



John Muir Park



Cultural Landscape Inventory

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Quinn Evans|Architects

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Department of Landscape Architecture, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Division of Facilities Planning and Management

DEFINITIONS

What is a "cultural landscape"?

The following document is based on concepts and techniques developed by the National Park Service. The NPS has produced a series of manuals for identifying, describing, and maintaining culturally significant landscapes within the national park system.¹

The National Park Service defines a **cultural landscape** as

...a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein[,] associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or [one] that exhibits other cultural or aesthetic values.²

In 1925, geographer Carl Sauer (1889-1975) summarized the process that creates cultural landscapes: "Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result."³ Similarly, the writer J. B. Jackson (1909-1996) looked upon the landscape as a composition of spaces made or modified by humans "to serve as infrastructure or background for our collective existence."⁴

What is a "cultural landscape inventory"?⁵

This cultural landscape inventory for John Muir Park is one of eight such studies produced for the UW-Madison Cultural Landscape Resource Plan. Each inventory defines the boundaries of a distinct cultural landscape on campus, summarizes its history, describes its current condition, assesses its integrity, and makes recommendations about its treatment. In addition to these eight cultural landscape inventories, two companion documents round out the resource plan; they cover the archaeology and overall history of the campus. This collection of documents is collectively entitled, "Cultural Landscape Report for the University of Wisconsin-Madison." Within the national park system, a **cultural landscape report** (CLR) serves as the primary guide to the treatment and use of a cultural landscape.

Overleaf: Muir Knoll dedication, 1918. Judge Milton Seward Griswold is the speaker at the podium. The bronze bust of Muir was sculpted by C.S. Pietro, and dedicated in 1916 (also figure 6).

¹ The most recent and comprehensive of these publications is *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, published in 1998. Its lead author, Robert R. Page, is director of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Studies, based at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Charlestown, MA: <http://www.nps.gov/oclp>

² U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, by Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan (Washington: 1998), 129.

³ Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," in *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, ed. John Leighly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 343.

⁴ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 8.

⁵ The term "cultural landscape inventory" is not to be confused with the NPS *Cultural Landscapes Inventory*, a computerized database of cultural landscapes within the national park system.

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<i>Prepared by:</i>	Brenda W. Williams
<i>Researched and written by:</i>	Cortney A. Cain, with Catherine Dammann, and Lee Sommerville
<i>Graphics/Images by:</i>	Rebecca L. Marquardt, Jason Tish, Xiaojian Yu, and Jon Hodkiewicz
<i>Project management by:</i>	Arnold R. Alanen, Gary Brown, and Sam Calvin
<i>Edited by:</i>	Susan O. Haswell and Daniel F. Einstein

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NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

The U.S. Congress created the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, launching an ongoing census of historic properties. To be eligible for the National Register, a property must meet specific requirements. First and foremost, an eligible landscape must have significance: in American history, in architecture (including landscape architecture and planning), in archaeology, in engineering, or to specific cultures.

Understanding the historic context in which a landscape developed is key to determining its significance. To qualify for the National Register, a cultural landscape must be shown to be significant according to one or more of the four Criteria for Evaluation:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, or
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to archaeological or historical knowledge.

Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are primarily of state or local significance. Nationally significant properties—such as UW-Madison’s Dairy Barn—may be designated National Historic Landmarks (NHL) by the Secretary of the Interior. NHLs also are listed on the National Register.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Inventory unit name: John Muir Park

Current name: John Muir Park, Muir Knoll, Muir Woods

Historic names: Bascom Woods, Storyteller's Hill,⁶ Black Hawk Knoll⁷

National Register status: John Muir Park is part of the Bascom Hill Historic District, which was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

TABLE 1: KEY TO PLACE NAMES

Extant features

<i>Official name</i> ⁸	<i>Location</i>	<i>Other or former name(s)</i>
47 DA-1208, Archaeological Site Inventory (ASI)	Muir Knoll	Muir Knoll, workshop site
Arthur D. Hasler Laboratory of Limnology	680 N. Park St.	Hydrobiology Laboratory, Limnology Laboratory
Black Hawk Knoll	Site of Carillon Tower	Name no longer in common usage
Carillon Tower	1160 Observatory Dr.	
Helen C. White Hall	600 N. Park St.	Undergraduate library
Howard Temin Lakeshore Path	Parallels shore of Lake Mendota	Lakeshore path, Lover's Lane (eastern segment of path)
John Muir Park		Bascom Woods, Muir Woods, University Woods
Muir Knoll		Storyteller's Hill
Water Science and Engineering Laboratory	660 N. Park St.	Hydraulic Laboratory, Hydraulic and Sanitary Laboratory
William H. Sewell Social Sciences Building	1180 Observatory Dr.	Economics-Sociology-Anthropology Building, Social Studies, Social Science, Social Sciences Building

⁶ Charles E. Brown, *Campus Landmarks; Prepared for the Use of Students, University of Wisconsin Summer Session* (Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Museum, 1926), 5; John Hunter, "Famed locust may yet be lasting memorial to Muir," *Madison Capital Times*, 16 October 1953.

⁷ The hill at the western end of Muir Woods, just outside the proposed boundaries of the John Muir Park cultural landscape, formerly was called Black Hawk Knoll. The class of 1888 dedicated a memorial to Black Hawk on the knoll in June 1913. Reports on the construction of the Carillon Tower in 1934-35 identify the site as Black Hawk Knoll. The name continued to be used as late as 1950.

⁸ As listed on Facility Name Registry, Space Management Office, University of Wisconsin-Madison: <http://www2.fpm.wisc.edu/smo/> (accessed May 2009)

Non-extant features

<i>Name</i>	<i>Status</i>
Class of 1961 terrace	Demolished 2009
Ski slide (wood)	Built 1919, burned 1930
Ski slide (steel)	Built 1932, relocated to Hoyt Park 1957
John Muir Locust	Designated 1919, cut 1953
Water Reservoir	Demolished 2009

Commemorative objects⁹

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
Academic Staff rustic bench	Along trail between Muir Knoll overlook and lakeshore path, installed 2008
Anderson boulder	Western edge, Muir Knoll overlook
Bascom Hill Historic District marker: “Natural Wonders” (honoring Muir)	Near sidewalk leading to overlook; marker installed 2001
Black Hawk boulder	Eastern edge, Social Sciences Building plaza ¹⁰
Brittingham rune stone	South of Muir Knoll overlook
Brittingham plaque	Next to Brittingham rune stone
Class memorials, aka “tombstones” (Class of 1889, 1891, 1893, 1897, 1899, 1905)	Along northern edge of Observatory Drive
Minji Kim bench	Along sidewalk leading to overlook; memorial Minji Kim, student
Muir Knoll boulder	John Muir Park; northeast of North Hall
Robert E. Gard Storyteller’s Circle	Muir Knoll overlook, dedicated 2010

⁹ Daniel Einstein, “UW Commemorative Objects, version 9, February 2010” (Facilities Planning and Management, UW-Madison).

¹⁰ Although the Black Hawk boulder lies just outside the proposed boundary of the John Muir Park historic landscape, it’s included on this list due to its historical significance, proximity to the park, and status as a class gift (donated by the Class of 1888; dedicated June 1913).

Location Map:

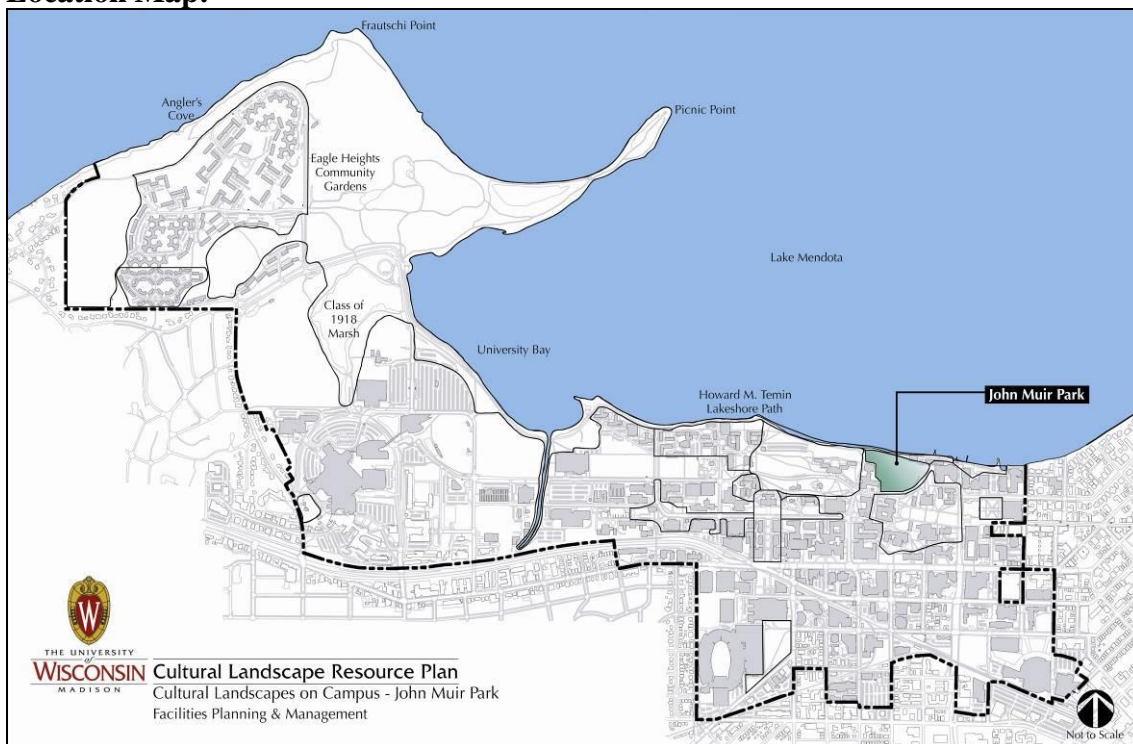


Figure 1: Location of John Muir Park on campus, 2004.

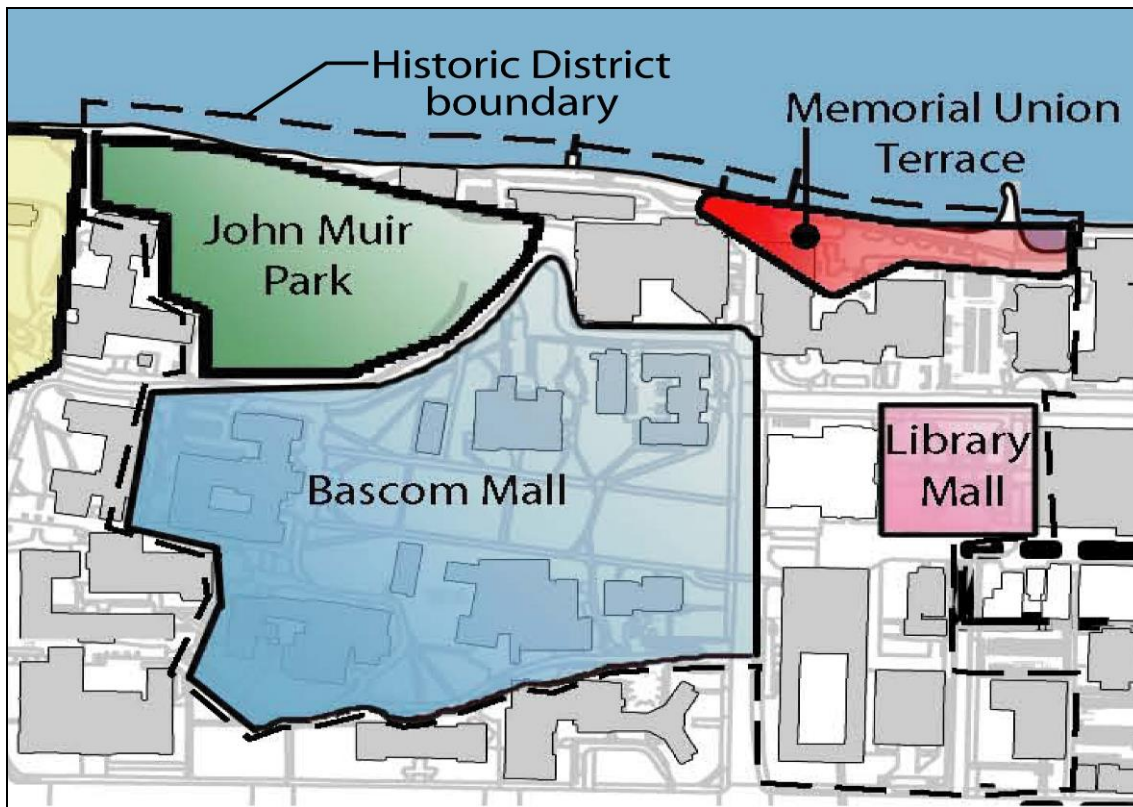


Figure 2: Component landscapes of the Bascom Hill Historic District.

Existing boundary description: The National Register nomination for the Bascom Hill Historic District (which includes John Muir Park) does not provide a written boundary description. However, a drawing in Appendix A of the nomination shows the boundary indicated in figures 1 and 2.¹¹ The nomination indicates that the John Muir Park site contains seven acres of land. A proposed boundary description is provided below and illustrated in figure 3.

Proposed boundary description: The proposed boundary of the John Muir Park historic landscape encompasses the entire wooded area that lies north of Observatory Drive between Charter Street and Helen C. White Hall, and south of the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path, the Arthur D. Hasler Laboratory of Limnology, the Water Science and Engineering Laboratory, and the parking lot and driveways associated with these buildings (figure 3). This area is roughly 0.7 acres larger than that indicated in the National Register nomination, resulting in a total area of approximately 7.7 acres.

¹¹ State Historical Society of Wisconsin, "Bascom Hill Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination form, prepared by Jeffery M. Dean, 1974.

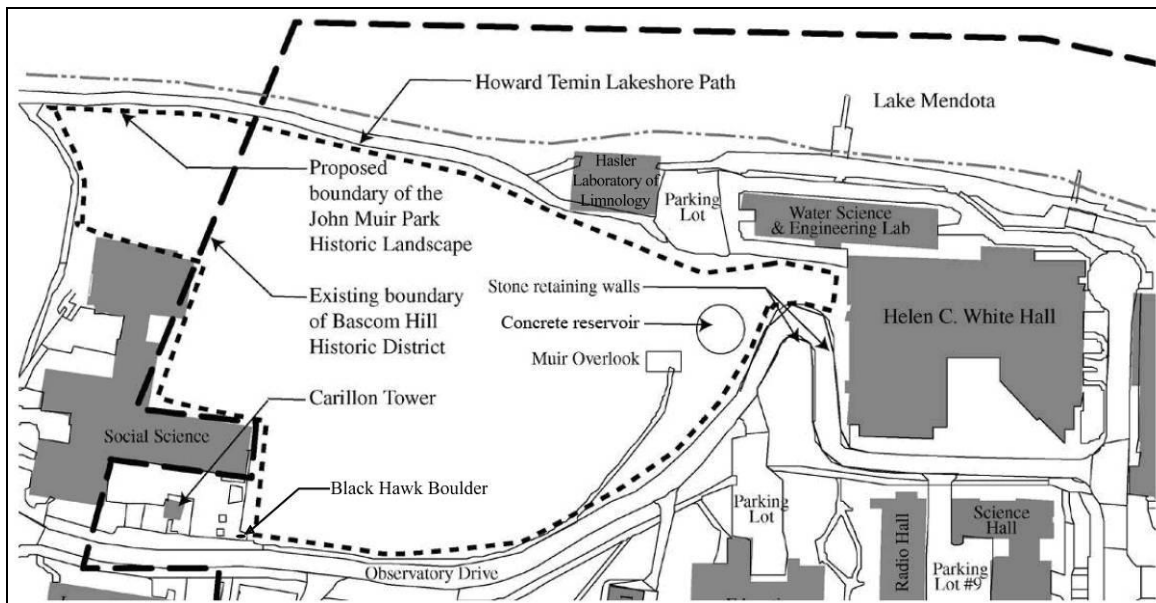


Figure 3: Proposed boundary of the John Muir Park Historic Landscape, 2005.

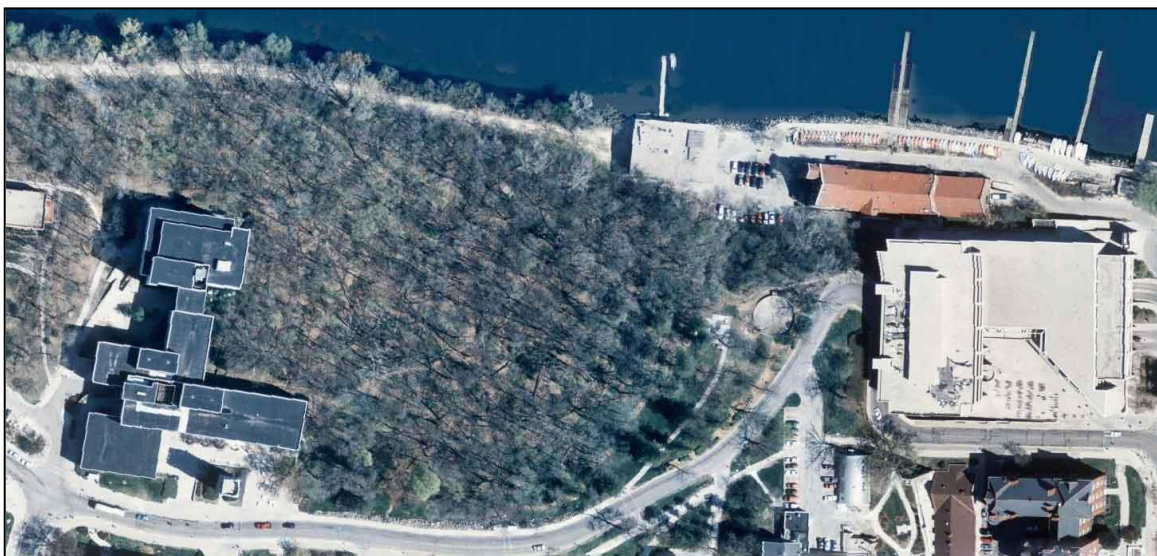


Figure 4: Aerial view after construction of Social Sciences Building, 1964.

CHRONOLOGY:

12,000 B.P.-present: Native American

- For at least 14,000 years Native Nations have lived in the area that we now refer to as the main university campus. Ancient cultural materials, including projectile points, ceramics and burial mounds attest to this long occupation. An ancient workshop site (ASI 47 DA-1208) is located on Muir Knoll.

1830s-1850s: Early European Settlement

- Wild berries gathered from bushes on slopes.

1861-1863: John Muir on the University Campus

- Feb. 1861: John Muir takes up residence in North Hall.
- Spring 1861: Muir has his first informal lesson in botany beneath a black locust near North Hall.
- 1863: Muir departs the University of Wisconsin for the “University of the Wilderness.”

1860s – 1920s: University Woods

- The wooded slope northwest of North Hall is used for firewood gathering, recreation, and outdoor instruction.
- 1914: Water reservoir constructed for use by Hydraulic Laboratory; parapet walls designed to create student gathering place.

1918 –present: Muir Knoll

- 1918: Muir Knoll designated as a memorial to John Muir; red granite “Muir Knoll boulder” placed.
- 1919-1955: Wooden ski jump (replaced by steel in 1932) constructed from Muir Knoll down to Lake Mendota; ski jump tournaments held on site.
- 1940: 800 black locust trees planted on the knoll to help prevent erosion.
- 1941-45: Muir Knoll and ski jump used for military training exercises.

1920s-present Bascom Woods

- In 1920, the main administrative building on campus, named Main Hall or University Hall, was given the new name of Bascom Hall. In the following years the wooded area to the north of the building gradually took on the informal name of Bascom Woods.
- Class memorials markers are moved to an area adjacent to Observatory Drive, near Muir Knoll, formerly located around Bascom Hall.

1958 – present: John Muir Park

- 1958-66: Construction of Social Sciences Building destroys one-third of Bascom Woods. In response to faculty protests regarding the loss of the woods, the administration agrees to protect the remaining natural area from future development.
- 1962: Three-level terrace constructed with funds from Class of 1961.
- 1964: Seven-acre “John Muir Park” officially dedicated as a natural botanical laboratory not to be disturbed by future university development.
- 2009: Water reservoir and Muir Knoll overlook demolished. Former Class of 1961 terrace replaced with the Robert E. Gard Storytellers Circle, a stone

seating area. The concrete debris from the demolitions was buried in the cavity formed by the former reservoir. 2010: Dedication of Robert E. Gard Storytellers Circle, September 24.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural landscape type: Historic site

Current use/function: Overlook, passive recreation, woodland preservation, commemoration of individuals and classes

Historical functions: Ski jump (recreation), outdoor laboratory for learning, ROTC training, natural area, site of water reservoir for Hydraulics Laboratory, commemoration, National Geodetic Survey station (Wisconsin OM 1102)

Historical significance

John Muir Park is a portion of the Bascom Hill Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance according to Criterion A¹² as the:

...most historic cluster of institutional buildings in Wisconsin. Even beyond this it is a sensitive mix of urban and natural spaces comprising a memorable and coherent whole significant in itself. The buildings themselves are of major statewide significance, but together in their interrelationships and their relation to 'College Hill' and Madison's natural environment they become part of the greater identity that is the Bascom Hill Historic District.¹³

The nomination describes John Muir Park as a:

...seven-acre wooded area, formerly known as Bascom Woods, [that] was named in honor of naturalist John Muir by the regents in 1959. A three-level overlook surveying the waters of Lake Mendota was constructed on the park's knoll in 1962. Official dedication of the park as a laboratory for the study of plants and animals took place in 1964. At the dedication, botany professor Grant Cottam described the park as "one of nature's history books.... We have here a living document that serves as a primer for those students just beginning to read biology and as a technical encyclopedia for the more knowledgeable." Muir Knoll, formerly a campus ski jump, is marked by a red boulder dedicated to Muir in 1918.¹⁴

In addition to its significance according to Criterion A, John Muir Park is potentially significant according to Criterion B for its association with John Muir. The site commemorates Muir's ties to the campus. "No University, it seemed to me, could be more admirably situated," Muir recalled shortly before his death. As Muir "sauntered about" the campus, he was "charmed with its fine lawns and trees and beautiful lakes."¹⁵ While living in North Hall, Muir received his first informal botany lesson under a black locust tree near the knoll. He eventually left the University of Wisconsin for the

¹² See box, "National Register Criteria," p. 7.

¹³ Statement of significance, "Bascom Hill Historic District."

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ John Muir, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913; San Francisco, Sierra Club, 1989), 160.

“University of the Wilderness.”¹⁶ Later, Muir went on to foster the national park system and the Sierra Club. Additionally, John Muir Park is significant for providing recreation and outdoor education opportunities. Today, it continues to serve as an outdoor laboratory for students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

John Muir Park also is potentially significant according to Criterion D. Native American burial mounds were present between North Hall and Lake Mendota before the area was developed. Although above-ground features are no longer extant, archaeological deposits have been documented in the area. It is possible that other archaeological resources have remained intact.¹⁷

Periods of significance

The period of significance for the Bascom Hill Historic District is 1851–1969. Significant dates/periods in the history of John Muir Park include: 1861–1863, when John Muir lived and studied on campus; the dedication of Muir Knoll in 1918; the designation of Muir Woods in 1959; and the dedication of John Muir Park in 1964.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Wisconsin Historical Society, Office of the State Archaeologist, *A Phase I Archaeological Survey of Muir Knoll, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison: State Archaeologist, 2003), 5.

LANDSCAPE HISTORY

John Muir (1838-1914)

John Muir was born in Dunbar, Scotland, on April 21, 1838 (figure 5). While still a young boy, he showed an interest in the natural beauty and wildlife of the surrounding countryside. In 1849, when Muir was eleven years old, he and his family emigrated to the United States to establish a farm in Marquette County, Wisconsin. During Muir's early years in America, intense manual labor was required of all the family members for survival. Although Muir worked hard on the family farm, he also arose early in the morning to study, before tackling his chores.¹⁸

In addition to studying, Muir enjoyed inventing. At the urging of a neighbor, Muir took several of his inventions to the state fair (held at what is now Camp Randall on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus) for exhibition in September 1860. His inventions were well received by the press and he was offered a job in a small machine and foundry shop in Prairie du Chien. Within a few months, however, Muir moved to Madison and began to dream about a life at the University of Wisconsin. Later, Muir recalls, "I was desperately hungry and thirsty for knowledge and willing to endure anything to get it."¹⁹



Figure 5: John Muir, 1863.

¹⁸ Muir, *Story of My Boyhood*, 138 ff.

¹⁹ Ibid, 153.

Muir at the University of Wisconsin, 1861-1863²⁰

Muir was able to enroll in the second term of the 1860-61 academic year, beginning in February 1861. Initially he was assigned to the preparatory department, but he was quickly transferred into the regular academic program once he demonstrated proficiency in basic subjects. He received his first informal lesson in botany under a black locust tree near the steps of North Hall from Milton S. Griswold, a classmate, probably in the spring of 1861. Muir was “charmed” by the lesson and went:

...flying to the woods and meadows in wild enthusiasm...I wandered away at every opportunity, making long excursions round the lakes, gathering specimens and keeping them fresh in a bucket in my room to study at night after my regular classes were learned; for my eyes never closed on the plant glory I had seen.²¹

John Muir left the university in 1863. He became one of the most famous naturalists in the United States, co-founding the Sierra Club and playing a major role in the establishment of the national park system. He wrote of leaving Madison:

From the top of a high hill on the north side of Lake Mendota I gained a last wistful, lingering view of the beautiful University grounds and buildings where I had spent so many hungry and happy and hopeful days. There with streaming eyes I bade my blessed Alma Mater farewell. But I was only leaving one University for another, the Wisconsin University for the University of the Wilderness.²²

In 1897, the regents recognized Muir’s achievements by conferring an honorary doctor of laws degree upon him.²³

²⁰ The dates for Muir’s residency on campus have been reported in numerous articles and biographies. Frequently these dates conflict with each other. Muir did not help matters with his composite recollections in his autobiography, where he casually lumps experiences in a manner not supported by university records or his letters from this period. A review of records in the UW Archives in 2013 indicates that Muir spent a total of six terms on campus during the period February 1861-June 1863. During this time the university moved from an academic year of two 38-week terms to three 13-week terms. His 85 weeks of academic attendance are equal to 2.6 years in the current university calendar.

²¹ *Muir*, *Story of My Boyhood*, 157-158.

²² *Ibid*, 159-160.

²³ Record of the meetings of the Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 1848-1971, University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives; Series 1/1/1, Vol. E. 23 June 1897.

Dedication of Muir Knoll

Professor Julius E. Olson, long-time coordinator of the university's commencement activities, originally asked the regents to consider naming the knoll near North Hall the "Muir Knoll." Olson offered to arrange for a ceremony on Alumni Day. Muir Knoll was officially dedicated on June 18, 1918. Dr. Charles H. Vilas delivered the dedication address. Judge Milton S. Griswold and Muir's North Hall roommate, Charles E. Vroman, also spoke (figure 6).²⁴

In June 1919, the annual alumni "zigzag parade" ended on Muir Knoll, where Prof. Olson asked the assembled party to decide which of several trees on the hill was to be designated the "John Muir Locust." The group "unanimously found that the locust tree nearest North Hall was the one to which John Muir refers in his writings," and authorized Olson "to have the same suitably marked."²⁵



Figure 6: Muir Knoll dedication, 1918. Judge Milton Seward Griswold is the speaker at the podium. The bronze bust of Muir was sculpted by C.S. Pietro, and dedicated in 1916.

²⁴Record of the meetings of the Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 1848-1971, University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives; Series 1/1/1, Vol. J, 17 April 1918; "The Committee on Public Functions," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 19, (August 1918), 246-249.

²⁵"Victory commencement," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 20 (August 1919): 273-74.

Class memorials

During the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, it was common for graduating classes to erect memorials, typically stone markers bearing the class graduation year. These class memorials were often placed in the wood lot north of Main Hall (now Bascom Hall) in the area now known as John Muir Park.²⁶ After several decades of accepting the class memorials, the regents became concerned about the appearance of the grounds. Regent Magnus Swenson indicated that the cluster of stones had taken on the appearance of a graveyard.²⁷ By 1926, low marble monuments in the John Muir Park area included those dedicated to the classes of 1868, '86, '91, '93, '97, and '99, as well as others. Some of these were relocated to this site when moved from their original locations in front of Bascom Hall.²⁸

John Muir Park continued to be a popular site for placing memorials, including circular benches donated by the Class of 1961, and several boulders. A red granite boulder inscribed, “Muir Knoll,” which was placed on the site by the John Muir Walking Club; the Brittingham Rune Stone, a gift from Viking Scholarship students; and the Anderson boulder, which resembles a Viking ship and honors Rasmus B. Anderson (1846-1936). Anderson, the first Wisconsin-born professor at the university, founded the first permanent Scandinavian studies department in an American institution.²⁹ The class memorials are clustered near the sidewalk along the southern border of John Muir Park adjacent to Observatory Drive (figure 7).



Figure 7: Class memorials looking west along Observatory Drive, 2004.

²⁶Theodore Herfurth, *Sifting and Winnowing: A Chapter in the History of the University of Wisconsin*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1949), <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/WIReader> (accessed 29 February 2004).

²⁷ Ibid., citing *Madison Democrat*, 23 June 1910, and *Milwaukee Journal*, 28 June 1910.

²⁸ Mathilda Fink, “Class gifts become landmarks,” *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 30 (October 1928): 15.

²⁹ Edwin Broun Fred, *A University remembers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1969), 70-73.

Ski jumps

The steep bluff where Muir Knoll meets Lake Mendota provided an ideal location for ski jumping (figure 8). In 1919, Norwegian students built a wooden ski jump there. On 11 January 1920, the ski jump officially opened. A month later, on 14 February, the first ski jumping tournament was held at the site.³⁰



Figure 8: Original ski jump at Muir Knoll, 1920.

The original ski slide was replaced over Christmas break, 1920, with a taller jump. The Norwegian engineering students who designed the slide used dismantled bleachers from Camp Randall to build the supporting scaffold. The slide featured two platforms, 26 and 35 feet above ground level. The engineers calculated the typical rider's speed upon landing at the foot of the hill as 50 miles per hour.³¹

The jump remained in use for about eight years, eventually falling into disrepair. In October 1931, a group of students celebrated the Badgers' football victory over Purdue by burning it down.³² Appropriately, the class of 1932 designated a portion of their class gift to be used for the construction of a new slide.³³ The Wisconsin Hoofers agreed to take on the project and approached the regents for approval. Plans for the new steel structure were drawn by the state engineer (figure 9 and 10).³⁴ The *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* announced completion of the new slide in January 1933, and it was dedicated on 11 February during ceremonies that attracted jumpers from "all parts of the country,"

³⁰ Finn Aanesen, "Ski sport at Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 21 (March 1920): 125-126.

³¹ M. K. Drewry, "Skiing, the engineer's sport," *Wisconsin Engineer* 25 (January 1921): 65-66.

³² Clipping from *Daily Cardinal*, marked 20 October 1931, in Wisconsin Hoofers scrapbook no. 3, p. 6; University of Wisconsin Collection: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/UW>

³³ "The 79th commencement exercises," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 33 (July 1932): 312.

³⁴ "Approve new ski slide construction," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 34 (November 1932): 50.

including a female athlete from Norway.³⁵ The 108-foot-long jump was a popular attraction on campus until 1957, when it was dismantled and relocated to Madison's Hoyt Park.³⁶



Figure 9: Steel ski jump, built 1932-33.

In May 1940, students recruited by horticulture professor Franz Aust planted 800 black locust trees on the knoll in an effort to counteract erosion. "A half-acre strip near the University ski slide and adjoining the lake road was planted with two-foot sprouts, which it is hoped will make the hill erosion-proof in three or four years," the *Wisconsin Alumnus* reported.³⁷

³⁵ "Dedicate new ski jump," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 34 (March 1933): 174.

³⁶ Porter Butts, "The university adds the lake to its campus," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 35 (January 1934): 101; "A landmark gone," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 59 (November 1957): 13.

³⁷ "Muir Knoll Erosion Stopped," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 41 (July 1940): 339; E. David Cronon and John W. Jenkins, *The University of Wisconsin: A History, 1925-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 678.

In addition to its recreational use, the ski jump and Muir Woods were used during World War II for military training exercises. In 1942, Muir Knoll was the scene of “spectacular maneuvers,” during which:

two platoons of infantry successfully stormed the ski jump hill under conditions resembling actual warfare, two planes of the civil air patrol “machine-gunned” marching troops [sic], and engineers set up barbed wire entanglements and “land mines”.... The platoons attacked the objective from two directions, one platoon advancing through the underbrush of the heavily wooded Muir Knoll woods west of the ski pump [sic] hill and the other from the less protected area of Lincoln terrace.³⁸

In 1943, ski troops practiced winter tactics on the hill:

Commando winter warfare tactics were featured at the ski meet held at Muir knoll February 14. The ROTC ski troops, garbed in all-white uniforms, presented a demonstration which included a machine gun mounted on skis in its tactical maneuvers. In camouflaged positions, the cadets manned all types of infantry weapons, while “Walkie-Talkies” furnished the communications for this mock battle.³⁹

Undoubtedly, these maneuvers made some impact on the vegetation and soils of Muir Knoll.

Removal of the Muir Locust

In 1953, university officials determined that the moribund Muir Locust had become a safety hazard and ordered it cut down.⁴⁰ President E.B. Fred arranged for wood from the tree to be turned into mementos, such as letter openers and gavels.⁴¹ In subsequent years, Muir Locust gavels were presented to members of the Board of Regents and to various alumni groups.⁴²

³⁸ Havens Wilbur, “R.O.T.C.,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 43 (July 1942): 348.

³⁹ “Ski troops learn winter war tactics,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 44 (April 1943): 254.

⁴⁰ John Hunter, “Famed locust may yet be lasting memorial to Muir,” *Madison Capital Times*, 16 October 1953.

⁴¹ R. Bruce Allison, “In search of the Muir Locust,” *Wisconsin Alumni* 90 (September 1989): 29.

⁴² Minutes, Board of Regents, UW Archives, series 1/1/1, Vol. 15, 10 April 1954; “Win alumni newsletter awards,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 62 (January 1961): 31.



Figure 10: Muir Knoll, Bascom Woods, and Lake Mendota, ca. 1940-46. The ski jump is visible above the treetops to the right of North Hall.



Figure 11: Ednah Shepard Thomas teaches an English class at the edge of Bascom Woods, ca. fall 1950.



Figure 12: Outdoor class at the Carillon Tower near Bascom Woods, ca. 1940s. Note Black Hawk boulder between Observatory Drive and the seated group.



Figure 13: “A Design Plan for John Muir Park,” drawn in 1959 by G. William Longenecker, UW professor of horticulture. Longenecker directed landscape planning, planting and maintenance for the campus. He also served as executive director of the UW Arboretum from its inception in 1932 until 1966. In 1964, Longenecker established the UW Department of Landscape Architecture and became its first chair.

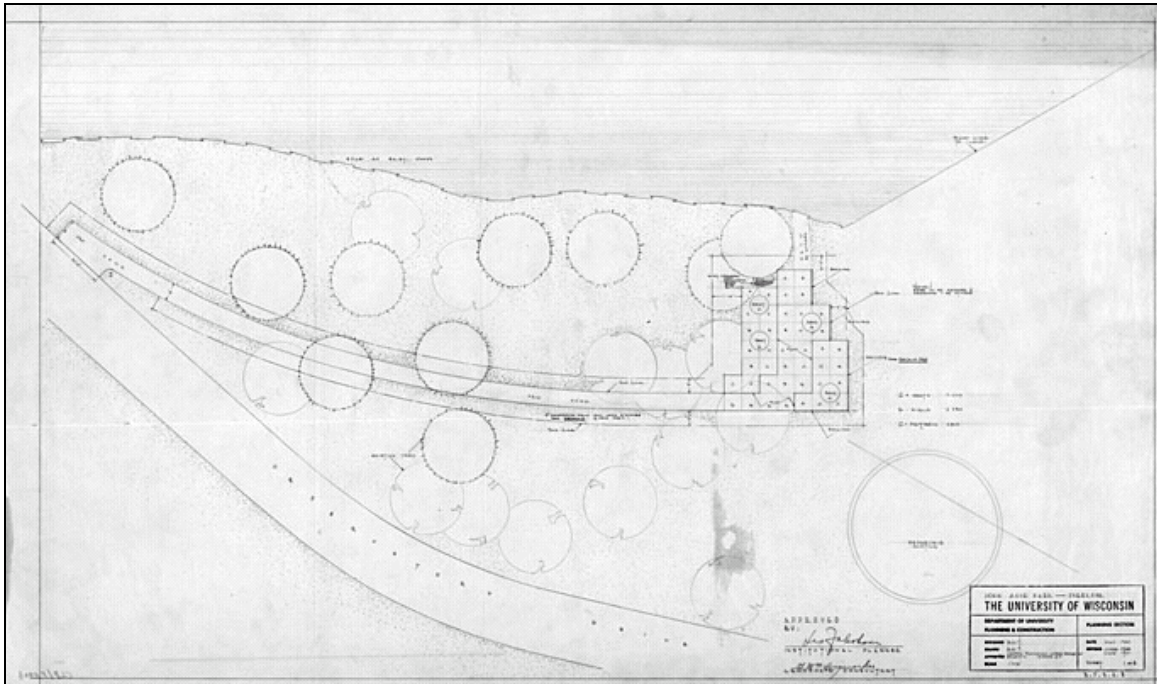


Figure 14: Plan for John Muir Park Overlook, designed 1960-61 by Richard E. Tipple. The three-level terrace area was installed in 1962. Funds for its distinctive mushroom-shaped seats were donated by the Class of 1961. Tipple, who had graduated with the Class of 1950, went on to become the university landscape architect in 1963.

The Social Sciences Building controversy

In October 1958, the regents directed the campus planning commission to determine the best use of the wooded slope between Bascom Hall and Lake Mendota (figures 11 and 12). The commission considered several possible scenarios, including clustering a group of buildings around the Carillon Tower; developing a mall from the north end of Bascom Hall to the lakeshore; or leaving Bascom Woods undeveloped and building elsewhere.⁴³ The Advisory Committee on Campus Wooded Areas issued a report the following month.⁴⁴ In February 1959, the regents voted to place a new “Economics-Sociology-Anthropology building” at the western end of the woods, with the proviso that the area east of the Carillon Tower be preserved as “John Muir Park” (figure 13)

to be a laboratory for studying the plants and animals of the region and an outstanding example of the landscape of Wisconsin. Such designation would act as a guide to the Campus Planning Commission and as a reassurance to both those who value the unusual educational opportunities provided by the wooded areas and those who cherish the beauty of the campus.⁴⁵

⁴³ “Compendium,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 60 (December 1958): 23.

⁴⁴ Advisory Committee on Campus Wooded Areas, “The Use of Campus Wooded Areas by Biologists: I. Eastern Portion of Campus,” 21 November 1958; UW Archives, series 1/1/3, box 85 (filed with documents for Board of Regents’ meeting, 17 January 1959).

⁴⁵ Minutes, Board of Regents, UW-Archives Series 1/1/1, Vol 20, 7 February 1959; “Compendium,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 60 (March 1959): 8.

For those who wanted the woods left intact, the regents' decision was anything but reassuring. Among them was naturalist James H. Zimmerman, a newly-minted Ph.D. in botany, who saw in John Muir Park the ideal laboratory for nature study. "Bascom Wood is the only thing intimately accessible to the [UW] student which was neither created nor fundamentally altered by man," he wrote. "To manipulate the Wood is to assume, in a most unscientific way, that nature can be improved upon....Because they teach literacy of the land, natural areas do in fact have long-term economic and social values...."⁴⁶

A Committee for the Preservation of Bascom Woods organized and asked the Wisconsin Alumni Association to poll WAA members on the issue.⁴⁷ UW president Conrad Elvehjem commented on the controversy at the Alumni Day Dinner in June 1959. "My years on this campus have given me a love for its beauty that no man can challenge or deny," Elvehjem maintained.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Regent Oscar Rennebohm continued to press for the development of Bascom Woods until he left the board in 1961. "You can't continue to ask taxpayers of this state to pay \$430,000 an acre for land off the campus and let a lot of land with second growth trees stay vacant," Rennebohm told his fellow regents, insisting that "the land would be more beautiful if the woods were cut down and the area built on, landscaped and gardenized."⁴⁹

Rennebohm relinquished his seat on the Board of Regents in June 1961, around the same time that the trees began coming down on the western edge of Bascom Woods. "Part of Bascom Woods has been sacrificed," reported the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, "to provide badly needed classroom and office space in the new Social Studies building."⁵⁰ The portion of the building contiguous with the Carillon Tower was completed in 1962 (figures 15, 17 and 18).⁵¹ An

⁴⁶ James H. Zimmerman, "Muir Park: a perfect laboratory for nature study," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 60 (May 1959): 17. Zimmerman held three botany degrees from the UW: B.A., 1947; M.A., 1952; and Ph.D., 1958. His specialty was plant taxonomy, but his knowledge of the natural world was encyclopedic and his teaching skills, legendary. After serving as a technical assistant to the UW Integrated Liberal Studies Program in the late 1950s, Zimmerman took a position with Madison's public schools as a naturalist. In 1977, he joined the Department of Landscape Architecture faculty, teaching classes in environmental awareness. He died 28 September 1992 while tending a restored prairie on property he owned near Cambridge, Wisconsin.

⁴⁷ "Association report," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 60 (July 1959): 3.

⁴⁸ "Of commencing and returning," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 60 (July 1959): 7.

⁴⁹ "Oscar Rennebohm ends his term as a member of the Board of Regents," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 62 (July 1961): 48.

⁵⁰ "New buildings change campus profile," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 62 (June 1961): 29. Accompanying the story is a photograph of the excavation for the Social Science Building's foundation.

⁵¹ "Building-Part I," *Wisconsin Alumnus* 64 (November 1962): 18.

eight-story addition to the northern side of the building was completed in 1966 (figure 16).⁵²

Muir Knoll overlook

In the meantime, landscape architect Richard E. Tipple (1925-2005) designed a three-level area, to be installed on the former ski jump site. Tipple's original plan was dated May 1960, with final revisions made the following spring — perhaps in response to the installation of a memorial to Thomas E. Brittingham, Jr., near the proposed site. The Brittingham Rune Stone, inscribed with lines from the Norse Edda, was dedicated in May 1961 by beneficiaries of the Viking scholarship program (figure 25). Brittingham and his wife, Margaret Cummins Brittingham, had established the program in 1952 and over the years had paved the way for scores of students from Scandinavia to attend the university. Carved in Sweden, the stone was shipped to Madison in 1961.⁵³ The decision to place the monument on Muir Knoll may have been influenced by the proximity of the Rasmus B. Anderson memorial (figure 20), which stands only a few yards west of the rune stone, as well as by the knoll's historical ties to previous Norse students, who had built the first ski jump there.

Construction of the terrace was completed by July 1962, partially funded with a gift from the Class of 1961 (figures 14 and 20). The facility was intended to encourage “the pedestrian traveler to pause and enjoy the striking view of Lake Mendota, and for outdoor classes.” At the time, tree species present in Muir Woods included ash, box elder, cherry, elm, hickory, hop hornbeam, locust, maple, oak and willow. Official dedication of John Muir Park took place on February 8, 1964. Ceremonies at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin headquarters building included the unveiling of a John Muir commemorative postage stamp.⁵⁴

The Class of 1961 terrace was demolished, along with the adjacent water reservoir, during November 2009. The reservoir site has been restored with lawn and native plants. The Class of 1961 terrace was replaced by the Robert E. Gard Storytellers Circle, a limestone seating area with views to the lake. An archaeologist monitoring the initial ground disturbing activities did not note any archaeological features.

⁵² University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Planning and Construction, *Perspectives of a university: A survey of the campus-architectural, historical, archaeological and memorial resources and recommendations for preservation* (Madison: 1978), 72.

⁵³ “Vikings pay tribute to Tom,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 62 (July 1961): 44-45.

⁵⁴ Photograph, *Wisconsin Alumnus* 63 (July 1962): 21; “John Muir Tribute,” *Wisconsin Alumnus* 65 (March 1964): 8. For another contemporary photograph, see *Wisconsin Alumnus* 67 (October 1965): 12.

The Anderson Boulder

The Rasmus Bjørn Anderson boulder at John Muir Park commemorates the founder of the first Scandinavian studies department to be established within an American university (figures 20 and 26). Anderson (1846-1936), the son of Norwegian immigrants, was born in Dane County and joined the UW faculty in 1869. He was named to the chair of Scandinavian languages and literature in 1875, a position he resigned in 1883 to enter the private sector. His efforts to improve the status and cultural prestige of Scandinavian-Americans were tireless. According to his biographer, UW history professor Paul Knaplund, Anderson “taught men of Norse blood not to consider themselves second-class citizens.” Anderson died March 2, 1936 in Madison.

The boulder that was to become his memorial once stood outside his home on North Carroll Street, where it served as a mounting block for visitors arriving on horseback and in carriages. Anderson and his wife found the boulder in the Greenbush area of Madison and had it moved to his residence in the winter of 1881. The professor claimed that the boulder was the petrified Viking ship that brought Leif Erickson to this continent. Apparently, Erickson abandoned his ship on the Atlantic coast, after which Indians used it in their travels to the Four Lakes area. Here the boat was abandoned and subsequently became petrified—shrinking materially in size as it turned to stone. On at least one occasion, student pranksters tried to steal the ship from in front of Anderson’s house, but failed to budge the five-ton boat.⁵⁵ The erstwhile ship was moved to Muir Knoll after his death and dedicated on June 29, 1937.

⁵⁵ “Leif Erickson’s boat in Madison,” *State Journal*, August 18, 1903.

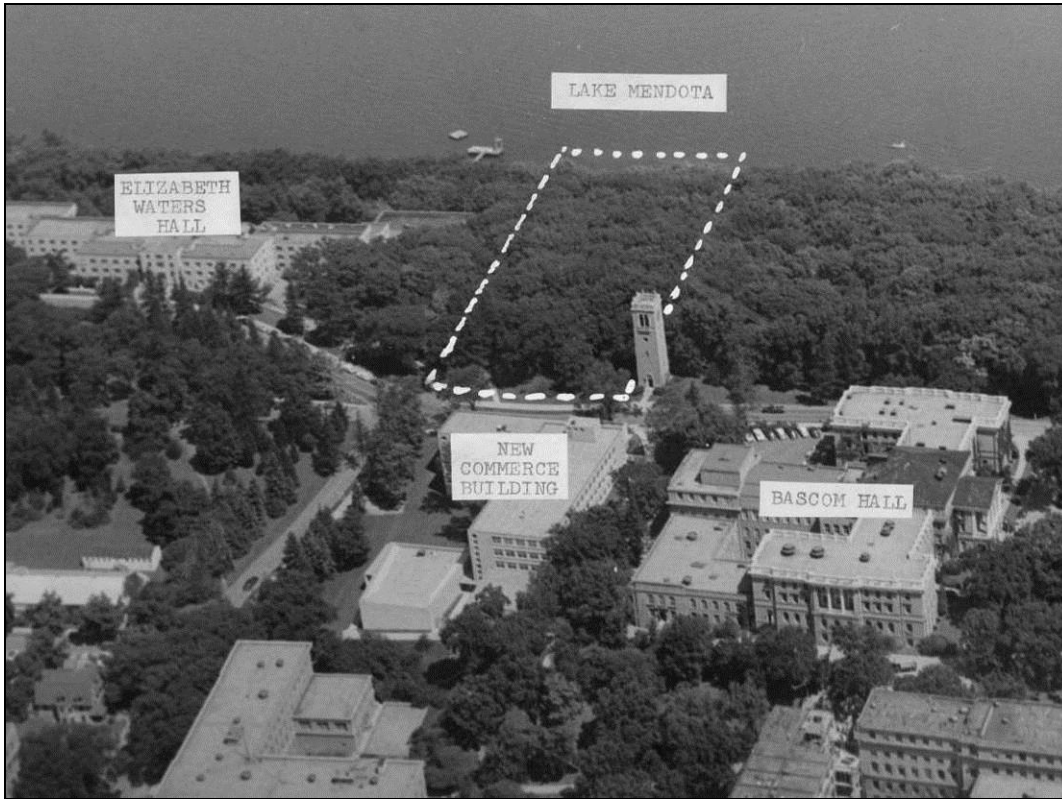


Figure 15: Future site of Social Sciences Building, 1958.

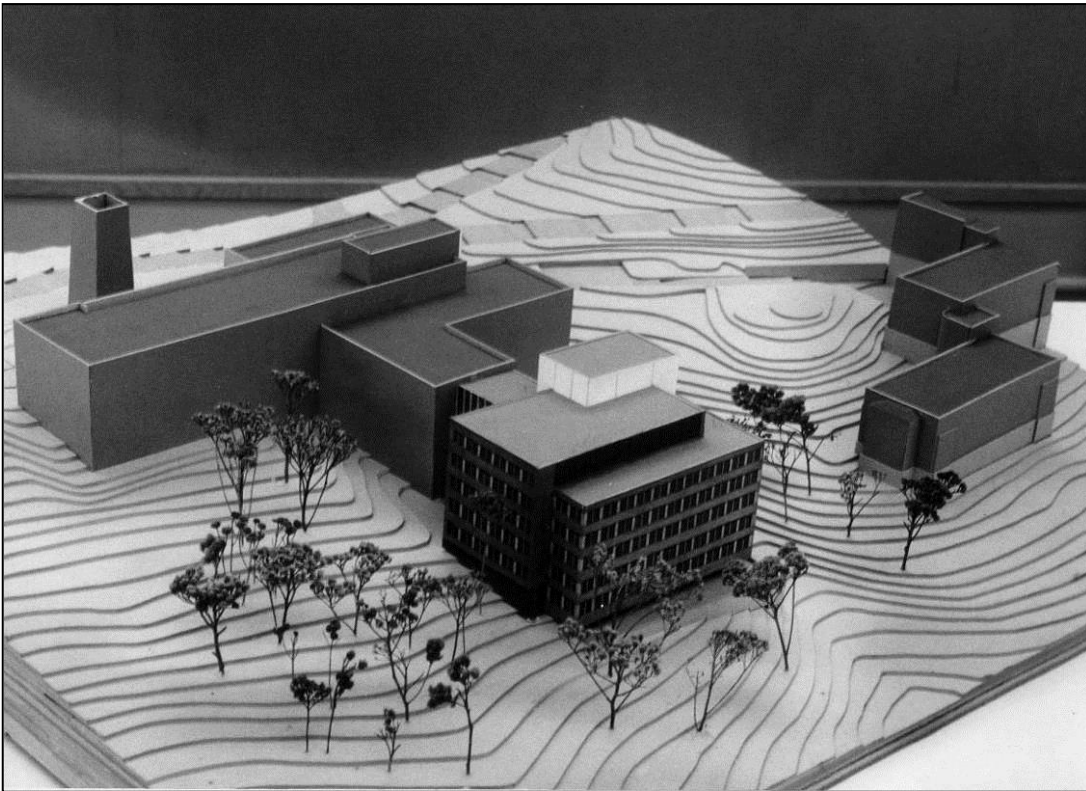


Figure 16: Architects' model of Social Sciences Building, showing 1966 north addition.

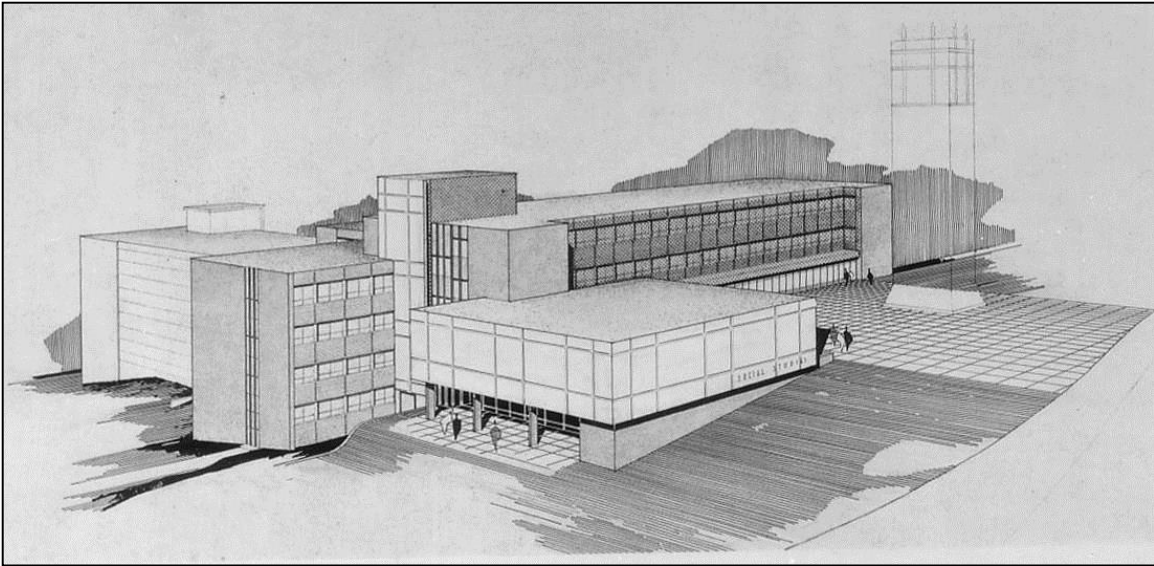


Figure 17: Architects' rendering of Social Sciences Building; Law, Law, Potter and Nystrom, 1960.



Figure 18: Social Sciences Building under construction, 1961.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land use

The park is used for passive recreation and for teaching classes in botany, landscape architecture, environmental studies, ecology, geology, and art (figures 11 and 12). A network of trails provides circulation between the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path, the overlook, and Observatory Drive. The park is managed by the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, a unit of the Facilities Planning and Management division.

Spatial organization

John Muir Park comprises more than seven acres, mostly wooded. The William H. Sewell Social Sciences Building stands at the western boundary, with Observatory Drive on the south and Helen C. White Hall on the east. The Howard Temin Lakeshore Path forms the major portion of the park's northern boundary (figure 19). The overlook is near the northeastern corner of the park. From the overlook, paths lead downhill through the woods and west to the Social Sciences Building.

Topography

The property slopes downward from Observatory Drive north toward Lake Mendota. The grade from Bascom Hall north to the lake averages 18 percent, while the northern aspect of Muir Knoll has an average grade of 66 percent.⁵⁶ By contrast, the sidewalk leading downhill from Observatory Drive to the overlook descends at the relatively gentle grade of 9 percent. The highest point on Observatory Drive is 948 feet; elevation at the overlook is 908 feet, almost 60 feet above the lake level.⁵⁷

Vegetation

Although oaks were the once dominant species, these trees have ceased to reproduce.⁵⁸ Plants not associated with an undisturbed oak forest dominate the groundlayer. The relatively level area adjacent to the overlook is maintained as a lawn, which is shaded by mature specimen trees. Many of these stately trees are identified by signposts.⁵⁹ Ornamental shrubs provide a buffer between Observatory Drive and the southeastern corner of the park, while a small area along the eastern boundary is overgrown with undesirable shrubs.

⁵⁶ Grades were calculated using four-foot contour maps, accessed August 29, 2006 via the Dane County Land Information Office website: <http://www.countyofdane.com/lio>

⁵⁷ See National Geodetic Survey data sheet for the "Wisconsin" station, OM1102, <http://www.ngs.noaa.gov>. Although the levels of Madison's lakes vary, the average elevation of Lake Mendota is 849 feet.

⁵⁸ This is to be expected, because oak seedlings are intolerant of shade, as noted by John T. Curtis: "The dominance exerted by any one oak species is likely to be only one generation in duration, since other species with greater shade tolerance will replace it." See Curtis, *Vegetation of Wisconsin*, 145.

⁵⁹ Einstein, Daniel, ed. *Campus Tree Walks: Bascom and Observatory Hills*, revised sesquicentennial ed. (Madison: UW-Madison Environmental Management/Physical Plan, 1998), 2, 8-10.

Patterns of circulation

Primary access to the park is by sidewalk from Observatory Drive. Just east of the class memorials, the walk curves toward the overlook, crossing the lawn. Pedestrians also may enter the park from the lakeshore path via a rustic trail with log steps. Informal trails meander through the woods. Trails paved with gravel are covered with eroded soil and leaf litter. There is no vehicular access to the park.

Views

The Muir Knoll overlook provides a spectacular panorama of Lake Mendota and its shoreline. Views south toward Observatory Drive from the overlook are buffered by vegetation, providing a sense of enclosure that helps to guide the visitor's focus toward the woods and lake. Views from within the woods change with the seasons due to tree and brush cover. From the southern edge of the park, the northern façade of Bascom Hall and the Carillon Tower dominate the view. Helen C. White Hall blocks views to the east. Looking west, the woods end at the Social Sciences Building, obscuring a clear view of the structure. Due to the steep slope below the overlook, there is very little to be seen of the campus from the lakeshore path, while the views from Observatory Drive are obscured by vegetation, especially in the summer months.

Archaeological resources

Personnel from the Wisconsin Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) conducted a Phase I survey at Muir Knoll on August 18, 2003 (figure 28). They excavated nine shovel tests, two of which produced flake and shatter fragments of Prairie du Chien chert. Muir Knoll subsequently was registered as 47 DA-1208 on the state Archeological Site Inventory (ASI).⁶⁰

In 2004, George Christiansen of the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center visited the site as part of a campus-wide investigation. Although the OSA had surveyed the hilltop, the area at the base of the knoll remains untested, Christiansen noted in a subsequent report. His recommendations include additional testing along the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path, "and perhaps along the northern margin of Observatory Drive." He also called for additional archival research to identify other potentially significant properties. Archaeologist Charles E. Brown reported in 1914 that linear mounds once existed between North Hall and Lake Mendota.⁶¹ "The potential path of these mounds

⁶⁰ Wisconsin Office of the State Archaeologist, *A Phase I Archaeological Survey of Muir Knoll, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*, by Amy L. Rosebrough (Madison: 2003), 2, 8. For a description of Phase I survey methodology, see Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center, "2004 Archaeological Investigations on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus, City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin," prepared by George W. Christiansen III (Milwaukee: GLARC, 2005), 34-35.

⁶¹ Charles E. Brown, "Prehistoric Indian monuments on the university grounds," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 15 (June 1914): 384. Brown's informant was I. N. Stewart (1838-1915), who lived in North Hall while attending the university in the early 1860s. John Muir lived across the hall. After graduating with the Class of 1862, Stewart joined the army and was stationed at Camp Randall. Afterwards, he taught school, wrote for the *Milwaukee Journal*, and served in the state assembly. See I. N., "Concerning an old student," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 1. (November 1900): 74-76.

lies within the overlook portion of John Muir Park,” Christiansen pointed out. Any construction activities that involve earth movement should be monitored by a professional archaeologist qualified to excavate human remains, he advised.⁶²

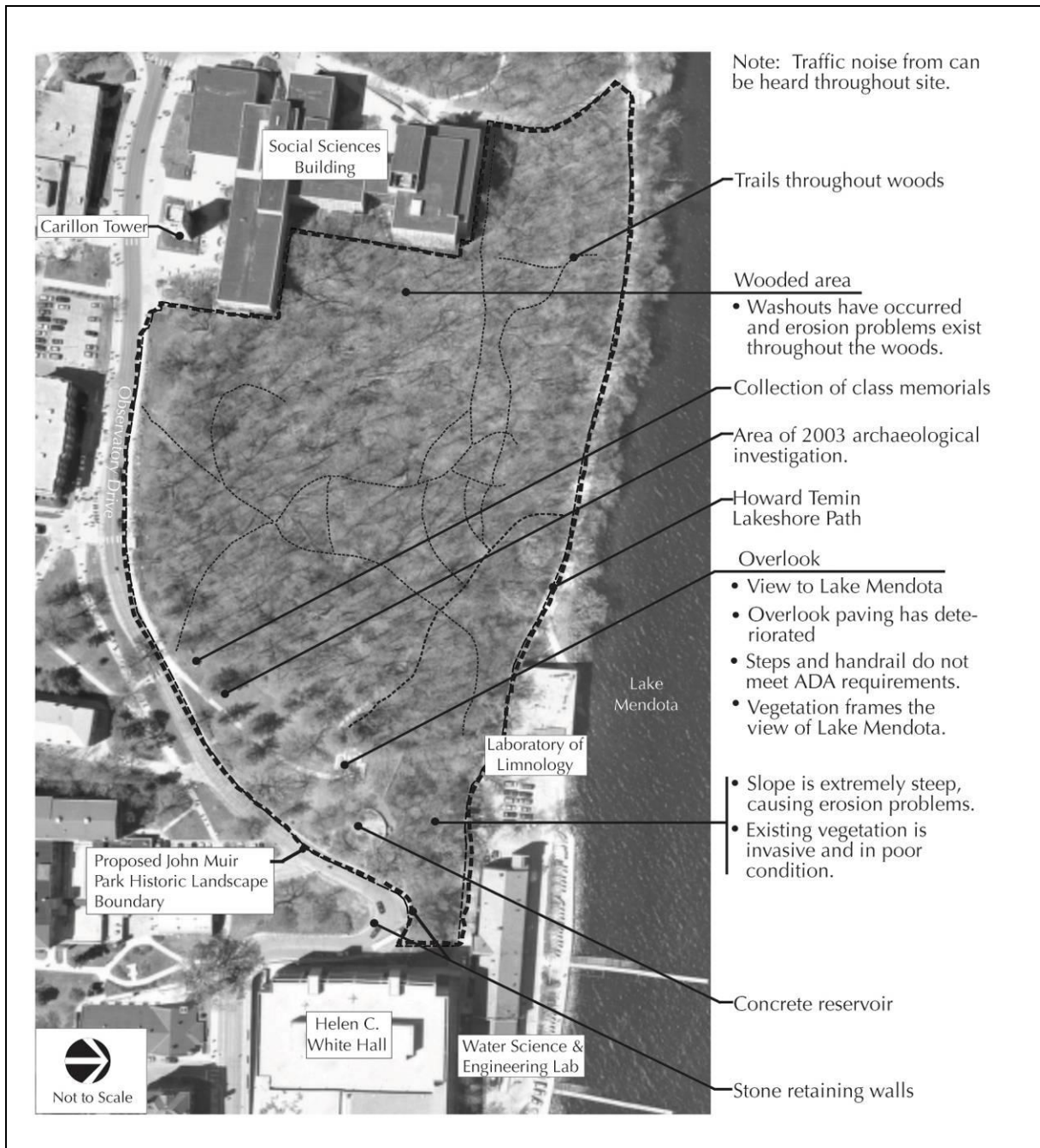


Figure 19: Existing conditions, 2004.

⁶² GLARC, “2004 Investigations,” 107-108, 144-145.



Figure 20: Overlook, looking east, John Muir Park, 2004 (left to right): Rasmus B. Anderson boulder, Class of 1961 terrace, Brittingham rune stone. Helen C. White Hall is visible in the distance through the trees.



Figure 21: Looking northeast across sidewalk to overlook, 2004. In the background is the roof of a reservoir built in 1914 to supply water to the Hydraulics Laboratory.



Figure 22: Looking southeast along sidewalk toward Observatory Drive and Bascom Hall, John Muir Park, 2004.



Figure 23: “Natural Wonders” historical marker honoring John Muir, 2004. In 2001, more than 30 historical markers were installed on campus to commemorate outstanding achievements and discoveries with ties to the university. The historical marker project was funded by the UW Foundation as part of the university’s sesquicentennial observance.



Figure 24: Looking northeast along sidewalk from Observatory Drive toward overlook, John Muir Park, 2004.



**Figure 25: Located adjacent to the Brittingham rune stone, this plaque provides the following translation:
“To a good friend, the way is not long, though he be far away.”**



Figure 26: The Anderson boulder, dedicated on June 29, 1937, commemorates the achievements of Rasmus Bjørn Anderson (1846-1936), the university's first chair of Scandinavian studies, 2004.



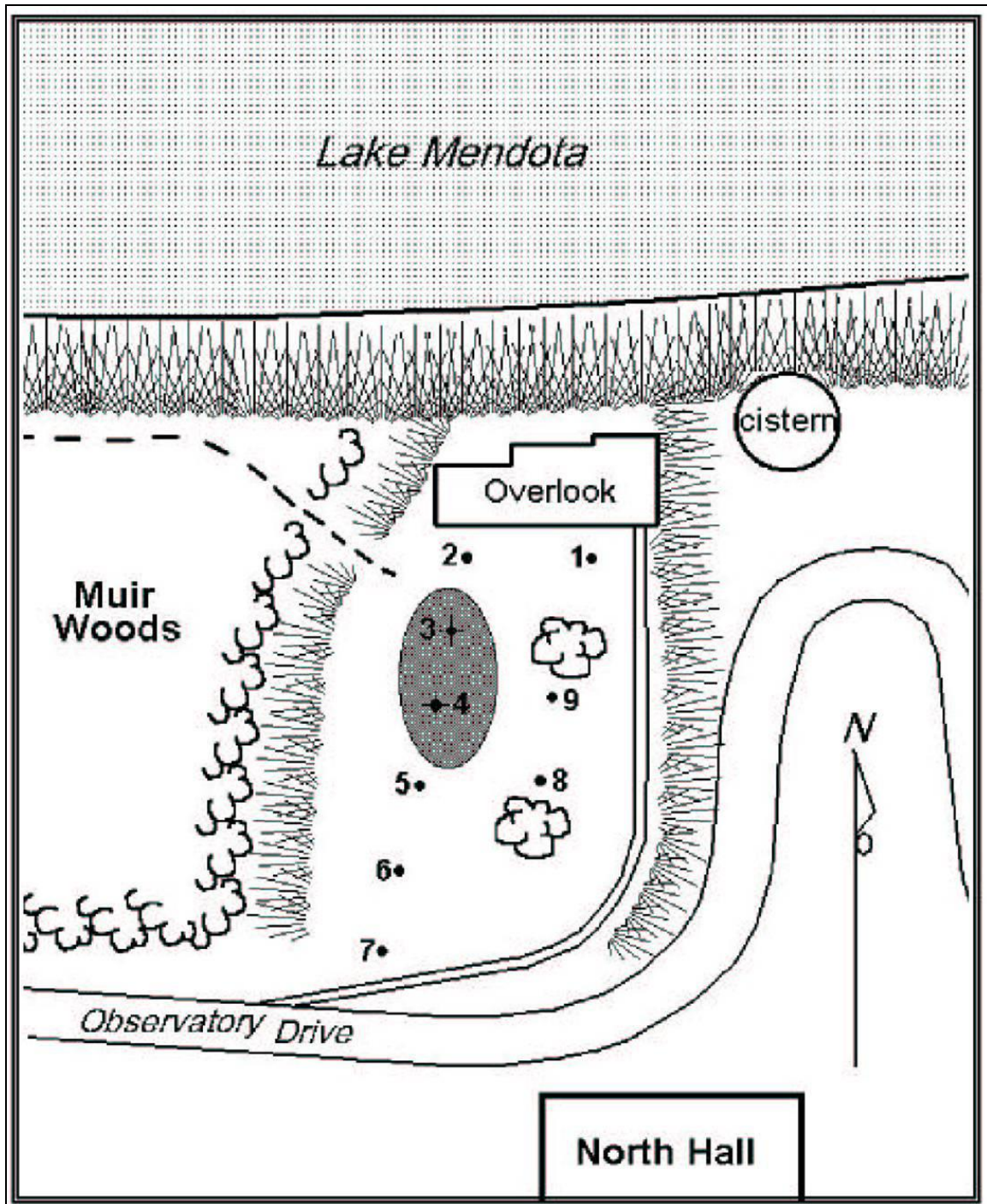


Figure 28: Locations of archaeological shovel test sites excavated in 2003. Egg-shaped shaded area marks location of ASI site 47 DA-1208.

ANALYSIS OF INTEGRITY

Land use

American Indians once inhabited the campus area and built earthworks on the hills overlooking Lake Mendota. Two linear mounds once stood in the area between North Hall and the lakeshore. The above-ground resources associated with these mounds likely have been destroyed by development. In 2003, archaeologists found pre-European-American settlement artifacts on Muir Knoll, but disturbance at the site has mixed this material with post-contact debris. Further investigation would be necessary to determine the extent of the archaeological resources present within John Muir Park.

During the university's early years, the area now known as John Muir Park was used for recreation and as a source of firewood.⁶³ In addition to its use for passive recreation such as hiking, the park has been the scene of active recreational use (notably, the Wisconsin Hoofers' ski jumping competitions).

John Muir Park also serves as a commemorative site. The first memorial known to be dedicated there was the Muir Knoll marker, a red granite boulder inscribed with the words, "Muir Knoll," which was presented by the John Muir Walking Club in 1918 (see foreground, figure 9).⁶⁴ Class memorials from the late nineteenth century, originally located near Bascom hall, and subsequently relocated to the southern edge of Muir Woods, where they are visible from Observatory Drive.⁶⁵ The memorial to Rasmus B. Anderson was erected in 1937. The Brittingham Rune Stone was dedicated in May 1961, and re-dedicated in September 1963.

Construction of the overlook area in 1962 supported passive recreation. The formal dedication of John Muir Park in February 1964 reflected a renewed commitment by the university to maintain the property as a natural botanical library not to be disturbed by development. "We have here a living document that serves as a primer for those students just beginning to read biology," declared botany professor Grant Cottam, "and a technical encyclopedia for those more knowledgeable."⁶⁶

⁶³ Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin: A History, 1848-1925* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1949), 1:188; "Do you remember?" *Wisconsin Alumnus* 37 (August 1936): 349.

⁶⁴ The official name is unclear. The memorial has been identified variously as "Muir Rock" and "Muir Boulder." At the time of its dedication, it was called the "Muir Knoll marker," or simply the "Muir marker." See "Muir Knoll dedicatory exercises," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 19 (August 1918): 248.

⁶⁵ The tradition of dedicating a class "tombstone" during Commencement Week apparently died out around the turn of the century. See "Commencement Exercises: Class Day," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 1 (July 1900): 437: "It is worthy of notice that this year the tombstone idea was dropped, much to the advantage of the upper campus."

⁶⁶ E.B. Fred, *A University Remembers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1969), 80.

Topography and response to natural environment

The fact that John Muir Park has remained relatively undisturbed over the years is due in large part to its location atop a knoll and steep slope overlooking Lake Mendota. Before the arrival of European-American settlers, the site was frequented by Native people, who built earthworks there. Vegetation at that time of the U. S. government land survey consisted of mixed prairie and oak savanna with patches of hazel underbrush. An extensive marsh system was located less than a mile to the west, providing a food source to both Indians and white settlers. Muir Knoll caps a small bench that projects northward from the summit of Bascom Hill, a large drumlin to which early settlers referred as Madison's "second hill." Muir Knoll slopes steeply downward (at a grade of 60 to 75 percent) on its northern and eastern flanks.⁶⁷ The northern slope, which once dropped directly to the southern shore of Lake Mendota, is severely eroded.

Vegetation

In December 1834, when government surveying crews were running a section line over the future site of John Muir Park, they recorded oaks (black, white and bur) as the dominant timber species.⁶⁸ Undergrowth along nearby section lines was recorded as "oak and grass," a combination suggesting the presence of an oak savanna.⁶⁹ Bascom Hill, formerly known as College Hill, was still relatively wild in the 1850s, and a "delightful hiding place for stock of all kinds," recalled one Madison resident, Lydia Sharp Winterbotham (1845-1922). Cattle that had wandered away from nearby homes "could eat acorns, drink lake water, wade through grass knee deep, or completely lose themselves, or their owners, searching for them, in the thicket deeply overshadowed by the large trees," she wrote. "State street was the forest primeval, carpeted with underbrush...."⁷⁰

Today, the largest trees in John Muir Park are red oak, white oak, black cherry, and shagbark hickory. They represent remnants of the original forest cover, which would have been characterized by UW botanist John T. Curtis as southern xeric.⁷¹ The oaks are not reproducing, however, and some of the red oaks have been infected by oak wilt. A wind shear event in recent years caused three tip-ups and broken treetops on Muir Knoll.

Shrubs grow more densely than they would have in John Muir's day; nor would exotic species such as buckthorn have been present in the 1860s. Currently, shrubs cover from 25 to 50 percent of the understory; species include natives such as elderberry and

⁶⁷ Office of the State Archaeologist, *Muir Knoll*, 3; GLARC, 2004 *Investigations*, 108.

⁶⁸ Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands, *Surveyors' field notes, 1832-1865*, Town 7 North, Range 9 East. <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu>. Follow link to "Wisconsin Public Land Survey Records" (accessed 1 August 2, 2006). See notes for line between sections 14 and 15, which was recorded on 7 December 1834.

⁶⁹ Surveyors' field notes, T7N, R9E. For example, see notes for line between sections 15 and 22, the future route of Linden Drive.

⁷⁰ L.S.W. [Lydia Sharp Winterbotham], "Some Early University and North Hall History," *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* 5 (February 1904): 144.

⁷¹ John T. Curtis, *The Vegetation of Wisconsin: An Ordination of Plant Communities* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 132 ff.

chokecherry. Ground layer species include hepatica, wild geranium, columbine, Jack-in-the-pulpit, mayapple, enchanter's nightshade, Virginia waterleaf, early meadow rue, false Solomon's-seal, white baneberry, white snakeroot, and goldenrods (zigzag and elm-leaf). Although diverse, native species are sparse in the ground layer.

Vegetation adjacent to the overlook includes mown lawn and mature European larch, as well as other tree species (figure 24). Over the years, this area has undergone the most disturbance, with construction of the ski jumps and the overlook.

Patterns of circulation

The sidewalk leading from Observatory Drive to the overlook has been present since 1962 (figure 22). Little is known about the network of paths in the woods. Their rustic construction is consistent with the overall character of the woods (figure 27).

Views

The view of Lake Mendota is one of the most critical elements related to the integrity of this site. The relationship between the campus and Lake Mendota was an important influence on John Muir. Although the plants and hardscape may have changed over the years, the preservation of the campus-lake relationship is still vital and apparent.

Archaeological resources

The property contains a state listed archaeological site, 47-DA-1208, which has been listed on the state Archaeological Site Inventory (ASI). Shovel testing in 2003 revealed the presence of artifacts at a low density. Relatively recent debris is mixed with pre-contact artifacts throughout the A horizon, indicating a significant level of soil disturbance.

Landscape features

In the tables below, landscape features are divided into three categories, based on their contribution to the historic integrity of the landscape.

1. *Contributing features* were present and directly related to the historic character of the property during the period of significance; they continue to contribute to the overall integrity of the landscape
2. *Compatible features* were not present during the period of significance, but are compatible with the historic character of the property; they do not detract from the integrity of the landscape.
3. *Non-contributing features* bear no relationship to the period of significance and may detract from the landscape's integrity.

TABLE 2: Contributing Features

<i>Contributing features</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Muir Knoll boulder	Red granite boulder placed 1918	Good
Woods	The woods provide an important recreational and educational resource.	Fair
Topography	The park is situated on the northern slope of a drumlin that rises above the southern shore of Lake Mendota	Fair
Views	Panoramic Lake Mendota vista	Good

TABLE 3: Compatible Features

<i>Compatible feature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Black Hawk boulder	Erected 1913	Good
Class Memorials	Boulders and “tombstones” with class years inscribed	Good
Kim bench	Memorial to Minji Kim, 1999	Good
Anderson boulder	Memorial to Rasmus B. Anderson; 1937	Good
Brittingham rune stone	Memorial to Thomas E. Brittingham Jr.; 1961	Good
Wooden steps and railing	On slope between overlook and Howard Temin Lakeshore Path	Poor

TABLE 4: Non-Contributing Features

<i>Non-contributing feature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Robert E. Gard Storyteller’s Circle	Limestone seating area, Muir Knoll overlook	Excellent
Water reservoir	Built 1914-15; parapet walls (figure 21)	Poor
Historical marker	“Natural Wonders” message; erected 2001 (figure 23)	Good
Post and chain fence	Along Observatory Drive, bordering eastern edge of knoll	Fair
Bus shelter	Metal and Plexiglas shelter on Observatory Drive	Fair
Sidewalk	Concrete; leads from Observatory Drive to overlook	Good
Metal post and woven wire fence	Along base of knoll near lakeshore path	Poor

LANDSCAPE TREATMENT

Approaches to treatment

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards and providing advice on the stewardship of cultural resources listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Secretary's standards describe four basic approaches to treatment of historic landscapes:⁷²

Restoration attempts to return a property to its appearance during a particular period of significance (e.g., John Muir's student years). Restoration is not appropriate for John Muir Park because it would not be desirable to return the property to its appearance at one particular period in history. To recreate the landscape of Muir's day would be impossible; as yet, we have no photographs, descriptions or detailed maps from that period of the park area. We know next to nothing about the Indian mounds that reportedly once stood between North Hall and Lake Mendota. In the absence of documentary evidence, only archaeological investigation could determine their exact location. Furthermore, returning the woods to their Civil War-era appearance might offend twenty-first century eyes. There can be little doubt that the "University woods" represented a convenient source for fuel for students from North Hall and soldiers stationed at Camp Randall in the 1860s.

Reconstruction attempts to re-create a vanished landscape to its appearance during a specific period of significance and in its original location. Substantial physical and documentary evidence are essential to inform the reconstruction, which must be identified clearly as a modern creation. This approach is not recommended for John Muir Park, because there is inadequate documentary evidence to support it.

Rehabilitation allows repairs, alterations, and additions that may be necessary to accommodate a compatible use for a landscape, as long as features that convey historical, cultural, or architectural values are preserved. Rehabilitation is the most appropriate treatment approach for John Muir Park. It would address contemporary needs while maintaining features with historic significance, such as the class memorials and other commemorative objects.

Preservation aims to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. This approach focuses on stabilizing and protecting extant historic resources, rather than replacing missing elements. It is appropriate when a historic property is essentially intact and does not require extensive repair or replacement.

⁷² National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, edited by Charles A. Birnbaum with Christine Capella Peters. (Washington: 1996), 3.

Management concerns

Erosion

The trail leading from the overlook to the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path is in poor condition due to erosion from runoff. Portions of the woods also have eroded, due to runoff from the Social Science Building and Observatory Drive. The slope below the overlook also has suffered erosion damage.

Vegetation/invasive species

A dense cover of invasive shrubs limits the growth of desirable species throughout the woods, as well as in the area around the retaining wall at the northern edge of the overlook. No desirable ground cover is present to hold the soil. Vegetation at the eastern edge of the park consists of opportunistic species may not be desirable (figure 29, Zone F). Maintenance of this area should be included in an overall plan for the park.

Views

Unless the dense shrub growth is pruned, views from the park to the lake will become increasingly obstructed.

Commemorative objects

Most visitors to John Muir Park are unaware of the historic significance of the class memorials scattered along Observatory Drive (figure 29, Zone B). These “tombstones” have no direct connection to John Muir or to the park’s function as a “laboratory for studying the plants and animals of the region.” Nevertheless, they serve as a reminder of the sentimental rituals practiced during commencement week in the late nineteenth century, when the student body was still relatively small and most students considered graduation a deeply meaningful rite of passage.

Archaeological resources

Linear mounds reportedly once existed between North Hall and Lake Mendota. Shovel tests by an archaeologist in 2003 yielded artifacts within the top 15 inches of the soil profile. The find spots were listed on the state Archaeological Site Inventory as 47-DA-1208—Muir Knoll. Educational and recreational uses of the park should be coordinated to protect archaeological resources.

Maintenance

John Muir Park is maintained under the direction of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve in conjunction with the university’s Physical Plant Grounds crew. Management policy oversight lies with the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee, which published a master plan for the Preserve in March 2006. The plan calls for “naturalistic management for heavier use” in John Muir Park, a regimen that will involve restoring or enhancing the landscape with “naturalistic vegetation capable of withstanding the impacts of anticipated

uses.”⁷³ Meanwhile, the metal U-style post and woven wire fencing along the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path and in the woods is unsightly and potentially dangerous. The design of the Class of 1961 terrace was poorly implemented, resulting in a hardscape incongruous with its surroundings. The overlook area is unattractive and in poor condition, and the railings are of questionable value. The nearby concrete reservoir is not compatible with the rest of the park. In its current form, it holds little appeal as a public space. If the reservoir were incorporated into an overall design for the park, however, it might become better suited for public use. (Update: the concrete reservoir and Class of 1961 were removed in 2009. The reservoir area has been covered in sod and landscaped. The Class of 1961 terrace has been replaced with the Robert E. Gard Storyteller’s Circle, a stone seating area with views to Lake Mendota.)

Other concerns

Due to a lack of appropriate signage, visitors may misinterpret John Muir Park’s history, its intended use, and its relationship to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Traffic noise from Observatory Drive interferes with quiet contemplation and outdoor lectures.

Treatment recommendations

General recommendations

1. All design projects related to John Muir Park should be developed through careful consideration of relevant planning documents, on file with UW-Madison Facilities Planning and Management:
 - a. University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Campus Master Plan, 2005: Recreating Ourselves in Place*, prepared by Ayers/Saint/Gross, Baltimore. Madison: 2005.
 - b. University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan*, prepared by Ken Saiki Design, Inc. Madison: 2006.
2. John Muir Park should remain under the jurisdiction of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.
3. Consider developing an interpretive plan for the historic landscape.
4. Develop and implement guidelines to preserve important landscape features.

Recommended treatment

1. **Rehabilitation** is the recommended treatment approach.
2. Manage the landscape based on the recommendations provided in Tables 4-6, and according to the treatment zones illustrated in figure 29.
3. Repair areas where erosion has caused washouts.
4. Use hand tools for grading.
5. Limit activity around treatment site.

⁷³ *University of Wisconsin-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan*, March 2006; see “Sustainable Management Guidelines,” 25, and “Future Vegetation” map, 50. The master plan may be downloaded from the Lakeshore Nature Preserve website: www.lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu

6. Plant indigenous groundcovers and low-growing woody species in re-graded areas to help stabilize the soil.
7. When necessary, use temporary erosion control measures (erosion control blankets, silt fences, hay bales) in areas that have been re-graded, until new vegetation is established.

Archaeological recommendations

1. The report included with this CLR, *2004 Archaeological Investigations on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus*, provided detailed information on the many archaeological sites across campus. Please refer to this report for details on resources within the boundaries of John Muir Park.⁷⁴
2. Modern archaeological techniques don't always locate deeply buried sites or human burials. Should human remains or artifacts be recovered during construction or treatment, stop work immediately and contact the Burial Sites Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society (608/264-6502).⁷⁵
3. Additional archaeological testing should be conducted at shorter intervals in the central and northern portion of the overlook area to establish site boundaries. This testing should include the excavation of at least two one-meter-by-one-meter test sites to assess further the site's potential for yielding archaeological information.⁷⁶
4. Any construction activities that involve earth movement should be monitored by a professional archaeologist who is qualified to excavate human remains.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center, *2004 Archaeological Investigations on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus, City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*, prepared by George W. Christianson III. (Milwaukee: GLARC, 2005), 107-108, 144-145.

⁷⁵ Wisconsin Office of the State Archaeologist, *A Phase I Archaeological Survey of Muir Knoll, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*, by Amy L. Rosebrough (Madison: 2003), 2.

⁷⁶ GLARC, *2004 Archaeological Investigations*, 144.

⁷⁷ GLARC, *2004 Archaeological Investigations*, 145.

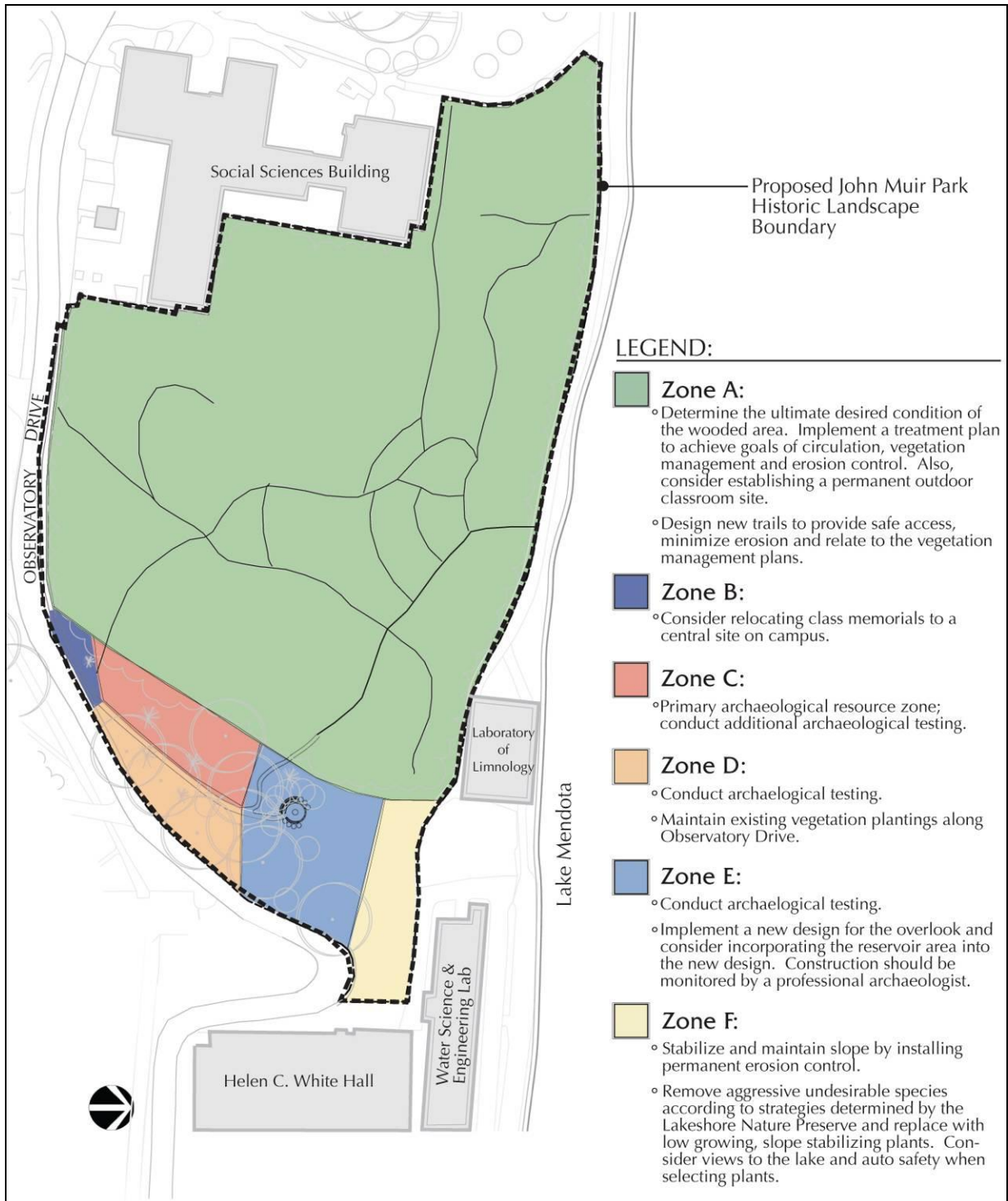


Figure 29: John Muir Park recommended treatment zones, 2004.

Treatment zones

Zone A: Wooded slope

- Determine the ultimate desired condition of the woods and implement a management plan to achieve the goals. Consider the following recommendations for treatment of the vegetation:
 - Identify desirable and undesirable species and develop a management plan.
 - Develop and implement an erosion control plan for the entire park.
 - Carefully manage the vegetation on the north side of the overlook to ensure the maintenance of the view to Lake Mendota. Prepare, implement, and monitor a planting plan for this area.
 - Consider designing trails through the woods based on the curriculum of the classes using the site.
- Repair the trail between the lakeshore path and the overlook.

Zone B: Class memorials

- Consider relocating the class memorials. Establishing a place on campus dedicated to class memorials would clarify the meaning of the objects. Follow guidelines provided in the Campus Memorials Policy.⁷⁸

Zone C: Primary archaeological resource area

- Preserve known archaeological resources.
- Conduct additional archaeological investigations to determine the extent of the resources present.

Zone D: Observatory Drive buffer

- Conduct archaeological investigations to determine the extent of the resources present.
- Maintain the existing vegetation along Observatory Drive.

Zone E: Muir Knoll Overlook

- When implementing any new landscape plan, carefully consider the character being created. Strive to use native plant materials and a naturalistic style (reminiscent of landscape architects Franz Aust and Jens Jensen). Avoid developing overly manicured plantings or modern elements within the park.
- If possible, consider the overall design of the entire park before implementing any hardscape design for the knoll. (Update: the Class of 1961 terrace was demolished during November 2009. The Robert E. Gard Storytellers Circle was constructed at this site and dedicated September 24, 2010.)
- Consider incorporating the circular concrete reservoir located east of the overlook into the overall design for the park. Perform a structural analysis on the reservoir to ensure its safety. (Update: Reservoir demolished, November 2009.)
- Follow recommendations in *2004 Archaeological Investigations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus*.

⁷⁸ The policy is available from UW-Madison, Facilities Planning and Management.

Zone F: Steep slope

Stabilize and maintain the slope by installing permanent erosion control measures. Remove aggressive undesirable species, according to Lakeshore Nature Preserve plans, and replace with low-growing, slope stabilizing plants. Consider views to the lake from Observatory Drive.

TABLE 5: Treatment recommendations for contributing features

<i>Contributing feature</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Muir Knoll boulder	Preserve
Woods	Develop and implement a landscape treatment plan to determine goals for vegetation, circulation and erosion control. Consider establishing a permanent outdoor classroom site.
Topography	Preserve
Views	Preserve

TABLE 6: Treatment recommendations for compatible features

<i>Compatible feature</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Academic Staff bench	Maintain
Black Hawk boulder	Maintain
Class memorials	Consider relocating to a central site on campus.
Kim bench	Maintain
Anderson boulder	Maintain
Brittingham rune stone	Maintain
Wooden steps and railing	Repair or replace with new steps and railing that complement the rustic character of this portion of the site.

TABLE 7: Treatment recommendations for non-contributing features

<i>Non-contributing feature</i>	<i>Description</i>
Water reservoir	Use as part of landscape treatment plan. (Update: Reservoir demolished, November 2009.)
Historical marker (2001)	Maintain
Class of 1961 terrace	Replace with new design. (Update: terrace demolished, November 2009. Installation of Robert E. Gard Storyteller's Circle completed Spring 2010.)
Post and chain fence	Maintain
Bus shelter	Maintain.
Sidewalk	Maintain
Metal post and woven wire fence along trail	Remove. If necessary, replace fence with safety railing that complements the rustic character of this portion of the site.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Bascom Woods. Before the regents named John Muir Park in 1959, the forested area between Bascom Hall and Lake Mendota commonly was known as “Bascom Woods.” Further research is necessary to determine whether or not this was a formal designation (i.e., approved by the regents) or an informal one.

Muir Woods. The name Muir Woods is now in common usage, however it is not clear if this ever was an officially sanctioned name, or if this is merely a transition from the previous designation of Bascom Woods.

Social Sciences Building. The regents’ decision to destroy one-third of Bascom Woods to make way for a “social studies building” (as it was originally called) galvanized local environmentalists into action. Madison’s afternoon newspaper, *The Capital Times*, gave the controversy extensive coverage. Management of Bascom Woods subsequently was transferred to the Arboretum Committee. As a turning point in the university’s stewardship of its “natural areas,” the Social Sciences conflict deserves more thorough documentation.

Black Hawk boulder. Research and document the monument’s history.

Natural history. Develop a more comprehensive understanding of the site’s natural history. In addition to documentary research, consult oral history interviews available from UW Archives Oral History project <http://archives.library.wisc.edu/ORAL/oral.htm>.

- John Thomson (1913-), emeritus professor of botany and dendrology, described the northwestern slope of Bascom Hill, (now occupied by Ingraham Hall) as being covered with mature open-grown oaks.
- Francis D. Hole (1913-2002). Hole came to Madison in the late 1930s to study soil science and geography; he joined the UW faculty in 1946, retiring in 1983.

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