RED LAKE FALLS

AREA CHARACTER

Red Lake Falls, a community of 1,590, is located at the confluence of the Red Lake River and the Clearwater River. The rivers cut through the beach ridges of Glacial Lake Agassiz making it one of the most scenic areas in Northwestern Minnesota. Much of the city is perched above the rivers on high, eroded clay banks. Originally inhabited by Chippewa, it was settled by French-Canadians in the late nineteenth century. The confluence is the site of a trading post and subsequently the site of the Red Lake Falls Saw Mill that was powered by the swift and sometimes turbulent river. The current and the rapids make this section of the river a popular place for tubing.

The city is bisected by the Clearwater River. State Highway 32 runs through its downtown, and the Bottineau Trail, a three-mile county trail, runs along the edge of downtown. The community’s parks are located along its rivers.

DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

BALL FIELDS PARK: This is a private park has soft ball fields.

ERODED BANKS: The twenty-foot bounce in the Red Lake River has eroded the beach ridges left by Glacial Lake Agassiz exposing the surficial geology of the area.

SPORTSMEN’S PARK BOAT LAUNCH: The boat launch at Sportsman’s Park is a popular spot for launching both canoes and fishing boats.

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE (BOTTINEAU TRAIL): The Bottineau Trail is built on an abandoned rail line that travels through town. The old railroad bridge across the Clearwater River is an ideal place for viewing the scenic river below.

RIVERSIDE PARK PICNIC AREA: The shelter in Riverside Park provides tables for a group picnic along the Clearwater River.

DOWNTOWN RED LAKE FALLS: The unique character of the Downtown District in Red Lake Falls provides a window into the history of this community.
RED LAKE FALLS
COMMUNITY RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

Scenic Red Lake Falls has many recreational amenities and points of interest. Connecting these by creating a city trail system would provide access to these destinations for both city residents and visitors while providing a way for visitors using the river to buy food and other provisions in the downtown.

CITY TRAIL SYSTEM: Using the Bottineau Trail as a spine, trail loops connect to active recreational destinations such as the swimming pool, Oak Knolls Golf Club, Les Dreschel Softball Field, picnic and camping areas, Voyageur’s View, Sportsmen’s Park, and cultural sites such as the Bottineau Homestead and the historic downtown.
RED LAKE FALLS
SPORTSMEN’S PARK EXISTING CONDITIONS

Scenic Sportsmen’s Park, in the city of Red Lake Falls, lies at the confluence of the Red Lake River and the Clearwater River. It is the historic site of sturgeon spawning runs as well as the original Red Lake Falls Sawmill. There are several amenities in the park including a boat ramp access. The park is near the Rails-to-Trails walkway for easy connection to town. Camping is permitted (check for fees). Currently Sportsman’s Park is an open area with rifle range, trap shooting, and archery ranges occupying the southern portion of the peninsula; and the boat launch, mill ruins, and campgrounds occupying the northern portion. The Lion’s picnic structure is adjacent to the rifle range. Although it has great potential as a memorable place; its potential has not been realized.

DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

PARK BOAT LAUNCH: The park boat launch is in poor condition and is in need of repair and upgrading.

RED LAKE FALLS SAW MILL RUINS: This historic site has a sign on a remnant of the old mill.

RIFLE, TRAP SHOOTING, AND ARCHERY RANGES: These popular ranges are next to each other on cleared land southwest of the park road.

PICNIC SHELTER: This shelter for group picnics also facilitates camping use.

PARK CAMPGROUND & LIONS SHELTER: The campground is on a treeless site with Recreational Vehicle hook-ups.
The existing uses are upgraded and reorganized in the new design of Sportsmen’s Park to more fully take advantage of this scenic and cultural site and to provide more opportunities for use by residents and visitors.

CROW’S FOOT POINT GATHERING SPACE: A number of different activity areas are concentrated on Crow’s Foot Point (the point formed by the confluence of the Red Lake and Clearwater Rivers). The fishing pier/scenic overlook is located at the tip of the point. The expanded boat launch, on the Clearwater River side, is separated from the other activity areas of the point by dense planting of trees and mounded earth berms. Crow’s Foot Point Gathering Space with its picnic shelter, interpretive signs, RLRC Kiosk, and playground is located on the site of the old Red Lake Falls Sawmill. It is connected to the fishing pier/overlook by a short trail and to the parking lot by a crosswalk and trail.

CLEARWATER RIVERBANK / PICNIC AREA: Day-use picnic areas are sited along the riverbank. Trees between each picnic site provide privacy for the individual picnic areas. Trails connect the picnic areas to the parking lot and other parts of the park.

RED LAKE FALLS CAMPGROUND: Eleven car campsites and seven recreational vehicle campsites are located in the campground on the Red Lake River side of the park. Trees on the sides of each campsite provide privacy for campers by separating each campsite from each other, the road, and the park trails.

THE TRAIL SYSTEM: A system of trails follows along the banks of the rivers, connects the activity areas within the park, winds up a hill to a viewing point promontory, and provides access to the existing restrooms for all park users. Trails that skirt the parking lot provide connection between the parking and the activity areas.

THE PENINSULA’S CENTER / PARK ROADS & PARKING LOTS: A park road in the center of the peninsula provides access to the camping areas, rifle range, Crow’s Foot Point Gathering Space, boat launch, and the main parking lot. Picnic goods and people can be dropped off in the pull-out just south of the gathering space. Parking for cars and boat trailers is provided in a large parking lot. Trees separate the parking lot from the rest of the park. A storm water swale slows and cleans storm water as it runs off the parking lot and the rifle range before it runs into the Clearwater River.

BERM & FENCE: For safety reasons the Rifle Range is separated from the rest of the park by trees, a berm, and a fence. A separate parking lot for range users is provided.
RED LAKE FALLS
CROW’S FOOT POINT GATHERING SPACE

NAMING OF CROW’S FOOT POINT: The point is named for the crow’s foot symbol which was used to identify the logs that were destined to be cut at the Red Lake Falls Saw Mill.

CROW’S FOOT POINT PLAZA: The combination of the RLRC Kiosk, Red Lake Falls Sawmill Historic Site, Lions Club picnic structure, children’s playground, and increased tree plantings define the edges and organize the perimeter of the plaza creating the gathering space at the core of the point.

INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS: The Red Lake River Corridor Kiosk and the sawmill ruins interpret the pre-European settlement, trading post, and sawmill histories of the site and provide information about this section of the Red Lake River Corridor.

PICNIC SHELTER & PLAYGROUND: The Lions picnic shelter is moved to the new plaza. A small play area with a variety of play structures for young children is placed on the edge of the plaza within sight of the picnic shelter.

RLRC INFORMATIONAL SIGN: The signs at the head of Crow’s Foot Plaza Gathering Space provide information about the Red Lake River Corridor, Red Lake Falls, and Sportsmen’s Park. The river sign provides information about trail resources such as campsites, restrooms, and picnic areas.

DROP-OFF: A drop off area by the crosswalk is provided for dropping off people and picnic supplies before parking the car in the parking lot.
CROW’S FOOT POINT GATHERING SPACE

RLRC KIOSK
(Interpretive Element)

RED LAKE FALLS
SAW MILLS RUINS
(Interpretive Element)

PICNIC SHELTER
(Potential Lions Structure Reuse)

Forest Plantings

PLAYGROUND

Nature Trail

RLRC INFORMATIONAL SIGN
(Interpretive Element)

DROP-OFF

Bermed
Forest
Plantings
RED LAKE FALLS
CROW’S FOOT POINT ILLUSTRATIVE DETAILS

FISHING PIER / SCENIC OVERLOOK: The fishing pier / scenic overlook provide opportunities to fish at this popular location and enjoy the views of the banks across the river. It is constructed of a metal frame and steel grate decking that follows the established RLRC design vocabulary, while ensuring longevity and ease of maintenance.

RLRC INFORMATIONAL SIGNS: The sign at the boat launch provides information about the Red Lake River Corridor, Red Lake Falls, and Sportsman’s Park. The river sign is erected along the canoe trail and provides information about trail resources such as campsites, restrooms, and picnic areas.
ILLUSTRATIVE VIEWS

FISHING PIER / SCENIC OVERLOOK
RED LAKE FALLS
SPORTSMEN’S PARK DESIGN COMPONENTS

DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION: The various design components of the Sportmen’s Park plan have been designed with a non-hierarchical phasing strategy which can be addressed as a whole, or can be pursued over time as independent installations, based on the park design. This addresses issues of timing and funding as the community determines where, when, and what improvements are to be pursued.

CROW’S FOOT POINT: Use requirements mandate at a minimum the river bank be stabilized at the existing boat launch. As an extension of work on the boat launch it would be a logical progression to consider options for the northeast bank along the entire length of the park. To accomplish this the cut of the slope of the existing northeast river bank be graded to less than 1:3 and reinforced with Rip-Rap type boulders to ward off further erosion. To accommodate the new Crow’s Foot Point it would be necessary to reconfigure the existing boat launch to pull in/out configuration with the inclusion of space for trailer turn around. The small road section (X on the diagram) would need to be closed and traffic redirected to the launch access. A parking lot could be housed within the inside of the loop. Each of these design initiatives would maintain the existing road alignment to Crows Foot Point throughout all phases.

DAY USE PICNIC AREAS: On the Clearwater River side of the point the planting of forest patches which mimic the existing forest patches seen along this river section would create small spaces which could be used for picnicking or potentially camping. These new spaces should maintain access to/from the existing drive.

FOREST NATURE AREA: This forested area would be built around the new infiltration swale and would incorporate appropriate water loving plantings. This could facilitate the planning and construction of a new fence/berm combination as a divider effectively producing a sufficient buffer zone between use zones seen at the park.

FORESTED BERM AND FENCE: This design feature requires the existing drive access to be realigned. The fence could potentially be used without berm. The fencing idea could also be accomplished with increased forest plantings and a fence.

CAMPGROUND: This design feature requires driveway road realignment starting north of restroom facility, while maintaining existing rifle range driveway. The road alignment would reconnect to the new road and force the relocation of the Lions structure to Crows Foot Point. The new road loop change would widen the return loop and close the arrival path, while maintaining the existing boat launch. The existing trees would be used as enclosure for new structure location.

PARKING: The new parking configuration would require fill on the west side of existing road loop. This construction would also facilitate the construction of the rain garden/detention pond.

RIVERSIDE TRAIL: The River’s edge trail and promontory require no road changes. Each uses existing grade. The Clearwater River side to gun range would not see trail development. The alignment would proceed along west edge of parking lot and loop back to restroom facility. An existing “Social Trail” should be investigated as an optional riverside trail to Voyageur’s View.
This diagram features the design plan for Crow’s Foot Point as a white line drawing, and the FSA 2003 Aerial Photographs of the point at Sportsmen’s Park. The graphic shows the relation of existing features of the park with all design potentials as an overlay to show the flexibility and stand alone capabilities of the design components.