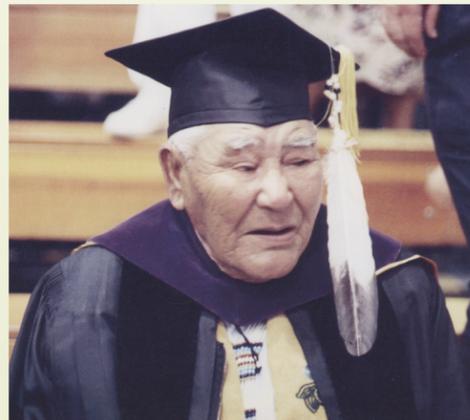


# Troth Yeddha' Park Plan

University of Alaska Fairbanks May 2010



## Troth Yeddha'

THE DENA HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS COLLEGE HILL



TROTH  
INDIAN POTATO  
*Bodanum alpinum*  
Troth was dug in early spring or fall. In summer, the roots were tough and dry. The roots could be eaten fresh like celery or cooked by boiling, roasting or frying in grease. A member of the legume or pea family, this plant grows throughout mainland Alaska in open spruce woodlands, also along roadsides or rocky alpine slopes. Growing up to 7' high, the plant has compound leaves with 15-20 oval leaflets that have conspicuous veins on their undersides. Narrow clusters of pale pink pea-like blossoms appear in June and July. Seeds are contained in dry, articulated pods.

# Acknowledgements



Jones & Jones wishes to gratefully acknowledge all those who gave so generously of their time, expertise, and enthusiasm in the development of this plan for Troth Yeddha' Park.

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## Photo Credits

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## Prepared by

**Jones & Jones Architects, Landscape Architects, and Planners**

*Johnpaul Jones, FAIA, Principal-in-Charge*

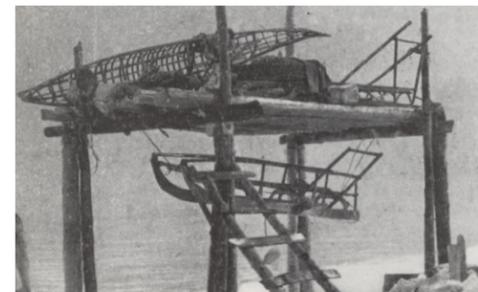
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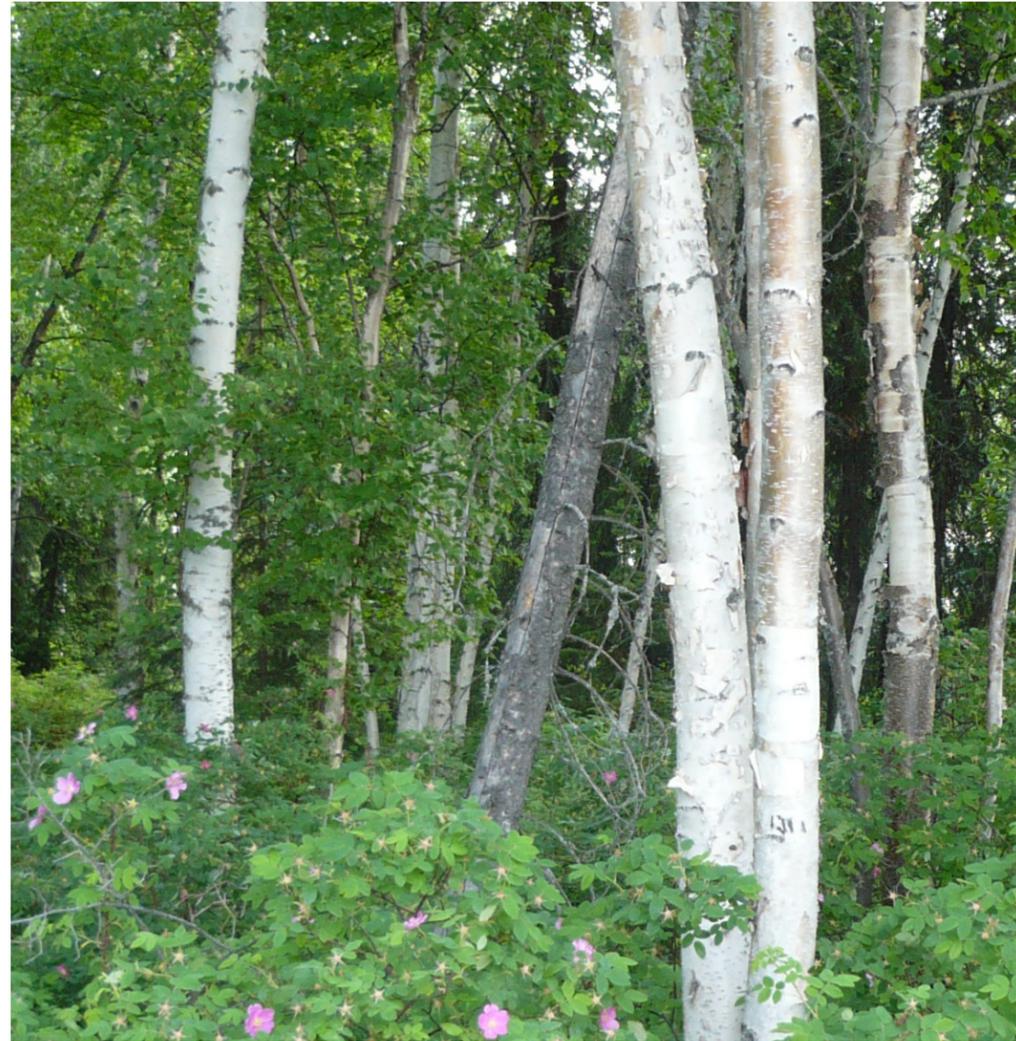
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*“Our people used to come to this hill to pick Troth. They would paddle up the creek, Troth Yeddha’ No, and camp by the Lake Troth Yeddha’ Mena. Troth Yeddha’ was important, a meeting place. The grandfathers used to come to talk and give advice to one another about what they were going to do. When they learned this place would be used for a school, the university, they came here one last time, to decide what they should do. They decided that the school would be good and would carry on a very similar traditional use of this hill (a place where good thinking and working together would happen). They placed an eagle feather on a pole. This was to let all the people know that the Dena would no longer be using the ridge for a meeting place or to pick wild potatoes. They were also giving a blessing so their grandchildren would be part of the new school. I am proud of it. I am an Indian. What does it mean to put an eagle feather with the United States flag? The eagle feather is connected with the clan. It is a symbol of us. We are part of this new Nation. People from all over the world come to the university to go to school and teach. We have something in common. Something all American people can share in. Be proud of it. Make it all the way, not just part way.”*

—Chief Peter John, Minto, Alaska as published in the UAF catalog

# INTRODUCTION

## Brief History of the Park

For many years, a place to commemorate and acknowledge Native Alaskan peoples has been envisioned at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). Moreover, the university is attended by increasing numbers of native students who have continually expressed interest in having a touchstone place on campus that is reflective of their peoples' culture and traditions. The College of Rural and Community Development, as well as Interior-Aleutians Campus has steadily backed the concept of a commemorative park for gathering, reflection and cultural expression.

Over the past decade, the realization of a park came into focus with the identification of a site on the ridgeline of the campus. As described in the 2002 University of Alaska Fairbanks Campus Master Plan, the Troth Yeddha' Park site... "is located between the UA Museum and the Natural Science Facility. Most recently, it was the site of the USGS buildings and observatory. It contains a number of mature birch and spruce trees in an open setting. Located at a high point on the campus, it provides spectacular view across Tanana Valley to the Alaska Range. Trails for skiing and walking lead north through the trees to connect to the campus trail network. A utility corridor crosses the site underground between the two parking lots."

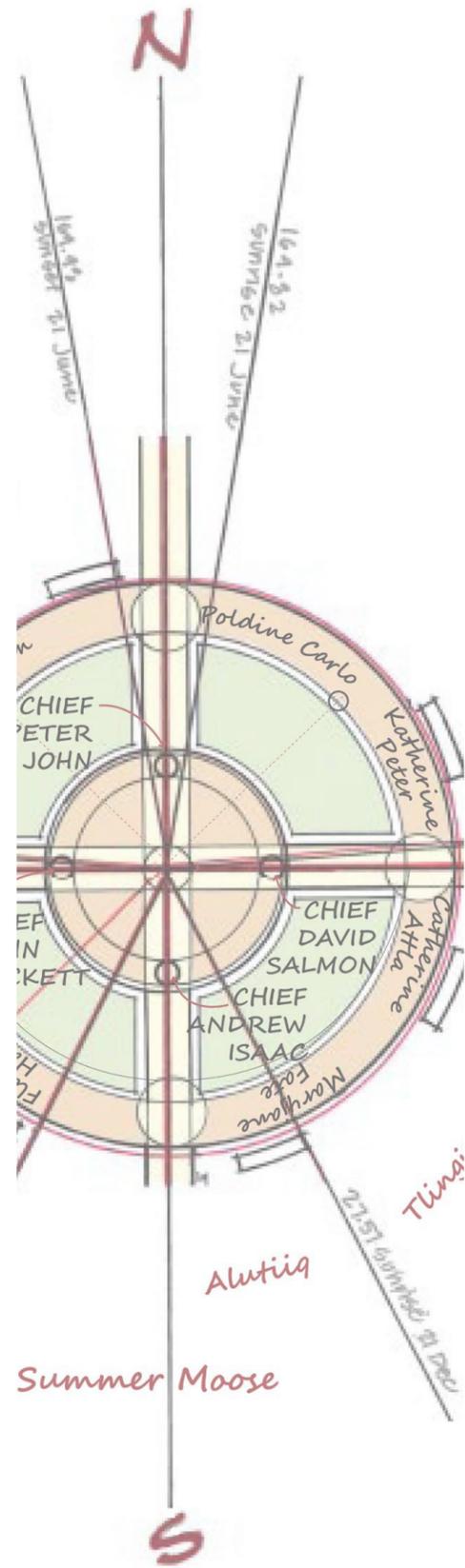
The Campus Master Plan confirms "the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Native Education (CACNE) recommended that this area, which was set aside as a protected space in the 2002 Campus Master Plan be maintained as open space dedicated to culturally relevant symbols representing Native Alaskans: the Athabascans, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Eyak, Inupiaq, Yupiaq/Cupiaq, Yupiget, Alutiiq, Sugpiaq, and Unangan/Unangus. The UAF Faculty Senate passed a resolution in March 2002 supporting this recommendation. The CACNE recommended that the name of this open space be Troth Yeddha' Park. This is the name that the Tanana Athabascans called the land now occupied by the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It refers to the wild potatoes (*Hedysarum alpinum*) that were collected on the site".

From a presentation titled Troth Yeddha' Roots of the Past, Bridge to the Future, the Tanana Athabascans referred to the large hill where the UAF campus now resides as "Wild Potato Hill". It was a site where elders

would gather and hold council regarding the state of affairs of Native nations in the interior of Alaska. When it had been decided the hill would become the site for a university, an eagle feather was placed on a pole to let the Athabaskan People know the meeting place would be used for formal education, carrying forward the traditional use of the hill. The proposed park will thus create a permanent link between the symbolic eagle feather and the contemporary academic research institution.

Troth Yeddha' Park is intended to create a living, lasting, and functional tribute to Alaska Native culture and history and to enhance the educational experience of Alaska Native students at UAF. It will provide a central gathering place on campus for people from all walks of life and cultures to participate in group activities, events, and celebrations.





## Planning Process

Development of the Troth Yeddha' Park Plan involved a three-part process of 1) evaluating the park site and campus context, 2) determining the requirements and uses for the park, and 3) developing recommendations for the design of the park. These three steps in the planning process are summarized as follows:

### 1. Data Gathering and Site Analysis

During this initial planning phase, the design team gathered existing maps, reports and data about the project area. A site reconnaissance of the site area was conducted with the client group. Then, information about the site's topography, vegetation, access, adjacent facilities, views, and other characteristics was diagrammed over air photos of the site reviewed with the client group. This information about the site's conditions and characteristics was continually referenced to inform all decisions about the design for the proposed park.

### 2. Determine Park Needs and Uses

Workshops were conducted by the planning team with the client group to discuss the intended uses and activities for the park. Needs and requirements for gathering and commemorative spaces, buildings, interpretation, circulation and access came out of these discussions. This information was synthesized by the planning team into a list of needs and uses for the park, summarized in the following section of this report.

### 3. Develop Recommendations

Based on the stated goals, site conditions, and intended park uses, the design team developed recommendations for park improvements and facilities. To reach consensus on an appropriate design, a series of alternative design concepts were developed for the park, showing park spaces, paths and facilities. These alternatives were reviewed with the client group and a preferred alternative and design direction was established. The Troth Yeddha' Park Plan design concept reflects the comments and recommendations by the client group for the park layout and features.



View from site



Bus drop-off on west side of site



Site

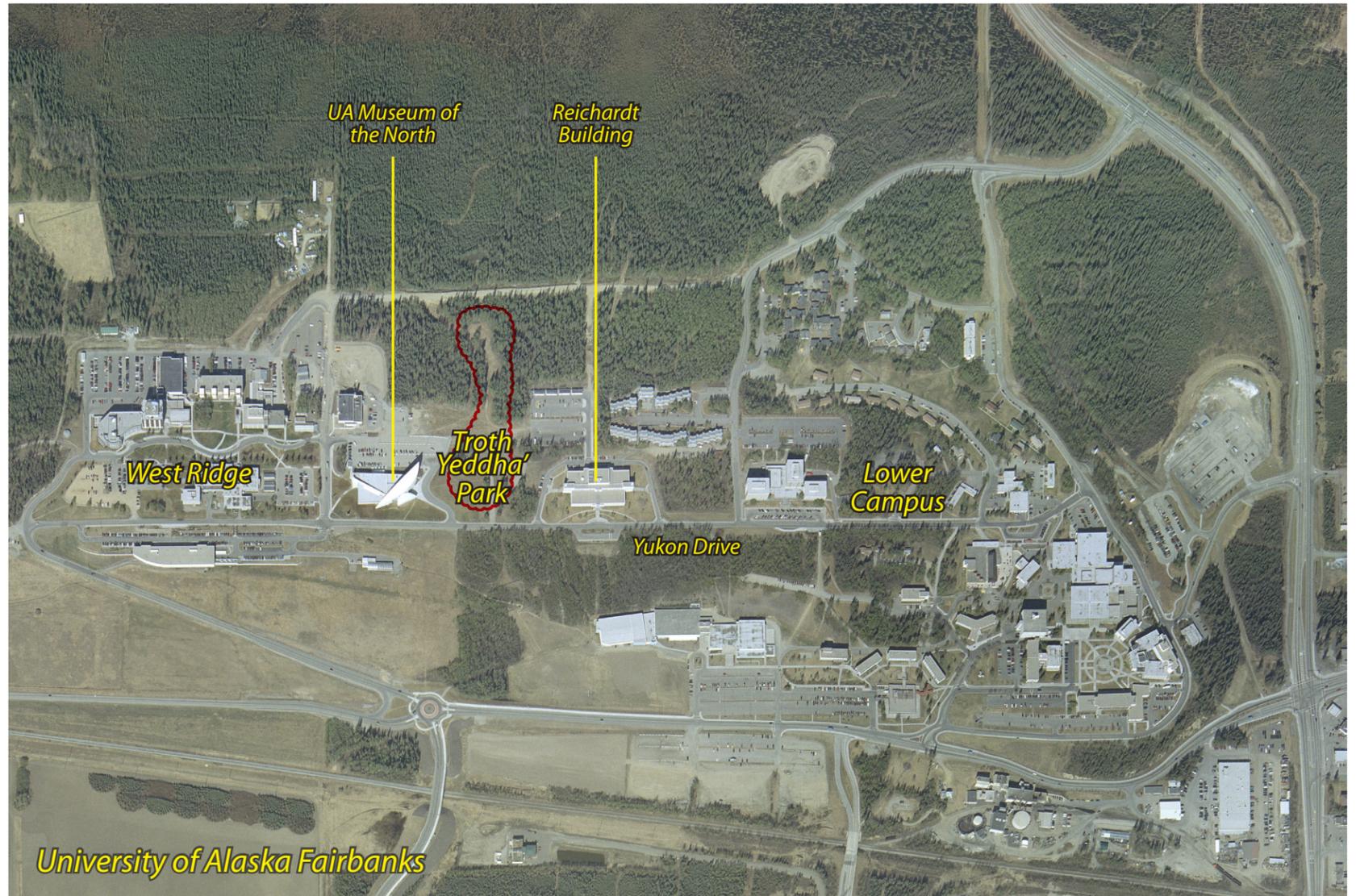


# PARK SITE

## Location

The park site is located on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. Fairbanks straddles the Tanana Uplands eco-region and the Tanana-Kuskokwin Lowlands eco-region. These vast regions contain wide variations in characteristics but are unified by certain predominant conditions including spruce-climax coniferous forest, sub-surface permafrost, low rolling hills, and an extensive system of river and creek drainages through wide bottomlands and lowlands. Fairbanks borders the north side of the broad Tanana River.

The park site sits on a large hill or ridge that runs east-west above the winding Chena River, a tributary of the Tanana River directly to the south. This ridge is occupied by the University of Alaska campus. Streets, drives, academic buildings and dormitories are arrayed along the length of the ridge for several blocks with Yukon Drive serving as the major east-west connector. The park site is situated at the campus's western end, or upper campus, which is made up of mostly newer university facilities. The remodeled UA Museum of the North abuts the west side of the park site and the large Reichardt Building edges the eastern side. Undeveloped forest stretches off to the north of the site, and a steep open slope drops away to the south on the south side of Yukon Drive. (Refer to map and photos on pages 10 and 11.)



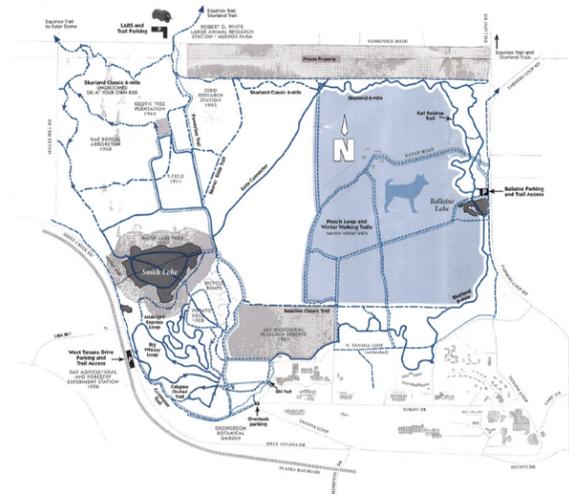
Park site with Yukon Drive and UA Museum of the North to left, Reichardt Building to the right



UA Museum of the North



Reichardt Building



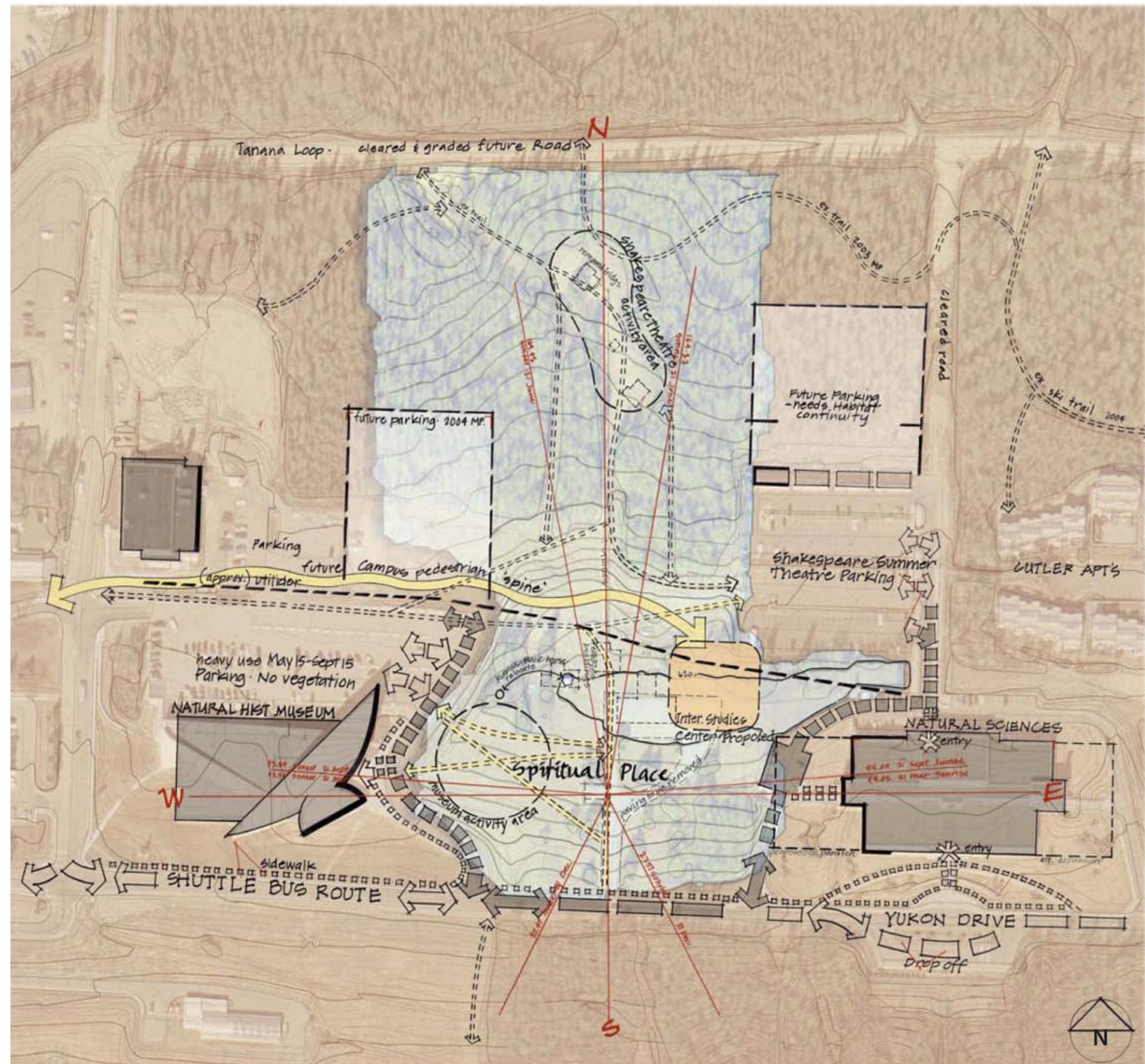
Winter Trails

Access

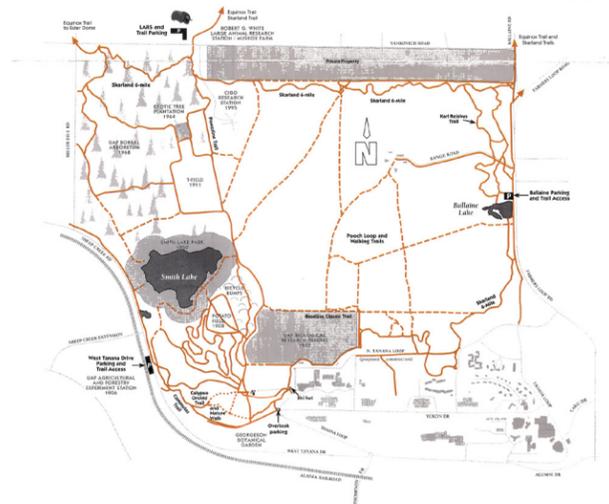
Primary access to the park is from Yukon Drive which provides vehicle access to the UA Museum of the North and the Reichardt Building. Large parking areas occur behind both facilities and abut the park site. Expanded parking will eventually be added north of both parking areas on the east and west sides of the proposed park. As shown by the drawing on this page, a road bed for the Tanana Loop Road has been constructed across the north side of the site, but the road has not been paved and the corridor's use as only a pedestrian trail appears likely to continue for some time into the future.

Yukon Drive carries a campus shuttle bus which has a stop directly in front of the Reichardt Building. A major east-west campus pedestrian way has been partially developed through the mid-section of the site close to an existing east-west underground utility tunnel. Smaller trails and paths wind north-south through the site, providing connections between parking areas, event clearings on the site, and the extensive North Campus system of multi-use trails north of the Tanana Loop road bed.

*Troth Yeddha' was an important meeting place.*  
 —Chief Peter John



SITE CIRCULATION & ACCESS



Summer Trails

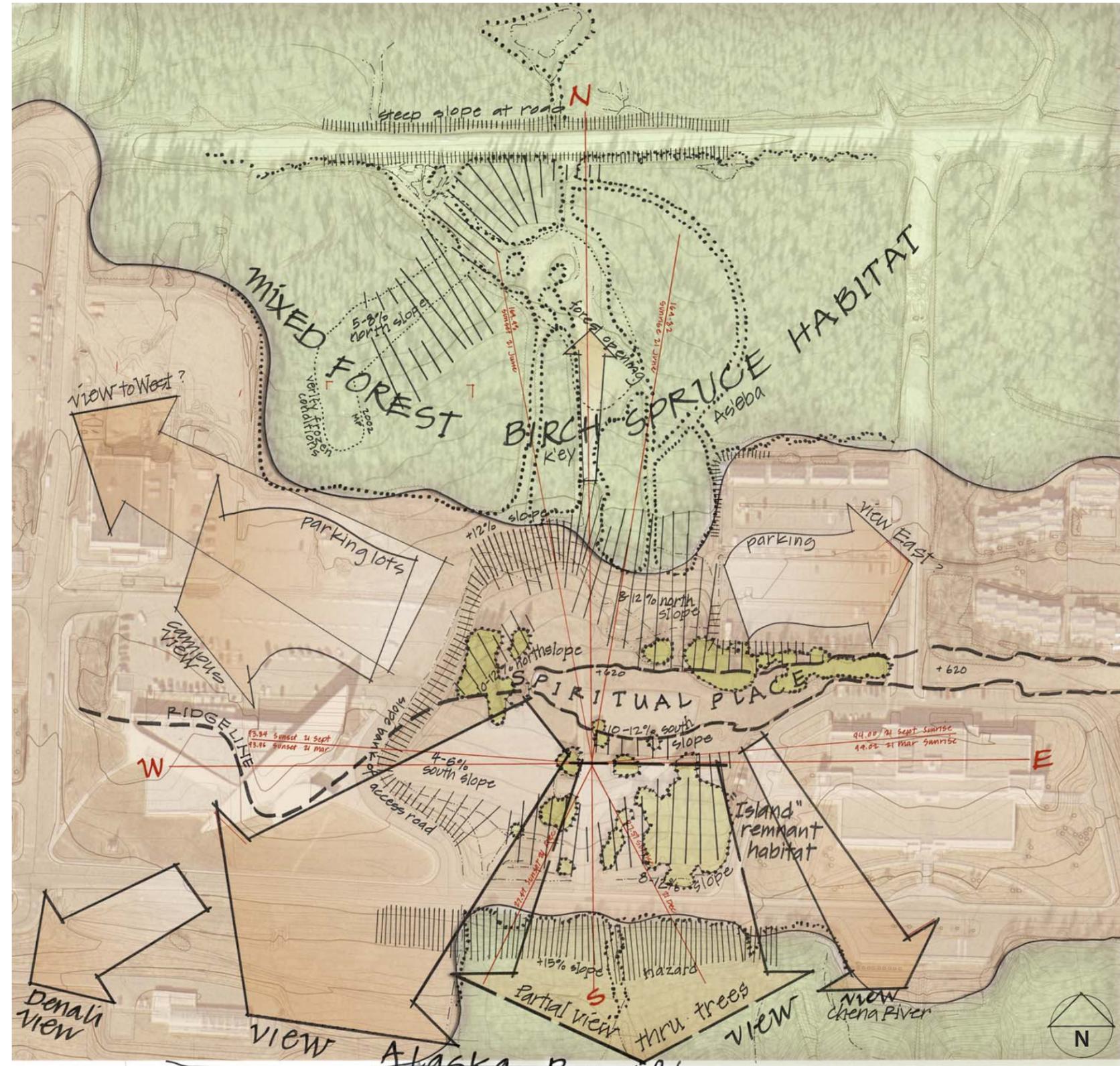
### Site Character

Looking at the drawing on this page, the park site has two distinct halves or areas. The north area is characterized by birch-spruce forest with open clearings over a slightly north-facing slope. The south half of the site rises to a broad low hill crest which is mostly open with remnants of birch-spruce forest and scattered individual trees. While the north half of the site seems secluded and shady, the south half is open and exposed to the sun and wind. From the hill, beautiful panoramic views sweep south across the Tanana River valley to the Alaska Range in the distance.

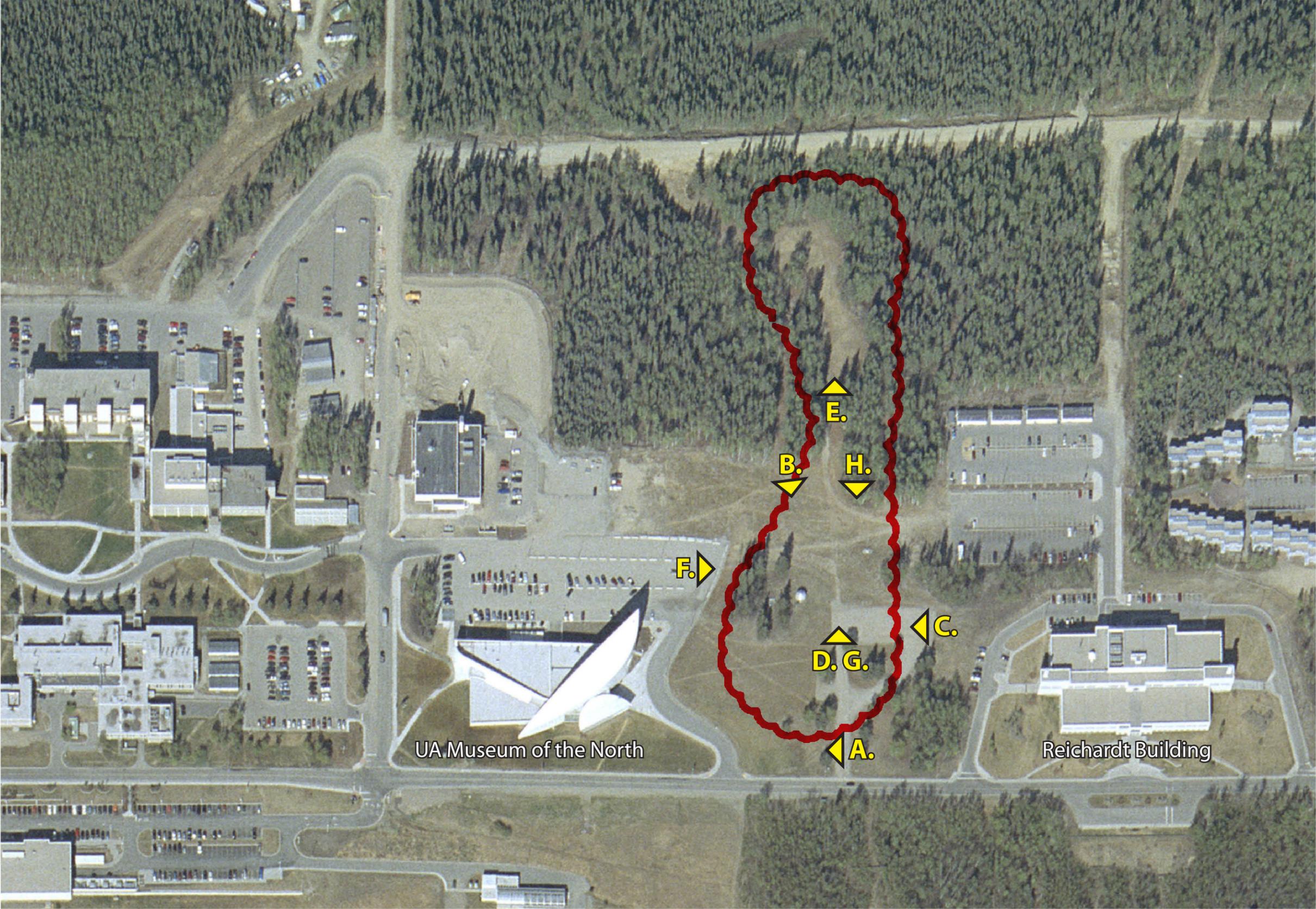
The large UA Museum of the North which is to the west and the Reichardt Building on the east visually encroach on the site's southern half, as do their parking areas and drives.

Gradients across the site range from nearly level to gradually sloping with perhaps the steepest natural gradients occurring at the transition from the north woods up to the hillcrest. The woods contain pockets of low lying poorly drained ground which collect drainage from adjacent areas. The fill berm constructed for the Tanana Loop road bed presents a very steep slope across the site's northern boundary.

*Our people used to come to this hill to pick Troth.  
—Chief Peter John*

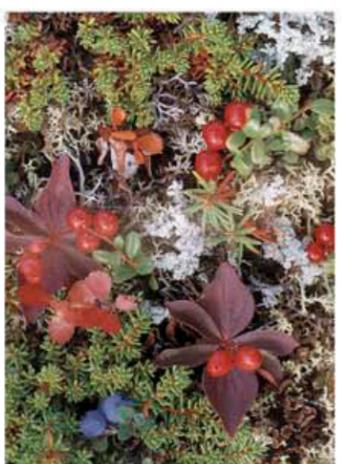
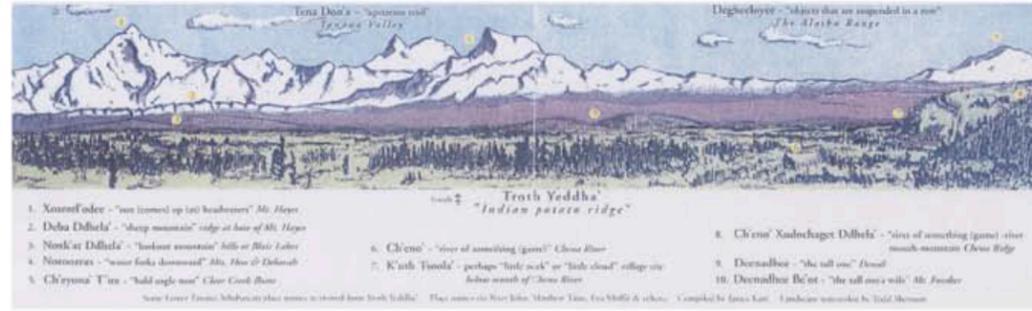


SITE CHARACTERISTICS





# PARK DESIGN CRITERIA



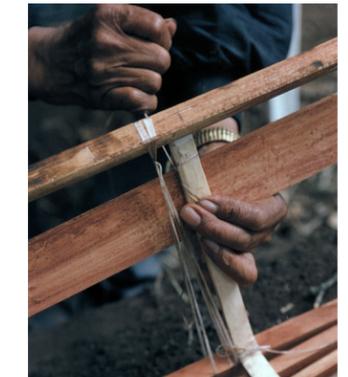
# PARK DESIGN CRITERIA

## People, Place, and Culture

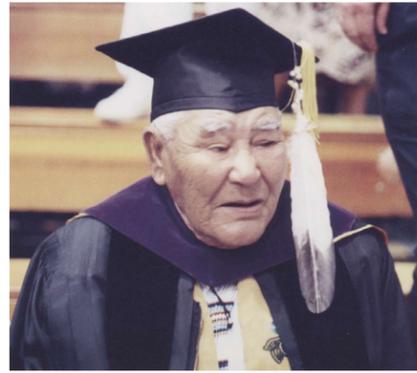
The Athabascan people historically lived and traveled in small bands across a vast landscape of boreal forest and taiga. Much of this natural ecosystem remains intact over large areas of interior Alaska due to its remoteness, harsh climate and low population densities. The photos on page 12 reflect some of the incredible flora and fauna that still extends over spectacularly scenic portions of interior Alaska. Among the plants used for food by the Athabascans was the wild potato, or Troth Yeddha', pictured in the illustration. There is a strong desire to incorporate many native boreal plants into the park because of their ethno-botanical importance, seasonal color and ecological value.

The harsh climate and occasionally limited resources of interior Alaska required a transient or nomadic lifestyle among its native peoples. The Athabascan adapted to and lived in this harsh environment by making use of available plants and animals in resourceful and ingenious ways. Many traditional methods for obtaining and preserving food, making tools and implements, and travel are still practiced today. The images on page 13 provide a sampling of traditional techniques and practices that will hopefully find expression and interpretation on the park site.

Of course, it is people who provide continuity of culture and tradition from one generation to the next. Just as the Athabascan have adapted to their natural environment over thousands of years, they have had to adapt to ways brought by white arrivals over the past three hundred years. In the face of extreme upheaval and change, they have learned to carry forward and integrate their culture, keeping it relevant and alive for both their people and other ethnic groups. The photos on this and the next page present the human face of this cultural continuity—of the people who carry the past forward through their lifeways and leadership. The park is partly intended to acknowledge and honor those who have contributed to the continuance of traditional ways and beliefs.



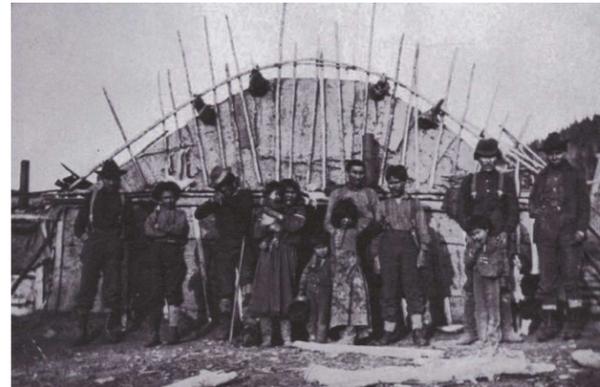
Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Eyak, Inupiak, Yupiaq/Cupiag, Yupiget, Alutiiq, Sugpiaq, Unangas/Unagus



List of Months

(From *Dinaakanaaga Ts'inh Huyoza* by Eliza Jones — Junior Dictionary for Central Koyukon Athabaskan)

- January *Mininh neek'k'aa nodzaanh' eelkige*—Month of the days going from short to long. *Neeek'k'aa nodzaanh dilaaeye*—One that separates long and short days.
- February *Till zo'o'*—Eagle month.
- March *KK'olk'ee'yo zo'o'*—Month of the hawk.
- April *Hutinhzo'o'*—Month of the spring crust.
- May *Mininh tois'eyh liyaaye*—Month boats are put in the water.
- June *Ggaahnogha'*—King salmon eye. *Mininh hudinyanghee*—Month everything grows.
- July *Naolaaghanogha'*—Dog salmon eye. *Mininh tok'agoyh'ahudilaaye*—Month ducklings are put in water.
- August *Saanlaaghanogha'*—Silver salmon eye. *Mininh nok'it'on didaaghee*—Month in which leaves fall.
- September *Nodlaagha nogha'*—Chinook salmon eye. *Huyts'in lookk'a nogha'*—Falltime fish eye.
- October *Mininh diditeeye*—Freeze-up month. *Mininh toif'eeek'adaghee*—Slush-ice-in-river month.
- November *Sooga zo'o'*—Marten month.
- December *Huyh kk'aak'o la'onee*—End of the year.



## Planning Workshop Talking Points

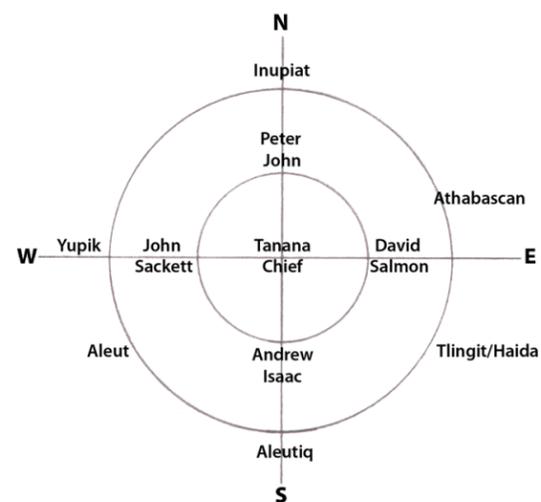
From early, pre-planning discussions about the park, the Troth Yeddha' Park was envisioned as a place:

- to create a living, lasting and functional tribute to Alaska Native culture and history on the UAF campus.
- to enhance the educational experience of all students with focus on Alaskan Native students at UAF.

Once the Troth Yeddha' Park Plan was underway, an initial workshop was conducted by Jones & Jones with the park committee to further refine the vision and articulate overall goals for the park. The following is a list of the park Vision Thoughts and Goals that were generated during this workshop.

### VISION AND GOALS

- A welcoming place for all peoples and cultures
- Tribute to Athabascan Native People's culture and history
- Honoring of all Native Alaska people
- Honoring of the Tanana Chiefs
- Suggested arrangement diagram:



- A place that increases good relationships
- Honor Alaskan Native Veterans
- Troth Yeddha' was an important wisdom gathering place where good things happen
- A place; a park that will influence others' thinking
- A place; a park that nurtures our Indigenous ways & beliefs
- A place that will help increase Alaska Native students at UAF
- It was a coming together place
- Honor the sharing of wisdom place
- Honor the cardinal directions and the equinox and solstice directions—every season has a role in our lives
- The Troth Yeddha' site needs to be seen as a symbol of Alaska Native People
- Visitors need to see this park as a Native symbol viewed from the lower campus as well as from the main campus
- It needs to be a place to identify with, and for, Alaska Native people; and a place that speaks to the Indigenous people of the UAF campus
- Troth Yeddha' Park needs to be a healthy place
- A place giving voice to Indigenous ways and knowledge
- A place to host our Indigenous and other Indigenous cultures from around the world
- A place of the four worlds:
  - Native World
  - Animal World
  - Spirit World
  - Human World

- A place where our Native kids can know their own heroes—not just who they are taught about in public school from the non-native community
- A place to help with the spiritual side of our lives, a sacred place, a place to find out, an explaining place
- A great/great grandfather place. They always knew that we would have a place on this hill
- It is a place of good feeling where good thinking and working together will happen, make it all the way, not just part way



## Park Needs and Uses

A set of specific park needs and uses was developed with input from the planning committee through workshops and reviews. This discussion and evaluation of needs and uses gave more clarity to the types of activities that are to be accommodated in the park. It also helped to determine the types of spaces and facilities that would be needed to support these activities. The following is an overview of intended park uses and activities and anticipated park facilities developed in the course of two workshops at UAF:

### NEEDS & USES

- Need a demonstration area for canoe and dog sled making and Native food preparation
- Incorporate Native languages into the design
- Plant the Troth Yeddha—Indian potato on site
- Provide a celebration area for Native drumming, singing, dancing, fiddle music activities
- A gathering place—maybe a series of gathering places
- There will be 500 to 700 people gatherings, as well as 15 to 50 people gatherings
- Need support areas such as toilets, regalia dressing areas, storage areas, etc. These structures need to be built into the hill. Helps to keep the Troth Yeddha Park free of buildings
- We identify with round/circular shapes and forms
- We want a fire pit for tea; it needs to be a Native tea making place, not a bon-fire pit!
- We would like a place to cook our foods outdoors
- It needs to be a green place and a green project park
- Think of how to use whale bones or moose/caribou antlers in the design
- Move the Russian Block House and incorporate it into an interpretive trail walk or Native history walk related to the UA Museum of the North away from Troth Yeddha' Park

- The UA Museum of the North uses part of the site for its various outdoor gathering—outdoor tent areas; UA Museum of the North season is 5/15 to 9/15
- Could be a good winter viewing place for the nighttime Northern Lights
- Berries are an important food to Alaska Native People; the park landscape needs to be planted with berries
- The Troth Yeddha' Park site needs to be planted with Alaska Native plants! Colorful and seasonal food, medicine and healing, craft and art, hunting and fishing. Plant Troth Yeddha' with these types of plants
- This place needs to be a clockwise movement place
- A site needs to be identified at the Troth Yeddha' Park for a future Indigenous Studies Building



- The UAF Native students need an outdoor place, a place for Native student outdoor events
- We need a covered Kiosk with interpretive information about Troth Yeddha' history and culture
- Identify what vistas you see form Troth Yeddha' site
  - Alaska Range
  - Tanana Valley
- Use Indigenous names throughout the Troth Yeddha' Park design
- The north forested site area of the Troth Yeddha' Park is good for:
  - Interpretive trails about Indigenous plants
  - Hiking trails; jumping off point

- Snow shoeing and cross country skiing trails; jumping off point
- Use wood poles similar to river-fish traps, spear poles, and native wind breaks
- Flower plants: Plant large areas of wild flowers, grasses, and berry shrubs (habitat rather than a botanical collection)
- Use Athabascan pattern design throughout entire project
  - Plant/flower design started at time of contact
  - Geometric design was earlier pattern
  - Other patterns to use:
    - Fish skin pattern
    - Water patterns
    - Etc.
- Work animals into the design – must fit seasons and Cardinal Directions
- Need a place to stack firewood – tuck into side of hill
- Use Native wind breaks some way in the design
- Circular grove of Birch Trees – colorful in summer, fall, etc.
- Use food plants in the design – large massing – not one plant or two here and there
- Need a place on the site for assembling a temporary Native structure – something that's not up all the time
- Could have actual sculptures of Tribal Leaders—perhaps walking to center
- Amphitheatre is a place for Upward Bound and Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI); a place for drumming and singing
- Put all the names of the Tribes of Alaska Native Peoples in a place in the park (230)

### General Thoughts

Never at a loss for ideas, the Troth Yeddha’ Park Planning committee articulated other thoughts and considerations that might somehow be reflected or addressed by the design of the park. The items listed below are of a more general nature, but are nevertheless important considerations in creating a multi-faceted and enriching design for Troth Yeddha’ Park.

**GENERAL THOUGHTS**

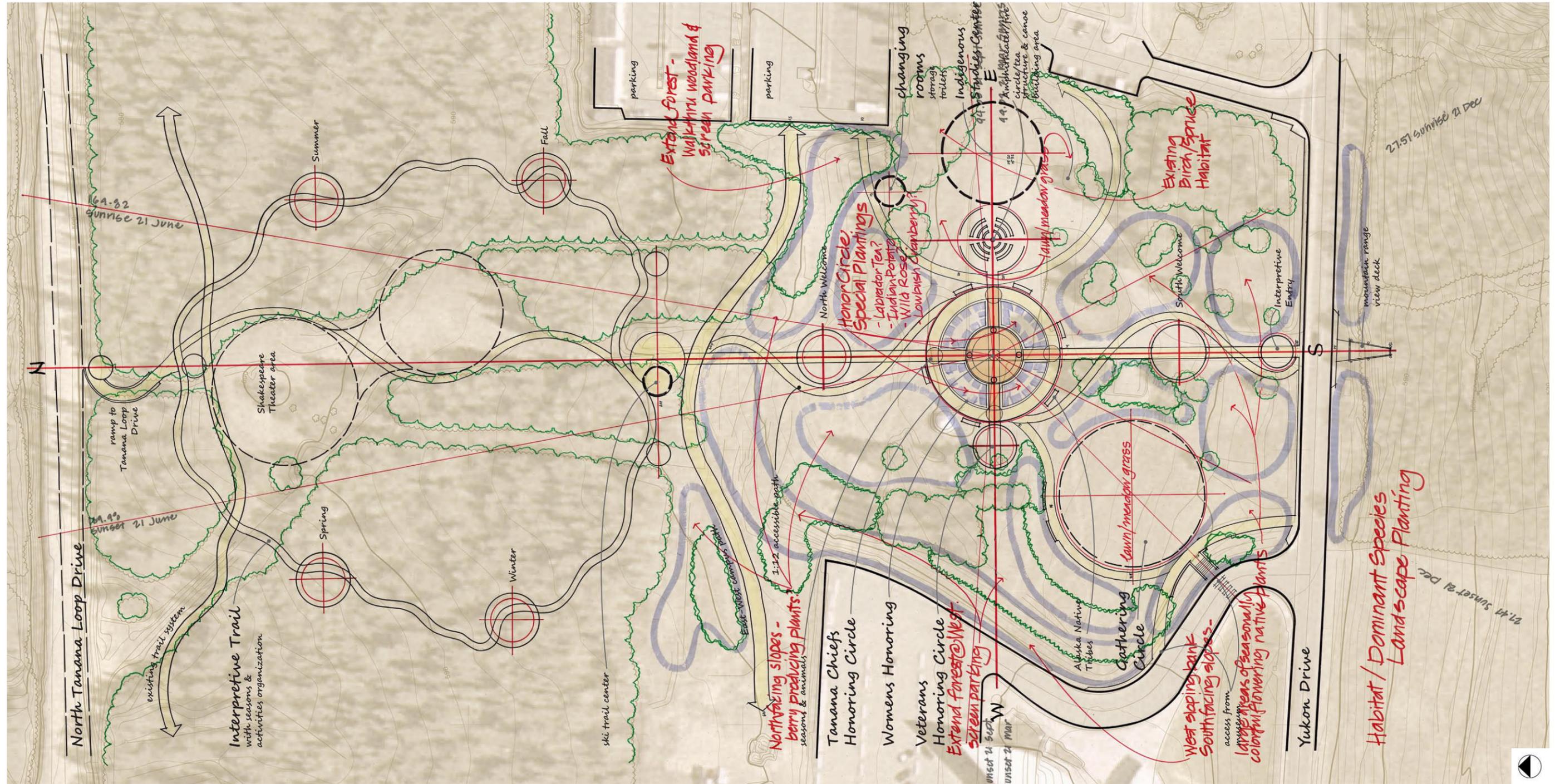
- Possible other site uses:
  - World Eskimo-Indian Olympics
  - UA Museum of the North programs
  - UAF summer Native high school programs
- March is traditional Alaska Native gathering time—time of celebration
  - Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting
  - Doyon Native Corp. Annual Meeting
  - Alaska Festival of Native Arts
  - Fairbanks Native Association Potlatch
  - Interior-Aleutian Campus Council Coordination Meeting
  - College of Rural and Community Development Council Meeting
- The existing large trees on the south half of the site are beautiful and should be saved. They need to be reviewed by an arborist



- Men came to this Hill (Troth Yeddha’)—women and children came with them—with sleds, dogs, supplies—all walking together
- Some paddled up the slough near the lower campus—some camped at the lake near the upper campus; all came to the ridge—the gathering place
- This place could provide the needed new tools for solving/fighting the new enemies: drugs, sickness, etc.
- Project needs to be a sustainable project – define this clearly: people, plants, view, water, animals
- Be careful with men and women things in the design – such as men are only connected to the big animals like bear or moose, etc.
- The main wind pattern of the site is east/west and west/east
- Outdoor activities that Native students can do in the winter time:
  - Native games such as Indian football
  - Dog sled culture activities
  - Festival of Native arts and crafts is mostly indoors – some of the activities need to use outdoors
- The stage that is used for the Fairbanks Shakespeare Theatre could also be used for park activities
- Some of the cottonwoods on the south side of Yukon Drive could be cut to open views from the site
- Campus sidewalks need to be wider
- Use plants that might stimulate different discussions
  - Medicine garden; unusual plants; teaching area
  - Plants: Echinacea, arnica, lowbush cranberry, Hudson Bay tea, fireweed, rose, troth
- Students could learn to take care of the plants
- Plants are usually women’s efforts; men have more knowledge about animals. The Athabascans are not so divided as some Natives



- Proposed west expansion of Reichardt Building extends into the Troth Yeddha’ park land
- The UA Museum of the North could adopt the planting style of the park along Yukon drive
- Theme: Walk with me on this trail



ALTERNATIVE 1

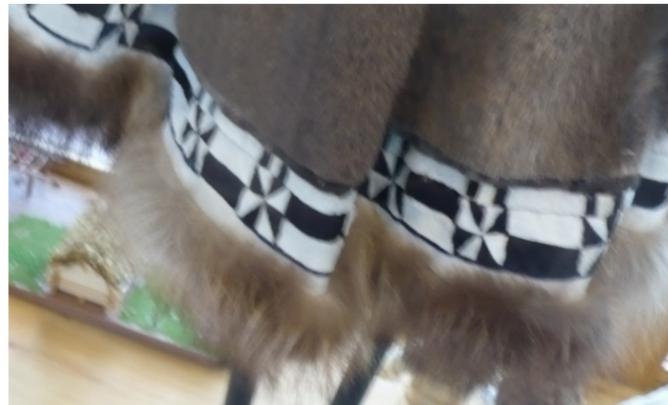
# PARK DESIGN CONCEPT

## Alternatives

Three alternative design schemes were developed and evaluated for the park. The three alternatives show the program elements in different configurations and arrangements on the site. Each scheme is intended to convey a slightly different feel or character while responding to the program requirements.

Although they differ, the schemes share many elements, and the locations for certain elements are consistent among all three schemes. Because of its symbolic importance, an Honoring Circle for the Tanana Chiefs takes a central location on the site's high point in all of the schemes. In addition, the Great Lawn Gathering Circle occupies a broad flat open area southwest of the Honoring Circle where it can conveniently accommodate large outdoor events associated with the UA Museum of the North. Other similarities and consistencies among the schemes include dense massings of native plants to define outdoor spaces, and the use of trees and woods to screen or buffer adjacent buildings, access drives and parking areas. An interpretive trail loops through the wooded northern half of the site in all three schemes, and a major east-west campus pedestrian-way winds through the mid-portion of the site. Finally, a site for the future proposed Indigenous Studies Center is located east or northeast of the Honoring Circle.

The following is a brief description of each alternative.



## Alternative 1

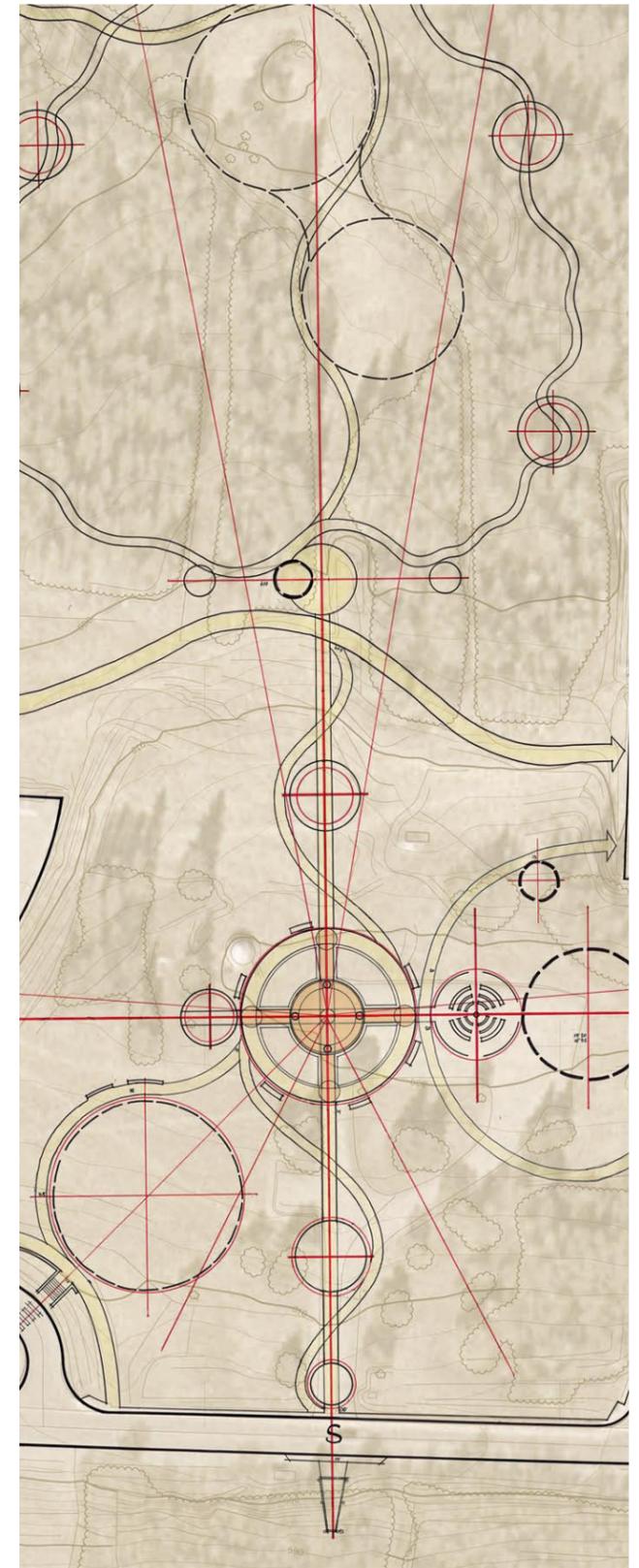
Because it is such an important aspect of Athabascan culture, the cardinal directions are dominantly expressed in Alternative 1. Major paths transect the central Honoring Circle from the north, south, east and west, and the position of other park features and elements further reinforce the cardinal directions in this design scheme. Alternative 1 expresses a strong organization reflective of traditional art motifs and designs.

As shown by the drawing on page 18, several elements are aligned along the north-south axis. North of the central Honoring Circle, there is a ramped connection to North Tanana Loop Drive, a ski trails center, and the North Welcome Circle. South of the Honoring Circle are the South Welcome Circle and Troth Yeddha Park's Entry and Interpretive Wall. The Mountain Range View Deck extends the north-south axis across Yukon Drive.

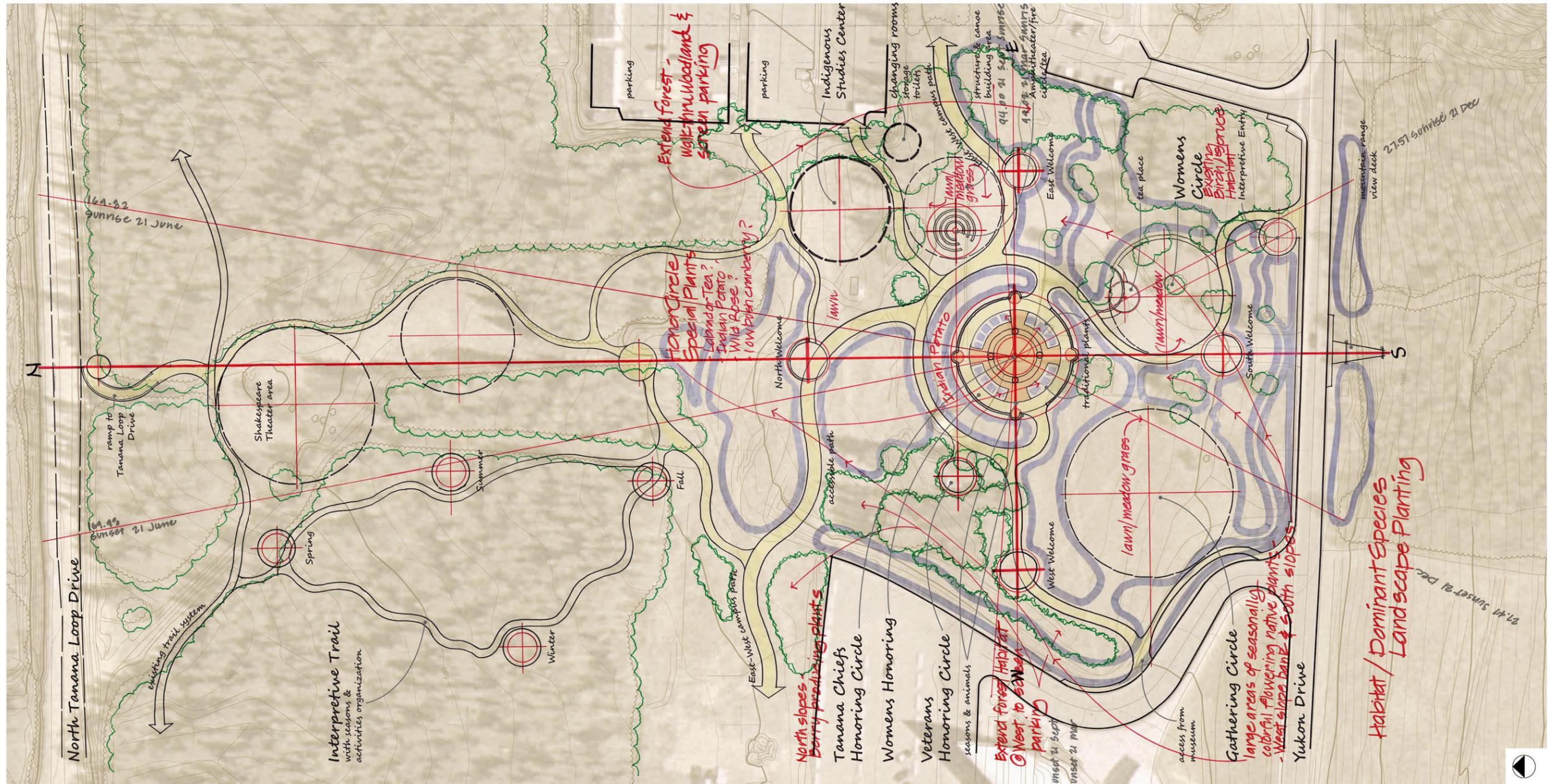
The east-west cardinal line crosses the high point of the site, through the center of the Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle. Program elements occurring on the east-west axis include the future Indigenous Studies Center Building and the Fire Circle/Amphitheater/Tea Place to the east of the Honoring Circle, and the Veterans Honor Circle to the west of the Honor Circle. The Gathering Lawn will be used for UA Museum of the North activities as well as for other outdoor events

Native plants would edge and define the various activity areas and spaces discussed above. Many plants would be types that were and continue to be collected for traditional foods, utensils and tools. These planted areas would provide seasonal color and relate to the strong cultural and natural themes of the park.

An Interpretive Trail meanders in a broad loop through the wooded northern portion of the park. At about a ¼ mile in length, the trail passes through forest openings which would be thematically designed as "seasonal camps", telling the stories about traditional activities related to the different seasons. The larger event areas in the center of this wooded area would host activities like the current Fairbanks Shakespeare Theater as well as ceremonial gatherings and craft demonstrations.



Concept diagram



ALTERNATIVE 2

## Alternative 2

Depicted on page 20, Alternative 2 shares many of the components of Alt. 1; however, Alt 2 is more loosely organized and the cardinal directions are less rigidly defined. This scheme makes reference to a natural, meandering riverine landscape in the layout of spaces and major paths.

The Honoring Circle is centrally located but is slightly off the crest of the ridge. A rock wall encompasses the Honoring Circle, providing a place to sit on the south edge of the space and a surface for interpretive messages and exhibits around the north half of the circle.

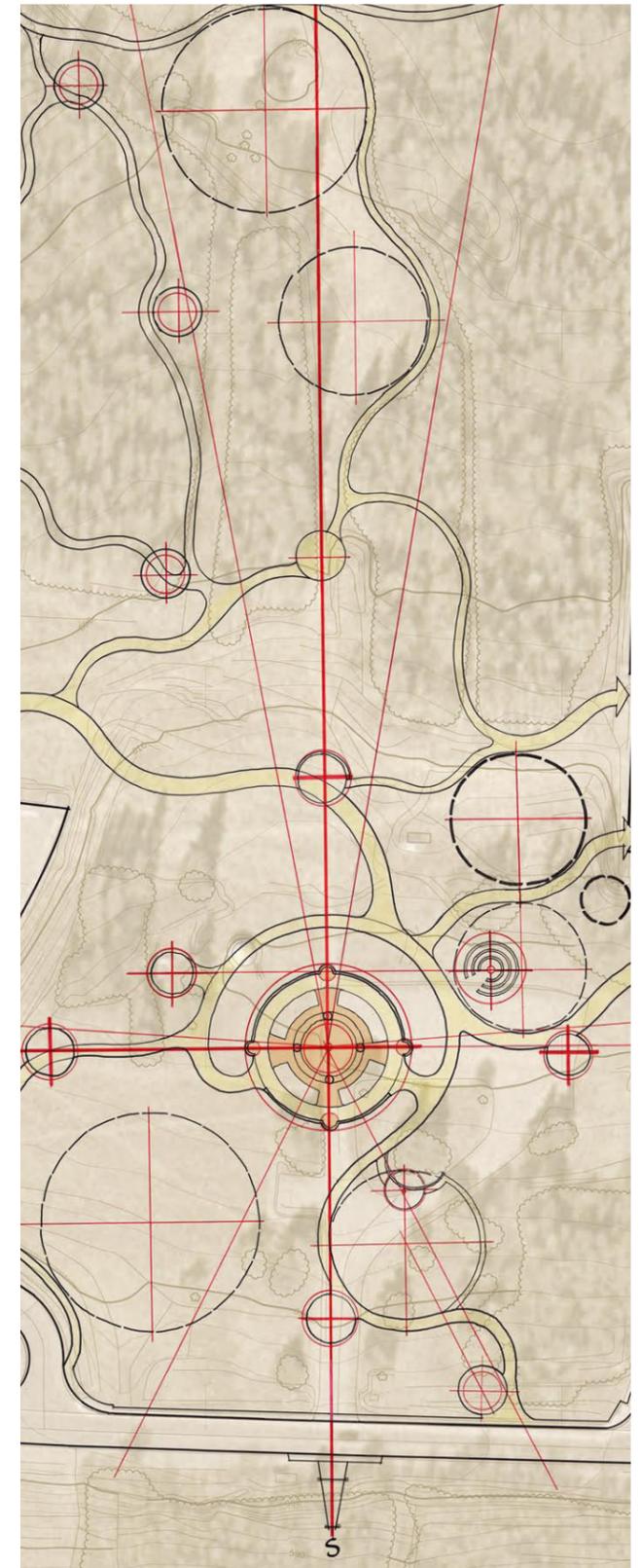
Upon entering the park, four Welcome Circles, each marking one of the cardinal directions, are encountered along the park's main paths. The Mountain Range View Deck extends the north-south axis across Yukon Drive.

As with the other alternatives, the Gathering Circle occupies an area currently used by the UA Museum of the North. It will remain designated as a formal lawn for large outdoor activities with its primary access directly across from the UA Museum of the North's main entry. In a slight departure from the other schemes, Alternative 2 includes a Women's Circle with a fire pit for tea and a sitting place under trees. The Women's Circle provides an additional lawn area separate from but connected to the Gathering Circle.

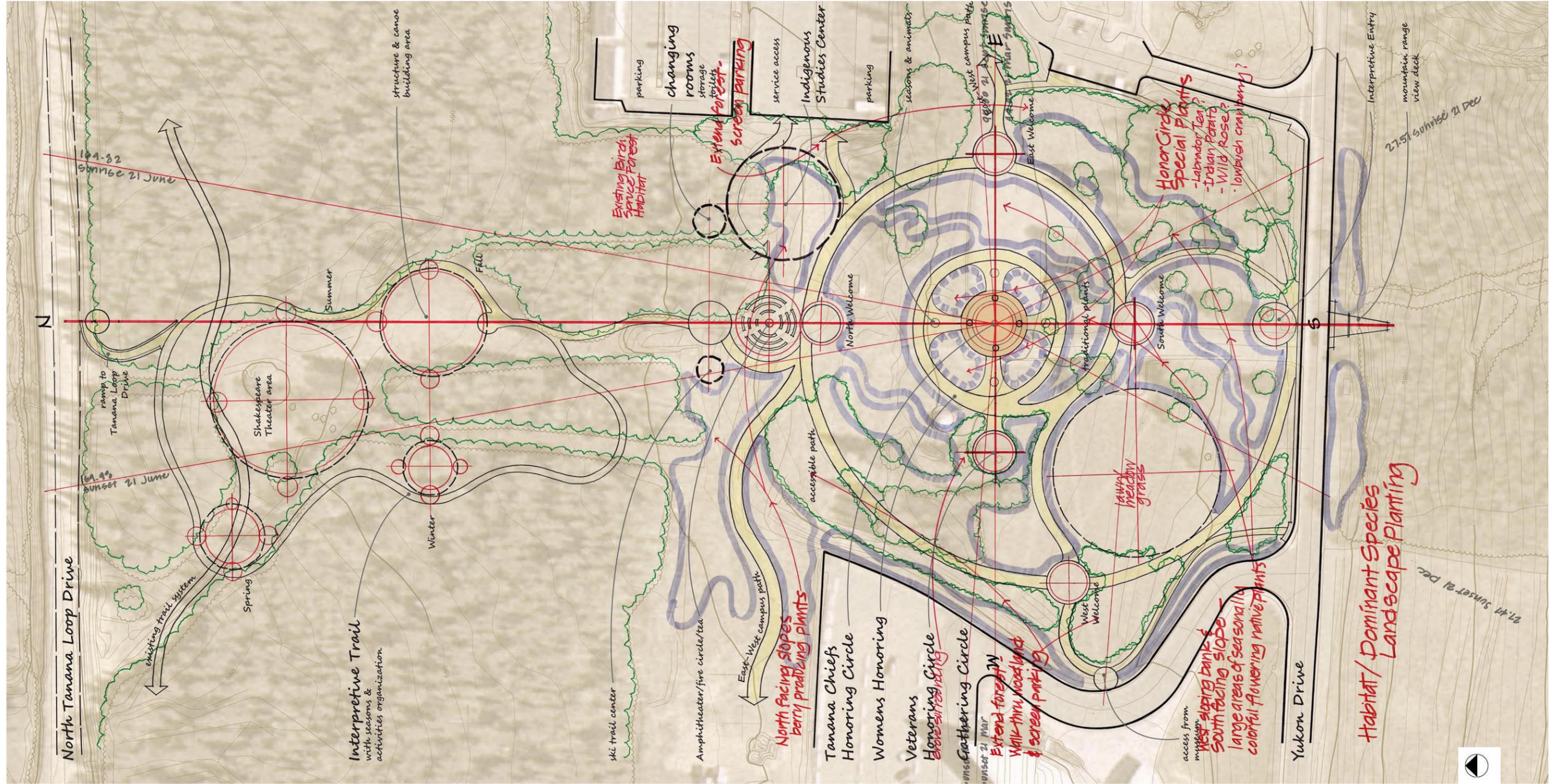
The high point of the site is occupied by a crescent-shaped area for native plants that wraps the north side of the Honoring Circle. Plantings of birch and spruce trees screen views of the UA Museum of the North, access drive and parking lot on the west side of the park. Woodland trees also buffer the park from parking, access drives and the Reichardt building to the east. Planted areas containing seasonally colorful native plants and traditional use plants blanket the site, surrounding and defining outdoor spaces and activity areas.

The site for a future Indigenous Studies Center occurs northeast of the Honoring Circle. A canoe carving area and amphitheater are adjacent to the native student facility.

The wooded north half of the site would continue to host outdoor events and celebrations in two large clearings. An interpretive trail with seasonal camps travels through the woods on the west side of the event areas.



Concept diagram



ALTERNATIVE 3



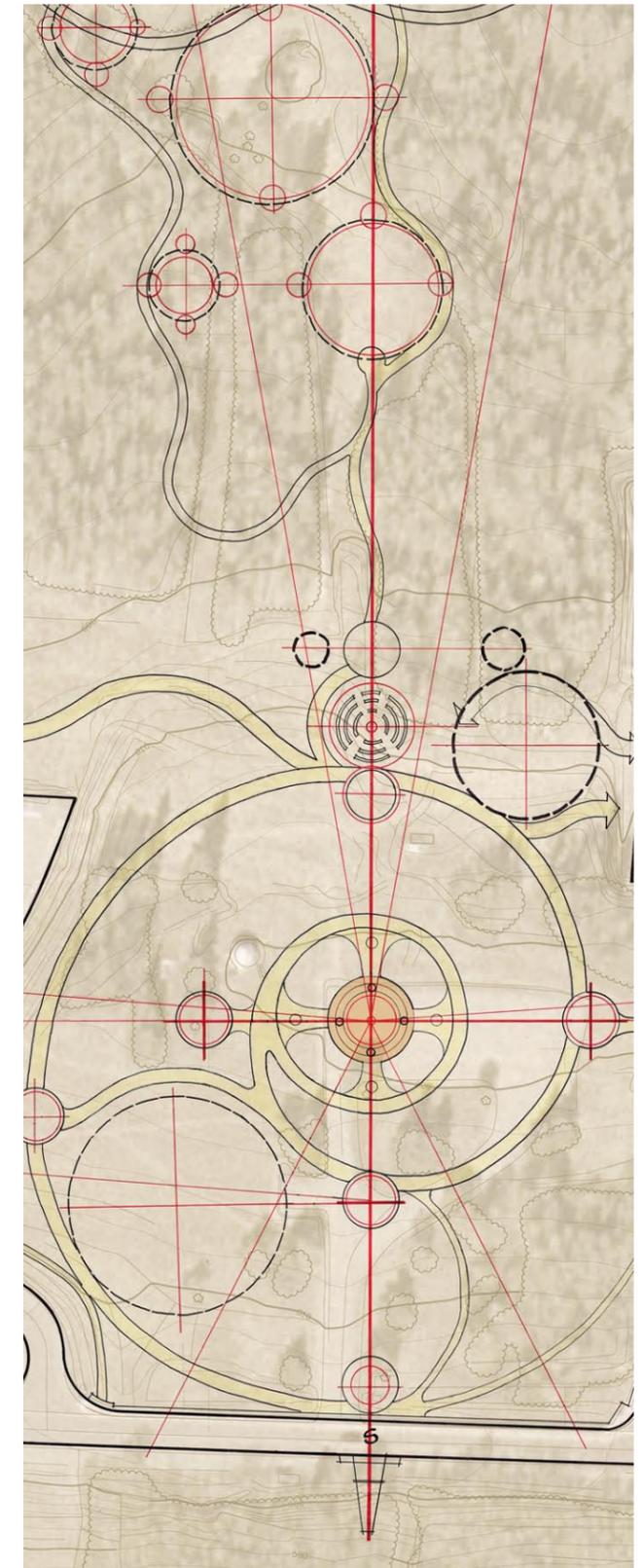
### Alternative 3

A primary feature of Alternative 3, shown on page 22, is a spiral path that gradually ascends the hill to the Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle at the crest. The processional path moves in a clockwise direction and symbolizes traveling through the woods, in reference to the Athabaskan' mobility and transience in the harsh northern environment.

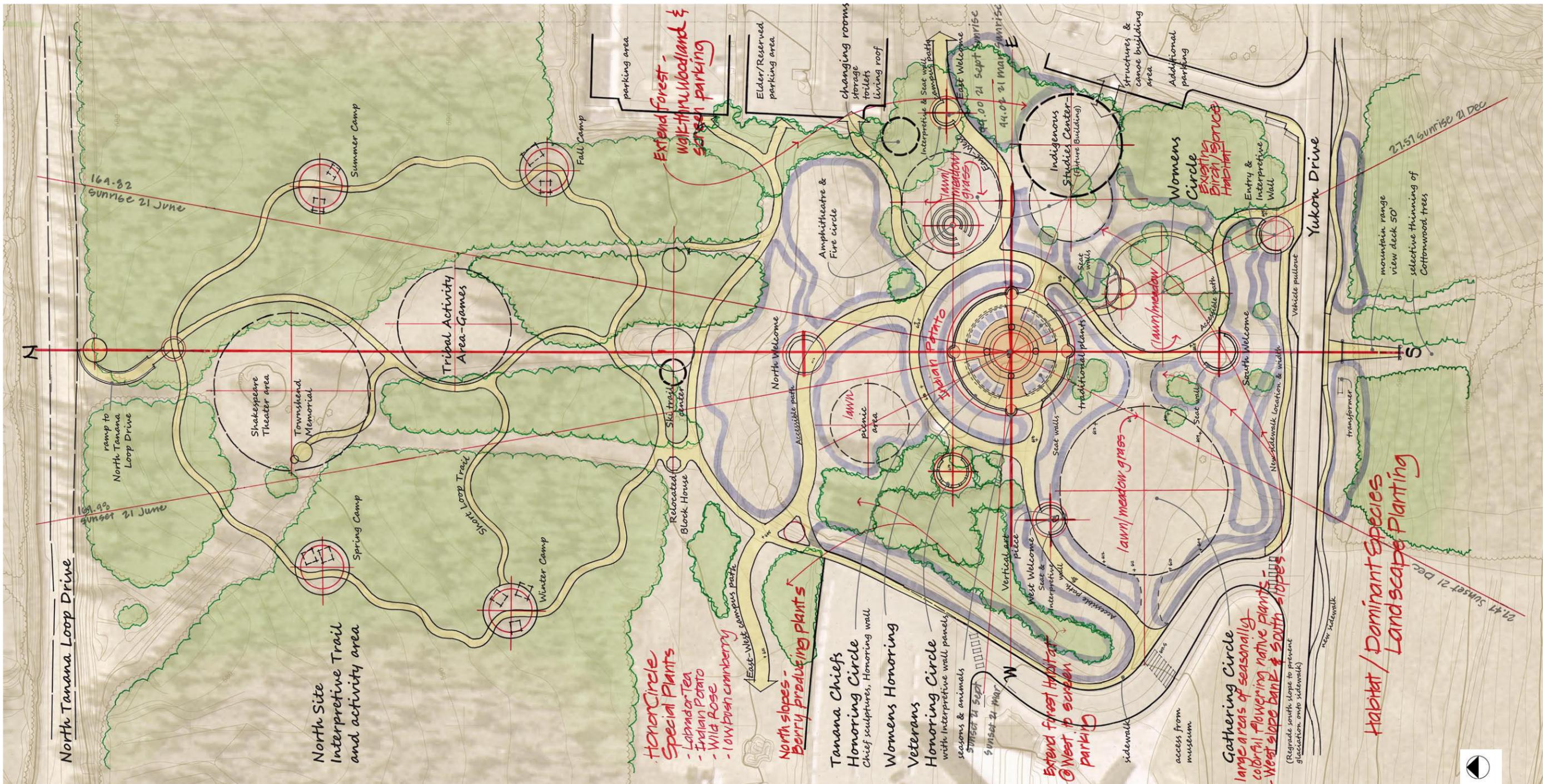
The processional walk joins the North, South, East and West Welcome Circles which are located on the cardinal directions. The Welcome Circles provide interpretive messages, seating, and views of the park landscape, conveying information about Native peoples from different geographic areas. An Honoring Circle for Veterans occurs directly west of Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle. A Fire Circle for tea and small gatherings is nestled into the base of the hill at the North Welcome Circle. For convenience, direct path connections are made between the Honoring Circle and the UA Museum of the North and from the south entry off of Yukon Drive. A possible site for the future Indigenous Studies Center is shown below the hillcrest to the northeast of the Honoring Circle.

As with the previous alternatives, the UA Museum of the North, access road and parking to the west is screened from the park with dense plantings of birch and spruce. Woodland plantings also buffer the park from parking, access drives and the Reichardt Building to the east. Planted areas of seasonally colorful and traditional-use plants blanket the site and surround the outdoor spaces and activity areas.

An interpretive trail travels through the woods and around the cleared event areas in the north half of the site. Traditional canoe carving and structure building will take place in the north park area.



Concept diagram



PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

## Preferred Alternative

Upon presenting the three alternative schemes to the client group, a preferred alternative was selected.

The Preferred Alternative merges aspects of Alternatives 1 and 2. Essentially, the design for the north half of the site in Alternative 1 is combined with the design for the south half of the site depicted in Alternative 2. A woodland Interpretive Trail on the site's north half will encircle informal event and activity areas, while meandering trails will create riverine patterns and connections over the south half of the site.

### Troth Yeddha' Park Plan Elements

The UA Museum of the North, access road and parking is screened with dense plantings of birch and spruce trees on the west. Forest plantings also buffer the park from parking, access and the Reichardt Building on the east. Planting areas of seasonally colorful and traditional use plants blanket the site and surround the various spaces and activity areas.



### Indigenous Studies Center & Amphitheater

The University of Alaska Fairbanks has identified a need for an Indigenous Studies Center on the campus. While originally envisioned as part of the Park, the 2010 Campus Master Plan recommends incorporating the Center into plans for an addition to the west wing of the Reichardt Building. This addresses campus-wide goals in integrating teaching and research into new building and supports campus sustainability. The design of the center would take into consideration the proximity of the Park and the integration of activities in both locations.

### Welcome Circles

Welcome Circles are aligned with the cardinal directions and are encountered along the park's main paths. The Mountain Range View Deck extends the north-south axis across Yukon Drive.

### Gathering & Womens Circle

The Gathering Circle, an area currently used by the UA Museum of the North, is a formalized lawn for large outdoor activities. Access to this area is directly across from the UA Museum of the North entry. The Women's Circle provides an additional lawn area separate from but connected to the Gathering Circle.



## Park Plan Elements

### Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle

The UAF campus occupies the landform known by the Tanana Athabascans as Troth Yeddha' Hill. Wild potatoes growing on the hill were collected by Tanana Athabascans over many generations. The legacy and relevance of Troth Yeddha' Hill lies in its use as a seasonal coming together place by Native people for not only food but, more importantly, for "wisdom sharing... and good feeling, good thinking and working together" (Elder Quote from Troth Yeddha Park workshop, January 4, 2009). Troth Yeddha Park is intended to commemorate Athabascan culture and history and to "nurture indigenous ways and beliefs". It will also embody a symbolic connection between the University and the Athabascan people who designated the hill as a place for learning and the sharing of knowledge.

Among the traditions central to Athabascan culture are the customs of Honoring and Welcome. The Troth Yeddha' Park Plan gives form to these customs through a series of Welcome Circles at primary entrance points into the park. Each Welcome Circle will contain interpretive exhibits and seating. At the center of the park will be the Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle dedicated to tribal leaders who have provided direction and cultural continuity for their people. The Honoring Circle will be a place where "...our Native kids can know their own heroes - not just who they are taught about in public school..." (Elder comment, Jan. 4, 2009 workshop).

The Honoring Circle will include sculptural likenesses of four Tanana Chiefs located at each of the cardinal directions around the inner ring of the circle. Their life-size forms will express the motion of walking toward each other as though they're about to meet in the center. Also in the Honoring Circle, remarkable women leaders will be honored with a series of commemorative "Women's Benches". The Women's Benches will encircle the life-size forms of the chiefs and will help to contain raised planters holding traditional use plants. Each plant will be identified by its importance and use to the Athabascan people. Floral and geometric beadwork patterns will be represented in the paving patterns throughout the Honoring Circle.

In honor of all Native Peoples of Alaska, the names of the 230 tribes will be set in a semi-circular stone wall wrapping the north, east and west sides of the Honoring Circle. At the cardinal directions, the stone wall will be punctuated with cascading rocks and native plants in honor of the animals that hold special place and meaning in Native People's culture. Stone markers will indicate the equinox and solstice and reflect the change of seasons. It can also be a place for interpretive stories and messages. The Honor Circle is wrapped on the south by a stone seat wall which will provide visitors with a place to sit and look across the broad Tanana River valley to the Alaska Range. All paths in the park will lead to the Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle.

### Native Plant Restoration and Landscape Planting

This Troth Yeddha' Park Plan recommends that large areas of the Troth Yeddha' Park remain and be planted in native vegetation. Because native plants are used for food, medicine, tools and shelter by Native Peoples, the park should host a collection of plants of ethno-botanical value.

Plants in and around the Honoring Circle especially need to be culturally relevant and evoke interest and discussion among visitors. Certain plants and berries could even be collected and harvested from the park.

Other advantages of native plants include the following: they are well-suited to local soils and climate, establishing and growing faster than non-natives; they provide critical habitat and forage for wildlife; and they provide excellent seasonal variation and visual interest. Existing wooded areas and native plants contribute significantly to the site's character and these plants should be preserved by exercising extreme care in the final design and construction of the park.

As reflected on the Troth Yeddha' Park Plan, plants should be preserved and planted to help define park spaces and trails, buffer or screen

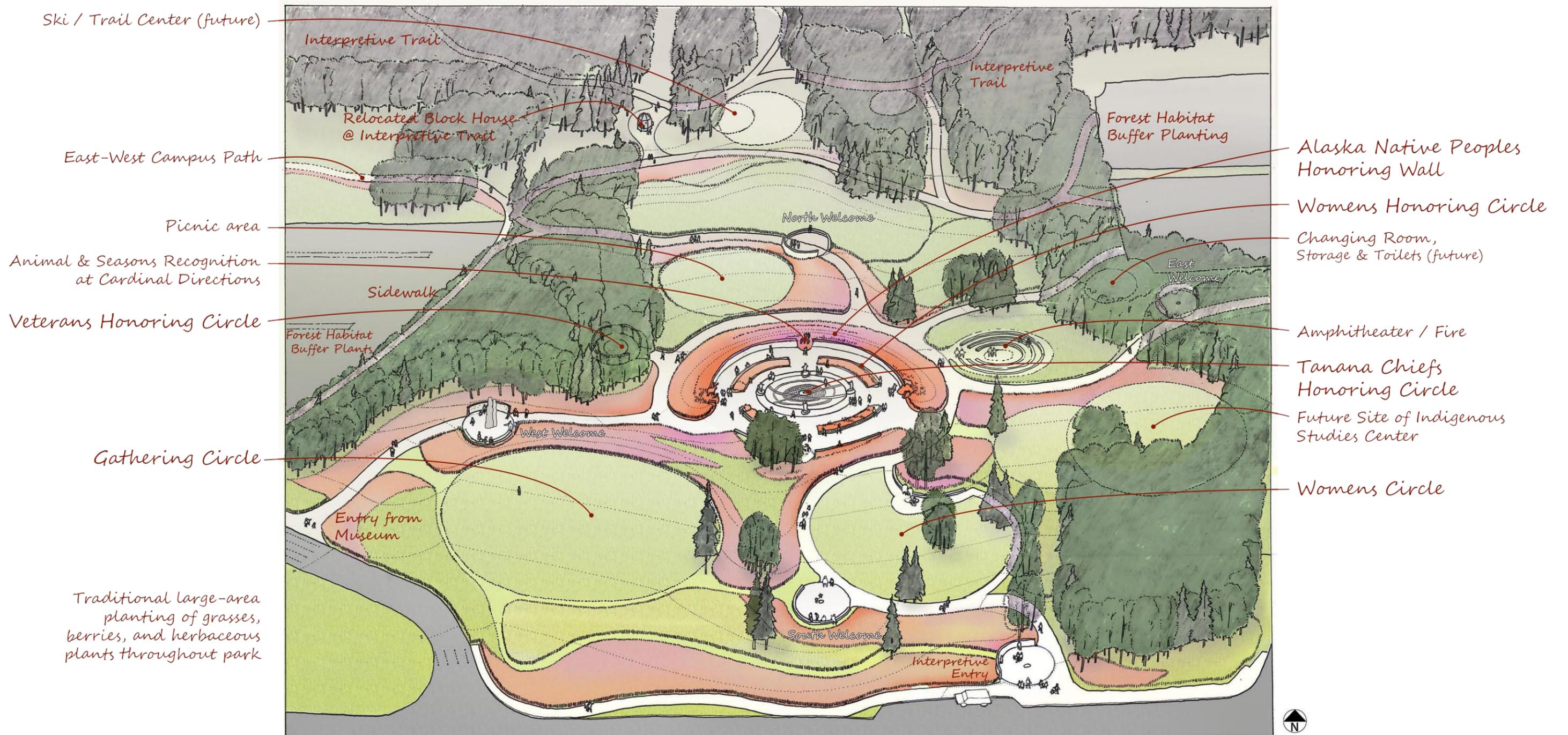
detracting elements (such as large buildings and parking areas), reinforce or frame scenic views and vistas, and provide protection from strong winds or the sun. The layout of planted areas on the Troth Yeddha' Park Plan is intended to evoke a riverine landscape where ribbons or bands of vegetation meander across the site, much like ribbon marshes or braid-bars in a river basin. Other symbolic connections or themes in the use of plants should be explored in future design phases for the park.

### Site Art Piece viewed from Lower Campus

Troth Yeddha' Park will occupy a prominent site on a high point of the UAF campus. The park will be visible from a considerable distance to viewers below and south of the site as well as from Yukon Drive approaching the site. With the distinctive UA Museum of the North as a neighbor, the park needs to establish its own identity as an important commemorative landmark. Proposed park features and landscape will go a long way toward expressing the spirit and heritage of the Athabascan Alaskans. The park site also provides a prime setting on the UAF campus for an art piece that embodies the sun, wind, water, and spirit of the native world. The park committee and university will need to collaborate on commissioning a major sculptural piece for the park.

The Troth Yeddha' Park Plan depicts a prominent site to the east of the Honoring Circle as the location for the Center.





AERIAL VIEW OF SOUTHERN AREA OF THE PROPOSED PARK

Ski / Trail Center (future)

Interpretive Trail

Interpretive Trail

Forest Habitat Buffer Planting

East-West Campus Path

Relocated Block House @ Interpretive Trail

Alaska Native Peoples Honoring Wall

Picnic area

North Welcome

Womens Honoring Circle

Animal & Seasons Recognition at Cardinal Directions

Changing Room, Storage & Toilets (future)

Sidewalk

East Welcome

Veterans Honoring Circle

Amphitheater / Fire

Forest Habitat Buffer Plants

Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle

Future Site of Indigenous Studies Center

Gathering Circle

West Welcome

Womens Circle

Entry from Museum

South Welcome

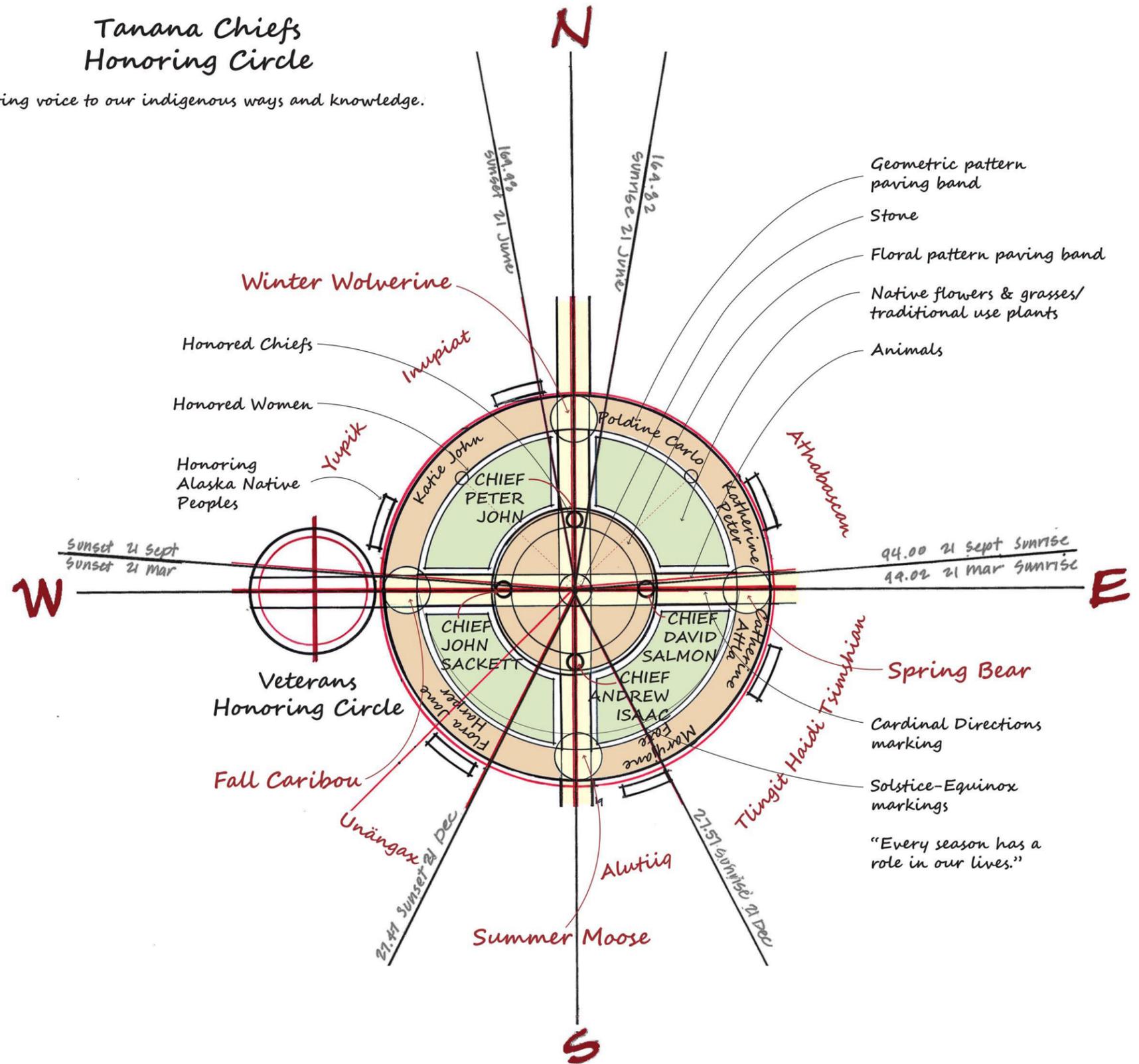
Interpretive Entry

Traditional large-area planting of grasses, berries, and herbaceous plants throughout park

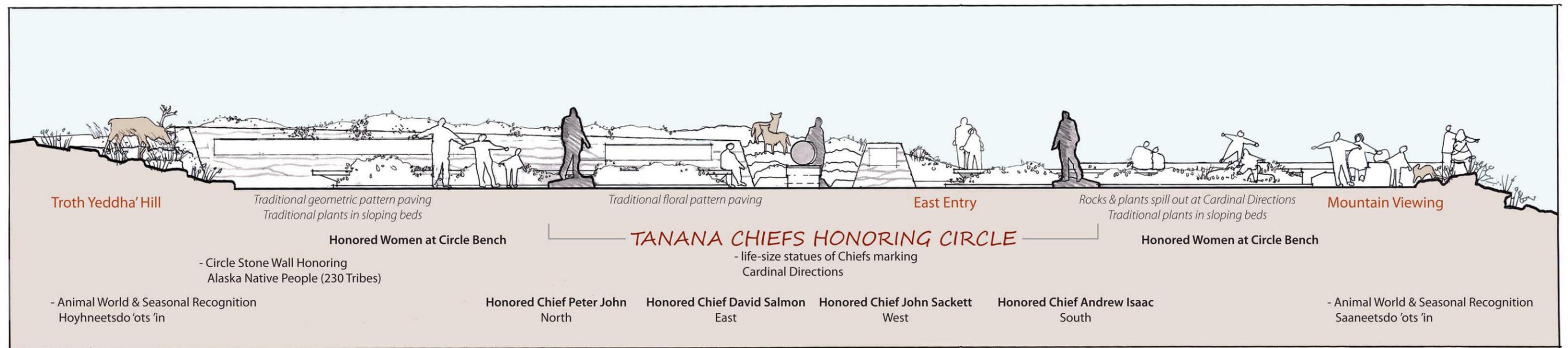


### Tanana Chiefs Honoring Circle

"Giving voice to our indigenous ways and knowledge."







North-South Section

Changing Room

A Changing Room is needed for Native student events and cultural activities that will take place in the park. The Changing Room would include regalia dressing areas, toilets and storage. The Troth Yeddha' Park Plan proposes the room be recessed or built into the hill and have a living roof to diminish the presence of the building. It would be accessible from the parking area northeast of the Reichardt Building.

Blockhouse

A new location has been identified for the Blockhouse, a remnant of Russian territorial claim to Athabascan lands which now sits in the Troth Yeddha' Park. Cooperative efforts between the Troth Yeddha' Park Planning Committee, UA Museum of the North, and University have culminated in an agreement to use the Blockhouse as a path entry marker to the future interpretive trail that will be developed in the northern wooded portion of the Park site.

Reichardt Building Expansion

The 2004 Campus Landscape Plan shows a large future addition to the Reichardt Building proposed on the west side of the existing facility. This expansion would occupy the current drive and accessible parking area on the building's west side; it would also encroach on the Troth Yeddha' Park site.

This major building expansion would basically diminish park access and would visually overwhelm the park. Because the Park is a heritage site for the University, the Troth Yeddha' Park Planning Committee recommends the proposed addition to the Reichardt Building be located on the east of the facility where there is considerable developable land. At this location, the building addition would not encroach on the Troth Yeddha' Park or limit access to the site from the existing drive.

Sustainable Design

Park improvements and facilities should demonstrate best practices and methods for energy conservation, low resource consumption, pollution containment and remediation, efficient land use, and minimal impact upon natural resources. As the park design moves forward, consideration should be given to various "green" technologies and measures including snow-melt and rainwater harvesting for irrigation and toilets, storm-water runoff treatment, recycled building products, and low maintenance, durable materials for walls, benches, lights, etc. As mentioned in another section, the use of native plants will reduce maintenance costs and bring about various environmental benefits. Opportunities to describe and interpret the green methods and technologies employed at the park should also be pursued.





*The last little thread that holds a person to their people is Spirit.  
There is a freeing notion staying true to what you know through food,  
language, arts. These things are essential to the Spirit.  
—Willie Hensley*



JONES  JONES  
ARCHITECTS  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
PLANNERS