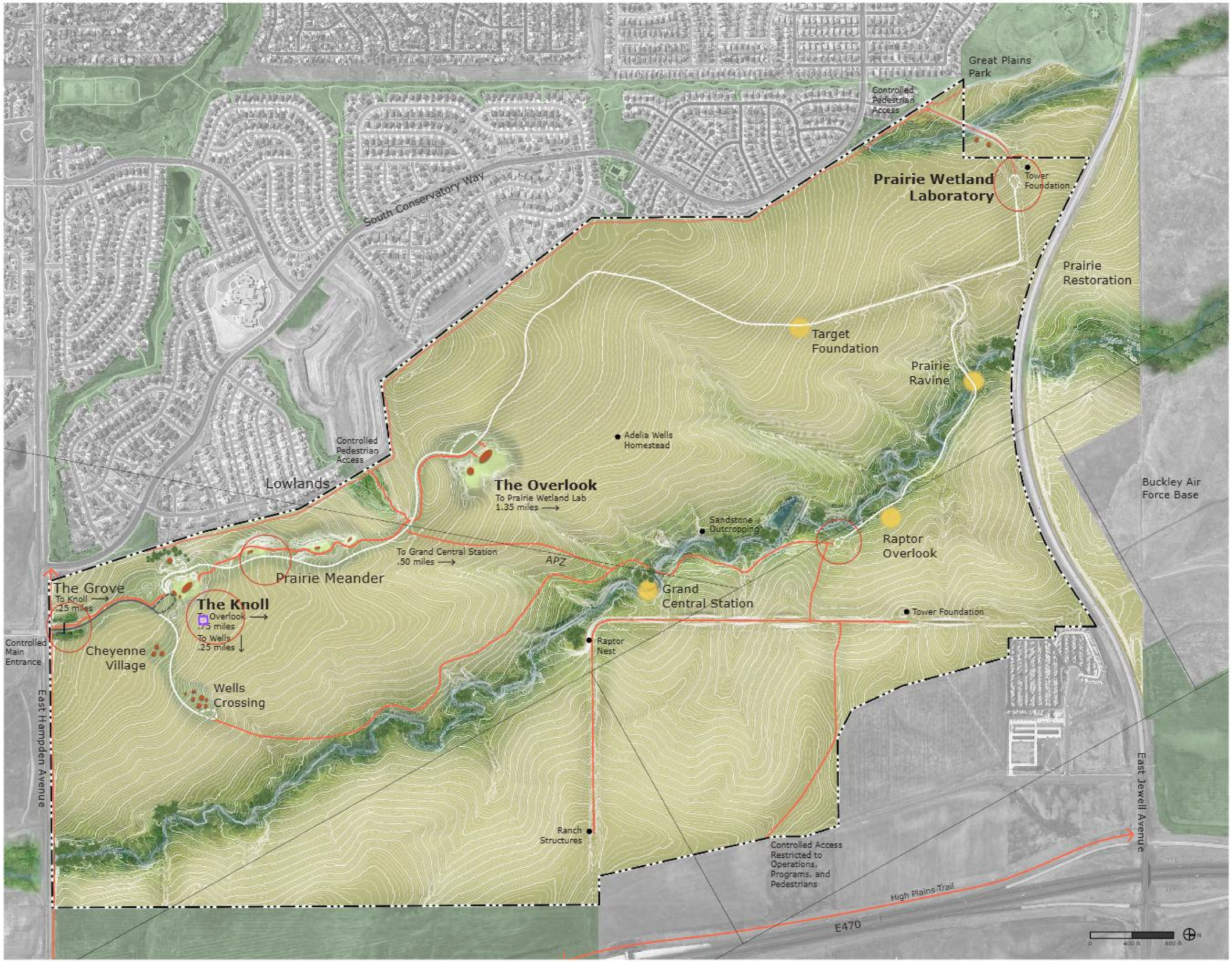
Plains Conservation Center

Master Plan



Legend

- PCC Entry Road
- Prairie Tour
- Trail
- Resource-based Point of Interest
- Riparian Lowlands
- Shortgrass Prairie
- Accident Potential Zone (APZ)

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The Prairie Wetland Laboratory outdoor classroom will offer hands-on exploration of the landscape.

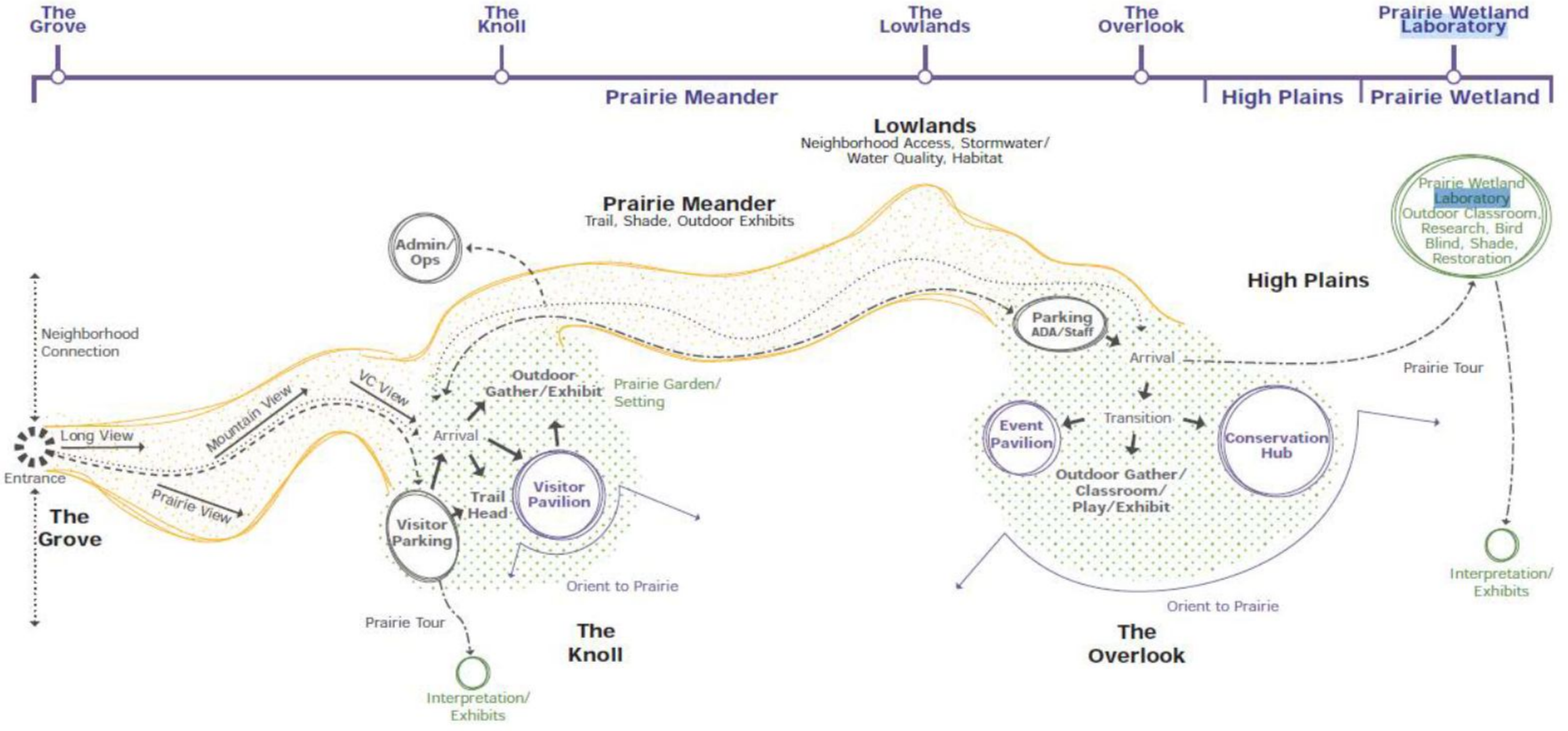


The Prairie/High Plains zone will support diverse plant and wildlife while offering visitor experiences of low environmental impact.



Visitor use areas will provide opportunities for all ages to explore, learn, and connect to the natural and cultural heritage of the high plains. The Visitor Pavilion at The Knoll will be the primary point of visitor contact and orientation and offer areas for interpretation, exhibits, and small gatherings. The Event Pavilion and Conservation Hub at The Overlook will be located outside the APZ district and will be the center for education, research, interpretation, and visitor gatherings. Prairie Meander will provide a distinct outdoor gathering space and linear connection between The Knoll and The Overlook. The Prairie Tour and trails will support low impact visitor experiences and connections to interpretive and educational points of interest.

The design of new features and an integrated approach to management of natural and cultural systems will support conservation, healthy ecosystems, and the resiliency of PCC's built and natural environment.



Thoughtful siting, orientation, and site design will ensure facilities and outdoor spaces create an orchestrated experience and capitalize on complementary adjacencies.

The Grove | The Knoll | The Lowlands | The Overlook | Prairie Wetland Laboratory

Prairie Meander | High Plains | Prairie Wetland

Use Zones

- Prairie/High Plains Zone
- Manicured Prairie Zone
- Resource-Based Point of Interest
- Controlled Site Access
- PCC Public Entry Road
- Prairie Tour
- Trail
- Accident Potential Zone (APZ)
- Potential Raptor Seasonal Restriction Zone[1]

[1] Restriction zone is enacted with active eagle nests. Future nesting sites are unknown and could occur in trees along East Toll Gate Creek. This plan identifies a 1/4 mile buffer from East Toll Gate Creek as a potential restriction zone.

Great Plains Park
Controlled Pedestrian Access
Riparian Restoration
Prairie Wetland Laboratory
Outdoor Classroom, Research, Bird Blind, Shade, Restoration
Tower Foundation
Prairie Resoration
Aurora Open Space
SOUTH CONSERVATORY WAY
Target Foundation
Prairie Ravine
Wildlife Corridor
Controlled Pedestrian Access, Neighborhood Access, Stormwater/ Water Quality, Habitat
Adelia Wells Homestead
Lowlands
The Overlook
Education Pavilion, Classroom, Exhibits, Partner
Buckley Air Force Base
EAST HAMPDEN AVENUE
Sandstone Outcropping
Raptor Overlook
Prairie Meander
Trail, Shade, Outdoor Exhibits
The Knoll
Visitor Pavilion Operations
Grand Central Station
The Grove
Controlled Main Entrance
Cheyenne Village
Wells Crossing
East Toll Gate Creek
Raptor Nest
Tower Foundation
ROME WAY
EAST JEWELL AVENUE
Cultivated Dryland Fields
Ranch Structures
Controlled Access Restricted to Operations, Programs, and Pedestrians
Wildlife Corridor

0 1200 ft 2400 ft

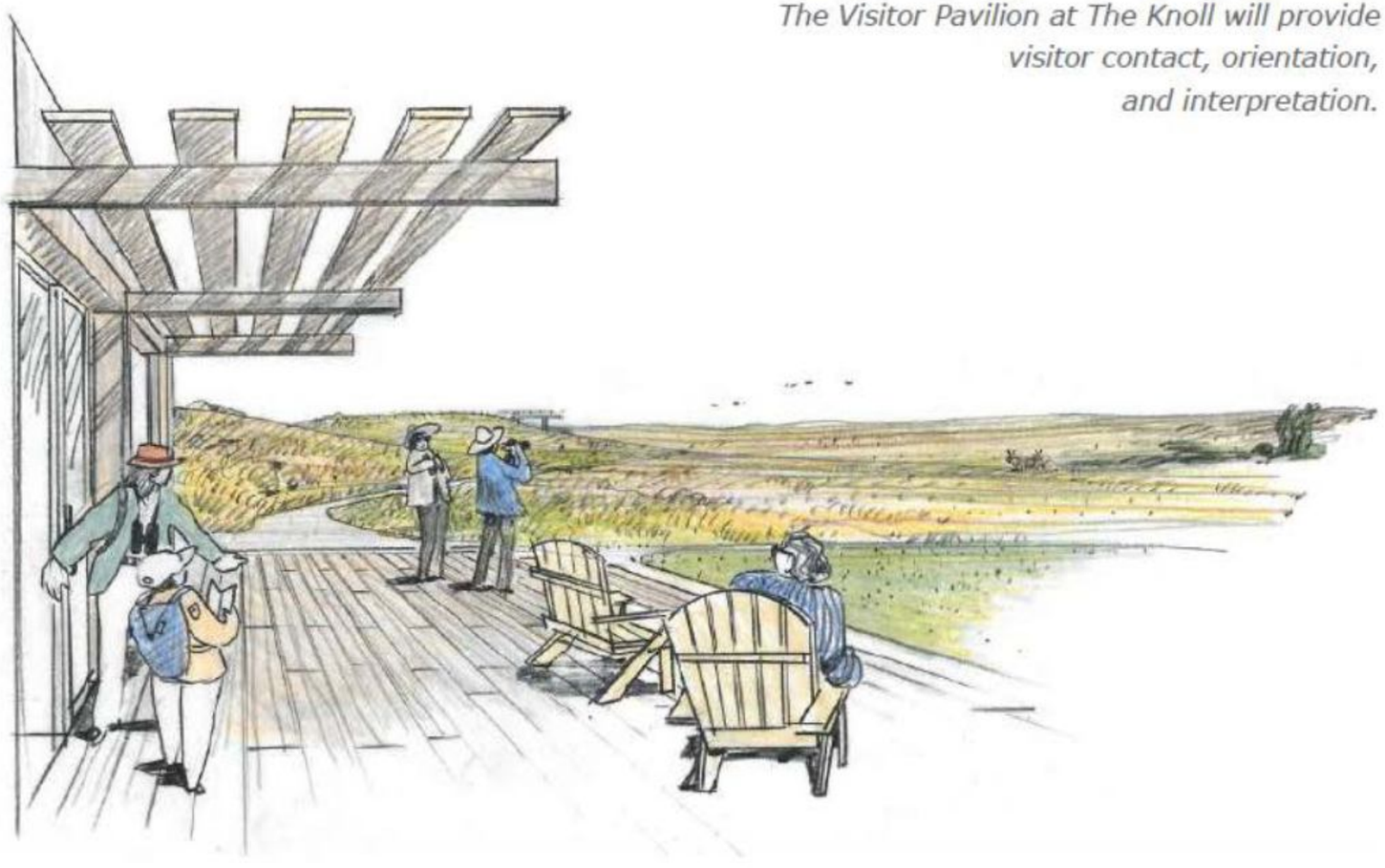
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Manicured Prairie Zone

Visitors will enter PCC on its southwestern edge from East Hampden Avenue where the shortgrass prairie/high plains unfold to the east with the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains as a backdrop to the west. This edge will be developed and managed as the Manicured Prairie Zone. Visitor contact, education, interpretation, administration, and operations will be located in this zone. This zone will provide diverse experiences for all visitors and will minimize impacts to resources.

The Knoll, Prairie Meander, The Overlook, and Prairie Wetland Laboratory will be within the Manicured Prairie Zone.

The following describes key recommendations for the Manicured Prairie Zone. Detailed guidance is provided in Chapter 6.



The Visitor Pavilion at The Knoll will provide visitor contact, orientation, and interpretation.

» **Establish The Knoll as the primary orientation to PCC for all visitors.**

A portion of PCC's existing visitor/education site will be re-purposed as The Knoll. The Knoll will provide visitor amenities, orientation, interpretation, exhibits, and small gathering areas including those for curriculum- and community-based groups.

Facilities will include visitor and bus parking, small shade shelters, a trailhead and a visitor pavilion. Outdoor gathering areas will include lawns, terraces, and classrooms.

From The Knoll, visitors will connect to PCC's native landscape and experiences via trails, PCC shuttle, and the Prairie Meander.

PCC's administration and operations will be on the southwest edge of The Knoll, visually and physically separated from visitor area.

» Establish Prairie Wetland Laboratory as an outdoor classroom.

An outdoor classroom for hands-on exploration of the prairie wetland landscape will be located on the northeastern edge of PCC. The Prairie Wetland Laboratory will provide a gathering space, human-scale shade shelters, vault toilet restrooms, and a bird blind for curriculum- and community-based programming, wildlife viewing, citizen science (i.e., seed collection, plant identification, bird counts), and partner research.

» Maintain Cheyenne Village as a primary exhibit.

The setting and features of Cheyenne Village will continue to be an inspirational space for interpretation and educational programming. Cheyenne Village will continue to be a place to share cultural stories of the Cheyenne Indians on the high plains.

» Relocate Wells Crossing closer to Cheyenne Village as a primary exhibit.

The story of homesteading, agriculture, and the high plains prairie will continue through living history and curriculum- and community-based programming at Wells Crossing. This exhibit will be relocated to be closer to The Knoll to improve walkability. As improvements are made, Wells Crossing will become a more authentic and finely crafted setting for interpretation and education.



The Prairie Wetland Laboratory outdoor classroom will offer hands-on exploration of the landscape.

Site Design

Site design guidance establishes a framework to achieve the master plan vision for The Knoll, Prairie Meander, The Overlook, Prairie Wetland Laboratory and Prairie/High Plains Zone. Thoughtful consideration of orientation, siting of facilities and features, and integration of these within the natural setting of Plains Conservation Center (PCC) will ensure protection of the shortgrass prairie and create distinctive settings for a range of visitor experiences.

General Guidance

General guidance for site and facility design provides basic principles to be followed when defining uses, repairing existing sites and structures, and designing new facilities and amenities. Adhering to this general guidance will ensure the shortgrass prairie remains the focal point of PCC as new improvements are designed in response to the natural environment.

- Re-purpose a portion of PCC's existing visitor/education site as The Knoll—new visitor pavilion, orientation, and administration/operations area.
  - » Visually and physically separate operational uses from visitor uses through site design, topography, screen plantings, and separated circulation.
- Respect and preserve the natural character of PCC by subordinating new improvements to the native setting and site's features.
  - » Design new features to be subordinate and placed in context to the natural environment, native vegetation, topography/landforms, and views.
- Orient and site structures and features to blend with the shortgrass prairie landscape. Set new facilities into PCC's sloping prairie topography and maintain undeveloped ridges and highpoints.
  - » Ensure features express a consistent aesthetic complementing the shortgrass prairie's character in materials, size, and color.
- Allow topographic/landform modifications of a prairie-scale to create backdrops or assist in defining outdoor spaces or to screen parking and operations areas.
- Design facilities and amenities holistically, ensuring features are integrated with one another and with the larger context of PCC.
- Capitalize on primary views to the shortgrass prairie and secondary views to the mountains. Site and orient new facilities to primarily focus on the prairie/high plains.
  - » Frame views through structure placement, road and trail alignments, vegetation, and topography.
- Integrate parking and circulation routes with landscape and topography to minimize visibility.
- Locate site features to minimize impacts to habitat and natural features.
  - » Minimize improvements and concentration of visitor uses within habitat patches and raptor seasonal restriction zones.
  - » Focus site improvements to the Manicured Prairie Zone to maximize habitat conservation and maintain buffers between visitor use and wildlife.
- Locate visitor gathering spaces exceeding a capacity of fifty (50) persons outside the Buckley Air Force Base Accident Potential Zone District (APZ).
- Ensure features are compatible with PCC's prairie character in materials, size, scale, and color.
- Consider physical and visual separation between PCC and adjacent development—i.e., Buckley Air Force Base and Lowry Landfill.
  - » Consider noise pollution from adjacent roadways and development when locating visitor amenities.
  - » Consider adding topographic and vegetative buffers as backdrops to screen adjacent development from visitor areas.

Site Design

Orchestrated Experience

Orchestrated experiences cultivate a sense of arrival, enhance wayfinding, and create moments of discovery beginning at PCC's entrance and continuing throughout the site. Establishing orchestrated experiences through vegetation, views, and beacons will ensure varied and memorable experiences for first time and repeat visitors.

- Establish clear visitor arrival spaces.
- Maintain and improve Prairie Tour as a memorable PCC experience via trail and shuttles with visitor protection from inclement weather.
- Capitalize on views to the prairie, mountains, natural features, and iconic site features.
- Create "beacons" drawing visitors through the shortgrass prairie landscape.
- Allow landform modifications of a prairie-scale providing a backdrop or assisting in defining outdoor spaces and visitor uses or screen parking and operations areas.

Outdoor Gathering Areas

Outdoor gathering areas provide flexible spaces for curriculum- and community-based programming, and special events. Thoughtful placement of new amenities and facilities within the shortgrass prairie will provide engaging settings to gather, view wildlife, and learn.

- Establish outdoor gathering areas at The Knoll, The Overlook, Prairie Wetland Laboratory, Cheyenne Village, and Wells Crossing to facilitate curriculum- and community-based programming.
- Improve existing resource-based points of interest at the Target Foundation, Prairie Ravine, and Raptor Overlook to enhance visitor experience, provide interpretation, and protect resources.
- Locate outdoor gathering areas to complement indoor uses, for interpretation of natural and cultural features, and to capitalize on views.
- Ensure gathering areas are subordinate to and placed in context to the natural environment, respecting features such as vegetation, habitat, and views.

Visitor Amenities

Basic visitor amenities support necessary visitor uses while protecting resources. Amenities will include shade, seating, trash and recycling receptacles, restrooms, and wayfinding and interpretive signage.

- Locate amenities in areas where they do not detract from the visitor experience, impact views, or diminish the character of PCC.
- Establish site amenities to express a consistent aesthetic, complementing the shortgrass prairie's character in materials, size, scale, and color.
  - » Design features to be simple and timeless.
  - » Ensure features are low profile and of a human-scale.
  - » Ensure features are designed with the highest level of craftmanship and quality materials.
  - » Ensure materials and colors are subdued with an even tone. Compatible materials include wood, painted steel, and stone.
- Provide shade, viewing platforms or bird blinds at The Knoll, Prairie Meander, The Overlook, and Prairie Wetland Laboratory.
- Provide vault toilet restrooms at Wells Crossing and Prairie Wetland Laboratory.

Circulation and Access (continued)

Vehicular Parking

Provide parking for everyday visitation and operations at The Knoll and limited access/ special event parking at The Overlook and Rome Trailhead.

- Minimize the number of parking spaces provided to those needed to accommodate PCC's program of uses.
- Design parking areas to be safe and intuitive for vehicle and pedestrian travel.
- Integrate parking areas and circulation routes with the landscape's sloping topography and vegetation to minimize visibility.
- Provide accessible parking and routes.
- Coordinate offsite parking and shuttle transportation for large special events. Potential overflow parking sites may include Great Plains Park and the parking lot north of East Jewell Avenue.

Trailheads

Provide trailheads with orientation and information about PCC at The Knoll, Lowlands, Prairie Meander, Great Plains Park, and the existing Rome trailhead.

- Provide standard amenities, i.e., signage (wayfinding, regulatory, and informational), trash and recycling receptacles, and seating.
- Establish controlled pedestrian access at The Lowlands, Prairie Wetland Laboratory, and Rome Trailhead. Consider a fob system or scheduled times of operation.
- Restrict access at Rome Trailhead to operations, scheduled curriculum- or community-based programming, and controlled pedestrian access.

Wayfinding

Design circulation routes for intuitive navigation and reinforce with consistent signage.

- Establish a system of signs representing the character of PCC.
- Ensure signs are subordinate to the landscape through orientation, placement and use of materials.
- Use materials compatible with the shortgrass prairie character of PCC, timeless, and durable.
- Minimize sign clutter through careful consideration to the need for, and location of each sign.