

# COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## REGIONAL SCIENCE CENTER

Under the auspices of Moorhead State University Foundation

Prepared By:

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Landscape Architecture

Site Planning

Visual Assessment

Open Space Planning

**Foss Associates**

Architecture

Interiors

Engineering

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## Executive Summary

The Regional Science Center Comprehensive Development Framework identifies several areas to be addressed in the design, development and implementation of a regional facility intended to serve the on-going outdoor educational needs of the area. This product has been prepared as a working document to assist in the identification, design and eventual construction of features, facilities and activities which emphasize public observation, participation, education and scientific research.

This Framework for development should be considered as a basis and resource for the continuing decision-making process associated with a project that is evolutionary in nature, multi-disciplinary in scope and responsive to the needs of the scientific community.

Significant aspects which have determined the general direction of the conceptual master plan are a result of dialogue with, and input from, the Regional Science Center Advisory Committee and include consideration of the following: existing natural and cultural conditions, site opportunities, proximate recreational/educational resources, supply-demand factors, and fiscal considerations.

### Conclusions

The following general conclusions and recommendations result from the Regional Science Center Comprehensive Development Framework:

1. The purpose of the Regional Science Center is to provide on-site opportunities in the sciences which expand upon existing and available area facilities. The project's emphasis is not to duplicate nearby activities such as the interpretive program provided through Buffalo River State Park, but rather to develop innovative and cooperative efforts among agencies, organizations and educational institutions offering complementary programs.
2. Interim management and coordination will be provided by the Office of Public Affairs through Moorhead State University. It is recommended that a Staff Director be brought on board as early as possible to organize and manage what it is hoped will be an increasing demand for site usage, to develop introductory workshops to area instructors and other interested parties, and to prepare outline educational syllabi and programs for use by educators.
3. Physical development should be kept to a minimum. It is anticipated that small scale development of facilities will be implemented in the very near future not only to satisfy regional educational needs, but to act as a demonstration project to generate area-wide enthusiasm and commitment so vital to an undertaking of this type.

4. Management operations, maintenance and security will require close coordination among local authorities, affected agencies, and Regional Science Center management.
5. Any development which occurs should take into account, and mitigate as much as possible, the intrusion of humans into a sensitive environment. Areas that have already been developed should be upgraded to increase wildlife habitats, reduce site deterioration, emphasize the region's prairie character and enhance aesthetic values.
6. Sensitive ecosystems and site amenities should be maintained and protected. Site development must be based on established resource management practices that will strengthen the areas diverse natural orientation.
7. Existing outdoor recreation facilities (specifically the Ponderosa Golf Course) will be maintained on an interim basis until such time that scientific educational and research facilities/activities require additional land and/or it is determined that non-scientific recreational usage poses a conflict with the state goals and objectives of the Regional Science Center.
8. Provide on-site educational/research opportunities which are developed in such a manner as to assure long term preservation and protection of wildlife, vegetation and other sensitive resources.
9. The existing clubhouse facility should be renovated to accommodate current recreational demand and to facilitate science Center administrative, orientation, and educational programs and requirements.
10. An immediate effort should be initiated to design and develop a prototypical trail loop which offers an introduction to the sites natural diversity, as well as access to limited facilities and activities and programs which can be expanded as funding becomes available.
11. Emphasis will be given to those programs and activities which are participatory in scope, non-destructive to local ecology, and which serve scientific instruction, study and research objectives.