



Lake Red Rock Project  
**MASTER PLAN**

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**CHAPTER 8**

Summary of Recommendations

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## CHAPTER 8

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Lake Red Rock is the largest piece of contiguous public land and waters in the State of Iowa. This presents significant opportunity for natural resources and public recreation. This Master Plan creates the vision for stewardship of Lake Red Rock's natural and cultural resources while improving, expanding, and/or developing new recreation facilities. Throughout the Master Plan process we sought a high level of public involvement in helping define this vision.

The stewardship of Lake Red Rock's natural resources was the primary consideration of this Master Plan. All proposed development options were secondary to the determination of environmentally sensitive areas and resource protection of that classification.

This Master Plan conceptually establishes and guides the management and development of all natural, cultural, and recreational resources at Lake Red Rock. The Master Plan is a land use management document and does not address water management operations, associated water management facilities (dam, levees, etc), or shoreline management. These are outlined in separate documents. Following are the primary areas of focus within the Master Plan that create the vision for Lake Red Rock.

#### 8.1. LAND CLASSIFICATION

In general, this Master Plan includes minor changes to actual allowable use of project lands as compared to previous allowable land uses. However, the acreage change appears significant due to changes in classification categories from the previous 1976 Master Plan to this Master Plan. The new classifications are in compliance with the current Engineering Regulations and Engineering Pamphlets. The primary actual change to allowable use of the land is for lands that have been classified as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in this Master Plan. This classification is new and ensures the protection of valuable resources. An ESA site may have known locations for threatened or endangered species; critical habitats for priority species; high quality native plant communities; a landscape history indicating a lack of disturbance; and scenic or iconic landscape.

#### 8.2. MANAGE FOR NATIVE SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

In analyzing ESAs and important natural resource areas, it was determined that the greatest threat facing the natural resources at Lake Red Rock was invasive species reducing or eliminating native species. A primary goal of the Master Plan is to control invasive species and recover or restore native sustainable resources in ESAs and important natural resource areas.

#### 8.3. FISHING AND HUNTING

Improvement of fishing opportunities was a top priority of many stakeholders. Improvement of fishing access and fishing success is a priority in this Master Plan.

Maintaining existing hunting opportunities was also a priority of many stakeholders. A goal to maintain a minimum of 95% of the current hunting opportunities is included in this plan in order to protect this recreational and biological management tool. It is important to note that a 5% reduction is not being recommended; rather it is being recognized that it could be necessary.

#### 8.4. RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

The public values the recreation facilities currently at Lake Red Rock and encouraged putting additional resources into maintenance or modernization of those facilities. However, modernization does not mean significantly changing the look and feel of a recreation area (i.e. removing significant number of trees to enlarge camping pads).

The public strongly encouraged improved quality and expansion of marina facilities. They felt the marina could serve as a strong hub for the lake area with a restaurant, bike rentals, boat rentals, and other concession offerings.

There was strong desire for development of recreation facilities of regional scope. This was desired for expanded recreation opportunities and area economic benefit.

This scope of regional significance is included in concepts for bike trails; horse trails; archery ranges; water trails, and potentially soft trails.

#### 8.5. CONNECTION TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Connection to the environment is found in all of the concepts in this Master Plan. Throughout the process, we heard from stakeholders that they want to actively participate in and enjoy nature; they value the interpretive programs that help them understand and enjoy nature; and they feel a desire to improve the environment and reduce public impact.

All of the expanded or new recreation trail opportunities recommended in this Master Plan have a strong dependence on the resources in which each activity occurs. The variety and quality of natural resources are what add value to developments such as water trails, horse trails, soft trails, and hard trails.

Development of playscapes, watchable wildlife areas, and interpretive centers provides a direct connection to the environment. The proposed Cordova Center brings together several of the desires for connection to include active play in nature and nature education with a strong emphasis on water quality improvement.

#### 8.6. KEEPING IT WILD

During the Master Plan public input process, we received comments that placed high value on the wildness of Lake Red Rock and the desire to keep or improve its wildness. Wildness was expressed as many things, including an undeveloped vista around Lake Red Rock, access to natural areas, the ability to be by one's self, quietude, observing wildlife, and exploring or feeling that one was in nature. John Pearson wrote the following about rewilding Lake Red Rock:

*Rewilding - Red Rock is not a wilderness, but I have found wildness there - and opportunities for reflection. Kayaking its coastlines and open water, I am impressed by its rugged sandstone bluffs, surprised by its wildlife, and captivated by its spaciousness. Its huge size allows me to slip away from marina-tethered motorboats, pass beyond the bridge-bound highway, cruise isolated shores, and encounter natural beauty.*

Restoring wildness must include a determination to preserve and expand it in known strongholds - natural prairies, woodlands, wetlands, and streams - and a willingness to discover it in unexpected places.



### 8.7. PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

This goal is simply to assure the public has access to public lands. This will require partnerships among county, state and Federal governments so as to keep roads leading to public lands well maintained and in public ownership.

### 8.8. SUMMARY

This Master Plan creates the vision for resource stewardship and recreation opportunities at one of Iowa's most important public lands. It provides the framework for the Corps and other managing agencies at Lake Red Rock to guide their activities and management decisions.

The primary threats to this vision have been identified as sedimentation, invasive species, and poor water quality.

The multi-dimensional need for keeping it wild at Lake Red Rock is a legacy worth leaving as we fulfill the Master Plan vision.

**We invite you to join us in lifting the Red Rock Project higher by being engaged in the activities at the Lake. It is the partnerships between stakeholders and agencies that make good things great. Get involved and share your knowledge, experience, and time to enable the ideals of this plan.**



*Red Rock Balloon Fest*

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