

Willamette River Bridge Design Enhancements Eugene - Oregon

Finalist Proposal
Lillian Pitt Team

March - 15 - 2011



Three Sculptures for the Story of the Kalapuya



Camas Lily
Vital Food Source & Trade Item
Bulbs were roasted in stone-lined pits
& pressed into cakes

Lillian Pitt - Artist Statement



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lillian Pitt'.

I have made art for over thirty years. During that entire period, the work I have done has been informed by the heart and spirit of my Native American ancestors. When I look for proposals that most interest me, I choose to apply for those that ask me to do creative work that addresses Native American issues. This allows the chance to give back to the Native American community. It also empowers me to give voice to Native American stories that will inform the larger community in Oregon so everyone will learn something. It is for these reasons that I applied to design the public art for the Whilamut Bridge project.

Preparing to design work for this project has been a very enlightening experience that has allowed me to use various strategies to learn about the Kalapuya people who lived in the Springfield area of Western Oregon. I went to the Natural History Museum in Eugene, read the book, *The World of the Kalapuya, A Native people of Western Oregon*, and *Indians of the Pacific Northwest*, and I listened carefully to Esther Stutzman, a Kalapuya elder when she shared the information that her people are still here and have not vanished. Like her, I feel it is essential that people understand Native Americans have been here for thousands of years and that we continue our commitment to our culture, place, and the natural world that nurtures us to this day. Her stories about her people were very important to me.

As I propose to undertake the design for the Whilamut Bridge project, I deeply feel that I have a responsibility to represent the voice of the Kalapuya people and to consult with them directly about this project. I also feel I have a responsibility to the citizens of Oregon and to the Oregon Department of Transportation to create a lasting work of public art and to do the very best and safest job possible. With my team, I am confident that we can create a work that will act as a legacy to make us all proud to be Oregonians.

Because the generous funding for the public art for the bridge allows us to create multiple elements as part of this project, we plan to do separate artistic enhancements at sites 2&3 on the South side of the Whilamut Bridge and another on the north side of the bridge at site 4. On one South site, we will use stainless steel cutouts to represent the legend of Coyote and the Frog Sisters. The image of the Frog sisters will be placed in relation to a water image. On the other South site of the freeway we will create a Kalapuya style hat design in four sections with images of coyote, salmon, a deer, and a Native family, all of whom need water to survive. We feel that because the bridge allows citizens to cross over water, this imagery is particularly fitting and honors the history of the river as well as the legends of the Kalapuya people.

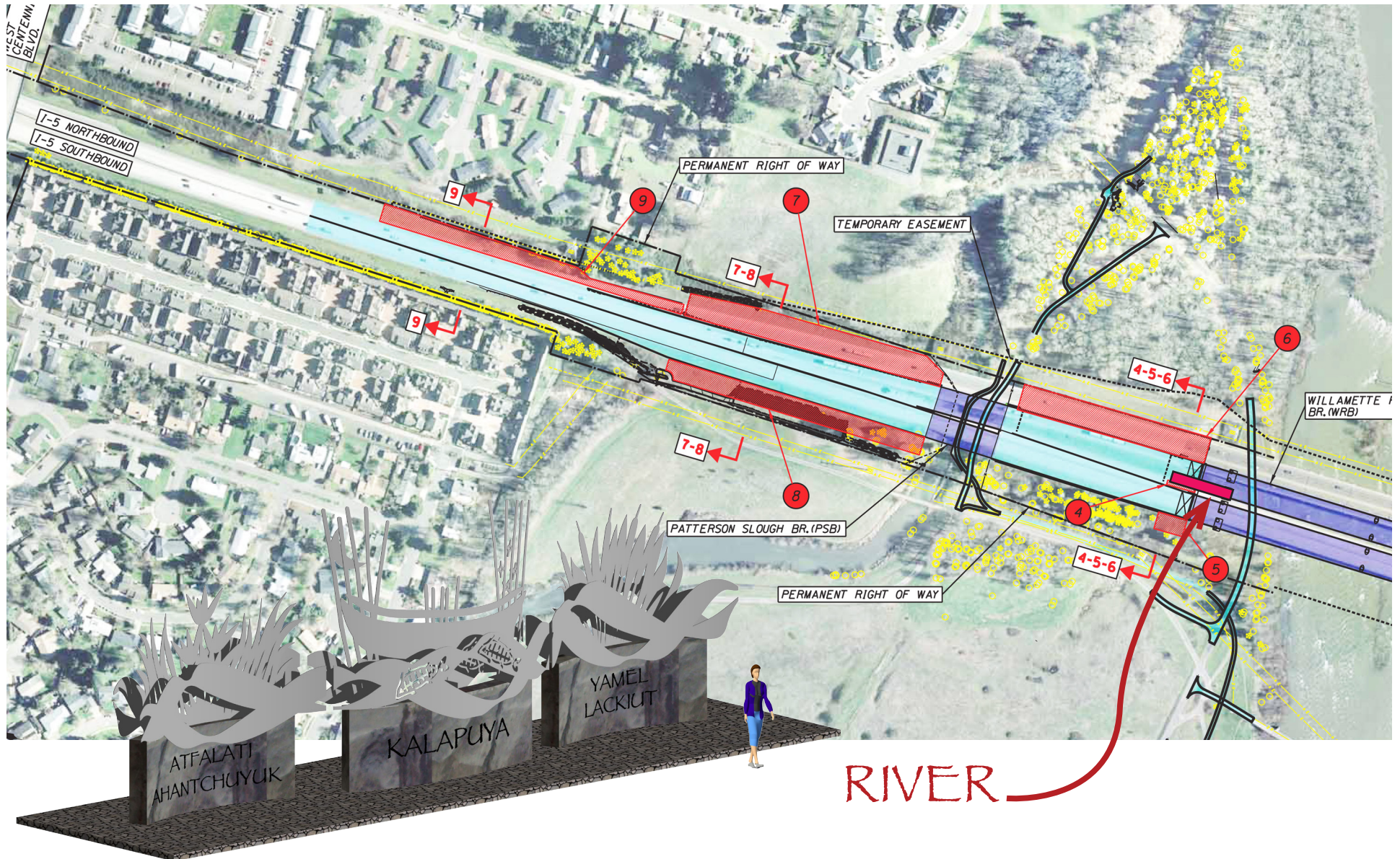
The legend about Coyote and the Frog sisters relates a particular story of one of Coyote's adventures. It tells how Coyote was very thirsty after traveling around the country for five days. He was told there was water close by, but that if he wanted to drink, he had to pay the Frog Sisters a big price because they were hoarding all the water. To prepare, Coyote went away to dig some camas roots, which he magically shaped into dentalia shell money. He transformed himself so he looked like a wealthy man, and then he went back to the place where the Frog Sisters were hoarding the water. The Frog Sisters had built a large earthen dam so that no one else could get any water. They told him that he could only take five swallows of water after he paid them with the dentalia. Each time he went to the dam to drink he wore a different hat to protect himself and to hide what he was doing. He had five hats in all. As he bent over to drink, each time he dug down into the earthen dam. It wasn't until he had almost finished digging through the dam that the Sisters realized what he was doing and attacked him, but by that time the water was released, and he escaped along with the water and all the fish and salmon. Coyote told the Frog Sisters that the water in the river would never be sold again. He turned them into bullfrogs and made them live beside the water, but took away the power they had used to dam the water. Such legends are told to educate the people. Coyote is one of the main characters in the legends told in this region. Sometimes he is a hero because of he did to help the people, and sometimes he was a mischievous character who taught people what to avoid doing. In either case the legends were there to make the people think hard about how they should behave.

On the median on the North side of the bridge at site 4, we propose to build a stainless steel sculpture of a canoe above a graceful wave pattern in a setting of large camas plants and cattails. The canoe was important to the Native people as a means of travel that allowed them to gather food and trade goods. The canoe surface will have cutouts of important items used by the Kalapuya people including digging sticks, baskets, bulbs of different plants used for food, and images of the sun and moon and stars. This sculpture will be placed on a concrete wall finished to look like stone. We plan to cast the original names of all the Kalapuya bands as well as the recent names that were given to them by the settlers because of the locations they lived into the concrete base. These bands all came from a single tribe that spoke dialects of the Kalapuyan Takelman language. While the Kalapuya originally lived, hunted and gathered in the Eugene-Springfield area, large numbers of them were wiped out by malaria and pneumonia epidemics and their remaining descendants currently live on the Siletz and Grand Ronde reservations. As my design plans show, I intend to take my job as a partner of the Oregon Department of Transportation on this project seriously and to represent Kalapuya and their culture in the best way possible.

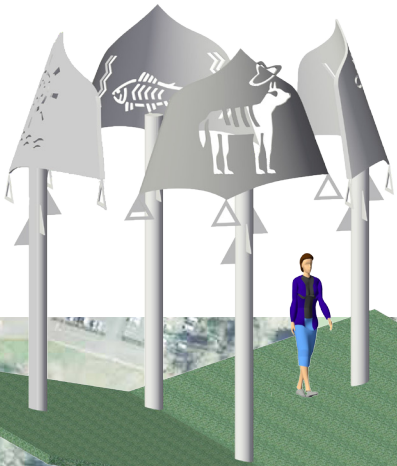
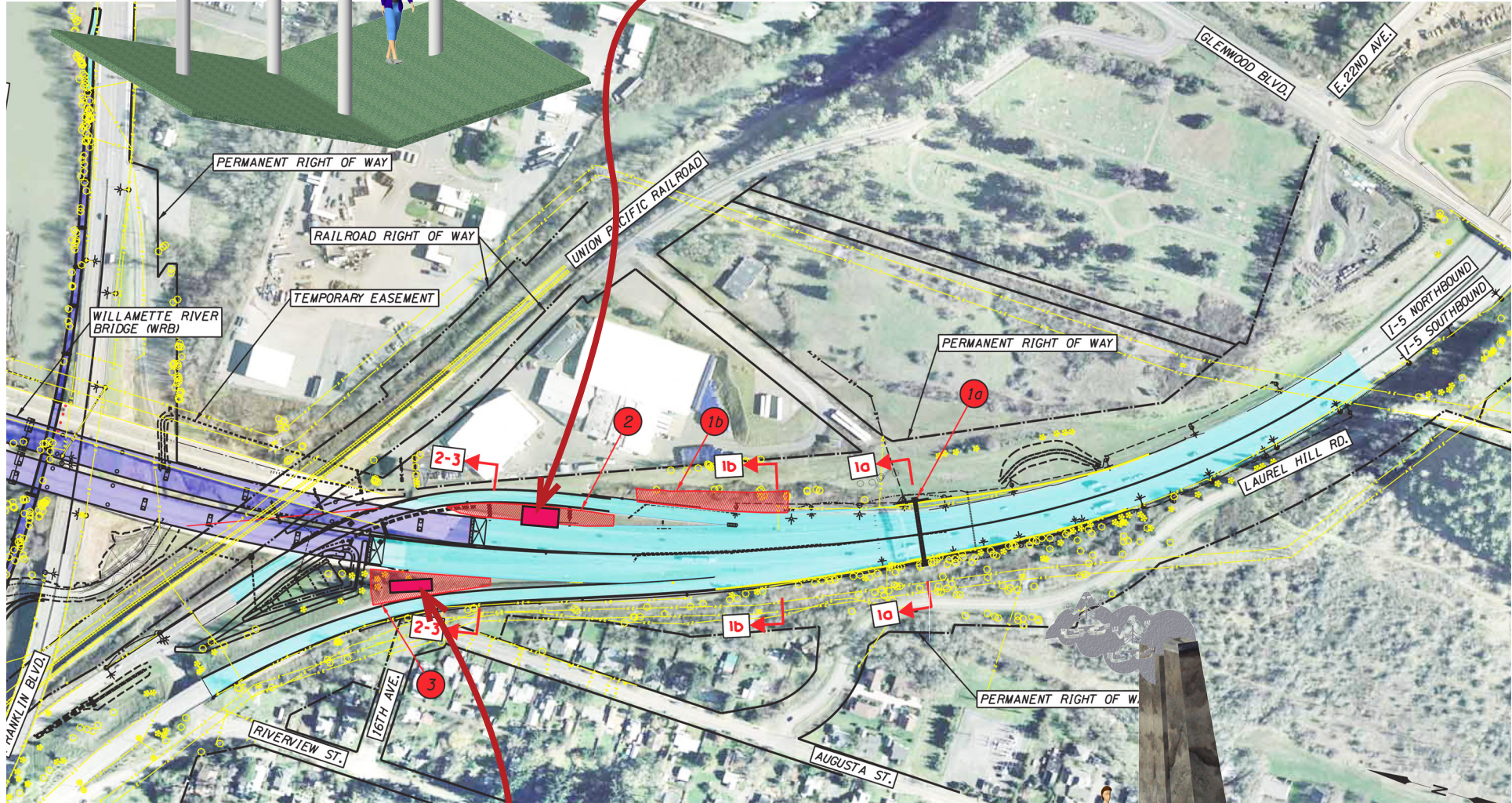


She Who Watches - 2007
Bend Community College

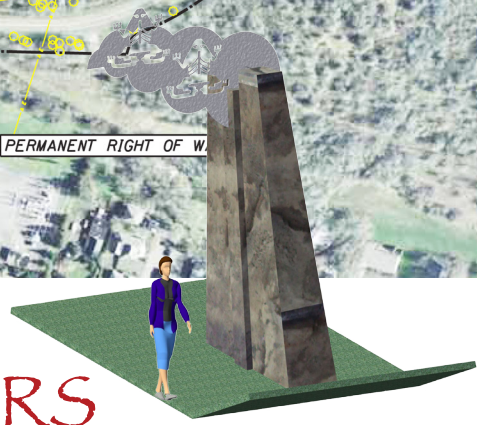
Sculpture Locations



COYOTE

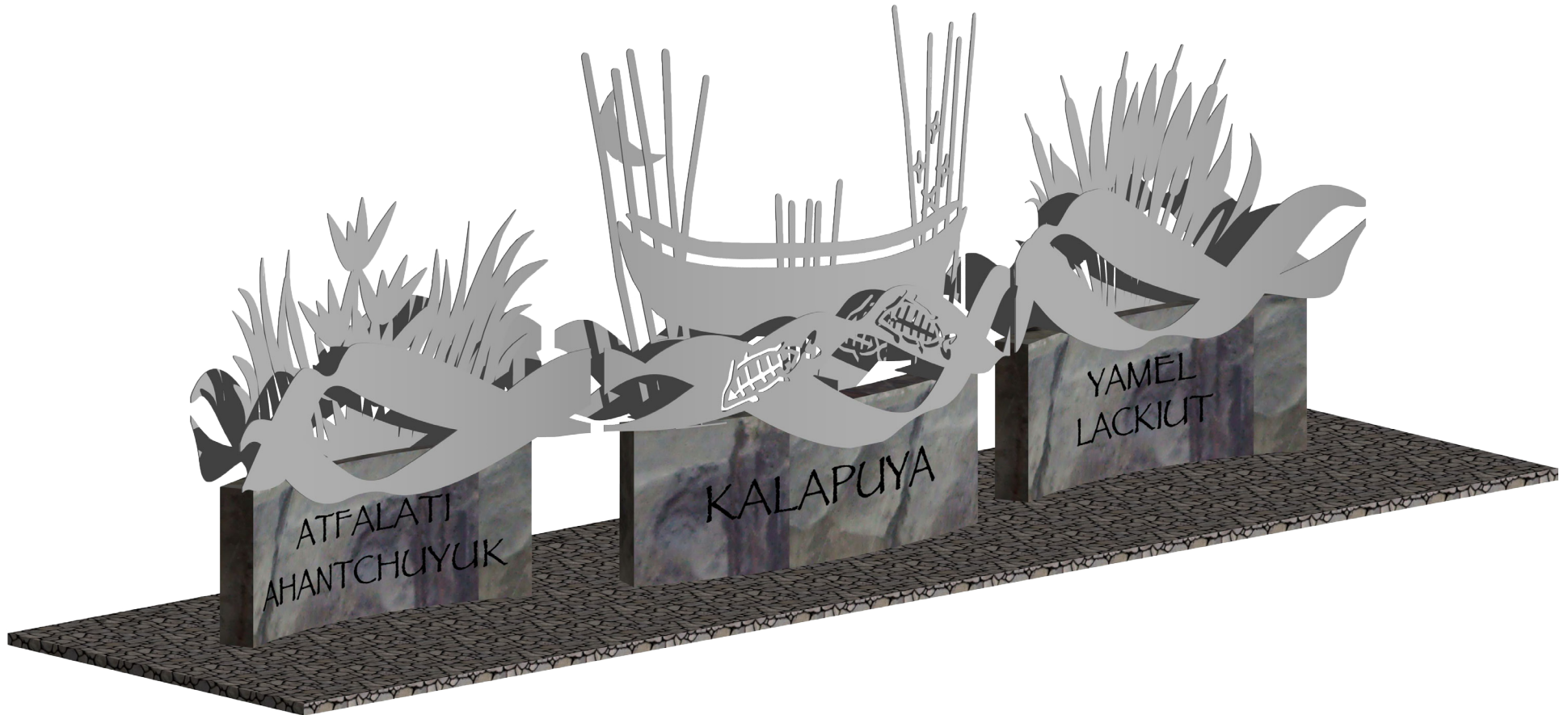


FROG SISTERS

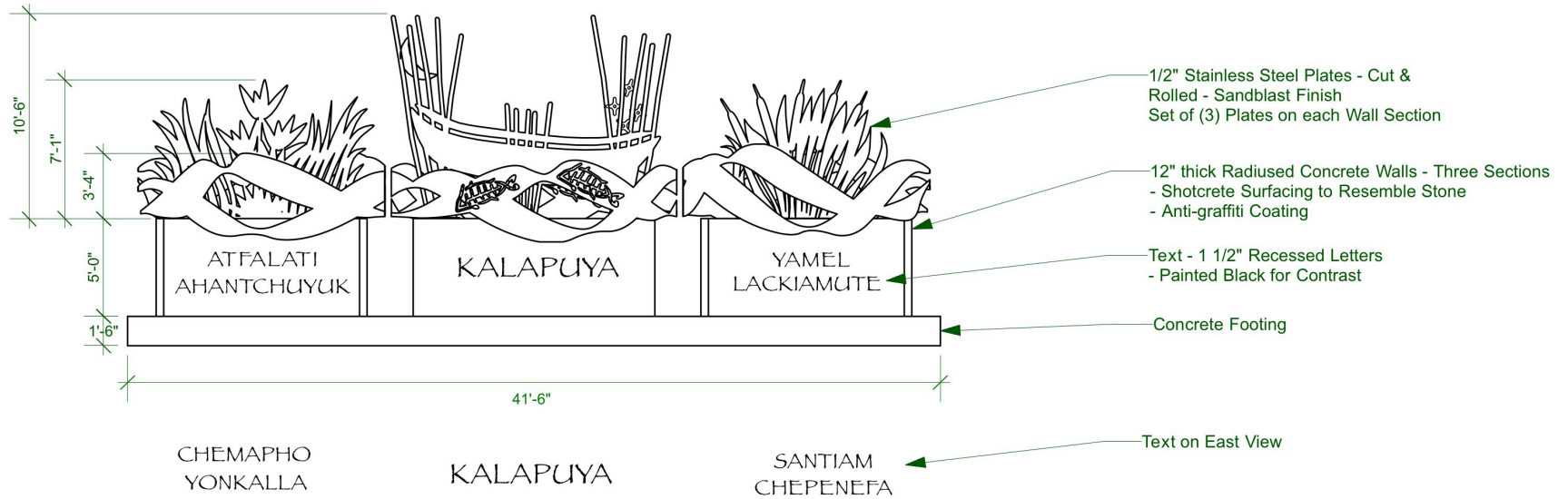


RIVER

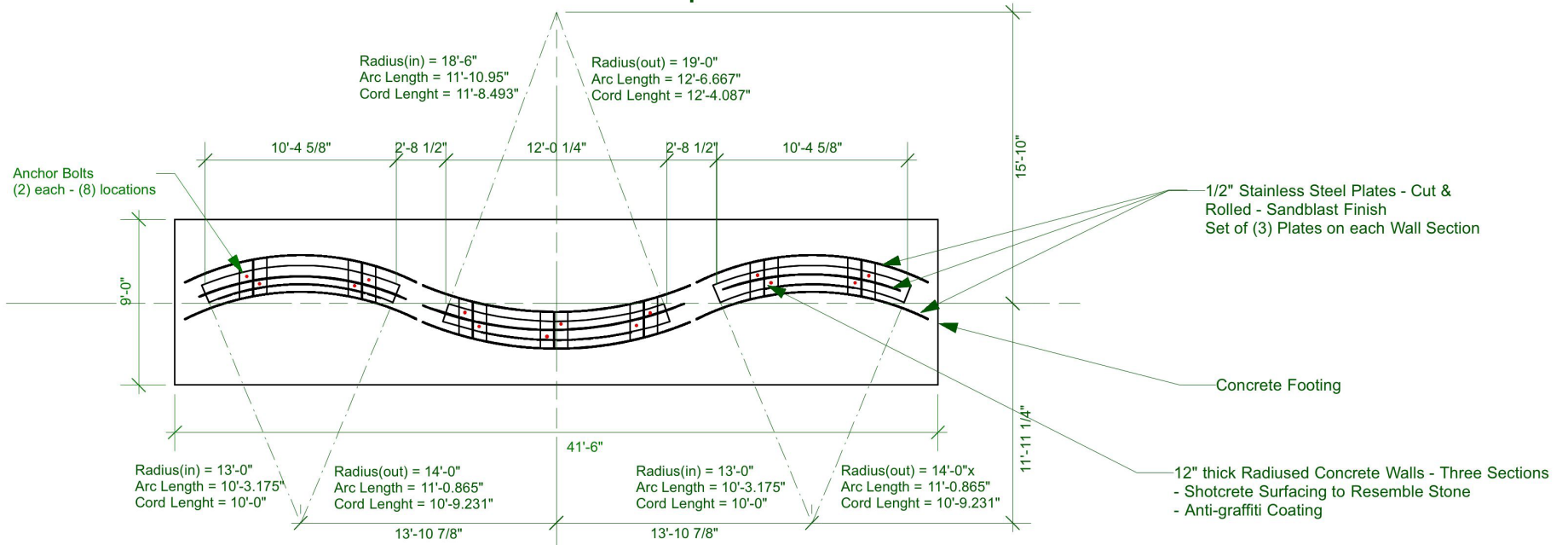
Location Site Enhancement Area-4
North End of Bridge
Between North & South-bound Lanes



View From West



View From Top



Detail of Center Section

West View

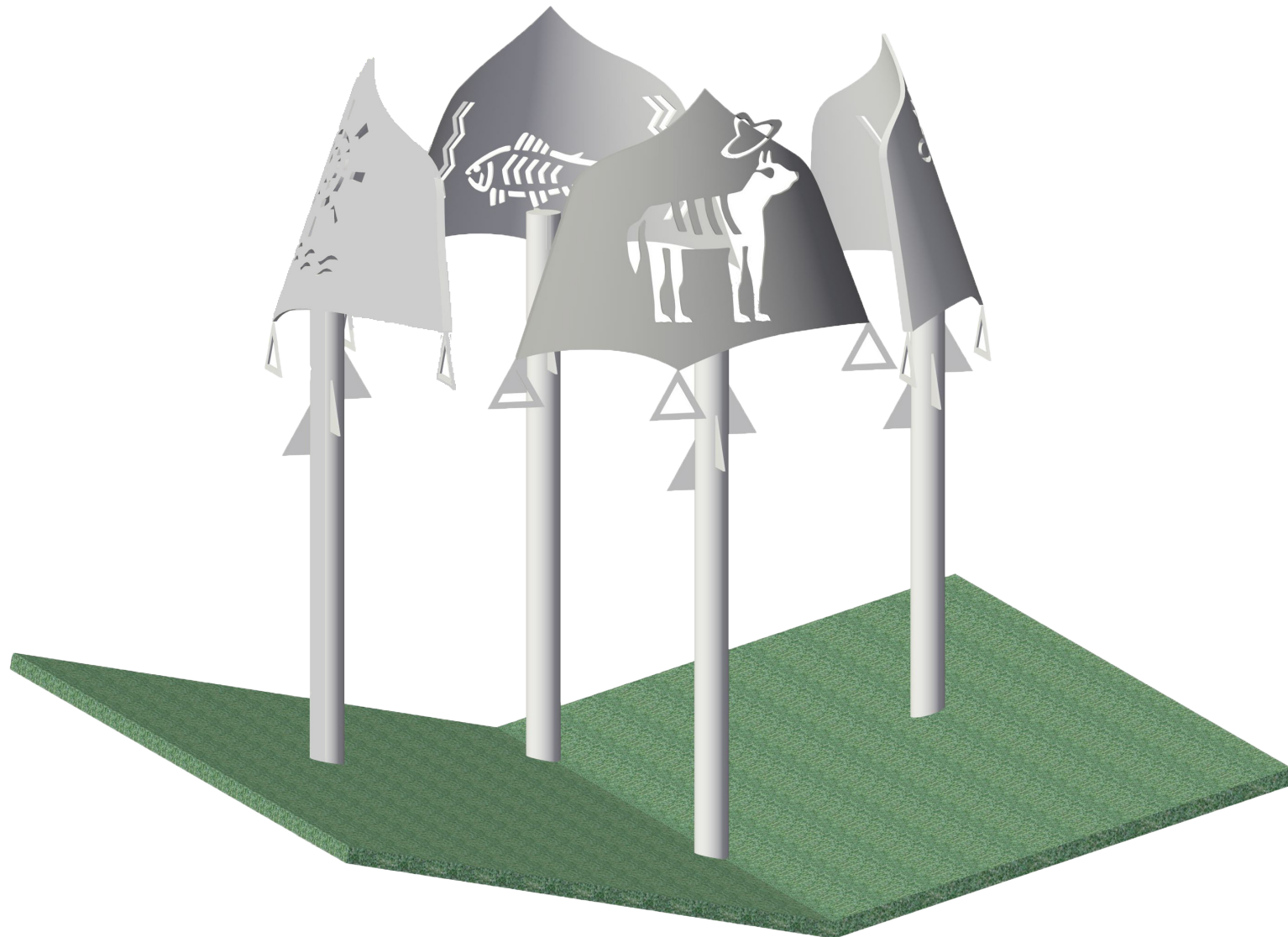


Tribes of the Kalapuya

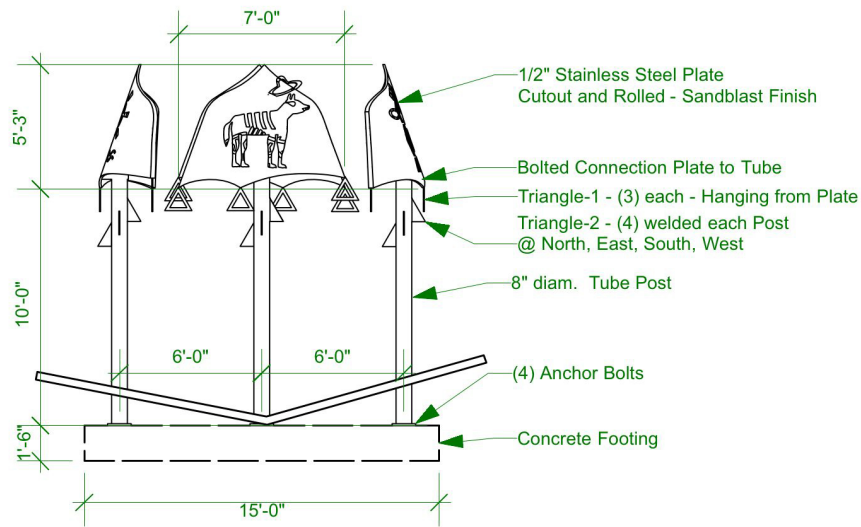
Group	Territory (River Valley)	Present-day County
AHANTCHUYUK	Molalla River Pudding River	Clackamas-Marion
ATFALATI	Tualitin River North Yamhill River Wapato Lake	Washington
CHEMAPHO	Muddy Creek (tributary of Marys River)	Benton
CHEPENEFA	Marys River	Benton
LACKIAMUTE	Lukiamute River	Polk-Benton
SANTAIM	North & South Santiam River Mill-Champoeg Creeks	Marion-Linn
YAMEL	North & South Yamhill River Rickreal Creek	Yamhill
YONCALLA	Willamette River Row River	Lane-Douglas

COYOTE

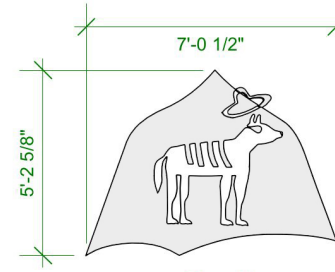
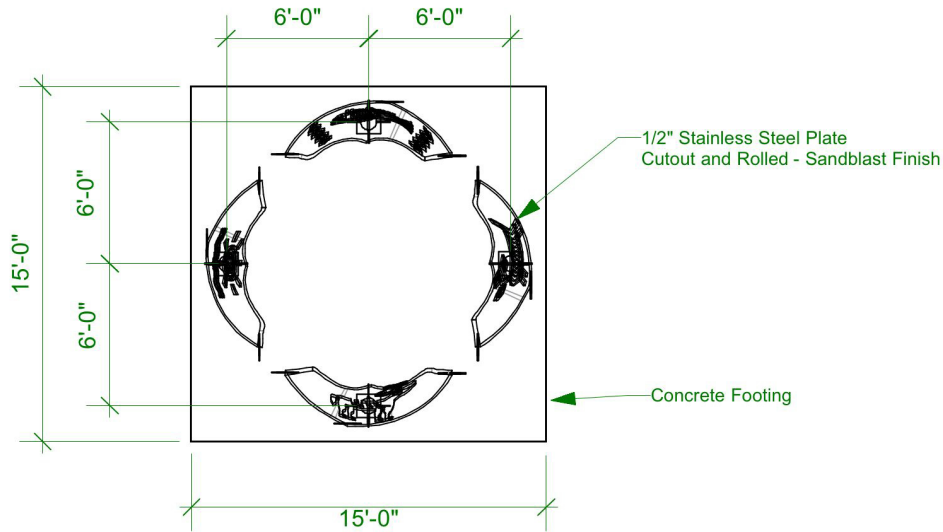
Location Site Enhancement Area-2
South End of Bridge
Between North-bound Lane & Off-ramp



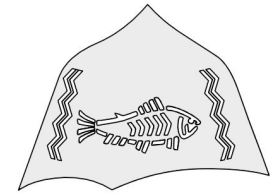
View from South



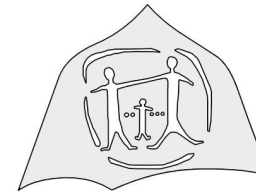
View from Top



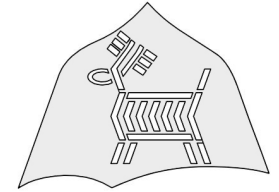
South



North



West

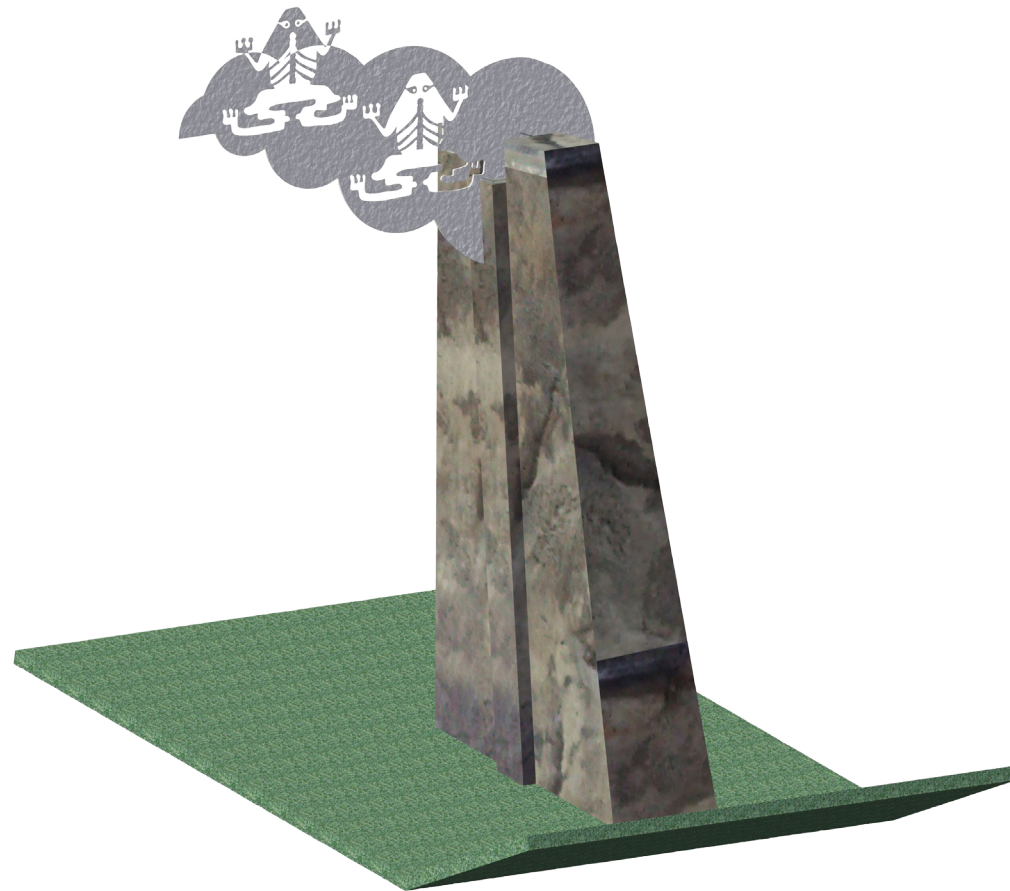


East

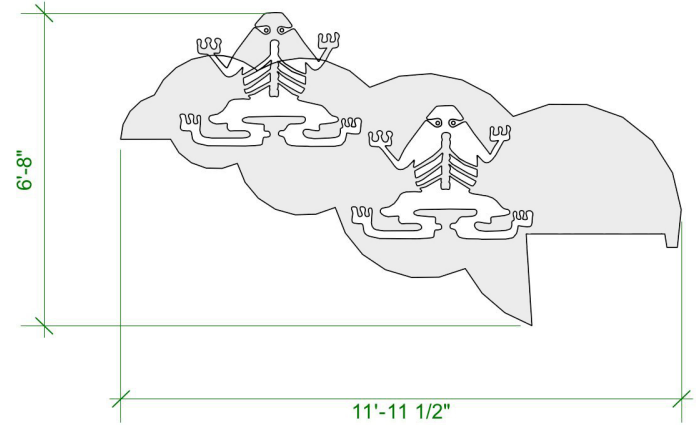
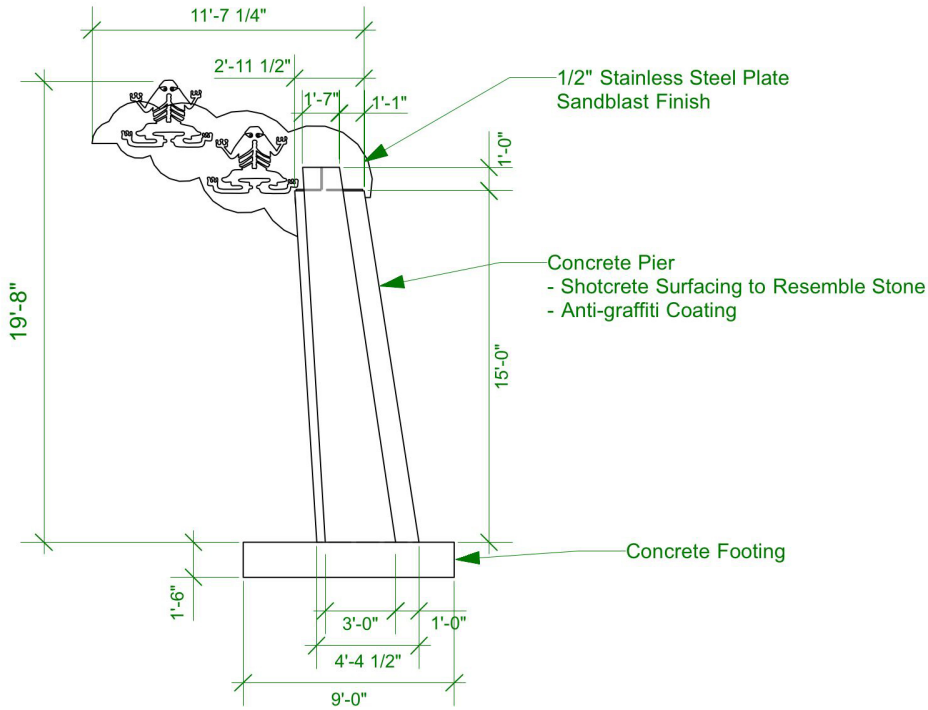


FROG SISTERS

Location Site Enhancement Area-3
South End of Bridge
Between South-bound Lane & Off-ramp



View From West



View From Top

