Rich, rich stories of history, and the environment

While working with the Friends of Norris Camp, along with the other folks who contributed to this plan, I couldn’t help but sense the pride and connection of those individuals and their families to Norris Camp. There are so many stories to be told. An Interpretive Center will afford the local community a place to celebrate their past, and visitors the opportunity to enjoy its richness.

The resulting concept plan will interpret the:

- Area’s history
- New Deal’s impact
  - Civilian Conservation Corps
  - Resettlement Administration
- Environment and natural resources

And most importantly, protect and share the historical buildings of Norris Camp.

John Beckwith, planner
### Goals
An Interpretive Center will be established in order to:

1. **Utilize the buildings and resources of the Norris Camp Civilian Conservation Corps Camp to serve as the primary visitor interpretive center.**
   - a. Create new signage to welcome guests and put them at ease in touring the camp and surrounding area.
   - b. Utilize the existing buildings to house appropriate display areas.
   - c. Establish a self-guided tour of the historic camp and buildings.

2. **Establish a self-guided walking tour to discover the landscape, flora and fauna of the surrounding area.**

3. **Improve classroom and student connections** through improved facilities and greater opportunities for learning, both on-site and through participation in the classrooms.

4. **Create a virtual experience through use of technology** to share the stories of Norris Camp with visitors unable or simply too great of distance from the area to make regular visits.

5. **Looking to the future:** The plan has suggestions for possible events or activities, and projects that will have folks talking about their experience when they get home. These activities will be made possible, or greatly enhanced by completion of the improvement phase of the interpretive center.

### Cost Estimates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal / Support</th>
<th>Est. Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New signage to welcome guests</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize existing building for display.</td>
<td>$196,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour of the historic camp.</td>
<td>$31,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tour of landscape, flora and fauna.</strong></td>
<td>$71,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Improve student connections.</strong></td>
<td>$31,400</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Virtual experience of Norris Camp.</strong></td>
<td>$60,300</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Design Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and Administration</td>
<td>$33,800</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$527,460</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Plan made possible by:

- Friends of Norris Camp
- MN DNR, Red Lake Wildlife Management Area
- Giziibii Resource Conservation and Development
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships
- University of Minnesota, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, Community Assistantship Program

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**ASPIRATIONS**

The aspirations that were the force behind this entire planning process were to thoughtfully preserve the historical value of Norris Camp and to create a tourism venue that will tell the many stories of the Norris Camp area in a fun and memorable way.

Implementation of this plan will provide for:

1. A greatly enhanced opportunity for on-site and remote visitors to understand the history and natural resources of the area through exploration of the historic sites as well as hiking the improved trails.
2. Visitors feeling welcome to explore more deeply the many resources already available such as the homestead sites, hunting trails, or solitude walk off into the remote areas.
3. Development of the site with specific learning messages identified, resulting in an improved educational experience and wisely used funds and contributions.
4. Partnerships with other local venues to encourage regional tourism and improve the overall visitor experience when in Northwest Minnesota.
5. The protection or restoration of a valuable historic site for future generations.
6. An increase in visitor days as well as numerous special events and activities will be made possible, and very likely to occur.