September 1989: the North Dakota Museum of Art opened in its permanent home, a renovated 1907 gymnasium on the campus of the University of North Dakota. While situated on its own patch of land, the Museum is surrounded on three sides by roads and parking lots. As the director of the Museum and the descendent of early North Dakota settlers, I was interested in enfolding the Museum in a garden that paid homage to those settlers. As they moved West, they brought with them the rudiments of culture: a few books, a memory bank of songs, an occasional musical instrument, and plant cuttings dominated by peonies and lilacs. Trading was the quickest way to add plants to a garden and soon the Rosa rugosa ‘Hansa’ and “Harrison’s Yellow” rose were added to the peonies and lilacs. Today many of those old gardens have returned to prairie leaving only stands of peonies, thickets of Harrison’s Yellow, rows of lilacs, and aging shelterbelts as testament to earlier human life, and as choice locations for aviaries.

Before planning the Museum’s garden, it was necessary to plan the structure. We commissioned Richard Nonas, a second-generation minimalist, to create a sculpture garden that would define the building as a museum. He was asked to create within the space an area for a planting a specimen peony garden. He would make the structure and I would plant the garden. Before turning to sculpture, Nonas was an anthropologist who studied how native people create public spaces within nature, not unlike defining a museum space surrounded by asphalt and concrete except far less beautiful.

Nonas, a New Yorker, didn’t drive, so the Museum arranged for Zoran Mojsilov to meet his plane and take him to the Cold Springs granite quarries near St. Cloud, Minnesota. Nonas marked charcoal granite stones in the junk pile to ship to Grand Forks and Mojsilov initialed his first rocks—his sculpture in stone was born of that visit, including stone chairs and couch potatoes now in the Museum garden.

Nonas, the artist, circled the Museum with upright marking stones, each accompanied by either a horizontal “bench” or a peony plot that would hold six peonies: forty upright boulders, twenty benches, twenty peony beds to house six peonies each. The benches were more visual than comfortable but children found the upright stones suitable for climbing.

The next step was to make a peony list. First, I went to Harold Thomforde, a nursery owner from Crookston, Minnesota, who was widely recognized as a judge at national peony shows—and of the domestic birds category in state and county fairs. Mr. Thomforde made a peony list and forwarded it on to Greta Kessenich, long-time secretary of the American Peony
Society who lived in Minneapolis. She added her choices, bringing the list to 120 hybrids and species. I took the list to Grand Fork's Frances Kannowski, widely known for her love of peonies. She laughed and said, “Oh, let’s just go with the experts.”

More advice came from the growers, in particular Roy Klehm of Champaign, Illinois, who helped locate hard-to-find plants. Mrs. Ben Gilbertson of Kindred, North Dakota, offered a collection of her late husband’s introductions including Coleen Marie, a double red, and Goldilocks, one of the garden’s first yellow peonies. And a row of Gilbertson’s “Lillian Gibson” roses were planted on the west edge of the garden.

http://www.ndmoa.com/peony-garden

*University of North Dakota Soaring Eagle Garden
Behind the Chester Fritz Library 3051 University Avenue, Grand Forks

http://www.und.edu/org/soaringeagleprairie/2005/storyofsep/storytitlepage.htm

Founded in 1883, the University of North Dakota (UND) was set amid a vast tallgrass prairie sea. Those first buildings were surrounded by prairie grasses and flowers under the great dome of the sky. Early students saw a kind of nature which is only a distant memory today. As the University grew and our world around it, we altered the prairie landscape. Now, less than 1% of the tallgrass prairie remains nationally making tallgrass prairie among the most threatened of all North American ecosystems. With eradication of prairie, we have lost a sense of heritage and connection to the land. Worse yet, many find that those very elements missing now (grasses, flowers, birds, butterflies) provide a kind of peace especially important in our busy, distracted and stress filled lives.

A simple gift was the catalyst providing the momentum for what was to become “Soaring Eagle Prairie”. UND alumnus Colonel Eugene E. Myers (class of 1926 and 1938) gave UND students the impressive “Soaring Eagle Statue” by Native American artist Bennett Brien (class of 1984 and 1988). The statue was installed on central campus (south of the Chester Fritz Library) and dedicated fall 2000. The simple elegance of the statue inspired the vision of a native prairie garden.

Volunteers planned, planted and continue to tend the native prairie garden. Horticultural designer/environmental historian Kathleen Brokke designed the bed. With emphasis on circular rather than straight lines and rows, the flowing triangular bed is 80 feet on a side, showcasing taller plants at center and shorter ones along edge. The garden initially featured more flowers than grasses, since people seemed more accepting of and enchanted by flowers. Spent flowers
become seeds, food for creatures, and seedlings. Plant debris is not trimmed in the fall. Prairie plants stand tall in winter winds offering protection for plants, food for creatures, protection for soil, and contour in an otherwise flat land. Migrating grassland birds find much needed native plants within the garden. Quiet and patient visitors may spot birds, butterflies, insects, small creatures and a Cooper’s Hawk that regularly perches on the statue.

Native plants are almost all local, specific to the Red River Valley watershed. Plants were given from personal collections of Kathleen Brokke, Richard and Glinda Crawford, Marcia Melberg and Nancy Paur. Plants were transplanted from the city prairie planting at Columbia Road and DeMers Avenue; these plants were originally from Prairie Habitats, Argyle, Manitoba. Carlson Prairie Seeds, Karlstad, Minnesota, donated plants and seeds in 2003. Dan Svedarsky from the University of Minnesota-Crookston donated purple coneflower (Echinacea angustifolia) originally from the Lake Agassiz beach ridge. The “Knowing Nature” class (in the Department of Sociology) donated plants students started from seed. In this class, students studied the relationship of humans to the land integrating ecopsychology, ecospirituality, native studies, bioregionalism and science.

The garden has been used widely and knowing the extent of its use is not possible. Academically, the garden has been integrated into numerous UND classes: Plant Systematics, Science Teacher Education, Living Lightly on the Earth, Ecofeminism, Environmental Studies, Ecology, Entomology, Political Sociology, photography, art, among others. The prairie has become a symbol of wellness. Counseling Center graduate students and staff have used the garden to study the healing power of nature. The garden is designated as an Outdoor Wildlife Learning Site by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and is used by the Greater Grand Forks community educators.
The University Park Rock Garden was constructed in 1988 and partially funded with money raised from the Grand Forks Horticultural Societies annual garden tours. The large boulders were hauled in and placed on the site under the direction of Betty Ann Addison of Rice Creek Garden in Fridley, Minnesota. In addition to the site preparation, she also supervised the planting of the garden which was done by the members of the Grand Forks Horticultural Society. Betty Ann Addison, a rock garden designer, has also constructed gardens in Duluth, the Lake Harriet gardens in Minneapolis, Central Park in New York City and the garden here in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The Wings of Hope Memorial Garden and Statue are part of the Altru infant bereavement program and provide a place where families can remember and honor their deceased children. The adjacent Healing garden is a contemplative setting for special summer programs.
The Grand Forks Park District was established in 1917. The first professional forester was hired in 1950. Grand Forks became a TREE CITY USA in 1976. The Park District's Forestry Crew professionally maintains over 30,000 trees (over 20 species) in the city throughout the year and plants an average of 1000 new trees each spring. The Forestry Department maintains an arboretum at Sertoma Park to educate the public about trees.

Japanese Garden

Like medieval European architectural styles, such as Gothic and Romanesque, Japanese gardens are built according to the distinguishable landscape architectural styles. The style adopted for this park is known as JYOUDO-style. The word "jyoudo" is a religious word for Buddhists, which means heaven, paradise, space, or universe, depending upon its context. Two of the most distinguishable features of the JYOUDO-style gardens are "KARE SAN SUI" (dry river in the mountain) and "SYUMI SEN" (mountain of Gods), both of which are represented in this garden. It is the garden designer, Master Gardner Toshio Yoshida's hope that a visitor to the Japanese garden built with the imagination of "jyoudo", or heavenly universe, would develop his or her own imagination of universe. According to Mr. Yoshida, such imagination does not necessarily be the same as that of the designer, because, each individual's imagination of the universe is unique and respectable. Thus, such imagination and uniqueness of each individual should be honored and cherished as such.
Raingarden at 17 Ave South and South Washington Street, Grand Forks  
N47° 54.211 W097° 02.728
The purpose of a rain garden is to improve water quality in nearby bodies of water and to ensure that rainwater becomes available for plants as groundwater rather than being sent through stormwater drains. Rain gardens reduce the amount of non-point pollution reaching waterways. The city of Grand Forks and the North Dakota Department of Transportation partnered to install this rain garden. The site has a kiosk describing the benefits of rain garden filtration systems for stormwater management.

*Schroeder Middle School Butterfly garden 800 32 Ave South, Grand Forks  
N47° 53.372 W097° 02.355
During the summer of 2003, the Dakota Science Center partnered with the Grand Forks Horticultural Society to build the Butterfly Garden and Outdoor Classroom. The original garden was located at 308 South 5th Street and was constructed to resemble a butterfly in flight.

The Dakota Science Center approached Schroeder Middle School during the 2004-2005 school year with a proposal to move the Butterfly Garden and Outdoor Classroom to the school grounds. The garden was moved in May 2005. The Schroeder Butterfly Garden is used as an outdoor classroom for the school. The 7th grade life science classes uses the garden as part of their unit on monarch butterflies, as well as in the study of classification, animals and animal behavior, plants, and ecology. The garden is utilized by 8th grade North Dakota Studies classes as many of the plants in the garden are native to North Dakota. The art classes use the garden as inspiration for their art work and have made stepping stones for the garden. English classes make use of the garden as a place of inspiration for their writing. The Butterfly Garden is an educational resource for the entire school.
Fannie Mahood was born near Spring Valley, Minnesota on March 5, 1864, the daughter of John and Elizabeth Mahood. She came to Grand Forks, N.D. in 1881 and that year married Frank Arnold Heath. He was born at Niagara, Ontario, Canada on March 20, 1853 and came to Grand Forks, N.D. in 1877. The next year he homesteaded on land in Brenna Township Grand Forks.

When Fannie arrived at Frank's homestead, she was dismayed to see a treeless prairie. While Frank worked to establish their small farm, Fannie worked to establish a vegetable garden with various fruits to preserve for the winter months. She also planted flowers that she was familiar with from childhood. Unfortunately, due to the drying winds and alkali soil, the traditional flower garden plants died. Fannie noticed that there were beautiful flowers growing alongside the roads and on the North Dakota landscape that thrived naturally. She began a study of native plants and soil improvement that led to an extensive correspondence with horticulturalists around the world. When the Theodore Roosevelt cabin from southwestern North Dakota was moved to the Capitol grounds in Bismarck, it was Fannie who was asked to landscape it, making it look as natural as possible for a cabin on the western North Dakota prairie. She became known as the "Flower Lady of North Dakota." The Grand Forks Herald printed regular articles about public tours of the Heath gardens. Fannie was a founding member of the North Dakota Horticultural Society and the National Horticultural Society. Fannie died September 29, 1931 and Frank in 1937.

This garden, at the Grand Forks County Historical Society, is planted in her honor, in partnership with the Grand Forks Horticultural Society. It has a balance of native prairie flowers and other cultivars, such as delphiniums and peonies which she also loved.

The Fannie Mahood Health Papers (1921-1941) can be accessed at the NDSU Institute for Regional Studies & University Archives Collection number: MSS 80. The primary item in the collection is a copy of her 152 leaf manuscript “My North Dakota Garden or Prairie Flowers for Your Garden” that provides a rich source in documenting her lifelong dedication to growing plants in North Dakota. The Subject Files Series includes an original copy of Mrs. Heath’s catalog Hardy Wild Flowers of Prairieland that lists “choice Alpines and other Rock Garden plants”. For each she gives a brief description, growth height, blooming period and for some a price. There is a file containing carbon copies of typed lists of fruit varieties, flowers by color and alpine plants under trial in her garden.

[https://library.ndsu.edu/repository/bitstream/handle/10365/13371/Mss0080.pdf]
The City of Grand Forks, the Grand Forks Park District and the Forks Handicapped Club partnered to design a park for those with physical mobility limitations. The park was designed with consideration for all degrees of sensory awareness, all types of locomotion and all levels of physical ability. The park provides a relaxing atmosphere where visitors can enjoy the sights, sounds and scents of an outdoor garden. The 1.5-acre park has raised beds so that those using a wheelchair can enjoy the garden at eye-level. The paths are 6 feet wide to allow 2 wheelchairs to pass one another and have orientation strips for the visually impaired. The paths are smooth without joints for ease of use in a wheelchair. All paths circle the landscape features and return to the center court which has a gazebo. Steven Schadler (Grand Forks Park District) designed the garden. The Forks Handicapped Club established a Community Foundation Fund to support the maintenance of Independence Park.
Jerry Wenzel, a science teacher at Central Middle School, EGF and Vince Ames, a science teacher at Central High School, GF partnered to design and develop what is now known as the CMS Butterfly Garden. The dream of an outdoor classroom came to be when the new middle school was built after the 1997 flood. The science teachers wanted students to experience science outdoors, develop an understanding of environmental science and learn to garden. Many teachers saw possibilities to incorporate the garden into the curriculum of other subjects as well; such as art, writing composition, and woodworking.

The CMS Butterfly Garden is situated on the Southwest corner of the school and has 3 components; the butterfly garden, the native prairie, and the bird sanctuary. The Butterfly Garden is designed to attract butterflies by providing their habitat needs. Upon the retirement of Jerry Wenzel, Laurie Arnason and Teri Hammarback took over the responsibility of the garden. Mrs. Arnason is a teacher at South Point Elementary and Mrs. Hammarback is a Central Middle School retired teacher. Both schools use the garden. Bordering the school is the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 30-acre prairie restoration area. The prairie starts at Bygland Road and extends north to the elementary school. The students enjoy the prairie for both recess and class time. The area of the garden alongside the prairie has been developed into a bird sanctuary. Students have made some of the bird houses and feeders in woodworking class.
Kannowski Park 703 South 4th Street, Grand Forks
N47° 55.157 W097° 01.338

Max B. Kannowski was the Grand Forks Superintendent of Parks from 1921 until his death in 1933. He was known nationally for his pioneering work about a barberry bush being the cause of wheat rust. He was honored by the Federal Department of Agriculture for this work. Max Kannowski died in 1933 and was succeeded as Superintendent of Parks by his wife Frances. Frances was the first female superintendent of a park district in the United States and served in the position from 1933 to 1953.

Skidmore Park Historic Horse Trough Gateway Drive & North 5th Street N, Grand Forks
N47° 55.964 W097° 02.902

New York actress Minnie Maddern Fiske campaigned to improve the lives of workhorses and dogs. She donated more than 100 troughs across the United States in the early 1900’s. Grand Forks received the 5-ton granite trough in 1907 from the National Humane Alliance. It was located at Chestnut and 5th Street near the original Grand Forks County Courthouse. It was moved closer to the river before finding its current location on Gateway Drive.
The Sherlock house is one of the oldest houses in East Grand Forks, MN. It was built after the flood of 1897, on the only dry spot; the corner of 4th St. and 3rd Ave. NW. It was one of the first houses to have electricity. Jack Sherlock was a prominent lawyer and judge. Mr. Sherlock was instrumental in bringing American Crystal Sugar to East Grand Forks. Sherlock Park was named in his honor. The Sherlock house was moved to the Heritage Village grounds after the flood of 1997. (Take note of the two dates; 100 yr. flood?) The Sherlock House holds a special place in our hearts as a monument to our heritage and the floods of 1897 and 1997.

The Sherlock House garden is maintained as a living exhibit of home gardening. It is an educational exhibit regarding the importance of home gardening in our nation's history. The organic garden is fertilized bi-annually and vegetables are rotated regularly for optimal production. A diluted organic soap mixture is sprayed on the plants to discourage the rabbits. The garden harvest is shared with the community.

To help the United States win World War I and World War II, civilians made do with less so there would be enough supplies for the armed forces. Planting a Victory Garden was encouraged by the federal government to supplement civilian shortages and allow raw materials to be diverted to the military. Gardening and canning became patriotic acts. Mr. Wendell Landon began making a Victory Garden exhibit by the Sherlock House in 2009. An heirloom plant variety is one that has been maintained by gardeners and farmers over the years. These plant varieties were commonly grown during earlier periods in history, but are not used in modern large-scale agriculture. The Victory Garden has heirloom varieties that are native Minnesota plants including raspberries, black currants and strawberries. Swiss chard was popularized through Victory gardens.

To learn about the historic buildings on the grounds visit: http://egfheritage.com/heritagevillagebldgs.html.

*These public gardens are maintained by volunteers.*