Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site Management Plan, Fort Pierre, South Dakota

Prepared for the South Dakota State Historical Society – Historic Preservation Office

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February 2010

Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site

Management Plan

Fort Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota

Prepared for

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INTRODUCTION

The Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site Management Plan is a synthesis of preservation and educational goals. Protection of the site's integrity and its archaeological resources is the top priority for all future planning and management efforts. Fort Pierre Chouteau is a non-renewable resource, and all recommendations for future site enhancement take that into careful account.

Enhancing the visitor experience of the site, and improving public knowledge of local heritage, is also a key objective. It is through the interpretation of cultural resources that public stewardship is cultivated. This management plan recognizes that the public cannot be expected to support preservation efforts if they cannot understand an historic site's relevance or rarity. Creating a visitor experience grounded in high-quality interpretation, sensitivity to the site, and broader connections to regional history are all key goals.

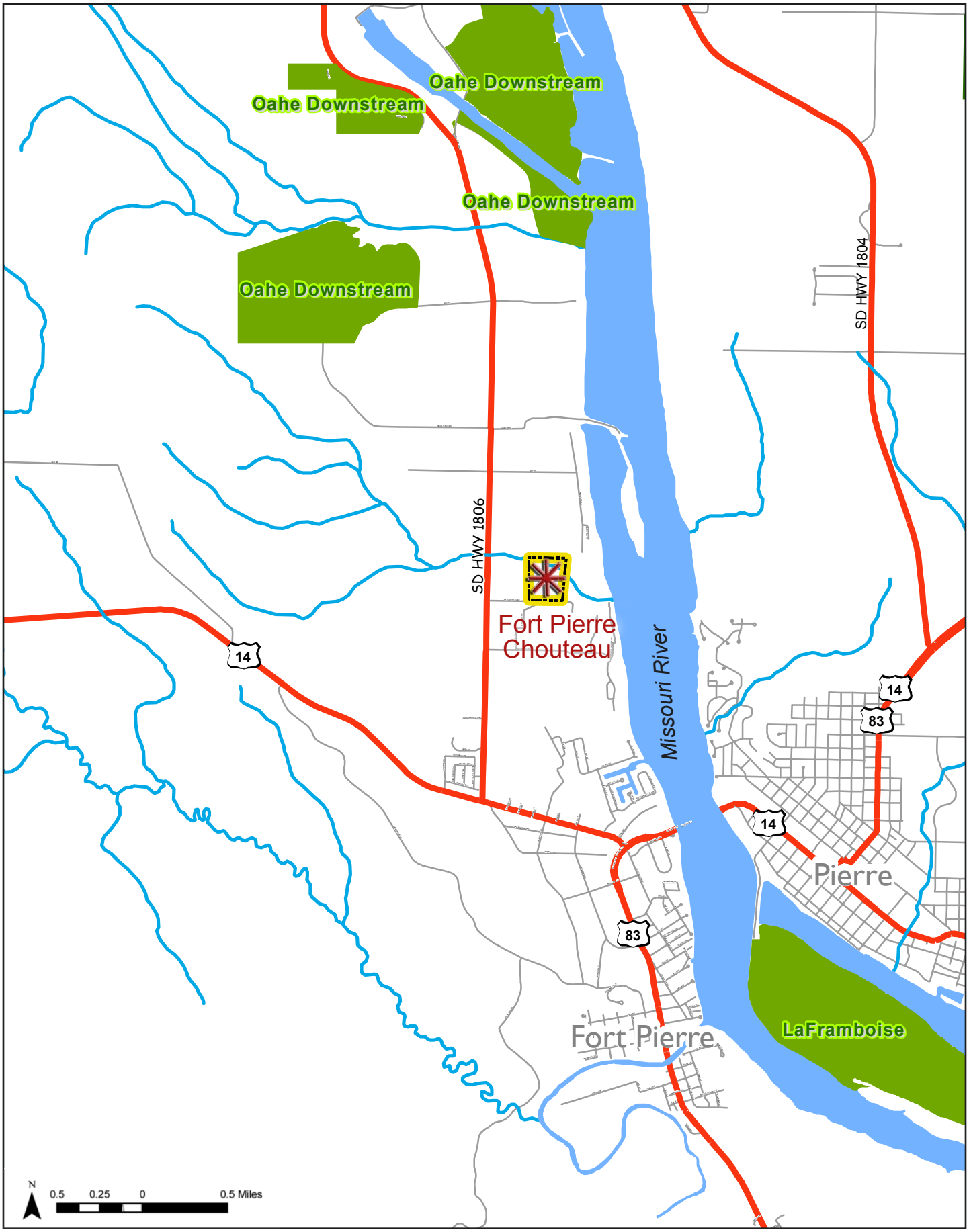
Fort Pierre Chouteau is a site of local and national importance. Located approximately two miles north of the cities of Fort Pierre and Pierre, South Dakota, the site consists of 33.5 acres of open field (Figure 1: Location Map). Although all historic evidence is presently invisible—remaining physical traces of the fort lie buried underground—the site is home to a rich and layered history, a story that begins with indigenous legacy, one that later includes the country's burgeoning fur trade, a U.S. military presence, and culminates in saving the North American bison population from extinction and an eventual return to nature.

Designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1991, the nomination form states that, "Fort Pierre [Chouteau] may well have been the most significant fur trade/military fort on the western American frontier." The Fort was the largest and busiest port in the entire region; at no point during the history of the U.S. fur trade did the volume of furs traded and shipped to markets reach the level of the Upper Missouri region from 1830-1865. Fort Pierre Chouteau was a place where Native and European cultures came together under shared economic interests. As the nomination form elaborates, "rarely can an igniter of such vast cultural and economic diffusion throughout a region be traced to a single locality [the Fort]." In addition to such national significance, the Fort is also a profound touchstone of local heritage and namesake of cities Fort Pierre and Pierre.

This management plan is divided into four sections: an introduction and overview, articulation of a vision for the site, an historical outline of the site with descriptions of current conditions, the management plan with in-depth discussions of interpretive opportunities and site operations, and a detailed strategic implementation plan. The management plan is designed to function as a practical and motivating tool to guide action and site management decisions for years to come.

Planning Process

Development of the Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site Management Plan included shared opinions and insights from a number of important site stakeholders. All helped to give shape to this management plan, its approach and recommendations.



Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site
Management Plan
Figure 1: Location Map

A site visit and workshop was held with the project's Advisory Committee in October 2009. Organizations represented included: South Dakota State Historical Society (SDSHS) staff, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, the South Dakota State Archaeologist's Office, Office of the Governor, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Fort Pierre Mayor Sam Tidball also joined the Advisory Committee at the site visit to emphasize the importance of the site and to express the city's support of planning efforts to improve it.

In addition to the workshop, further meetings were also held with SDSHS staff and follow-up site visits were conducted by the project consultant team.

Guiding Principles

Over the course of workshop meetings and subsequent communication, a number of key principles for the Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site Management Plan were developed. They are as follows:

- Preservation and protection of the site's integrity and archaeological resources is of paramount importance; all future management decisions will be informed by this point of view.
- The fort site is recognized as both an archaeology site and an historic site, as a place where scholarly investigations and public education will find balance.
- Improved stewardship of the site will occur. Site stewards include the state, county, city, and local residents.
- The fort site will be transformed into a moderate and respectful attraction. In other words, a worthwhile and meaningful destination, but not a Disneyland.
- Interpretation on site will be layered in its narrative approach, situating the site into a broader context of fort history (and regional tourism). Both cultural and natural resources will be interpreted.
- Revitalization of the site will bring positive benefit to both natural and cultural resources; limited development will enhance the visitor experience.

VISION

A vision statement guides future action. Part inspirational and part pragmatic, the vision for Fort Pierre Chouteau is intended to inform future management decisions and be used as a continual reference point for evolving site programming, operations and interpretation. The vision is as follows:

> Fort Pierre Chouteau is a non-renewable and unique resource that tells a vital story in U.S. history. Protection and preservation of the site and its cultural resources is our foundational goal. Interpretation of the site is low-impact and place-based; it shall illuminate, inspire and educate the public about local history and wildlife. All site visitors are always encouraged to become true stewards of, and take pride in, this nationally significant site.

Figure 2. Fort Pierre Chouteau, as depicted in 1856

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SITE CONDITIONS

Established in 1832 as a commercial trading outpost on the edge of the American frontier, Fort Pierre Chouteau is now a National Historic Landmark and a precious vestige of the fur trading era. The site offers insights into the meeting of two cultures – a legacy that continues to touch the local community today.

As the largest and busiest fur trading post on the Upper Missouri River, Fort Pierre Chouteau became the hub of commerce for a wide region and the most visible Euro-American presence along the 1,500-mile stretch of the river. During its 25 years as a trading post, the Yankton, Santee, Yanktonais and Teton Sioux tribes exchanged bison robes for manufactured goods with representatives of the American Fur Company's Western Department. More than a commercial outpost, Fort Pierre Chouteau would become a place to hold councils to address grievances, build trading alliances and exchange news and ideas from one culture to another. The result was not only an impressive volume of trade, but a remarkable level of cultural interaction.

By 1855, the fur trade waned and the inevitability of American expansion grew. The fort was sold to the U.S. Army and became the first military fort in the Upper Missouri region. For a brief time, the military installation continued to play an integral role in shaping the economic and political realities of the western frontier of the United States. As the American west became settled, the region was transformed into extensive ranches, connected to the rest of the growing nation by waterway, and then trains. The once numerous bison, whose commercially-valued fur was the basis for the fort's origination, had been eliminated to near extinction by the late nineteenth century. In a twist of irony, rancher James "Scotty" Philip, whose land holdings included the old Fort site, would be credited with helping to save the buffalo, growing his herd from 74 to over 1,000 head.

Although no evidence of the fort remains on the surface, the area has long been respected for its important historic contributions. A portion of the fort site was given to the state in the 1930s when a stone marker was erected. The state's property was expanded in the 1970s, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. Designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1991, the site is poised to become a place of learning, cultural understanding, and recreational enjoyment.

Historical Timeline

Following is a brief timeline of the Fort Pierre Chouteau, outlining the significant events in the history of this site.

Fort Pierre Chouteau – Historical Timeline

1738	French explorers Chevalier and Louis Verendrye visit the Upper Missouri region searching for a water route to the Pacific claiming the region for France.
1803	United States purchases the Upper Missouri region in the Louisiana Purchase from France.
1804	Lewis and Clark explore the Upper Missouri region to determine the extent of fur-bearing animals and locate a water route across the continent.
1806	Lewis and Clark party stay on the Fort Pierre Plain during expedition along the Missouri River.

1808	John Jacob Astor organizes the American Fur Company (AFC).
1811	Manuel Lisa of the Missouri Fur Company visits Fort Pierre Plain. H. M. Brackenridge chronicles expedition describing scenery and Sioux encampment.
1817	Joseph LaFramboise builds Fort Laframboise, the first trading facility on the Fort Pierre Plain.
1822	Fur trading area surrounding Fort Pierre Chouteau is first commercially utilized by white inhabitants when the Columbia Fur Company (CFC) receives license to trade and builds Fort Tecumseh.
1827	AFC purchases the Upper Missouri interests of the CFC changing the name to Upper Missouri Outfit (UMO). AFC contracts Bernard Pratte and Company to manage its Western Department in St. Louis headed by chief agent, Pierre Chouteau Jr.
1830	Bernard Pratte and Company takes over management of the Upper Missouri region of the AFC. Bernard Pratte and Company builds the first shallow-water steamboat *Yellow Stone* used on the Upper Missouri River.
1831	During the steamboat *Yellow Stone's* first voyage, Pierre Chouteau Jr. finds the dilapidated conditions of Fort Tecumseh, the field headquarters of the AFC, beyond repair and orders a new post built. Jacob Halsey chronicles details about the construction of Fort Pierre Chouteau in *The Fort Tecumseh-Fort Pierre Journal, 1830-1833*.
1832	Fort Pierre Chouteau built as part of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company (AFC) as the most strategic post in the AFC's Western Department. Artist George Catlin completes landscape painting depicting a less than accurate image of Fort Pierre Chouteau and writes a description of the Sioux he encountered during his visit.
1833	Construction of Fort Pierre Chouteau is completed. Fort Pierre Chouteau visited by Prince Alexander Maximilian of Wied accompanied by Artist Carl Bodmer. Prince Maximilian writes the most detailed description of the early Fort period. John Audubon visits Fort Pierre Chouteau on his journey up the Missouri River.
1834	Pierre Chouteau, Jr. becomes part owner of Pratte, Chouteau and Company. John Jacob Astor sells the Western Department of the AFC to Pratte, Chouteau and Company.
1837	Smallpox epidemic greatly reduces Indian population near Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1838	Bernard Pratte is elected mayor of St. Louis and sells his interest of Pratte, Chouteau and Company to Pierre Chouteau, Jr.
1839	Bernard Pratte dies and Pratte, Chouteau and Company is reorganized as Pierre Chouteau, Jr. and Company. During expedition to map modern-day eastern South Dakota, scientist Joseph Nicollet and John Fremont visit Fort Pierre Chouteau. Father Pierre DeSmet baptizes three of fur trade bourgeois William Laidlaw's thirteen children at Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1842	Fort Pierre Chouteau becomes operations base for the U.S. Indian Agent in the Upper Missouri region.

1843	Fort Pierre Chouteau is re-platted and expanded with a row of buildings and numerous other interior additions and changes made during a remodeling phase ending in 1850. John Audubon visits Fort Pierre Chouteau for several days while journeying up the Missouri River on steamboat *Omega*.
1844	Pierre Chouteau, Jr. and Company ceases business interactions with AFC and continue arrangements with other commission houses in the United States and overseas to sell robes and furs.
1847	Explorer John Palliser visits Fort Pierre Chouteau and the Upper Missouri by horseback. Father Nicholas Point completes two paintings of Fort Pierre Chouteau illustrating structures within the compound.
1849	After a series of financial setbacks AFC goes out of business. French artist E. De Girardin visits Fort Pierre Chouteau and describes structure in travel magazine *Le Tour de Monde*.
1850	Thaddeus Culbertson of the UMO writes description of newly remodeled Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1851	Artist Rudolph Friederich Kurz completes sketch of Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1854	Frederick Behman completes watercolor depicting changes constructed during remodeling phase. Massacre of thirty US soldiers by a band of Sioux near Fort Laramie creates opportunity for Pierre Chouteau, Jr. to sell Fort Pierre to the U.S. Army.
1855	U.S. Army purchases Fort Pierre Chouteau for a sum of $45,000 (the equivalent of over $1.1 million in today's dollars) and it becomes the first military fort in the Upper Missouri region. U.S. Army finds numerous required repairs at Fort Pierre Chouteau and an undetermined amount of ancillary structures are constructed outside the picketed enclosure until the abandonment by the military. Fort Pierre Chouteau is ill-equipped to sustain 900 troops and cantonment camps are built in the surrounding area. Lt. G. R. Warrant and Captain Turnley make two subsequent sketches of Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1856	Secretary of War orders a military reservation established around Fort Pierre to include all available arable land. General William Harney conducts a treaty council with the various tribes of the Sioux Nation. Two watercolor sketches completed by General Alfred Sully depict Fort Pierre from a bird's eye view and southward view illustrating compound during later days of its development.
1857	The United States Army abandons Fort Pierre and all useable buildings are transported to Fort Randall while the remaining timber is used to fuel steamships traveling on the Missouri River.
1859	Captain W.F. Raynolds of the Army Engineers records the last description of the remnants of Fort Pierre in the process of being demolished to build Fort Randall.
1864	Pierre Chouteau, Jr. and Company sold to Northwestern Fur Company.
1868	Laramie Treaty of 1868 gives the Sioux Nations a majority of the western half of modern-day South Dakota including the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau.

1889	Congress diminishes size of Indian reservation in the Dakota Territory allowing homesteaders to claim more of the reservation land including the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1890	James "Scotty" Philip claims land containing the old Fort Pierre Chouteau site. Philip would be credited with helping to save the buffalo.
1901	James "Scotty" Philip drives a herd of 74 buffalo to his ranch in the vicinity of Fort Pierre Chouteau to help preserve the dying species.
1911	James "Scotty" Philip dies and the Fort Pierre Chouteau site remains in pasture until 1930. The herd of buffalo had grown to approximately 1,000 head.
1913	George Catlin suggests the formation of a National Park in the Fort Pierre area to preserve the diverse animal species which once inhabited the area.
1930	Fort Pierre site is deeded to the state of South Dakota by Henry O'Neil, Inc. A stone marker is placed near the center of the compound when discernible portions of the stockade trench were still visible on the surface. Surveyor W.N. Lovejoy produces measurements of Fort Pierre showing for the first time the measured dimensions of the palisade.
1931	SDSHS is entrusted ownership of the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1933	A stone marker with bronze plaque is placed near the former west wall of Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1952	A legendary flood reaches the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau.
1970	Ole Williamson gives the tract of land surrounding the site of Fort Pierre to the state of South Dakota.
1976	Fort Pierre Chouteau site placed on National Register of Historic Places.
1980	Excavation conducted at the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau by the SDSHS to locate distinctive and recognizable portions of the fort.
1981	Second excavation conducted by SDSHS at the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau to locate portions of the fort as represented on early maps whereby the perimeter or palisades could be located with some precision.
1991	Fort Pierre Chouteau site designated as a National Historic Landmark.
1997-2001	Preliminary excavations conducted at Fort Pierre Chouteau Trading Post site to identify the physical location of the fort and to make a determination of areas endangered or destroyed by erosion while obtaining information on structural features.
2006	SDSHS Board of Trustees resolve to authorize work with other state agencies and funding sources to study the feasibility of the reconstruction and development of the fort as a tourism, research, and study destination.
2007	Geophysical surveys conducted to investigate subsurface archaeological conditions within the trading post and adjacent areas. The survey revealed dense concentrations of iron artifacts in the locations of former structures and activity within the trading post.
2008	Kenneth L. Kvamme, Ph.D. presented his survey findings in the report "Geophysical Investigation at Fort Pierre Chouteau, South Dakota" and also prepared "Daddy, I Don't See a Fort," a popular interpretation of the technical geophysical findings.
2009	SDSHS commissions first management plan for the historic fort.

Current Site Conditions

For almost two centuries, Fort Pierre Chouteau has been a place where artists and explorers have admired the relationship of a built environment against a natural and river-bound setting (Figure 3). Today, the site is comprised of 33.5-acres and is located approximately two miles north of the cities of Fort Pierre and Pierre, South Dakota. Access to the site is off of Highway 1806 at Fort Chouteau Road. There are approximately eight parallel parking spaces along Fort Chouteau Road opposite the entrance to the site. The site is bordered by single-family homes to the south and west, and agricultural land to the east and north. The Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place is located southwest of the site and the Dunes Golf Course to the southeast. The Missouri River lies approximately 500 feet to the east. A paved bike trail runs parallel to Highway 1806 and links Oahe Downstream Recreation Area State Park, Fort Pierre Chouteau and the cities of Fort Pierre and Pierre (Figure 4: Existing Conditions).

The Fort Pierre Chouteau site consists primarily of a relatively flat open grassland area with a distinct line of trees along the edge of a former river bank and a lower former riverbed area (the river shifted location in the 1950s) on the east side of the property. An intermittent stream runs through the north part of the site. An overhead electrical power line bisects the site. A wooden rail fence runs along the south edge (Fort Chouteau Road frontage) and a wire fence is located along the other three sides. There are three access gates in the perimeter fence, one located in the southwest corner off of Fort Chouteau Road and two in the northeast part of the site.

An opening in the wood fence allows pedestrian access to a gravel path lined with interpretive signs and terminating in a natural boulder placed on the site in 1933. The boulder bears two bronze plaques, one placed in 1933 marking the site and commemorating the “institution of the Fort Pierre Chouteau Trading Post” and a second on its opposite side placed by the U.S. Department of the Interior designating the site as a National Historic Landmark in 1991. No evidence of the former fur trade fort or military fort is visible on the surface. There is substantial subsurface archeological evidence of the history of site use by Native Americans, the forts and subsequent agricultural and ranch use. The site is owned by the State of South Dakota and is administered by the South Dakota State Historical Society.

Figure 3. Karl Bodmer's 1833 view of Fort Pierre Chouteau and setting

Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site Management Plan

Figure 4: Existing Conditions

Current Site Perceptions

The Fort Pierre Chouteau historic site is currently underutilized and unknown to large segments of local residents, to say nothing of the broader public. The site has the appearance to passersby of an abandoned field, and lacks enticements, even to those who are familiar with the site's history and significance. Wayfinding signage to the historic site is poor, and the site remains largely hidden from potential visitors. Although the site is a National Historic Landmark, it remains a tucked away gem: highly significant, powerful in the stories it contains, rich in history, yet to this point unable to convey much.

A lack of visual evidence of the fur trade fort hampers awareness and interest. On-site access and movement for visitors is currently limited to a single dead-end pathway. The existing interpretive signs are the only items on the site that provide information about the property and they can only engage visitor interest for a few minutes. Current site orientation is "backwards" for visitors enter the site not from its historic face to the river, but rather from behind. There is nothing on site that accurately addresses this or helps to meaningfully reorient the visitor.

The site can be experienced in a much more dynamic and engaging manner through improvements to site interpretation and circulation. The park-like character of the site, its views and the abundant wildlife, combined with a nationally important history, make the site a distinctive and attractive place to visit and experience.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

In many ways the Fort Pierre Chouteau site is a hidden gem awaiting discovery. This management plan includes recommendations to bring the gem to light and realize the site's potential to the region, state and nation while protecting and managing the site in an efficient and sustainable manner. The Site Enhancement Plan recommends actions to visualize the fur trade fort and tell the site stories with a trail network through six site related interpretive zones. These recommendations aim to bring the unique qualities of Fort Pierre Chouteau and its stories to light through development of improved visitor experiences and amenities. The enhancement recommendations are modest in scale and easy to maintain, recognizing the moderate activity level that is desired and available resources for capital improvements and on-going operations and management.

In addition to the recommended Site Enhancement Plan, two additional management strategies are described. One option is to manage the site "as is" with no additional visitor enhancements. Another management option is to make minimal changes through mowing of the fur trade fort footprint and a loop trail. These options could be enacted as site management actions or be used as a phased approach to realization of the recommended Site Enhancement Plan.

The goals of the Fort Pierre Chouteau Management Plan are to:

- Preserve and protect the site's cultural and natural resources.
- Make the site history visible and tangible by raising the awareness and use of the property by locals and tourists, telling compelling stories of the site's history, and adding a physical and visual element interpreting the Fort.
- Enhance visitor experiences and amenities by bringing the rich history to light and creating learning opportunities through interpretive features and trails that take advantage of the site's views and build on the park-like attributes.
- Make the site easy to maintain and sustainable by employing long- and short-term property management actions, engaging in strategic partnerships and using durable materials.
- Define affordable and reasonable implementation actions that keep operational costs low, create an inspiring initial site development and balance investment with expected use.
- Be a catalyst for formation of productive partnerships for site improvement, management and marketing.

Preservation and Protection

The enhancement and promotion of Fort Pierre Chouteau cannot be pursued without assuring the protection and preservation of the site's history and setting. Just as the lack of a visual historic presence makes the site's interpretation and visitor attraction more challenging, it also helps to discourage intruders and serves as a protective barrier for archaeological evidence. More than just an archaeological site, Fort Pierre Chouteau is set within a broader geographical context known as a

cultural landscape that includes both cultural and natural resources associated with an historic event. Therefore, actions that directly and indirectly affect the integrity of the historic resources and the landscape need to be addressed both on-site and off-site.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The cultural landscape of Fort Pierre Chouteau is comprised of archaeological resources associated with several historic periods: Native America (precontact), the fur-trading fort period (1832-1855), and the military period (1855-1857). Archaeological evidence on site has been characterized as "subtle" due to the fort's wooden construction. Archaeological excavations have been conducted on site in 1980 and again from 1997 to 2001. The latter helped to delineate portions of the fort palisade and yielded some information on adjacent interior buildings.

Site features were identified and recorded, yet in the interest of preservation, were not fully excavated. As the draft report notes: "excavations were discontinued when a feature was identified. This practice was utilized to preserve the feature for future generations… this practice did not allow for identification of feature functionality" (Fosha & Sieverding, 2007). A final report and artifact inventory has not yet been completed for these site excavations. In the interest of enhancing the interpretive experience on site, and through other off-site sources (such as the internet), it is recommended that preparation and submittal of the final report be considered a high priority and occur without undue delay.

As features were not fully excavated, sensitive archaeological resources remain buried throughout much of the site. Current threats facing these resources include:

1. Over-excavation. Full excavation of the site could potentially have a negative effect on the site's landmark status. Too much archaeology, and the site becomes devoid of its resources and value.

2. Development. Extensive development of the site, such as a full reconstruction of the fort, would result in unavoidable damage to the site's archaeological integrity and is therefore not recommended.

3. Bioturbation and Erosion. These natural processes can pose problems for site disturbance. There does not appear to be significant risk of further erosion that would affect archaeological resources. Some previous archaeological excavation sites have exposed geo-textile fabric or show evidence of subsidence. These areas should be filled with topsoil and seeded. Although bioturbation is a persistent problem, its situation is not viewed as serious enough to substantively jeopardize the site's overall integrity, or warrant a rodent extermination program. Partnering with the neighboring golf course and their methods of rodent control is an option of rodent control if desired.

4. Looting and Vandalism. Placement of a fence and gate at the site has reduced looting and vandalism at the site. It is, however, still a concern. Crafting an interpretive message that strongly encourages stewardship, reminds visitors that any unpermitted excavation is illegal, and that the site contains artifacts that are worth much in terms of information (nails, glass,

buttons, metal fragments and the like), but does not contain objects of monetary or resale value will all aid in deterring looters.

A public archaeology program was hosted on site in 1980, 1981 and from 1997 to 2001. This program was very successful, attracting participants from across the nation. Continuation of this program is, however, not recommended in the fur-trading fort area. In accord with this plan's vision statement, "protection and preservation of the site and its cultural resources is our foundational goal" any further impacts to existing archaeological resources should be avoided until new field research technologies allow for improved investigation with minimal ground disturbance.

The military portion of the site could potentially be used for an alternate public archaeology program: one targeted specifically at children age 12 and under, consisting of -supervised excavation of small test pits only, and lasting in duration no longer than one week to minimize activity on site. Beyond just a digging activity, this program would emphasize the scholarly nature of archaeology, develop research questions pertinent to the fort's history, and contribute to the overall understanding of the site. To protect the resources, it is important that it be supervised by an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's standards for professional qualifications. This type of program could be advertised as a kind of 'summer camp.' It would be a meaningful way to engage a new audience (kids), and nurture the next generation of stewards. Deadwood Archaeology Summer Camp in the Black Hills, South Dakota, hosts popular archaeological excavations for children ages 9 to 12 and charges a nominal fee of $25 for the week. The program is capped at 20 participants. This model would be an apt program to emulate at Fort Pierre Chouteau.

Across the site, partially exposed sections of geo-textile fabric were noted during the field visit. Top soil, seed and mulch should be used to cover the fabric and its suggestion of underground archaeological resources.

INTEGRITY CONCERNS

Setting

Part of the character of the Fort Pierre Chouteau site is its context and relationship to the surrounding lands. Today there is a subdivision of single-family homes to the south, one single family home on a large parcel to the west and agricultural lands to the north and east (Figure 5). Further development adjacent to the site would compromise the visitor's experience and negatively affect the character of this National Historic Landmark. The State, Stanley County and the City of Fort Pierre should work together with surrounding land-owners to protect the scenic character of the fort

Figure 5. Residential development has encroached on the site's southern boundary

site. Of particular importance are the retention of existing compatible land use buffers (agricultural or open space lands) adjacent to the site and retention of views to the Missouri River from the site and from Highway 1806 to the site. There are several methods available to guide land use and protect views and scenic qualities, including land acquisition, scenic/conservation easements, guiding/zoning land for compatible agricultural or open space use, and scenic and riverfront overlay zones to protect lands and views.

Site

The existing overhead power line is the biggest visual intrusion on the site, detracting from the site's historical integrity and scenic qualities. Truck access to maintain or repair the line could possibly cause damage to archaeological resources. The power line should be removed from the site and the poles cut off at ground level, so as not to disturb further the soil and archaeological deposits. If the power line is rerouted near the site border, it should be placed underground in previously disturbed soils. There is also an existing private water line running through the site that serves the residence to the west. If there were a break or leak, damage to the site could occur and repair would necessitate excavation of the line which could further damage archaeological resources. That water line should be abandoned, capped and rerouted off of the fort site.

Grasses cover most of the site. There is little active soil erosion on the site. There is evidence of significant erosion in the past (gullies along the former riverbank which undercut areas of the former fur trade fort), but those areas today are mostly well covered by vegetation. There does not appear to be significant risk of further erosion that would affect archaeological resources. There are some exposed soil areas at former excavation areas and geo-textile fabric from previous excavation efforts is exposed at some locations. These areas should be covered with top soil, seeded and mulched.

The line of trees along the former river bank is not in character with Fur Trade Fort era. However, the trees are evidence of the dynamic living nature of the site (river and river bank shifted since the 1800s, trees grew up) and as such are part of the site's story.

Figure 6. Weeds have taken root along the new gravel path

The recent improvement of the access path exposed some soil areas which were quickly colonized by weed species (tumbleweed and thistle) creating a line of weedy vegetation bordering the access path (Figure 6). These weeds should be removed and the path edge seeded with a mix of native grasses and forbs. Note: the recommended Site Enhancement Plan includes eliminating the existing path to create a new circulation loop system, so the timing of the weed removal/reseeding with eventual trail re-alignment should be a consideration.

The site is regularly hayed and the hay bales stored on site to dry detract from the historic character of the site. There are no trash cans on the site. At the current low level of visitation only occasional trash (bottles, cans and paper) appears on the site. As visitation is encouraged, trash is likely to increase as well. In order to foster greater site stewardship, placement of trash receptacles and service may be necessary. The perimeter fence appears to prevent unwanted vehicle use of the site (cars, ATVs etc.).

Visitor Experience

SITE ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The Fort Pierre Chouteau site is underutilized and largely unknown to the public. The park-like character of the site, its views and the abundant wildlife, combined with nationally significant history, make the site a unique and attractive place to visit and experience. Therefore, part of the management recommendations for the site is to bring the unique qualities and stories to light through development of visitor experiences and amenities. The enhancement recommendations are modest in scale and easy to maintain, recognizing the moderate activity level that is desired and available resources for capital improvements and on-going operations and management (Figure 7: Site Enhancement Plan).

The Site Enhancement Plan is based on the following objectives:

- **Telling the Stories.** Visitors should understand the rich depth of the site's history, from Native American use through the Scotty Philip Ranch. Creative use of interpretive media incorporated into the site and site features will help tell the engaging stories of the site. Visitors will feel an enhanced appreciation for the site and renewed sense of stewardship for local heritage resources.

- **Experiencing the Place.** Visitors should be able to experience the site through a network of trails that illuminate the range of site attributes – Native American pre-contact use, the Fur Trade Fort, the Military Fort, the former river bank, wildlife, and prairie resources. This includes creation of an orientation area at the entrance from Fort Choteau Road, creating a purposeful sequence of arrival, linking trails to interpretive themes and stories and creating interconnected trail loops that offer a variety of experiences.

Infrastructure

Loop Trails

The existing access path includes a series of interpretive signs that dead-end at a stone marker. The path does not lead to a compelling destination, include any sitting opportunities, or provide for loop circulation. The recommended loop trail system includes six interpretive zones (see following section) employing curving paths and regimental grids, which help to define the variety of experiences and uses of the entire site. Curving paths will include interpretation of Native American history, Indian culture and natural resources, while straight paths interpret western cultural elements such as the Fur Trade Fort and Military Fort.

Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site
Management Plan
Figure 7: Site Enhancement Plan

The curving loop paths can access a new native plant garden/healing garden that can demonstrate Native American use of plants. Another loop trail should follow just outside of the grid of the Fur Trade Fort (see Visualizing the Fort, below). A loop trail along the upper and lower former riverbank can interpret natural resources and river transportation. A mowed trail can follow the layout of rectangular paths within the military fort area. A curving mowed path in the north part of the site can focus on natural resources and wildlife viewing. The proposed path alignment would cross the intermittent creek twice. Stepping stones can be placed at the east crossing point. The stones should be flat 12- to 18-inch diameter stones, 4 to 6 inches thick, placed 6 inches apart across the creek bed. A treated wood pedestrian bridge should be used at the westerly crossing. It should be wide enough and strong enough to allow a tractor and mower to cross.

Most trails are envisioned as a mowed turf surface approximately 6 to 8 feet wide and they should be laid out where the terrain permits to allow access for persons with disabilities. The orientation area and primary access path will be the most frequently used paths and should have a durable surface such as compacted gravel. The rectangular trail around the fur trade fort is envisioned as mowed turf, but other more durable (but expensive) options include compacted gravel over fill or a boardwalk.

Visualizing the Fort

The visual and physical presence of the fur trade fort will be achieved through mowed trails creating a distinct vegetation pattern inside the fort footprint, installation of interpretive nodes (markers, interpretive signs and seating) at the fort corners, and construction of an observation tower in the scale of the fort's southeast block house. Full reconstruction of the fort or extending the terrace is not recommended due to construction costs, on-going operations considerations and potential damage to sensitive, below-surface archaeological resources (see Site Enhancement Plan).

The mowing pattern, corner markers and observation tower will provide the ability to see the breadth and scale of the fort and to learn about the fort history within a modest development budget and easy-to-maintain plan. It should be noted that the fort corner markers and the overlook should be placed slightly away (off-set) from the actual historic fort footprint so as to minimize impact on archeological resources. In addition, the footprint of the primary buildings could be marked through the placement of concrete parking bumpers (inverted and placed flush with the ground surface) to allow mowing.

To Rebuild, or Not to Rebuild?

The question of whether a reconstruction of the fort should be included as part of the interpretation of the site received extensive thought and conversation by the Advisory Committee. Advantages and disadvantages of having a reconstructed fort on the site were debated and weighed. The management plan recommends *not* fully reconstructing the fort on site for the following reasons:

1. Reconstruction would likely compromise the below-ground resources preserved on site, violating a guiding principle.
2. Fort reconstruction would require increased operations expenses and logistics, which appear unlikely to be realized.
3. A reconstructed fort would be subject to vandalism and abuse without sufficient staff and security.
4. Visualization of the site can be achieved by less disruptive and less costly methods, while still conveying meaning and understanding for visitors.

The former location of the fort's southeast corner and block house has been severely eroded and is now below the upper terrace of the main fort in the "riverbank" area. An option is to fill this area to bring the soil elevation up to the level of the main fort terrace. While this would allow placement of the overlook tower in a more historically accurate location, the soil placement and compaction would be expensive (requiring placement of approximately 1,200 cubic yards of soil), would expose the site to heavy truck traffic, and initially would be more susceptible to erosion.

This Plan recommends a "no fill" approach. The location of the overlook tower can be on the upper terrace main fort elevation near the edge of the top of former river bank (see Site Enhancement Plan). Given the size of the fort (approximately 300 feet by 250 feet), the upper terrace location will still convey the rectangular shape of the fort's footprint, without the cost and potential maintenance issues of bringing in substantial amounts of fill soil.

Adding Visitor Amenities

As use of the Fort Pierre Chouteau site increases, visitor amenities such as seating, shade, trash collection, picnic tables, drinking water and bathrooms will be needed. The Site Enhancement Plan includes benches and picnic tables and a trash receptacle. Providing bathrooms (portable or permanent) and drinking water are expensive and the frequency of site use may not warrant that level of investment. It may be preferable initially to work with the nearby Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place and/or Dunes Golf Course to obtain access to bathrooms and water, especially for on-site events. The existing parking along Fort Chouteau Road is adequate for the anticipated level of informal visitation to the site. For events, arrangements should be made to utilize parking spaces at Wakpa Sica and/or the golf course.

INTERPRETATION

Due to the diverse sequence of historical events that have occurred at the fort site over time, interpretation should be layered in its narrative approach. Through this technique, attention can be paid to all aspects of the site's legacy, increasing the depth of interest for visitors and appreciation of the site's sweeping arc of stories. To accomplish this, six interpretive zones have been proposed for the site; each is identified and discussed in following pages. As the site is also home to abundant wildlife and acts as a kind of nature sanctuary amidst increasing suburban development, it is recommended that both cultural and natural resources be interpreted to the public.

The interpretive experience at Fort Pierre Chouteau should be minimalist, low impact, self-guided and easy to maintain. This is not the place for excessive signage, kiosks, or flashy amenities. Such installations would not only be costly, but could also detract from the quality of the landscape. The invisibility of the historic fort is, to some degree, an evocative asset that can be used to actively stir the visitor's imagination.

The following three principles adopted from *Interpretation for the 21st Century: Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture* (Beck and Cable, 2002) provide a soft framework for on-site interpretation at the Fort:

The interpretive presentation – as a work of art – should be designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens.

Interpretive writing should address what readers would like to know, with authority of wisdom and the humility and care that comes with it.

Interpretation should instill in people the ability, and the desire, to sense the beauty in their surroundings – to provide spiritual uplift and to encourage resource preservation.

The following actions are recommended as preliminary steps for improving the interpretive, and thereby the visitor, experience at Fort Pierre Chouteau:

1. Relocate the stone monument and plaque from the center of the field to the current point of entry. The stone is then perceived not as a final destination, but rather an early indicator of the site's national significance and recognition.

2. Relocate current on-site interpretive signage to an appropriate location on the nearby bike path. This has two advantages: a) bicyclists will be introduced to the nearby attraction and likely choose to pay a visit thereby increasing site visitorship, and b) the site will be cleared for a new interpretive approach, a fresh narrative, and enhanced circulation pattern. It is also advised that an additional sign be installed on the bike path providing orientation and directions for getting to the fort site.

Interpretive Zones

Six interpretive zones are proposed here to highlight particular aspects, or layers, of the site's history and natural features. Redesigned walking paths aid the visitor in moving through the entire site, thus increasing opportunities for visitors to connect more deeply with the area and making full use of the property. Each zone is thematic. Each is intended to illuminate a particular story. The interpretive zones are detailed below and can be referenced in the Site Enhancement Plan (see Figure 7):

- **Zone 1: Orientation – Point of entry**. The site's overarching messages are introduced. These include site welcome, site description, overview of what will be found on site and a message of stewardship. The orientation zone establishes visitor expectations as well as the interpretive style/tone.

- **Zone 2: Native American** – Pays homage to indigenous legacy in the area prior to European contact. The area emphasizes curves and organic shapes (in contrast to the angular and square design of the fort and military areas). The area includes an ethnobotanical garden and identifies traditional plants and how they were planted/harvested/used by Native people. Establishment and maintenance of the garden may be achieved through cooperation with local tribes and/or other experts in Native flora.

- **Zone 3: Fur Trading Fort** – The core of the site. An approximation of the fort's footprint is created by a mown pathway. This footprint provides the visitor with fascinating and tangible evidence of the historic structure that once stood there. Interpretive nodes (signage and

seating) are placed in each of the building's four corners, encouraging visitors to walk through the whole of the area. Construction of a simple observation tower, similar in scale and shape to the fort's southeast block house becomes a focal point and destination for all visitors who arrive to the site. Facing the river, it interprets and improves site orientation and allows a great view of the site and of the river. This should be a simple wood structure capturing the scale and place of the blockhouse. Use of contemporary materials such as treated wood is recommended. It is not intended to be a log recreation of the historic structure.

- **Zone 4: Military Fort** – Extending from Zone 3, Zone 4 follows the footprint of a portion of the historic military fort. This zone aids in visitor circulation, moving people through the west and northwestern portion of the site. It interprets the brief military history on site and the lives of those stationed there, and helps to illustrate the scale of the enlarged fort.

- **Zone 5: Ranching & Scotty Philip** – Pays tribute to ranching history in the area and the notable story of Scotty Philip who helped save the bison from extinction. A poignant tale when set in juxtaposition with fur-trading history at Fort Pierre Chouteau.

- **Zone 6: Wildlife & River** – Set along the former riverbed in the eastern portion of the site, this area invites the visitor to observe and learn about the natural environment and wildlife. Interpretation highlights natural river history, the river as a transportation corridor, and flora/fauna found in the area.

On-Site Interpretive Media

As mentioned previously, the interpretive experience at Fort Pierre Chouteau should be minimalist, low impact, self-guided and easy to maintain. It should allow for modification and the quick ability to refresh content. Three styles of basic interpretive media are therefore recommended for use on the site:

1. Interpretive panels (ADA accessible and low-angle)

2. Audio tours through personal cell phone devices and/or smart phone applications

3. Interpretive architecture: the observation tower, building corners and interpretive nodes

Each of these media types offers a form of interpretation that is informative and engaging, but also quiet and non-intrusive. For those visitors who want to simply walk through the site and enjoy its park-like qualities—signage can be ignored and cell phones can be shut off. Yet for those seeking a deeper understanding of place, they will find several opportunities to engage with the site's stories and learn more.

Interpretive panels should not be used to excess. One to two panels per interpretive zone is sufficient with the exception of Zone 3 where each building corner will act as an interpretive node. Basic guidelines for development of all signage are:

- All interpretative text is thematic, highlighting a primary interpretive theme and a clear take-away message

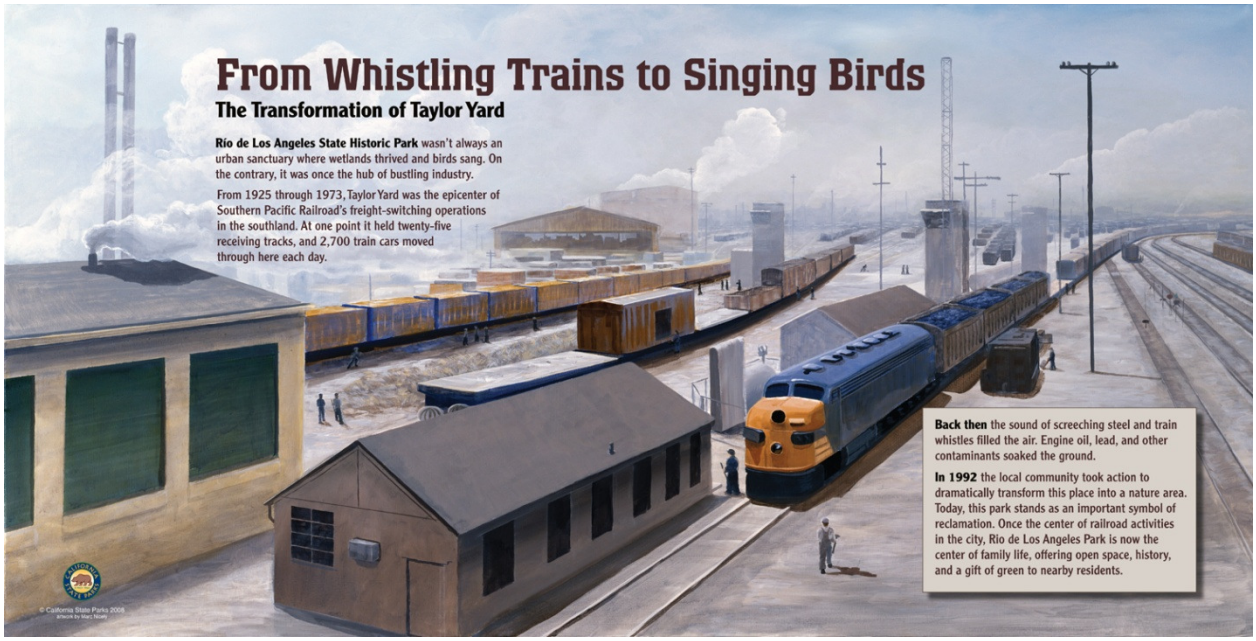
- All interpretive text avoids mere recitation of facts and dates, in favor of a more storytelling-based narrative approach
- Due to the small size of the site, cohesion in graphic design style (basic template) across all interpretive zones, is recommended to aid visitor understanding
- No panel contains more than 150 words
- Interpretive messages and images flow in a seamless and captivating way from one interpretive zone to the next
- Panels are set at a low height / angle
- Panel designs should be consistent with other interpretive signage in the Pierre/Fort Pierre area installed by the SDSHS.

See Figure 8 for examples of interpretive signs from other sites that meet these guidelines.

Audio tours using personal cell phones and/or iPhone are an effective way to incorporate dynamic storytelling methods into the visitor experience. Cell phone content can be easily refreshed. Scripts can be revised as new archaeological conclusions are drawn. Seasonal events or programming can be highlighted, e.g., particular plants in the Native garden can be interpreted when they are in full bloom. Numbers are placed in interpretive focal points (on stickers, stakes, etc) that direct the visitor to dial in and listen to a brief interpretive overview. Some recommended vendors for this service include: U.S. Media, Guide By Cell and Museum411.

Regarding iPhone and other smart phone applications, the new iPhone 3G[S] has the ability to offer site visitors stimulating new levels of information for historic sites – in particular those where visible remains are scant – through new applications. The phone's compass feature helps to orient visitors to the site and visitor-downloaded applications can actually feature virtual tours and site recreations in the palm of one's hand. What percentage of the local population owns iPhones/smart phones is an important consideration. Increased use of the devices is, however, on the rise. Firms GeoQuest Tech and Mediatrope are both excellent resources for keeping in the know of developing trends and how they may enhance interpretation at the Fort site.

Interpretive architecture emerges through story and design. The observation area in Zone 3 offers visitors an exciting feel for the historic fort and its layout; the walking path and fort building corners provide further direction and points of interest. Each corner interprets a different aspect of fort history such as: social life, cultural history, trade and trade goods, archaeology, etc. Visitors are also able to relax and sit in these areas.



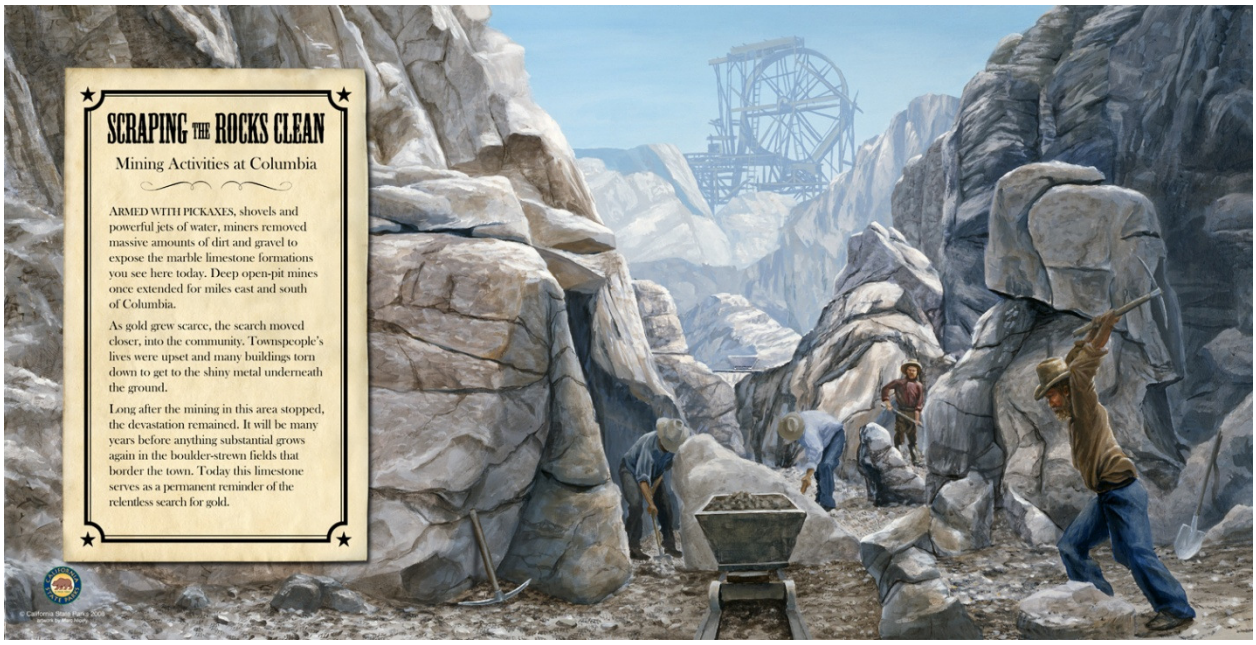


Figure 8. The above illustrations are examples of the integration of interpretive content with art and design

Construction of the observation tower should not strive to replicate the original structure. On the contrary, the new design should employ simple, durable materials and be minimalist, even somewhat modern, in style. The size and height of the structure can be historically accurate, impressing visitors with the true dimensions of the fort's southeast blockhouse and commanding views, yet the goal is not to convince or "fool" visitors into thinking they are standing in a vestige of the actual nineteenth century fort. Simulating authenticity is not the objective here; enhancing the visitor experience of the site is. In addition, as this plan does not recommend reconstruction of the actual fort on site, an accurate model installed as a permanent museum exhibit would stand as an educational substitute.

Should finances, future planning and partnerships permit, two other media types are proposed for consideration and implementation. The first is commission of a unique **art installation** (metal, stone, or wooden sculpture, for example, or something more ephemeral along the lines of environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy's work, as another) to creatively interpret river history. Placement of this artistic installation would be suited to the former riverbed portion of the site, Zone 6.

Should exhibit facilities become available through future partnership with Wakpa Sica, a short **documentary video** describing Native American history in the area and the legacy of Fort Pierre Chouteau is also recommended. This video could include a virtual reconstruction of the fort and be shown at Wakpa Sica and/or broadcast online, through DVD distribution to schools, tourists' information center, and via an embedded YouTube clip on the SDSHS's website. Both the art installation and documentary video should be considered phase two priorities.

On-Site Programming

Special events and programs can encourage new visitors to come to the site, as well as help cultivate a returning audience. Basic recommendations for types of programming include: tours and on-site discussions offered by specialists in Native culture, fort history and those knowledgeable in the area's natural resources; children's events such as an archaeology program in Zone 4 (Military); "dog days" – invite residents to bring their dogs (and their clean-up bags!) to the site for fun and socializing; music festivals and performances; trade or swap events that pay homage to the site's fur trading history; school field trips and living history.

A one-time event or an annual event can also be held on the site, perhaps in May for South Dakota Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month. "Fort Pierre Chouteau Day" would get people on the site and aware of its resources and the experiences it can offer. Rendezvous gatherings (costumed interpreters/living history of the fur trade period) are an example of a popular event that has been successful at other historic sites. A partnership with Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place and/or Dunes Golf Course for parking, access to bathrooms, etc. is needed for event use of the fort site.

Any programming or scheduled events would require special care to ensure that all archaeological resources are fully protected and not adversely impacted by the presence of crowds. Overnight camping should be avoided as it can produce unwanted and adverse impacts to cultural resources. Visitors should also be made aware that any personal objects lost or left behind such as coins, bottle caps, litter, and other sundry items can disturb the site's archaeological context. Visitors should be extra

vigilant about disposal of garbage, and regulations should be put in place to ensure that no debris is left behind after events, e.g., bring in a volunteer clean-up crew.

SITE DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

Three site development alternatives are provided. The alternatives vary based upon the extent of realization of the Site Enhancement Plan, the recommended site development alternative. Recognizing that funding, staff resources and decisions about the direction and role of the site in the State's historic resource and tourism plan may not make the implementation of the full plan feasible, management alternatives for the *status quo* and partially implemented plan are provided. The three options are designed to be effective as standalone alternatives, or to be used in a phased approach toward realization of the recommended Site Enhancement Plan. The alternatives are as follows.

Alternative 1: Basic Maintenance Program. This option includes actions for managing the site in its current condition with no additional visitor enhancements. This option also entails one-time action steps that improve the integrity of the setting and offer further protection of the site.

Alternative 2: Partial Enhancement Management Program. This option utilizes the existing gravel pathway for the primary site access but adds a mown trail around the Fur Trade Fort footprint and a mown loop trail around portions of the site. Existing interpretive signage may be placed in other locations along the newly created trail, as appropriate, to attract visitors to these locations. These improvements can be implemented with minimal investment.

Alternative 3: Site Enhancement Management Program. This recommended alternative entails the fully built-out Site Enhancement Plan and interpretive program as described in the previous sections.

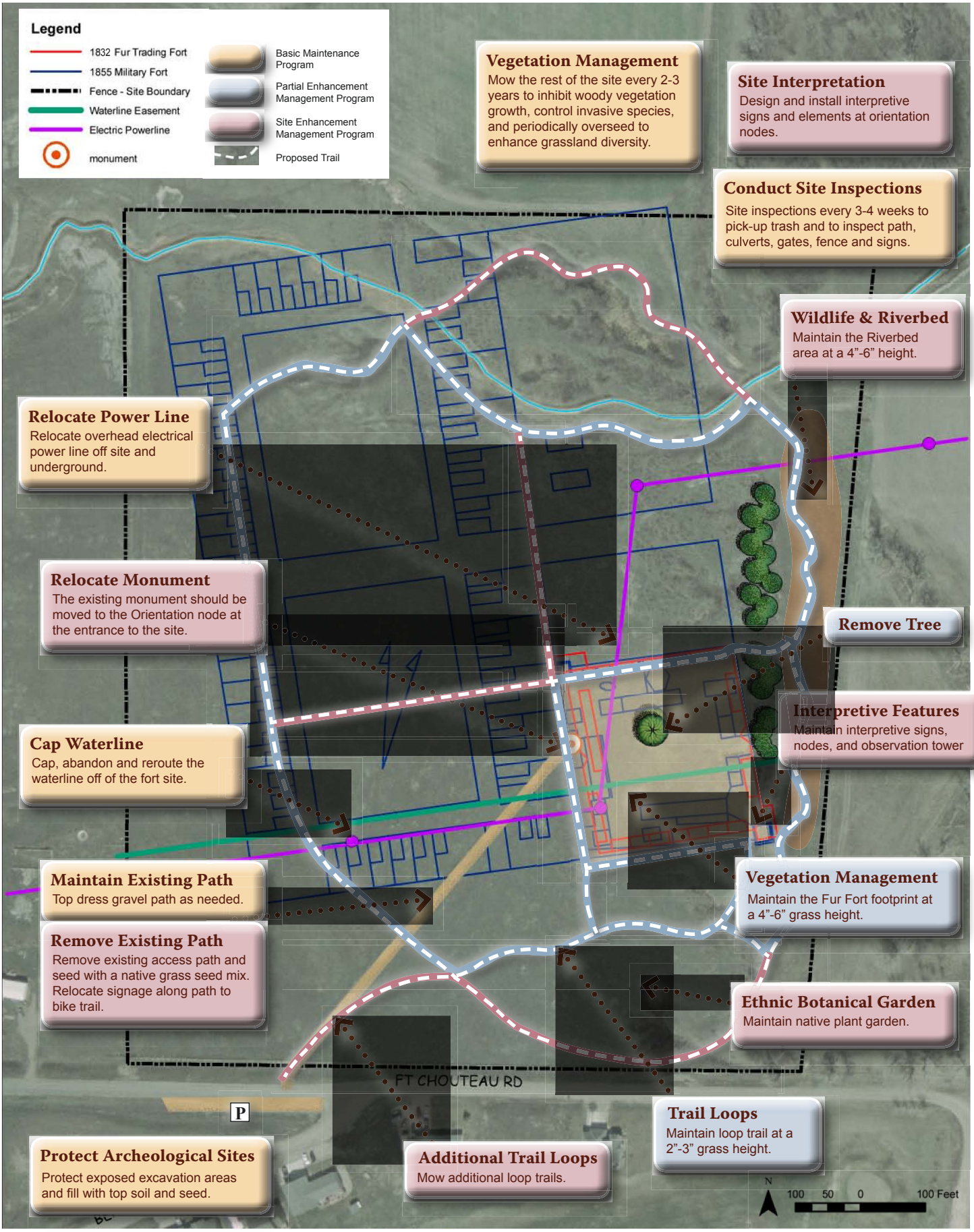
Operations

Operation of the site consists of management, maintenance, programming, and marketing actions. These operational recommendations are based on existing conditions, with specific techniques used for each alternative (Figure 9: Management Plan).

SITE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

Alternative 1: Basic Maintenance Program

Management recommendations under this alternative presume the current plan and configuration of the site. Management and site integrity improvements include onetime actions such as removing the overhead power line and poles (cutting them off flush with the ground), abandoning and capping the water line and filling/seeding exposed excavation areas. A two track dirt road in the northeast corner of the site crosses through two gates in the wire fence. The road and gates allow access from the adjoining property. The northeast gates should be removed once the adjoining property is sold. The two track road should be scarified and seeded. Obtain quote and specific seed recommendation from local landscape contractor or State agency maintenance staff. Use the existing southwest gate for maintenance vehicle access.



Fort Pierre Chouteau Historic Site
Management Plan
Figure 9: Management Plan

Regular site inspection/maintenance visits should occur every 3 to 4 weeks during the summer and less frequently in the winter. During these visits trash should be picked up, any weeds in the gravel paths should be removed and any holes filled, and the condition and integrity of the fence, gates, signs, monument and culverts should be inspected. Any issues discovered during the inspection should be addressed promptly (i.e. remove any blockages in the culverts, make any fence repairs, remove graffiti, etc.).

Top dress the gravel path as needed to retain adequate depth to inhibit weeds (approximately every two years). Overseed the site in the late Fall with a mix of warm and cool-season grasses and forbs to introduce a greater proportion of native plants and fewer weed species. Overseeding is recommended every 2 to 3 years until the native plants are well established.

Mowing of the site is recommended only as needed to reduce woody invasion (every 2 to 3 years to inhibit tree/shrub growth). Site mowing should occur after July 31, the end of primary bird nesting season. Baling should be eliminated or bales removed promptly to eliminate the visual intrusion, as the hay bales are out of character with the fort's period of significance. Occasional over seeding with native seed mixes appropriate for the soils and the site conditions will help enhance grassland diversity. The SDSHS should contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks staff regarding seed selection and the match between soil conditions and optimal plant selection.

Periodic control of invasive plant species such as Canada thistle, white sweet clover, yellow sweet clover, and crown vetch, which can crowd out native vegetation, is recommended. Control methods may vary, but selective cutting and spot application of herbicide can help control invasive plants.

Replace site features such as the signs and fence as conditions warrants. The fence (wood and wire) and gate (installed 2005) have an estimated life cycle of 15 to 20 years. Interpretive signage has an anticipated life cycle of 10 years.

Alternative 2: Partial Enhancement Management Program

In addition to the basic maintenance and site integrity actions under Alternative 1 the following additional management activities are recommended.

Remove the existing cottonwood tree located near the center of the fur trade fort. Cut the tree off at ground level, but do not to extract the roots so as not to further disturb the soil and potential archaeological deposits. Treat the stump with Round Up or a similar product to inhibit suckering and re-growth. Removal of the tree strengthens the physical depiction of the Fort boundary (see Figure 7: Site Enhancement Plan).

Mow the proposed loop path on a regular basis (every 3 to 6 weeks based on growth rate/rainfall) to an approximate 2- to 3-inch height. Mow the rectangular area within the fur trade fort area to an approximate 4- to 6-inch height on a less frequent basis (every 1 to 2 months). This mowing pattern will result in a visually distinct grass area within the fort boundary. If the loop trail gets used frequently, seeding for turf grass growth or use of other trail surfaces, such as wood chips, may be necessary.

Periodically inspect and trim trees where the loop trail passes through the existing tree line (east of the fur trade fort) to prevent hazard conditions. Remove limbs that fall on the trail. Replanting of trees is not recommended.

Alternative 3 - Site Enhancement Management Program

The recommended management strategy is based on implementation of the full Site Enhancement Plan which is designed to greatly enhance visitor experience and to realize the potential of the site's rich heritage. This alternative adds new interpretive signage, interpretive nodes, an observation tower, an interpretive garden and additional mowed loop trails. In addition to the site management actions under Alternative 2, the following additional management activities are recommended.

Create additional loop trails. Mowing of the trails is recommended on a regular basis (every 3 to 6 weeks based on growth rate/rainfall) to an approximate 2- to 3-inch height. Turf on frequently used trails may become worn exposing the soils to the surface. If this occurs, the use of other trail surface materials such as wood chips may be necessary.

Mow the riverbed area. In addition to mowing the trails and the fur trade fort footprint, the former riverbed area should be mowed to an approximate 4- to 6-inch height approximately every 1 to 2 months. The former riverbed should have a serpentine "riverbank" mow edge.

The addition of a treated wood observation tower, fur trade fort corner markers/interpretive nodes intermittent stream crossings will require regular inspection (every 2 to 3 weeks) and upkeep. Maintenance requirements increase based on use and as the structure's age. Typical activities include repair and upkeep of railings, stair treads and decking and removal of graffiti from signs. The life-cycle of treated wood structures is approximately 15 to 20 years.

Retain the existing tree line along the former river bank, but remove select trees near the southeast corner of the fort (site of the proposed overlook structure) as needed to open up a view of the river to the east. Retention of the tree line emphasizes the former river bank, offers diverse views, and creates an edge condition supportive of wildlife. Periodically inspect the trees and remove fallen, hanging or weak limbs that could interfere with the trail use. Replanting of trees is not recommended.

Establish a native plant garden/healing garden as an interpretive and program feature in Zone 2 by planting traditional vegetation. A garden requires a higher level of maintenance than other proposed site features. Seek partners such as a local garden club, Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place or the Lower Brule Sioux community to help design and maintain the garden. Use of a higher proportion of shrubs as compared to forbs reduces garden maintenance needs. Deer can pose a problem for the establishment of some plants. A fence may help reduce deer damage and selection of plants that are not as attractive for deer browse is recommended.

Vegetative and Cultural Landscape Management

The existing grassland is fairly well established, although there is evidence of some minor on-going erosion and bare spots. With management, the grassland is suitable and supportive as a cultural landscape for the fort site. There is a line of weeds (tumble weeds and thistle) along the edges of the

gravel entry path. The weed line is likely a result of recent reconstruction of the entry path. Current management is annual mowing and haying of the site.

The existing grassland is in an acceptable condition, but it can be improved from ecological and interpretive standpoints. The vegetative management goals are to increase plant diversity/habitat benefits, reduce erosion potential, use selective mowing for visitor access and interpretation and be cost effective.

The composition of the existing grassland is not native vegetation (native vegetation was likely a mixed-grass prairie). Due to cost and management requirements, conversion to prairie is not recommended at this time. Management of the grassland area should strive to introduce a greater proportion of native grasses and forbs (broad-leafed herbaceous plants) and fewer weed species. This can be done through periodic over-seeding with a mix of warm and cool-season grasses and forbs. Dormant seeding as needed in late Fall is recommended. Consultation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks staff regarding plant selection is recommended.

Other vegetative management strategies vary based on the level of site enhancements for visitors. See the three Management Alternatives for specific vegetative management actions.

Other Maintenance Aspects

Gophers are present on the site. The concerns are that they may hasten decomposition of wooden archaeological resources and that gopher holes on pathways can be a hazard to visitors. Long-term eradication of gophers is difficult and expensive. Unless the affect upon buried wood resources is a significant concern, only case-by-case control of gophers (i.e. holes along pathways) is recommended. The SDSHS could seek a partnership with the nearby Dunes Golf Course or with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks for assistance with occasional gopher control management.

Increased use of the site will increase the need for a trash receptacle and pick up. The presence of litter and trash on the site suggests a lack of thoughtful stewardship. As the site is improved, users should be encouraged to use and given the opportunity to property dispose of bottle, wrappers, etc. A hooded (restricted opening) trash receptacle should be placed on the site in the orientation node. Frequency of trash collection can be adjusted based on site use. Similarly, the official or unofficial use of the site for dog walking will likely result in unappealing litter problems without the encouragement of waste disposal. Installation of a pet station dispensing waste disposal bags and appropriate regulatory signage would be prudent.

The need for site mowing will increase as the site enhancements are put in place. The SDSHS should seek a partnership with South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks for assistance with mowing, site management, promotion, and programming. The nearby Oahe Downstream Recreation Area State Park seems like a logical partner for assistance with site operations. The existing trail connection and the proximity to the State Park makes the Fort Pierre Chouteau site an attractive programming option for State Park visitors. The Dunes Golf Course or private landscape maintenance contractors are also options mowing and site maintenance.

The Society should also explore the potential of the adjacent Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place as a potential partner for site operations and programming. The Reconciliation building has staff, potential exhibit space, parking and bathrooms that could fit with future use and operation of the Fort Pierre Chouteau site.

MARKETING

Currently, the Fort Pierre Chouteau site is not actively marketed or promoted as there is little for visitors to see or do on the site. As the site enhancement plan is implemented, marketing and promotion should increase. Site marketing can occur largely through existing media and methods such as webs sites, brochures, signage, press releases, etc. In addition, marketing and promotion should occur through partnerships and events. There are many potential strong partnerships for site promotion such as, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (guided walking tours by State Park staff), the Cultural Heritage Center (potential addition of indoor exhibit of the recreated fort and map/directions to see the real site nearby), Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place, South Dakota State Tourism, local tourism organizations, and area school districts. There are also potential marketing links between the Fort Pierre Chouteau site and a larger fort circuit (including Fort Union and Fort Clark), Lewis and Clark exploration, the Native American – European contact period, the history of bison, etc.

A "Friends of the Fort" group could also be established to help with site improvement, funding, promotion, and event management.

Making Connections – Regional Tourism

During stakeholder discussions, the desire to improve interpretive offerings of Fort Pierre Chouteau within a broader context of regional forts and tourism was expressed. Heritage tourism efforts such as this can be very successful in piquing public interest and drawing national attention to the area. The visitor experience of the site is transformed from an isolated understanding of place to a wider and more holistic historic perspective.

Making regional connections is not limited to the intrepid few that choose to travel from fort to fort. Online resources (the U.S. National Park Service's Travel Itinerary that already features Fort Pierre Chouteau is a good start) such as maps, videos, photos, story and sounds can also be used to enhance regional understanding. A new SDSHS museum exhibit that focuses exclusively on the story of Fort Pierre Chouteau and other regional forts would also increase awareness.

Forging partnerships with tour companies, RV rental centers, gas stations and rest areas (through the South Dakota DOT) can also aid in marketing the site to mobile audiences and cultural tourists. Distribution of "books on tape" style CDs or brochures can introduce travelers to compelling journey routes, providing them with background information and directions to each historic site. A regional and comprehensive interpretive plan could better address and identify opportunities for heritage tourism throughout the area.

Implementation and Priorities

Management recommendations in this plan are intended to be reasonable, actionable and feasible. A concrete implementation plan will serve to launch the management plan from a theoretical document to concrete steps for site improvement, interpretation and preservation. The Implementation Plan suggests which actions need to be taken with the selected alternative. Resources – from partners to financing – are addressed here to help make the plan a reality.

PARTNERSHIPS

Goal implementation cannot and should not be undertaken without the collaborative partnerships of key organizations. Not only do strategic alliances help to make the goals feasible, but they also serve to create collaboration and buy-in from broader communities. These collaborations can produce synergistic results, with each contributor gaining valued enhancements. The Advisory Committee suggested a number of key partners who should be approached which may have strategic interests in working with the SDSHS to accomplish its goals. Potential partners and their strategic and mutual values are listed below.

Game, Fish and Parks

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GF&P) was frequently mentioned as a key partner toward the implementation of a variety of goals – from programming to infrastructure. Several facilities are in the close proximity to the Fort Pierre Chouteau site, including Farm Island Recreation Area, LaFramboise Island Nature Area, and Oahe Downstream Recreation Area. These three sites in and around Pierre and Fort Pierre and also linked by the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial National Recreation Trail, a trail system that comes within 0.25 mile of the fort. Partnering opportunities include:

- Develop promotional materials to be distributed at these and other state parks to encourage people to visit Fort Pierre Chouteau.
- Develop programming offered to visitors connected to the Fort and its cultural associations.
- Request assistance from the GF&P for facility improvements and maintenance (e.g. mowing).
- Collaborate with the GF&P to create a nature component to the interpretive program.
- Explore potential land acquisition by the GF&P to preserve and protect adjacent open spaces within the view shed.

Discussions with the GF&P can be facilitated through the Governor's office.

National Park Service

Fort Pierre Chouteau's status as a National Historic Landmark makes the National Park Service (NPS) an active stakeholder in the preservation, development and oversight of the property. Funding of potential projects from federal sources would trigger the review system under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, so continued communication and consultation of potential projects are essential to assure the support of the NPS. Potential partnering opportunities include:

- Consultation with the NPS on proposed development or other activities to seek advice on impacts to historic resources and landmark designation.

- Application to competitive grant funding from the NPS through such programs as Save America's Treasures and the Challenge Cost-Share grant program to support worthy preservation and interpretation projects.
- Promotion of Fort Pierre Chouteau through NPS web site and programs, such as "Teaching with Historic Properties" (http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/) and "Travel Itineraries" (http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/).

South Dakota Tribes

The pre- and post-contact Native American story of the Fort Pierre Chouteau site is integral to the site's history, preservation and interpretation. Stories of the interaction of native communities with fur traders and the long legacy cannot be told without the native voice. Specific recommendations, such as the medicinal garden, should be implemented through strong tribal partnerships. Development of partner relationships with South Dakota tribes, including Cheyenne River Sioux, Crow Creek Sioux, Flandreau-Santee Sioux, Lower Brule Sioux, Oglala Sioux, Rosebud Sioux, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Standing Rock Sioux, Yankton Sioux, Three Affiliated Tribes (Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation) of North Dakota should be established to assess their interest in collaborating in any of the following ways:

- Advisory input on interpretive planning.
- Implementation of native medicinal garden.
- Collaboration, co-sponsoring and cross-promotion of events and programming.
- Potential funding for project implementation.

Companion Sites

Collaborative promotional programs with other historic forts and heritage sites will help each site to build on the other to form a critical mass of sites that visitors will find attractive, as a collective. A similar program of "Military Forts in the Dakotas" was done as a joint venture between South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, the North Dakota Parks and Recreation department, and the State Historical Society of North Dakota (see: http://www.sdgfp.info/Parks/Learning/DakotaForts.htm). Enhanced linkages with other SDSHS sites with cross-promotional materials will serve all of the heritage sites well.

- Begin marketing and programming with other SDSHS historic sites such as the Verendrye site, the Oahe Chapel, and the Cultural Heritage Center.
- Form a consortium of heritage sites within the Pierre/Fort Pierre area, such as the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center, to promote the tourist opportunities as a whole.
- Join existing coalitions, such as the "Military Forts in the Dakotas" to be included in these marketing opportunities.
- Link with Lewis and Clark heritage sites.
- Consider including other cultural and natural attractions, such as the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs, South Dakota and the Mitchell Indian Village in travel itineraries for heritage tourists.

State and Federal Agencies

A number of state and federal agencies (in addition to those already mentioned above) may be able to offer key partnering opportunities, whether through mutual programming needs or funding sources. Some agency partnerships to explore include:

- Federal Highway Administration, which operates Transportation Enhancements activities that fund projects related to surface transportation, including historic preservation, landscaping and beautification.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has strong interest in preserving the Missouri River waterway.
- Through the South Dakota Department of Corrections' Inmate Work Program, low-cost skilled and unskilled labor can be used for state institutions. Partnering with the community service program may facilitate the implementation of the development, infrastructure, and maintenance programs necessary at Fort Pierre Chouteau.

County and City

Local governments have strong interests in seeing the successful transformation of the fort into both a local amenity and a visitor attraction. Local use will enhance the quality of life and increase the awareness of the community's heritage. Making the fort attractive to outside visitors will make a positive contribution to the economy. Local officials have already shown interest and cooperation in site management.

- Develop and grow relationships with city and county officials.
- Identify mutually agreeable and accountable collaborations and management arrangements.

Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place

Located within sight and walking distance of Fort Pierre Chouteau, the Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place appears to be an excellent candidate for future partnering and collaboration from both a thematic and logistical perspective (Figure 10). With underutilized space within a modern building, Wakpa Sica may be able to offer a more substantial facility for an interpretive experience that is close to the site without concerns about disturbing important archaeological resources. The center's themes of reconciliation, economic development, race relations, and social justice are compatible with the history of Fort Pierre Chouteau and may be interpreted through the historic lens.

Figure 10. Wakpa Sica Reconciliation Place is nearby and a logical partner

- Begin a dialogue to introduce the possibilities of a collaborative relationship that would have mutual benefits.

- Invite the center to participate in programming and planning for Fort Pierre Chouteau.
- Be prepared for long-term dialogue and relationships.

Neighbors

The unstaffed and unmonitored historic site has been subject to vandalism and looting in the past. Reaching out to neighboring property owners may result in strong relationships that will in turn protect the site and offer opportunities to enhance programs. Neighbor partnerships include:

- Residential neighbors to the south have some of the strongest physical and visual connections to the historic site. Establishing relationships with these residents may result in strong, mutually beneficial results if suspicious behavior and unwanted intruders can be reported and reduced. Developing these relations will enhance SDSHS' reputation as a good neighbor.
- The Dunes Golf Complex may result in another strategic alliance. Strong neighborly relationships with this organization may offer solutions to routine mowing needs, overflow parking for large programs and events, restroom facilities, and gopher hole management.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following section organizes all Management Plan recommendations into an effective to-do list, identifying the strategies recommended in the plan, contingencies that need to be met to implement the strategies, and a phased implementation timeline.

ID	Strategy	Contingent On	Alternative		
			1	2	3
1.0	**Site Preservation and Protection**				
1.1	Cover exposed geo-textile fabric using top soil, seed and mulch	Partner/contractor for implementation; Funding	X	X	X
1.2	Remove power lines from site and place underground in an off-site location	Coordination with power company and affected private owners	X	X	X
1.3	Remove intrusive weeds and seed with a mix of native grasses and forbs	Partner/contractor for implementation; Funding; coordination with site enhancement plan Strategy 2.1	X	X	X
1.4	Abandon and cap existing water line across site	Coordination with private land owner	X	X	X
1.5	Obtain final report and complete artifact inventories for 1997-2001 archaeological investigations.	SD State Archaeologists Office	X	X	X
1.6	Investigate potential land and viewshed preservation strategies	Identification of land preservation programs and partners	X	X	X
1.7	Implement viewshed preservation program	Planning recommendations; Funding; Partners		X	X
2.0	**Visitor Experience: Site Enhancement**				
2.1	Establish and mow loop turf trails. Remove gravel trail and restore/reseed.	Partner/contractor for implementation; Funding		X	X
2.2	Begin regular mowing of the Fur Trade Fort boundary	Partner/contractor for implementation; Funding	X	X	X
2.3	Prepare detailed design and construction plans for Fort visualization	Funding			X
2.4	Construct Fur Trade Fort corner markers	Funding; Strategy 2.3			X
	Construct corner observation tower	Funding; Strategy 2.3			X
2.5	Add visitor amenities, such as picnic tables and benches	Funding; Partner			X

ID	Strategy	Contingent On	Alternative		
			1	2	3
3.0	**Interpretation**				
3.1	Relocate stone/plaque	Partner/contractor for implementation; Buy-in from leadership			X
3.2	Develop new interpretive content for the site: themes and signage text/images for all new Interpretive Zone panels and audio tour scripts. Content development and panel design should occur at the same time, i.e., the writer and the graphic designer collaborate from start to finish for best results.	Funding			X
3.3	Relocate current interpretive signage to bike path and new mown trail alignments	Partner/contractor for implementation; Strategy 3.2		X	X
3.4	Fabricate and install new interpretive signage on site	Funding; Strategy 3.2			X
3.5	Install number points on site for cell phone call-in; activate service with chosen vendor.	Funding; Strategy 3.2			X
3.6	Commission and install a unique art installation to creatively interpret river history	Funding			X
3.7	Create a short documentary video describing the history of Fort Pierre Chouteau; upload documentary video to SDSHS website, produce as DVD for distribution, feature in Wakpa Sica if screening space is available	Funding; Partnership with Wakpa Sica			X
3.8	Develop annual programming schedule; gather names and create a mailing list of potential and desired attendees	Coordination and staff time	X	X	X
3.9	Plan for and fabricate a new exhibit at the SDSHS Museum that features exclusively on Fort Pierre Chouteau (using a reconstructed model of the fort) and regional fort connections	Funding; Coordination with SDSHS Museum			X
3.10	Prepare a regional and comprehensive interpretive plan to address and identify opportunities for improving heritage tourism throughout the area	Willing partners; Funding			X

ID	Strategy	Contingent On	Alternative		
			1	2	3
4.0	**Operations**				
4.1	Regularly mow and maintain site based on management plan recommendations	Partners/contractor; Funding	X	X	X
4.2	Remove existing cottonwood tree near center of the Fur Trade Fort	Partners/contractor; Funding		X	X
4.3	Selectively remove trees near southeast corner of Fort to open view to river	Partners/contractor; Funding			X
4.4	Establish native plant garden/healing garden in Zone 2	Partnership with local tribe; Funding			X
4.5	Control invasive plant species through selective cutting and spot application of herbicides	Partners/contractor; Funding	X	X	X
4.6	Develop detailed marketing plan	Funding			X

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

As the site is improved, Fort Pierre Chouteau will attract more visitors, which will increase management needs. The improvement plan is designed to minimize, but not eliminate management burdens and expenses. Large volumes of visitors are not anticipated on a regular basis, so the expenses and investment of management will be modest. Increased use of this important National Historic Landmark and awareness of the rich history and attractive site features is a positive thing for visitors and for the local and state economy. The State and SDSHS should recognize through budgeting and allocation of resources (staff and money) that with increased use comes a greater responsibility for management of this nationally significant site. The commitment to actively manage and maintain the site should go hand-in-hand with the allocation of funds to make the site improvements.

APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Management Plan Advisory Committee

Expertise, insights and perspectives of the Fort Pierre Chouteau Management Plan Advisory Committee were invaluable to the development of this document and for guiding the future of the historic site. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

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APPENDIX B: PROJECT PERSONNEL

Project Personnel

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Amanda Adams	Interpretive Planner
Greg Ingraham	Landscape Planner
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