

natural bridge state park

Design Ideas and Options

10/10/23

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor
Maura Healey

Lieutenant Governor
Kim Driscoll

Energy and Environmental Secretary
Rebecca Tepper

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner
Brian Arrigo

meeting logistics

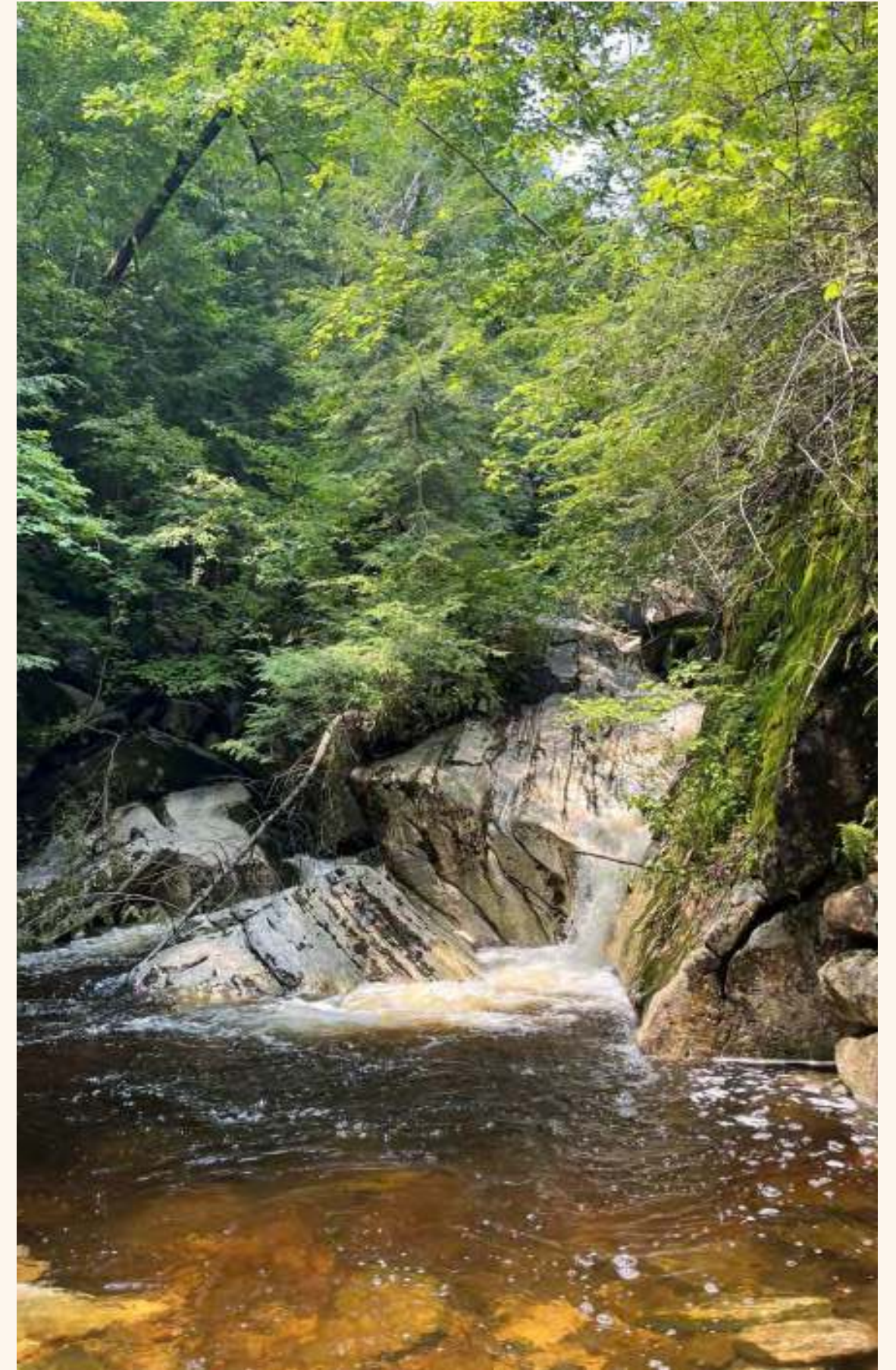
Two ways to ask questions during the meeting

- Use chat feature
- Raise hand using the Zoom function, and you will be given permissions to unmute and speak.
- Slide numbers are located at the bottom right of each slide for reference.

Please note that this public meeting will be recorded; the recording will be a public record.

DCR mission:

To *protect, promote* and *enhance* our
commonwealth of natural, cultural
and recreational resources for the
well-being of **all**.



agenda

Welcome and Introduction

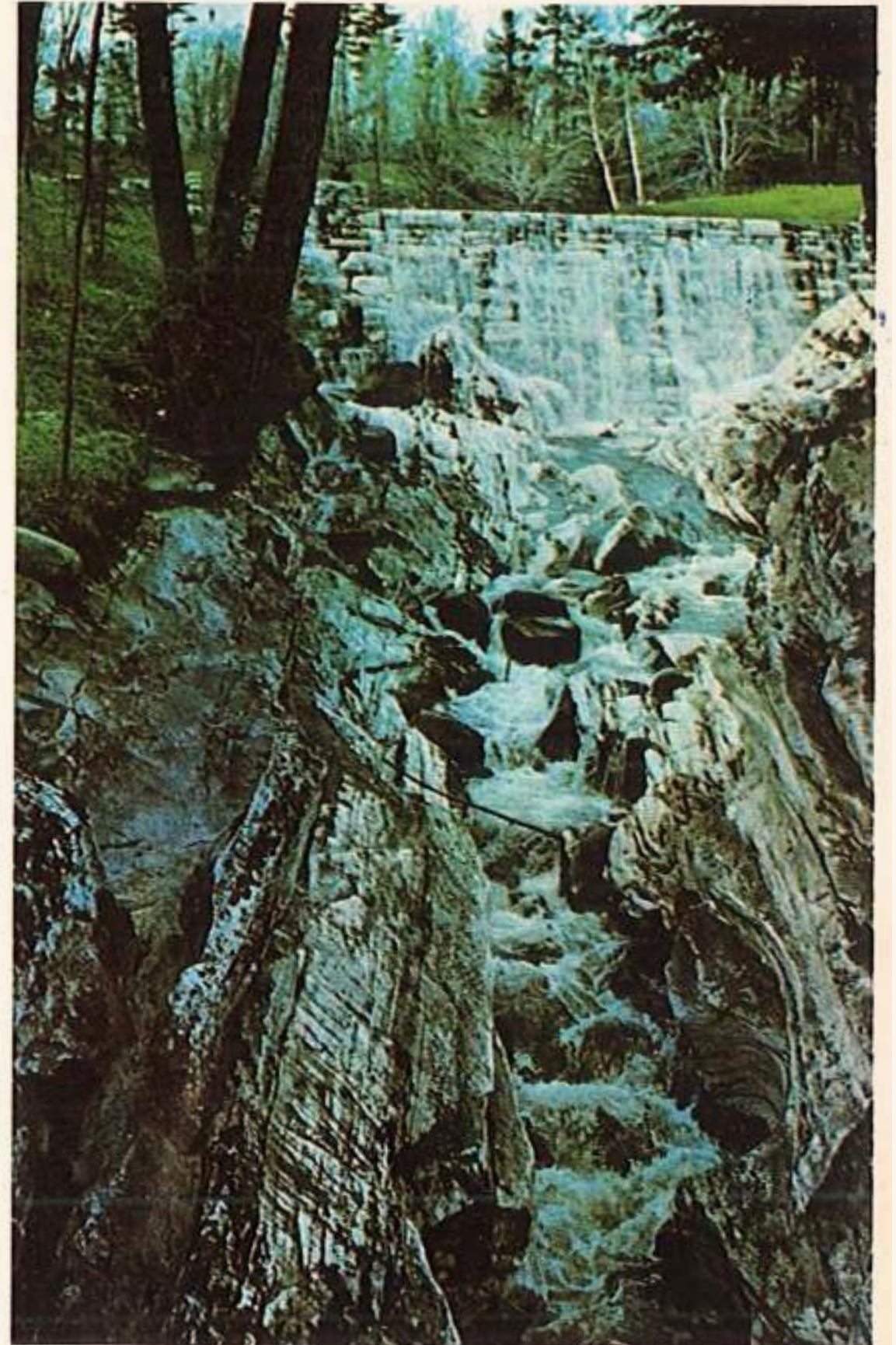
Brief Project Introduction

Engagement Opportunities / Updates

Design Investigations / Options

Questions and Feedback

Next Steps

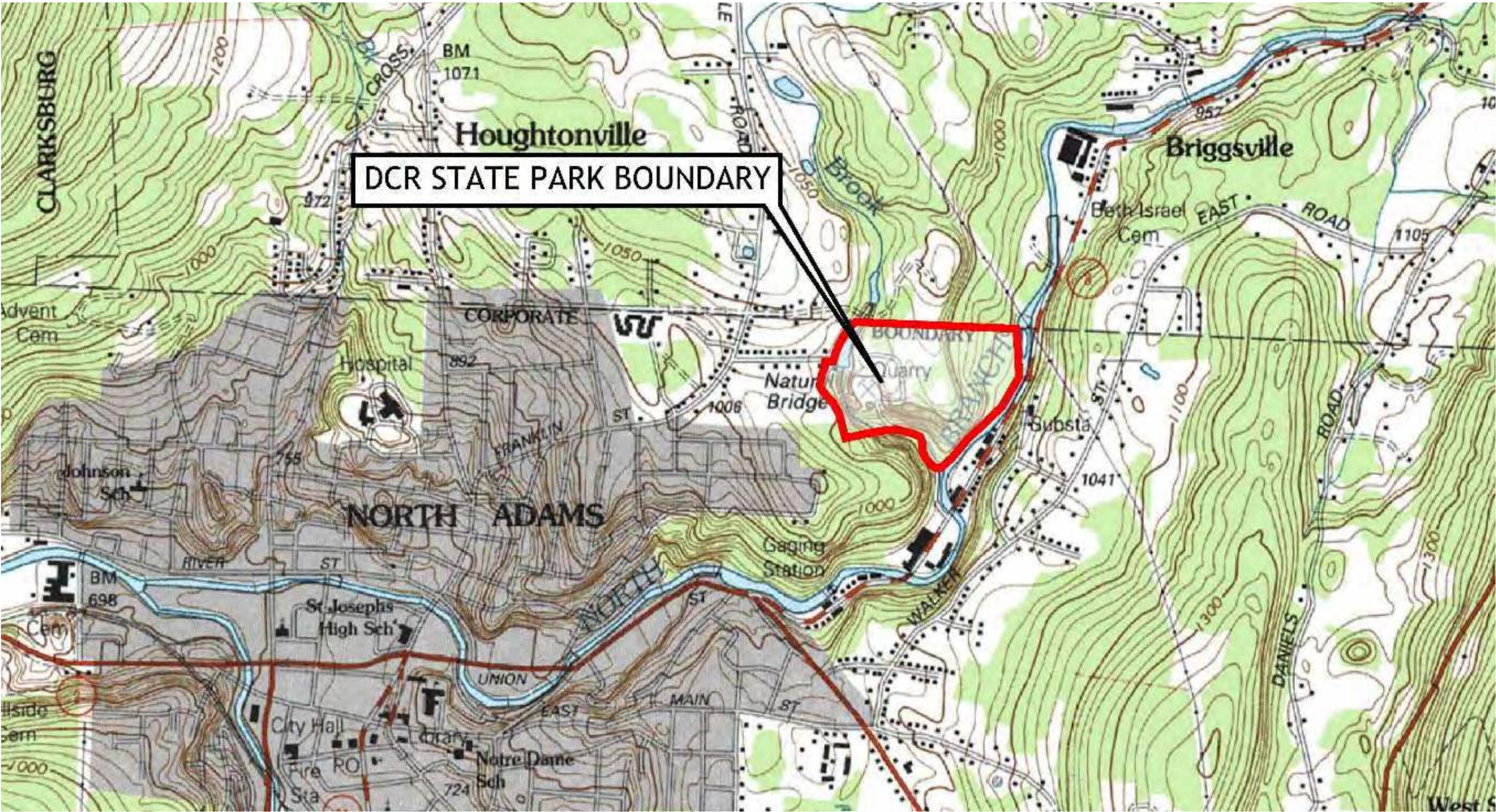


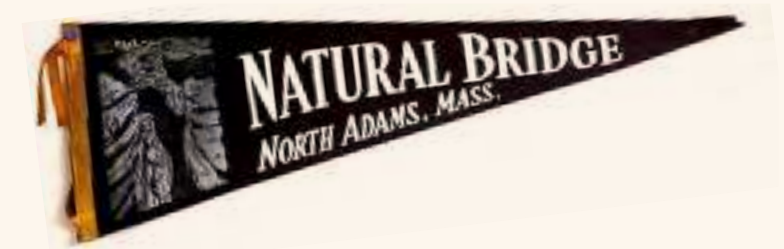
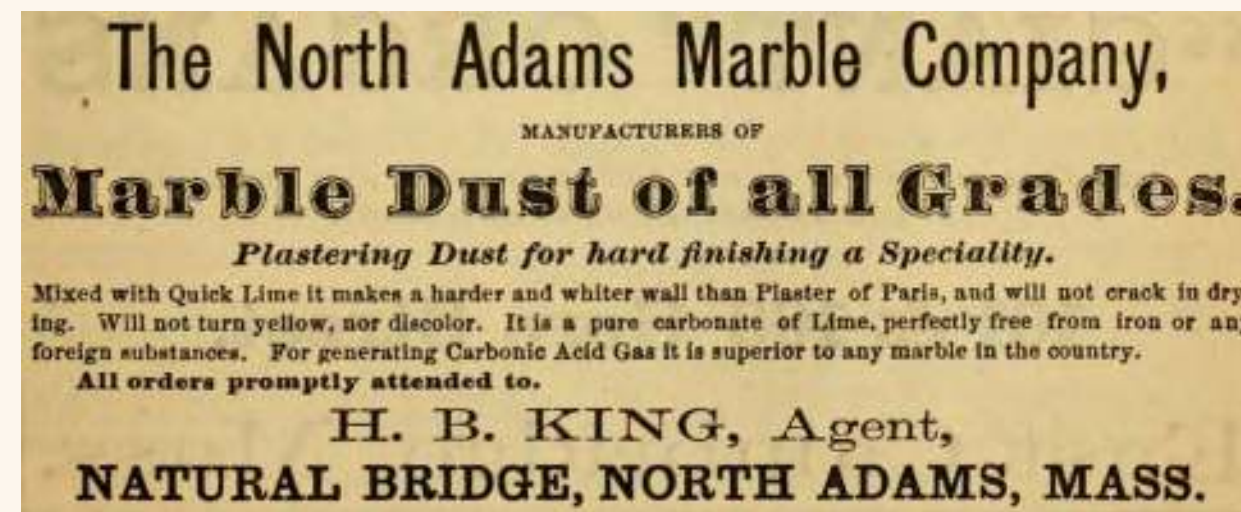
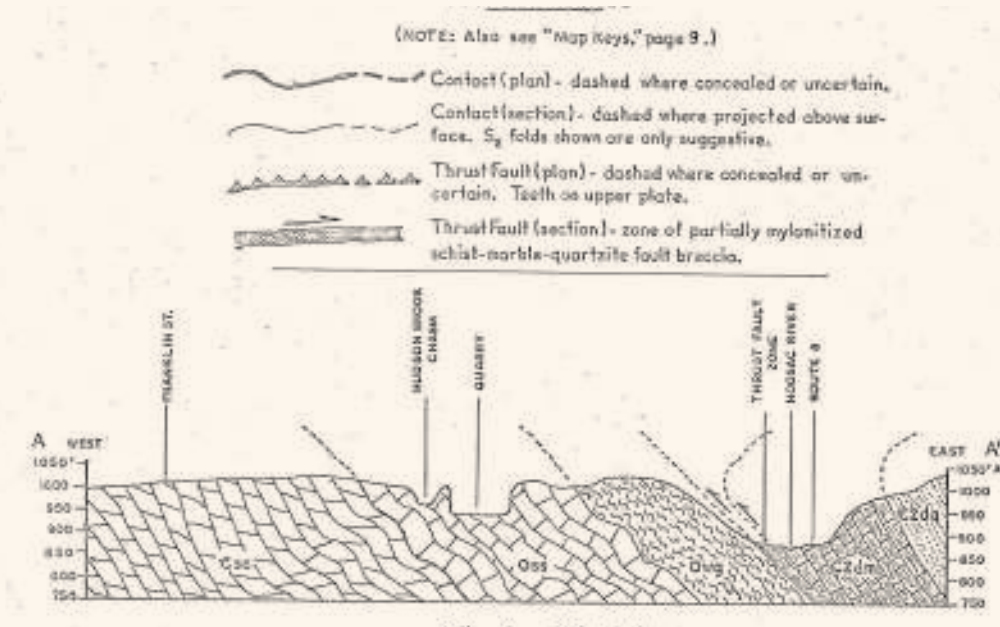
Natural Bridge - Route 8 (North) - North Adams, Mass.

land acknowledgment

It is with *gratitude* and *humility* that we acknowledge that we are learning, speaking, and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the **Mohican Nation**, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the **Stockbridge-Munsee Community**. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

site context/ project area

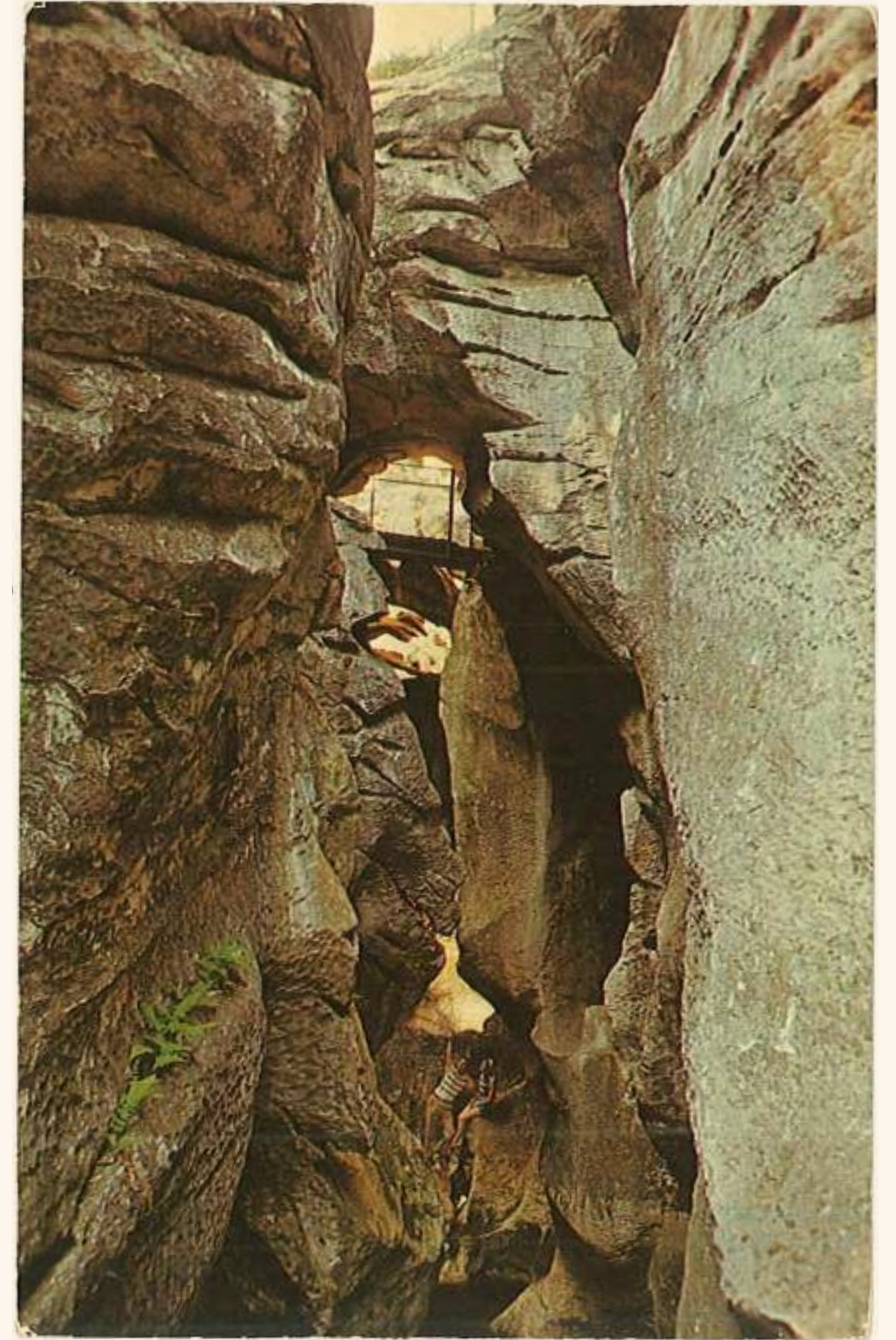




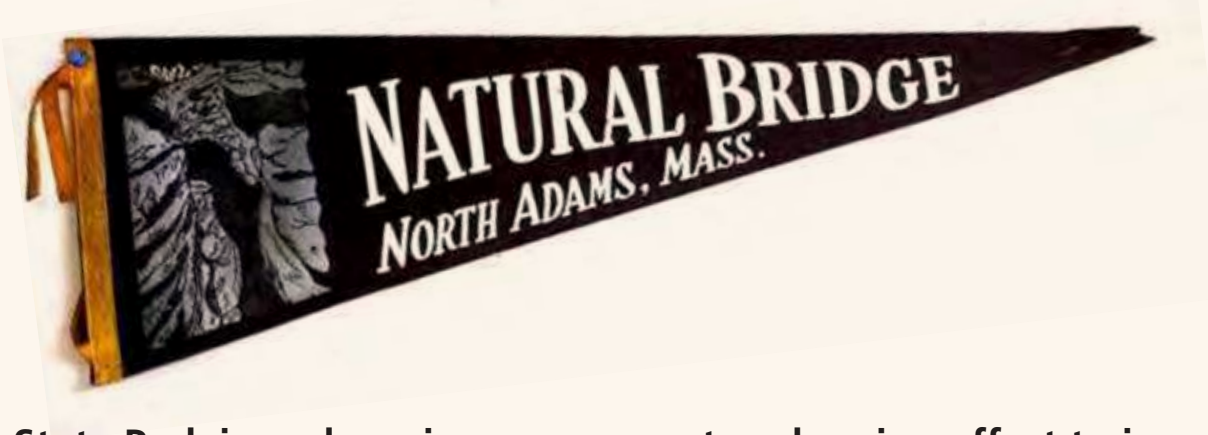
Few state parks have as rich a history as the Natural Bridge State Park. The story of the natural bridge began 550 million years ago. It was 13,000 years ago when the retreating glaciers of the last ice age carved the chasm. It was a thriving industrial site – a marble quarry that operated from 1810 to 1947. From 1950 to 1983 it was privately owned by Edward and Agnes Elder and became a popular tourist attraction off the Mohawk Trail. With the passing of Edward Elder in 1984, the site became a 44-acre state park in 1985 to preserve its unique geological features. Today the park is used to provide public access and enjoyment of this natural wonder. It's open seasonally from May to October, from 9am to 4:30pm.

project design goals

- Provide safe and increased access to the amazing views and natural features
- Strengthen the interpretation of both the natural and human histories of the site
- Connect the elements of the park in a singular circulation route



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Natural Bridge State Park is undergoing a new master planning effort to improve access and enhance visitor experience.

As part of this process, the Design Team wants to hear from Park Visitors, like you.

Please select the appropriate QR Code below to access a brief survey (takes one minute):

North Adams Resident

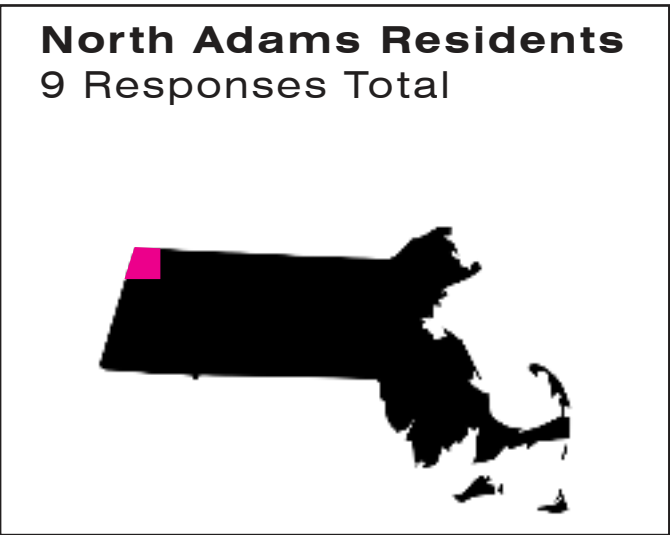
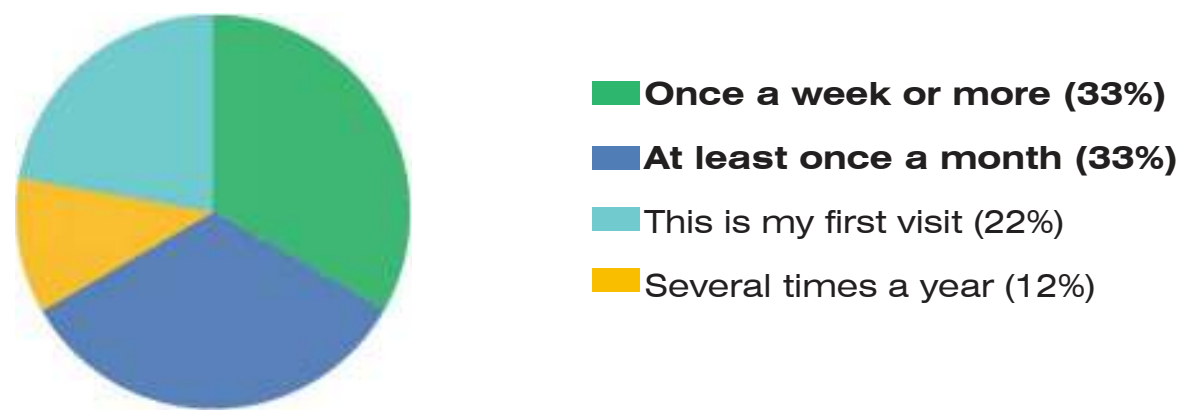
Regional Visitor
(under a 1-hour drive)

Long-Distance Visitor
(over a 1-hour drive)

Thank you for sharing your thoughts to support the legacy of Natural Bridge State Park!

intercept survey analysis

1) How often do you visit Natural Bridge State Park?

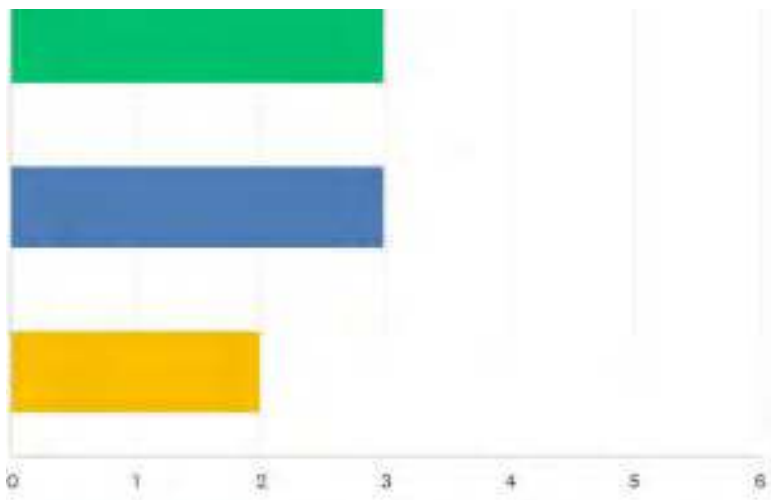


2) How would you describe Natural Bridge State Park?

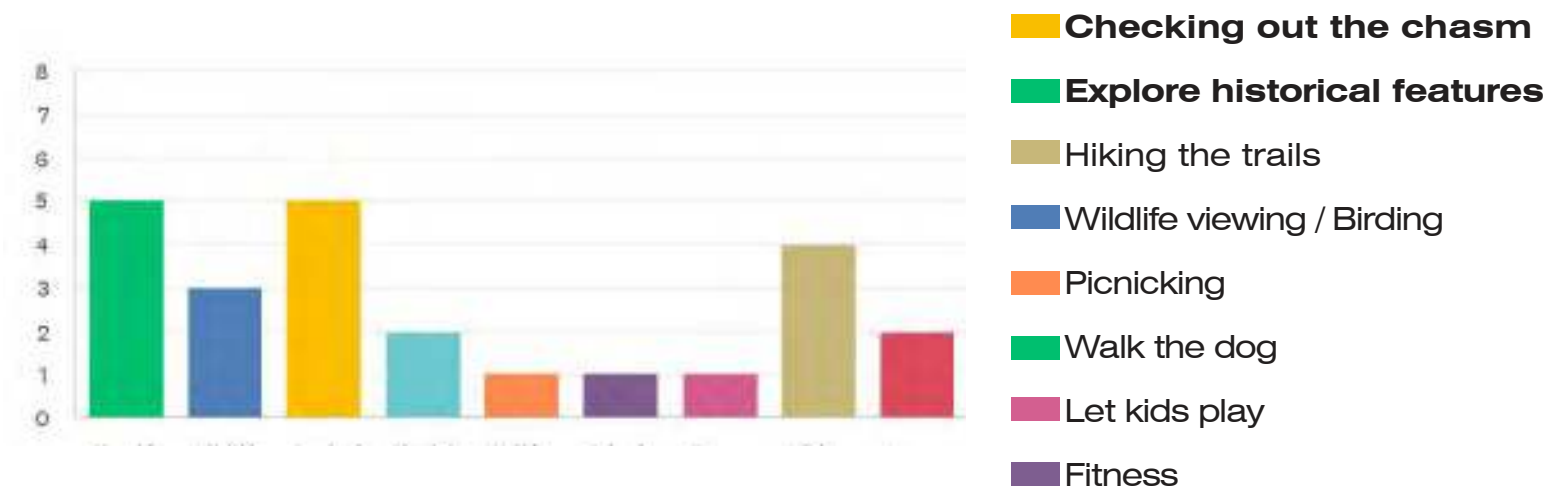
It's my neighborhood park

It's a great place to connect with nature

It's a great place to learn about local history



3) What activities do you participate in when visiting the park?



4) Other features you'd like to see included at Natural Bridge State Park:



intercept survey analysis

1) How often do you visit Natural Bridge State Park?



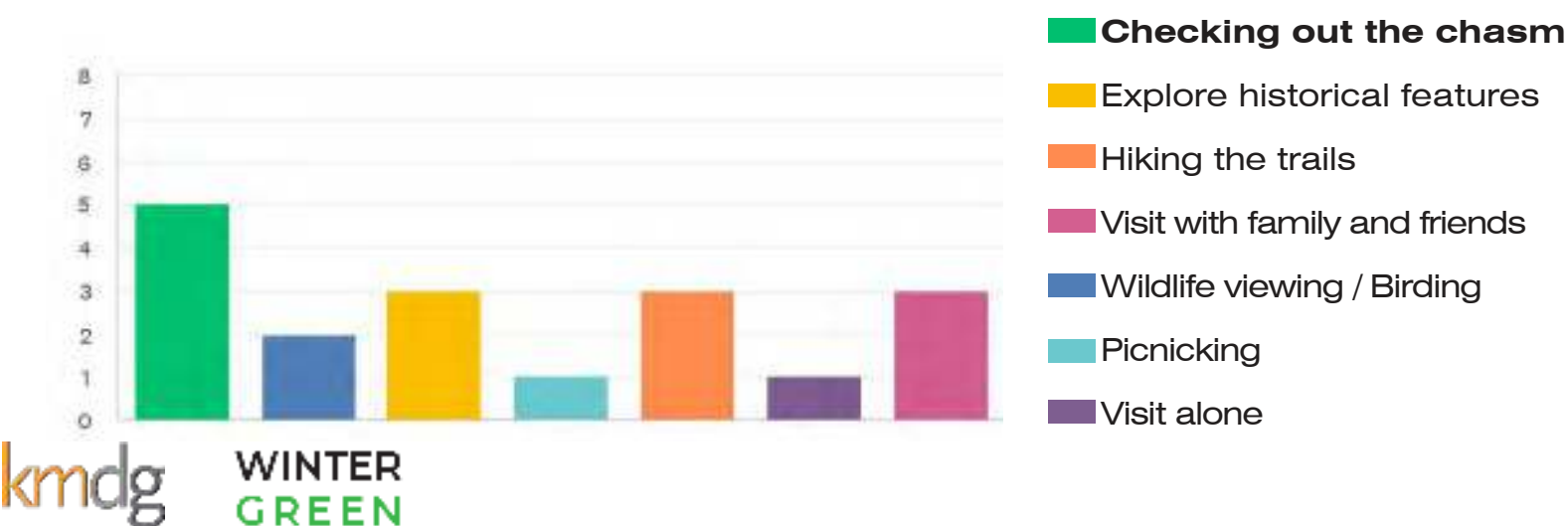
2) What inspired you to make this trip today?



4) Other features you'd like to see included at Natural Bridge State Park:

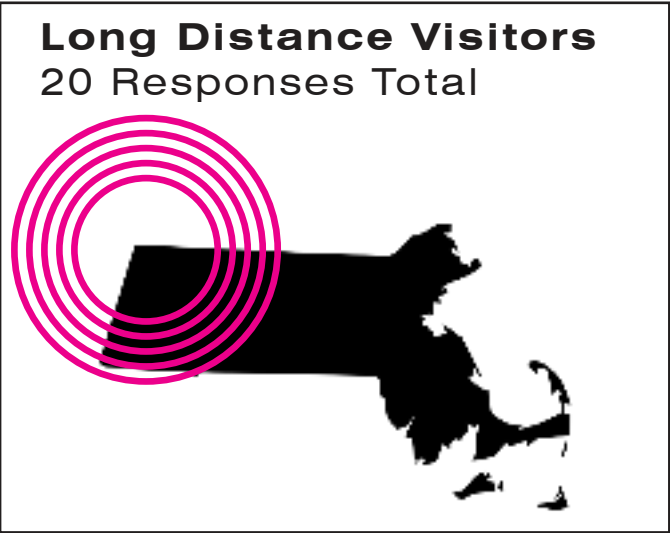


3) What activities do you participate in when visiting the park?



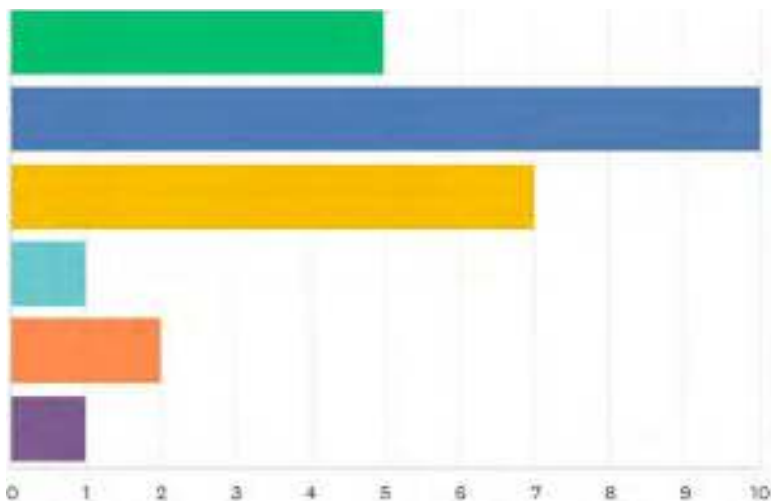
intercept survey analysis

1) Have you visited Natural Bridge State Park before?

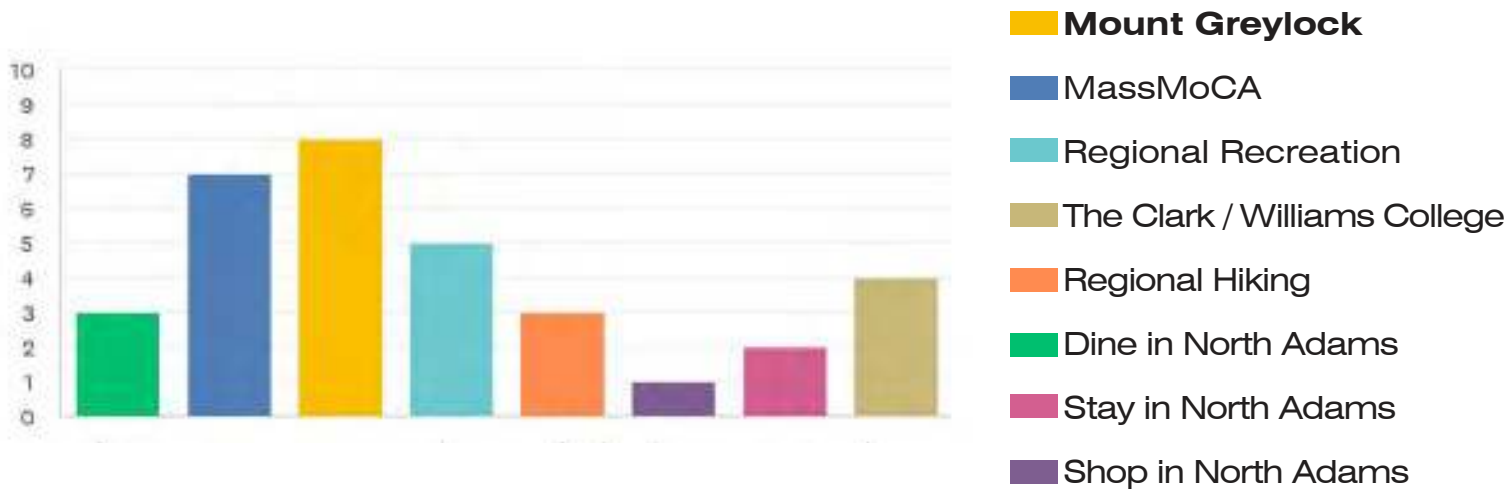


2) What inspired you to make this trip today?

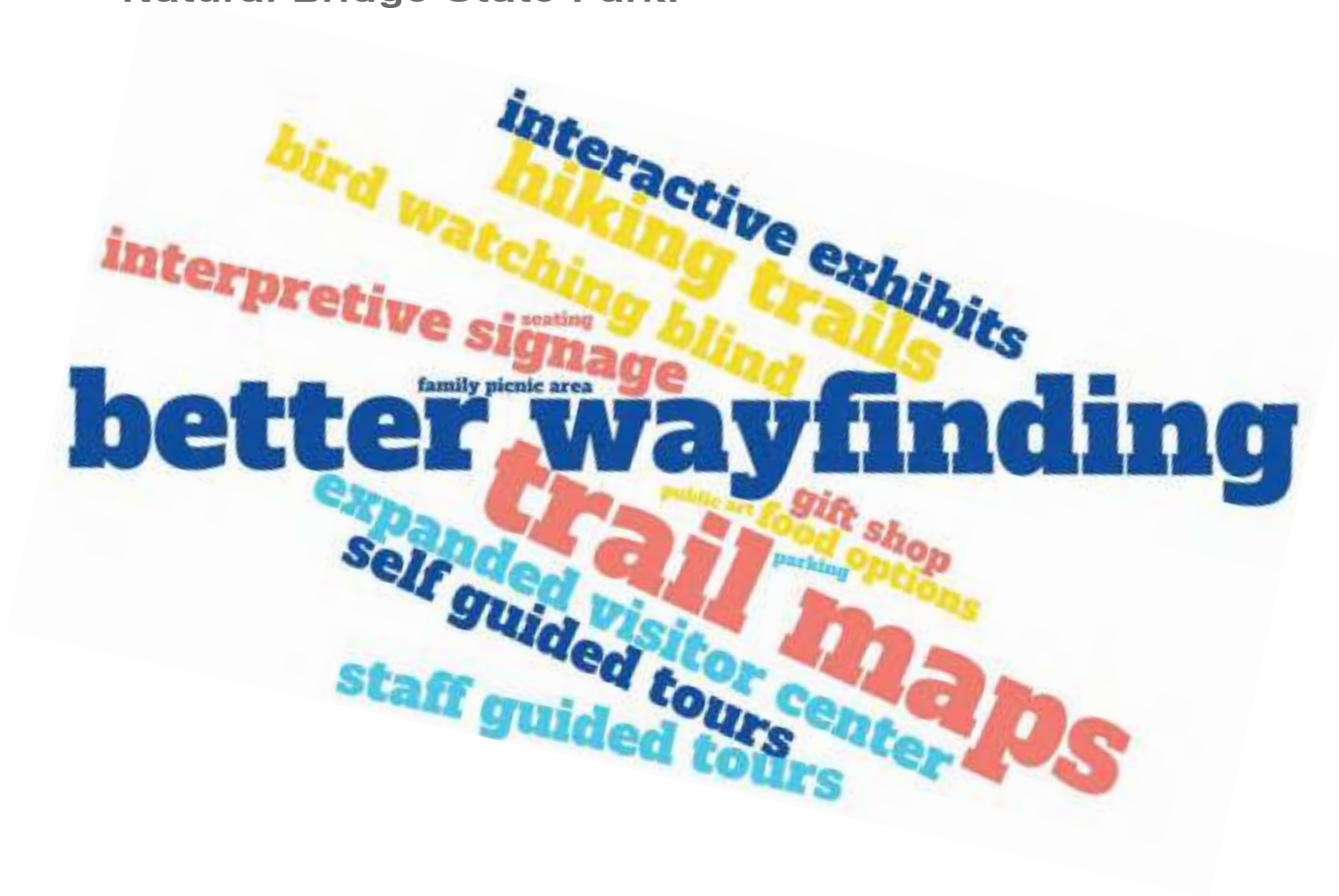
- Learn about the history of the park and the region
- We came to see the Natural Bridge!**
- See the park natural features and ecology
- Passing through and needed a break from car
- Local resident recommended visiting the park
- Other



3) What other local attractions / businesses will you visit?

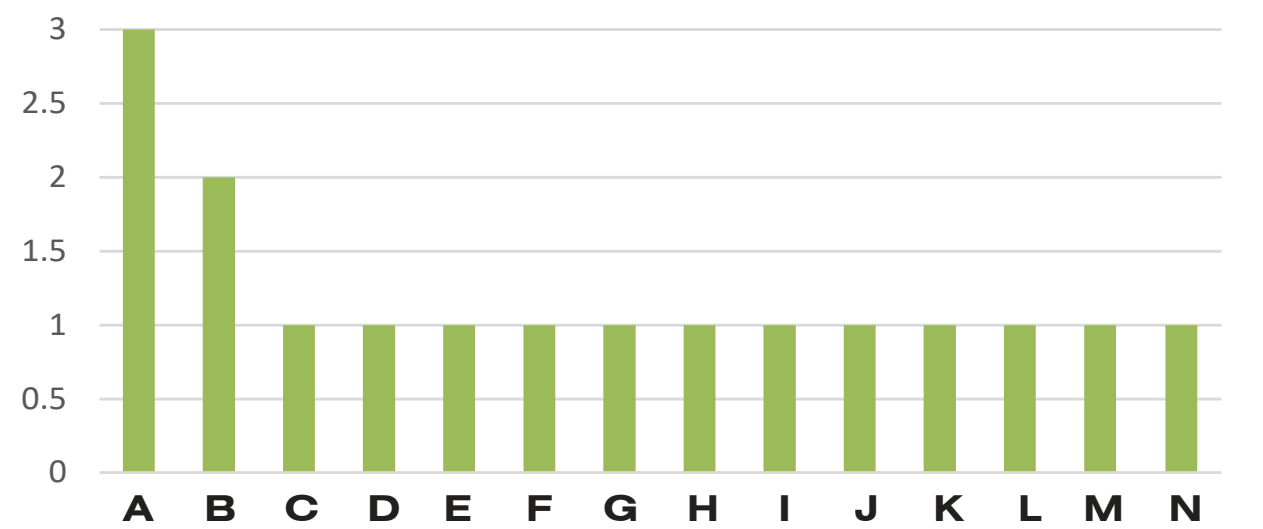


4) Other features you'd like to see included at Natural Bridge State Park:



intercept survey analysis

1) What are some compareable parks?



Combined
35 Responses Total



2) Other features you'd like to see included at Natural Bridge State Park:



design investigations / options

A Tour Around the Park

1. Visitor Center
2. The Clearing
3. Chasm Area
4. The Quarry
5. Mill Complex
6. Trail Connections



visitor center parking area

Expansion of Parking lot

- current number of spaces: 26 (2 ada)
- proposed number of spaces: 39 (3 ada)
- supplementary seeding for pollinators

Improved Connection to the Visitor Center

- storm water pollinator garden at the base of the lot
- new entry plaza and trail head
- new accessible path to chasm and the clearing
- new picnic shelters



Fisher Hill Promenade - KMDG



Cleeve Hill, Cotswolds

Legend

- Existing Pedestrian Circulation
- New Accessible Pedestrian Circulation
- Vehicular Circulation
- Pollinator Garden
- Entry Plaza
- Picnic Shelter
- Picnic Site
- Mown Lawn



visitor center parking area



visitor center parking area



existing parking lot



Fisher Hill rain garden and bridge - KMDG



Williams College rain garden w/ marble - Stimpson

the clearing

Temporary Exhibition and Event Area

- tree management to better form clearing
- temporary exhibition program and infrastructure
- new overlook into quarry
- enhanced pedestrian accessibility

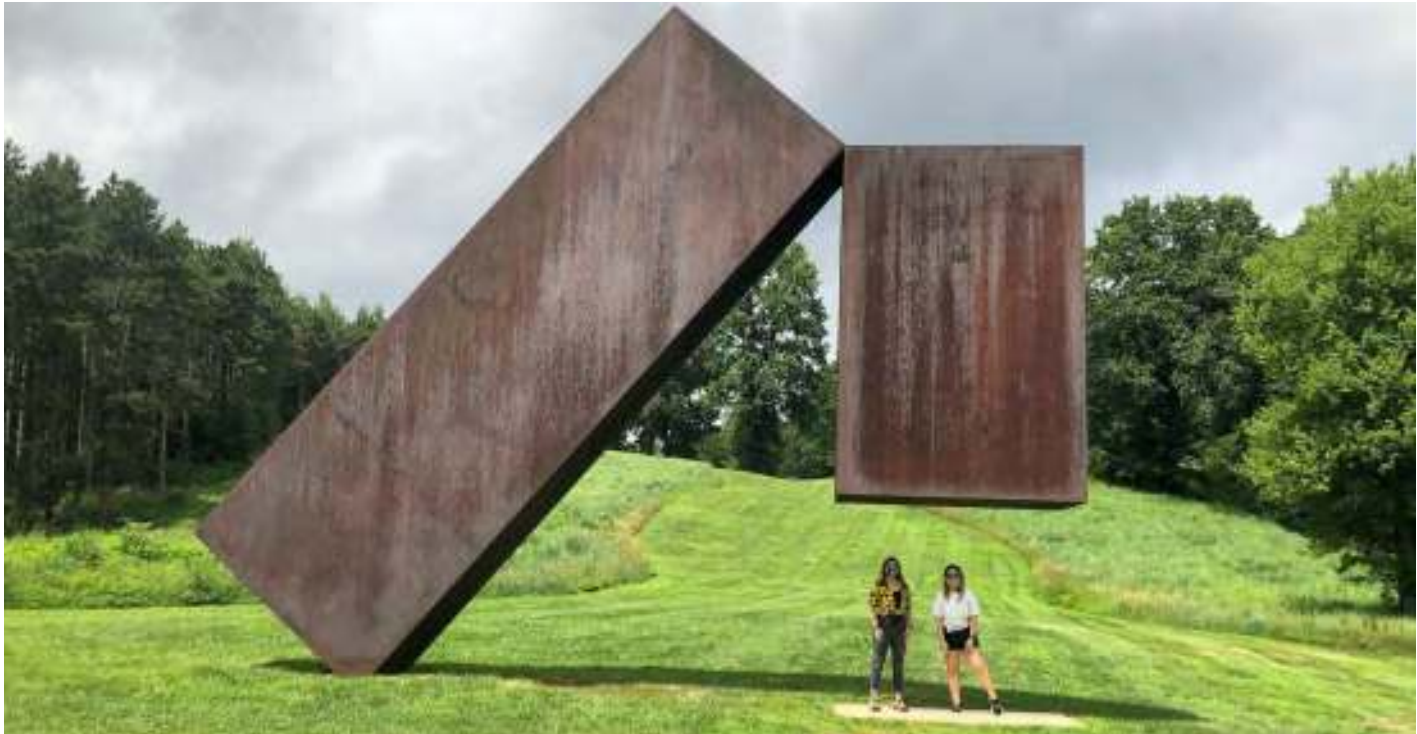
Legend

-  Existing Pedestrian Circulation
-  New Accessible Pedestrian Circulation
-  Vehicular Circulation
-  Pollinator Garden
-  The Clearing
-  Proposed Tree



the clearing

Temporary Exhibit Area



Turn Park - West Stockbridge, MA



Storm King Art Center - New Windsor, NY

the clearing

Temporary Event / Performance Area



Bloedel Reserve, Bainbridge Island, WA



Robert Irwin - Two Running Violet V Forms (1983)



Music in the Woods, Artpark- Lewiston, NY



Outdoor Yoga at Herrontown Woods, Princeton, NJ

the chasm area

Improved Accessibility to the Chasm Area- Option 1

- remove boulders - gap between boulders and existing fence is 2.5' - less than 3'; width without boulders is 5'-6' at narrowest point
- smooth existing path surface
- new guardrails



existing conditions



option 1

the chasm area

Improved Accessibility to the Chasm Area- Option 2

- fill the path with new rocks, partially exposing existing boulder
- new guardrails



existing conditions



Tourist Road Project- Sognefjell, Norway

the chasm area

Improved Accessibility to the Chasm Area- Option 3

- fill the path with new rocks, partially exposing existing boulder
- new guardrails
- additional cantilever overlook into quarry with leaning rail



existing conditions



option 3

the chasm cantilever

Precedent Images



Fisher Hill overlook at field - KMDG



Fisher Hill rail detail - KMDG

the chasm area

Chasm Area

- waiting on LIDAR / Drone efforts
- Rock Mapping Exercise

Interpretation Areas

- Chasm
- Quarry



Chasm Area - Ongoing Analysis Efforts

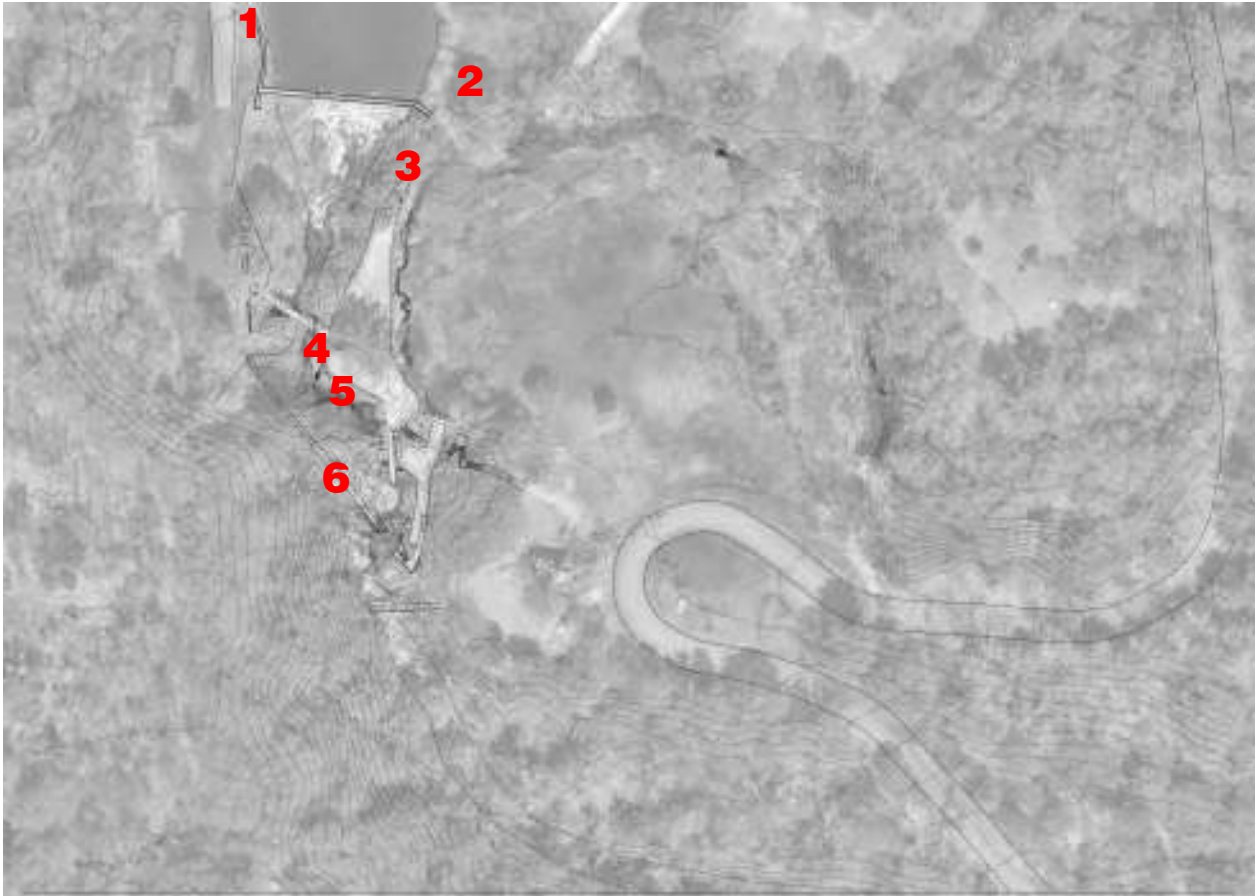
Green International - Have produced a structural assessment of the Penstock and Mill Complex that is currently under DCR review.

Ivan Myjer - Is currently preparing a conditions assessment on the masonry materials used at the Penstock and Mill Complex, with long-term preservation recommendations.

PAL - Are currently performing the Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey with Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment of the entire site. Part of this effort includes indigenous community outreach which will result in an Indigenous Statement of Significance for the Natural Bridge Park.

GEI - Is currently conducting Drone and LIDAR survey work of the chasm and quarry as well as geologic mapping of the chasm and quarry walls to contribute to the safety assessment of this area.

park natural features



chasm drone footage



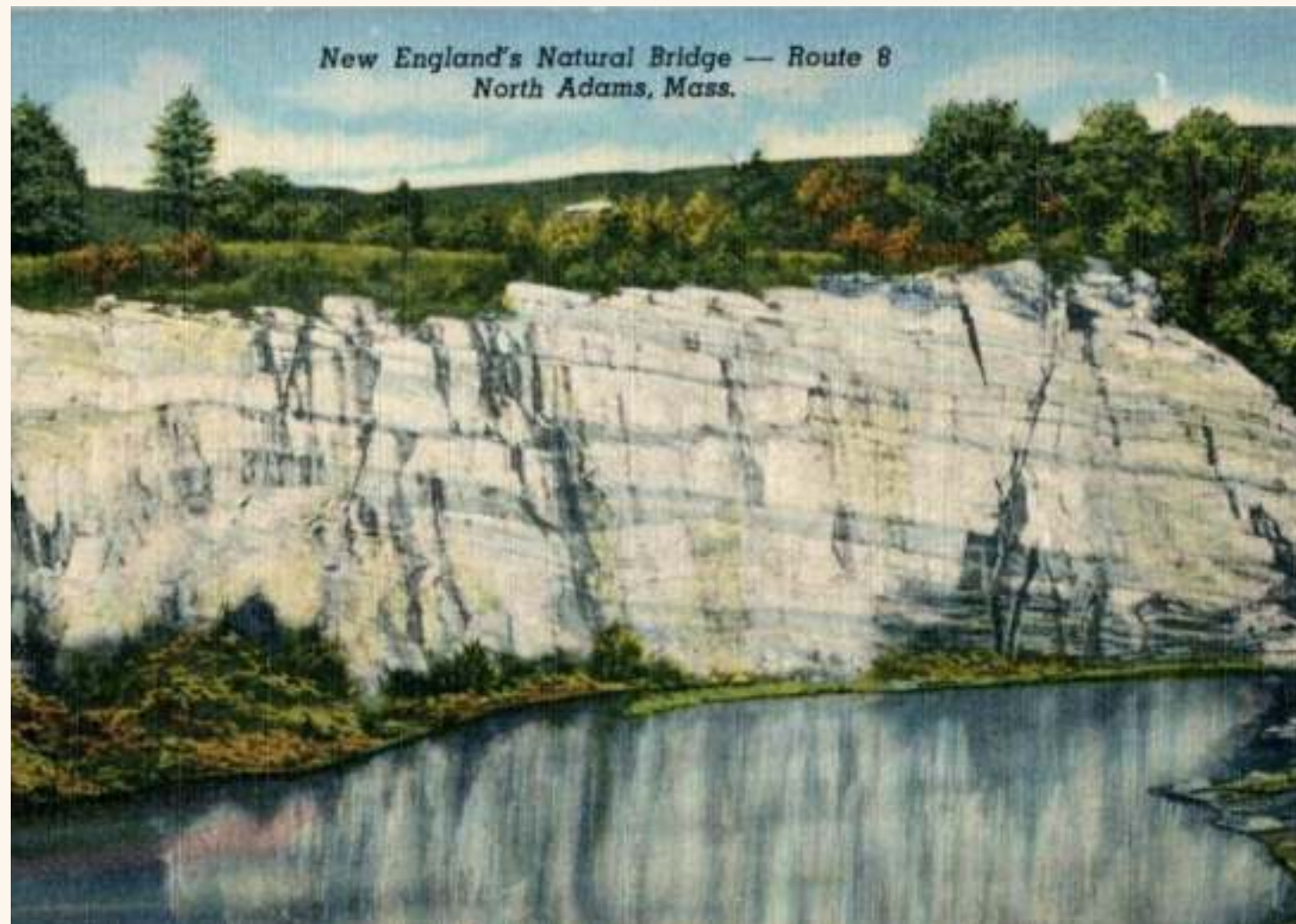
the quarry

Land Management Strategies

Additional Roadside Parking

Additional Picnic Shelter

Improved Access to Mill Site



the quarry

Land Management Options

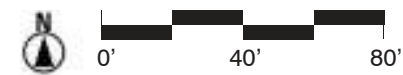
Enhance Existing Conditions

- invasive removal
- controlled burn
- supplementary planting for pollinators



Legend

- Quarry Edge
- Mature/Young Tree and Under-story Mix
- Tall Grassland
- Sumac/Sapling Mix and Mesic Meadow
- Sumac/Sapling Mix and Wet Meadow
- Mown Lawn



the quarry

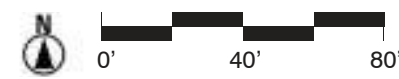
Land Management Option 2

- Extend Lawn to North Quarry Wall
- expand existing plant typologies
 - enhance existing plant typologies
 - supplementary planting for pollinators



Legend

- Quarry Edge
- Mature/Young Tree and Under-story Mix
- Tall Grassland
- Sumac/Sapling Mix and Mesic Meadow
- Sumac/Sapling Mix and Wet Meadow
- Mown Lawn



the quarry

Land Management Option 3

Elevate Lawn

- scrape away soil to expose quarry marble floor
- reduce and objectify lawn area
- expand and enhance existing plant typologies
- supplemental planting for pollinators
- introduce picnic site to quarry



Legend

- Quarry Edge
- Mature/Young Tree and Under-story Mix
- Tall Grassland
- Sumac/Sapling Mix and Mesic Meadow
- Mown Lawn
- Scraped Floor
- Picnic Site



the quarry

New Parking and Picnic Shelter- Option 1

- 3 new parallel parking spaces (1 ada)
- new picnic site at the edge of quarry lawn
- new stair connection down to historic mill site

Legend

Quarry Edge

Mature/Young Tree and Under-story Mix

Tall Grassland

Sumac/Sapling Mix and Mesic Meadow

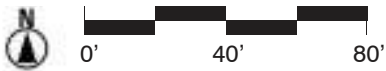
Mown Lawn

Existing Pedestrian Circulation

Enhanced Pedestrian Circulation

Vehicular Circulation

Picnic Site



the quarry

New Parking and Picnic Shelter- Option 1

- 3 new head-in parking spaces (1 ada)
- new picnic shelter between lower chasm and blast rock
- new stair connection down to historic mill site

Legend

Quarry Edge

Mature/Young Tree and Under-story Mix

Tall Grassland

Sumac/Sapling Mix and Mesic Meadow

Mown Lawn

Existing Pedestrian Circulation

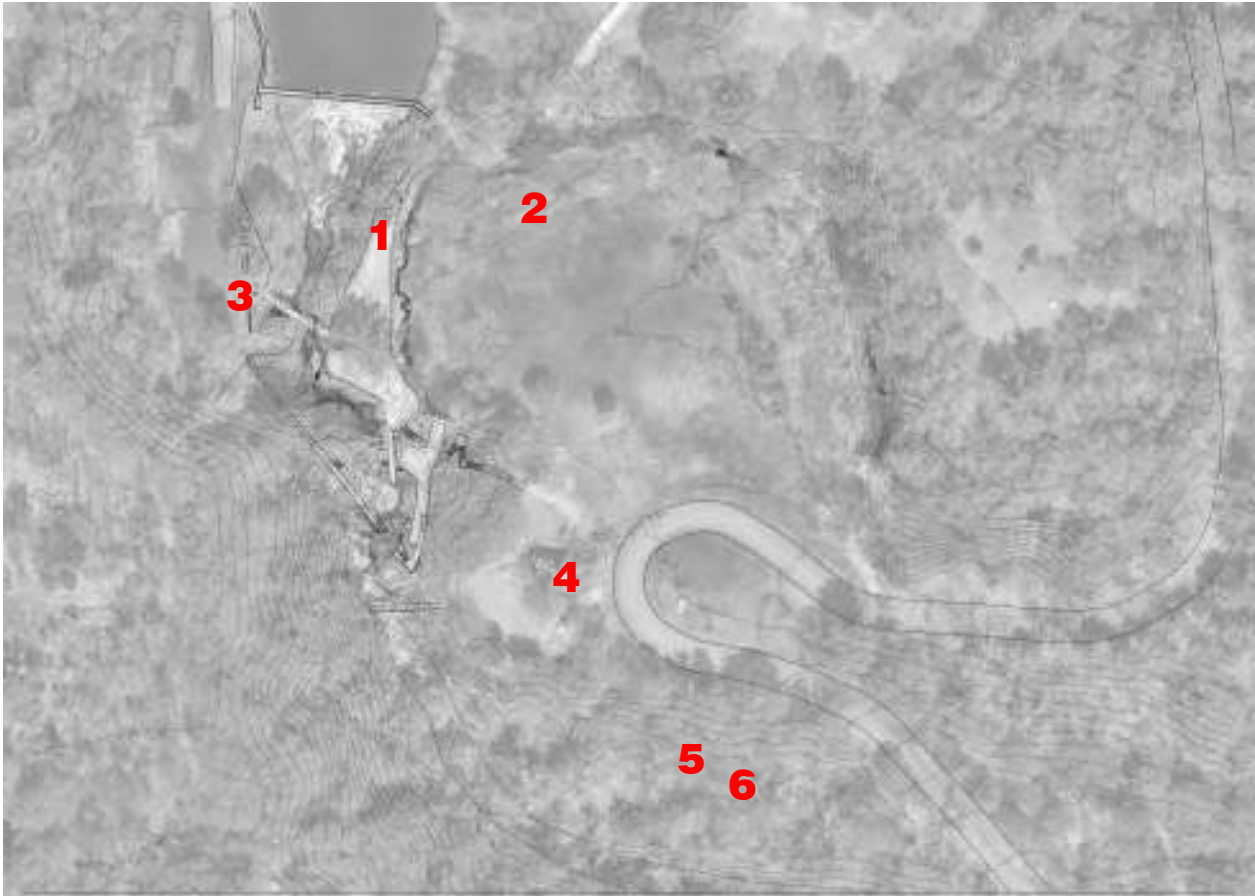
Enhanced Pedestrian Circulation

Vehicular Circulation

Picnic Site



park industrial features



the mill complex

Mill Complex Area

Interpretation of this area
Safety Assessment

PAL - measured drawing, site walks
Ivan - building materials report
Green - structural report



Chasm Area - Ongoing Analysis Efforts

Green International - Have produced a structural assessment of the Penstock and Mill Complex that is currently under DCR review.

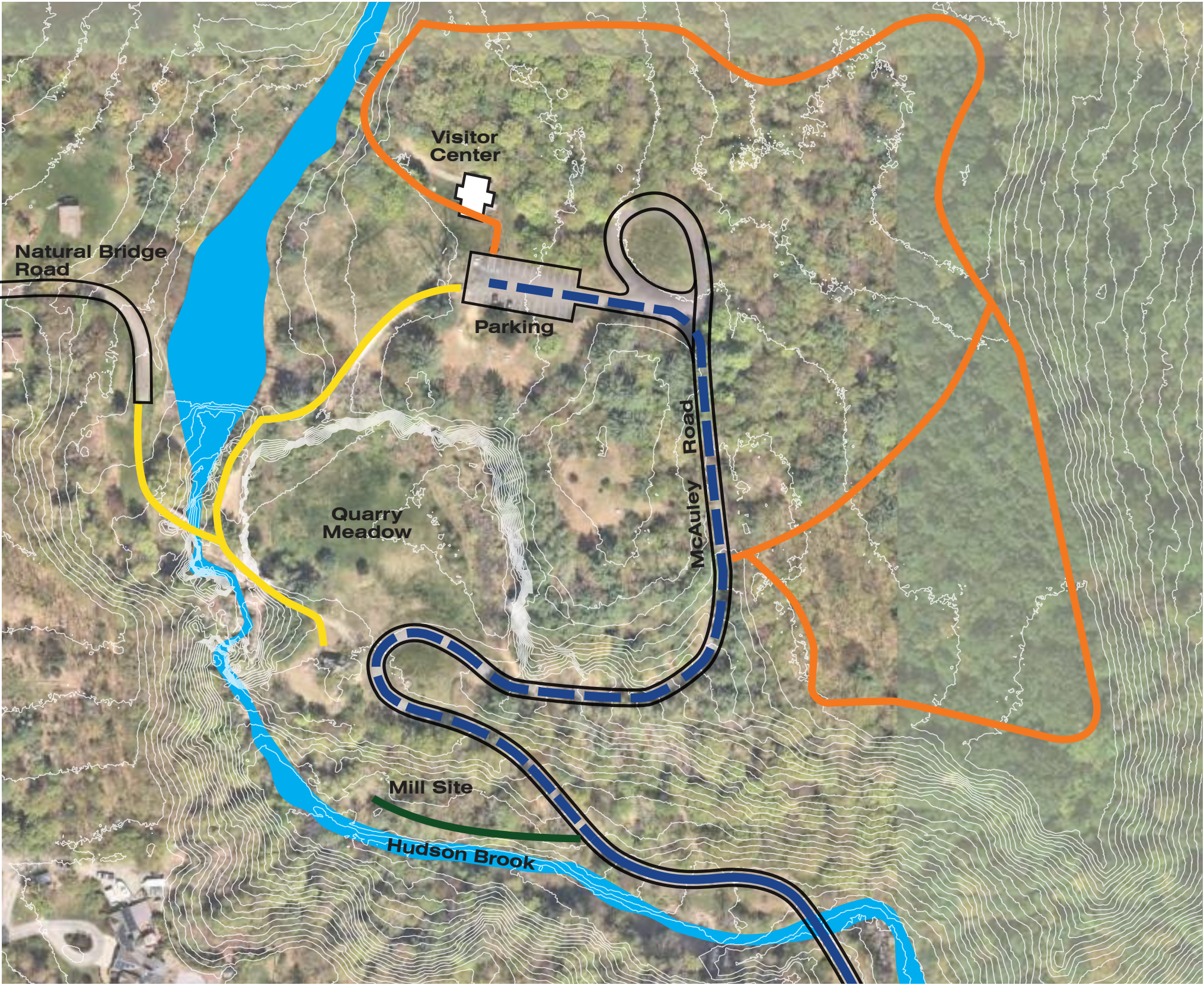
Ivan Myjer - Is currently preparing an conditions assessment on the masonry materials used at the Penstock and Mill Complex, with long-term preservation recommendations.

PAL - Are currently performing the Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey with Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment of the site. Part of this effort will result in a measured and GPS located plan of the Mill Ruins.

GEI - Will be working with KMDG and the DCR to review the Mill Complex with the result being a safety assessment of this area and recommendations for future visitor access.



trail connections



Legend

Heart Healthy Trail

Chasm Trail (future)

Vehicular

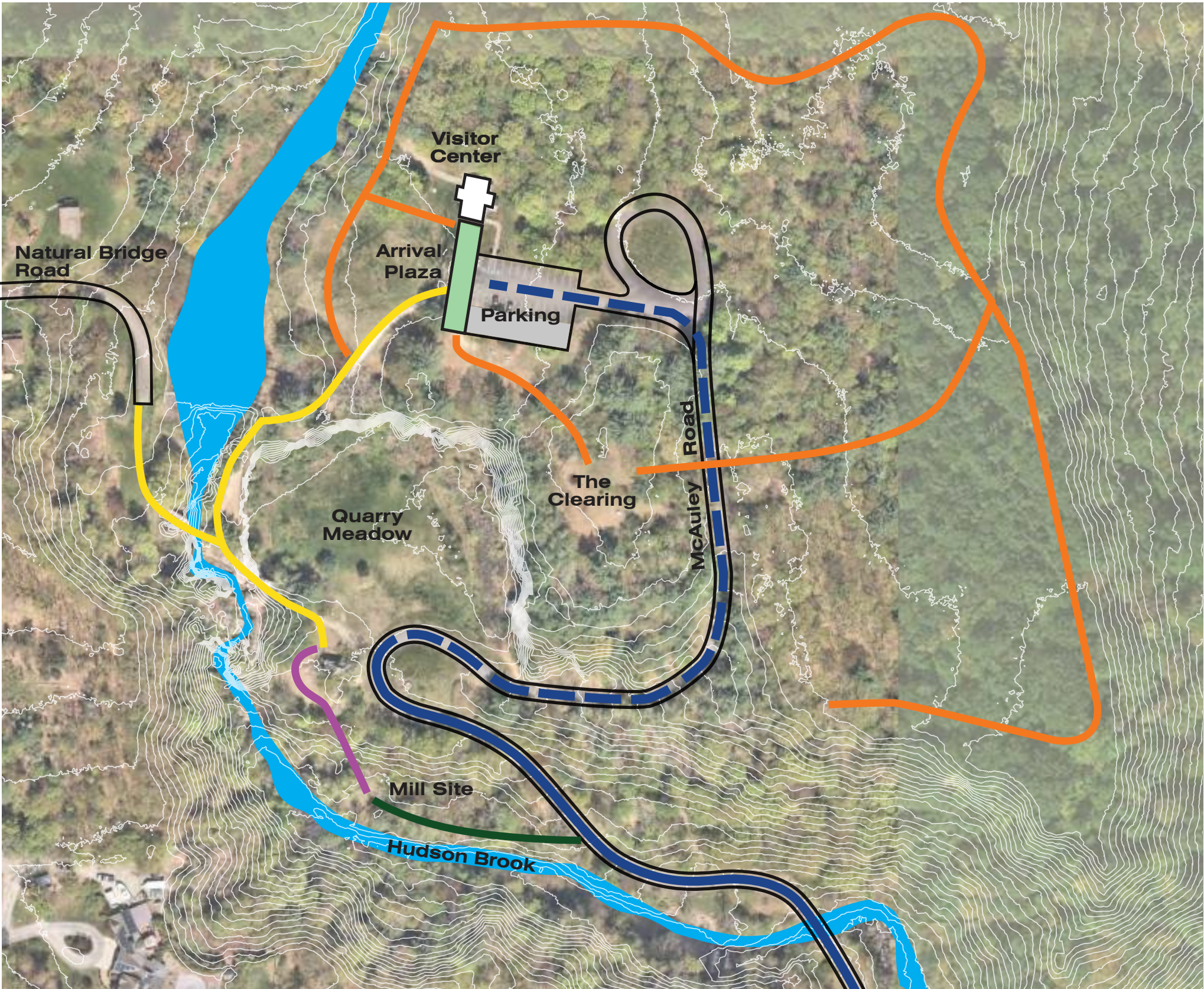
Multi-Modal (shared vehicular & pedestrian)

Creating a Park-wide Loop Trail System

The existing trail system within Natural Bridge State Park is disjointed, as the Park's various attractions are accessible to pedestrians only by walking on McAuley Road. Built as a dedicated vehicular road, this is not an ideal option for pedestrian circulation. Ultimately, the goal is to provide a safe and dedicated pedestrian trail system that connects all of the Park's attractions and the Visitor Center.



trail connections



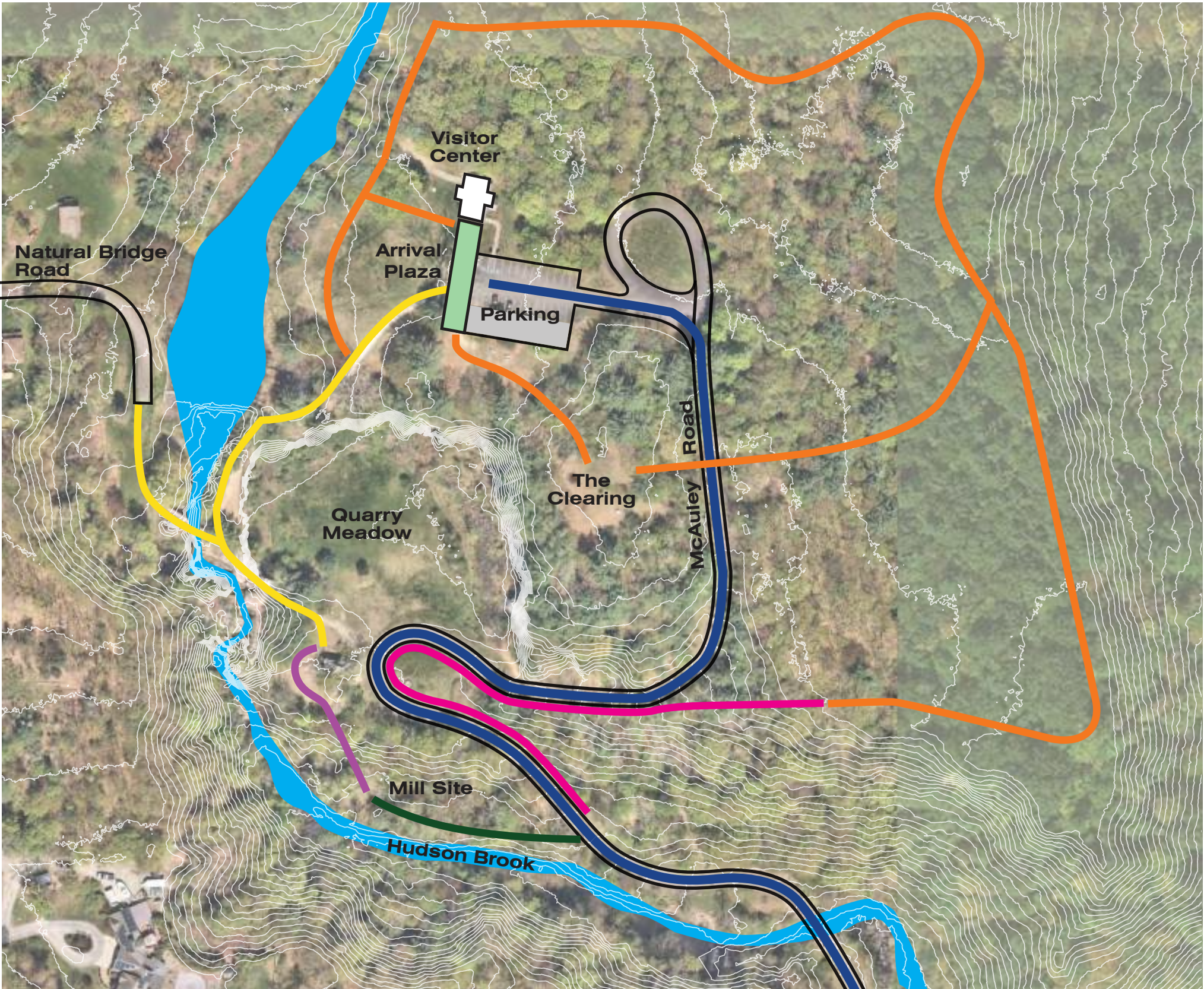
- Legend**
- Heart Healthy Trail
 - Chasm Trail (future)
 - Vehicular
 - Multi-Modal (shared vehicular & pedestrian)
 - Mill Site Connector



Provide a direct connection from the Quarry to the Mill Site via a series of timber steps built into the forest hillside. Bypass McAuley Road.



trail connections



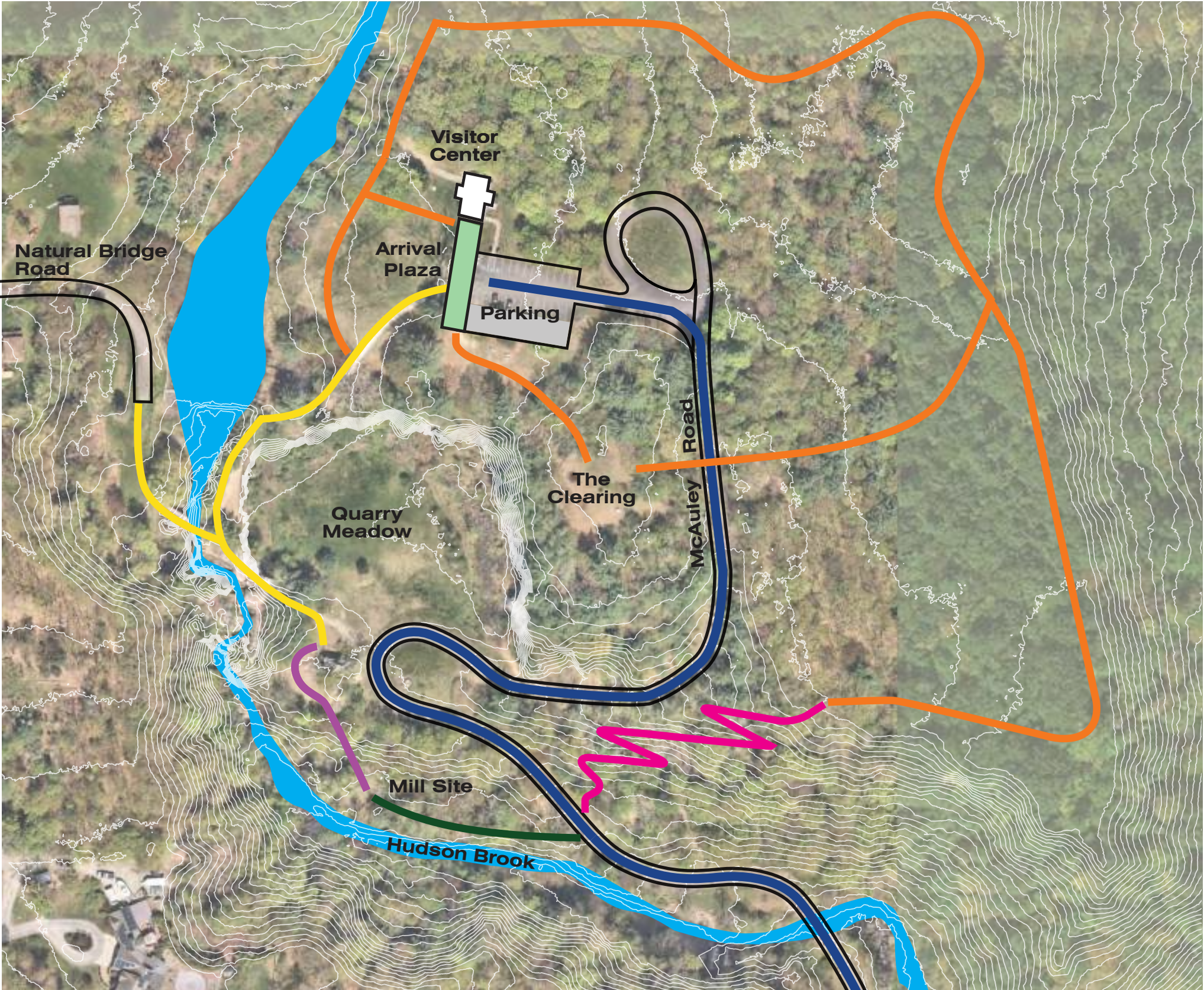
- Legend**
- Heart Healthy Trail
 - Chasm Trail (future)
 - Vehicular
 - Mill Site Connector
 - Proposed Trail Connector Option 1: Sidewalk Steps



Sidewalk Steps
Extend the existing vehicular road with a dedicated pedestrian path, which is cast into steps when traversing steep topography.



trail connections



Legend

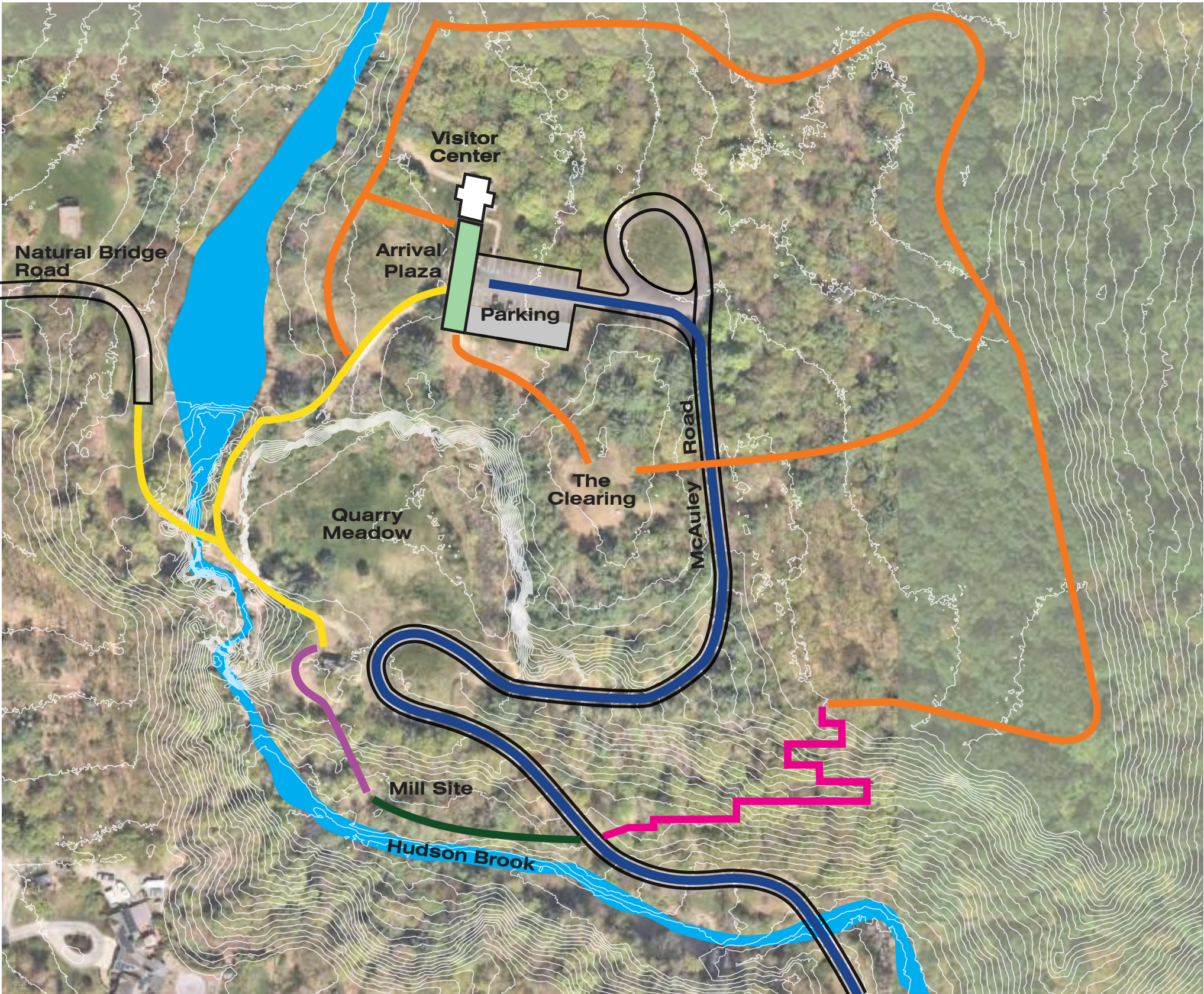
- Heart Healthy Trail
- Chasm Trail (future)
- Vehicular
- Mill Site Connector
- Proposed Trail Connector Option 2: Switchback Trails



Switchback Trails
A trail that cuts sharply back and forth to traverse steep topography, breaking the path into multiple lesser-degree slopes.



trail connections



- Legend**
- Heart Healthy Trail
 - Chasm Trail (future)
 - Vehicular
 - Mill Site Connector
 - Proposed Trail Connector Option 3: Structured Stairs and Walks



Structured Stairs and Walks
Allows for the most direct path of travel by building over topography.



discussion

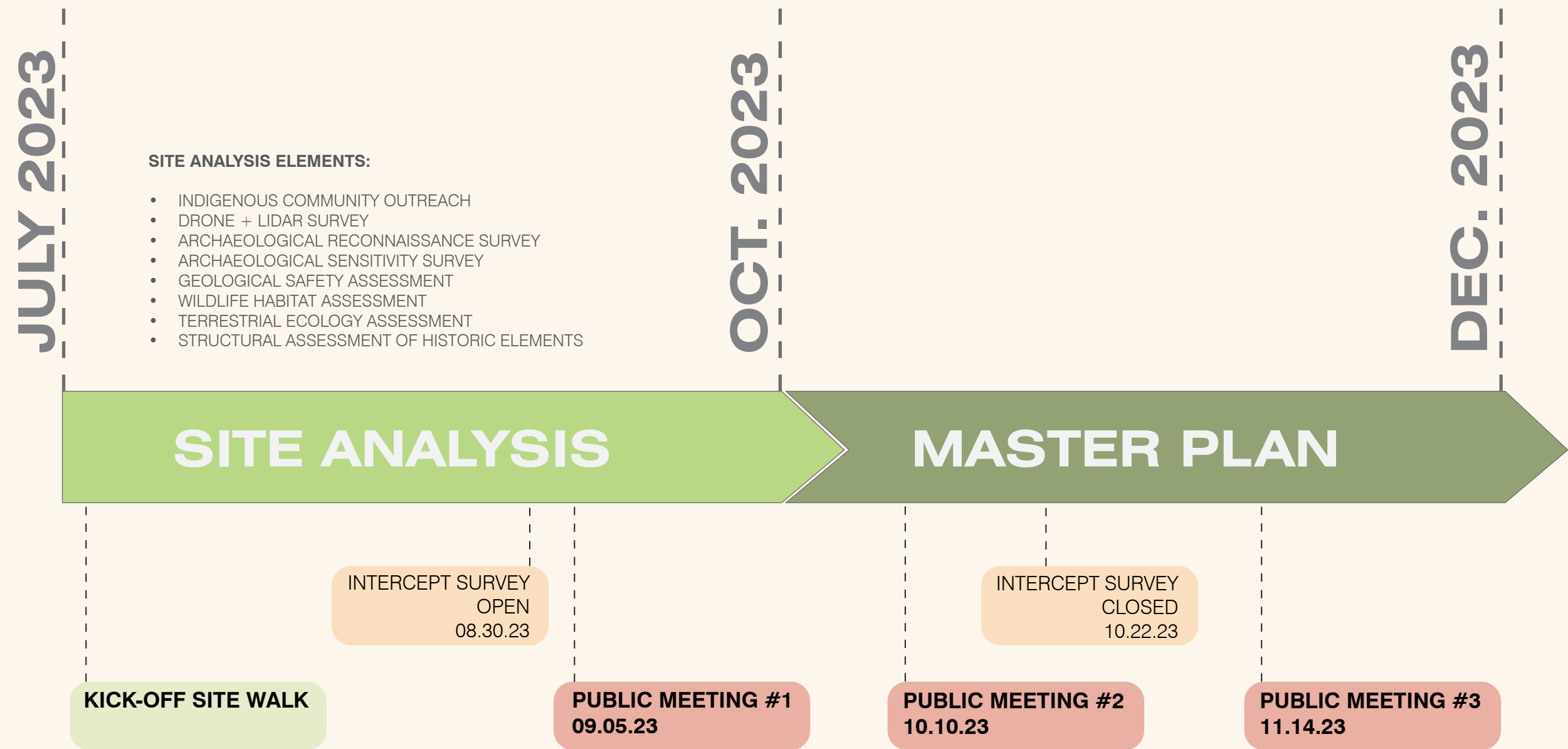
Instructions for Discussion

- Please keep your comments concise so we can hear from as many voices as possible.
- The chat is a valid/equal communication tool.

Friendly Reminders

- We're just getting started!- no decisions are being made tonight.
- This isn't your only opportunity to express your ideas and opinions.

project schedule



next steps



additional information

- Recording and tonight's slide deck will be available at:
www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings
- If you have comments on this project:
 1. Submit online www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment
 2. Deadline: Sunday, October 22, 2023
- If you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv: contact DCR's Office of Community Relations via email at:
mass.parks@mass.gov