AREA CHARACTER ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Upper Sioux Agency State Park is the fourth segment of focus. Consisting of 1280 acres, most of the park is located on top of the bluffs. A substantial portion in the river bottoms at the confluence of the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine Rivers is also within the park boundaries and provides opportunities for experiencing one of the tributaries of the Minnesota River.

EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND & POW-WOW SITE:
The campground is a regional attraction to equestrian enthusiasts and a wagon train is held each year. Each summer Native Americans come from all over participate in a pow wow.

OPPORTUNITIES: The park provides an opportunity to see an annual pow-wow. Many opportunities also exist for equestrian patrons of the park including equestrian campsites and trailer parking. It is within close proximity to Skalbakken Park’s equestrian trails.

CONSTRAINTS: Bicycles and horses are not compatible; horse and bike trails need to be separate from each other. Steep slopes and flooding make some of this land unusable at times.

INTERPRETIVE CENTER:
Wildlife, plant life, and cultural exhibits are on display at the Interpretive Center. Water, rest rooms, and parking are available. A series of hiking, snowmobiling, and horseback riding trails connect park amenities.

OPPORTUNITIES: A new trailhead and a state trail alignment could connect to the existing park trails and amenities. The new master plan will strengthen the Upper Sioux State Park as a major amenity along the Minnesota River State Trail.

UPPER SIOUX AGENCY CAMPUS:
The Upper Sioux Agency Campus is an important part of Minnesota’s cultural landscape. The treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 ceded Indian lands to the United States government and established the Upper and Lower Sioux reservations. The campus is the site of the federal administrative offices for the Upper Sioux Reservation. Burned down during the Dakota War of 1862, the Sioux Agency buildings have been rebuilt by the Minnesota Historical Society.

OPPORTUNITIES: The agency is an important site and appropriate access to it from the trail is desired.

CONSTRAINTS: The integrity of the historic sites needs to be maintained.
THE BLUFF-TOPS

AREA CHARACTER ANALYSIS:
OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

BLUFFS OF THE YELLOW MEDICINE RIVER:
The bluffs and coulee at the mouth of the Yellow Medicine River include a number of cultural sites: a settler’s cemetery, stagecoach trail, trader’s encampment site, and a fluting hill.

OPPORTUNITIES: A park trail loop off the main trail with a bridge across the Yellow Medicine River could provide access to both the historic sites and the parkland across the river.

CONSTRAINTS: Trail alignments need to respect the integrity of the historic sites. Park visitors have limited access to park land across the the Yellow Medicine River.

MINNESOTA RIVER OVERLOOK:
The overlook offers a breathtaking view to the river valley below. Recently planted prairie communities surround the park trail that connects the site to the interpretive center.

OPPORTUNITIES: The overlook provides the best view of the Minnesota River Valley in the park.

CONSTRAINTS: The overlook is on a point with a single access and is not part of a loop system. The native prairie plant communities need to be respected.

YELLOW MEDICINE RIVER CAMPGROUND:
The Yellow Medicine River Campground has ample facilities to provide a memorable river experience for all types of camping. Facilities include parking, walk-in campsites, restrooms/showers, electrical sites, drinking water, hiking, and equestrian trails.

OPPORTUNITIES: The campgrounds location near the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota Rivers and at the foot of the bluff make this a truly unique experience.

CONSTRAINTS: The campgrounds proximity to the route of the trail.
BLUFFS OF THE YELLOW MEDICINE RIVER

MINNESOTA RIVER OVERLOOK

YELLOW MEDICINE RIVER CAMPGROUND
TRAIL ALIGNMENT & TRAILHEAD STRATEGY:
Brings trail users into the park,
Provides views of the River Warren Valley, and
Interprets pre-European settlement and contact history.

TRAIL ALIGNMENT POTENTIAL SPINE TRAIL:
Follows along river From Upper Sioux Community #1 Trail to wind between wetlands, agricultural fields, and remnant floodplain forest, through the State Park crossing the Minnesota River at County Hwy. 21. it is a separate bituminous two way trail.

TRAIL ALIGNMENT POTENTIAL SPINE TRAIL:
Following along Minnesota River Scenic Byway, #2 Trail proceeds along the road right of way past the State Park with a separate bituminous two way trail.

TRAILHEAD:
Is located at the Upper Sioux State Park Office and Interpretive Center, and
Utilizes existing parking spaces, provides bicycle racks, and snow mobile parking.

TRAIL RESOURCES:
The resources accessed by the two trail alignments are the:

Visitors’ center,
Historic agency sites,
Picnic areas,
Camping areas,
Park trail system,
Scenic overlook, and
Access to MN and Yellow Medicine Rivers