Reinterpreting Culture and Nature as Productive Infrastructure
East Thornton Lake Natural Area

Winter 2017 • Landscape Architecture

Nicholas Sund • Landscape Architecture
Jacques Abelman • Professor • Landscape Architecture

SCYP
Sustainable City Year Program

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCI

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Brad Stangeland, Principal, Stangeland & Associates

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Kory Russel, Professor

Brad Stangeland, Career Instructor

Jillian Stone, Bachelor of Architecture Candidate

About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and one city in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with the partner city on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner city through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future.

SCI Directors and Staff

Marc Schlossberg, SCI Co-Director, and Associate Professor of Planning, Public Policy, and Management, University of Oregon

Nico Larco, SCI Co-Director, and Associate Professor of Architecture, University of Oregon

Megan Banks, SCYP Manager, University of Oregon

About Albany, Oregon

The city now known as Albany has an established history as a central hub in the Willamette valley. Founded in 1848 and incorporated in 1864 the city has served as the Linn County seat since 1851. Albany's unique place in Oregon's history is exemplified in its dedication to historical preservation. Albany is often noted to have the most varied collection of historic buildings in Oregon. Its "four historic districts are listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior." This downtown core has served as the center of revitalization efforts since 2001.

Located on the Willamette and Calapooia rivers Albany spans both Linn and Benton counties. With a population of 51,720 people, Albany is Oregon's 11th largest city and the second largest city in Benton County. Albany is administered under a home rule charter, adopted in 1957 establishing a Council and City Manager model. The city's vision, to be a "vital and diverse community that promotes a high quality of life, great neighborhoods, balanced economic growth and quality public services," is exemplified by its administration and government. Albany has a very active civic community with nearly 100 citizens serving on advisory commissions and committees dedicated to municipal issues.

Historically, Albany's economy has relied on natural resources. As the self-styled "rare metals capital of the world," Albany produces zirconium, hafnium and titanium. Major employment sectors include "wood products, food processing, and manufactured homes." Because of its short, dry temperate growing season Albany farmers excel in producing specialized crops like grass flower and vegetable seeds, "tree fruits, nursery stock, nuts, berries, mint and grains." Albany and the surrounding (Linn and Benton) counties are so agriculturally productive it is often called "The Grass Seed Capital of the World."

Albany's central location and mild climate has made it a popular destination for a variety of outdoor and leisure activities. Located in the heart of Oregon's most populous region with the Pacific coast to the west and the Cascade Range to its east, Albany is connected to the wider state by Interstate 5, Oregon Routes 99E and 34, and US Route 20. The city is also served by Amtrak, a municipal airport, and a local and regional bus network.

Course Participants

Adam DeHeer, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Brianna Heese, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Chris Weaver, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Chrissy Stillman, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Deanna Lynn, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Emma Stone, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Hannah Six, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Ilia Fiene, Landscape Architecture Graduate
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Sierra McComas, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Victoria Murphy, Landscape Architecture Graduate

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Executive Summary

The City of Albany owns a 26-acre property beside Thornton Lake that is slated to become a future park and nature preserve. The site has historically been used for private homesteading and agriculture but has since become wild fields and woodlands. The community supported the City of Albany's interest in purchasing the land to protect it from private development and preserve its natural character.

A new public park at Thornton Lake would create new opportunities for the community while protecting a piece of its unique natural landscape. This project aims to support recreation and community agriculture, and to restore habitats for endangered species. In each of these endeavors, the project strives to educate visitors about Albany's rich history and invites them to imagine its future.

Concept plans for this public park were developed by graduate students from the University of Oregon's Department of Landscape Architecture in winter term 2017.

Students collected background information for the project from personal site visits, interviews with city staff, and previous studies and plans. Utilizing this research, students identified current strengths and weaknesses of the project site, and identified possible opportunities and challenges that could impact the project.

After developing a basic understanding of the project and its context, students looked for similar projects and existing public parks in order to study them and learn from their successes and failures.

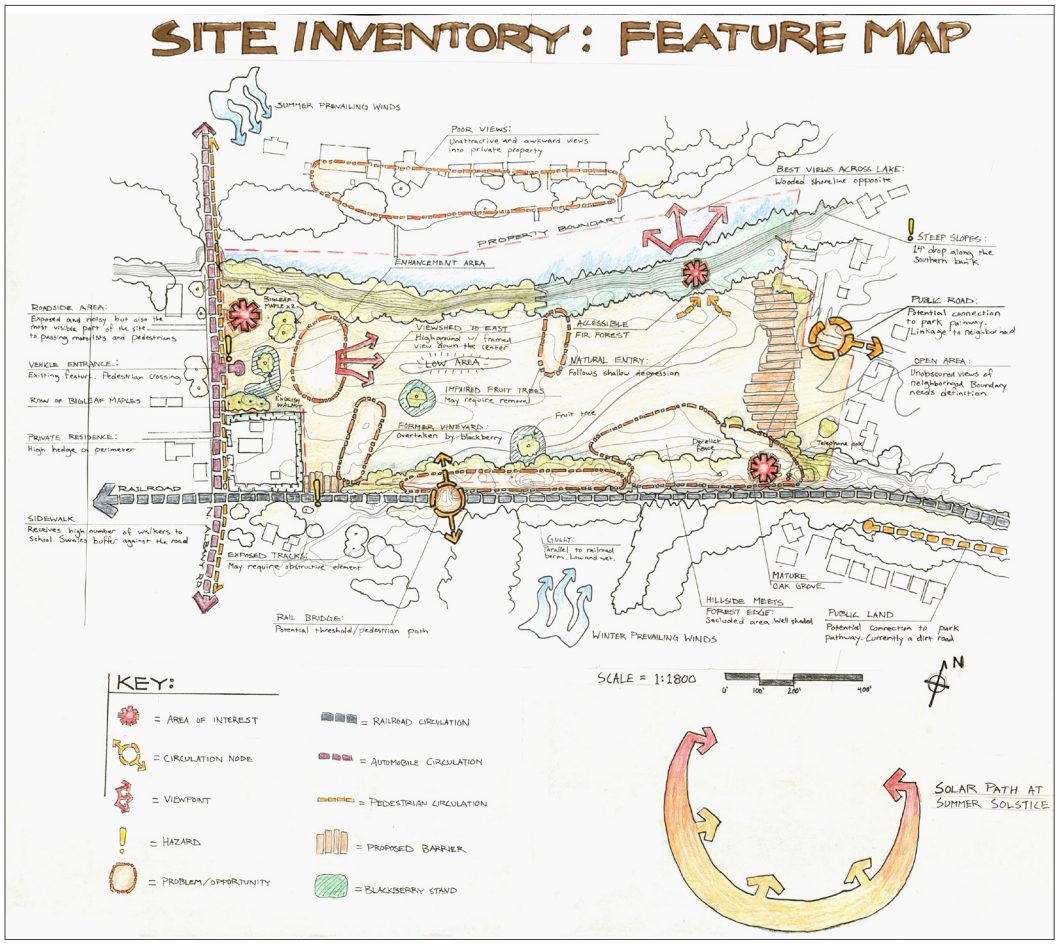
With research complete, students began developing individual design concepts for the park. As the class strived to achieve the community's goals, each student followed their own conceptual pursuits and used a variety of functionality, symbolism, and art. Various city staff, departmental faculty, and professional landscape architects helped to evaluate individual designs throughout the development process.

Each design proposal includes a combination of conceptual diagrams, site plans, cross sections, and representative illustrations. In March, 2017, final design concepts were presented in Albany and Eugene.

Background

In order to better understand the context of our project, our team studied Albany's environmental, social, and economic background. Our team collected background information for the project from personal site visits, interviews with city staff, and previous studies and plans. Through our research, we identified current strengths and weaknesses that could inspire the design process and identified possible opportunities and challenges that could impact the project. Our research is divided into five themes that range in scale from the entire city to the project site itself:

- Current Conditions
- Culture and Economy
- Environment and Ecology
- Agriculture and Food Systems
- Urban Development



Current Conditions

The project site is bordered by Thornton Lake to the north, a railroad to the south, and suburban neighborhoods to the east and west. The area can be accessed via Northwest North Albany Road.

Current Strengths

- Thornton Lake is a rare and valuable resource that creates scenic and recreational value while preserving the natural habitat.

Current Weaknesses

- Railroad traffic and noise can disrupt peaceful enjoyment of the park.
- Access to the lake is limited by steep slopes and dense vegetation.
- Views of nearby houses limits visitors' sense of privacy and solitude.

Possible Opportunities

- Improve access for nearby residents with a secondary entrance at Green Acres Lane.

Possible Challenges

- Removal of nearby forest for the purposes of development would threaten views.

Culture and Economy

Current Strengths

- Kalapuya history is a source of inspiration for landscape design, environmental education, and artistic interpretation that strengthens relationships between local residents and the land.

Current Weaknesses

- A lack of recorded cultural information limits understanding of Kalapuya history before the founding of Albany.

Possible Opportunities

- The presence and involvement of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde provides opportunities for education and conversation within Albany and the greater Willamette Valley.

Possible Challenges

- The historic extermination, oppression, and discrimination of Native Americans is a terrible scar that cripples healthy relations between the City of Albany and the Kalapuya.

Environment and Ecology

Current Strengths

Current Weaknesses

- Invasive plant species have replaced native habitat throughout the site. Complete removal could take many years, but is necessary before proceeding with any restoration efforts.
- Thick vegetation blocks views of the lake.
- Water quality is low. Water temperature is often too warm to sustain fish populations.

Possible Opportunities

- Establish select views of the lake by clearing small amounts of vegetation.
- “Scraping” the site of its topsoil is an intensive potential strategy that could also improve site topography for functional, experiential, and artistic purposes.

Possible Challenges

- Seasonal flooding.

Agriculture and Food Systems

Current Strengths

- Site soils are suitable for agriculture and food production.

Current Weaknesses

- Central Albany is a “food desert” that predominantly affects minority populations and single-parent households.

Possible Opportunities

- Albany has a vibrant local culinary scene, an existing farmers market, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) systems.

Possible Challenges

- Farmers have difficulty accessing local markets. There are not many small grocery stores and selling their produce at large groceries is too expensive.

Urban Development

The area around the project site is known as North Albany. This area began as a separate settlement in the 1880s, and has since been annexed by the City of Albany. Because of their separate histories, demographics differ between North Albany and the rest of the community. In general, median income is higher in North Albany and there is a greater concentration of married couples with children. Additionally, North Albany has its own elementary school zone, but shares a middle school with the rest of the city.

Current Strengths

- Low density development has preserved nearby trees, offering a feeling of removal from the bustle of a city.
- Northwest North Albany Road has recently been rebuilt with stormwater infrastructure.

Current Weaknesses

- Large block sizes increase walking distances to the park from nearby neighborhoods.
- Lack of bicycle infrastructure discourages people from biking to the park.

Possible Opportunities

- Provide educational opportunities to students at the nearby middle school.
- Continue improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to encourage alternative transportation and reduce the need for excessive parking infrastructure.
- Improve wetlands retainment to manage stormwater from nearby neighborhoods and future developments.

Possible Challenges

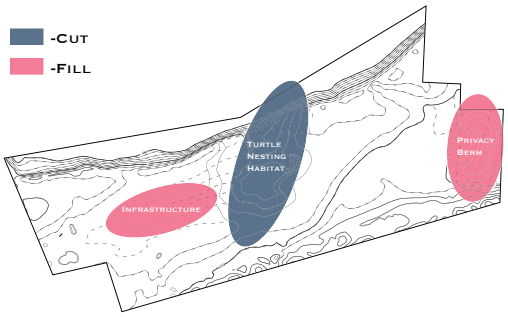
- If infrastructure for low impact transportation remains inadequate, more space will be required for parking for personal vehicles.

Adam DeHeer

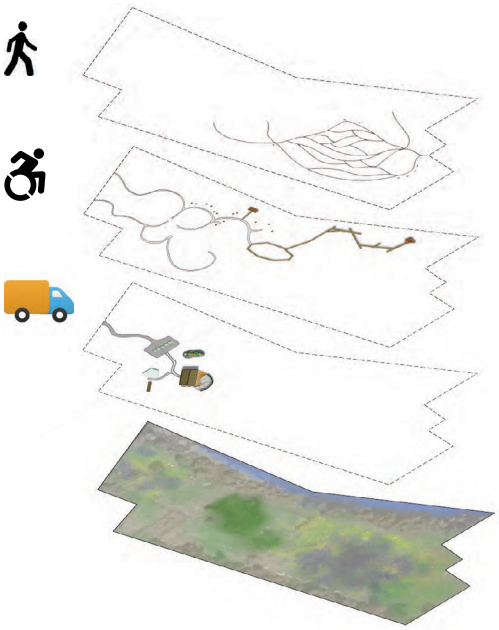
"Creating Gathering Grounds: Meeting Albany's Needs"

Park Structure

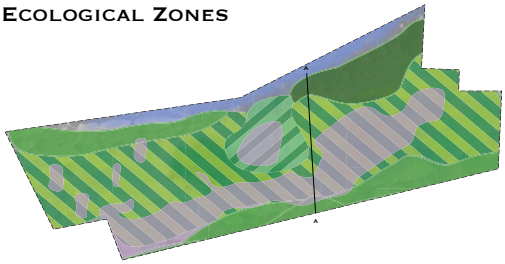
Grading Plan

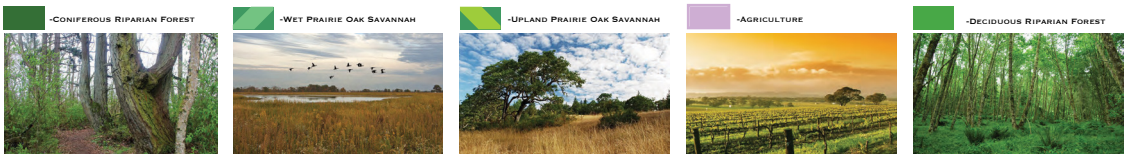


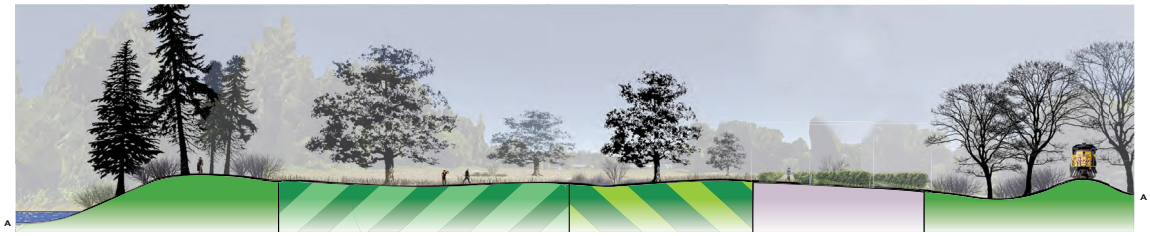
Circulation Hierarchy



Ecological Zones

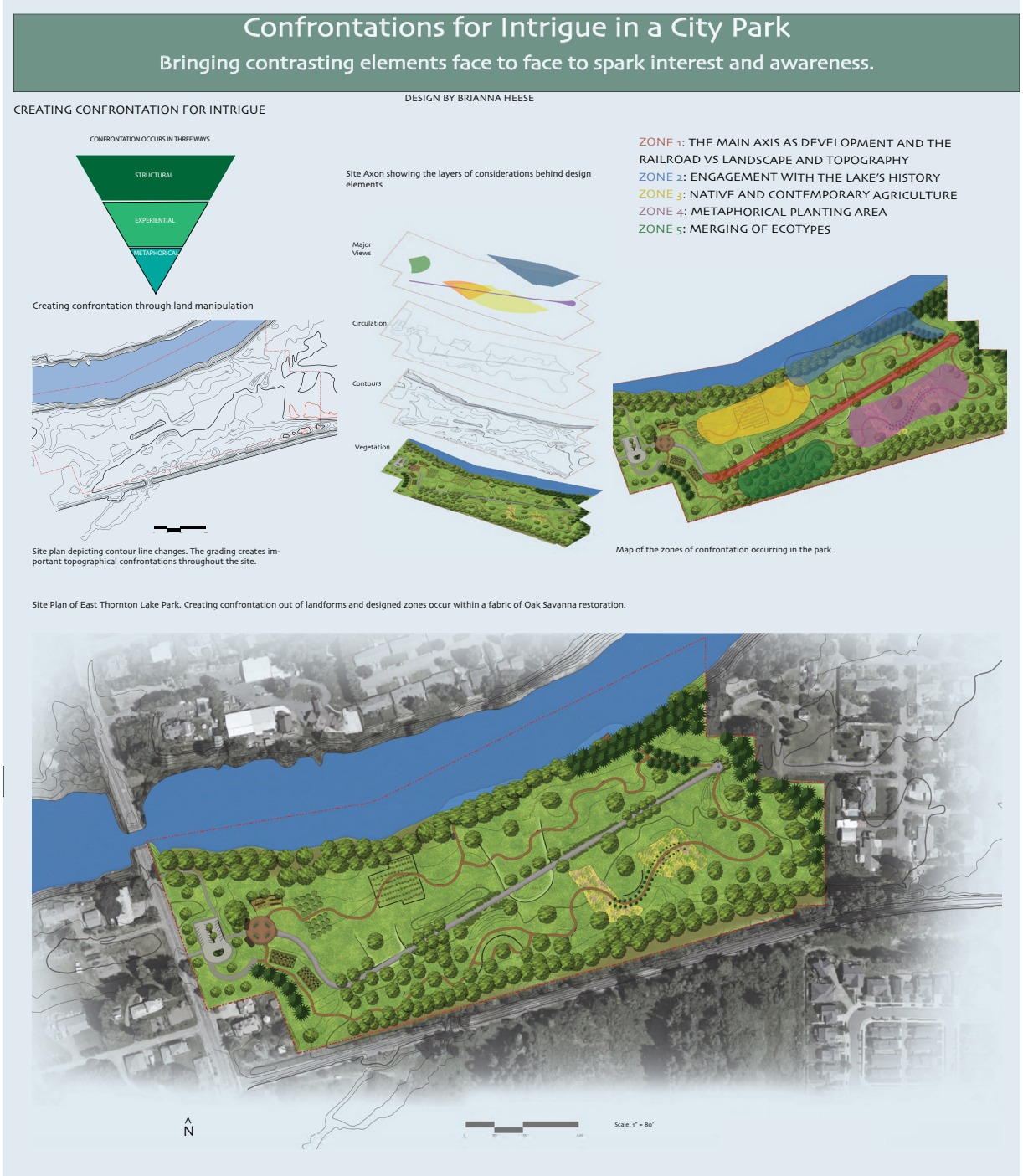






Brianna Heese

"Confrontations for Intrigue in a City Park"



Zone 1: The Central Axis: a main path "confronting" topography.

Development cutting through landforms

Rolling, natural topography

Structural:
- Straight formal path cuts through the landscape
- Path does not meander with topography

Experiential:
- Occasional v created by canopy trees
- Tunnel effect to the focal point at the end of the axis

Metaphorical:
- Occasional allee created by canopy trees
- Tunnel effect to the focal point at the end of the axis

Section cut through the main path/central axis of the site. Path making and development confront landforms and restoration in an abrupt way. The surface of the landscape is brought down to eye level.

A look to the focal point at the end of the main path. This point is a destination of redirection to the other zones in the park.

Zone 2: Wooded Lakeside Path: engaging the Lake's History

Closed conifer woodland

vs.

Open Oak Savanna

Structural:
- Viewing platform visually intersecting the lake shoreline.
- Allows view to the lake and information is offered about the lake's history as an abandoned side channel of the Willamette River

Experiential:
- Closed Douglas Fir forest path as opposite of open savanna

Section cut facing east throught the wooded path. Views of the lake are accessible. The construction of a viewing platform confronts the natural lake edge.

Zone 3: Native and Contemporary Agriculture

Contemporary agriculture

Native planting practices

Structural:
- The hillside's topography is intersected by a terrace.

Experiential:
- Abrupt change from rolling camas plantings to flattened terrace with linear plantings

Metaphorical:
- The terrace represents the introduction of European agricultural practices
- The hillside of camas represents the native practices that disappeared

Section cut facing east through the planted terrace that represents agricultural planting bisecting the planting of camas traditionally carried out by the Kalapooya Indians.

View west from the middle terrace toward the agricultural zone, community plaza, and street. The main path is seen on the left.

Zone 4: Metaphorical Planting Zone

Limited plant representatives

Many plant species

Structural:
- A native planting field is abruptly interrupted by two rows of same species shrubs

Experiential:
- Abrupt change in planting style and components

Metaphorical:
- From the entrance, the first bed of plantings consists of native plants, highlighting that diversity.
- The interruption of a single species shrub speaks to the decrease of native populations with settlement
- The final bed includes both these monotypic shrubs, natives, and new non native plant species to celebrate cultural diversity.

Section view east through the mixed planting area. Users get to walk through great plant diversity.

Zone5: Gathering Space- a collection of ecotypes

Structural:
- Many elements and ecotypes coming together:
  - agriculture
  - play area
  - community space
  - oak savanna
  - oak woodland

Experiential:
- Awareness of the changing spaces and ecotypes

Section looking east across the riparian zone, gathering plaza, community agriculture, and oak woodland transition.

Walking through the oak woodland right before opening to oak savanna and confrontation with another terrace.

Early Autumn fun in the park. The termination of the main path opens up opportunities for further exploration in the park. While providing some rest and enjoyment of space, the main purpose is to spark interest in the glimpses to the next zones.

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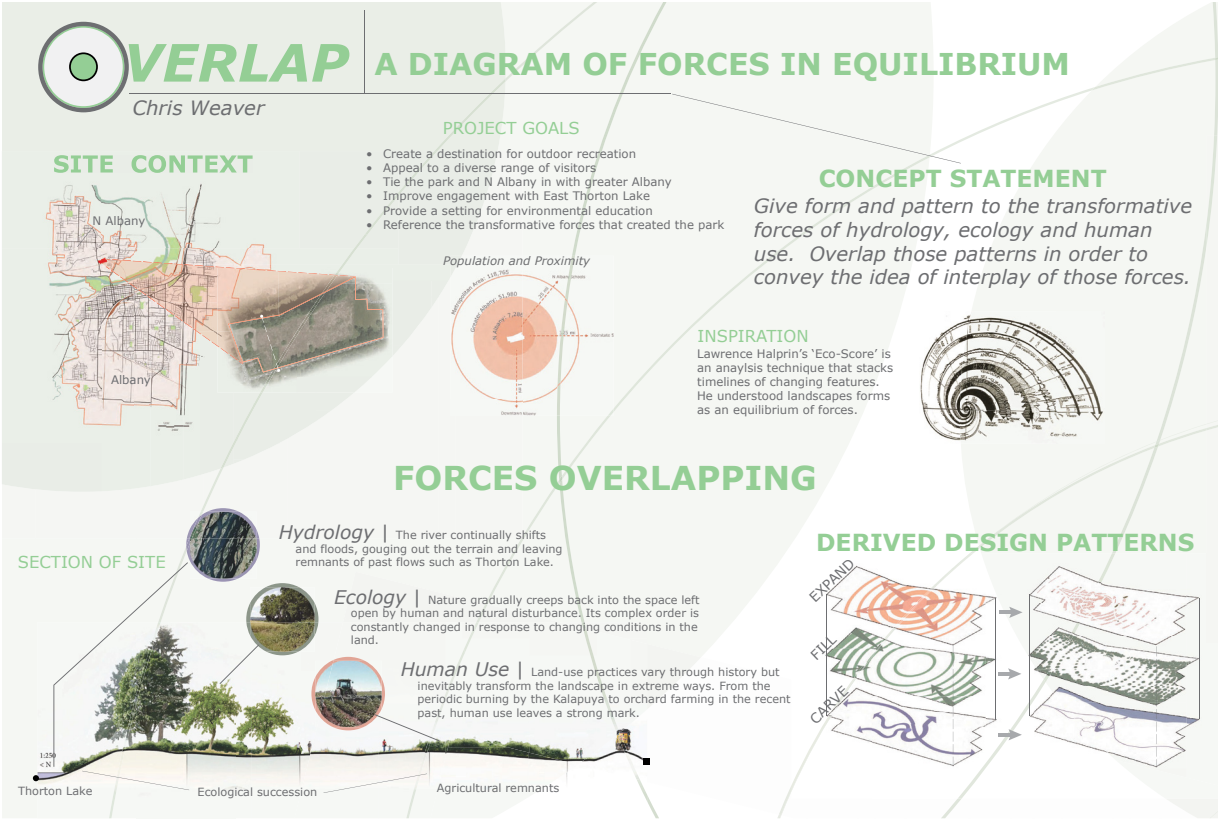
Chris Weaver

“Overlap: A Diagram of Forces in Equilibrium”



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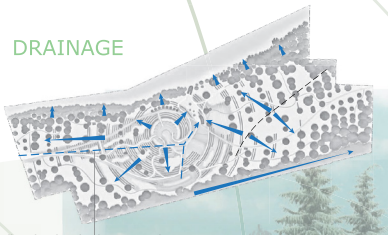
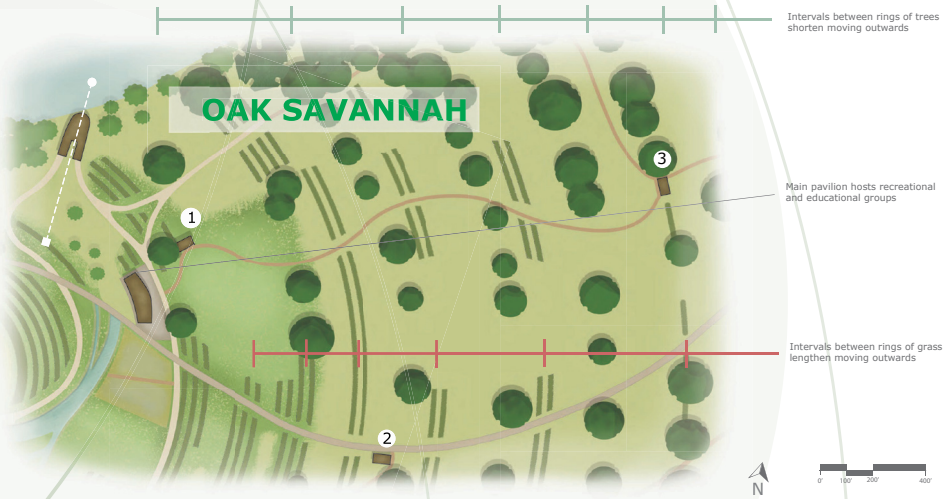
PERIPHERY

Moving outward, overlapping orders become pronounced as human patterns attenuate and natural scenery fills in

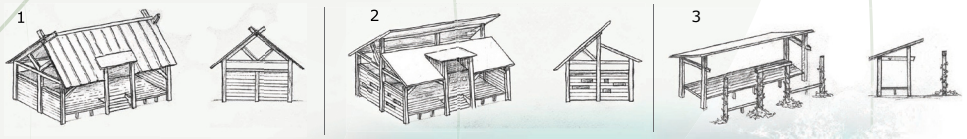
DRAINAGE



LAKESIDE PLATFORM



DECAYING SHELTERS Shelters become cruder at pace with dimishing human pattern



WHITE OAK SAVANNAH

View from a tertiary trail in restored white oak savannah

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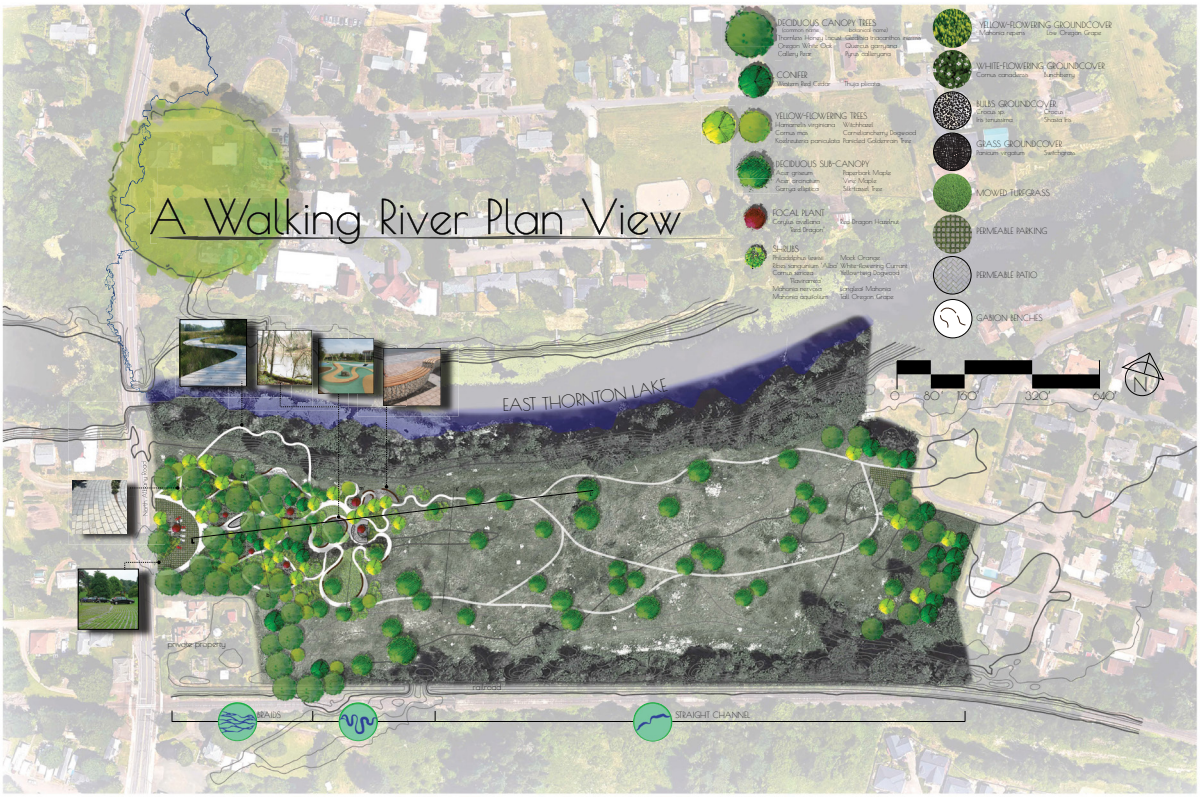
Chrissy Stillman

“A Walking River”



A Walking River

exploring how water builds topography, culture, and place in East Thornton Lake

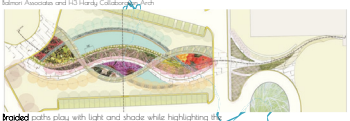
LA539: Design and Process Studio with Jacques Abelman
made possible by Sustainable City Year Program
in collaboration with the University of Oregon
schema by C. Stillman

WALKING AS THE WATER

Monk's Garden at Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2003)
Michael van Valkenburgh Associates Inc

Meandering paths are designed to appeal to children and immerse walkers in a sensory experience WITH-IN the landscape.

Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth
Balmori Associates and HO Hardy Collaborative Research



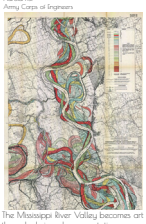
Braided paths play with light and shade while highlighting the significance of water in the landscape.

RIVER AS DESIGNER, ART FROM INTERPRETATION

Willamette River alluvial valley (2003)
Daniel E. Coe
Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

The Willamette Valley becomes art through designed Lidar data

Cartography of the Mississippi River alluvial valley (1940)
Harold Fist
Army Corps of Engineers

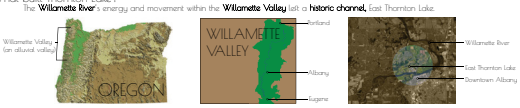


The Mississippi River Valley becomes art through designed representation

THE GEOHYDROLOGY PROCESS

What built Thornton Lake?

The **Willamette River**'s energy and movement within the **Willamette Valley** left a **historic channel,** East Thornton Lake.



What other designs does the river make?

Alluvial (river made) shapes, like Thornton Lake, are made by the **erosion rate** and **deposition**. In the Willamette River these forces create **braids**, **meanders**, and **straight channels**.

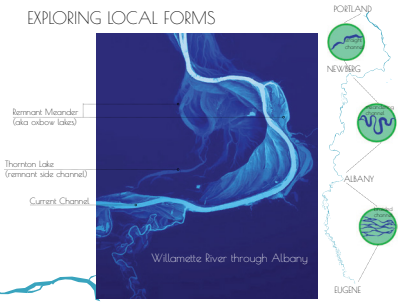
erosion deposition

How has this shaped our culture and community?

Alluvial soil (river-transported soil) supports camas, grass, and orchards. Rivers are **trade** routes. River **gravel** supports industry and infrastructure.

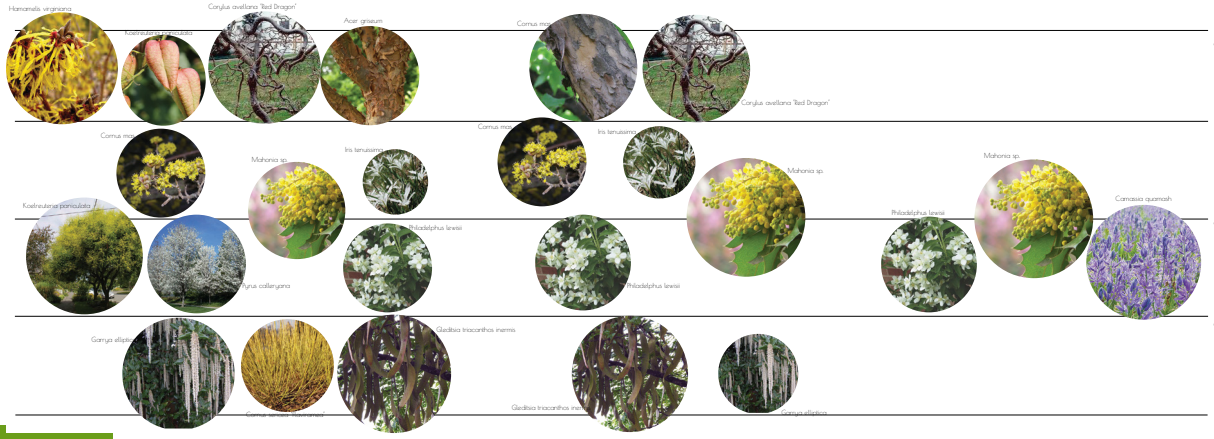
Camas, a Kalapuya staple food. Grass seed, a major valley export. Willamette Valley orchards. Albany functioned as a river-route hub. River gravel businesses.

EXPLORING LOCAL FORMS



A Walking River Seasonal Interest

Not all species are represented. Those with distinctive seasonal character are listed here.
The circle size indicates overall presence and prominence in context.



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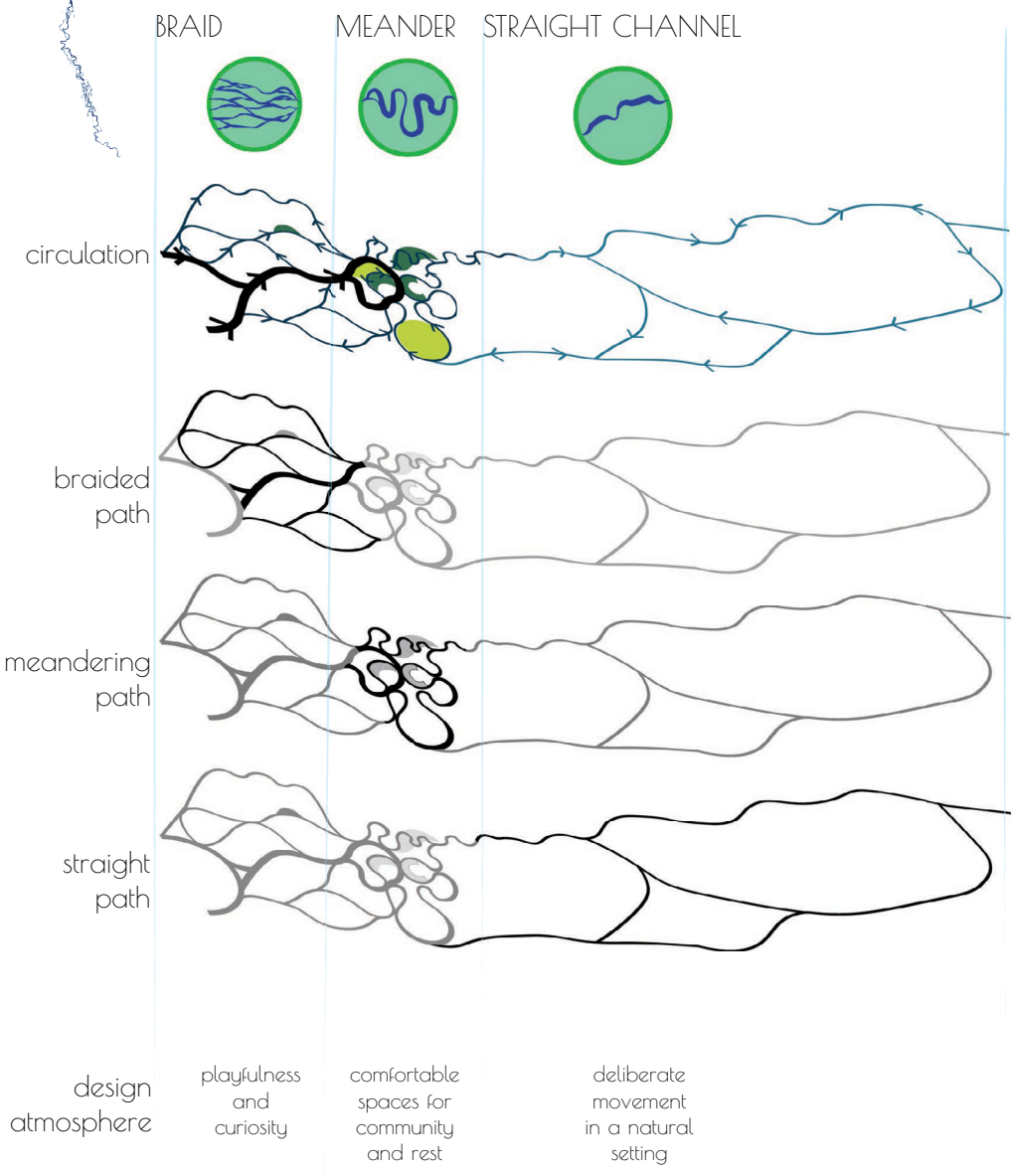
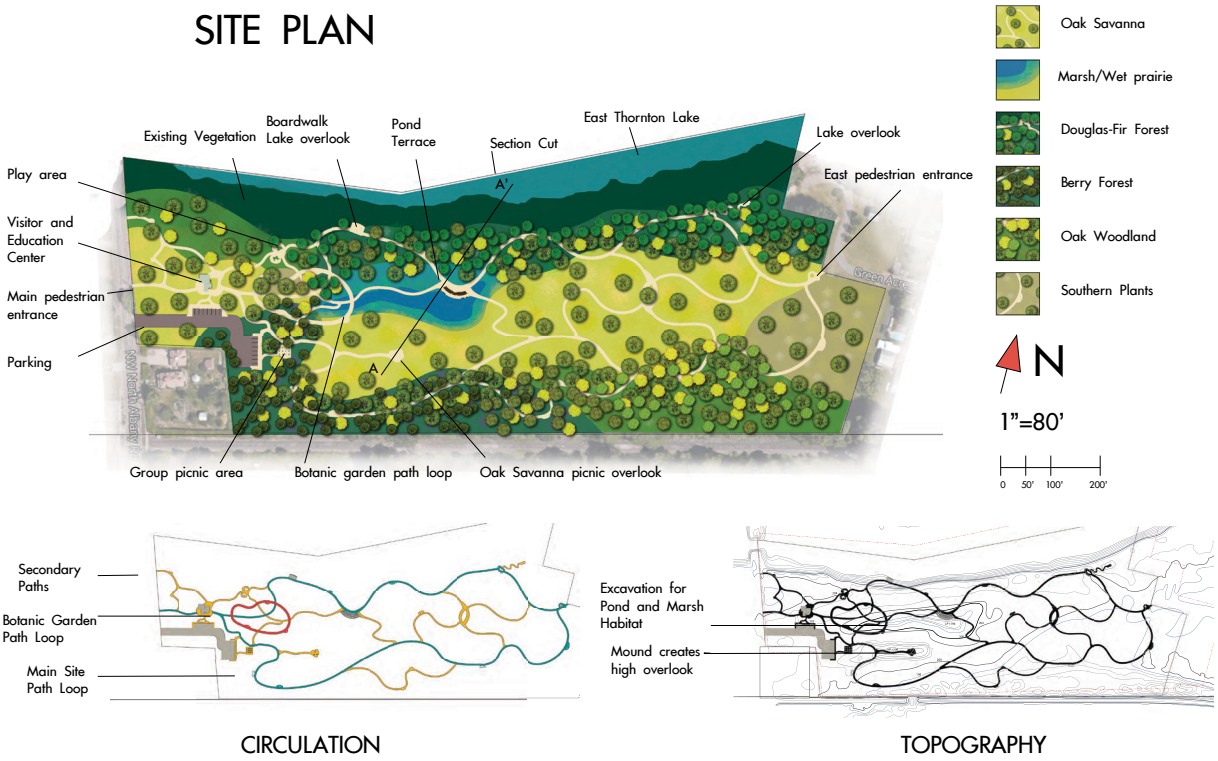
WALKING THE WILLAMETTE RIVER

following the Willamette River's forms by incorporating paths that braid, meander, and mimic the straight channel



Deanna Lynn

“Thornton Lake Botanic Garden”



THORNTON LAKE BOTANIC GARDEN

CONTEXT

26-acre site on south shore of East Thornton Lake in North Albany

INSPIRATION

Peter Walker Partners design for Constitution Gardens

Roberto Burle Marx planting design

CONCEPT: AESTHETIC RESTORATION:

Designing with native plant communities that establish ecological relationships and provide habitat value

Visitors enter through botanic garden to learn about plants in zones throughout site

GOALS

- Meet community needs for more educational facilities and access to natural areas
  - School children pass by park on way home
  - Albany park master plan emphasizes need for more natural educational space
- Address the lack of cultural presence of the kalapuya people
  - Educate visitors about Kalapuya plant use, land management and cultural practices with interpretive exhibits
  - Partner with the Confederate Tribes of the Grande Ronde
- Connect people to bioregion
  - Preserve and enhance quiet, natural character of site
  - Provide places for people to enjoy immersion in diverse atmospheres and connect to nature
  - Raise awareness of climate change and loss of biodiversity by featuring sensitive and resilient plants

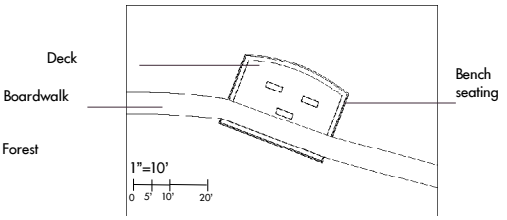
Hood River Middle School Outdoor Education

Kalapuya people playing traditional music

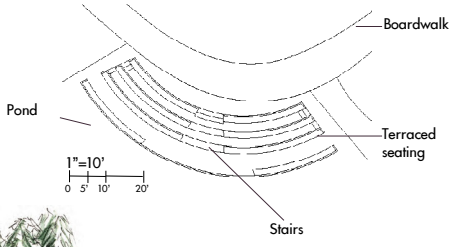
View of East Thornton Lake on site

BOTANIC GARDEN ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

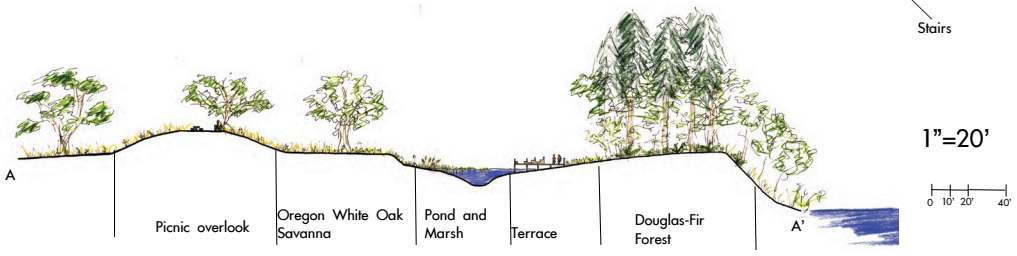
BOARDWALK LAKE OVERLOOK



POND TERRACE



ILLUSTRATIVE SECTION



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Emma Stone

“Feed Albany with a Park”

SITE PLAN

KEY

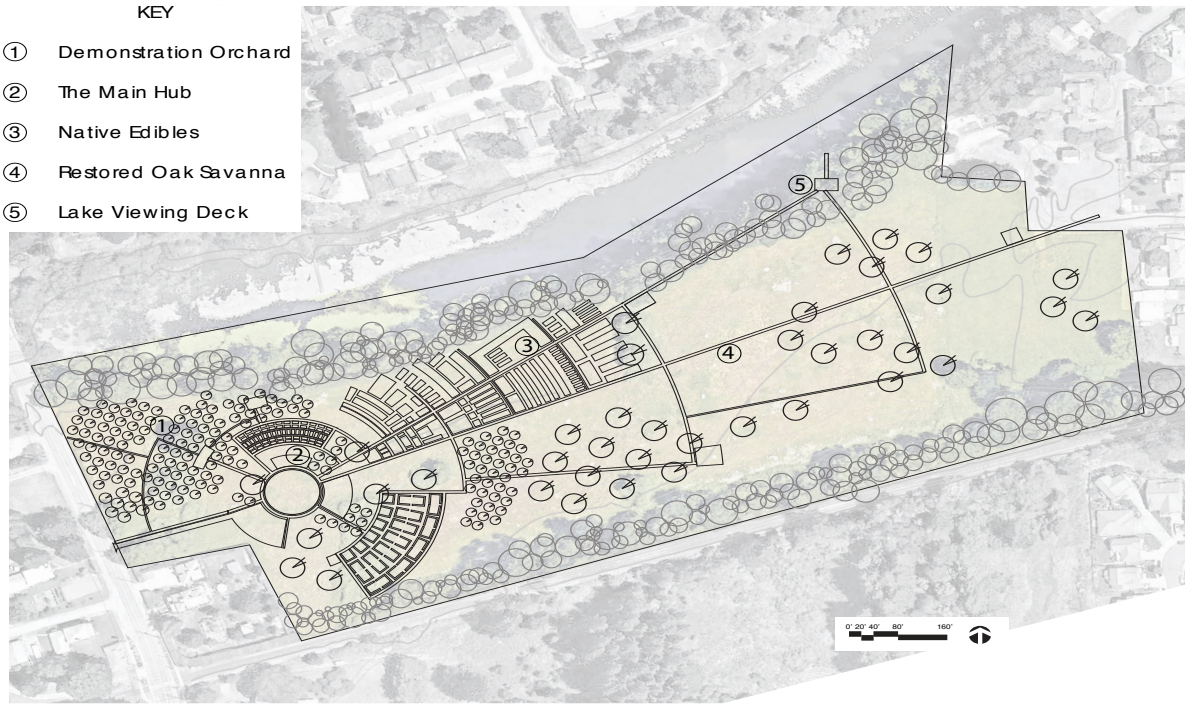
① Demonstration Orchard

② The Main Hub

③ Native Edibles

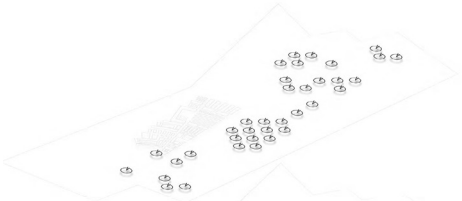
④ Restored Oak Savanna

⑤ Lake Viewing Deck



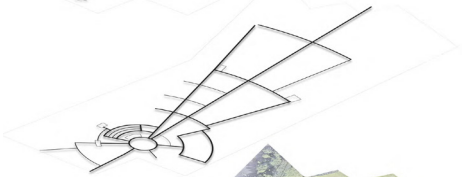
PROJECT LAYERS

Native Edibles

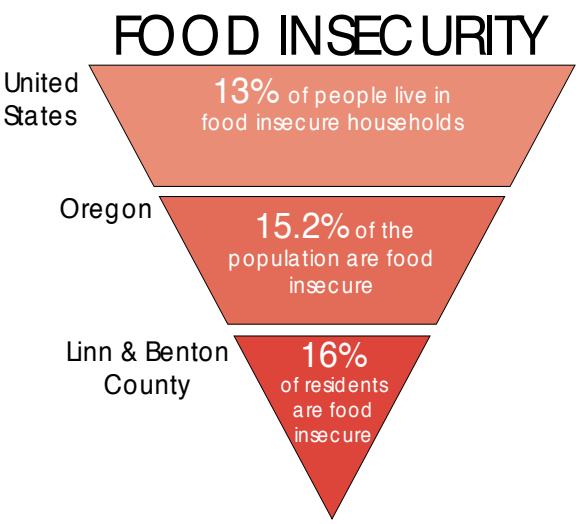


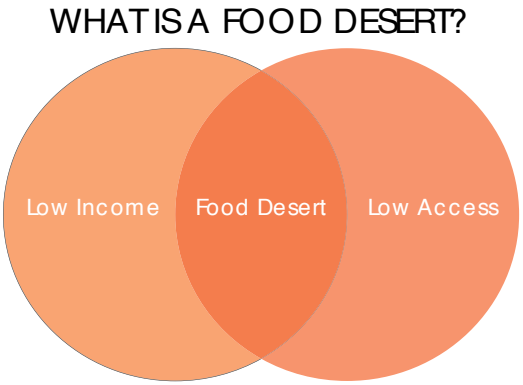
Intensive Agriculture

Circulation



Aerial



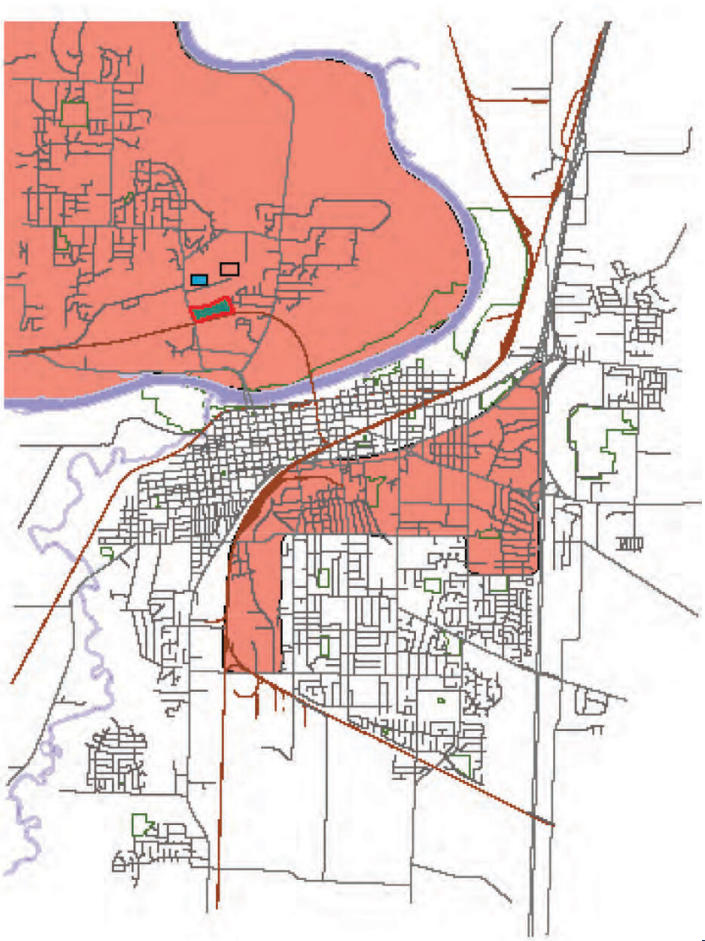


"Food deserts are defined as parts of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers." -USDA

North Albany Middle School District

North Albany Middle School

East Thornton Lake Park



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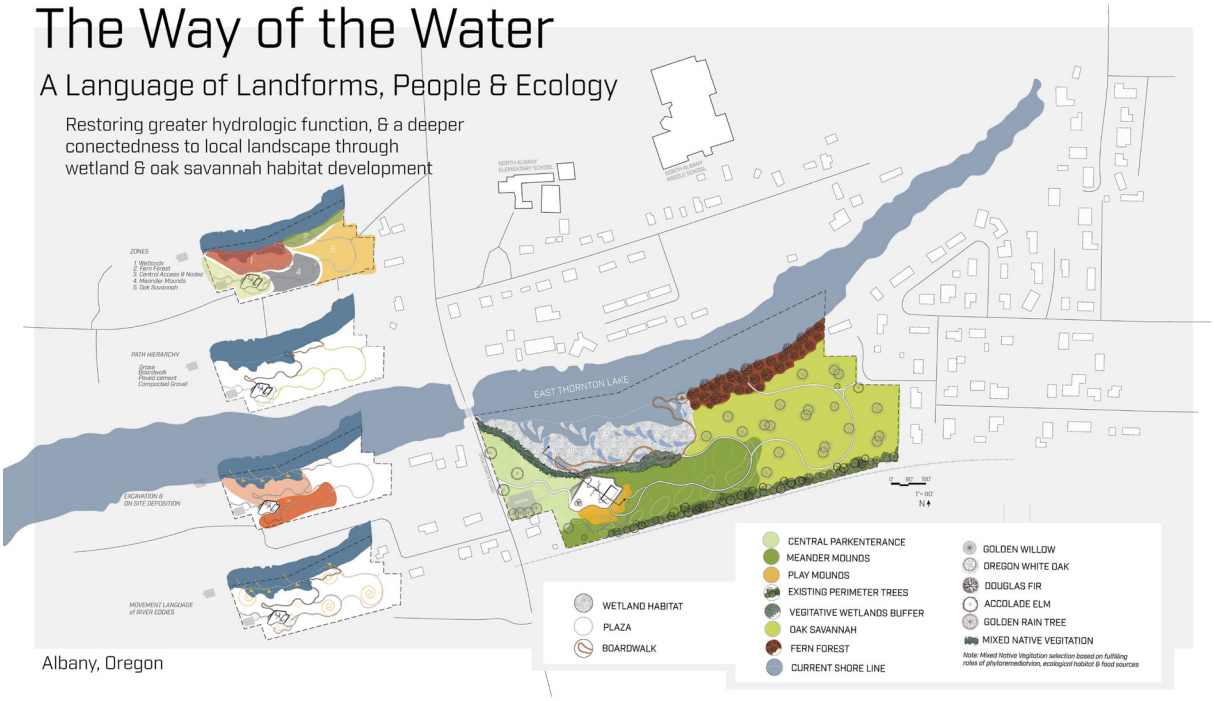
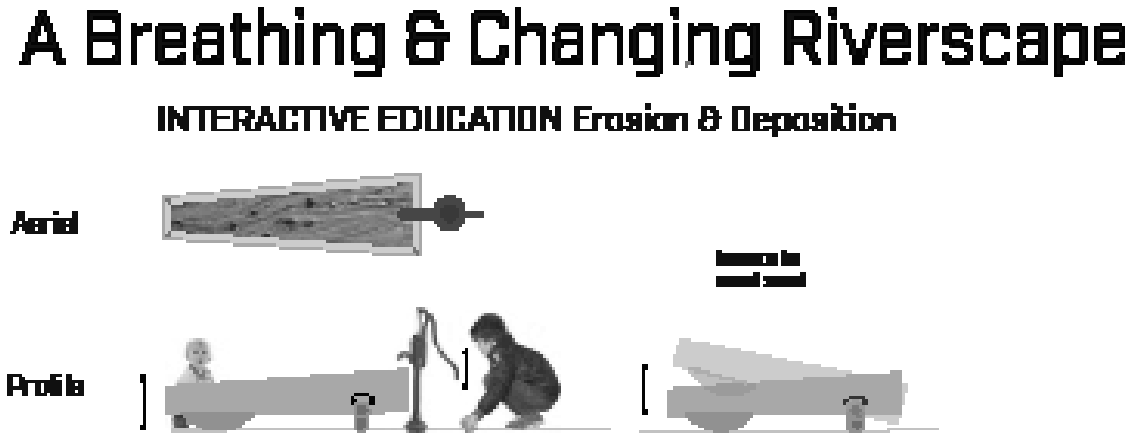
Hannah Six

"The Way of the Water"





SCYP
Sustainable City Year Program

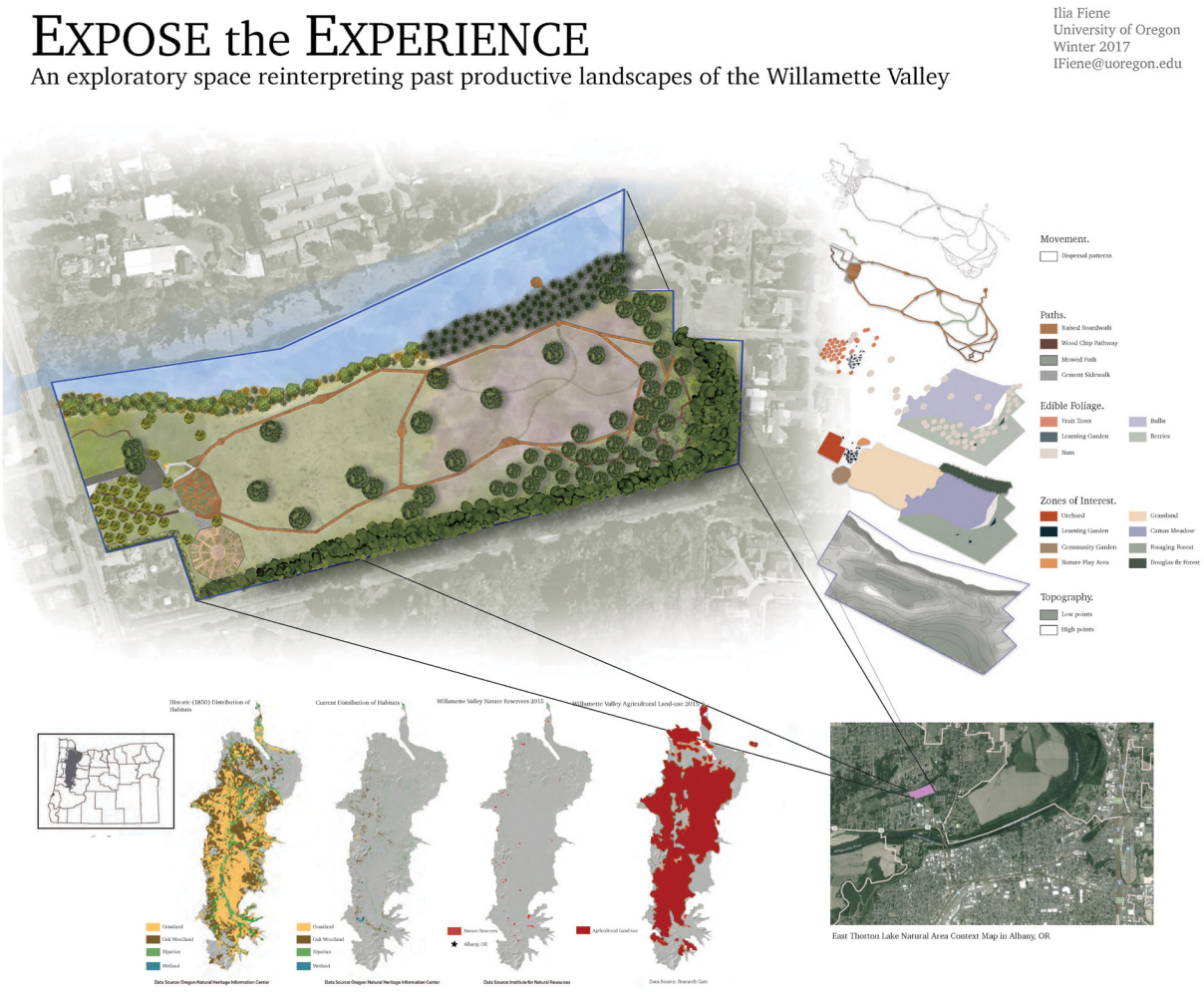
MEANDER MOUNDS facing South

WETLANDS facing East up the lake

FERN FOREST facing North

Ilia Fiene

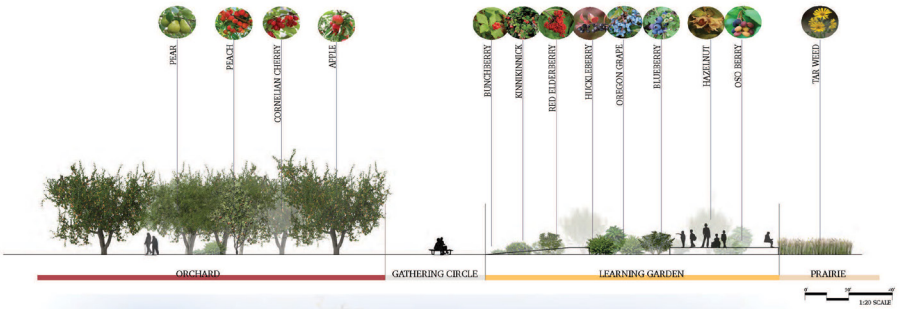
“Expose the Experience”



SCYP
Sustainable City Year Program

Learning Gardens
of edible natives

The learning garden exposes visitors to edible plants native to the Willamette Valley; unveiling the historical productivity of the area. By being displayed within a raised boardwalk provides visitors the opportunity to examine the whole specimen from the top to the bottom leaflets.



ENTRANCE ORCHARD
40 years after planting

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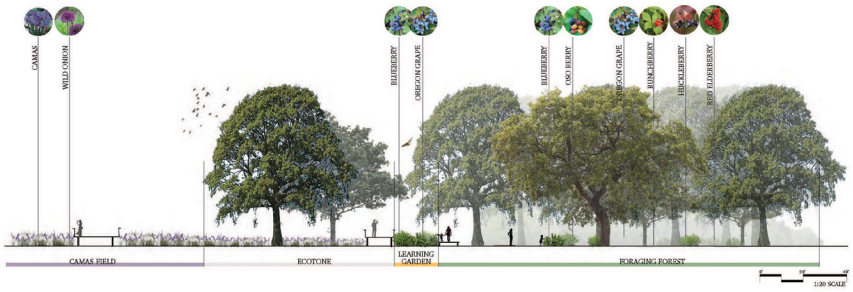
Foraging Forest

The Oregon White Oak woodland located on the east side of the park offers visitors the chance to forage for berries on and off the designated paths. Here the displayed specimens from the "Learning Gardens" are growing in a more natural habitat, providing greater insight to what one can find and eat in the wild.



FORAGING EXPLORATION

60 years after planting

SCYP
Sustainable City Year Program

OBSERVATION DECKS

Sundeck seating in the Camas Field

FIR FOREST BOARDWALK

To East Thorton Lake obsercation area

Nicholas Sund

“Balancing Act”

BALANCING ACT

As Albany strives to create a sustainable future for all, Balancing Act explores where we have been and where we are going.

Reto de Equilibrio - Como Albany se esfuerza por crear un futuro sostenible para todos, Reto Equilibrio explora dónde hemos estado y hacia dónde vamos.

A story in 3 parts / Una historia en 3 partes

The Park at East Thornton Lake represents 3 landscapes from Albany's history...

El Parque en el Lago Thornton del Este representa 3 paisajes de la historia de Albany...

1 The Wetland / El Humedal

The Willamette River has shaped the landscape for thousands of years. Seasonal floods slowly created East Thornton Lake, which is now home to many kinds of wildlife, including two endangered species of pond turtle.

El río Willamette ha modelado el paisaje durante miles de años. Las inundaciones estacionales crearon lentamente el Lago Thornton del Este, que ahora es casa a muchas clases de fauna, incluyendo dos especies en peligro de la tortuga del estanque.

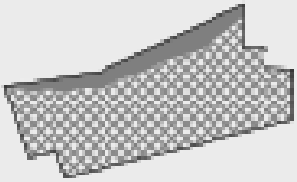
A constructed wetland symbolizes the historic presence of the Willamette River.

Un humedal construido simboliza la presencia histórica del río Willamette.

2 The Savanna / La Sabana

Humans eventually settled in the valley and created a new landscape. First Americans, like the Kalapuya, used fire to convert forests into vast oak savannas for hunting and agriculture. Ancient oak trees still grow in the Park, but the savanna is disappearing.

Los humanos finalmente se establecieron en el valle y crearon un nuevo paisaje. Los primeros americanos, como los Kalapuya, utilizaron el fuego para convertir los bosques en vastas sabanas de roble para la caza y la agricultura. Los robles antiguos todavía crecen en el parque, pero la sabana está desapareciendo.



A restored savanna symbolizes the historic presence of the Kalapuya people.

Una sabana restaurada simboliza la presencia histórica del pueblo Kalapuya.

3 The Settlement / El Asentamiento

European immigrants established new towns and cities and transformed the valley into vast agricultural fields and pastures. Human technology provides for our growing needs but it has also damaged the health of our environment.

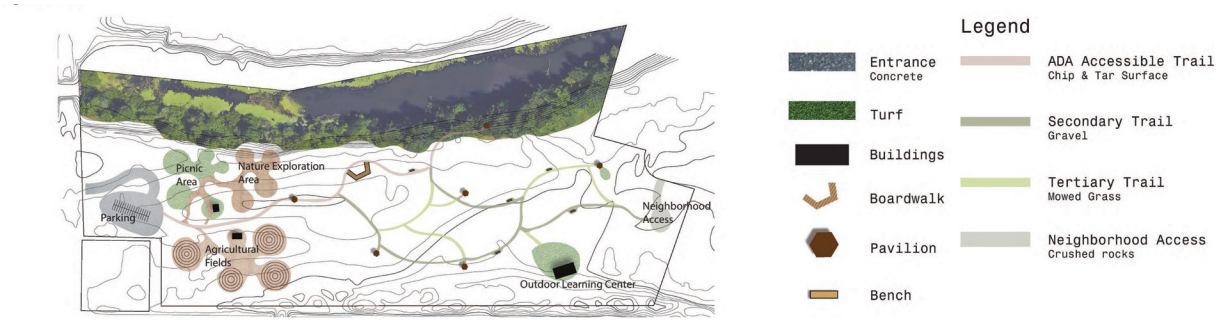
Los inmigrantes europeos establecieron nuevos pueblos y ciudades y transformaron el valle en vastos campos agrícolas y pastos. La tecnología humana proporciona nuestras necesidades crecientes pero también ha dañado la salud de nuestro ambiente.

The urban park symbolizes the historic development of European settlements and represents Albany's future development.

El parque urbano simboliza el desarrollo histórico de los asentamientos europeos y representa el desarrollo futuro de Albany.

Po Ying Hsu

“Celebrating Oregon White Oak & Oak Savanna”



Zone 3 - Restoration Area (Con't)

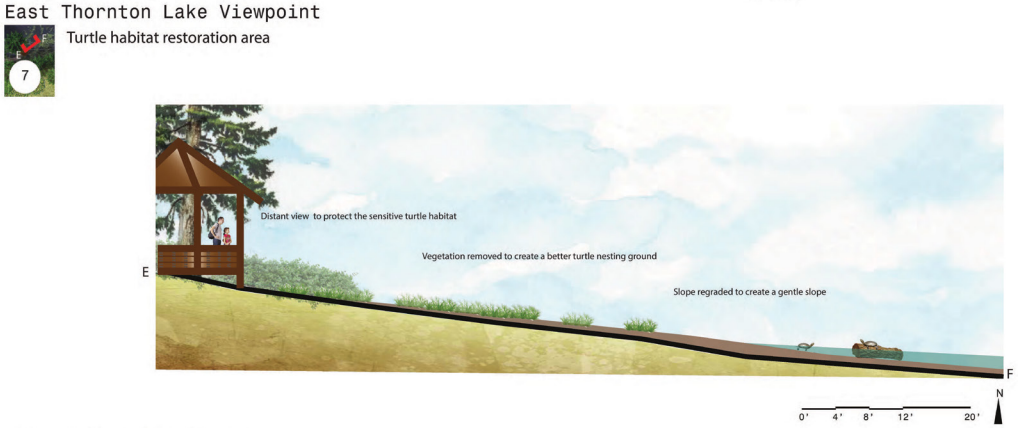
Learning about Oak Associated Animal Species

Learning about Oak Woodland Habitat

Outdoor Learning Center

Midpoint

East Thornton Lake Viewpoint



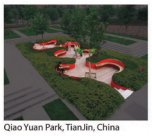
Alternative Picnic Area

Neighborhood Access

Zone 2 - Concentrated Use Area

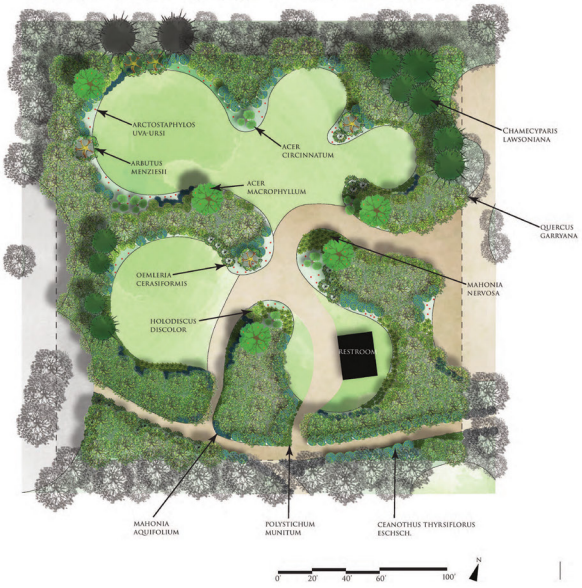
Picnic Area

The picnic area accommodates parties of different sizes. The plantings provide year round interest for picnicking.



Qiao Yuan Park, TianJin, China

Summer Plant Palette in the Picnic Area



Spring Interest

Fall Interest

Threshold

Creating an Oak Savanna Landscape inspired by Kalapuyan Tribe

Kalapuyan Landscape

Kalapuyan Summer Camp
Image provided by Melissa Darby

Other pavilion viewable from threshold

Forest Edge Boardwalk

View from the Boardwalk

Boardwalk at Finley National Wildlife Refuge

Shelbi Stagi

“Window to the Past”

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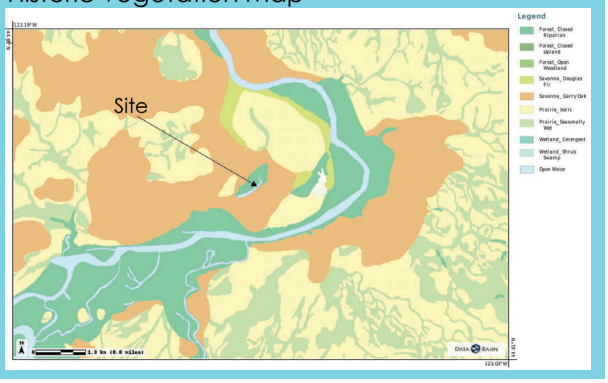
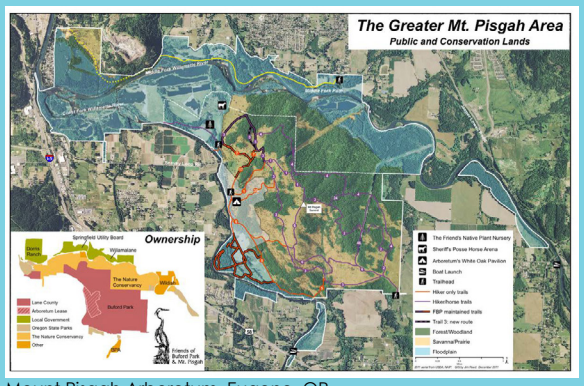
Concept and Context

This design creates framed views - Windows - to give the feeling of looking back in time. My goal is to help generate growth in the city of Albany through community outreach opportunities that can draw people from other local municipalities, creating spaces for revenue generation, and education of the public through workshops on site as well as smart design.

Historic vegetation Map



Precedent: Mount Pisgah



Mount Pisgah Arboretum, Eugene, OR

Mount Pisgah Arboretum contains a botanic garden, white oak savanna restoration area and a large event pavilion on site. An expansive trail system weaves through the grounds; it is a much loved place to spend a day in nature.

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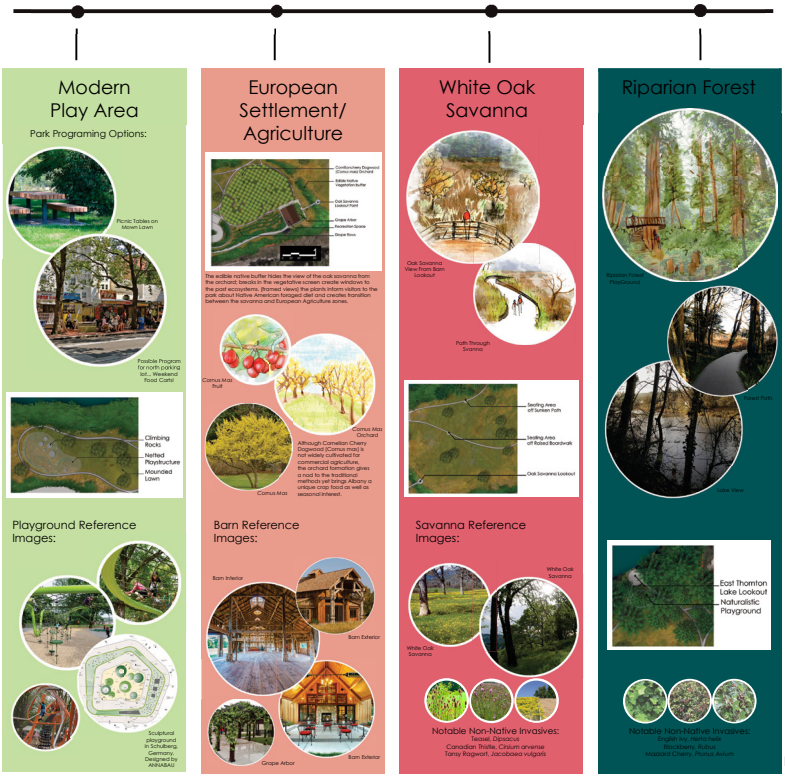
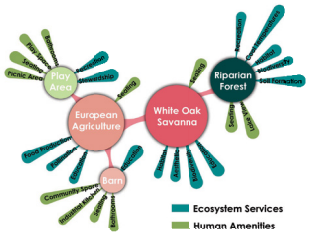
Site Plan

The park offers visitors the expirence of walking through a historical timeline, here guests can *feel* what this site might have been like in the past.

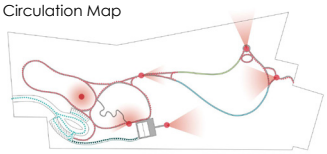


Historic Atmosphere Zones

- Modern Play Structure
- European Agriculture/ Settlement
- White Oak Savanna
- Riparian Forest
- East Thornton Lake



Circulation Map



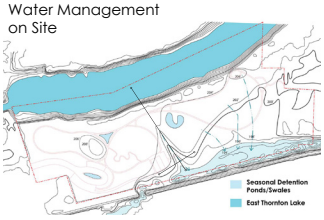
Destination Windows · Gravel Access Road · ADA Paths · Paved Roads · Sunken Path (ADA) · Raised Boardwalk (ADA)

1

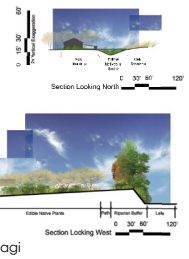
Raised Boardwalk N.T.S.

Sunken Path N.T.S.

Water Management on Site

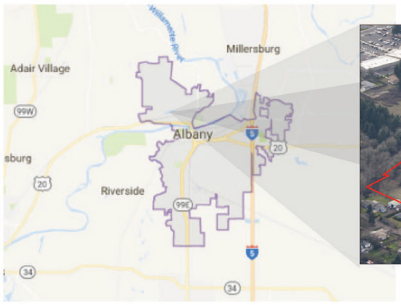


The removal of non-native, invasive species is imperative to the restoration effort at East Thornton Lake. I propose mowing or scraping 1'-2' of soil from the eastern half of the site to eradicate unwanted vegetation without chemical intervention. Much of the scraped soil can then be used to flatten the western side of the park (a less sensitive ecotype), as shown through contours on the water management map.

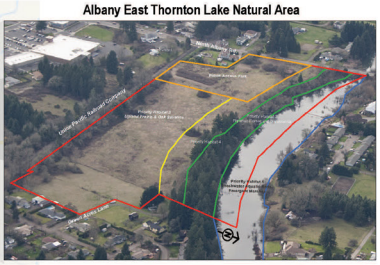


Designed by Shelby Stagi

Context



Albany East Thornton Lake Natural Area



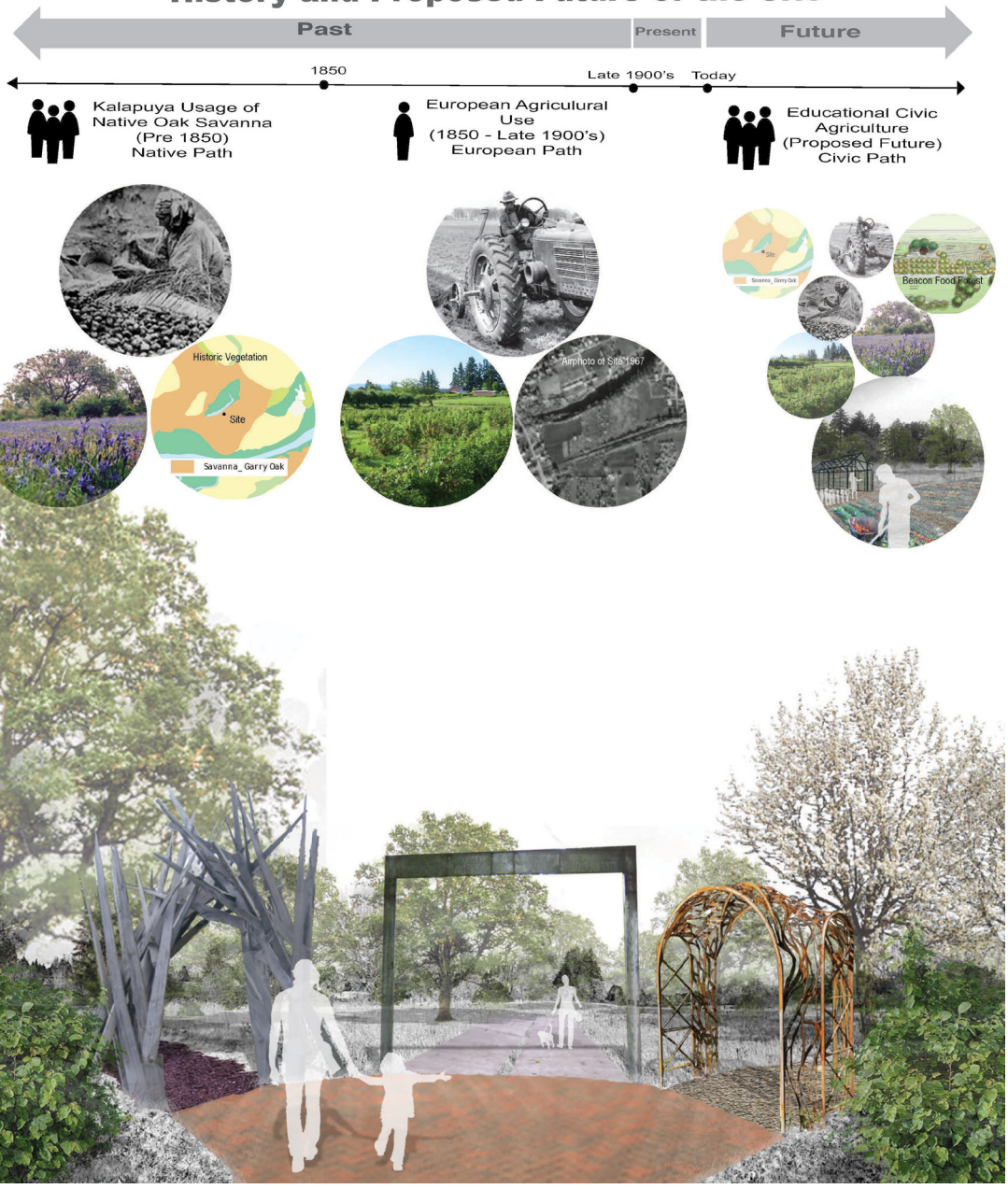
This design draws from the historical food based systems of the East Thorton Lake Natural Area site to create a park that addresses food access and security, as well as the City of Albany's restoration goals for oak savanna, upland prairie, riparian zones, and aquatic habitats.

The park design is centered around three trail systems that are each unique in experience. The first two are directly derived from the two main historical site uses, and the third path system is a combination of the two transformed into a positive and interactive landscape. The first usage of the site was of a native landscape harvested and foraged by the Kalapuya tribe. The second historical use was the more recent European agricultural usage after the industrial revolution. Finally, the third and proposed use of the site is for a park that creates not only an enjoyable place of leisure, but also a productive civic landscape in terms of both habitat as well as cultivated and forgeable foods.

I propose that the City of Albany partner with a local non-profit to create a staff that is regularly on site to tend to the community gardens proposed in this park design, and to assist people who volunteer to work in the garden. Food harvested from the garden could then be redistributed throughout the community through food banks, other non-profit organizations, and given to volunteers who help maintain the gardens.

Food-Based, Inclusive Park Design at East Thorton Lake + Non-Profit Organization or Grant Funding = Stronger, Healthier Community

History and Proposed Future of the Site



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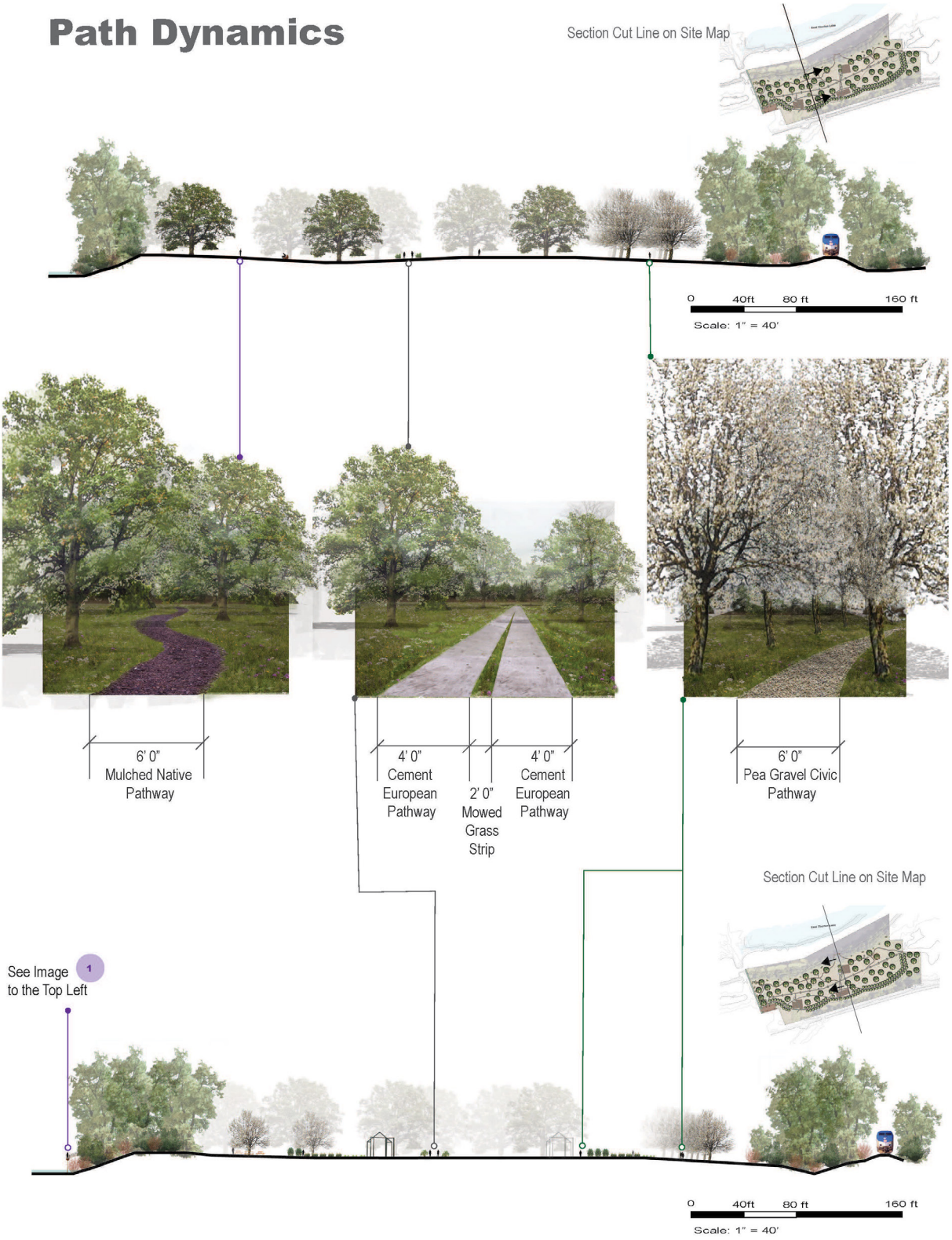
Path Dynamics



Tori Murphy

“Trust Your Neighbor”





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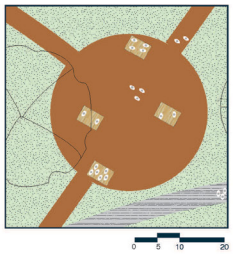
CHALLENGE COURSE

BALANCE CHALLENGE

"The Balance Challenge" encourages groups to work together to balance the board inspired by the greater need for cooperation from all members of the community to make change.

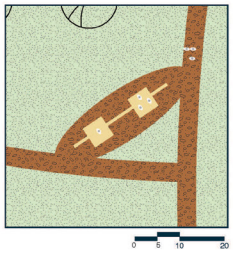
PLAN VIEW



THE FIRE PIT

"The Fire Pit" encourages groups to get from one platform to another without touching the ground underneath inspired by the historic fire management practices of an Oak Savannah.

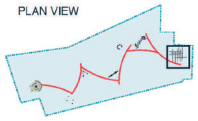
PLAN VIEW

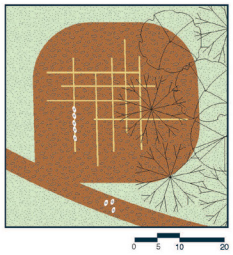


THE LUMBER YARD

"The Lumber Yard" encourages individuals or groups to work together to walk across inspired by the timber industry important to the livlihood of Albany in the 1880-1990s.

PLAN VIEW

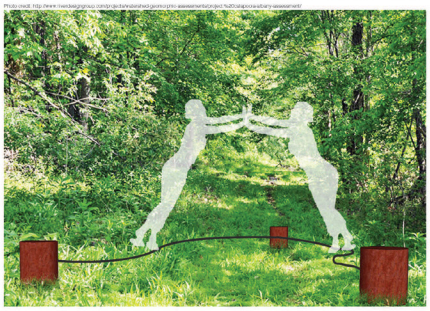


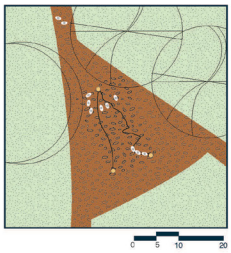


CHALLENGE COURSE

TWO RIVERS

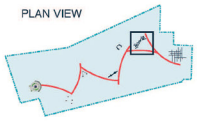
"Two Rivers" encourages pairs to stabilize each other in order to move down the cables inspired by the merging of the Calapooia and Willamette rivers.

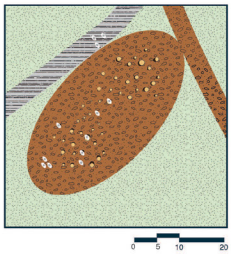




The Turtle Hop

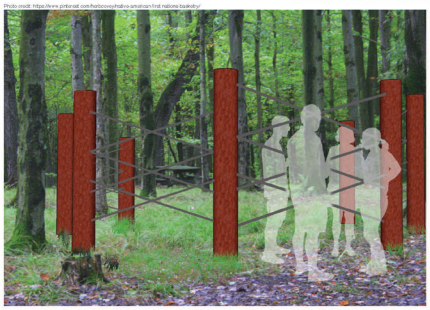
"The Turtle Hop" encourages migration across the logs by hopping from one log to another inspired by habitat fragmentation and the impact humans have on the ecological community.

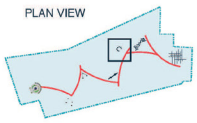


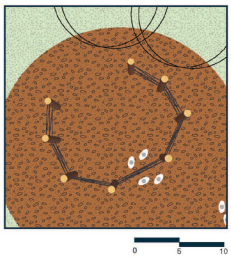


THE BASKET WEAVE

"The Basket Weave" encourages groups to work together to get all members of the group through the cables with out touching them. The form is inspired by the Kalapuya craft of basket weaving.







Conclusion

Thornton Lake offers many opportunities for Albany to develop sustainable community infrastructure, and this project demonstrates that recreational and agricultural activities can coexist with natural systems.

The lake is a critical asset, and while its steep shoreline makes access to the lake difficult, there are opportunities to appreciate the lake from afar via boardwalks or viewing platforms. Select views of the lake can be established by clearing small amounts of vegetation. In this way, we recommend the use of low impact infrastructure to provide social engagement with nature. Rather than separate people from nature, we encourage people to explore the larger site and appreciate its many qualities while learning about current and future restoration activities.

The project location along the southern shore of Thornton Lake provides minimal amounts of usable turtle habitat and offers little value for restoration. Restoration of this native habitat could be costly and would preclude other uses of the site. We recommend that restoration of the native turtle habitat be concentrated along the northern shore of Thornton Lake, while allowing for alternative uses along the southern shore. Additionally, artificial habitat solutions could create educational opportunities.

The site could become a great asset to the school district. The nearby middle school could provide daily educational programs while more distant schools could offer field trips to observe a working wetland ecosystem.