



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519
Tel 907-343-4355

URL www.muni.org/departments/parks



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 14, 2018
To: Parks & Recreation Commission
Cc: Joshua Durand, Parks Superintendent
From: Taylor Keegan, Park Planner
Project: PRC 18-19: Sand Lake Learning Lab

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Schools on Trails Program Project Description

Anchorage parks and trails are well-loved and well-used by many of our residents. Yet many people are not aware of the parks, trails, waterways and natural areas in their own neighborhoods. More can be done to incorporate them into daily life, and especially into the lives of our children. With this in mind, the Anchorage Schools on Trails Program formed in 2014 around a vision of “engaging Anchorage schools with their nearby trails, parks, streams and natural habitats so that students and staff in those schools learn about community assets in their neighborhoods, and these neighborhoods are enriched by this increased local awareness.”

The Anchorage Schools on Trails Program (Schools on Trails), is currently working with students, school staff, community members, and professionals through a partnership with the Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) to collaboratively plan, design, and construct different projects with different schools throughout Anchorage.

Schools on Trails projects create opportunities for learning in a natural environment and attract children and families to the park during and after school. Moreover, these projects foster student/expert collaborations and provide career development and mentorship opportunities for professionals in the fields of science, design, education and resource management. In addition to serving as classrooms designed with student and educator input, these outdoor spaces will serve as community assets that improve public health through knowledge and awareness of the natural environment.

A consequent Schools on Trails goal is to encourage and educate students in the processes of government and advocacy. They will participate, collaborate, and present to community councils, stakeholders, park steering committees, design professionals and government officials, and the experience gained will empower them to be positive forces in their community—as contributors, stewards and leaders.

Sand Lake Learning Lab design and development with Sand Lake Elementary

Sand Lake Park is nestled between Sand Lake and Sand Lake Elementary school on west end of Anchorage, Alaska. The park offers 5.1 acres of green space, two docks, and a paved trail. While small, SLP is important to the community. The roughly 2 miles of shoreline are almost

entirely bordered by private property limiting public access to the lake. For this reason, the park provides an excellent access point to the lake and is crucial to providing recreational and educational opportunities in the area, especially for the Sand Lake Elementary. Residents use the lake heavily for boating, fishing, and general outdoor enjoyment. In addition, it is home to a variety of plant and animal life that utilize habitat in this suburban oasis.

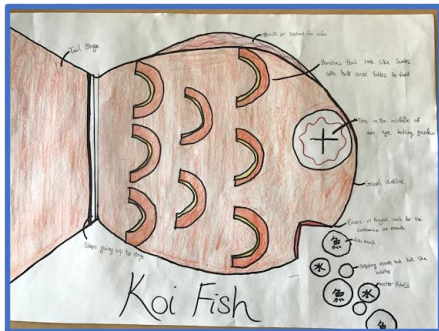


Figure 1. Students designed the park using a Koi Fish as an inspiration. Bubble like stepping stones lead up to the mouth entrance, scale like seats, and presentation area stage as a tail fin.

This project began in 2015 when the Sand Lake Elementary School decided to adopt Sand Lake Park and begin helping with garbage and deferred maintenance. In 2016, the group went through the challenge grant processes, and the learning lab gained momentum when a combination of teachers, students, and professionals were awarded an Anchorage Challenge Grant in 2017. As Sand Lake Park is located directly behind Sand Lake Elementary, it is a natural fit and partnership to encourage positive development and use of the park. As outlined in the planning and involvement, this project has moved through three different sixth grade classes and is ready to be constructed during the summer of 2018.

Per the design development of the 2016-2017 sixth grade class, the concept for the learning lab is a koi fish, with a platform as the tail, boulders for the eyeball, and the shape of the classroom inspired by the fishlike shape of the koi fish. As stated on the website created by the sixth graders “We met with our landscape architects several times so we can develop concept maps for our outdoor learning space. We decided since the view of the lake draws us to our selected area that our concept designs would be bases around “water.” We also would like to add touches of Japanese culture to our outdoor space. But not too much because we want the public to also enjoy it.”

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FUNDING

Sand Lake Elementary was awarded an Anchorage Parks Foundation Challenge Grant. The grant total is \$20,000. The team is required to match this grant through volunteer



Figure 2. Concept Kanji Stepping stones by Intrinsic Landscapes.

involvement and monetary donations. Therefore, the completed project will be valued at \$40,000 or more through a combination of the grant, donations, and volunteer time. This project will also be supplemented with 50k in Municipal Bond funds.

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Most of the work has been completed by sixth grade teacher Jena Piacenti and Landscape Architect Kevin Doniere, with some help from other volunteers. Because of the way classes fall over two years, the following has been recorded as their progress towards constructing the learning lab.

2015-2016

- Sand Lake Elementary officially adopted Sand Lake Park
- Park Report Cards Filled out
- Installed Nestbox
- Schools on Trails Maps

- Took care of deferred maintenance in the park

2016-2017

- Challenge Grant Workshop
- Sketch Workshop
- Site Investigation
- Concept Map Developments
- Resolution from the Sand Lake Community Council



Figure 3. (Right) Students staking out the site plan with volunteer professionals Fall of 2017. (Left) Example of a scale model created with 2017-2018 classes.

2017-2018

- Staking out the site with volunteer surveyor
- Design Development
- Creating 3-D Models of the Space
- Developing Kanji interpretive signage

For more information, check out the website that the Sand Lake Elementary 6th grade class prepared:

<https://sites.google.com/asdk12.net/sandlakemakeover/home>

2017/2018 IMPROVEMENTS

The teachers, staff, and students of Campbell Elementary have the goal to encourage and support recreational, educational, and community use of the park, while supporting indigenous flora and fauna with the following improvements:

- Pathway to Learning Lab
- Learning Lab will have a platform for presentations, custom handmade benches, stepping stones, a custom entrance modeled after a torii, and kanji interpretive signage.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed improvements at Sand Lake Park are supported by the Sand Lake Community Council. The Department recommends that the Parks & Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution to support the new playground as presented.

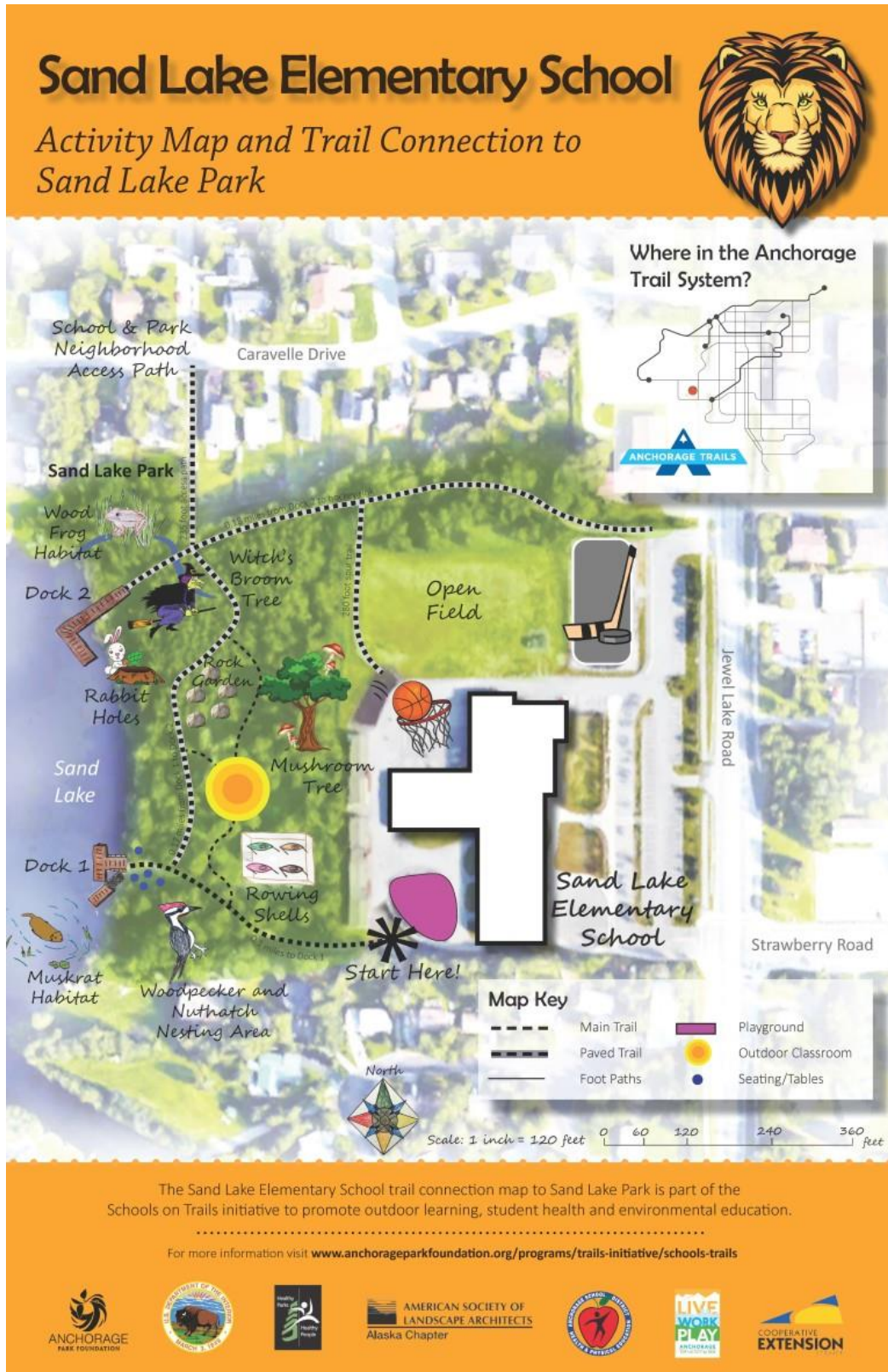


Figure 4: Schools on Trails Map created with Brendan Stuart, the Schools on Trails Coordinator and the SL Elementary Students



Sand Lake Park

MAKE OVER

Sand Lake Elementary Meets Sand Lake Park
A Community Project by Sand Lake Elementary 6th Grade Immersion

Connecting kids and community to their local place through:

- improving the physical aspects of the park
- increasing usage among students and staff
- increasing knowledge of park flora and fauna among students, staff, community
- getting kids outside
- teaching stewardship

“We Did It” Checklist

What are folks saying about our project?

“I have really enjoyed what you have taught the 6th graders this year. You are doing an excellent job teaching them about their local environment. My co-workers have also expressed their appreciation for teaching the importance of being a steward to their environment.”
~ Parent

“A group of sixth graders from your school recently gave an excellent presentation at the Sand Lake Community Council regarding the state of Sand Lake Park. I was impressed with their presentation.”
~ Alaska Herpetological Association

“My favorite part of this project was taking our Chitose Japan visitors on a tour of Sand Lake Park!”
~ Student

“Without going in our park this year so much, I probably I would’ve never known about the hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, or the chickadee. Getting to see their home was spectacular!”
~ Student

- ☑ Officially Adopted Sand Lake Park
- ☑ Mapped out park trails for online digital map
- ☑ Led tours through Sand Lake Park for various audiences
- ☑ Surveyed teachers and students about park usage
- ☑ Graded park with Anchorage Park Foundation Report Card
- ☑ Built and placed 8 nest boxes
- ☑ Collected trash park wide for spring clean up
- ☑ Presented findings to Sand Lake Community Council, Schools on Trails, PTSA, Anchorage Park Foundation, Anchorage Parks and Recreation
- ☑ Ordered new entrance sign

For more information about this project or to find out how you can get involved, please contact:
Jena Piacenti
Sand Lake Elementary School
piacenti_jena@aslk12.org

Figure 5. Overview of 2016 work including deferred maintenance in park

We Need Your Help! Let Us Know Which Projects YOU Can Help With!

Build Outdoor Seating or Learning Labs



Take a seat, stay awhile,
 Try to find a seating style,
 A stump, a log, any things fine,
 As long as you can fit your behind.

Clean Up Green Space



I live in a boreal forest,
 My muscle like branches are the sorest,
 Touch my bark it's paper thin,
 I am lucky no one has carved my skin.

Replace Signs



Once I was happy and clean,
 And then some people got very mean,
 They didn't like what I had to say,
 So they felt the need to give me a spray

Add Restrooms & Dog Stations



Current

Where can I go
 To sit and get low,
 My bladder can't wait much longer,
 The desire is getting stronger.

Repair Dock



I still float on my back,
 But with a crack,
 My hollow poles are not places for trash,
 Every piece leaves a gash.

Additional Future Sand Lake Park Improvements

- Add wildlife-proof resistant refuse cans
- Increase classroom use and education of park
- Create outdoor education kits with binoculars, microscopes, thermometers, metronomes, tape measures, compasses, nets, slides, laminated guides, flora and fauna guide books
- Create flora and fauna interpretive signs as learning tools for park visitors
- Fix pathway cracks and holes
- Continue to build community partnerships



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PRC RES NO. 2018 - 13
Sand Lake Elementary Learning Lab

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, the teachers, staff, and students of Sand Lake Elementary have the goal to encourage and support recreational, educational, and community use of the park while supporting outdoor classroom learning environments; and

WHEREAS, the teachers, staff, and students of Sand Lake Elementary and community volunteers as a part of the Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant program, Anchorage Park Foundation Schools on Trails project teaming with the Alaska Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects are working together to design and install a learning lab at Sand Lake Park; and

WHEREAS, the design was completed by sixth grade students at Sand Lake Elementary school and inspired by a Koi Fish and traditional Japanese gardens and further developed by students and professionals; and

WHEREAS, the construction will include a pathway and the learning lab area consisting of a platform, benches, and stepping stones and signage with kanji interpretive elements; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the proposed improvements at Sand Lake Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 14th day of June, 2018.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

John Rodda, Director
Parks & Recreation Department



PROPOSED LEGEND

- CONCRETE PAVERS
- SEWARD STONE 3/8"
- LEVELING COURSE
- 4" TOPSOIL + MULCH
- LANDSCAPE EDGING
- BOULDER A
- BOULDER B
- BOULDER C
- CONCRETE FOOTER (For Stage)
- 8"x8"x16' Buried Timber
- CUSTOM TORII FOOTER
- CUSTOM BENCH (Provided by Intrinsic)

SCALE IN FEET

0 2.5 5 10 15 20

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

2018 SAND LAKE LEARNING LAB

PHASE ONE

DATE: 7/5/2017 GND: _____

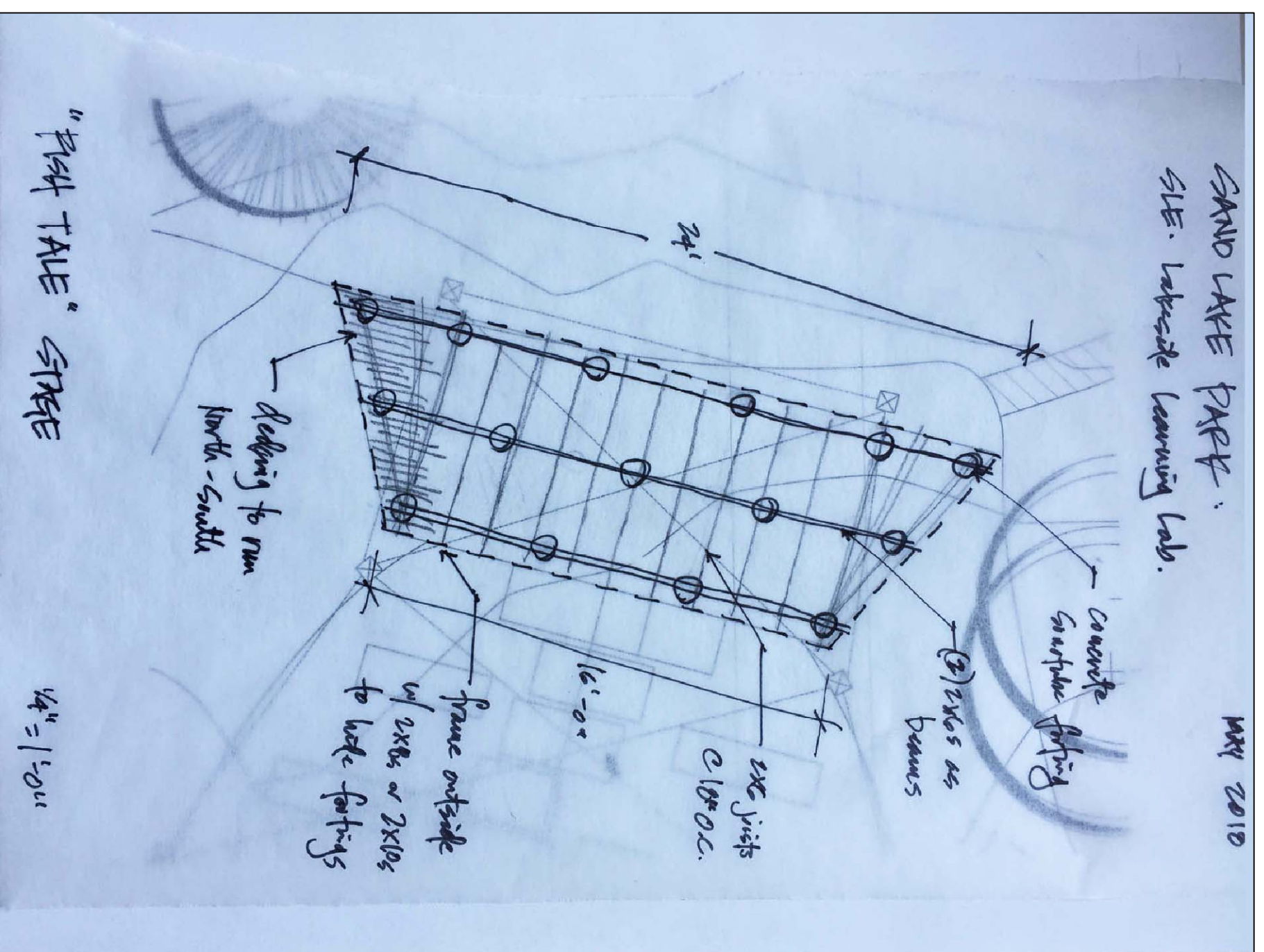
SCALE HOR. PER PLAN STATUS: FOR CONSTRUCTION SHEET 13 of 16

FIELD BOOKS		BM NO.	LOCATION	ELEV.	DATA	PROGRAM CHECKED	DATA	PROGRAM CHECKED	REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	REV.
DESIGN:					BASE TOPOGRAPHY	...	TELEPHONE	...					
STAKING:					PROFILE	...	ELECTRIC	...					
ASBESTOS:					SANITARY SEWER	...	CABLE TV	...					
CONTRACTOR:					STORM SEWER	...	TRAFIC SIGNAL	...					
INSPECTOR:					WATER	...	DESIGN	...					
CONSTRUCTION RECORD					GAS	...	QUANTITIES	...					
							MOA	...					
							MIN FINAL CHECK	...					

REVISIONS	PLAN CHECK

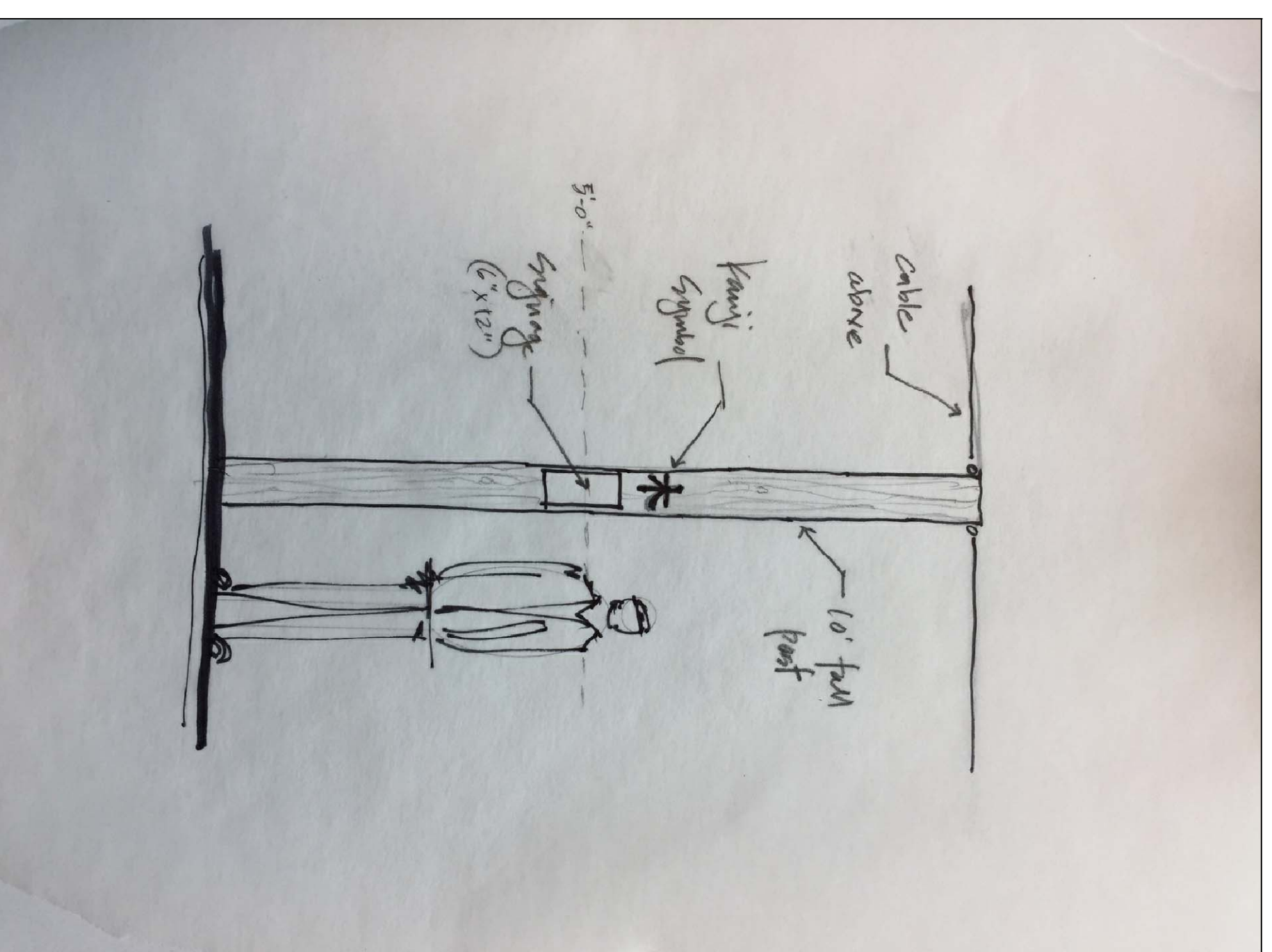
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SCALE HOR. PER PLAN	DATE: 7/5/2017	GND: _____
SCALE VER. PER PLAN	STATUS: FOR CONSTRUCTION	SHEET 13 of 16



PLATFORM DETAIL SKETCH

SCALE: N.S.



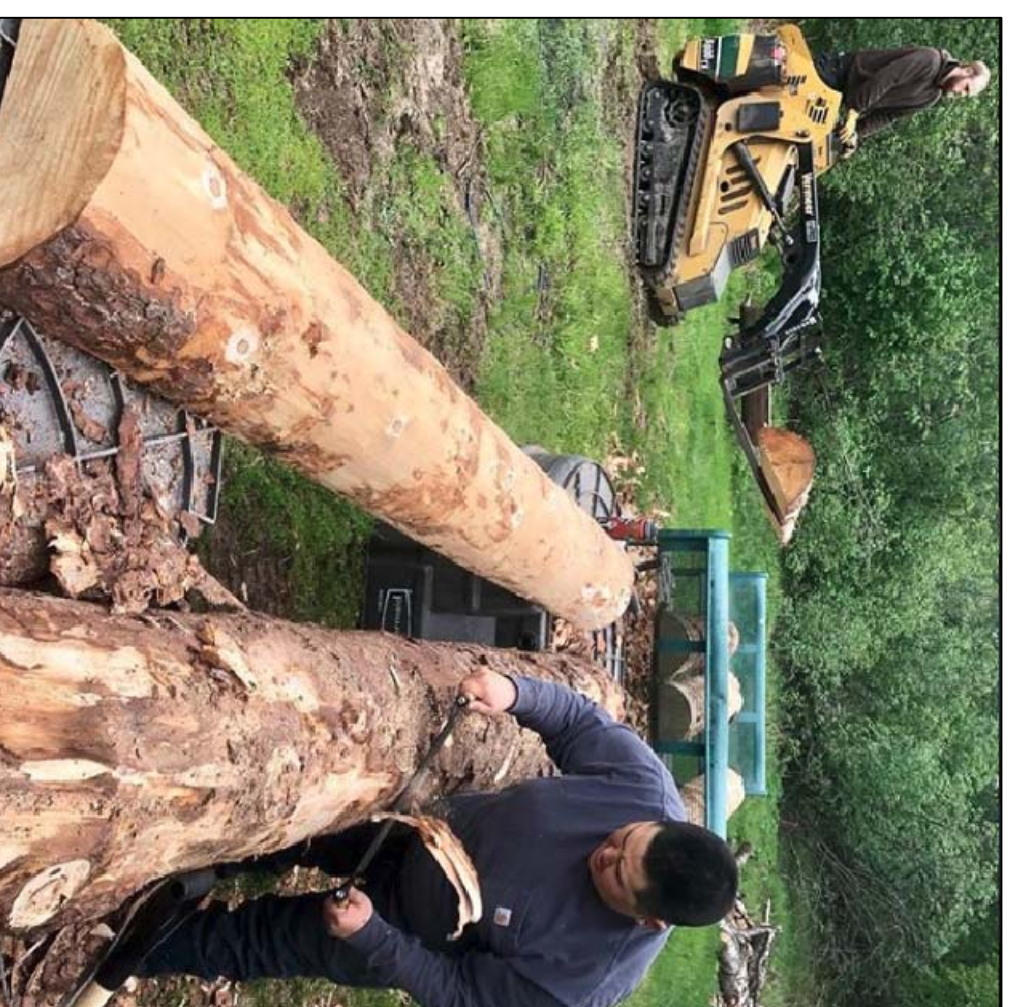
8x8 INTERPRETIVE POSTS

SCALE: N.S.



CABLE DETAIL

SCALE: NS



CUSTOM BENCH CONCEPT

SCALE: N.S.



CUSTOM TORII CONCEPT

SCALE: N.S.



CUSTOM PAVER PRECEDENT

SCALE: N.S.

FIELD BOOKS	BM NO.	LOCATION	ELEV.	DATA	ORIGIN	CHECKED	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	REV
DESIGN:				BASE	BY	BY				
STAKING:				TOPOGRAPHY	BY	BY				
				PROFILE	BY	BY				
				SMARTY SERVER	BY	BY				
				SMARTY SERVER	BY	BY				
				STORM SEWER	BY	BY				
				WATER	BY	BY				
				GAS	BY	BY				
REQUIREMENTS:				DESIGN	BY	BY				
CONTRACTOR:				DESIGN	BY	BY				
INSPECTOR:				DESIGN	BY	BY				
CONSTRUCTION RECORD				DESIGN	BY	BY				

DATA	ORIGIN	CHECKED	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	REV
TELEPHONE	BY	BY				
ELECTRIC	BY	BY				
CABLE TV	BY	BY				
TRAPIC SIGNAL	BY	BY				
DESIGN	BY	BY				
MON	BY	BY				
QUANTITIES	BY	BY				
MON	BY	BY				
PLAN CHECK	BY	BY				
MAIN FINAL CHECK	BY	BY				

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Healthy Parks Healthy People

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

2018 SAND LAKE LEARNING LAB
DETAIL DRAWINGS

SCALE: HOR. PER PLAN
SCALE: VER. PER PLAN

DATE: 7/5/2017
STATUS: FOR CONSTRUCTION

GRD: _____
SHEET 16 of 16

