Northern Hills Historic Trail

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


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.

View looking northeast towards Interpretive Center and Bear Butte

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.

INTERPRETIVE CENTER

PERSPECTIVES

PARKING LOT SECTION

VIEW TO BEAR BUTTE

VIEW TO FT. MEADE POST

NO VIEW PAST HILLTOP

VIEW TO CEMETERY

location: BLACK HILLS, SOUTH DAKOTA
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INTERPRETIVE CENTER

PERSPECTIVES

PARKING LOT SECTION

MASTER PLAN

View to Bear Butte

View to Ft. Meade Post

No view past Hilltop

View to Cemetery
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View to Bear Butte

View to Ft. Meade Post

No view past Hilltop

View to Cemetery

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.

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 HISTORY

WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT...

1980s
1990s
2000s

GROWTH IN TRAILS

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 areas resources.

2. Cultural Resources: Recognize the cultural significance and sacredness of the Bear Butte area 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.
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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 docking overlooking the reflective wetland system.
- The reflective ponds will be filled when water levels allow for overflow of bear butts.
- Past predictions put my reflective ponds visible 5 months out of the year, otherwise snow/ice coverage.
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 will 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 peoples perspectives of the land and molding how they view it along with how they view themselves in a landscape.
Bear Butte Lake is rich and unique to the country’s 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 lake site. You can find a former bathhouse, a picnic shelter, stone walls, and a dam structure along with an artesian 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 artesian well but in May 1987 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 means of the artesian well but in May 1987 they plugged the water flow. Snow and Rain are the primary source of water for the lake. When water reaches a certain point (over 7 ft) 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.

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**Wetland Plant List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wetland Plant</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed</td>
<td>Eupatoriadelphus maculatus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Turtlehead</td>
<td>Lactuca laevia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelone glabra</td>
<td>Calamagrostis canadensis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Sedge</td>
<td>Carex lacustris</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wetland Animals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wetland Animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson’s Phalarope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson’s Snipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Woodcock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piping Plover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Sandpiper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killdeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Sandpiper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-billed Curlew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marbled Godwit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-necked Stilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Avocet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Photo from South Dakota Magazine: Christian Begeman
SITE SYMBOLISM:
The infinity symbol is also known to represent the cycle of existence of birth, death and rebirth.

The infinity symbol in Northern Native American culture is a representation of the cycle of existence of birth, death and rebirth. Together in a mated pair they symbolize a devotion, permanence and eternity. For better terms a representation of the cycle of existence of birth, death and rebirth.

Hummingbirds (paired), also sometimes waterbirds, or quail. Together in a mated pair they symbolize devotion, permanence and eternity. For better terms a representation of the cycle of existence of birth, death and rebirth. These are often modified in many, very simple forms. Using the infinity symbol for many of my design 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 heal (it does), Northern Native American populations see it for its magical properties, where they burn the herb in order to drive out bad feelings, spirits, or negative influences.
Walk way through indoor salvia garden. Hanging iris plants will be on structures which over hang the walk way.
Views

View to Bear Butte

View to Ft. Meade Post

No view past Hilltop

View to Cemetery
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