

# **Resolution 25-788**

## Renaming Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and Indian Mounds Regional Park

**Staff Report for Saint Paul City Council**  
05.21.2025



**SAINT PAUL**  
**MINNESOTA**

[STPAUL.GOV](http://STPAUL.GOV)



# Dakota Sacred Sites within St. Paul





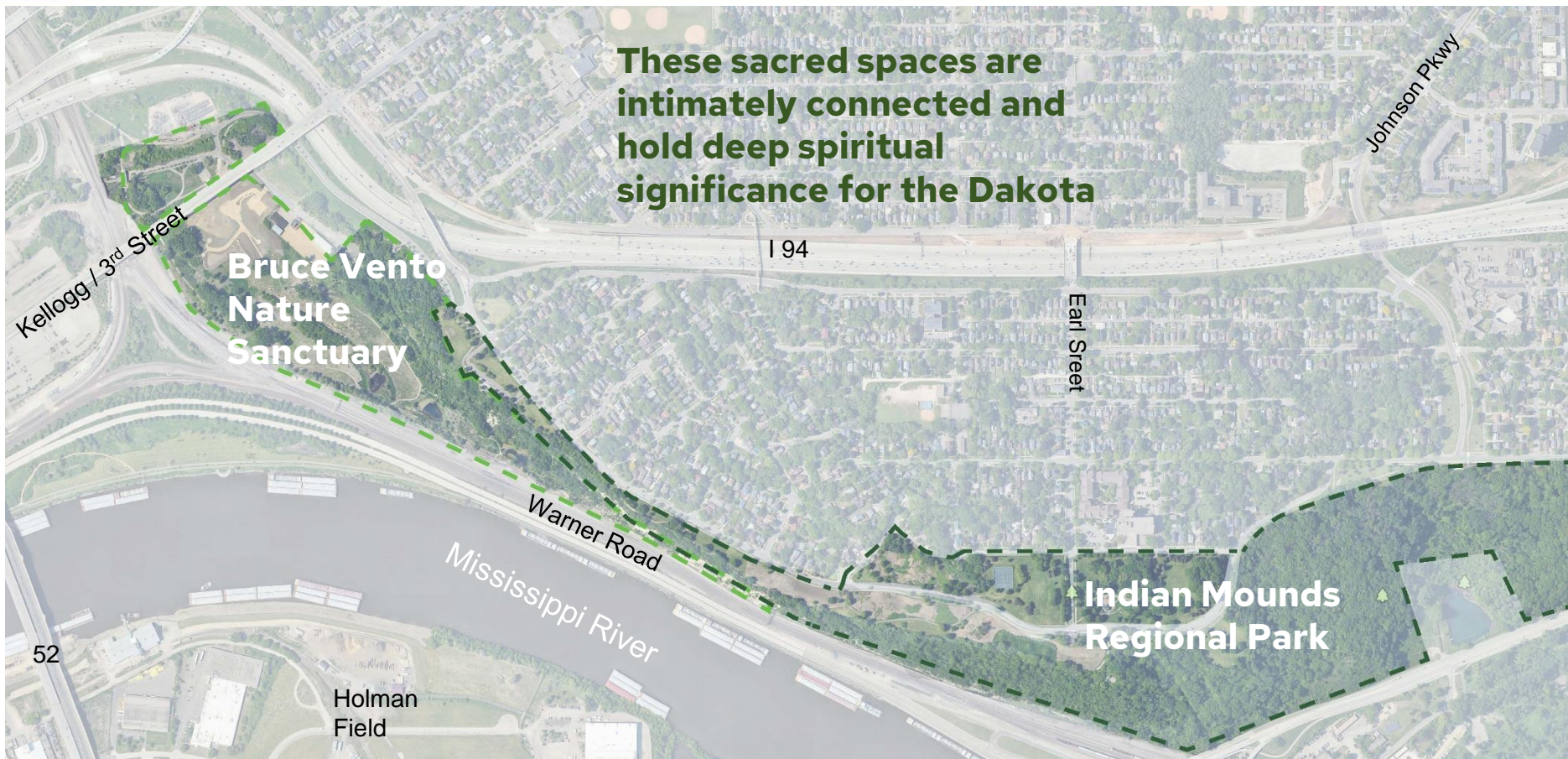


# Sacred Sites to Rename

**These sacred spaces are intimately connected and hold deep spiritual significance for the Dakota**

**Bruce Vento  
Nature  
Sanctuary**

**Indian Mounds  
Regional Park**







# Background

2016 Splash Pad project start highlights inappropriate uses and decision-making process. Reframe project.

2020 Cultural Landscape Study and Messaging Plan – build knowledge and understanding of sacred Dakota sites. Center indigenous voices.

2020 Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) request City initiate name changes to reflect the sacredness, for future generations and enforce tribal protections.



Photo by Mary Norton



# Background

***“How can we change a community’s perception of this place – drastically altered over the last two centuries to function as a public park – toward a perspective that is informed, empathetic, and respectful of its sacredness?”***

*- Indian Mounds Regional Park Cultural Landscape Study and Messaging Plan  
adopted 2020*





# Naming Process

**Dakota-led** process inclusive of recognized knowledge keepers and Tribal representatives. Honoring government to government relationships and Tribal sovereignty.

Tribal Council provided direction for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers represent Dakota Tribes in Minnesota

- Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Prairie Island Indian Community
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Upper Sioux Community

Process facilitated by Wakaŋ T̥ípi Awaŋyaŋkapi

- Tribal Consultation (THPO) meetings with City
- Meeting with Sue Vento
- Outreach events for input and feedback
- **THPOs determine final recommendation**



Photo by Ellen Stewart



# Naming Process

**City – led** steps facilitated by Parks and Recreation Design and Construction Division

Review and approvals

- Inform District Council
- Parks Commission recommendation
- City Council approval
- Met Council approval

Met Council's Imagine 2050 plan  
Cultural Landscape sub-classification of  
Special Feature designation



*Cultural landscapes recognize lands with significant cultural value to American Indian Tribes and other cultural communities.*

- *Protect areas of significant cultural or sacred meaning to groups.*
- *Help interpret and educate visitors*
- *Recreation doesn't need to be part of the unit.*



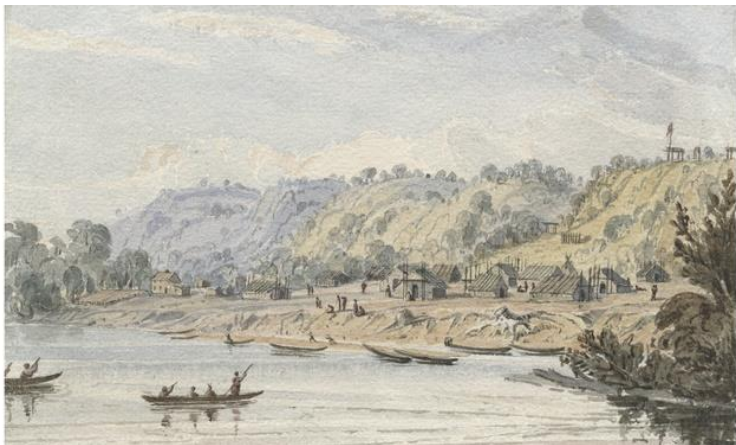
# Imnizaska

## Imnizaska (white cliffs, Dakota)

Proposed name for the Cultural Landscape

Dakota name for the area that is Saint Paul today

Pronounced e-me-NE-zha-ska



Painting by Seth Eastman  
circa 1847



Photo by Ellen Stewart





# Wicahapi

## Wicahapi (cemetery, Dakota)

Proposed name for Indian Mounds Regional Park

Pronounced we-CHA-ha-pee



Photo by Ellen Stewart

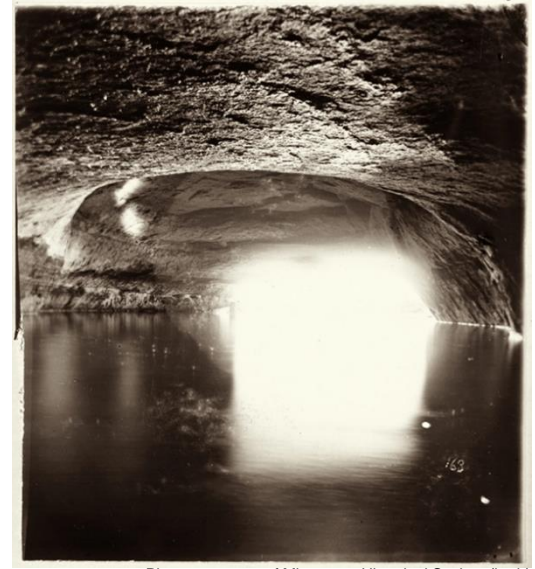
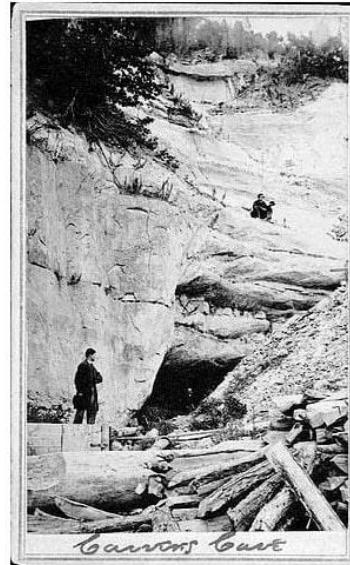


# Waxan Típi

## Waxan Típi (Dwelling Place of the Sacred, Dakota)

Proposed name for Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary

Pronounced wah-KAHN TEE-pee

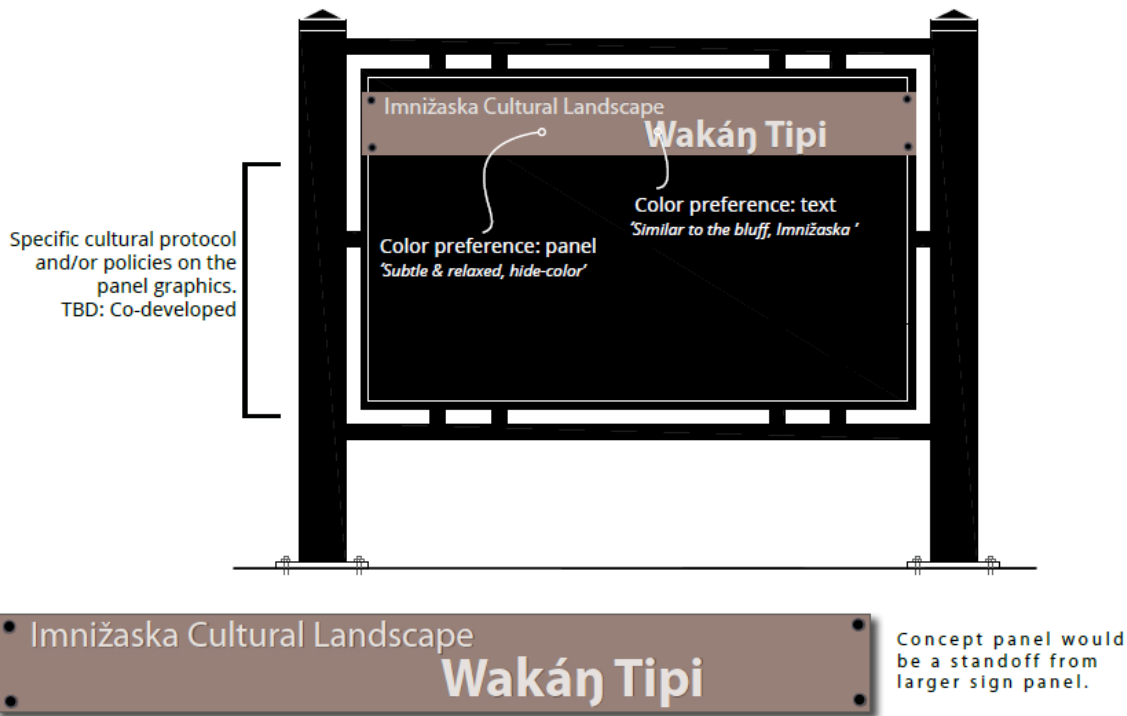


Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society (both)



# Signage Example

- Imnīžaska Cultural Landscape on the signs in each site
- Site names to appear prominently on the signs







# Sites





## Next Steps in renaming

- Website and media updates
- MetCouncil Cultural Landscape Long Range Plan for Imnīžaska when Legacy Funds available
- Approvals for the Long-Range Plan will require separate City Council Approval





# Thank you!

Franky Jackson, Prairie Island Indian Community (Historic Compliance Officer)  
Sam Odegard, Upper Sioux Community (THPO)  
Cheyanne St. John, Lower Sioux Indian Community (THPO)  
Leonard Wabasha, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (THPO)  
Noah White, Prairie Island Indian Community (THPO)



**SAINT PAUL**  
**MINNESOTA**

[STPAUL.GOV](http://STPAUL.GOV)





# Questions?

