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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

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SLA designs a desert forest
with space to play

GOLF GETS WILD

Reinventing course design
for biodiversity

MIDWEST LAND ART

Indigenous perspectives with a
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PLANT LIFE

Lessons for the planting species
from Rosetta Elkin



EDITED BY TIMOTHY A. SCHULER

BLACK BAY PARK PLAN



ABOVE

The new master plan for Black Bay Park will bring parkgoers to previously inaccessible areas of the 60-acre green space.

The Wilderness



Vistas + Valleys



The Water



A WALK IN
THE WILD SIDE

A MASTER PLAN BY CIVITAS GIVES A LOW-PROFILE PARK IN IDAHO A BIGGER PRESENCE.

BY TIMOTHY A. SCHULER

In Post Falls, Idaho, a town of 40,000 people on the Spokane River, Civitas was hired not to make a new park, or even to redesign an existing one, but to simply make a decades-old green space more visible. Named for the cove on its eastern edge, the land for Black Bay Park was acquired by the city in 1946 as a result of delinquent taxes. Its 60 acres are naturally split into distinct halves, separated by up to 300 feet of grade change. “You have this really hard granite with very shallow soils that create this crazy cool wilderness piece, and then you’ve got the softer river soil beds from glacial deposits,” says Jessica Doig, a landscape designer at Civitas. The latter is where the city eventually built basketball courts and a parking lot. “Everybody thought *that* was the park,” says Scott Jordan, ASLA, a principal at Civitas.

Black Bay Park’s new master plan, phase I of which broke ground this past September, makes the more rugged half of the park both more visible and



ABOVE

A floating boardwalk and partially submerged pier will allow wheelchair users to reach the Spokane River.

more accessible, with new entrances on the north and west sides and a well-marked, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail that brings parkgoers of all abilities to previously unreachable vistas.

To establish the new trails—which will serve not just residents but also emergency services and city crews in charge of removing dead timber—the designers made repeated visits to Post Falls in winter 2021. They walked the site with Post Falls Parks and Recreation Department staff

while an iPad running ArcGIS Collector (now ArcGIS Field Maps) tracked their every step.

The unconventional methodology was born of budgetary and technical constraints. “We literally only had [a] survey for the [lower] area, and we couldn’t afford to survey the entire site, so it was about being creative with the way we did everything,” Jordan says. “We followed game trails and mapped those. The best part was, because there was snow, when we came back the next day, our trails were still there.” To Jordan, it felt like going back in time. “That’s what we used to do before we had all this access to aerial photos and stuff. You’d just spend as much time as you [could] on a site.” ●