On the Ground

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Dirt is BLACK
Water is CLEAR.

BUT...

Building a Natural Play Space is definitely...

GREY
CONNECTING WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

...as opposed to

“if you build it, they will come...”

Community Participatory Design
RAISE AWARENESS OF NEED

Research demonstrates that nature experiences are an important part of a child’s developmental process. Studies increasingly show that children have less time outdoors and in nature. While there are many underlying causes for this, adult mentoring and priorities surrounding children’s nature experiences may directly impact whether or not children are encouraged to spend time outdoors.

*GET OLDER ADULTS*
*TALKING ABOUT THEIR CHILDHOOD*
*AND YOU HAVE THEM HOOKED*
Natural play spaces

You’re invited! Your knowledge and expertise would be greatly appreciated in helping to design Crookston’s Natural Play Space at Castle Park.

Wednesday, June 15
11:30am-3:00pm
Crookston, Polk County Sheriff’s Dept, Community Room

A healthy lunch will be provided from 11:30-12:00.
Bring your walking shoes as we will plan to visit Castle Park.

There is growing research and awareness that connecting children to nature has multiple benefits (physical, social, emotional). An effort is beginning in northwestern Minnesota to integrate and apply the emerging knowledge on this topic to developments in our communities.

Natural Playgrounds are one important way to connect children and families to these benefits. We invite community members and organizations in Crookston to participate in a process that will involve design with the community this summer and will be followed by potential implementation this fall.

Polk County Public Health, Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships and faculty and students from the University of Minnesota – Crookston and Twin Cities will facilitate the process. Local partners include City of Crookston, Crookston Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), Tri-Valley Child Care Resource and Referral and

What Is a Natural Play Space?
Natural play spaces use a blend of natural areas and things found in nature including rocks and plants to interest children in learning about the wonders and secrets of the natural world.

Swings and slides may still be there, but new-style playgrounds also offer other things to do that enhance creativity, physical activity and spending time in nature.

RSVP to Sarah Reese, Polk County Public Health, 218.281.3385, sreese@pcphealth.org
"Have a Question about the Castle Park Natural Play Space?"
Ask Us...
Castle Park Natural Play Space Advisory Board
- Create an opportunity for everyone to get involved
  - Who owns the space (physically and mentally)
  - Personal connections and trust
  - Know your community - values

Every wheel needs a hub...
Costs and Donations

What are project goals:
- build social capital/community input
  vs.
  - build a natural play space
What do you need?
- priorities to features

What do you want?
- members involved will come up with ideas as you go along

Who has what you want?
Who is going to ask for it?
- the right person in the right place at the right time

How are you going to pay for it?
- orders from companies
  - Individual buyers
Sometimes the plan is followed....
...what a great idea
Sometimes the plan is amended...
...and sometimes the plan is changed.
Natural Play Spaces change over time.

Can you handle that...
Design Refinement

• Crookston

• Warren

• Fertile

Adapted the designs to meet the needs of each community
Design Refinement - Crookston

CASTLE PARK NATURAL PLAY SPACE
CROOKSTON, MN 56716
MASTER PLAN
Design Refinement - Warren
Design Refinement - Fertile
DONATIONS
-TIME

-SUPPLIES/FEATURES

-$$$$
FUNDING SOURCES:

- LOCAL EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE
- GRANT OPPORTUNITIES
  creative thinking: arts, nature, farm 2 school
- LOCAL SERVICE CLUBS
- FOUNDATIONS
- OTHERS???
TIMING AND LOGISTICS

“...compact enough to keep it fresh in peoples minds, but long enough to get the job done...”
USE YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

RADIO NEWSPAPERS

FLYERS WITH SCHOOL KIDS
IF
COMMUNITY DESIGN CONCEPT IS USED

...
Materials and $$$$$

• Local materials
• Recycled materials
• Local connections
  – Farmers
  – Tree companies
  – City
• Start early and have a location to stockpile
Implementing the design

- Crookston
- Warren
- Fertile
  - Once refined can happen quickly- 2 weeks notice

Months of planning and coordination
ORGANIZING WORKDAYS
“Count me in at Castle Park!”
We Need Your Help!
The Castle Park design plan is done and now we need you and your group to help make it a reality.

Natural Play Spaces
WORK DAYS

Thursday, May 17th
2:00-8:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 19th
10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Work Day Training Session: Thursday May 10, 2012 7:00 p.m.
Polk County Sherriff’s Office Community Room

City of Crookston, Polk County Public Health, U of M Crookston, U of M Twin Cities, NW MN Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Crookston Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), Otto Bremer Foundation and United Way of Crookston.
UTILIZE

WHATEVER HELP

YOU CAN GET
COUNT ME IN AT
MASON PARK

What is Nature-based Play?
Nature-based play puts kids in touch with nature by encouraging them to play with rocks, water, sand, leaves, sticks and other materials found outdoors. A nature-based play space looks more like woods, prairie or garden than a playground.

Unlike the open woods, though, these spaces usually have a border, so parents know where their kids are, and so kids can play freely in the space.

The NATURAL PLAY SPACE design is complete and now we need YOU to help make it a reality.

ARE YOU IN?

COMMUNITY WORK DAYS
Tuesday, June 19, 4-8 p.m.
Thursday, June 21, 4-8 p.m.

Come out for a few hours or the whole time— whichever you prefer. The sound of shovels, rakes and drills will mark the beginning of a busy few days. There will be a job for anybody, you don't have to have any special carpentry skills.

For planning purposes, if you know we can count you in, please call or email: Kirsten Fagerlund, 218-281-3385 or kfagerlund@pcphealth.org.

YOU KNOW?

In a typical week, only 6% of children ages 9-13 play outside on their own. (Children & Nature Network, 2008)

Children who play outside are more physically active, more creative in their play, less aggressive and show better concentration. (Burdeette and Whitaker, 2006)

DID YOU KNOW?

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WORK DAYS

- ADVERTISE, ADVERTISE, ADVERTISE
  ARTICLE BEFORE, INVITE TO EVENT, PICTURE AFTER

  - NEED A FOREMAN
  - COMMUNITY WORKER BEES
  - INCLUDE ALL AGES (find a job for everyone!!!)

THINK AHEAD AND THINK OF EVERYTHING

  FOOD, SANITATION, GARBAGE,
  SAFETY, CHILDCARE,
  WEATHER, BACK-UP DAYS
  SUPPLIES
...KEEP YOUR MESSAGE CONSISTANT

...AND NO MATTER HOW MUDDY THE ROAD...
KEEP THE WHEEL TURNING
LET’S MAKE A RUN ON THE THRIFT STORES FOR PLAY CLOTHES AND ENCOURAGE WEARING THEM OUT!!!
MAYOR DAVE AND THE MASTER MUD MIXERS
NATURAL PLAY SPACES

• SCHOOL CURRICULUM
• 4-H
• GIRL SCOUTS
• GARDENING
• COMMUNITY EDUCATION
• DAYCARES
• AFTERSCHOOL CARE
• SUMMER CARE
• CITY BLOCK PARTIES

• MUSIC
• LOCAL ARTISTS
• VISITING ARTISTS
• ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
• UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
• GRADUATE STUDENTS
• SENIOR CITIZEN CENTERS
• PT AND OT PROGRAMS
• FREE PLAY

Enjoying the Natural Play Space...more to come...
Implementing the design - Crookston

Unifying element allows stockpile of materials
Coordinate volunteers by feature

1. **Covered Wagon Area**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Logs (to create the wagon shape)
   2. Braces (to stabilize the structure)
   3. Paint (for decorative purposes)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Measure and mark the area for the wagon shape.
   2. Cut logs to size for the wagon shape.
   3. Attach braces to keep the wagon shape stable.
   4. Paint the wagon to give it a decorative look.

2. **Tree Slide**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Logs (straight, 4-6 inches in diameter)
   2. Braces (for stability)
   3. Sand (for cushioning)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the tree slide path.
   2. Cut logs to the desired length.
   3. Attach braces to the logs for stability.
   4. Fill the area around the logs with sand.

3. **Water Play**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Water (from a hose)
   2. Containers (for storage)
   3. Pumps (for circulation)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Dig a small pond area for the water play area.
   2. Install containers for storage and circulation.
   3. Use pumps to circulate the water.

4. **Tree Branch Nest**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Logs (straight, 4-6 inches in diameter)
   2. Sand (for cushioning)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the tree branch nest.
   2. Cut logs to the desired length.
   3. Attach the logs to create a nest area.
   4. Fill the area around the logs with sand.

5. **Rock Castle**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Large rocks (natural or artificial)
   2. Sand (for cushioning)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the rock castle.
   2. Lay out the rocks to create a castle shape.
   3. Fill the area around the rocks with sand.

6. **Log Balance Course**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Logs (straight, 4-6 inches in diameter)
   2. Sand (for cushioning)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the log balance course.
   2. Lay out the logs to create a balance path.
   3. Fill the area around the logs with sand.

7. **Fort Building**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Logs (straight, 4-6 inches in diameter)
   2. Sand (for cushioning)
   3. Braces (for stability)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the fort building.
   2. Lay out the logs to create fort walls.
   3. Attach braces to the logs for stability.
   4. Fill the area around the logs with sand.

8. **Dirt Dipping Area**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Dirt

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the dirt dipping area.
   2. Use the dirt for sensory play.

9. **Culvert Canopy**

   **Materials Needed:**
   1. Logs (straight, 4-6 inches in diameter)
   2. Braces (for stability)

   **Steps to Take:**
   1. Mark the area for the culvert canopy.
   2. Lay out the logs to create a canopy shape.
   3. Attach braces to the logs for stability.

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**Castle Park Natural Play Space**

Canyon Rd & 4th St
Ranching Plan
Implementing the design

community volunteers

get kids involved

product testing

leverage social media
Implementing the design

intergenerational interactions
Implementing the design

think about how kids (not adults) would use the features
Lessons Learned

• Group elements together
• Finish elements completely on workdays
• Don’t go to large, small and compact works better than too large and spaced out
• Have a unifying element (trail, border, etc)
• Be flexible, adapt (design, features, process) to volunteer strengths, site conditions, etc...
• Social media can quickly mobilize volunteers
Questions?