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PEARSE-ROBINSON

LANDSCAPE - ARCHITECTURE - ENGINEERING

R. J. Pearse, A. S. L. A.  
F. A. Robinson, A. S. L. A.

Fine Arts Bldg.  
Des Moines, Ia.

35 So. Dearborn St.  
Chicago, Ill.

Merchants-Laclede Bldg.  
St. Louis, Mo.

RHP  
L. T. Andrus, Arch. E  
E. M. Bardwell, B. S.  
M. H. Fuson  
A. O. Greasby

Address Reply to:

TO THE BOARD OF CONSERVATION STATE OF IOWA  
A  
REPORT ON THE EXISTING CONDITIONS AND PROPOSED LANDSCAPE  
DEVELOPMENT ON THE TRACT OF LAND NEAR LEHIGH, IOWA, KNOWN AS;

DOLLIVER PARK

Dolliver Park near Lehigh is one of the most interesting and attractive pieces of natural scenery in the northwest part of Iowa, and when properly developed in order to furnish the maximum enjoyment for the Park visitors there is no question but that it will become one of the most popular State Parks in Iowa.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. MAIN ROAD: The main road leading thru the Park from north to south should be graded immediately and dragged after every rain during the summer. This coming fall and winter the road should be graveled, rolled and dragged in order to keep it in first class condition. In grading this road it will be necessary to cut down some of the steep grades and fill in the low places. The road should be not less than 16'(feet) wide exclusive of gutters.
2. SOUTH ROAD: The entrance road from the south should be widened to full four rods in width, should be graded and graveled in order to permit of access from the south off from the Primary road leading north and west from Lehigh.
3. SOUTH ENTRANCE: The south entrance to Dolliver Park needs a reasonable amount of grading and planting. It has too steep a grade which is winding as well as steep, for this reason it is even dangerous. The west bank should be lowered and the east bank built up so as to give more of a natural appearance without obscuring the view of the entrance turn. The entrance should be widened and well graveled and the banks planted with shrubs, vines and trees to hide the ugly grade scars which are now so much in evidence.
4. PLANTING ROADSIDE BANKS: Probably the most artificial, man made things to be seen in the park are the grade scars along the sides of the roads showing ugly clay banks which wash badly and are never attractive. After the definite finished grade is established, these banks should all be planted with native shrubs and vines, already growing in the park, such as the nine-bark, elderberry, dogwood, hazelnut, smooth wild gooseberry, woodbine, cat briar and bittersweet. These would form a mass of green foliage which would eventually cover the clay banks and give an appearance of a natural roadway leading between masses of native plant material.
5. WEST ROAD: The road which leads away from the main road toward the west forty, parallel to the creek should be improved in order to make the west forty more useable. The entrance from the main road should be changed at right angles to the main road and be moved farther south so as to not be so close to the stream and also to be on an easier grade. The sharp rocky hillside which is traversed on this road should be cut down and an easy grade be made in order to make the road accessible for all kinds of cars. Now only the high powered cars can climb this hill. This road should be made not less than 10'(feet) wide graded and culverts with side tiling should be placed wherever necessary.
6. SCOUT CAMP: At the foot of the cliff facing north on the west forty a site has been



chosen for a Scout Camp. The writer can see no objections to locating a camp at that place. A site was recommended for a well and the location of the tents.

The site asked for by the Scouts to place a temporary dam for a swimming pool was refused because by raising the water behind the dam, it will injure the roots of trees farther back along the stream. Another site was chosen for a dam site about 150' (feet) below the one asked for, it has every advantage of the other site and no trees along the banks will be injured by raising the water.

7. TRAIL ON WEST CLIFF: A four foot trail of easy grade should be built along the face of the west cliffs in order to make them more accessible for elderly people cripples and those not strong enough for a brisk climb. This class of people are often barred from seeing such natural beauty spots because no one has been thoughtful enough to provide easy access to them and a deluded idea is prevalent that these bits of natural scenery would be marred unless trails leading to them are rough, rugged and more or less inaccessible.
8. ATHLETIC FIELD TO BE PURCHASED: It is recommended that in the near future the State purchase the 8 acres of land known as the Johnson tract in the valley, it corners the west forty on the south east. This tract is ideal for athletic sports having a natural amphitheatre to the south and is especially desirable for picnics, harvest home festivals and celebrations of similar character where base ball games and races are a necessary part of the program.
9. BRIDGE: It is desirable to build a bridge across the creek at a point about 200' (feet) west of the present auto ford in line with the present main road from the south. This bridge should not be of the stereotyped farm, but should be made attractive in appearance and a real park bridge.
10. BOG PLANTING: A spot to the right of the first spring, north of the creek on the main road is recommended as an ideal site for a plantation of native water loving shrubs and flowers, in other words a bog planting. It would make a decided feature in the park of this kind of material and it is particularly desirable because it is accessible and can be seen from the main highway.
11. DAM AND LAKE NOT RECOMMENDED: Upon due consideration and with the information available the writer does not recommend the location of a dam at the site proposed about 400' (feet) from where the creek enters into the Des Moines river. The reasons given for this decision are as follows:-
  - a. Original cost of dam necessarily expensive because of large watershed drained by stream making flood conditions the rule rather than the exception.
  - b. Expensive flood gates would have to be built.
  - c. If floating logs or brush should stop the action of flood gates, large areas of the Park would be under water.
  - d. A fine swimming beach with a gravel bottom is available on the Des Moines River only a short distance away making this expensive layout for swimming unnecessary.
12. WADING POOL RECOMMENDED: In place of a dam and a lake of several acres the writer recommends the construction of a shallow wading pool in the creek bed made of concrete, smooth bottom and sides so shaped that in case of a flood the high water could pass over carrying the floating rubbish without any damage to the pool. This pool might be 150' (feet) long and 30' (feet) wide varying in depth from 10" (inches) to 3' (feet) in depth and conforming to the banks of the stream as to width. This pool should be placed at the upper end of the site proposed for the swimming pool.
13. CAMP SITE AREAS: The high well wooded bench which is now used for camp sites is ideal for such a purpose. It is recommended that these camp sites be laid out carefully with regard to not defacing any natural scenery. The spring should be opened up, pools, made for catching the surplus water, water loving plants and shrubs should be planted



along the water course to the foot of the hill. The swamp area at the foot should be drained and filled to provide for more extensive auto parking area near the spring and bathing beach. A road should be constructed thru this camp site area and from this, trails and paths should lead to the higher ground to the west.

Sites for sanitaries and camp fires should be selected with the greatest care looking forward to their convenience, use, accessibility and their blending into the natural beauty of the landscape so as to not be conspicuous.

14. NORTH ROAD: The road leading into the Park from the north should be carefully graded, drained and culverts be placed where needed, and it should be graveled as soon as possible in order to care for the heavy summer traffic from the north.
15. CAMP FIRE SITES: Camp fire sites are recommended (a) at the left of the main road leading from the south just before it crosses the creek, (b) at the west end of the west forty near the stream, (c) near the first spring north of the creek, (d) near the proposed dam site looking up the creek and down to the river, (e) at the camp site proper, (f) near the entrance to the wooded hollow aside of the little stream leading into the river, (g) at the top of the hill on the high level about a half a mile from the public road.

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

On the whole, Dolliver Park has been well taken care of and careful expenditure of funds available have produced wonderful results in making these grounds accessible and useable. This only fortells the many possibilities for future development in making the necessary improvements in the park which would add tremendously to the use, beauty and effectiveness of this most beautiful park.

Respectfully submitted

June 19, 1923

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By *R. J. Pearse*