



Straits of Mackinac Heritage Center

Purpose Vision

Background

The Father Marquette National Memorial was established by the National Park Service in 1975 and opened to the public in 1976 on land provided by the State of Michigan. The memorial remains, but the museum that opened in 1979 was destroyed by fire in 2000. The community and the state now have an opportunity to create a new facility that shares the story of the Anishinaabe and French people at the Straits of Mackinac as it involves more partners, serves more community needs, and offers more opportunities for outdoor and indoor learning and healthy recreation.

The first step in this process was the adoption in 2015 of a general management plan for Straits State Park that designates its west unit as a “History Education Zone.” The zone is focused on “visitor education and interpretation of the natural, cultural and historic resources related to the Father Marquette National Memorial and the region.”

We have formed a core collaborative committed to long-term collaboration to develop the plan for the site and secure the funding and partnerships needed to build it and make it sustainable. The group has received a \$500,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant, one of twenty-nine awarded in 2018. We must raise \$1.5 million in match for the grant.



Purpose Statement

The transformed site inspires reflection, learning, and healthy life styles through cultural and natural resource-based experiences built around the Anishinaabe and French heritage of the region.



Vision

The site welcomes, engages and excites visitors with indoor and outdoor experiences. It surprises them. It changes them. It causes them to think and to ponder the past, the present and the future. It's fun. It leads tourists and residents to a deeper experience of the region and a desire to visit other area attractions.

It is a sustainable destination tourism attraction created through partnerships with for-purpose and for-profit organizations with shared values and goals. It is varied, diverse and adaptable. It has a positive economic impact on the community and local businesses.

Outdoor space for powwows and various outdoor and indoor experiences help visitors understand the thriving Anishinaabe society that existed before the French arrived and realize that the Anishinaabe culture remains a vital part of Michigan.

The current Father Marquette National Memorial and expanded interpretation give people an authentic, honest sense of early French life in the region and compares the French interpretation of relationships with those of the Anishinaabeg.

A central building provides space for adult education classes and hands-on workshops for people of all ages presented in collaboration with educational institutions in the region. An observation room offers a view of the Straits and reflection space. A wellness area has information on healthy diets and exercise at the site and elsewhere in the region.

Changing indoor and outdoor interpretative experiences provide immersive opportunities that challenge people to reflect about the past and its meaning for modern and future issues from water to healthy diets to multicultural experiences.

The site is a regional trail hub with its own colorfully marked trails that offer natural history and geological interpretation and spectacular views. They will meet varied levels of use, from a short walk to longer distances.

The outdoor amphitheater provides additional performance space.

Visitors can sample Native foods and perhaps see them growing in a garden area.

A dedicated, safe recreational connection across I-75 links the Heart of Turtle Island to the other campgrounds and facilities of Straits State Park.

Members of the Collaborative

Moran Township
 Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
 Lake Superior State University
 Mackinac Straits Health System
 Department of Natural Resources: Parks and Recreation Division & Michigan History Center

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Site Photos



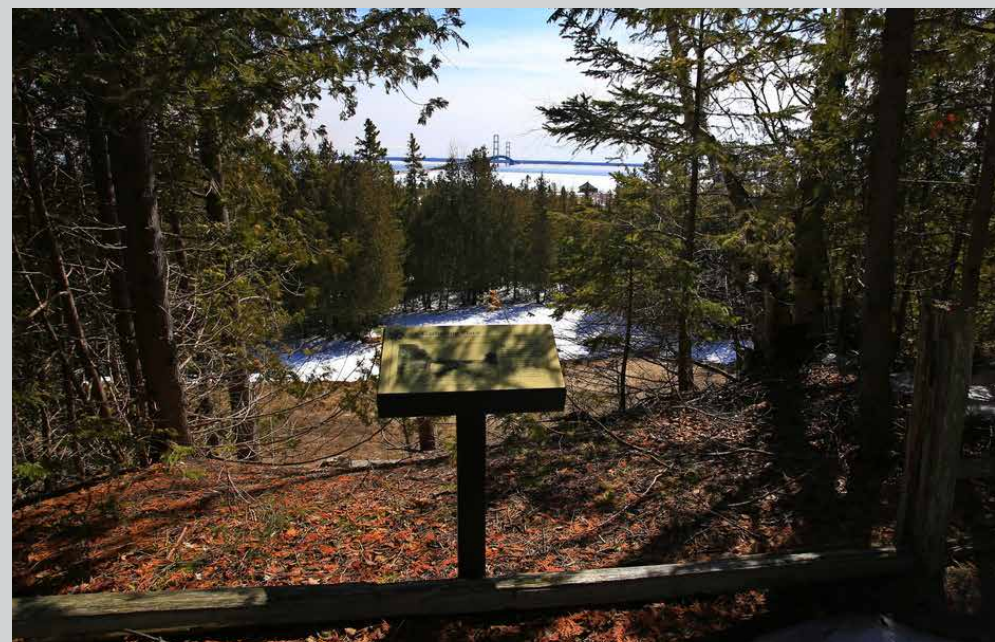
Site Entry -
Boulevard Drive



Site Entry from North -
US 2



Sense of Arrival



Handsome Contextual Architecture

Powwow Grounds



Abounding Views



Substantial
Topography



Lower Field

