

Heart of the Great Turtle Island – Gchi Mshikenh Deh Minishing Purpose and 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 the 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 recreations.

The first step in this process was the adoption in 2015 of a general management plan for the Straits State Park that designates its west unit as a “History Education Zone.”

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 29 awarded in 2018. We must raise \$1.5 million in match for the grant.



Father Marquette National Memorial

Purpose Statement

The transformed site inspires reflection, learning and healthy lifestyles 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 explore further.

It is sustainable 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.

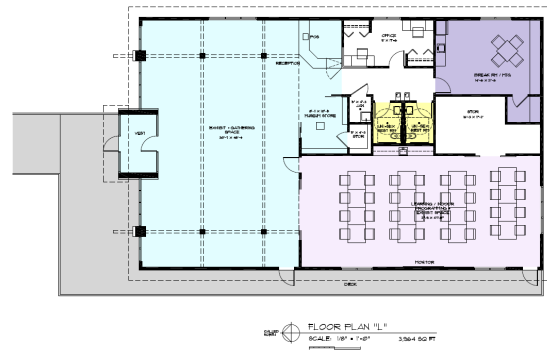
Outdoor space for powwows and various outdoor and indoor experiences help visitors understand the thriving Anishinaabe society that existed before the French arrived and realize that Anishinaabe culture remains a vital part of Michigan.



Design for new Powwow Circle structures

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

The Learning Commons provides space for adult education classes and hands-on workshops for people of all ages.



Floor plan for new Learning Commons

Changing the 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 and cultural interpretation along with spectacular views.

The natural 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 the Great Turtle Island – Gchi Mshiikenh Deh Minising 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