THE BRIEF

VISION:
The Northern Hills Historic Trail is located at the northern foothills of the Black Hills. It is rich in cultural history being adjacent to Bear Butte (a sacred site for several Northern Plains Tribes), and adjacent to Ft. Meade (one of the first military posts in the Black Hills). Protecting and sharing the cultural significance of the area is critical to future generations and to tourism of the region. I see the opportunity to create a space for visitors to enjoy the wildlife and history in a recreational setting.

GOALS:
1. Public Use: Connecting existing trails and historic spaces to allow opportunities for guests to experience recreation and education as means of promoting awareness of the area’s resources.
2. Cultural Resources: Recognize the cultural significance and sacredness of the Bear Butte are to the plains tribes, while honoring the Ft. Meade Post and the connection it has to past and present military institutions.
3. Wildlife and Vegetative Management: Impose very little on the natural habitat in order to maintain habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife.

THE HISTORY

Fort Meade was established during the winter of 1878-79 by the 1st and 11th Infantry and reorganized as the 7th Cavalry. The mission of the company at post was to provide military protection against the Sioux Indians, in order for gold seekers and settlers to continue with their travels. The location of the post was strategic since it enabled troops and US Military to maintain peace on the western Dakota Frontier.

The post was the headquarters for the 4th Cavalry for over 20+ years, until the installation retired in 1944 and became the Veterans Administration Hospital, which remains to this day.

Some interesting facts:
1. Ft. Meade was home to the Cavalry horse Commanche, the only living US “military member” found living on the Little Big Horn Battlefield. It was on Ft. Meade where the horse was officially retired with military honors.
2. Ft. Meade was also the first post to play the “Star Spangled Banner”. The post used it for the official military retreat ceremony, long before it became the National Anthem.

THE SITE

When I first set down my Thesis location in the Northern Black Hills I had a vision of creating a Memorial Site. Through my site inventory I began finding a vast gap and separation of people due to history, ethnicity, social class and geography. The aim was to construct an environment that created an emotional bonding experience among diverse people and encourage a common central purpose throughout my design. Shortly after beginning design phase, I realized I came short in following up on my cultural analysis. One thing I could not answer was “why will people visit my site?”

Research lead me to start listening to the surrounding community. I did this through understanding the types of people, their lifestyles and what they have been reacting positively to in terms of their diverse needs. One thing everyone all had in common: the importance of parks and recreational facilities. As the Black Hills continues to add miles of trail systems, the population growth also continues on an increase level… My solution to the underlying problem was to design a Trail System.

3 MAJOR TERMS OF IMPORTANCE AFTER INVENTORY/ANALYSIS

SITE SYMBOLISM/SIGN:
The infinity symbol is Northern Native American culture is a representation of humankind/kinship (paired), also sometimes waterbirds, or quail. Together in a mated pair they symbolize a devotion, permanence and eternity. For better terms a representation of the life cycle. These are often modified in many, very simple forms. Using the infinity symbol for many of my concept work meant I was taking into account the idea of history of the land, present day appreciation of the landscape and future preservation and education for the upcoming generations.

Salvia - Salvia comes from the Latin root “salvare”, which means “to heal”. Although Salvia is not used in the medical field to treat sickness, Salvia has the property to burn the fields in order to drive out bad feelings, spirits, or negative influences.

THE CONCEPT

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Walkway through indoor Salvia gardens.

Hanging iris plants will be on structures which overhang the walkway.
SECTION OF TRAIL

7.6 Miles of trail
- Meanders along Bear Butte Creek for over 5 miles of trail.
- Crosses over Hwy 79 twice, with an underground trail system.
- Connects to existing Bear Butte Summit Trail.
- Vegetation consists of part shade and deciduous trees along creek bed.

The trail system will be incorporating mirror sculptures into the Southeast Trail Section. The mirrors are placed along the trail as a way of reflecting various images for visitors. The mirrors reflect an abstract view of surrounding landscapes to include: Bear Butte, the sky, hills, trees, landforms and even people. Mirrors were my way of incorporating people's perspectives of the land and molding how they view it along with how they view themselves in a landscape.
2.3 Miles of trail
- Crosses Ft. Meade Cemetery
- Most heavily wooded section of trail.
- Steepest slopes will be found here.
- Max of 20% slope of natural trail.
- Shaded heavily by Black Hills Spruce and ponderosa pine.

**SOUTHWEST SECTION OF TRAIL**

Signage will be important along the Northern Hills Historic Trail. Since the trail connects to so many surrounding trails heads, keeping a signage style along my portion of trail is critical to keeping people on the track rather than steering onto additional trail routes. The signage to the right is an example of incorporating different materials such as stone, wood and metal.
Northern Hills Historic Trail

“A Trail Linking Scenic, Natural, Historic and Cultural Areas Across 13.6 Miles of Northern Black Hills Landscape”

Bear Butte Lake is rich and unique to the countries past. During the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt set out to improve and rebuild America’s resources. His actions to restore our natural water resources are still visible today at the lakes shore. You can find a former bathhouse, a picnic shelter, stone walls, and a dam structure along with an artisan well which were all constructed to encourage camping, swimming, boating and picnicking.

The Bear Butte Lake Project began by creating this artificial lake, which raised water levels through the dam. It was originally filled by means of the artificial well but in May 1967 they plugged the water flow. The lake is now completely dependent on annual rainfall. Snow and Rain are the primary source of water for the lake.

GOAL: Create a Wet Meadow

The past decade Bear Butte Lake has found itself with ample amounts of precipitation runoff, leaving the shorelines eroded and the annual depth higher than the average 7 feet. By creating an overflow area for the lake, I will be introducing a wet meadow at the edge of the lake. When water reaches a certain point (over 7ft) it will flow into the constructed meadow and serve as shallow reflective ponds for visitors. This reflective pond ties back into my original concept of creating spaces for visitors to reflect and focus on internal self.

A reflective pond will allow for not only visual of themselves, but of surrounding scenery. The reflections will only be visible during overflow water levels. By adding new vegetation, it will serve as a recreational pleasing location, while also providing excellent habitat for birds.

CREATING A WETLAND SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wetland Plant List</th>
<th>Wetland Animals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed (Eupatoriadelphus maculatus)</td>
<td>Wilson’s Phalarope (Phalaropus tricolor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Turtlehead (Chelone glabra)</td>
<td>American Woodcock (Scolopax mexicanus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Sedge (Carex lacustris)</td>
<td>Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluejoing Grass (Calamagrostis canadensis)</td>
<td>Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Sandpiper (Bartramia longicauda)</td>
<td>Marbled Godwit (Limosa fedoa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson’s Snipe (Gallinago delicata)</td>
<td>Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus)</td>
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Bear Butte Lake encompasses 215 square acres and has a shoreline of 3.2 miles. Anglers can expect to catch Northern Pike, White Crappie, Yellow Bullheads, and Yellow Perch.

NORTHWEST SECTION OF TRAIL

3.0 Miles of trail
- Trail is the least shaded of the trail section. Tall grasses.
- This section of trail ends at Bear Butte Lake upon docks overlooking the reflective wetland system.
- The reflective ponds will be filled when water levels allow for overflow of bear butte.
- Past predictions put my reflective ponds visible 5 months out of the year, otherwise snow/ice coverage.