

CENTRAL PARK FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

CENTER JUNCTION, IOWA
FEBRUARY 2024



**BOLTON
& MENK**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this project is to update and optimize the Central Park facilities including campsites, roadways, shelters, and utility infrastructure. The park enjoys a high demand from campers during the season, many of which are camping in modern RV's that expect large sites, electrical service, and water service. While many sites do provide these accommodations, others do not. This facilities masterplan includes recommendations to increase the quantity of sites available and modern amenities throughout all camping areas in the park. In addition to providing improved amenities for campers, this report includes designs for a new rentable shelter, rentable cabins and naturalized areas throughout the park.

General improvements proposed include the updating of all campsites to include electrical and water service, increased accessible camping site and restroom facilities, optimized camping layouts, and the completion of a lakeside trail. In addition to park-wide improvements, the park has been organized into a collection of sub-areas based on their current use and the extents of proposed improvements. These sub-areas allow for more detailed study and increased specificity of improvements unique to each area.

This Master Plan is a working document that will be relied on for managed park improvement. It will be continually updated to take into account opportunities for future park growth and changing park needs.

01 - Weers Addition Campground

This is a newly acquired property along the southeastern edge of the park. Ridges and valleys define the topography of the property which is separated both by distance and elevation from the lake. Opportunities to develop a new campground in this area allows for a significant increase in the quantity of campsites available for campers.

02 - Main Entrance Drive

This is a new roadway to connect into the park near the southeast corner of the park. Benefits of a new road include a more defined entrance experience and separation of campers and service area.

03 - Lower Camping Loop and New Parking

The existing camping area includes mature trees and three unique clusters of campsites. Improvements in this area include updated electrical and water service, new shower house, parking improvements and slight modifications to the existing layouts to better accommodate larger modern RV's. Improvements in this area are respective of the existing leach field, terraced topography, and the preservation of valuable mature trees.

04 - Day Use Area

This area was recently improved to include a beach, a small shelter, and an accessible pedestrian route from the road down to the beach. Other facilities, including the large rentable shelter, parking and playground, are dated or are beyond their intended life cycle. Improvements in this area include an adventure playground, multiple smaller shelters, restrooms, and the completion of an accessible lakeside trail.

05 - Central Camping Loop

This area includes an open sloped lawn with mature trees throughout. Existing campsites are organized around a one-way road that results in irregular and underutilized areas for campsites. Improvements in this area include a revised roadway alignment that allows for more campsites while preserving as many mature trees as possible. A new showerhouse, playground, restroom, and accessible sites are also included to provide modern amenities throughout this camping area.

06 - West Camping Loop

This area is organized by a roadway that continues from the Central Camping Loop. Steep slopes along either side of the roadway combined with a densely forested interior and conservation easements along the outer edges of this area limit opportunities for additional campsites. Improvements in this area include improved campsites organized along terraces, platform camping sites for tent campers, an accessible campsite, and an accessible restroom.

07 - Northwest Cabins

This area to the west of the Nature Center recently included pine trees that were severely impacted by the derecho in 2020. Tree clearing in the area has provided an opportunity to add a new roadway and rentable cabins to expand upon camping options at the park.

08 - North Shore Pavilion

A new pavilion is proposed to the east of the existing Nature Center. The pavilion will focus on views outwards across the lake and include operable overhead doors that blend interior and exterior spaces. A new playground and parking lot will flank the new structure.

09 - Maintenance Area

A new maintenance building will include staff offices, small kitchen, and expand the resources and efficiency of park staff. A new well is also indicated in this area to serve the full park. In the northeastern corner of the park, a solar array is proposed to provide sustainable power to park facilities.



PROJECT PRIORITIES

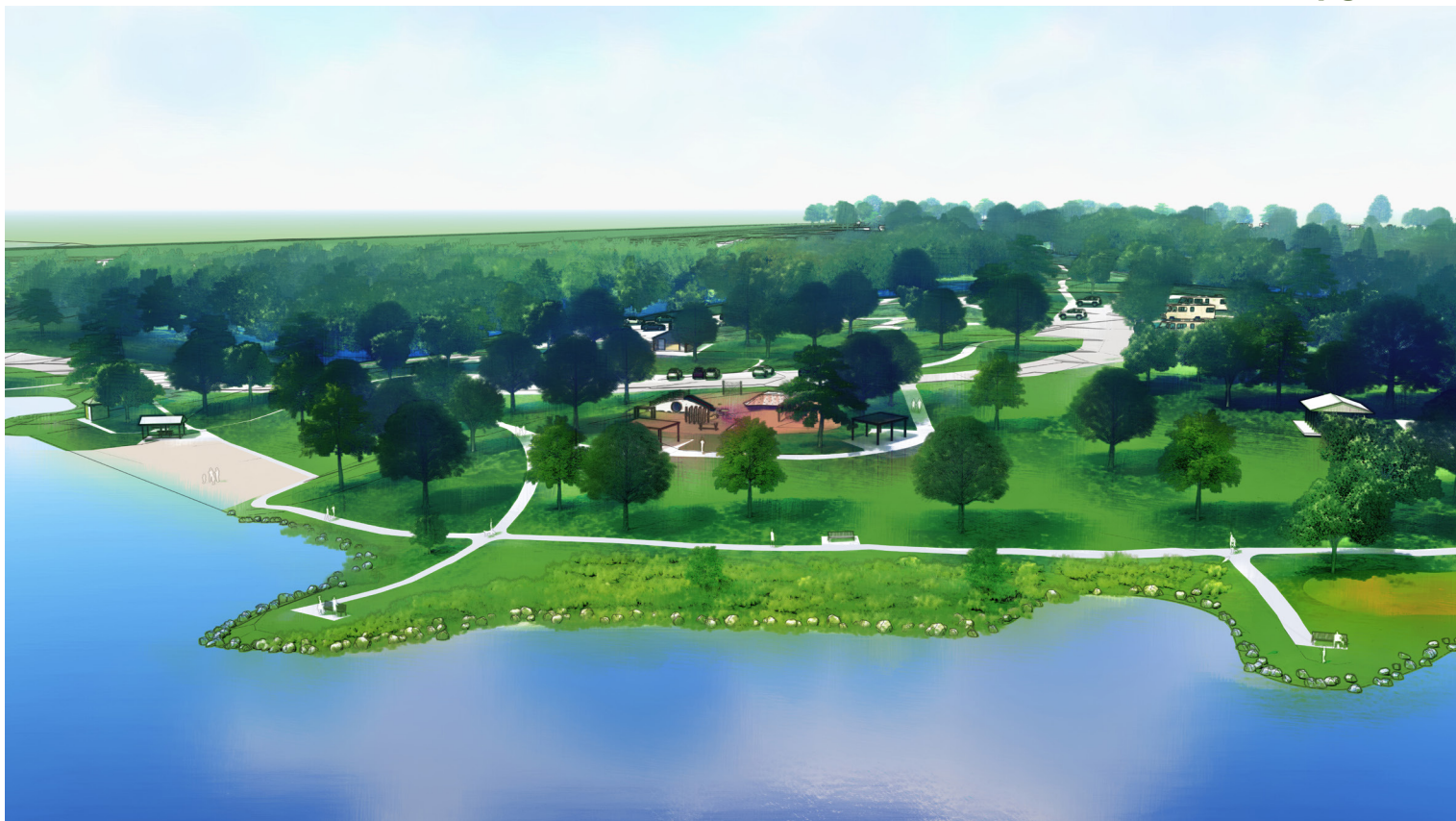
1. FREMONT MILL HISTORIC BRIDGE - PHASE 2&3
2. MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVE
3. WEERS ADDITION CAMPGROUND
4. INCREASED PERSONNEL
5. NORTH SHORE PAVILION
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7. LAKESIDE TRAIL
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10. HABITAT RESTORATION
11. CENTRAL CAMPING LOOP
12. WEST CAMPING LOOP
13. FUTURE PHASES OF WASTE WATER TREATMENT
14. NORTHWEST CAMPING
15. PARTNERING FOR PARK GROWTH



Weers Addition Campground



North Shore Pavilion



Day Use Area



Northwest Cabins

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Natural Features

- 24 acre Central Park Lake
- 6 acre west pond
- Hills rising up to park perimeter from the edge of the lake
- Forested areas in varying degrees of diversity and health

Built Features

South side of the lake includes:

- 74 Campsites
- 1 Showerhouse
- 2 Restrooms
- 2 Rentable cabins
- Beach
- Fremont Mill Bridge (Pedestrian)
- Storywalk®
- Playground
- Sand volleyball court
- Rentable shelter
- Paddle access

North side of the lake includes:

- Nature Center
- Boat launch and paddle access
- Accessible fishing pier
- 2 Restrooms
- Single entry/exit
- Dump station
- Maintenance area

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Opportunities

- High demand for additional campsites
- Newly acquired 'Weers Addition' includes developable land to add campsites
- Mature trees throughout park provide shade and sense of place
- Existing roadway alignments are generally optimized for efficient organization of campsites
- Area along the north shore of the lake is underutilized
- Historic Fremont Mill Bridge is an architectural asset and key pedestrian link across the lake

Constraints

- Most sites in the central and west loop do not include electrical or water service
- Existing access runs through the maintenance area and lacks a clear sense of arrival
- Topography throughout the park is generally hilly and will require significant grading to level for additional campsites
- Existing utility infrastructure is aging or in need of replacement
- Densely forested areas between the lake and the perimeter of the park create challenges for future development
- Conservation easement along the west and south edges of the property restrict expansion of modern camping areas



MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVE



SUMMARY:

This is a new entry roadway in the southeast corner of the park. Benefits of a new road include a more defined entrance experience and separation of campers and service area.

LEGEND

- ① DUMP STATION
- ② ENTRY SIGN
- ③ PROPOSED ROADWAY

WEERS ADDITION CAMPGROUND



SUMMARY:

This is a newly acquired property along the southeastern edge of the park. Ridges and valleys define the topography of the property which is separated both by distance and elevation from the lake. Opportunities to develop a new campground in this area allows for a significant increase in the quantity of campsites available for campers.

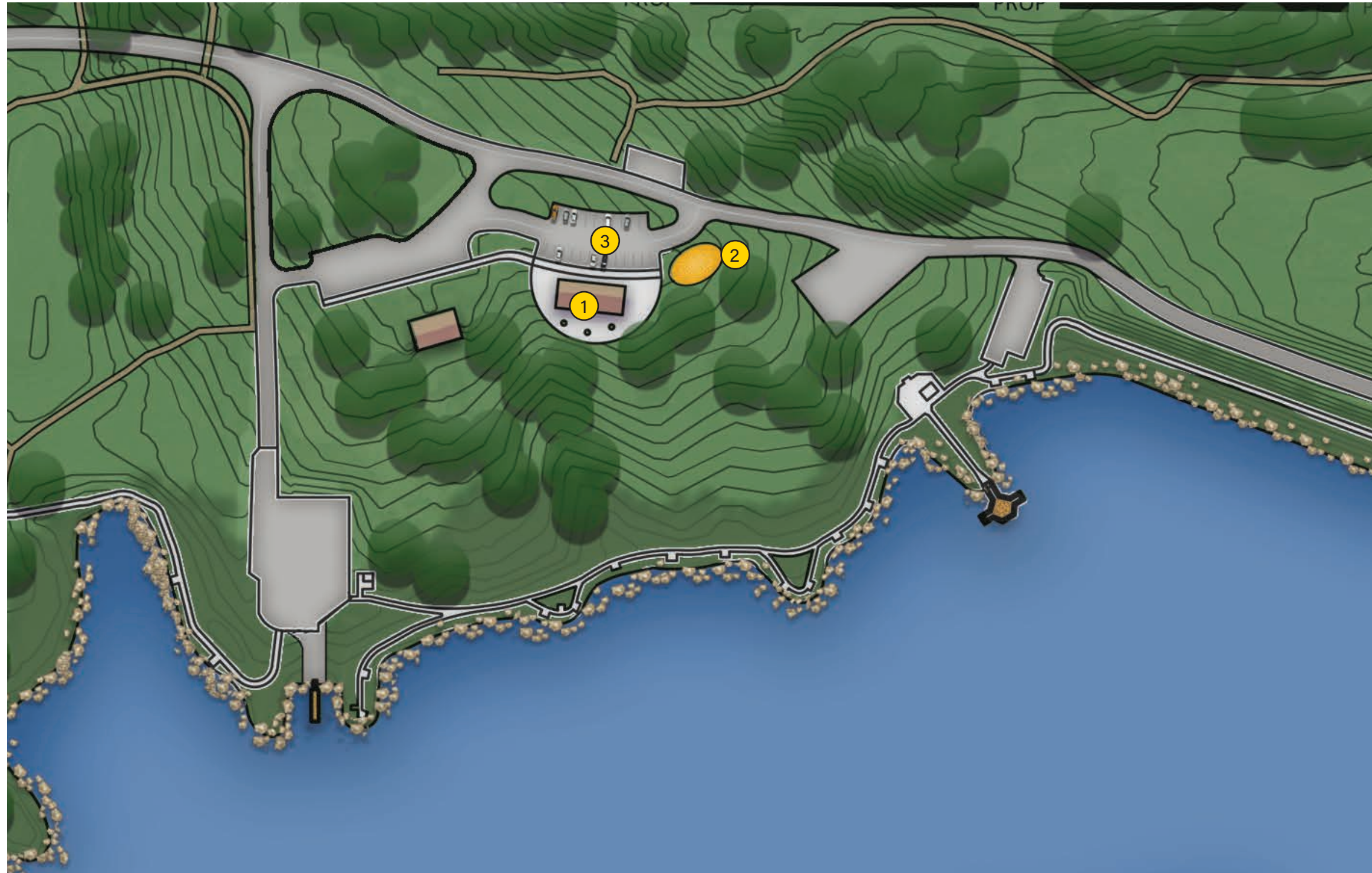


LEGEND

- ① SHOWER HOUSE
- ② PLAYGROUND
- ③ PARKING LOT
- ④ RV SITES
- ⑤ GROUP CAMPSITE



NORTH SHORE PAVILION



SUMMARY:

A new pavilion is proposed to the east of the existing Nature Center. The pavilion will focus on views outwards across the lake and include operable overhead doors that blend interior and exterior spaces. A new playground and parking lot will flank the new structure.

LEGEND

- ① RENTABLE SHELTER WITH INDOOR/OUTDOOR FUNCTIONALITY
- ② PLAYGROUND
- ③ PARKING LOT



DAY USE AREA



SUMMARY:

This area was recently improved to include a beach, small shelters, and an accessible pedestrian route from the road down to the beach. Other facilities including the large rentable shelter, parking and playground are dated or are beyond their intended life cycle. Improvements in this area include an adventure playground, multiple smaller shelters, restrooms, and the completion of an accessible lakeside trail.

LEGEND

- ① ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
- ② SMALL SHELTERS
- ③ RESTROOMS
- ④ LAKESIDE TRAIL
- ⑤ PRAIRIE

MAINTENANCE AREA



SUMMARY

A new maintenance building will include staff offices, small kitchen, and expand the resources and efficiency of park staff. A new well is also indicated in this area to serve the full park. In the northeastern corner of the park, a solar array is proposed to provide sustainable power to park facilities.

LEGEND

- ① MAINTENANCE BUILDING
- ② SOLAR ARRAY

LOWER CAMPING LOOP AND NEW PARKING

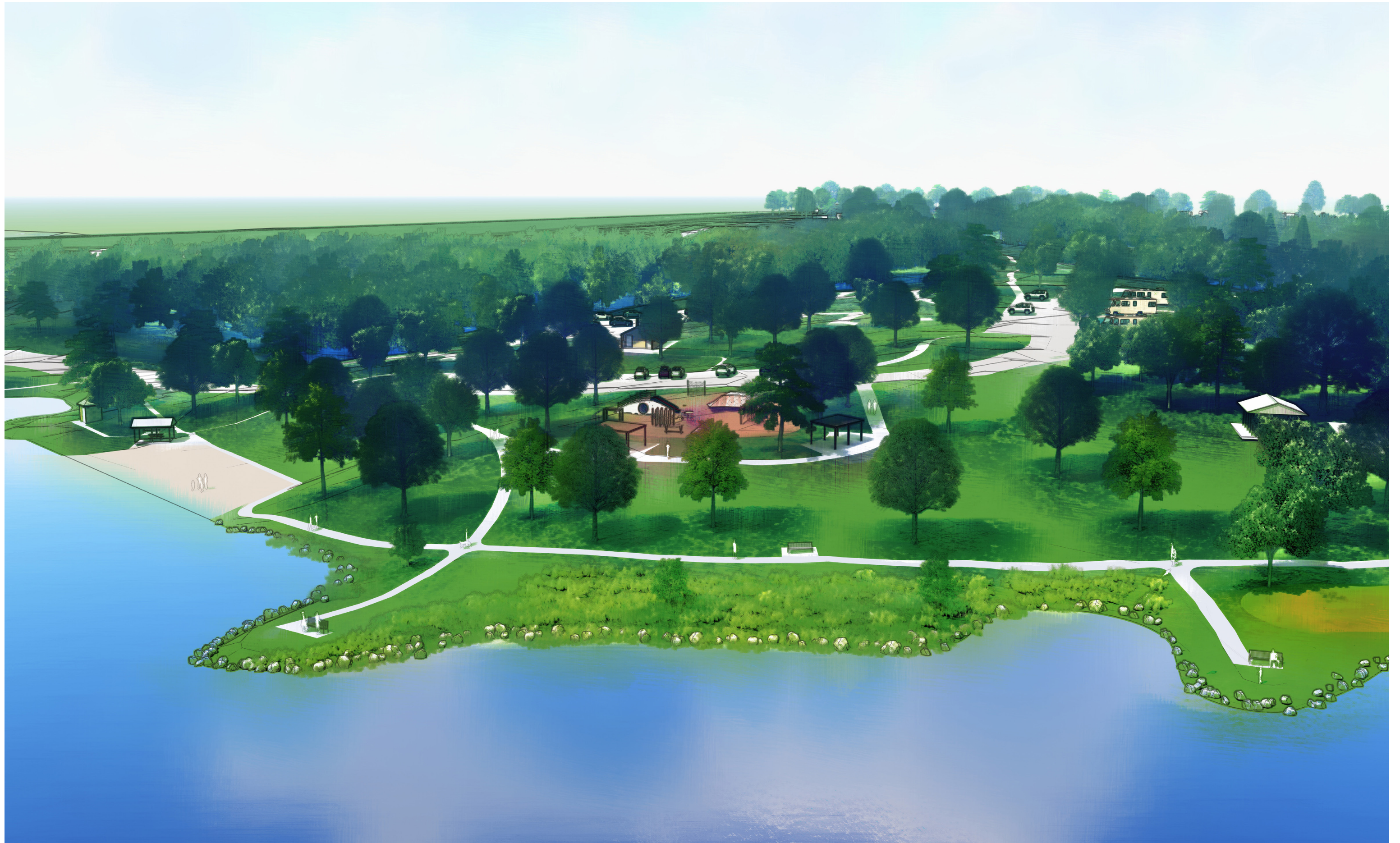


SUMMARY:

The existing camping area includes mature trees and three unique clusters of campsites. Improvements in this area include updated electrical and water service, new shower house, parking improvements and slight modifications to the existing layouts to better accommodate larger modern RV's. Improvements in this area are respective of the existing leach field, terraced topography, and the preservation of valuable mature trees.

LEGEND

- ① NEW SHOWER HOUSE
- ② ADJUSTED GRADING / ALIGNMENT OF EXISTING SITES
- ③ IMPROVED PARKING LOT STRIPING AND GRADING
- ④ NEW PARKING LOT



CENTRAL CAMPING LOOP



SUMMARY:

Improvements in this area include a revised roadway alignment that allows for more campsites while preserving as many mature trees as possible. A new shower house, playground, restroom, and accessible sites are also included to provide modern amenities throughout this camping area.



LEGEND

- ① REVISED ROADWAY ALIGNMENT
- ② LAKESIDE TRAIL
- ③ PLAYGROUND
- ④ SHOWERHOUSE
- ⑤ RESTROOM
- ⑥ ACCESSIBLE CAMPSITES
- ⑦ PADDLING ACCESS
- ⑧ IMPROVED PARKING LOTS

WEST CAMPING LOOP



SUMMARY:

This area is organized by a roadway that continues from the Central Camping Loop. Steep slopes along either side of the roadway combined with a densely forested interior and conservation easements along the outer edges of this area limit opportunities for additional campsites. Improvements in this area include improved campsites organized along terraces, platform camping sites for tent campers, an accessible campsite, and an accessible restroom.

LEGEND

- ① ACCESSIBLE RESTROOM
- ② ACCESSIBLE CAMPSITE
- ③ PLATFORM CAMPSITES
- ④ TERRACED GROUP CAMPSITE WITH VEHICULAR ACCESS

NORTHWEST CABINS



SUMMARY:

This area to the west of the Nature Center recently included pine trees that were severely impacted by the derecho in 2020. Tree clearing in the area has provided an opportunity to add a new roadway and rentable cabins to expand upon camping options at the park.

LEGEND

- ① ROADWAY
- ② CUL-DE-SAC TURN AROUND
- ③ CABINS
- ④ TRAIL CONNECTIONS

