The Master Plan

The Master Plan prioritizes the reinvigoration of the core Turkey Mountain experience Tulsans have come to love—easy access to a wilderness experience in the city. This means welcoming bikers and pedestrians via new gateways, strengthening and clarifying the trails system, and leveraging both age-old and innovative lessons from applied ecology to restore Turkey Mountain's landscape. This core mission safeguards the character of the site, "keeping Turkey Mountain wild," while laying the groundwork for new programs that invite new users to enjoy Turkey Mountain.

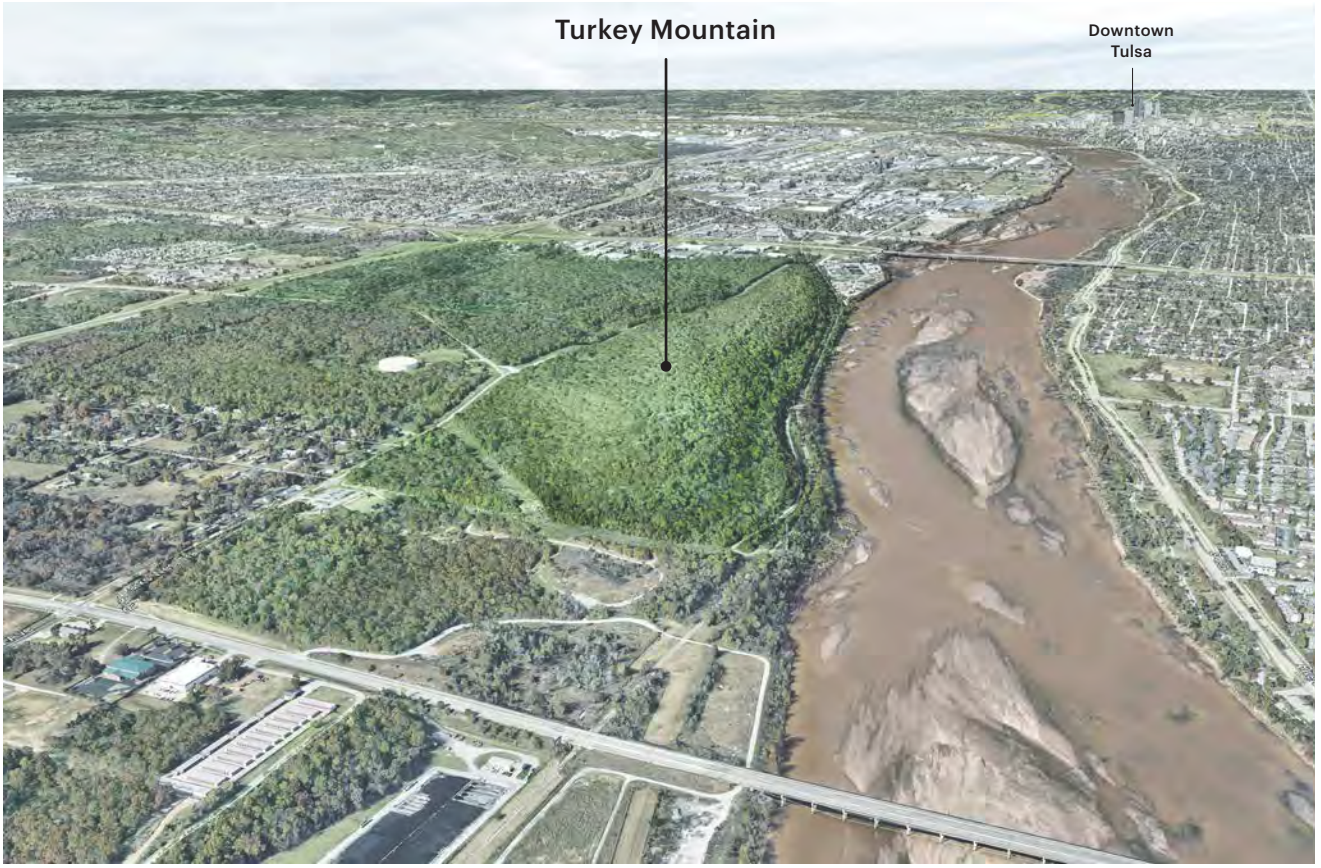
The Master Plan establishes four core principles to guide the future transformation of Turkey Mountain:

1. **Restore Nature**
2. **Maximize Access**
3. **Enhance Trails**
4. **Integrate Program**

An Expanded Vision

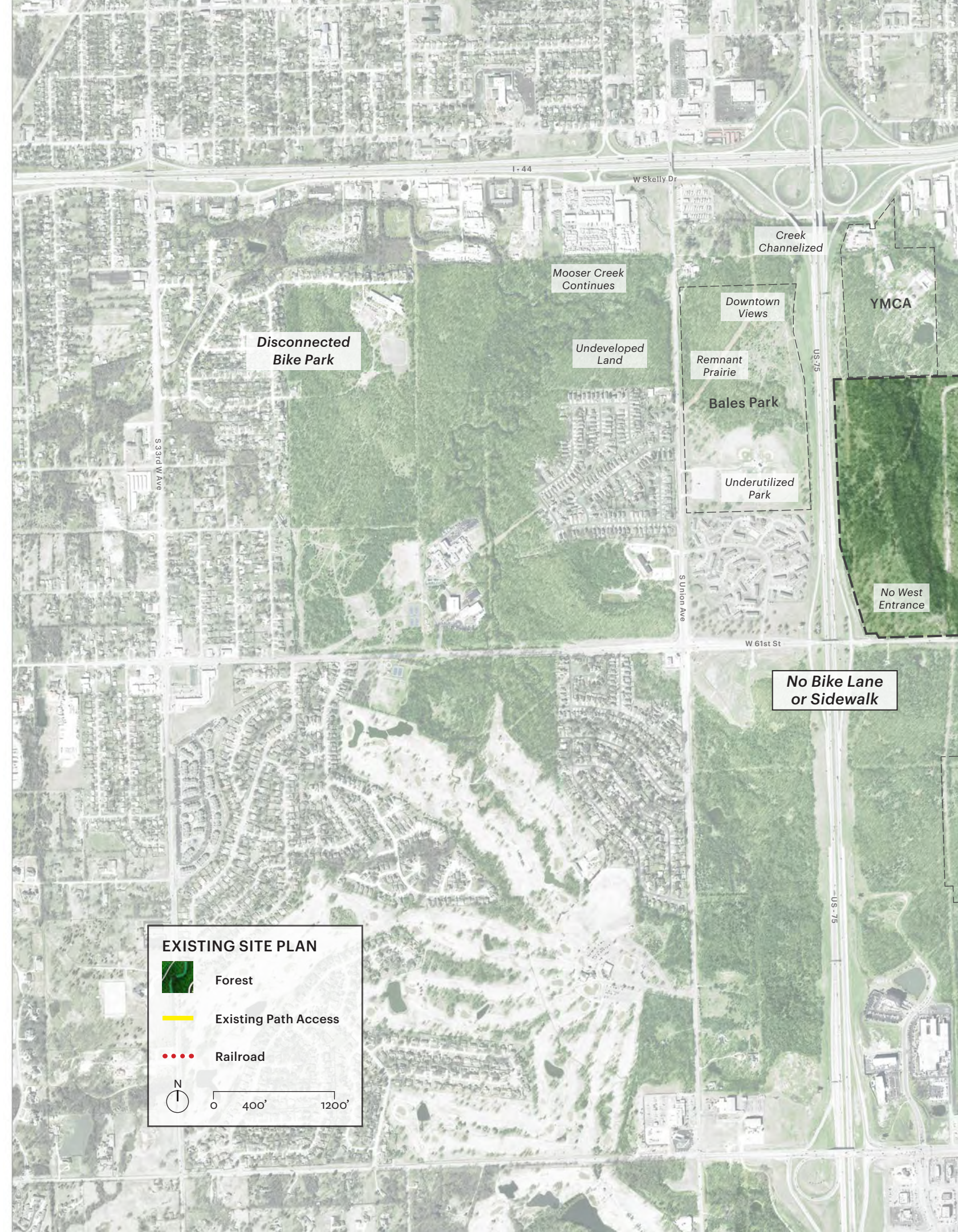
Added Sites Make Space for New Program

In order to accommodate both unprogrammed wilderness areas and new opportunities for fun, the Master Plan proposes to expand Turkey Mountain into adjacent sites. These expansion properties at the periphery of Turkey Mountain provide the additional space necessary to incorporate new ways of experiencing the outdoors—access to riparian wetland landscapes, adventure recreation and bike facilities, and spaces for group activities—and connect the core of the site to civic spaces and city parks to robustly integrate outdoors activities into the everyday life of Tulsa. The rustic, wild character of the core Turkey Mountain site would be preserved, while its new extremities could house activities to attract new users. Cooperation between city, state, and private landowners to grant easements and access is essential to expanding and preserving Turkey Mountain.



Existing Turkey Mountain Site Extents

Proposed Turkey Mountain Expansion and Connectivity

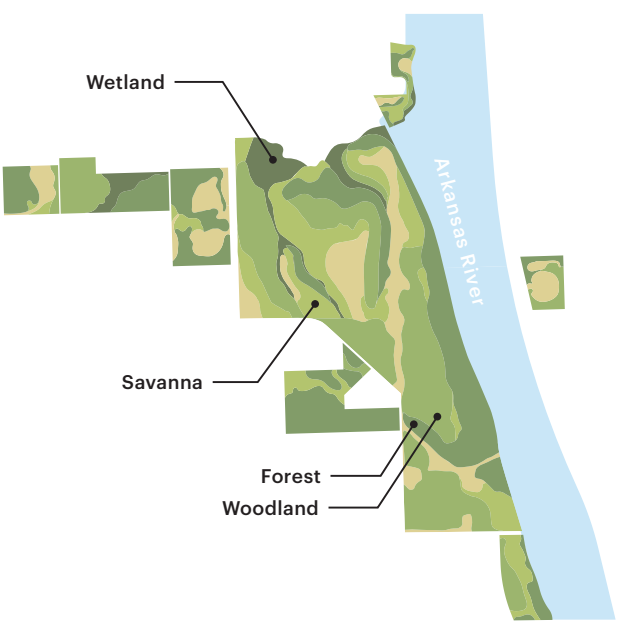

I - 44
W Skelly Dr
Creek Channelized
Mooser Creek Continues
Downtown Views
YMCA
Disconnected Bike Park
Undeveloped Land
Remnant Prairie
US-75
Bales Park
S 33rd W Ave
Underutilized Park
No West Entrance
S Union Ave
W 61st St
No Bike Lane or Sidewalk
US - 75
EXISTING SITE PLAN
Forest
Existing Path Access
Railroad
N
0
400'
1200'

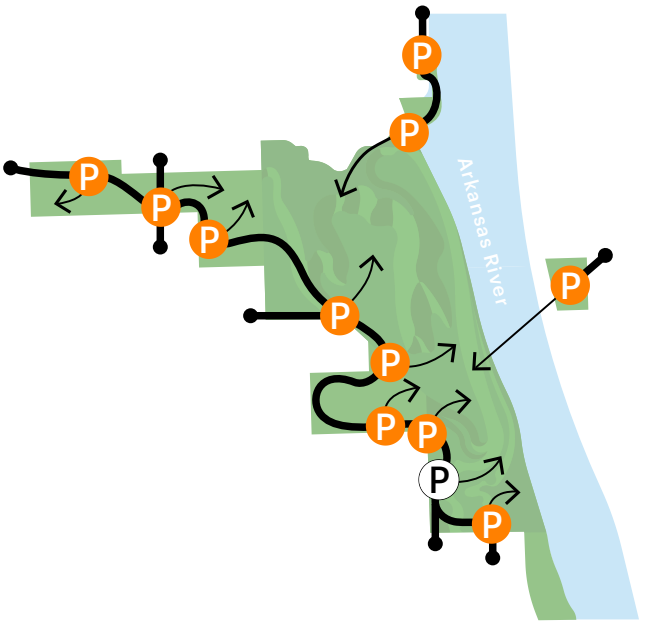

Downtown Tulsa
3.75 miles
I-44
I-44
No Bike Lane or Sidewalk
Riverside Dr
No North Entrance
Inaccessible Creek
Confined By Infrastructure
Exposed Pipeline
Poor Wayfinding
Few Connections Over River
Drainage Issues
Johnson Park
Underused Park
E 61st St
Degraded Wetlands
Turkey Mountain
Blind Curve
Dangerous, Fast Traffic
Riverside Dr
S Peoria Ave
Invasive Species
Inaccessible Trails
River Parks Foundation Property
S Elwood Ave
Significant Erosion
Arkansas River
No Waterfront Access
Insufficient Parking
Degraded Site
Regional Trail Ends
Dangerous Truck Route
No Public Access
W 71st St
E 71st St
No Path To South


I-44
W Skelly Dr
The Hinterlands
Bales Park
S Union Ave
US-75
S 33rd W Ave
W 61st St
US-75
PROPOSED MASTER PLAN
Forest
Woodland
Savanna
Prairie
Riparian Lowlands
Multi-Use Dirt Trails
Regional Asphalt Trail
N
0
400'
1200'


Downtown Tulsa
3.75 miles
I-44 Bridge
I-44
Riverside Dr
Mooser Creek
Johnson Park
Turkey Mountain
Core Site
E 61st St
Riverside Dr
S Peoria Ave
Water Tank Property
Arkansas River
The Bike Park
W 71st St
71st Street Bridge

Four Core Principles



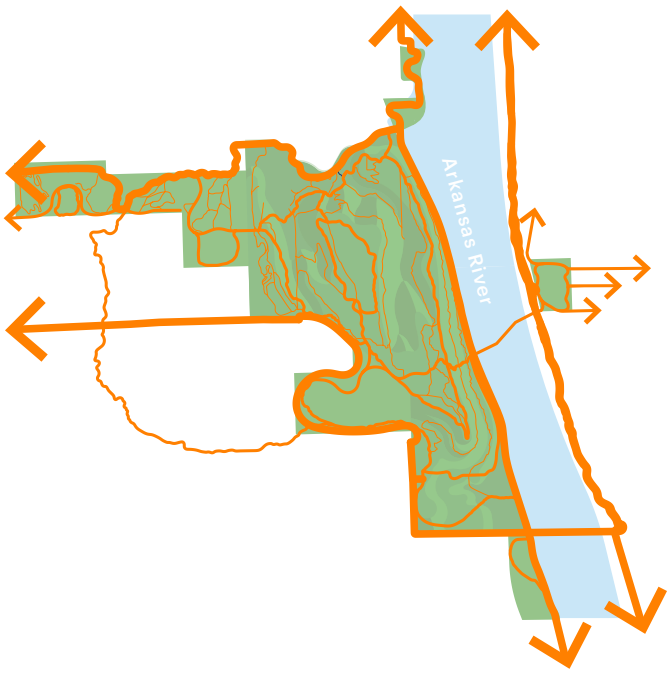


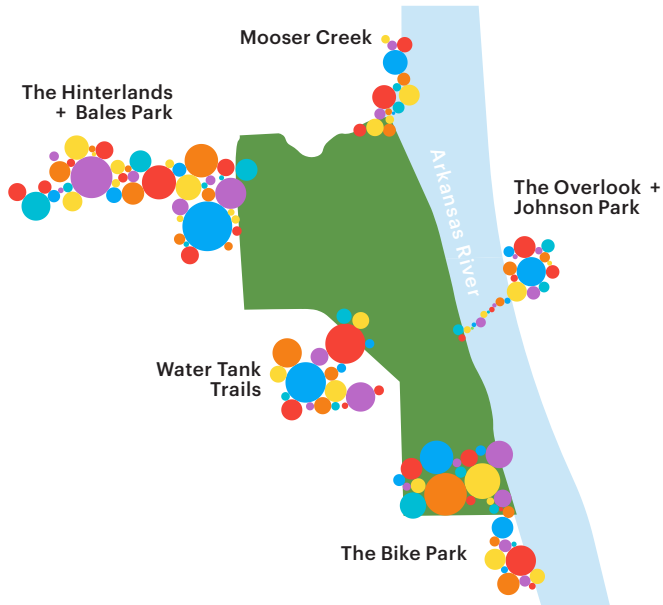
Restore Nature

Revive the native Cross Timbers landscape through active land management regimes encompassing prescribed burning and wetlands bioengineering.

Maximize Access

Make using Turkey Mountain easy for everyone by adding bike and pedestrian connections, opening new entrances, and expanding parking without encroaching on the remote quality of its core.





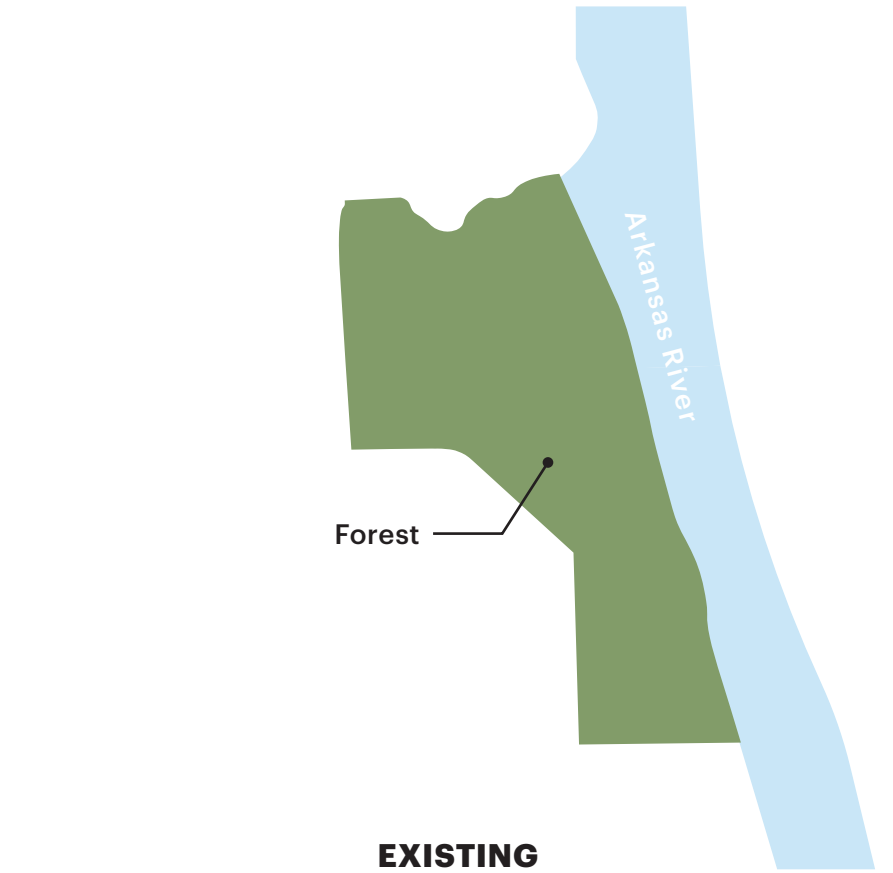
Enhance Trails

Introduce hierarchy in trail widths and uses to reduce user conflicts, improve wayfinding, and rebuild trails in ways that improve drainage and minimize erosion.

Integrate Program

Group new recreational uses together to minimize their environmental impact and operational cost, while maximizing their accessibility.

1. Restore Nature



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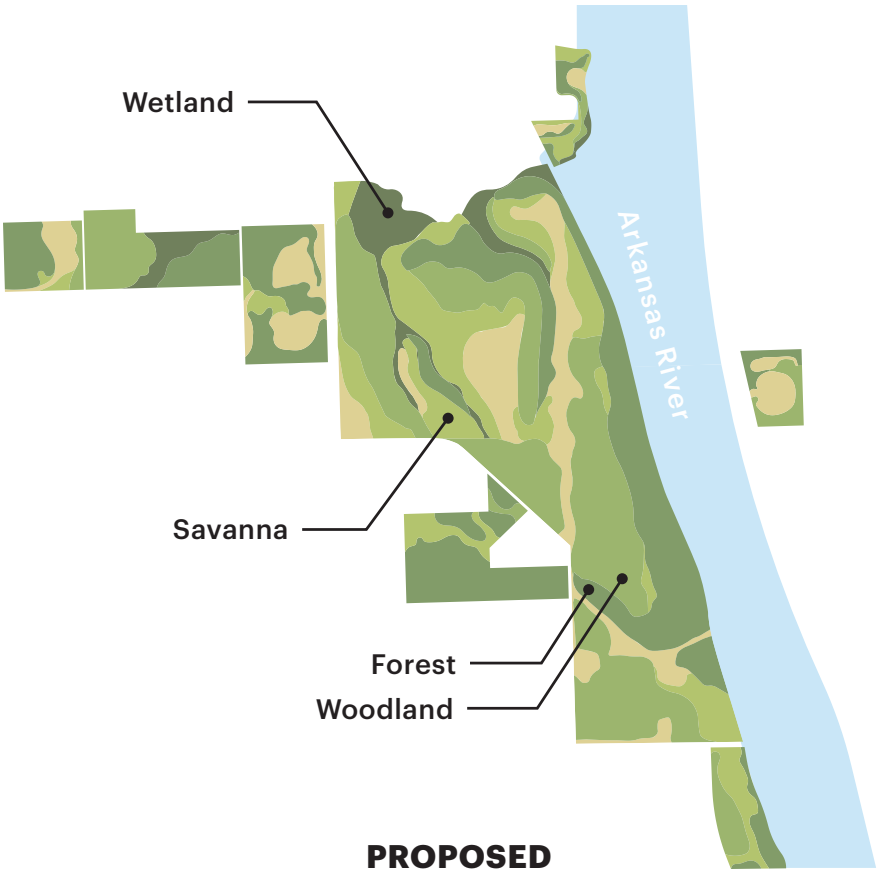


PROPOSED

Oak Savanna Restoration Case Study

Pleasant Valley Conservancy, Wisconsin

Butterfly and Wildflower Nature Walk with Audubon Society, Pleasant Valley Conservancy, 2018

An Actively Managed Landscape

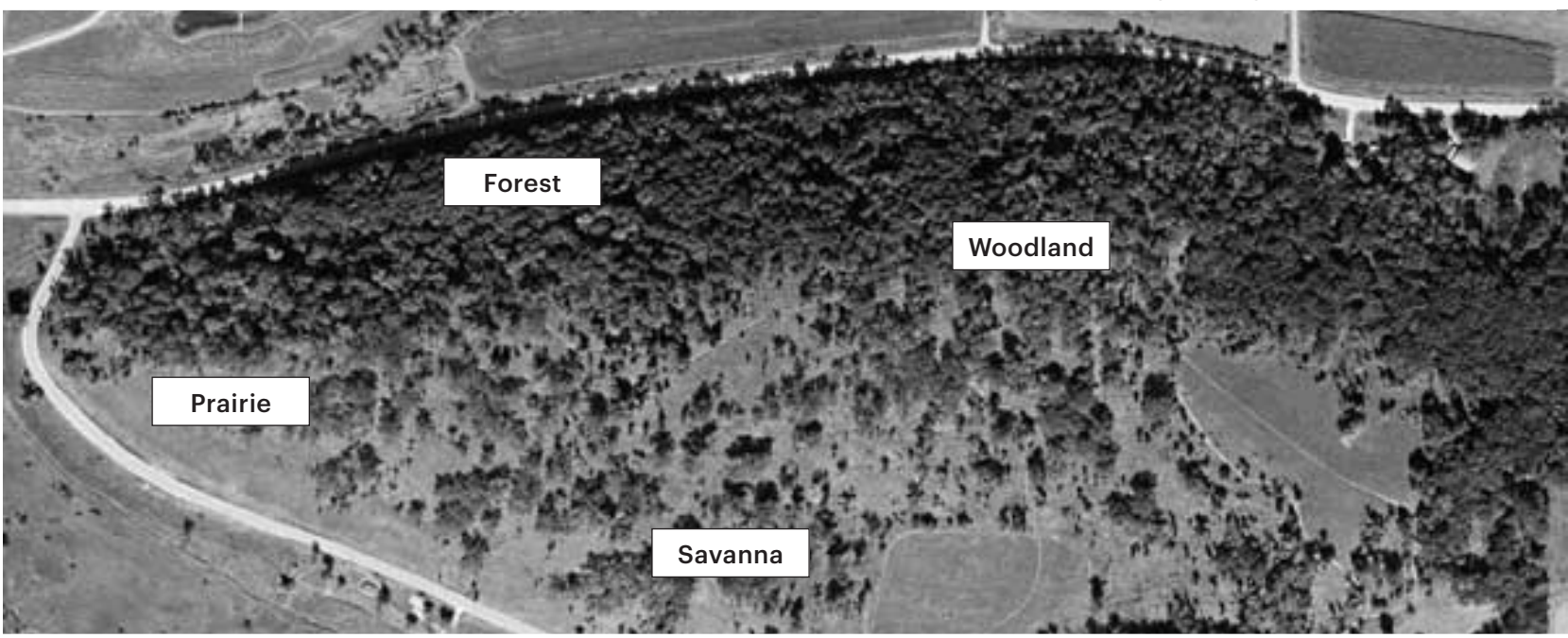
Pleasant Valley Conservancy in Black Earth, Wisconsin, shares a similar site history to Turkey Mountain. Fire and other natural disturbances were suppressed in this remnant landscape resulting in diminished ecological and experiential diversity. Former prairies and savannas became overgrown.

In 1990, the site was assessed and a plan for prescribed burn restoration was created. Careful identification of heritage post oaks and the application of frequent controlled fires, brush-clearing, and prairie plant seeding has brought back the former landscape complexity and beauty.

Dormant Season Prescribed Burn

1937—Native Condition of Oak Savanna

1990—Unmanaged, Degraded Site



2007—After Prescribed Burn Restoration

Prescribed Burn Management

Restoring a Cross Timbers Landscape

Long-Term Benefits of Fire

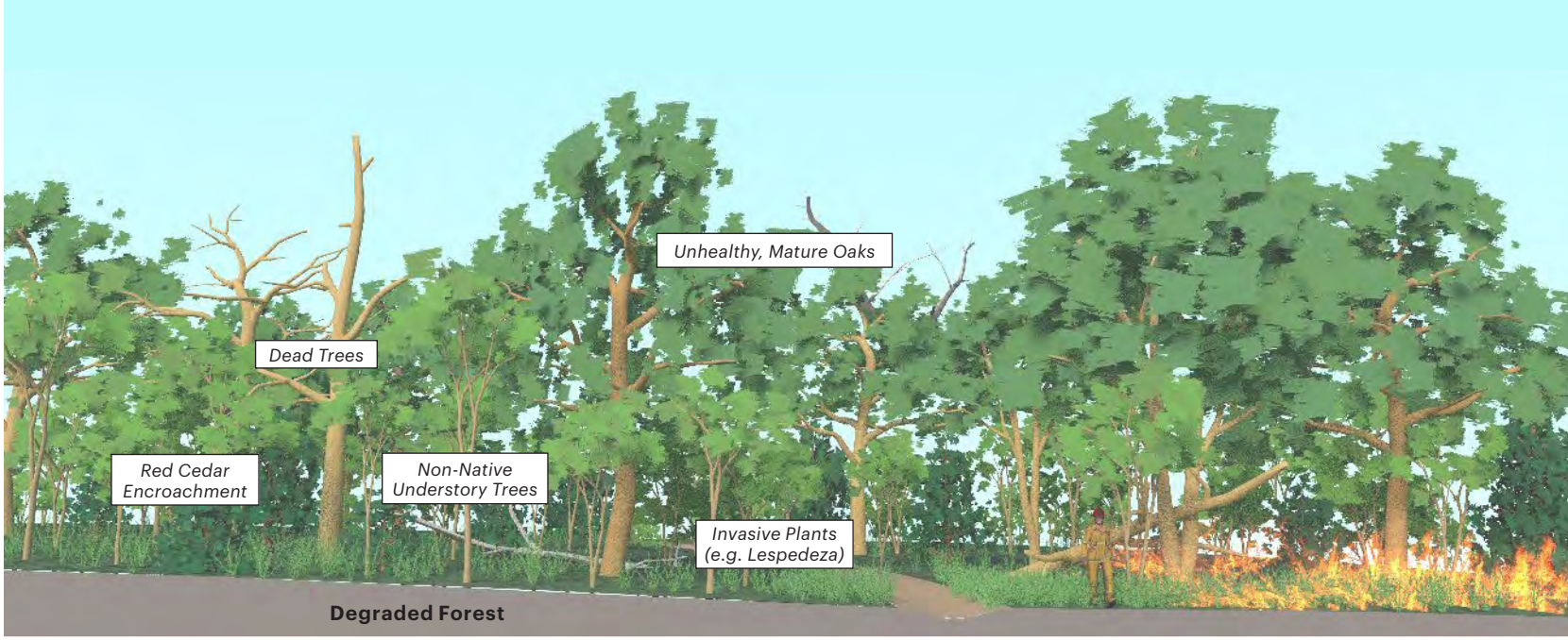
Without regular fires, leaf litter and dead plant matter accumulate, increasing the chances of wildfires. Conducting carefully planned, controlled burns in Turkey Mountain will reduce this accumulation and thus the risk of wildfire. Over time, the necessary burns will become smaller.

Prescribed burning is the most cost-effective means of managing a site as large as Turkey Mountain. Alternate methods such as herbicides or hand-pruning and removal can cost ten times as much, take longer, require more labor, and lack many of the other benefits of fire. Controlled burns stimulate post oak growth, cause meadow flowers to bloom more vigorously, attract native fauna through the growth of young herbaceous plants, prevent the spread of invasive species such a lespedeza and encroachment of red cedars into prairies and savannas, and reduce tick and chigger populations by reducing their habitats.

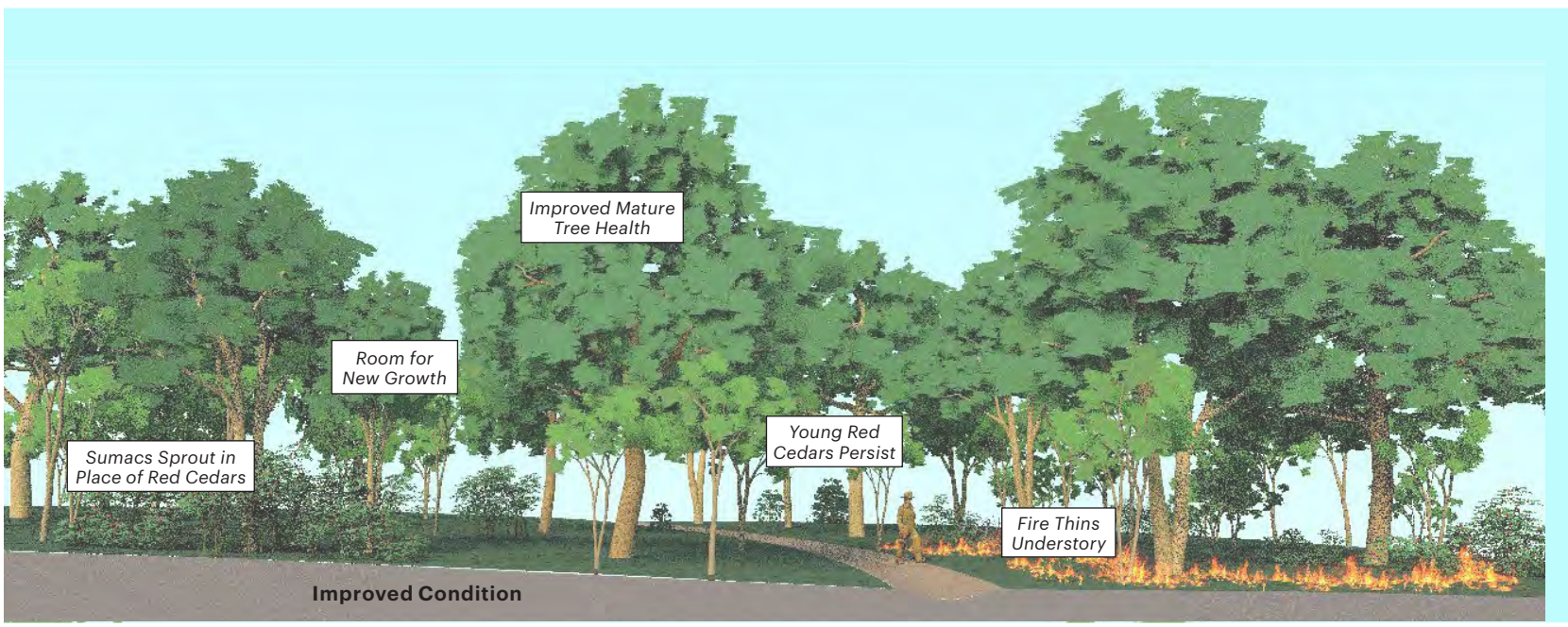
Training from Local Experts

The most cost-effective and reliable strategy for implementing controlled burns at Turkey Mountain is to train a local burn crew led by River Parks staff and aided by members of local fire departments.

To train these crews, the Master Plan looks to John Weir, a practicing burn manager with 25 years' experience in the field, who is head of Oklahoma State University's (OSU) prescribed burn research facility in Stillwater. Weir has conducted extensive training of personnel of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, state and city agencies, Native American reservations, and private landowners.



Year 1



Year 5

Year 10

Mooser Creek Bioengineering

Creating Riparian Habitat and a Greenway

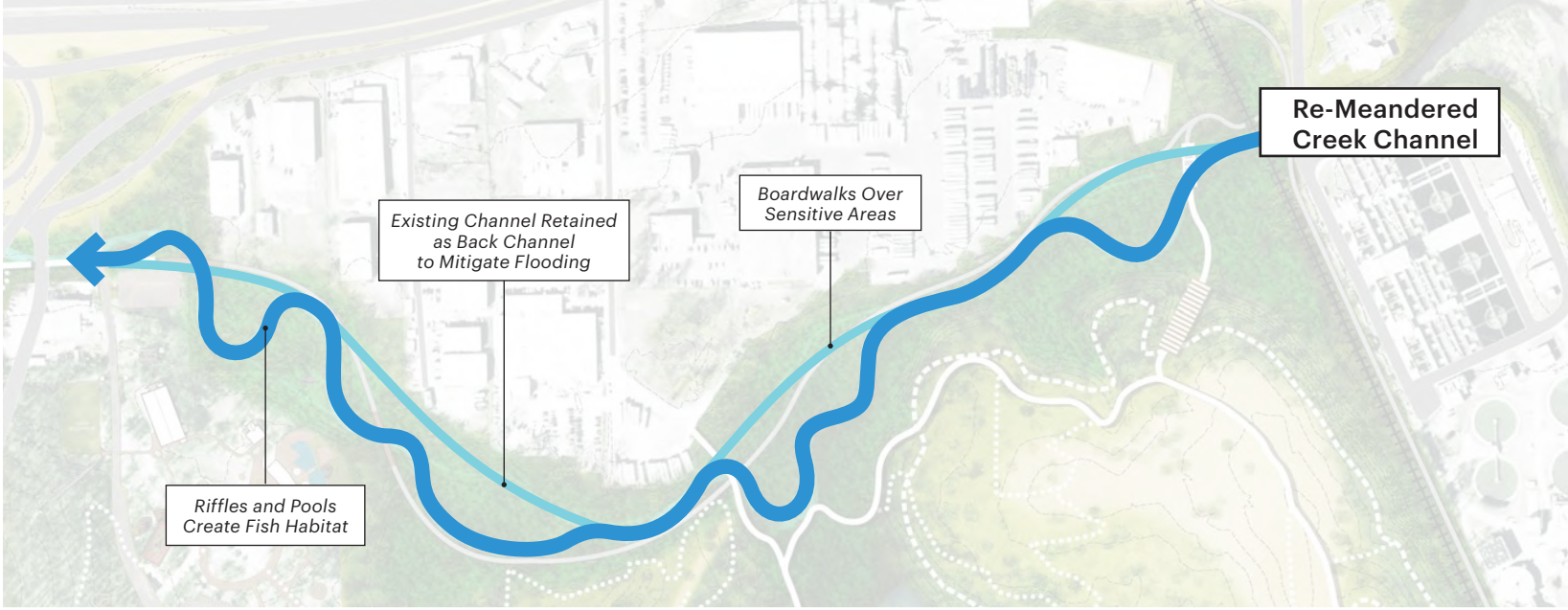
Stabilizing and Reconnecting the Creek

Mooser Creek forms the northern border of Turkey Mountain. Likely straightened and channelized as part of the development of the industrial park to its north, the creek's steep banks are eroding, and it remains largely inaccessible to Turkey Mountain users.

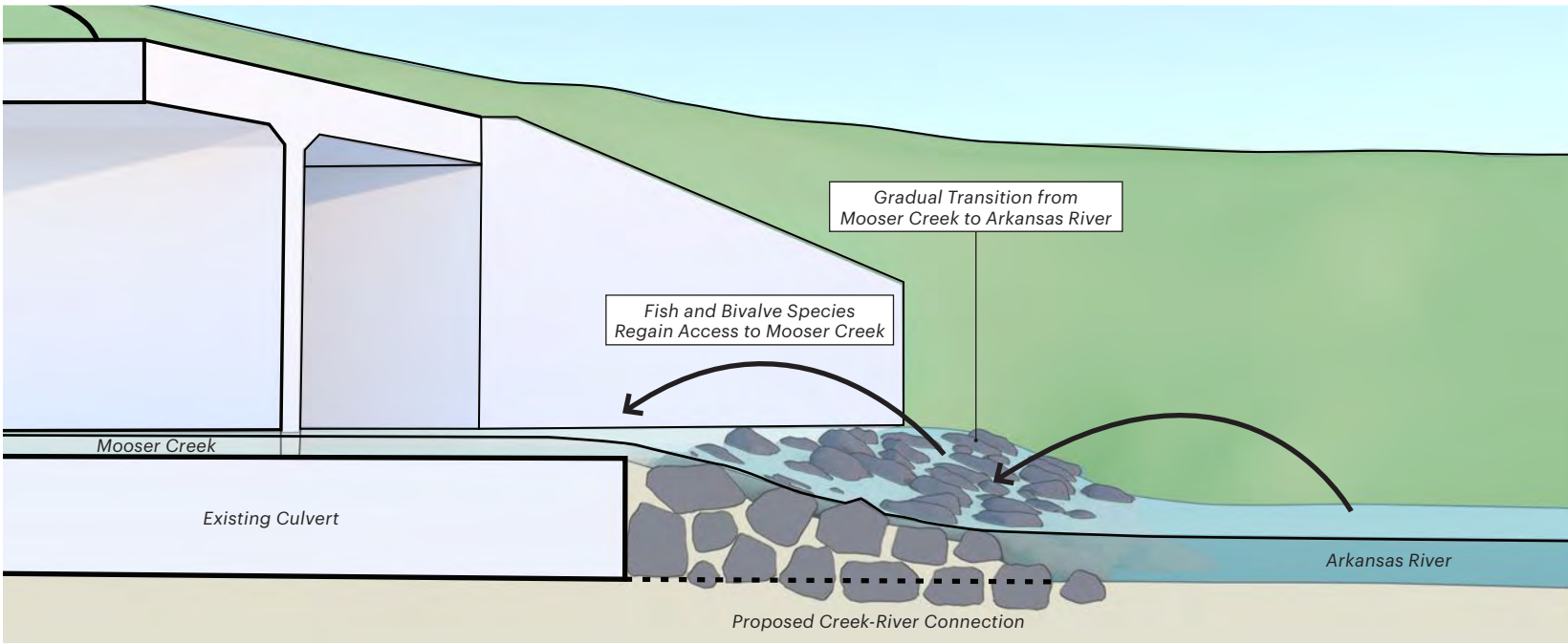
Restoring this riparian corridor has the potential to create fish and bivalve habitat, allow human interaction with the creek, and provide new access to Turkey Mountain from the north through the integration of a proposed bridge. The addition of a regional multi-use path along the top of the riverbank will also connect the River Bank West Trail to West Tulsa.

Wetlands Bioengineering Experts

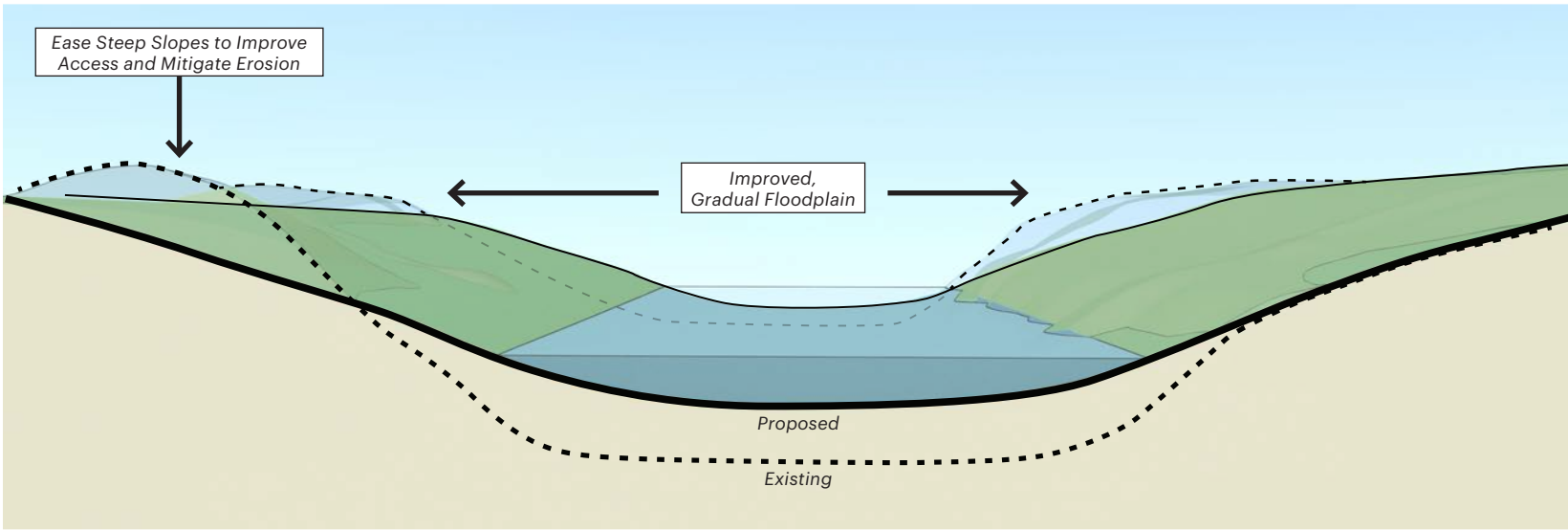
On-site analysis conducted by Inter-Fluve, experts in wetland restoration and bioengineering, indicates that Mooser Creek's channel could be renaturalized, improving its water quality and value as a habitat. Reconnecting the mouth of the creek to the Arkansas River would allow marine fauna to return to the creek. Lessening the steepness of the banks will improve resiliency during flood events and make room for an asphalt path along the top of the bank.



Remeander the Creek



Reconnect to the River



Widen the Floodplain

Turkey Mountain Core Site

Bringing Back Landscape Diversity

Wild Character in the City

Turkey Mountain is a precious resource—undeveloped, open land—that will only get rarer and rarer as cities like Tulsa continue to expand. The rustic quality and immersive, wild character of Turkey Mountain is extraordinary given its location just four miles from Downtown Tulsa. Any Tulsan, regardless of means, has access to a wilderness experience close to home.

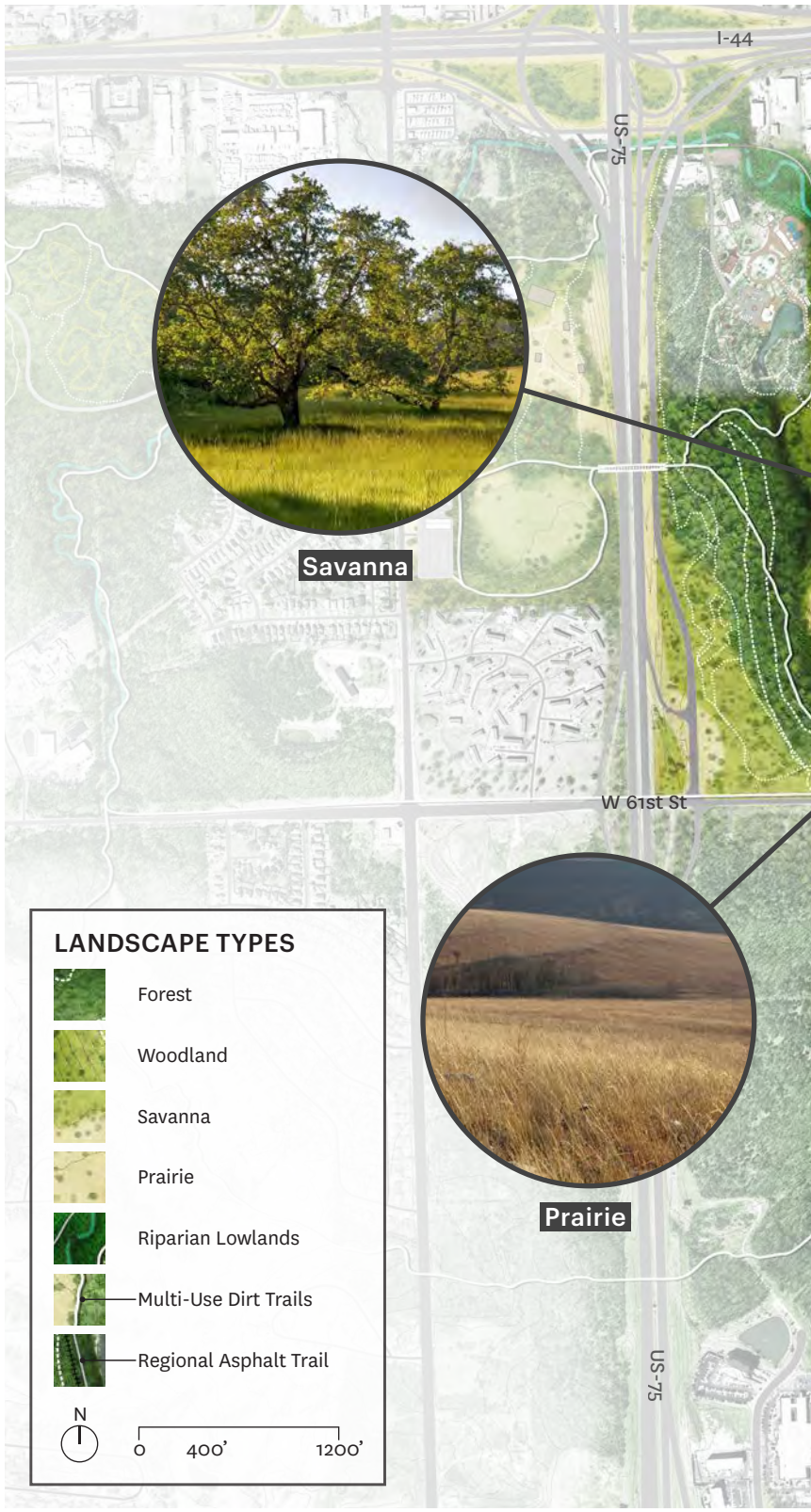
Sameness in the Landscape

The native Cross Timbers landscape is extremely varied—a patchwork of plant families that create microclimates, varying degrees of enclosure, long and short views, and habitats for native fauna. By contrast, the vast majority of Turkey Mountain today has grown into a uniform thicket that provides very few of these ecological or aesthetic benefits.

A Window Back in Time

Preserving Turkey Mountain means honoring the character of its native Cross Timbers landscape. Since the health of that landscape depends on forces of disturbance, predominantly fire, active management is necessary to restore Turkey Mountain's ecology.

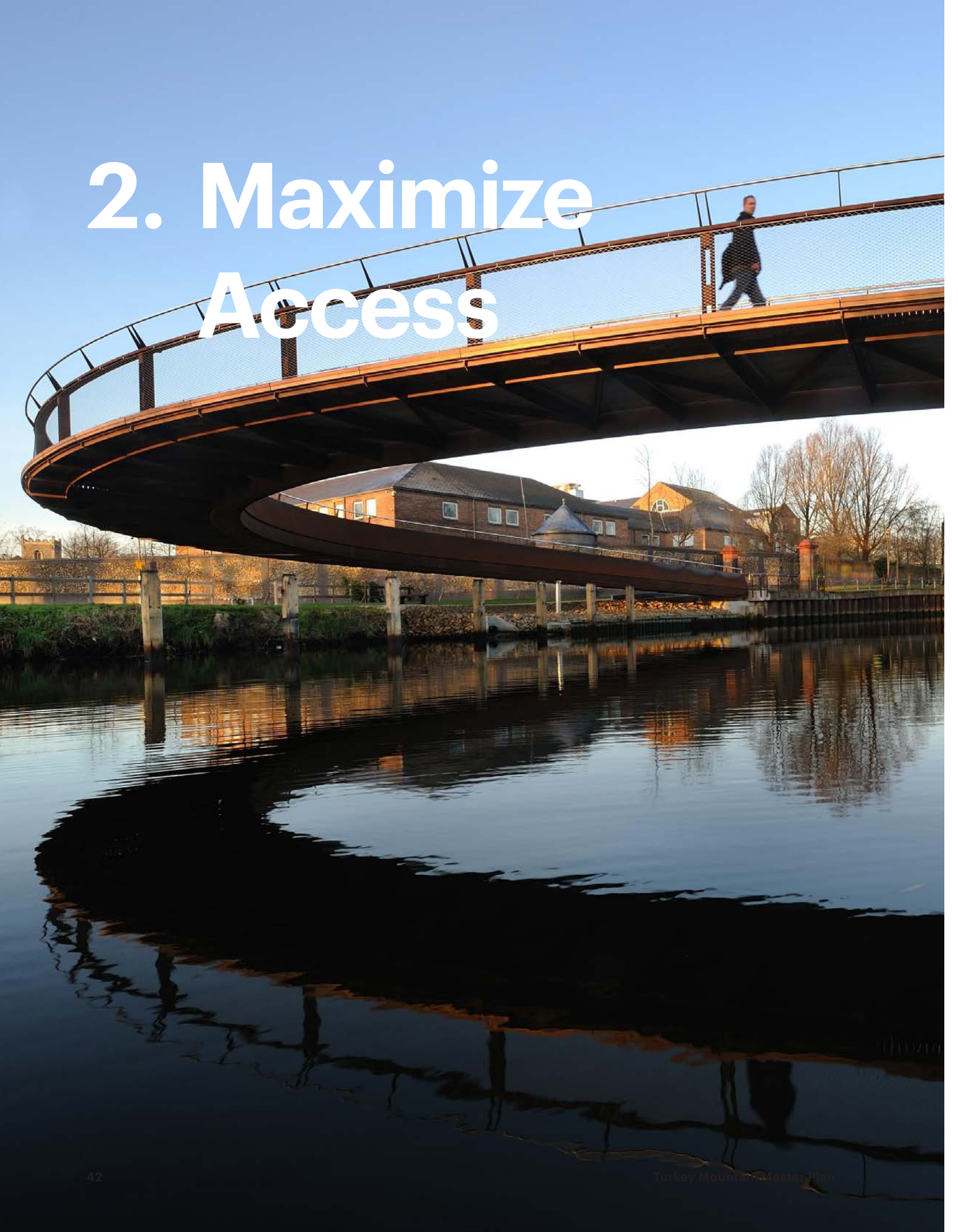
Reintroducing fire to the site through a regime of prescribed burn management will effectively turn back time, opening a window into what this region of Oklahoma looked like prior to its degradation.

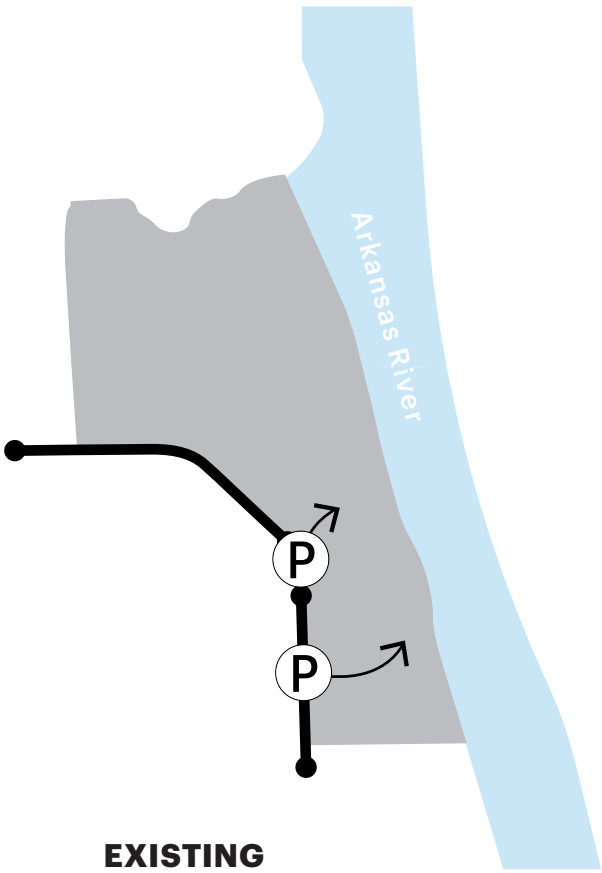


Existing Condition


Lowland
Woodland
Forest
S Peoria Ave
E 61st St
S Elwood Ave

2. Maximize Access





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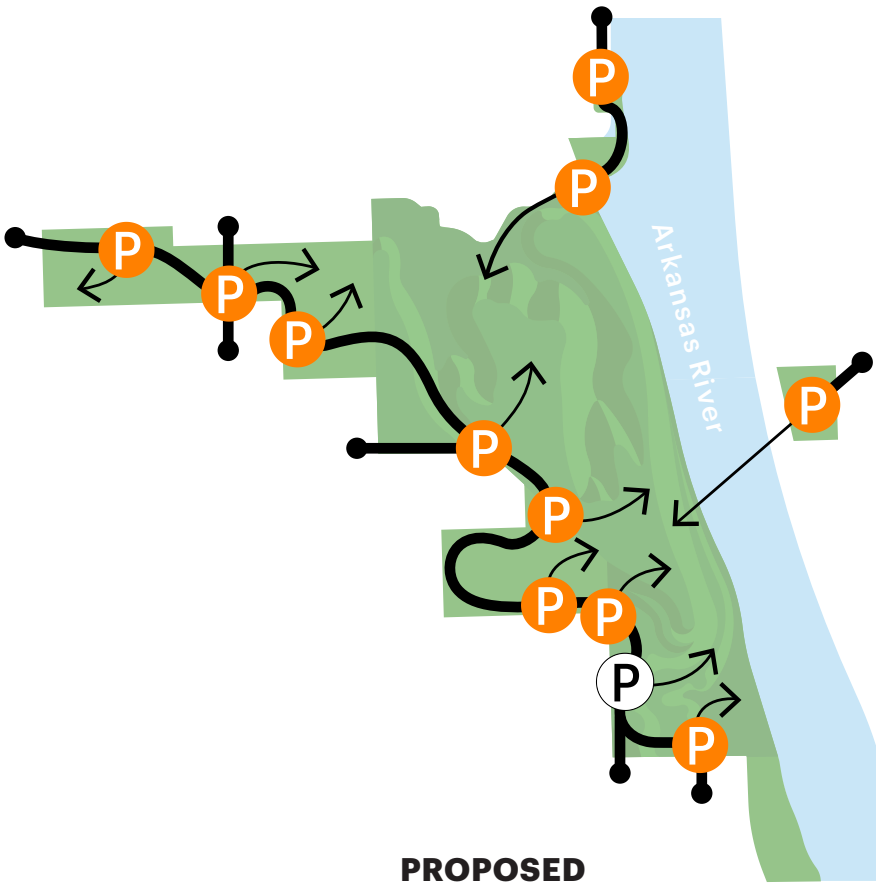


PROPOSED

Bridging Across an Expanded Site

New Bike and Pedestrian Access

Bales Bridge

Bales Bridge connects Turkey Mountain directly to Bales Park, taking advantage of its large existing parking lot and providing the primary connection to the proposed western expansion of the park, known as The Hinterlands.

Hinterlands

Bales Park

Bike Park

Mooser Creek

Hinterlands Bridge

Conceived as a rustic timber bridge, the Hinterlands Bridge reinforces the national park-inspired access road connection from West Tulsa through the Hinterlands to Bales Park.

Mooser Bridge

Dipping under the Union Pacific rail bridge, the proposed Mooser Creek Greenway connects to the Mooser Bridge, which would facilitate access into Turkey Mountain from the north.

Downtown Tulsa

Gathering Place

Turkey Mountain Core

River Bank West Trail

River Bank East Trail

Johnson Park

Johnson Bridge

The sole bike and pedestrian-only crossing over the Arkansas River to Turkey Mountain, Johnson Bridge would connect directly to Johnson Park and the River Parks West Bank Trail without the noise of a freeway, enabling a serene experience over flowing water.

Vehicular Access and Parking

Adding Parking While Minimizing Paving

Existing Parking

The two existing parking lots at Turkey Mountain—the Main Lot and the Upper Lot—together provide only a few hundred parking spaces for the average of 14,000 people who visit every month. Furthermore, both lots are located on the southern side of the site, leaving the northern and western reaches of the park inaccessible to many.

Proposed Actions:

1. Close South Elwood Ave

Traffic along South Elwood Ave, with its blind curves and steep topography, poses a safety risk to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike. The proposed closing of South Elwood Ave grants safe access to the adjacent water tank property, where proposed trails add miles of new terrain for Turkey Mountain users to explore.

2. Add Gravel Access Drives

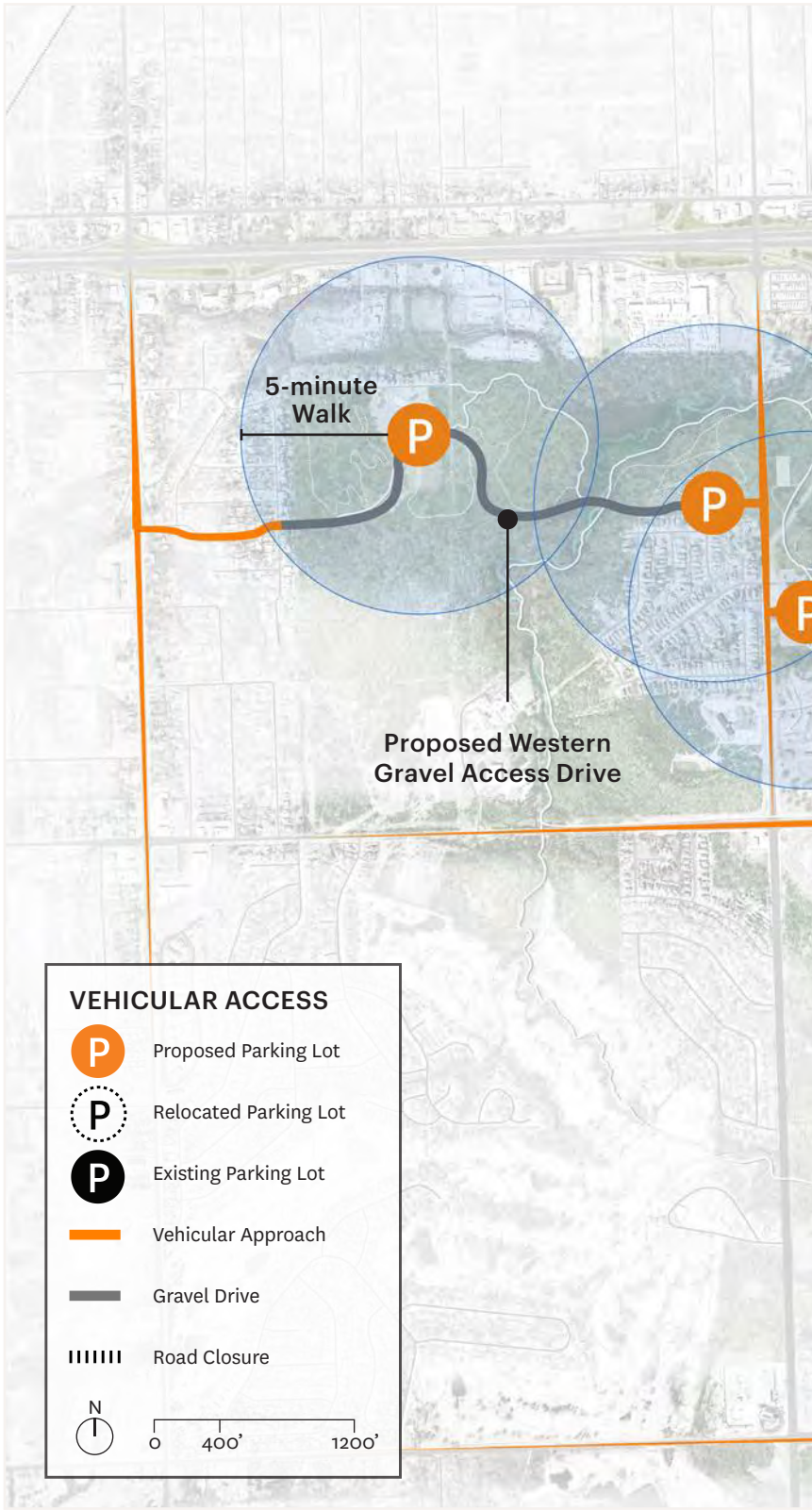
Two short gravel access drives provide access to new parking situated along the periphery of the park. The gravel surface slows traffic, disincentivizing the use of the new drives as shortcuts.

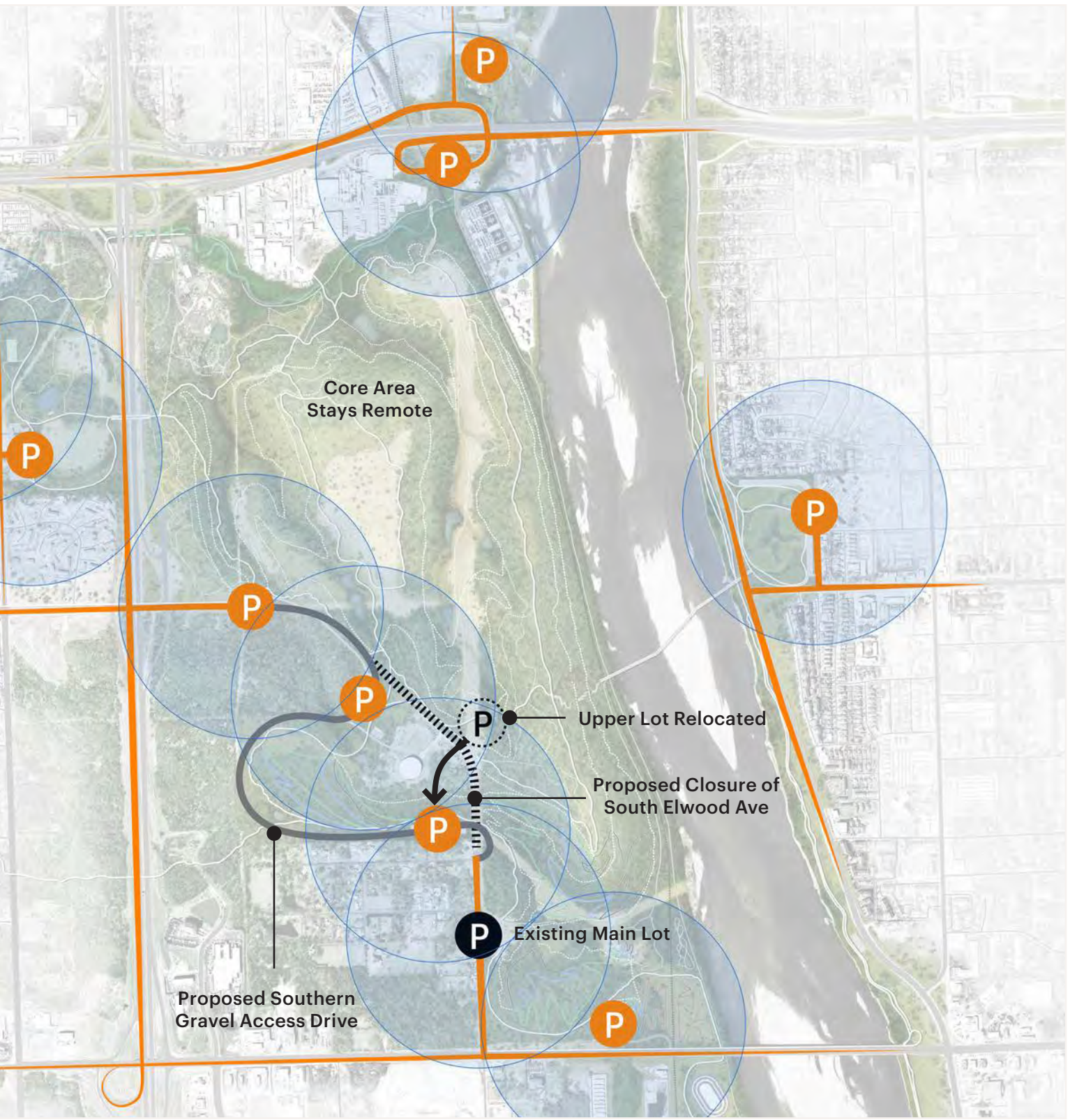
3. Expand Parking

Significantly expanding parking without paving over substantial areas of Turkey Mountain's precious wilderness is achieved through a combination of new connections to existing parking lots in Bales and Johnson Parks, expansion of these off-site lots, and the addition of parking lots along the periphery of the proposed additions to Turkey Mountain.

4. Preserve Remoteness

The strategic placement of proposed parking lots distributes over 2,000 parking spots along Turkey Mountain's perimeter to allow users to arrive nearer to their intended destination while preserving the remote character of the core site.




Core Area
Stays Remote
Upper Lot Relocated
Proposed Closure of
South Elwood Ave
Existing Main Lot
Proposed Southern
Gravel Access Drive