

SHEYENNE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

AN ECOLOGICAL LEARNING CENTER AND TRAIL ENHANCEMENT
IN RANSOM AND RICHLAND COUNTIES OF NORTH DAKOTA



The Sheyenne National Grasslands consist of 70,180 acres of public land. In such a vast plot of land manifests several unique ecological regions, housing numerous habitats and organisms. It is the only National Grassland in the tallgrass prairie region of the United States. The tallgrass prairie of the United States is becoming extinct, with only 1% remaining currently. With such a small percentage of this unique landscape remaining, it is imperative to conserve what is left to sustain the heritage of the tallgrass prairie.

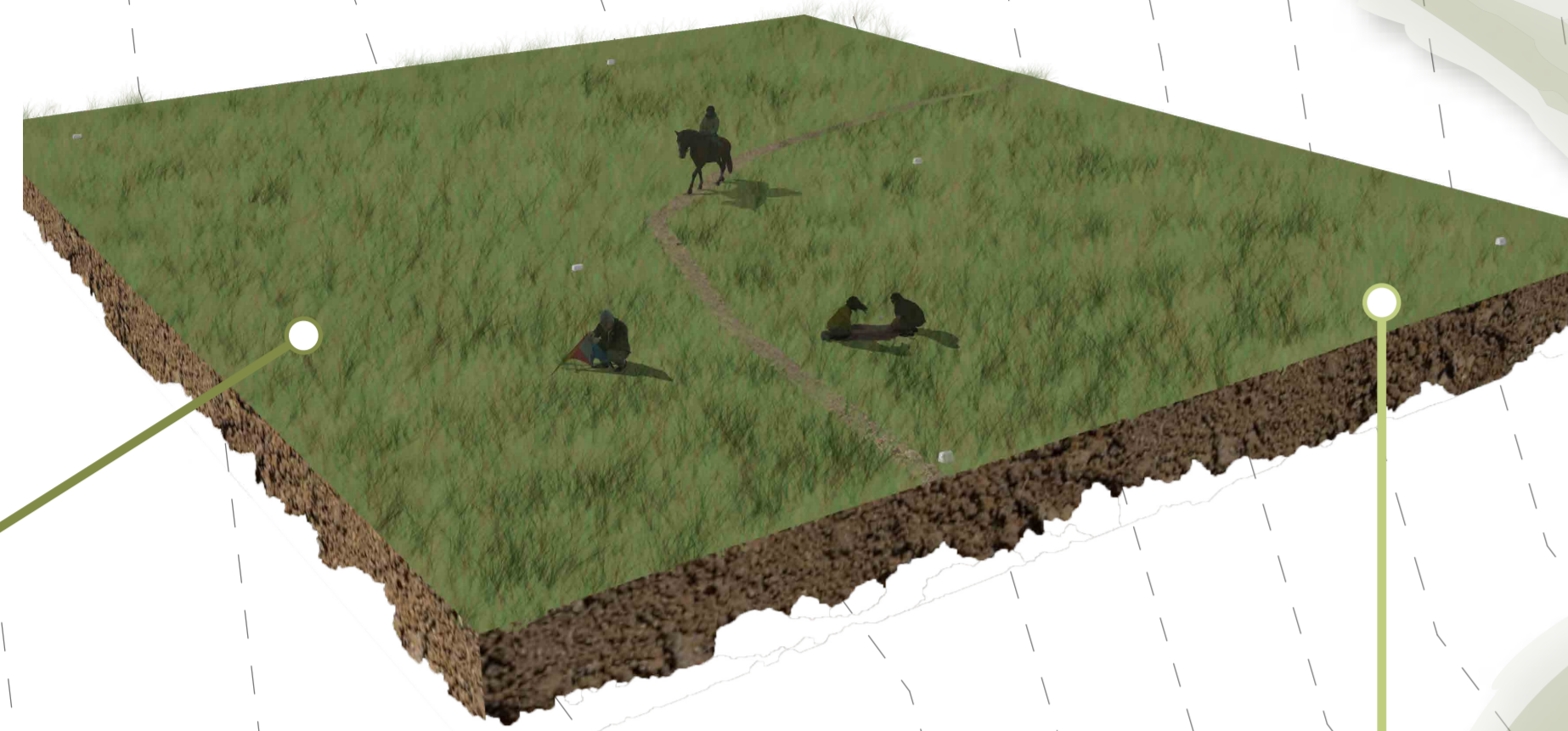


Farming is a major part of the culture of the area, comprising most of the land use around the Grasslands. While farming is good for industry, conversion of farmland from CRP land infringes upon native plant and animal communities, sometimes endangering species.

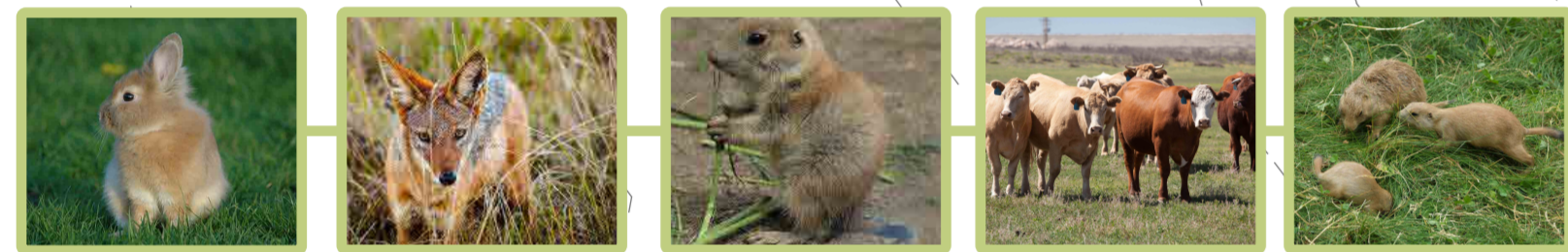
While the National Grassland is a flourishing ecosystem with several unique species and several recreational opportunities, there is not much around for people to realize the potential that the grasslands have. There are very minimal signs in the area highlighting the National Grasslands, and they are not promoted in any town signs or websites.

PROJECT GOALS: ~Education ~Recreation ~Preservation





Prairie



Common Hare Fox Gopher Grazing Animals Prairie Dog



Switchgrass Canada Wildrye Big Bluestem Sideoats Grama Indian Grass

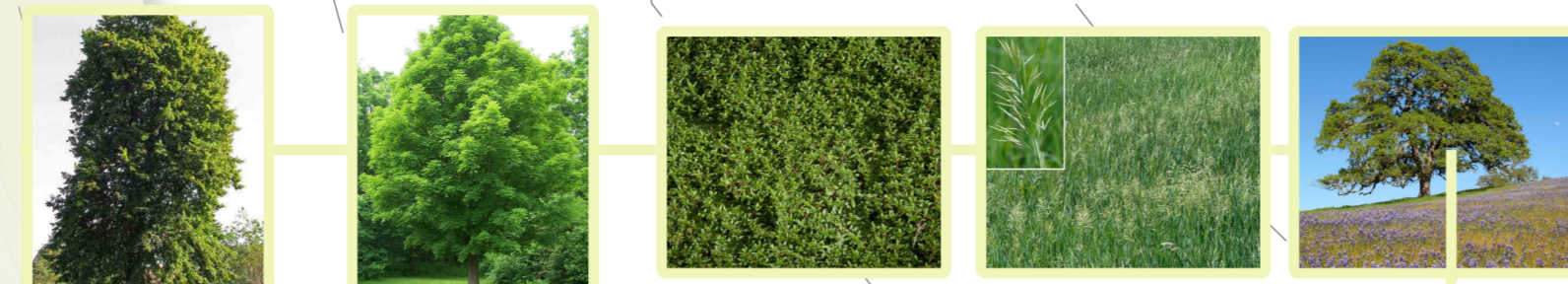


Little Bluestem Prairie Cordgrass



Endangered-Western Prairie Fringed Orchid Endangered-Dakota Skipper

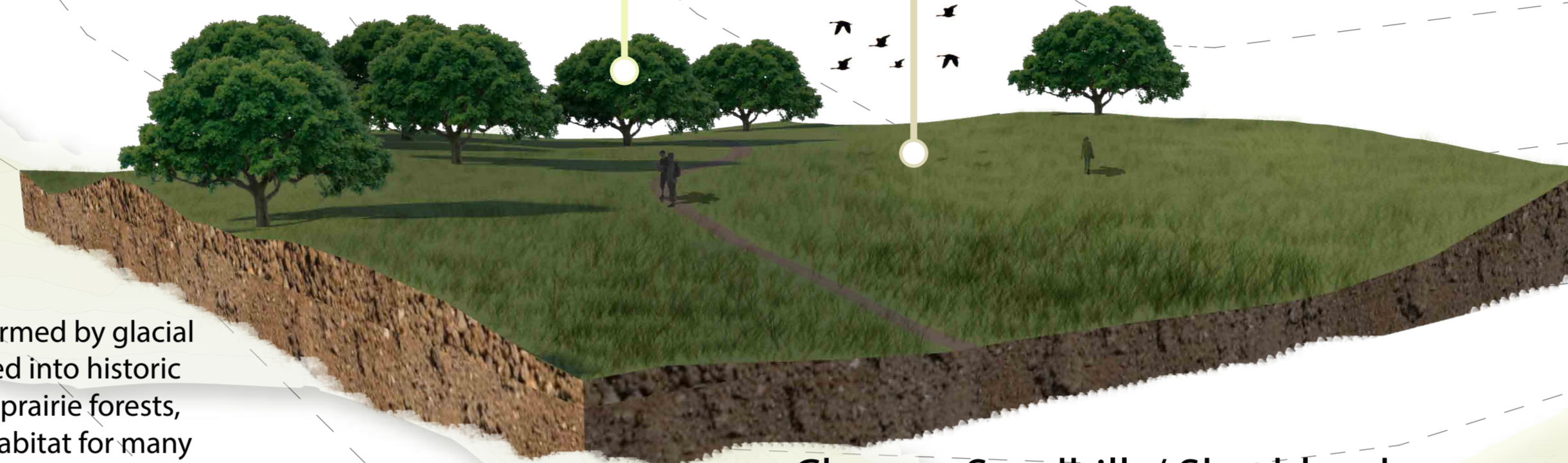
Prairies are one of the most diverse and complicated ecosystems in the world, only surpassed by the rainforests. Types of plants can vary from acre to acre or foot to foot depending on soils and microclimates. 40 to 60 different species of grasses make up 80 percent of the vegetation of a prairie. The other 20 percent consists of up to 300 different species of forbs and flowers, over 100 species of lichens and liverworts, and woody trees and shrubs near water sources.



Basswood Maple Groundcover Prairie Grasses Oak

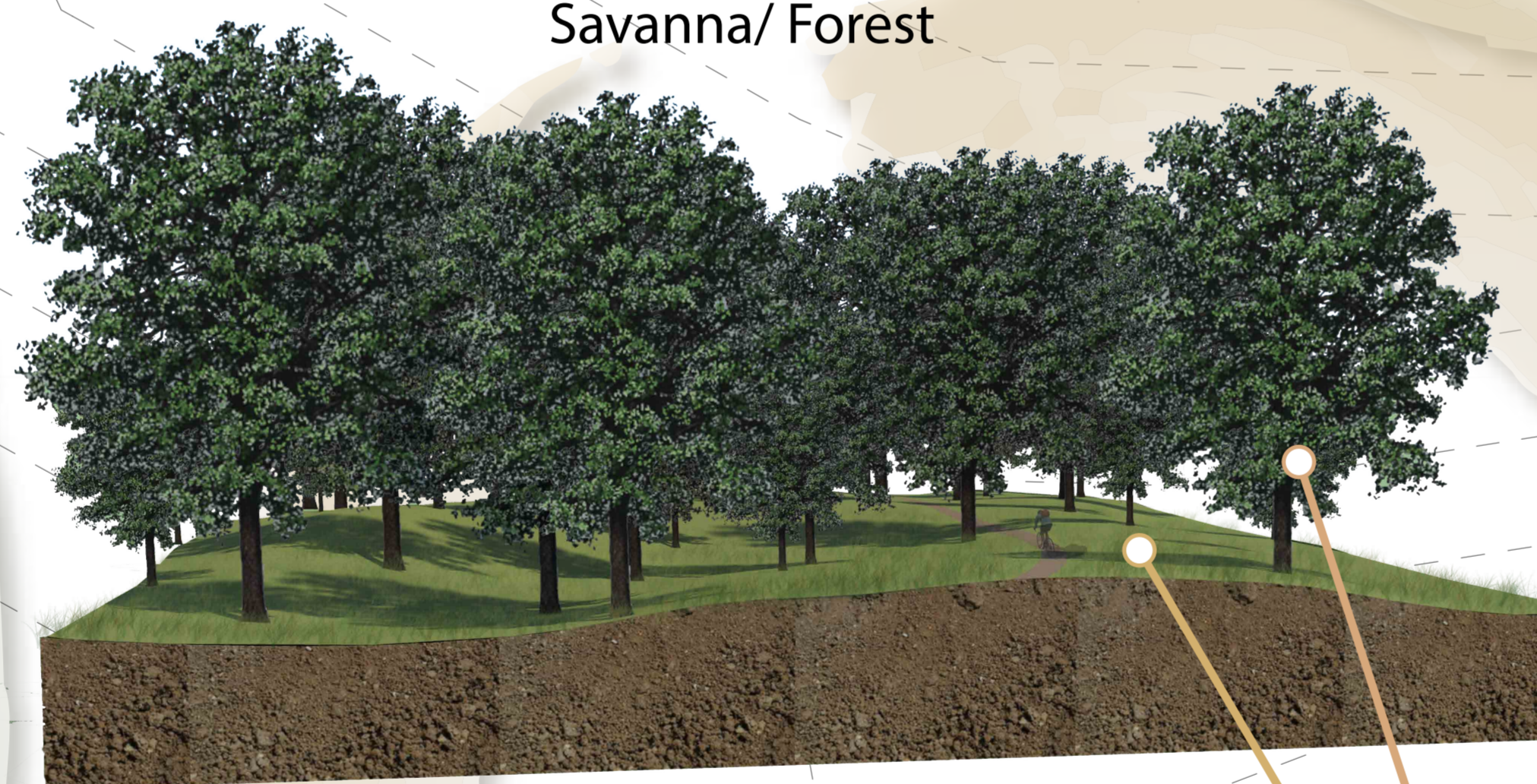


Northern Harrier Red Headed Woodpecker Wood Turtle Sandhill Crane Threatened-Regal Fritillary



Choppy Sandhills/ Shrubland

The sandhills of the Grasslands formed by glacial deposits in the delta that emptied into historic glacial Lake Agassiz. Similarly to prairie forests, prairie shrublands provide vital habitat for many animals to find food and shelter.



Savanna/ Forest



Owl Deer Fox Raccoon Squirrel



Aspen Elm Oak Poplar Boxelder

Forests in or near prairies develop in protected areas that do not experience grazing, fires, or other natural disturbance, termed woody encroachment. They also form near water sources such as near rivers, streams or lakes. Because prairie forests are associated with water, they are important as habitat for a diversity of animals and plants, including migratory and nesting birds.



River Terrace/ Riparian



Catfish Northern Pike Trout Sunfish



Cottonwood Willow Cedar Sedge and Rush Cattail

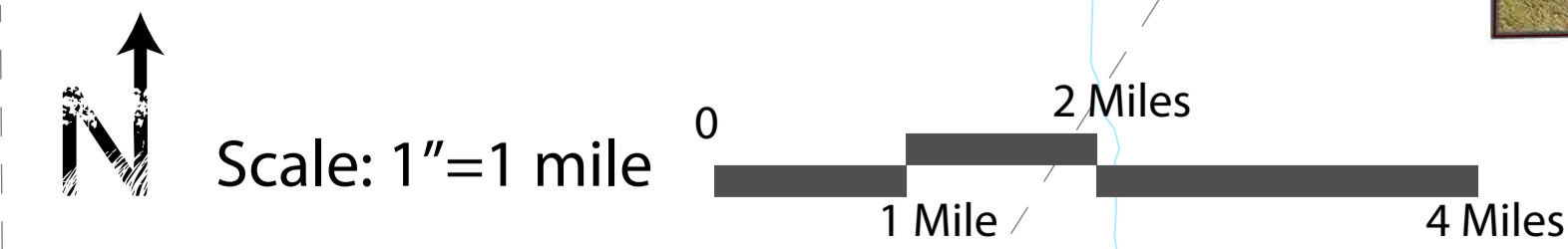


Amphibians Insects Migratory and Nesting Birds Muskrat Mink

The riparian areas of the Grasslands are located in the northern section near the Sheyenne River. Riparian areas provide food and nutrients to aquatic species as well as store runoff from large storm events. Like the other ecoregions, the riparian/river terrace area of the Grasslands provides unique and vital habitat to several species.

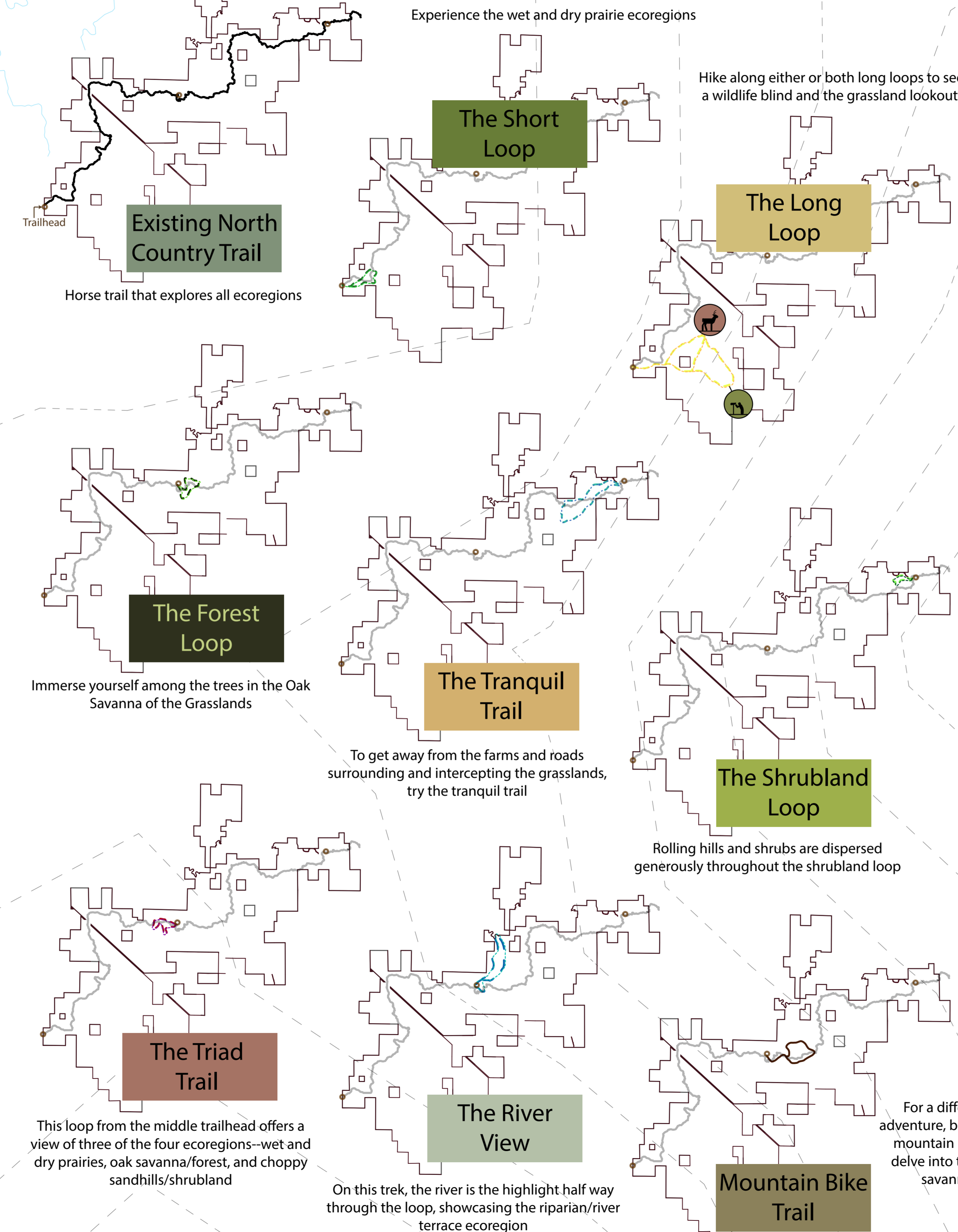
Sheyenne National Grasslands

Each ecoregion plays an important role in maintaining the overall ecosystem of the Sheyenne National Grasslands. To celebrate each ecoregion, several trails have been added to the existing trailheads. These trails provide shorter journeys that may be more manageable than the existing 25 miles of the North Country Trail that goes through the Grasslands.



- Choppy Sandhills/ Shrubland
- Savanna/ Forest
- Prairie (Dry)
- Prairie (Wet)
- River Terrace/ Riparian
- Walking Trail
- Horse Trail
- Snowshoe Trail (Winter)
- Kayak Launch
- Wildlife Blind
- Lookout
- Fire Tower

The Trails



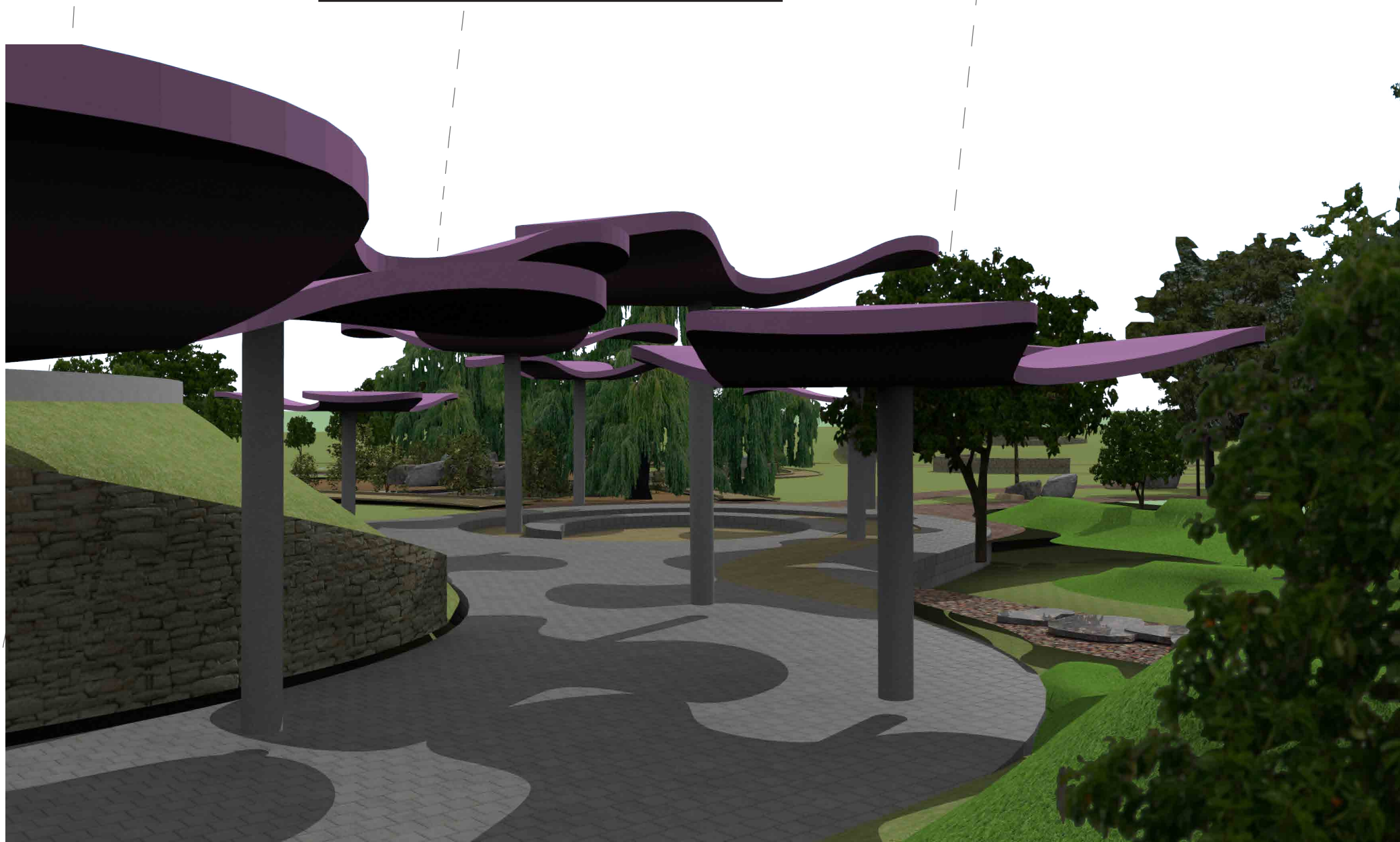
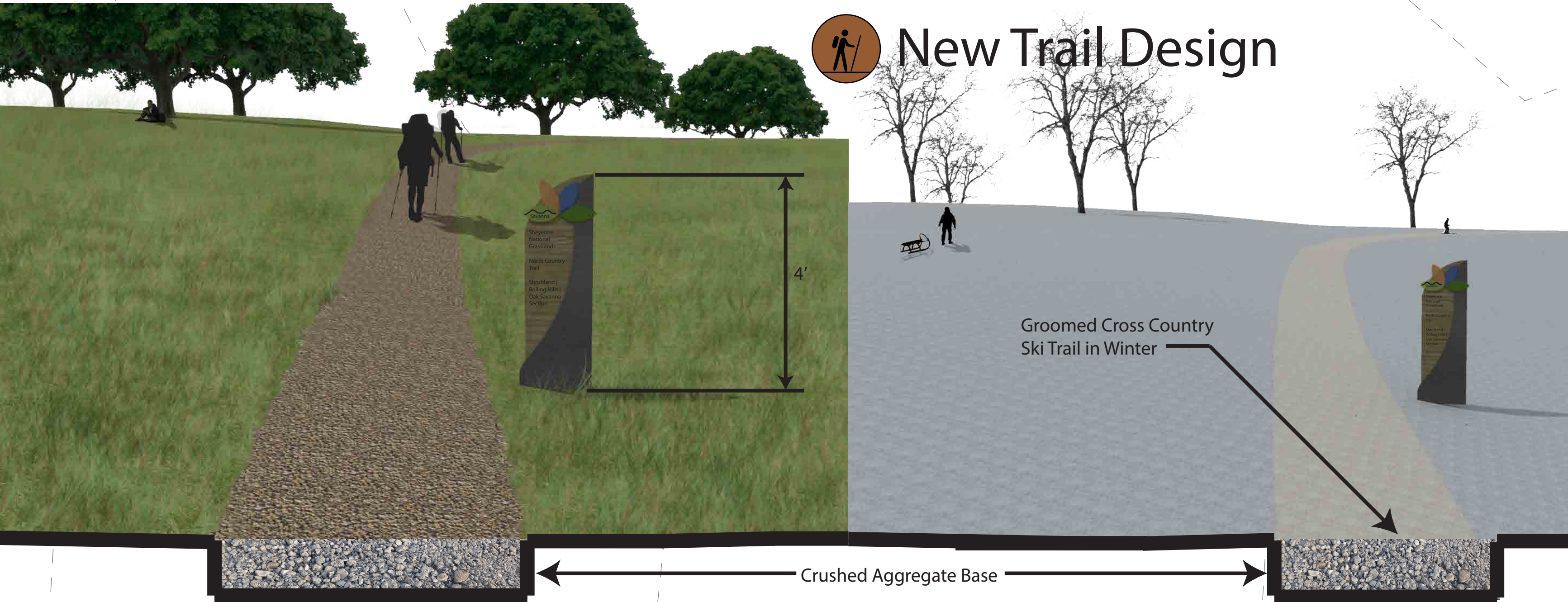
Site Plan

A small pond with an aquarium wall provides an area for people to see some of the species that inhabit the Sheyenne River



Material palette

- Crushed Aggregate
- Glass/ Plexiglass
- Wood
- Metal

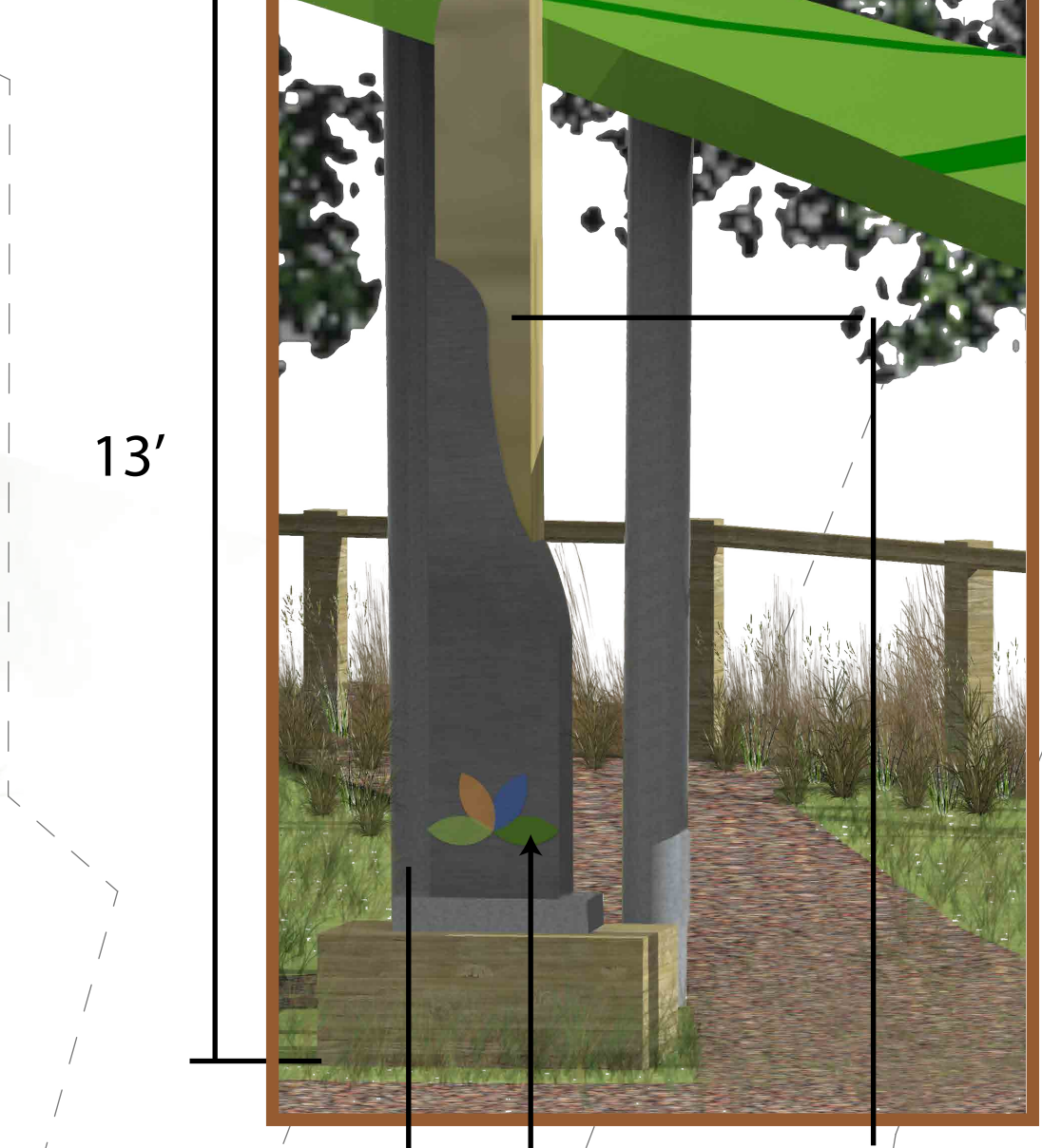




Grassland Overlook

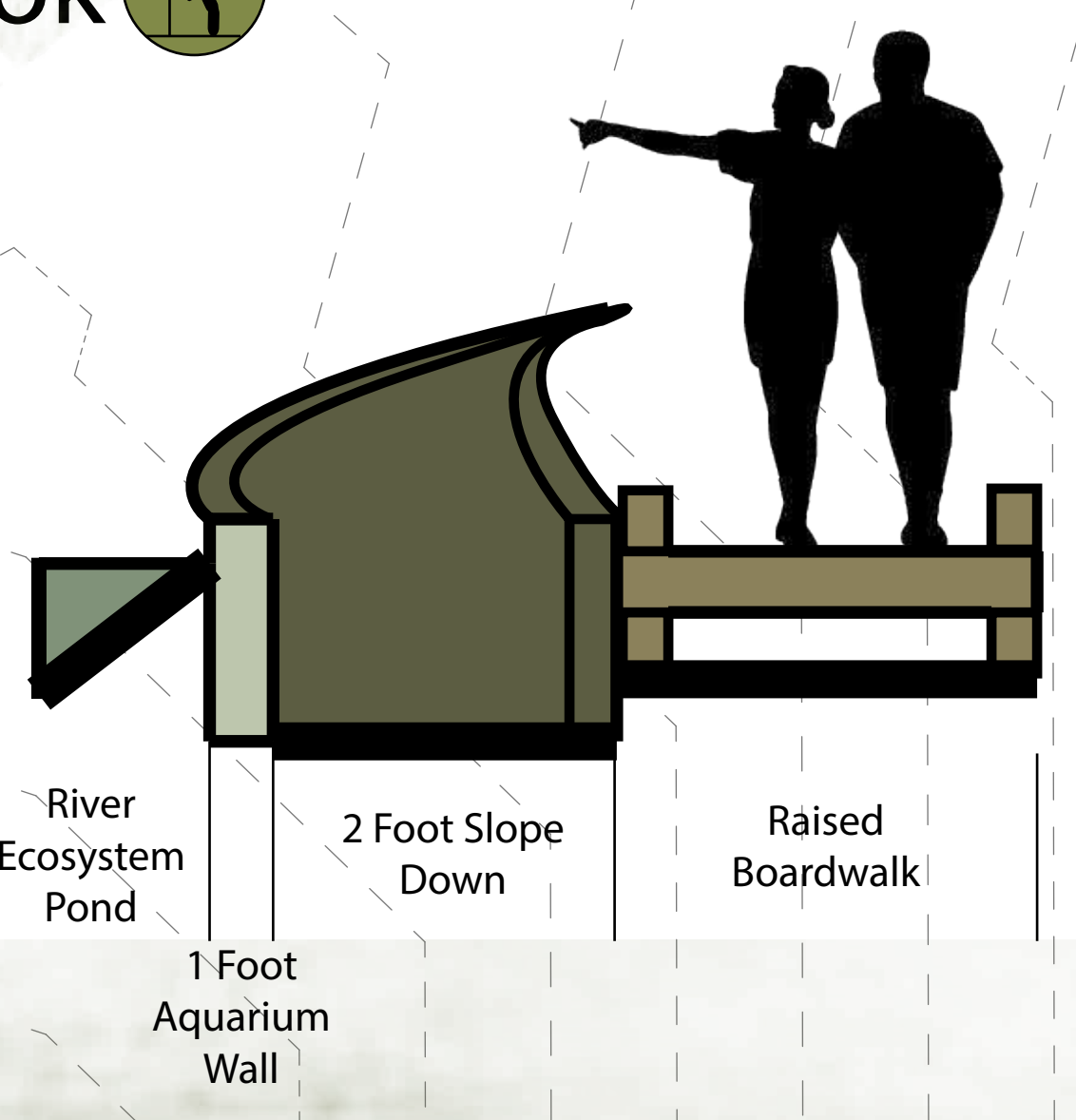
New Trailhead

Old Trailhead



13'

Etched Glass
Steel
Wood

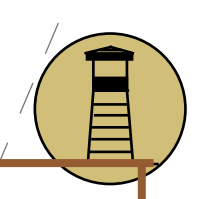


River Ecosystem Pond
2 Foot Slope Down
1 Foot Aquarium Wall
Raised Boardwalk

Wetland Boardwalk Section



Entrance and plaza of Education Center



Fire Tower

A fire tower along one of the trails outside the ecological learning center provides both an overlook of the vast Grasslands and an experience of what it is like to be in a fire tower 70 feet off the ground.

70'