façade with a park sign. Upon entering the park, the entrance road is a gravel substrate that guides users to the concessionaire to the east or continues northeast to the SRA. The current configuration of this entrance has been noted as a safety issue: some vehicles drive into the park at a high rate of speed and cause damage. Some motorists assume North Buffalo Bill Avenue continues north, but it actually ends at the entrance to the park. Once heading further east, a two-lane gravel road navigates users throughout the SRA, where it eventually loops around the campground, picnicking, river access, and archery range areas and reconnects with the main road.

Scout's Rest Ranch Road runs west along the southern border of the SHP, which provides access to the two parking areas at the SHP. The larger east parking is located 200 yards from the mansion and the barn. This parking lot was built around the trees and landscaping, which has allowed the asphalt to crumble, suggesting the need for the parking lot to be renovated. The smaller west parking lot provides easier access to the mansion, which contains Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant (ADA) parking for park users to easily get to the mansion and the park grounds. The west parking lot is also older and could benefit from updating and renovation.



Figure 1. Location of Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and State Recreation Area, North Platte, NE.

State Historical Park

The SHP is one of two park properties at this location. To the left of the main entrance is the SHP, also referred to as Scout’s Rest Ranch, which currently hosts the historical facilities that were once the home and a place to relax by William “Buffalo Bill” Cody. These facilities include the mansion, barn, ice house, cob house, spring house, superintendent residence, and staff office and maintenance facilities for both parks (Table 1 and Figure 2). Due to the local and national historical and cultural significance of the ranch, the SHP is recognized by the National Park Service’s National Registered Historic Places and National Historic Landmark. The ranch was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 1978 and covers 6.93 acres of the ranch including the mansion, barn, cob house, ice house and spring house/cellar. Because of the rich history and heritage associated with the park, Scout’s Rest Ranch has recently met the eligibility requirements being being listed as a National Historic Landmark. In 2021, Scout’s Rest Ranch was officially designated as a National Historic Landmark, and encompasses 8.25 acres of the ranch, including many of the facilities and amenities located in the SHP (Figure 2). The following sub-sections characterize the main facilities and amenities at the SHP.

Table 1. List of facilities and amenities considered within the National Historic Landmark designation at the Buffalo Bill ranch State Historical Park and the year/timeframe they were originally constructed.

Facility/ Amenity	Year(s) Constructed
Ranch House	1886/1909
Cob House	ca. 1880s
Ice House	ca. 1880s
Spring House/Cellar	1908-1909
Comfort Station	ca. 1960s
Barn	1887
Corral	ca. 1960s
Windmill	ca. 1880s
Scout Creek Irrigation System	ca. 1880s/1960s
West End Pond Bridge	ca. 1960s
Dam Bridge	ca. 1960s
Concrete/Earthen Footbridge	ca. 1960s
Wooden Arch Footbridge	ca. 1960s
Landscaped Lawns	ca. 1880s
Parking Lot	ca. 1960s
Roads and Paths	ca. 1960s



Figure 2. Current amenities, facilities and buildings located on the Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park property.

Mansion

The mansion, completed in October 1886, is one of several pinnacle attractions at the SHP and sits upon the original constructed footprint. The mansion is a two-story, nine-room Victorian, Second Empire-style house, built for \$3,900. The back end of the house was added in 1909, which included forced air heating, electricity and other modern amenities at that time; and was used as the servants' dining room and living quarters.



Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park Mansion.

Currently, the mansion showcases the furniture and interpretive displays representative of Buffalo Bill's history, family and items used during the era. For instance, the interior of the mansion contains displays and furniture including some of the original items owned by Buffalo Bill and are currently either owned by the agency or on loan from historical organizations. Visitors are required to pay a \$2 fee to tour the mansion and grounds, in addition to a park permit entry fee. The mansion also doubles as the main office and visitor center, which includes office space for staff and the gift shop. The mansion doubling as the visitor center and gift shop for the park has raised concerns about the wear and tear of the building. The amount of foot traffic and use of the building as the gift shop, staff office and park guest check-in has heightened concerns.

Game and Parks Commission and partners have conducted various restoration and preservation efforts following acquisition and include restoring the siding shingles, railings, various decorative details, wall reconstruction and restoration, and installation of shutters. Many of the displays throughout the mansion have been upgraded, but remain in need of proper curating and storage facilities to preserve



Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park Mansion.

them. Other restorative activities have also included installation of shingles and reconstructing the original chimneys (2015), repainting the exterior to reflect the original colors of the mansion (2019) and cupola.

Ice House, Cob House and Spring House

The ice house, cob house and spring house were used for storing many of the everyday living items necessary for Buffalo Bill and his family, along with their guests at the ranch. These three smaller structures are located immediately to the west of the mansion.

The ice house provided storage of ice, cut from the ranch pond behind the house in the winter months, and perishable food items. This was essentially the ranch's refrigeration, because there was not any electricity in the 1800s for refrigerating perishable food items, etc.

The cob house was used to store corn cobs. The corn cobs stored within the cob house, which were used as a heating source for the stove and heater in the house, due to the scarcity of trees present on the western Nebraska prairie.

The spring house was used to store vegetables, meats and dairy products for keeping them fresh throughout the year. The spring-fed pool area next to the spring house kept the room cool throughout the summer months.

Each of these facilities are in reasonable condition, but general maintenance and repair may be needed to ensure the integrity and restoration of the structures.

Scout's Rest Ranch Barn

Scout's Rest Ranch barn is another main attraction at the SHP. The 10,360-square-foot, two-story barn was constructed in 1887. The barn rests in the middle of the park property and is signified by the large white letters spelling "SCOUT'S REST RANCH." The historic barn battens on the outside of the barn are painted red and white, along with many other architectural details that are characterized throughout the building. Historically, this building was used to stable 80 horses and store hay and ranch equipment for operating the ranch.



Scout's Rest Ranch barn at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.

The first story of the barn currently contains many of the stallion stalls and displays depicting events hosted by Buffalo Bill and activities that occurred on the ranch. These activities include exhibits that represent saddle making and blacksmithing. A display of wagons used on the ranch by the Cody family and ranch hands are also displayed inside the barn.

The second story was historically used for hay and feed storage for the horses that were housed inside the barn. This area was previously open and available for the public to visit and use for events. However, safety concerns related to structural integrity of the second floor, ADA access and egress, and the need for an improved fire suppression forced a decision to close the second floor area to public access.



Historical photo of Scout's Rest Ranch barn.

Superintendent Residences

There are two superintendent residences located at the SHP. These areas include a house, garage and yard areas for personal use by the superintendents of the park areas. These living quarters are in two separate areas of the park. One is located in the northwest corner of the park and the second is located in the northeast corner. Both houses are located out of the historic landmark boundary and could be better buffered from the visitors viewshed. Both facilities will need continuous maintenance and updating.

Walkways and Hard Surface Access Roads

Walkways and hard surface access roads exist throughout the park. These walkways and hard surface access roads were built in the 1960s and offer safe circulation for guests to access the grounds throughout the park, while providing staff access for maintenance of the park's facilities. These access roads and walkways will need updating or repairs to meet safety and ADA compliance.

Staff Office and Maintenance Buildings

There are several buildings on the property that support staff and the park. One building doubles as a staff office, artifact storage and maintenance shop facility. This building is located immediately northwest of the west superintendent residence. This facility does have HVAC amenities within the structure, but the current HVAC system and storage facilities within the building are not adequate to properly store the historical artifacts, photographs, ledgers and other historical items currently housed in this facility. The second building, located to the west of the east park superintendent housing quarters, is mainly used as the maintenance facility building, which provides storage and maintenance space for the park equipment.

Bison Pen

The SHP currently hosts a live bison pen exhibit for park visitors that is home to several bison. The bison are currently cared for year-round at the park. The live bison area provides opportunities for park users to learn about the natural history of bison on the prairie. The bison pen is not a large area and can only hold a limited number of animals. Park staff have recently worked with veterinarians to ensure this area is adequate for the current number of animals, but more space for these animals may be beneficial. Other considerations could also include a temporary display of bison for high visitation periods.

Programming, Events and Activities

Along with the regular and daily tours of the SHP grounds, the park staff host many events and activities at the SHP throughout the year, including Christmas at the Cody's, First Day Hikes, candlelight tours, Pow Wow, Vintage Baseball and Halloween events. Christmas at the Cody's is one of the larger annual events, which hosts a few thousand local and non-local visitors to the park. This event is Christmas-themed, where park staff, non-profit organizations and many community volunteers decorate each room within the mansion with Christmas trees, lights and ornaments. The exterior of the mansion and barn are also decorated with Christmas lights. The event many winter themed activities for families to enjoy.

Another popular event at the park is the First Day Hikes, an annual event hosted on New Year's Day. These hikes provide a winter hike experience to tour the grounds of the SHP, while also providing participants opportunities for winter fun (e.g., building snow angels, snowmen, etc.).

Park staff have recently provided candlelight tour events, which are hosted in the late summer and fall. These tours consist of a tour of the mansion and park grounds.

The park also hosts a Native American Pow-Wow event. This event occurs annually the second weekend of July. The Pow-Wow provides opportunities for participants to experience Native American culture and emphasizes Buffalo Bill's contribution and appreciation of the many Native Americans he included in his Wild West Show. The Pow-Wow event hosts individuals from many tribes across the nation who participate in dance and drumming contests, along with singers and vendors for park guests and the surrounding community to enjoy.

The vintage baseball game event is held in the summer. This event replicates the sport of baseball as played in the 19th century.

Local and out-of-state participants dress in vintage baseball uniforms and play a historic baseball game on the SHP grounds.

Halloween-themed events are offered throughout October. These events provide park users haunted hayrack rides and tours of the mansion, pumpkin patch and other October-themed activities for families to enjoy. The next section describes the current state of the SRA property.



Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park mansion and Scout's Rest Ranch barn decorated during Christmas at the Cody's.

State Recreation Area

Buffalo Bill Ranch SRA currently has many recreational opportunities for park users, such as an RV campground, tent campgrounds, archery range, crane viewing area, hiking and equestrian trails, canoe/kayak launch and restroom facilities (Figure 3). The vast area that is not developed contains wetland and floodplain areas that pose challenges for development of park facilities and amenities. This area consists of moist soils and is prone to being inundated by high water events. Hunting is allowed on the park area, but due to the proximity of buildings and camping facilities, hunting is very limited.

Concessionaire Area

A concessionaire operates its services in the southern portion of the park and is located immediately to the east of the main entrance. Within the concessionaire area of the park is a restroom facility and iron ranger for collection of camping and daily park entry fees when park guests arrive after hours. The concessionaire currently has an annual concession agreement with Game and Parks to provide several recreational activities within the park, such as a petting zoo/farm, horseback rides and tanking outfitter. With limited staff at the parks, this agreement affords additional recreational opportunities for park guests. The concessionaire also assists in promoting and hosting seasonal events within the park (e.g., pumpkin patch, fall and winter activities, etc.).

Campground Facilities

The campground area hosts many amenities for the park. This area is in the north portion of the park and contains a RV campground area, tent camping area, restroom facilities, potable water access, and canoe/kayak launch and beach area.

The RV camping facilities consists of 23 RV camping pad sites. Eighteen of the RV camping sites include 30-amp electrical service, and five sites include 50-amp electrical service, which provides enough power to serve today's RV campers. The RV camping facilities also have several hydrants throughout the campgrounds that supply potable water for RV camping guests. Upgrading all the camping pads to 50-amp service and expanding water service connections at the RV campgrounds should be considered to meet the needs of today's RV camping users.

Immediately west of the RV campground, there are nine primitive tent camping sites spread throughout the inside of the camping loop road. Some of the primitive tent camping sites are located a bit farther from the restroom facilities near the RV camping area. Constructing restroom facilities that are closer to the tent camping area would benefit these users.



Aerial photo of the campground facilities at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Recreation Area.

The camping area of the park abuts the North Platte River, which provides fishing, limited hunting access and canoe/kayak opportunities for park visitors. The canoe/kayak access is a primitive, sand and gravel area, and could provide more opportunity for paddle sports if upgraded.

The picnic shelter for the campground area is adjacent to the campground restroom. This facility is relatively new and provides picnicking opportunities for park visitors with several picnic tables and a grill. The picnic shelter facilities are open to park users on a first-come, first-served basis, or can be rented by contacting park staff.

Archery Range

The archery range at the park is the only public range offered in the North Platte area and provides opportunities for park visitors to enjoy archery shooting sports. These facilities are located on the north end of the park, across from the tent and RV campground and picnicking area. This archery range was constructed in 2020 as a joint effort between Park division staff and volunteers from the North Platte community. The archery range contains seven targets set at 10, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50 and 60 yards.



Equestrian trail users at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Recreation Area.

Hiking and Equestrian Trails

The SRA hosts approximately 3 miles of multi-use trails for hikers and concessionaire guided horseback rides. The trails meander through the wetland areas of the east side of the park and along the bank of the North Platte River. These trails not only provide hiking and horseback riding activities for the park's users, but also provide opportunities for users to enjoy the flora and fauna throughout the park.

Sandhill Crane Viewing

Sandhill crane viewing is a popular activity during crane migration season, as the cranes frequently roost, rest and feed in open fields and meadows adjacent to the SRA, providing opportunities for visitors to watch and enjoy. One permanent crane viewing area is located along the park's west boundary. The park has two mobile viewing blinds that can be used on the park property and is also used for other crane viewing opportunities in the North Platte Area.



Figure 3. Current amenities at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Recreation Area.

PLANNING PROCESS

A planning process was established to create the goals and objectives of this plan. In recent years, the agency has recognized the need for relevancy of current and future programming, education, infrastructure, facilities and amenities for Buffalo Bill Ranch to increase visitor use. After identifying these needs the Parks division decided to begin the master planning process in 2020. Bi-weekly meetings with a core team, consisting of Parks division staff, were conducted to facilitate the planning process. These meetings provided opportunities to create four goals, objectives for each goal, and action items to meet the goals of this plan. The core team meetings also resulted in creating a public engagement process for the plan and was adopted by agency staff in 2022.

A site visit with park staff was conducted on October 21, 2020. This site visit included touring park areas. The objectives of the site visit were to provide an opportunity for the park's staff to discuss the current needs, challenges, and future opportunities of the park from their perspective; allow planning staff to capture baseline information assessing the facilities and amenities throughout the park; and to better understand the programming and interpretation events and activities. This information was used to establish the goals of the plan and their associated objectives and action items.

An internal stakeholder meeting was held in February 2021 to assist the parks team in refining the goals. Staff from Fisheries, Wildlife, and Fish and Wildlife Education divisions were in attendance. Staff were challenged to provide input on the four major goals and to assist with filling any gaps the core team might not have addressed in the initial draft. The input gathered from these meetings was incorporated into the overall goals, objectives and action items within this plan.

An external stakeholder focus group was held on June 8, 2021, at the Lincoln County History Museum. The objectives of this exercise were to expand upon the objectives and action items of the plan with partners and community representatives. The external stakeholder focus group consisted of various key stakeholders affiliated with North Platte, which included city administrators, education administrators, economic development and tourism associates, and neighbors/previous owner of the land where the park is today. The participants were asked a variety of questions related to their experiences at the park and about establishing and maintaining partnerships with the agency and park staff.

This exercise concluded with many participants expressing their ideas about how to: build stronger partnerships with the agency and the park information; better promote park activities throughout the community; and what programming, events and opportunities they think would benefit the park and the North Platte community.

A landscape architect was hired to conceptualize specific features of both parks for the master plan. Four key facility components were identified, which included



External stakeholder comments and suggestions from the external stakeholder workgroup session..

the entrance façade and park entrance experience, overall masterplan of the SHP, and a potential new visitor center and themed natural playscape. These features were chosen because staff thought these would be the most beneficial amenities to enhance future opportunities for park visitors. The core team and landscape architect met to illustrate conceptual ideas that would relate to the history and needs of the park.

To gain input from the public, a virtual meeting and digital workshop were hosted to showcase the conceptual designs on September 23, 2021, via Zoom. A virtual and digital public participation platform were used instead of hosting an in-person open house, due to concerns with coronavirus cases across the state. The virtual public meeting consisted of presenting the four conceptual designs created by the landscape architect and the concept of the future Buffalo Bill Heritage Shooting Complex.



Invitation flyer for the virtual public meeting and digital workshop.

To capture the participants' opinions and thoughts about each concept, participants were asked several survey questions related to each concept after each concept was presented during the presentation. The virtual open house poses several limitations in the type and quantity of questions that could be presented to the participants. To account for these limitations, and to attempt to reach more participants who might not have been able to attend the virtual open house, a digital workshop was also hosted by the agency.

The digital workshop was set up to be similar to the virtual public meeting for collecting additional input and to provide an opportunity for the Parks division to ask other questions related to the master plan that were not able to be presented during the virtual meeting. The workshop was available for two weeks after the public virtual meeting. Information provided by participants during this exercise was then refined, summarized and included to refine the goals and objectives of the plan, which are outlined in the next section.

VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

Through the planning process, the core team developed a vision statement and goals for this plan. These goals cover four major areas for the two parks, which are related to the infrastructure, interpretation/education/programming, recreation, and natural resources of the park area. Each goal is accompanied by its associated objectives and action items, which are presented in this section of the plan.

To clarify the definition of goals, objectives and action items presented in this plan, a description of each item is presented below.

Goals: An overarching statement characterizing what Parks division staff want to achieve for the parks in the long-term.

Objectives: Actionable statements to achieve the parks' goals.

Action Items: Specific actions to achieve the parks' objectives.

Vision Statement

Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and State Recreation Area will incorporate the historic setting and natural landscape, providing both educational and recreational experiences that connect the public with the story and influence of Buffalo Bill Cody's life.

Infrastructure Goal

Provide sustainable, updated facilities and infrastructure to promote a safe visitor experience.

Objective 1: Update facilities and infrastructure to ensure safety and access throughout the park and its facilities.

Action Items

- Repair and renovate west parking lot at the SHP to ensure accessibility to the Scouts Rest Ranch grounds and mansion
- Repair and renovate the large east parking lot at the SHP to meet accessibility standards and provide safe access to Scouts Rest Ranch grounds and mansion
- Continue improving accessibility concerns to the mansion, Scouts Rest Ranch Barn, and other outbuildings throughout the SHP
- Repair or replace walking surfaces to improve the safety, accessibility, and aesthetics of the mansion courtyard on the SHP grounds
- Enhance and maintain landscaping to improve aesthetics of the mansion courtyard on the SHP grounds
- Engage Engineering and Operations and Construction divisions to assess and remedy drainage issues along the barn at the SHP
- Assess connectivity, accessibility and maintenance for walkways between the buildings and make repairs or replace as needed at the SHP
- Assess and restore Buffalo Bill's relocated cabin (aka. North Cabin) at the SHP
- Install security system in Scouts Rest Ranch Barn at the SHP to ensure items, artifacts and assets are protected and facilities are secure

- Install security system in the mansion at the SHP to ensure items, artifacts and assets are protected and facilities are secure
- Update fire suppression system in the Scouts Rest Ranch Barn at the SHP for compliance with fire protection standards
- Install a restroom facility near the tent camping area at the SRA to accommodate tent camping users
- Assess the current traffic flow through the SRA, specifically to improve the safety of traffic flow through RV campground

Objective 2: Update and expand utilities throughout the SHP and SRA.

Action Items

- Improve and update water and electrical utilities for the restroom north of the pond at the SHP to provide hot water and better lighting in the facility
- Update and improve lighting in Scouts Rest Ranch barn at the SHP to improve safety
- Provide more electrical outlets/sources throughout the SHP grounds to provide electricity needs for events and activities provided by the park
- Continue utility, upgrades to the mansion, Scouts Rest Ranch Barn, and other outbuildings throughout the SHP
- Install improved outdoor lighting at the SHP to provide better safety and security for staff and park users
- Install sprinkler irrigation system throughout the SHP green space areas to maintain grounds more effectively and efficiently
- Upgrade the RV camping utilities from 30-amp to 50-amp services at the SRA campground to meet the current and future needs of RV and trailer campers
- Connect the park sewer system to city sewer and water to better accommodate sewer and water access needs for park guests
- Map the utilities throughout the SRA and SHP to characterize the locations of all underground infrastructure
- Provide internet access via Wi-fi at SHP and SRA for visitors and staff

Objective 3: Meet accessibility standards for public facilities.

Action Items

- Assess accessibility issues of the mansion at the SHP and prioritize upgrades as needed
- Construct a removable ramp that will accommodate users to enter and exit the mansion at the SHP, while meeting historic preservation standards of History Nebraska
- Create accessible interactive interpretation that presents the artifacts, displays and history of the SHP mansion second floor

- Update restroom facility at the SHP to meet current ADA standards
- Repair or replace walking surfaces and landscaping to improve the safety, accessibility and aesthetics of the mansion courtyard on the SHP grounds
- Create ADA-compliant access for the archery range and natural playground at the SRA to meet current ADA standards
- Improve parking throughout the SRA to meet current ADA standards
- Explore the feasibility of providing ADA-compliant trails at the SRA

Objective 4: Provide new facilities for visitors and park staff.

Action Items

- Construct a new Visitor Center at the SHP, where feasible, that will provide and consolidate services for users (e.g., visitor check-in, tours, gift shop, displays, etc.) and park staff (e.g., office space, meeting rooms, proper museum grade artifact storage, cataloging and curation, etc.)
- Create a multi-event space area on the SHP grounds to accommodate private or public events (e.g., weddings, reunions, etc.)
- Evaluate locations for appropriate bison pen space to better accommodate current number of captive bison at the SHP
- Assess and construct crane viewing areas at the SHP to provide more crane viewing opportunities for park guests
- Construct a new shooting range at the SRA facility that will highlight the themes of Buffalo Bill's legacy and his Wild West shows
- Centralize operations by providing a staff facility that will house maintenance shop and storage areas along with consolidating staff office space (e.g., combine shops to provide for efficient storage and workload) at the SRA
- Assess and construct crane viewing areas at the SRA to provide more crane viewing opportunities for park guests

Interpretation/Education/Programming Goal

Engage park users through informational and experiential opportunities showcasing the life of Buffalo Bill and the natural history of the SRA and SHP.

Objective 1: Update displays in the mansion, Scout's Rest Ranch barn and other outbuildings of historical significance to showcase more artifacts and history of Buffalo Bill at the SHP.

Action Items

- Design, construct and install displays that will help protect and preserve historical artifacts currently displayed in the mansion

- Design and construct new historical artifact displays at the mansion and Scout's Rest Ranch barn that will utilize the artifacts that are in storage
- Create and provide interactive displays and audio tours to enhance visitor experience in learning about the history of Buffalo Bill
- Create a rotation schedule for the displays in the mansion showcasing different collections of historical artifacts to entice visitors to revisit the park
- Utilize partnership resources for historical museum updates, displays and artifact preservation
- Plan and design areas for artifact and interpretative displays within proposed visitor center

Objective 2: Provide non-historical era events and interpretation at the SHP.

Action Items

- Promote park events using the park's wagons, etc. at city and local community events and locations (e.g., NebraskaLand days, Lincoln County Historical Museum, etc.)
- Continue to host Halloween events that could be historical or non-historical in context
- Collaborate with local partners (e.g., Dusty Trails, Historical museum, etc.) for programs/events such as shootout demonstrations, cook-offs and cookouts at the SHP
- Continue to provide 4th grade days events with North Platte School District Elementary Schools
- Explore and develop opportunities for "drive-in" movie events at the SHP
- Provide opportunities for a historical speaker series at the SHP to connect users and surrounding community with the history of the area of North Platte and Nebraska
- Promote, host and participate in running, walking and/or cycling events that will showcase or include the park area as part of the event route

Objective 3: Create and provide activities, events and programs that relate to the natural areas of the parks.

Action Items

- Explore implementing technologies throughout the SHP to provide self-guided educational opportunities for park users
- Provide First Day Hikes to promote hiking, recreation, and natural history of the SRA



Game and Parks employees participating in a parade promoting Scout's Rest Ranch in North Platte, NE.

- Provide interpretive signage for the trail system at the SRA to educate park guests about the natural history of the park



First Day Hike participants enjoying a hike at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.

- Create and provide more naturalist activities (e.g., BioBlitzes, guided hikes, interpretive programs with bison, etc.) that promote the history and natural resources of both parks
- Provide more areas for crane viewing opportunities for both parks
- Collaborate with the Watchable Wildlife Program to create programming related to wildlife watching for both parks

Objective 4: Create and provide activities, programs and events that relate to the historical period of Buffalo Bill's era in the North Platte area and the larger-than-life charisma of Buffalo Bill.

Action Items

- Provide more living history programs of the era represented during Buffalo Bill's legacy (e.g., blacksmithing, bison ranching, trick shot exhibition, etc.) at the SHP
- Provide additional era programming to include programs relevant to today (e.g., soap making, buck skinning, candle dipping, ranch life skills, etc.) at the SHP
- Continue to host and enhance the Christmas at the Cody's experience at the SHP
- Continue to host and enhance the annual Pow Wow activities, vintage baseball and historical "games" that represent the historical era of the SHP and local area
- Engage historically knowledgeable volunteers to assist and participate with historically significant activities, programs and events at the SHP
- Provide parades at the SHP depicting the history of Buffalo Bill
- Implement staff training for activities within the proposed shooting facility at the SRA
- Create and implement programming and events for the proposed shooting facility at the SRA

Objective 5: Engage partners and the community to promote and assist with activities and opportunities at the two parks.

Action Items

- Coordinate with the Communications division to create a marketing plan to promote park activities and events and attract users

- Connect with traditional and non-traditional partners to assist with promoting park activities and resources
- Promote the park by actively participating in North Platte and surrounding community celebrations
- Cross-promote with tourism, local businesses and Chamber of Commerce events and programming
- Establish a friends of the park group
- Increase involvement with Boy Scouts, public school district and friends of the park group to assist in events and programming
- Create robust volunteer program to assist with events and activities at both parks
- Create live social media events to engage with the public about historical topics that will create interest for users to visit the park and inspire participants to see historical sites in person

Objective 6: Develop and provide interpretation and educational programming for a diverse and inclusive audience at both parks.

Action Items

- Identify groups interested in hosting and assisting with educational and recreational programming activities at the parks
- Coordinate with educational partners to develop educational curriculum that meet the needs for State of Nebraska Sciences and Social Studies standards (e.g., Fish and Wildlife Education division, History Nebraska, North Platte School District, University of Nebraska, etc.)
- Coordinate opportunities to collaborate with local school districts to design events that connect with the natural history and historical context of the park areas
- Collaborate with organizations and other partners to translate interpretation and educational programming into multiple languages to provide inclusive programming to park guests
- Develop a distribution and marketing plan related to interpretation and educational programming to encourage identified groups to visit the park

Objective 7: Connect park users to the natural environment at the two parks.

Action Items

- Develop a formal park naturalist program to promote and educate the public about the recreation, cultural and natural resources opportunities at both park properties
- Explore creating an additional temporary park naturalist position to assist with facilitating park naturalist programs
- Create and provide new interpretive signage and wayfinding throughout the parks
- Explore self-guided technologies to educate users about the natural history and resources of the park areas

- Develop park programs that will provide hands-on experiences that connect people with nature
- Construct wildlife viewing opportunities (e.g., bat houses, wood duck boxes, geese nesting areas, pollinator habitat, viewing blinds and areas, etc.) to provide more wildlife viewing and education opportunities at the SRA

Recreation Goal

Provide recreational opportunities to the public that are unique and engaging to multiple audiences.

Objective 1: Provide for a safe and immersive trail experience for park users.

Action Items

- Develop a sustainable trail system near the river and throughout the wetland area of the SRA to showcase the natural water features
- Install wayfinding signage and interpretative signage throughout the SRA, educating park users about the natural history, flora, and fauna along the trail, and utilizing the Universal Trail Signage Guide and Interpretive Signage Guide
- Develop wildlife viewing areas along the current trail system, utilizing the surrounding natural landscape at the SRA
- Investigate the feasibility of allowing users to bring their own horses to experience the equestrian trails at the SRA
- Assess opportunities to develop a trail system to connect both park areas
- Explore opportunities to create a trailhead facility(ies) that provide(s) a central hub for trail users at both parks

Objective 2: Provide opportunities for park users to explore natural resources of both parks.

Action Items

- Create a themed playscape for kids that represents the historical context and natural landscape at the SHP
- Assess the recreational and interpretive resources available to users and determine locations that could showcase the natural resources of the SRA
- Create a natural playscape for kids that represents the natural landscape of the SRA
- Provide interactive recreation and educational opportunities at Scout Creek, Duck Lake, and the SRA backwater

Objective 3: Provide additional recreational opportunities for park users to experience.

Action Items

- Develop and construct a themed shooting range depicting the era of Buffalo Bill, his history and stories at the SRA
- Implement staff training for activities within the proposed shooting facility at the SRA
- Create and implement programming and events for the proposed shooting facility at the SRA
- Assess the opportunity of constructing unique camping experiences at the SRA
- Expand existing RV and tent camping areas at the SRA to provide more tent camping opportunities
- Explore improvements to and expansion of the beach access at the SRA to provide more opportunities for park guests to swim and explore the river
- Repair and update wildlife viewing blind along river at the SRA
- Evaluate opportunities to provide more active recreation opportunities at the SRA (e.g., disc golf, small venture recreation facilities, etc.)
- Create ADA-compliant fishing/wildlife viewing pier for providing accessible fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities at the SRA
- Assess how to improve water trail access area for kayak/canoe launch at the SRA
- Create a recreational gear rental/borrow program (e.g., fishing poles, binoculars, kayaks, etc.) for park users to explore and interact with the natural areas of the SRA, which could include participation from the park's concessionaire
- Assess park areas, beyond trail opportunities, to identify potential wildlife viewing opportunities to determine feasibility of constructing additional wildlife viewing facilities on the SRA
- Explore the opportunities to expand and construct crane viewing blind(s) on the SRA to provide more crane viewing opportunities on the SRA
- Construct new and refurbish existing birdfeeders and viewing areas throughout the park areas to provide more wildlife viewing opportunities for park guests
- Construct additional picnicking amenities at both parks

Natural Resources Goal

Maintain and preserve the natural resources of the park.

Action Items

Objective 1: Maintain and preserve natural landscape of both parks

- Manage and preserve cottonwood trees on the SHP grounds for listing of state historic trees
- Assess the current natural landscaping with horticulture staff to determine the resources at both park areas and develop a landscaping plan
- Assess the opportunity to graft existing cottonwood trees for future tree plantings for both parks

- Update the landscaping for both parks according to recommendations within the landscaping plan

Objective 2: Manage and monitor native and non-native species to benefit the biodiversity of the park areas

Action Items

- Coordinate with horticulture and wildlife staff to inventory native and non-native species at the park areas, and to assist with the development of a native and non-native species management plan
- Coordinate with Wildlife Division staff to determine effective strategies to control non-native plant species (i.e., phragmites, red cedar and Russian Olive) at the park areas
- Create interpretive signage to educate the public about the management of native species of the park areas
- Develop and implement a plan to remove non-native ornamental plant species at the SHP and replace with historically relevant native plant species

Objective 3: Preserve the water resources of both parks to provide recreational and educational opportunities.

Action Items

- Improve and restore shorelines of Scout Creek at the SHP to create interactive opportunities for park guest to self-discover and explore aquatic species (e.g., Crawdad Creek at Platte River)
- Explore opportunities with Fisheries staff to determine if dredging pond at the SHP is feasible for providing fishing opportunities for park users
- Preserve and maintain water rights from Cody-Dillon Canal and Scout Creek to ensure water rights are being maintained at the SHP
- Investigate the possibility of reducing nutrient and sedimentation into Duck Pond at the SRA to enhance the water quality of the pond
- Explore opportunities with Fisheries division staff to improve and enhance Platte River backwater at SRA to determine if improvements or enhancements are feasible for providing a better fishery

STATE HISTORICAL PARK DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN DESIGNS

The concepts presented in this section incorporate the input and comments provided by Game and Parks staff and the public. The design concepts in this section include an overall master plan, updated entrance façade and flow entering the park, potential future visitor center, natural playground at the SHP, overall master plan of the SRA and future heritage shooting facilities. The final location and final design concepts will be dependent upon the engineering and financial assessment in this plan. These

concepts were chosen because they meet the needs of the park staff to achieve their goals of the plan to improve traffic flow, educational opportunities, artifact storage, artifact areas concerns, increase recreational opportunities, and ultimately increase visitor use at the parks. Once park staff comments were implemented into the designs, we provided several opportunities for the public to comment on a variety of questions related to each of the concepts. Input provided by the public participants were then incorporated in the final design concepts presented below.

Overall Master Plan

The master plan concept for the SHP provides an overview of the potential future development within the park (Figure 4). The park's recent designation as a National Historic Landmark limits the area where new development can occur and is illustrated by the purple dashed rectangle. This limitation only allows for the area outside of this boundary for future implementation of these master plan concepts. This important designation may create new opportunities for federal grant funding for future development.

The master plan concept of the park is an immersive representation and experience that addresses the needs of the park staff and comments provided from the public. For instance, a new entrance and gateway experience addresses the circulation issues presented by park staff. The visitor center would address the needs presented by park staff, which includes: providing more area to showcase many artifacts that are in storage; and providing more space for staff offices and storage of artifacts. The visitor center will also include a place for visitors check-in for park tours and camping, relieving the concerns related to the amount foot traffic that currently occurs at the mansion. The themed natural playscape will provide an immersive educational and recreational experience for younger park users and their families. The parking area is configured to meet the needs of large camping vehicles and buses to maneuver, which is also in close proximity to the visitor center, providing easy access to these facilities. The layout of the overall master plan for the park was well received by the public who participated in the public engagement activities and suggested this proposed master plan would inspire them to visit the park more often.

Park Entrance

The proposed new entrance includes the reconfiguration of the park entrance experience and an entrance façade into the park (Figure 4 through Figure 7). The current configuration of the park entrance has been recognized as a safety issue by park staff (Figure 4). This includes a new gateway feature, reconfiguration of the entrance road, wayfinding monument, entry sculptures, prairie restoration area, pedestrian/bicycle trail and improved concessionaire access (Figure 5), and reconfiguration of the traffic flow and parking. These proposals address these safety concerns, while also providing a grand and unique experience indicating they are entering the parks.

Based on the uniqueness of the design and layout, the new gateway entrance façade invites park users as they are entering the park (Figure 6 and Figure 7). The entrance façade concepts present the parks name, while also identifying the park guests that SHP is to the left and the SRA is to the right of the entrance. Both concepts are designed to mimic the architecture of the existing Scout's Rest Ranch barn, while also incorporating the fonts present in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show advertisement posters and characterizing the grand personality of Buffalo Bill Cody. These concepts also allow options for the park

staff to install banners on each column of the gateway, which could advertise specific events and programming in the park throughout the year. The main difference between these two concepts is that the concept illustrated in Figure 6 specifically identifies Scout's Rest Ranch is to the left of the sign within the SHP and camping is to the right of the sign within the SRA for park users as they enter the park. Feedback from the public related to the park entrance designs indicated they preferred this themed entrance that provides a grand experience. Public also indicated that this design clearly identified they were entering the parks, instead of a continuation of the street entering into the park.

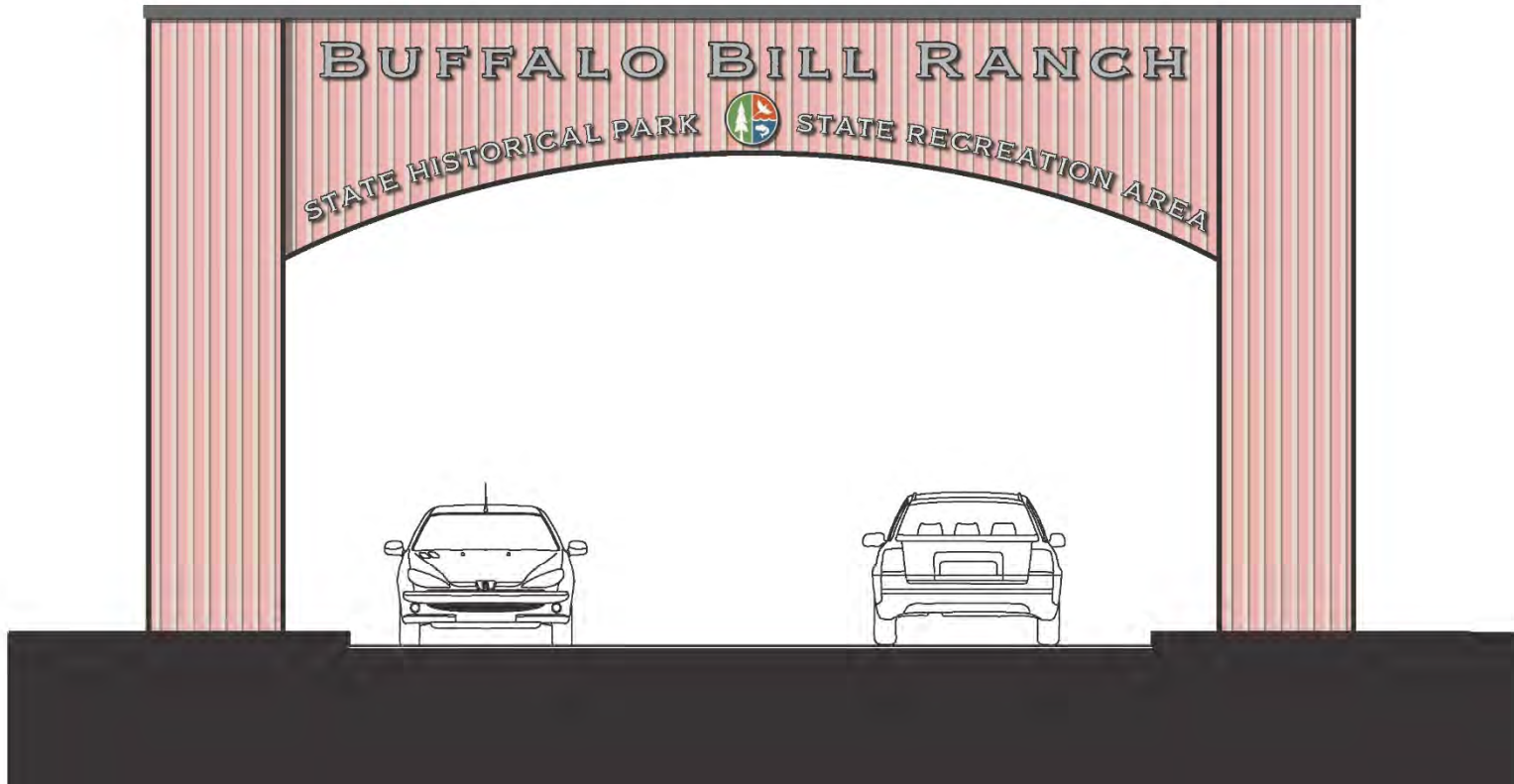
After passing through the gateway entry façade, the entrance road into the park has been reconfigured to include a more curved road upon entering the park (Figure 4). This configuration is expected to encourage park users to slow down when entering the park, potentially minimizing vehicle incidents entering the park. When moving along the curved entrance road, park guests encounter entry sculptures, a wayfinding monument and a prairie restoration area (Figure 5). The entry sculptures bordering the entrance roadway reflect the likes and personality of Buffalo Bill and his Wild West shows (e.g., horses, bison, etc.). The wayfinding monument will provide an opportunity for park users to take photos with friends and family, memorializing their park experience. This wayfinding monument could also represent a grandiose sculpture or signage, which would also portray the character and charisma of Buffalo Bill and his Wild West shows and the natural history of the park area. The entrance concept includes a pull-off area, so users can safely park and explore the entrance sculptures and the wayfinding monument. On the opposite side of the t-intersection, landscape screening is provided to buffer the superintendent's residence from visitors' view when entering the park, which was one of the improvements made from the original concept as a result of the feedback provided from the public. The t-intersection of the entrance road further provides a decision point for park visitors to decide which park they want to enter. A prairie restoration area is aligned on the west side of the entrance road for guests to explore and provides a sense of natural history, which could include an array of prairie plants that are native to Nebraska and the area of North Platte. The concept of having a grand experience when entering the park was well received by public participants and indicated the configuration of the entrance provides a sense of entering the park.



Figure 4. Overall conceptual master plan for the Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park. (Purple dashed rectangle represents the SHP's National Historic Landmark designation.)

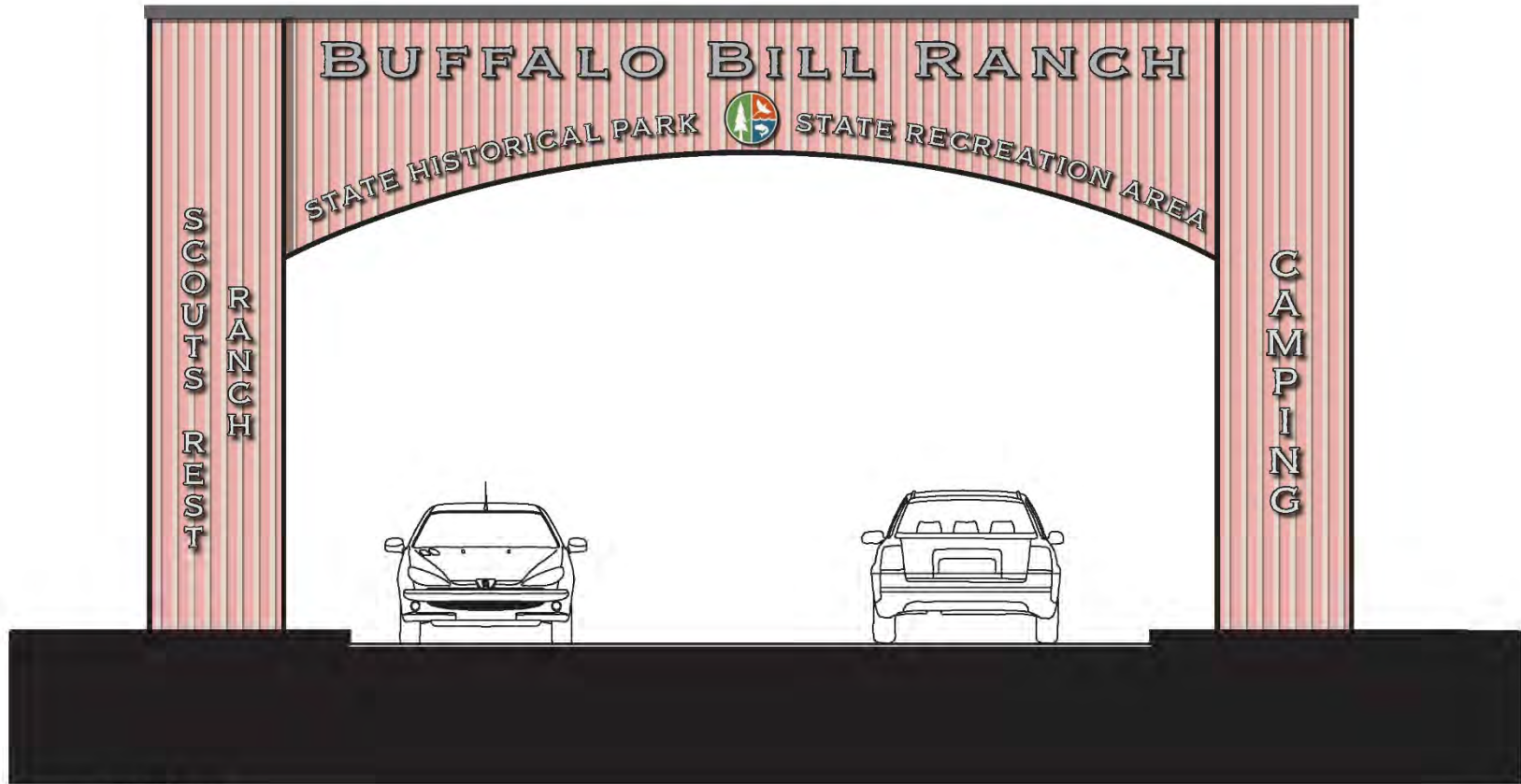


Figure 5. Conceptual design and layout of the park entrance at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and State Recreation Area.



Not to Scale

Figure 6. Version A of the park entrance façade for Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and State Recreation Area.



Not to Scale

Figure 7. Version A of the park entrance façade for Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and State Recreation Area.

Visitor Center

A new visitor center was one of the new facilities proposed by Park division staff during the planning process, which would offer more office, display and event space, as well as space for displaying exhibits and many of the artifacts currently in storage. The proposed visitor center is in close proximity of the historic T-barn that was present on the property in the 1900s, providing an opportunity to create a representation of this historic structure (Figure 7). This proposed location provides a better opportunity for a larger parking area and allows easier access from the west wing of the building to the current green space and barn, where many events are currently hosted. The exterior of the building is conceptually illustrated with a modern feel, while still being representative of a barn structure. The exterior concept illustrates each end of the building with full wall windows, allowing for an open space feel through the building (Figure 8 through Figure 12). Each of these renderings provide several views of the visitor center and illustrate the type of experience the facility would provide for park users. The public liked the look and feel of this design and indicated these facilities would inspire them to visit the park more often.

The proposed floorplan of the visitor center is representative of the original floorplan of the historic T-barn, which had three wings (Figure 12). Based on the input provided from park staff, the floor plan would meet their needs of providing space for events, education classes and offices, along with areas to display the historical artifacts and host rotating displays.

The entrance wing of the facility, identified as the purple rectangle area, could contain the guest services desk, gift shop and artifact displays. This would reduce the amount of foot traffic and wear and tear on displays, infrastructure, furniture and artifacts currently displayed in the mansion when visitors of the park need to register for camping, purchase park passes, etc.

The event space wing, identified in the green rectangle, could be used by park guests to celebrate with friends, families, co-workers, etc. and other special events for the park and community of North Platte. This space would also include storage areas for table and chairs and catering area amenities.

The park operations wing, presented in the red rectangle, would provide services for park staff. This would include office space, climate-controlled storage facilities to store historical artifacts and documents, and public and staff restrooms. This space would also provide more programming and educational opportunities for park users or school groups using the facility. The northern exterior sections of the visitor center would be allocated for event space and crane viewing. Adjacent to the visitor center would be a themed playscape, nature path area and expanded parking area for providing additional recreational opportunities to the SHP. Asked what type of events they would like to host at this facility, the majority of participants indicated they would like to host an array of events at these facilities (e.g., local, family, wedding, church and company outings, etc.). Public participants also felt the visitor center and its amenities would provide an area that meet their needs to view sandhill cranes.

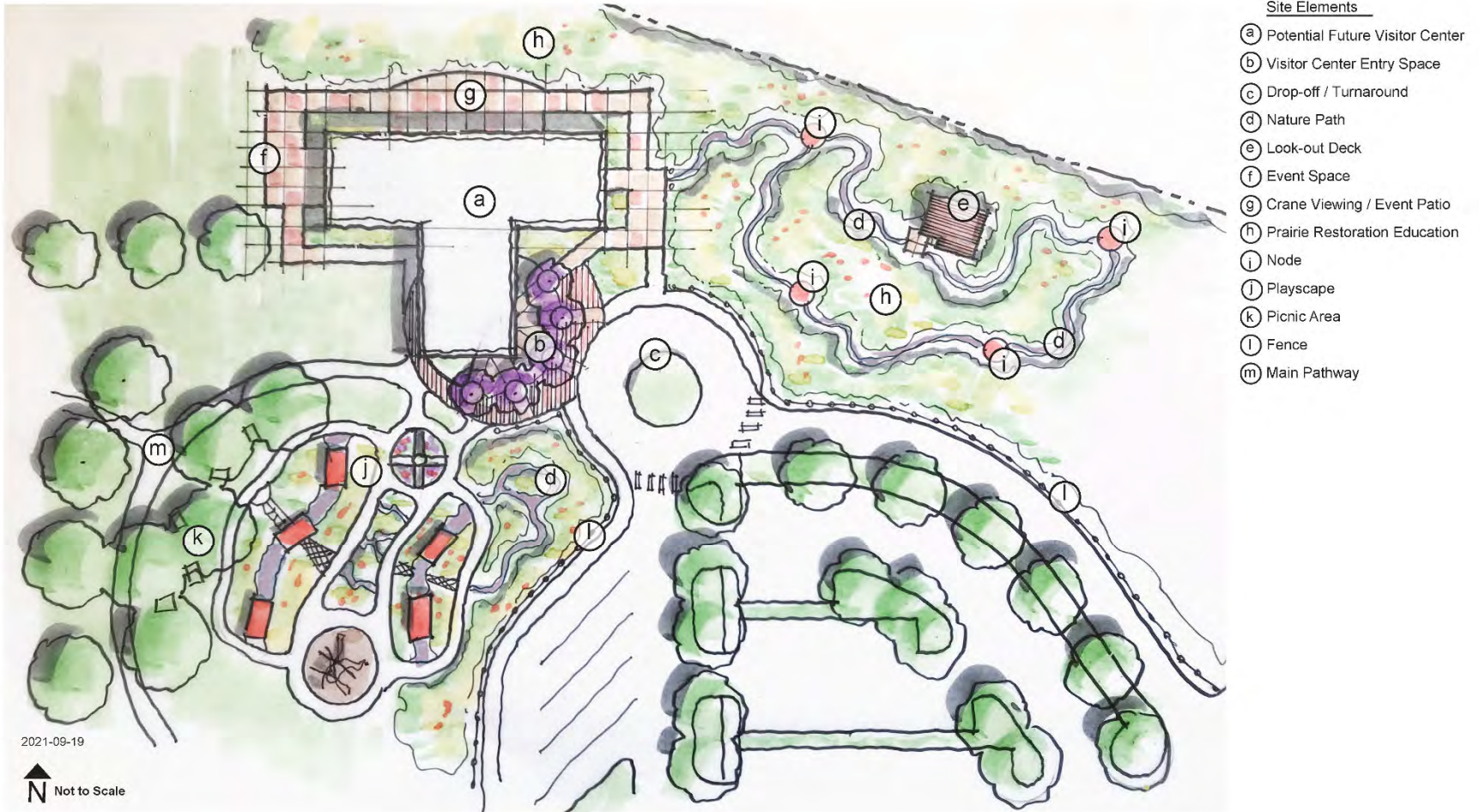


Figure 8. Conceptual design and layout of the potential visitor center, themed playscape, natural trail and crane viewing platform area and expanded parking area at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.



VISITORS CENTER CONCEPTUAL IMAGES
Buffalo Bill SHP/SRA



Figure 9. Looking northwest, front view of the exterior conceptual design of the potential future visitor center at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.



VISITORS CENTER CONCEPTUAL IMAGES
Buffalo Bill SHP



Figure 10. Facing north, front view of the exterior conceptual design of the potential future visitor center at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.



VISITORS CENTER CONCEPTUAL IMAGES
Buffalo Bill SHP



Figure 11. Looking south, the exterior conceptual design highlighting the viewshed maintained through the building and back patio area of the potential future visitor center at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.



VISITORS CENTER CONCEPTUAL IMAGES
Buffalo Bill SHP



Figure 12. Looking west by northwest, front perspective view of the exterior conceptual design of the potential future visitor center during dusk at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.



CHALK
site design

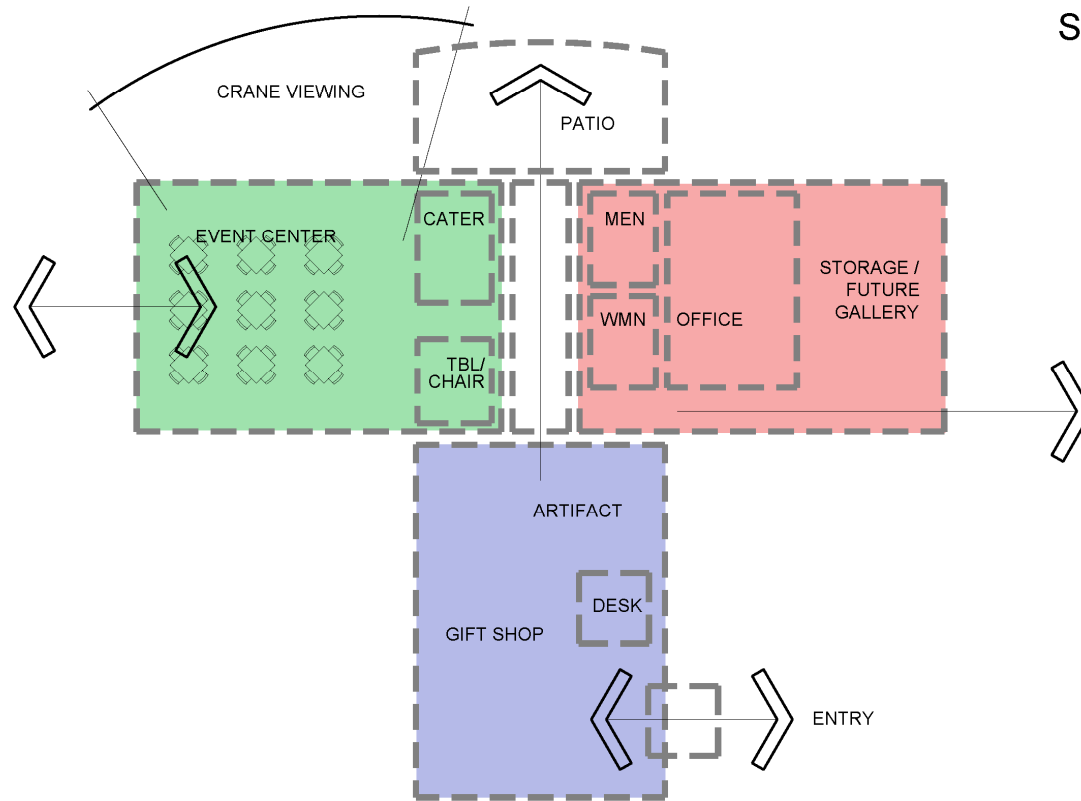
BUFFALO BILL SHP/SRA VISITOR CENTER/EVENT SPACE

NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

SCALE: NOT TO SCALE

SPACE DIAGRAM

PLANNING ARCHITECTURE INTERIORS WWW.AOMAHA.CO



- Hands-on
- Empowered
- Relentless
- Fresh Eyed
- Inquisitive
- Nimble
- Style Agnostic

Figure 13. Conceptual floorplan of the proposed visitor center at Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park.

Nature Trail

A nature trail is proposed as an amenity near the visitor center. This accessible nature trail would be located directly east of the visitor center, which includes natural history signage, natural prairie area and crane viewing area. The surfacing for this trail should meet accessibility guidelines. The signage and natural prairie area would provide park users with an educational natural history experience of the property, and the crane viewing platform will provide more crane viewing opportunities, so that guests can capitalize on the crane and wildlife viewing experience at the park. In addition, the pasture area to the north of the platform is used for agricultural purposes by the adjacent neighbor, which would allow park guests an agricultural experience, even though the park is located within an urban area.

Parking Area

The proposed parking area replaces the current parking lot. The parking area will provide an updated parking facility that will be more inviting, safe and accessible to the future visitor center. This planned parking area provides RV parking for visitors checking-in to camp with their RVs or trailered camping vehicles. The parking area will contain sufficient space to accommodate for the turnaround radius of these larger vehicles. The parking area will be the main parking lot for the eastern side of the SHP and the visitor center and is a distance away from the mansion. Public participants shared their concerns about the distance of the parking area in relation to the mansion and that it could be challenging for some park guests wanting to visit the mansion. To address these concerns, the current ADA accessible parking available near the mansion will remain part of the park design and functionality to ensure close access to the facilities in the western areas of the park.

Themed Playscape

As part of the planning process, Parks division staff liked the idea of a themed playscape at the SHP. The themed natural playscape is proposed to be constructed adjacent to the south of the visitor center, and would provide recreational activities for children and visitors to participate in during their visit (Figure 13). The playscape area connects to the walking paths of the main grounds of the park, allowing park guests to easily access the walking paths to visit the mansion, barn and other sites on the property. The theme of the playscape is based on the historic wagon trains and freight wagons, which are representative of the 'Conestoga' style wagons that traversed the wilds of Nebraska as pioneers headed west, and freight wagons that were popular with Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Shows when he and his troupe would tour across the country by rail.

The wagons/freight wagons comprise of several interpretive play structures, each with unique play opportunities. One train/freight wagon could be designed to facilitate play aimed towards young children. The second train/freight wagon could be comprised of more challenging elements for older children. Each set of trains could have various activity elements using ropes, slides, stumps, logs and boulders for children to play and explore throughout the playscape. The playscape is also designed with a sensory garden, Native American hoop garden and natural log material play area, which could be representative of a campfire. An array of picnicking facilities are incorporated into the west boarder of and benches are placed throughout the playscape area. These amenities would provide areas for families to rest and watch the children play amongst the playscape and enjoy picnicking opportunities. Public participants indicated that this would be a very unique experience to the park and the North

Platte Community. Feedback from the public regarding the placement and design theme of the playground was overwhelmingly positive.



Figure 14. Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park proposed natural playscape concept.

STATE RECREATION AREA CONCEPTS

The master plan concepts associated with the SRA expand upon its current uses and opportunities. It also includes a proposal of a new shooting complex and the potential relocation of the concessionaire areas. The limited amount of development within this area of the park, is because most of the park is within the floodplain of the North Platte River and contains wetland areas. The presence of these two habitats provides little opportunity for development to occur, but does offer many outdoor recreational and educational opportunities on the property (e.g., fishing, camping, hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, etc.).

Overall Master Plan

The overall master plan of the SRA is partitioned into several key areas, which include a heritage shooting park, relocation of the concession operation area and trail ride zones, current and expanded RV and tent camping area, natural playground, archery range, and potential grazing pasture for bison (Figure 14).

The expanded camping area to the southeast of the existing camping areas does provide opportunities to expand primitive tent and RV camping; however, this area does have some challenges for future development. Most of this area is in the floodplain or designated as lowland and wetland areas, which are prone to holding water. Engineering assessments and evaluations will be needed to identify sustainable places for developing within this area. This area of the park, specifically in the wooded area near the camping development, would also be ideal for constructing a natural playscape for younger park users. The area designated as the bison grazing area would provide potential future areas for the bison exhibit at the park, but the effects of the nearby proposed shooting complex on the bison will need to be considered. The shooting complex area will replace what is currently a passive use area of the park and hunting is likely not to be allowed in the future, because of the proximity to the housing structures on the two parks.

The concessionaire operations area, like most of the northeast and eastern sections of the park, is within the floodplain and low-lying areas consisting of moist soils. These moist soil conditions further limit the space to relocate the concessionaire within this section of the park and emphasize the need to be mindful of where to relocate the concessionaire facilities within this area. The current areas predominantly used by the concessionaire for equestrian and hiking trails will be similar to what currently exists at the SRA and provides some opportunities to expand trails throughout this area of the park.

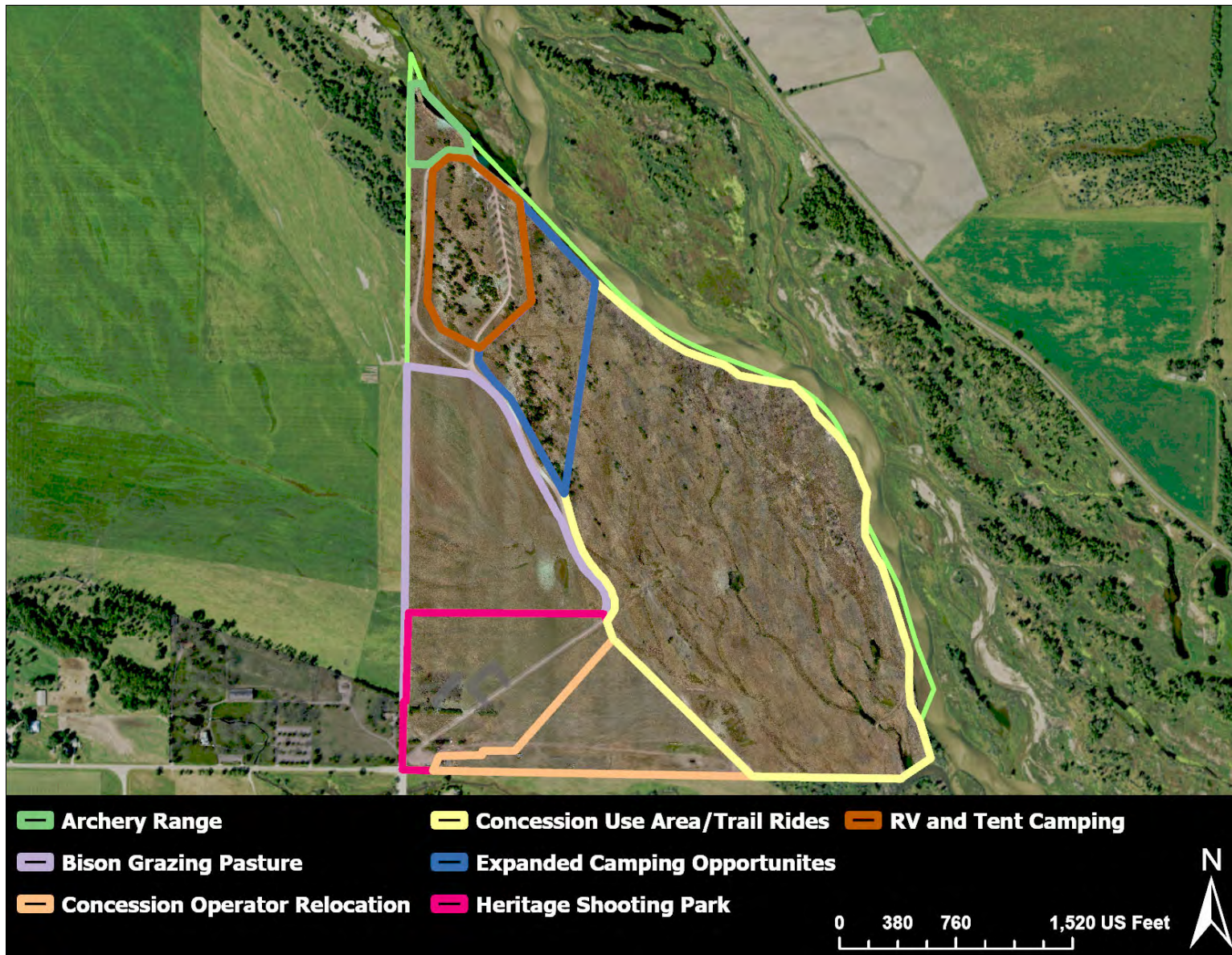


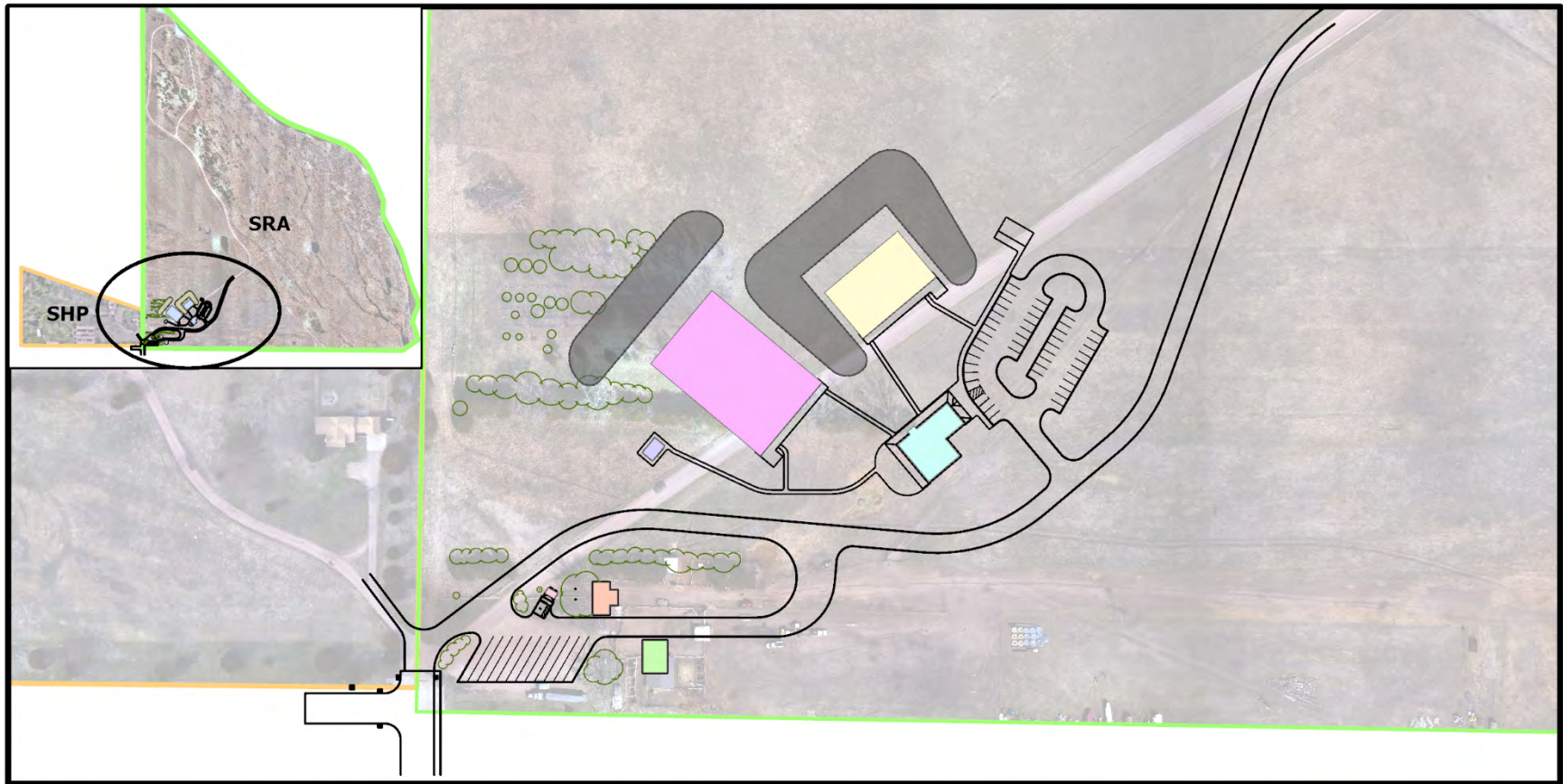
Figure 15. Proposed future areas for the Buffalo Bill Ranch State Recreation Area.

Heritage Shooting Complex

The potential heritage shooting complex is currently proposed to be constructed in the southwest corner of the SRA, immediately northeast of the park's entrance (Figure 15). Due to the amount of moist soil types and wetland habitats, the currently proposed area for the shooting complex is the only feasible area for the development of these facilities. The shooting complex would pay homage to the history, charisma and character of Buffalo Bill Cody and players of his Wild West Show. It will also provide unique shooting sports opportunities for park users. This was corroborated by the positive feedback from the public who agreed this is a unique opportunity for the park and the community.

The outdoor shooting facilities are proposed to include a standard archery range, archery tower blind range, small-bore rifle and pistol range and a small-bore quick draw gallery. The proposed archery range is expected to contain 12 shooting lanes that will contain targets up to 60 yards. The archery range will be protected by an overhead shelter and will also include berms and/or barrier walls. The outdoor small-bore range is designed to contain 12 participant shooting lanes with a maximum range of targets up to 20 meters, where the sides and rear of the range will be protected by berms and/or a barrier wall. A storage building is also proposed at the outdoor small-bore range to house necessary equipment and supplies for the shooting range. The outdoor quick draw range is designed to include a 20-foot-deep and 40-foot-wide shooting area, where users would have the potential to practice quick draw techniques.

The indoor facilities are proposed to include a small-bore quick draw, pellet gun shooting range, restroom and parking facilities. The small-bore range is currently designed to be 10 meters long and 21 feet wide and has the opportunity to include a variety of quick draw targets and techniques that were famous of Buffalo Bill and the great Annie Oakley. The indoor pellet gun range is designed to include five shooting stalls, which could be 10 meters long and include shooting benches, CO₂ propellant distribution system and an array of static and moving targets for users, which may be thematic of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows. Public feedback about these facilities was very positive and suggest following the theme of the history of Buffalo Bill and his troupe, along with ensuring the sound from the facilities do not greatly interfere with the other visitors and wildlife of the park.



Buffalo Bill Heritage Shooting Complex - Conceptual Layout

- Archery Stand
 - Concessionaire Building 1
 - Concessionaire Building 2
 - Indoor Shooting Gallery
- Outdoor Archery Range
 - Outdoor Pistol and Small-Bore Range
 - Restrooms



Figure 16. Proposed future Heritage Shooting Complex at the Buffalo Bill Ranch State Recreation Area.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementing the plan is key to continuing the success of these parks and achieving the goals of this plan. Defining an action plan will assist park staff in ensuring resources are available, projects stay on track, and that there is effective communication and collaboration among Game and Parks staff and partners.

The initial implementation plan should include a priority list the Parks division staff will reference and use as guidance, to achieve the goals within the plan. Park division staff considered the utility, staff resources and fiscal resources for establishing priorities for the facilities to implement the plan for the parks.

The following facilities are considered priority for the SHP:

1. Plan and Development of a Visitor Center

Initiating a plan and development for constructing a visitor center will assist the Parks division in meeting the Infrastructure and the Interpretation/Education/Programming goals and their associated objectives presented in the plan. For instance, the development of the visitor center would address concerns related to the staff and event space needs, improve artifact storage and display programming, and relieve some of the heavy traffic that the mansion currently experiences.

2. Renovation and Development of the East Parking Lot

Renovating the east parking lot will meet the goals and objectives specifically related to the Infrastructure goal and its associated objectives, by enhancing the parking area and providing efficient parking for RVs, trailers and bus tour groups. This will also ensure guests are closer to the visitor center for guest services, events and programming.

3. Improving the Entrance Experience

The construction and redevelopment of the entrance complements the Infrastructure and Interpretation/Education/Programming goal and their associated objectives. Improving the entrance sequence to the parks would enhance safety, directional sequence, and contain unique elements that showcase the park's history.

4. Development of Themed Playground

Development of a themed playground at the SHP would not only provide interpretive recreational play experience for the younger users of the park, but also allow for improving the connection and flow of foot traffic throughout the park, providing more picnicking and outdoor recreation opportunities for park visitors. Development of these facilities would assist the park staff in achieving the Interpretation/Education/Programming and Recreation goals presented in this plan.

Park staff recognizes the following facility and amenity priorities for the SRA.

1. Construct the Heritage Shooting Facilities Complex

The development of the shooting facilities will meet the needs of the plan by providing a unique and immersive recreation experience for park users, while providing more recreational opportunities at the park. This development will also include reconfiguration of the access road

to the park, enhancing the safety and traffic through the entire SRA. The construction of the shooting complex will meet the Recreation goal of the plan, while the reconfiguration of the entrance road will assist in meeting the Infrastructure goal presented within this plan.

2. Enhancement of RV and Tent Camping Areas

Enhancement of the RV and tent camping areas will provide more opportunities for camping. The proposed design will also consider unique camping opportunities (e.g., yurts, hammock camping, etc.), other recreational opportunities (e.g., natural playground, enhanced paddle sports access, disc golf, etc.) and developing more restroom facilities closer to the tent camping area. All of this would assist in meeting the goals and objectives within the plan related to the Recreation goal.

3. Expansion and Enhancement of the SRA Trail System

Expanding and enhancing the current trail facilities within the park would meet the Recreation and Interpretation/Education/Programming goals of the plan. For instance, these enhancements could include creating additional trails with proper trailheads and interpretative signage throughout the trail system at the SRA.

4. Improve and Develop Crane Viewing and Other Wildlife Watching Facilities

Improving and developing more crane viewing and other wildlife watching opportunities would assist in meeting the Recreation and Interpretation/Education/Programming goals of the plan. Improving and developing these facilities would provide more opportunities for Watchable Wildlife and natural history programming in the park area.

Park division staff will review and assess the projects and action items established in this plan on an annual basis. This will assist the staff with creating priorities and establishing a timeline to assist with planning these complex projects. These priorities will also allow staff to plan for needed resources to accomplish projects that will meet the goals and objectives of this plan, such as financial obligations, volunteer resources, procurement processes, etc. During times of staff turnover, annual planning will guide park staff about the development and maintenance at the park. Several components to the annual implementation plan that should be considered include:

- Creating a list of annual priorities from the action items to achieve the goals and associated objectives for the calendar year that are within the fiscal constraints and align with visitor needs.
- Defining roles and responsibilities among park staff for park projects
- Creating a schedule of projects to track and inform the progress of projects internally and externally to stakeholders and the general public.
- Identify resources needed to complete various action items or projects to meet the goals of the plan. This includes, but is not limited to, financial resources, staff resources, volunteer and partner organization resources, procurement processes and timelines, etc.

- Creating a contingency plan to account for issues that might arise, such as funding resources, natural disasters, lack of personnel resources, etc.

The Buffalo Bill Ranch complex, rich with natural heritage and natural history, provides an array of unique opportunities for many local, statewide and international park guests. Continuing to nurture, expand, create and explore new partnerships, funding opportunities and the continued commitment by the Parks division and Game and Parks to develop, renovate and maintain the facilities is paramount to ensuring the success of this plan beyond the next 10 years for visitors of the parks.