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
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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
Nicholas Sund, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Po Ying Hsu, Landscape Architecture Graduate
Shelby Stagi, Landscape Architecture Graduate
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 retention 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”

Gathering Grounds
Park Structure

Grading Plan

Circulation Hierarchy

Ecological Zones
Brianna Heese

“Confrontations for Intrigue in a City Park”

Confrontations for Intrigue in a City Park
Bringing contrasting elements face to face to spark interest and awareness.

Creating confrontation through land manipulation

Site plan depicting contour line changes. The grading creates important topographical confrontations throughout the site.

Site Plan of East Thornton Lake Park. Creating confrontation out of landforms and designed zones occur within a fabric of Oak Savanna restoration.

Map of the zones of confrontation occurring in the park.

ZONE 1: THE MAIN AXIS AS DEVELOPMENT AND THE RAILROAD VS LANDSCAPE AND TOPOGRAPHY
ZONE 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LAKE’S HISTORY
ZONE 3: NATIVE AND CONTEMPORARY AGRICULTURE
ZONE 4: METAPHORICAL PLANTING AREA
ZONE 5: MERGING OF ECOTYPES
Zone 1: The Central Axis: a main path “confronting” topography.

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.

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

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

Zone 3: Native and Contemporary Agriculture

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

Zone 4: Metaphorical Planting Zone

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

Zone 5: Gathering Space: a collection of ecotypes

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

PLANTING PALATE

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Chris Weaver

“Overlap: A Diagram of Forces in Equilibrium”

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**Project Goals**
- Create a destination for outdoor recreation
- Appeal to a diverse range of visitors
- Tie the park and N Albany in with greater Albany
- Improve engagement with East Thorton Lake
- Provide a setting for environmental education
- Reference the transformative forces that created the park

**Concept Statement**
Give form and pattern to the transformative forces of hydrology, ecology and human use. Overlay those patterns in order to convey the idea of interplay of those forces.

**Inspiration**
Lawrence Halprin’s ‘Eco-Score’ is an analysis technique that stacks timelines of changing features. He understood landscape forms as an equilibrium of forces.

**Forces Overlapping**
- **Hydrology**
  - The river continually shifts and floods, gouging out the terrain and leaving remnants of past flows such as Thorton Lake.
- **Ecology**
  - Nature gradually creeps back into the space left open by human and natural disturbance. Its complex order is constantly changed in response to changing conditions in the land.
- **Human Use**
  - Land-use practices vary through history but inevitably transform the landscape in extreme ways. From the periodic burning by the Kalapuya to orchard farming in the recent past, human use leaves a strong mark.

**Derived Design Patterns**

**Site Plan**

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**Site Context**

**Section of Site**

**Contour Map**

**Circulation**

**Feature Map**

---

1. Main Entrance
2. Entrance Plaza
3. Parking Lot
4. Play Fountain
5. South Entrance
6. ADA Path
7. Picnic Area
8. Natural Play Area
9. Main Pavilion
10. Lakeshore Path
11. Picnic Area
12. East Entrance (No vehicles)
PERIPHERY
Moving outward, overlapping orders become pronounced as human patterns attenuate and natural scenery fills in

DRAINAGE

LAKESIDE PLATFORM

Intervals between rings of trees shorten moving outwards

Intervals between rings of grass lengthen moving outwards

Main pavilion hosts recreational and educational groups

Wildlife Viewing

Swale planting filters stormwater runoff

Decreased streambank slope

Elevated platform faces NE

Sidewalk and parking lot drain via pipeline into a constructed swale

White Oak Savannah

Intertwined with native grasses and shrubs

Decaying Shelters
Shelters become cruder at pace with diminishing human pattern

Outdoor education groups based in main pavilion

View from a tertiary trail in restored white oak savannah

SCYP
Sustainable City Year Program
Chrissy Stillman

“A Walking River”
A Walking River
exploring how water builds topography, culture, and place in East Thornton Lake

LA509  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

RIVER AS DESIGNER. ART FROM INTERPRETATION

THE GEOHYDROLOGY PROCESS

A Walking River Seasonal Interest

EXPLORING LOCAL FORMS

A Walking River
Seasonal Interest

Hamamelis virginiana
Mahonia sp.
Iris tenuissima
Philadelphus lewisii
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis
Cornus sericea 'Flaviramea'
Pyrus calleryana
Garrya elliptica
Koelreuteria paniculata
Corylus avellana 'Red Dragon'

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

EUGENE
ALBANY
NEWBERG
PORTLAND
Willamette River through Albany
Willamette Valley (an alluvial valley)
East Thornton Lake
Downtown Albany

Walking River Seasonal Interest

facing north
January    March      May      August     December

How has the river shaped our culture and community?
Albany as a river-route hub. River gravel businesses
Grass seed, a major valley export. Willamette Valley orchards.
Camas, a Kalapuya staple food.

EXPLORING LOCAL FORMS

Walking River Seasonal Interest

A Walking River Seasonal Interest

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

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

- BRAID
- MEANDER
- STRAIGHT CHANNEL

- circulation
- braided path
- meandering path
- straight path

design atmosphere

- playfulness and curiosity
- comfortable spaces for community and rest
- deliberate movement in a natural setting
Deanna Lynn

“Thornton Lake Botanic Garden”

SITE PLAN

CIRCULATION

TOPOGRAPHY
THORNTON LAKE BOTANIC GARDEN

CONTEXT

CONCEPT: AESTHETIC RESTORATION:
Designing with native plant communities that establish ecological relationships and provide habitat value

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 Confederated 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

INSPIRATION

Peter Walker Partners design for Constitution Gardens

Roberto Burle Marx planting design

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

Visit

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

BOTANIC GARDEN ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

BOARDWALK LAKE OVERLOOK

POND TERRACE

ILLUSTRATIVE SECTION
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 INSECURITY

United States
13% of people live in food insecure households

Oregon
15.2% of the population are food insecure

Linn & Benton County
16% of residents are food insecure

WHAT IS A FOOD DESERT?

Low Income
Food Desert
Low Access

“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
Hannah Six

“The Way of the Water”

The Way of the Water
A Language of Landforms, People & Ecology

Restoring greater hydrologic function, & a deeper connectedness to local landscape through wetland & oak savannah habitat development

Albany, Oregon

A Breathing & Changing Riverscape
INTERACTIVE EDUCATION Erosion & Deposition
MEANDER MOUNDS facing South

WETLANDS facing East up the lake

FERN FOREST facing North
Ilia Fiene

“Expose the Experience”
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 leaves.

ENTRANCE ORCHARD
40 years after planting
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
OBSERVATION DECKS
Sun deck seating in the Canoeas Field

FIR FOREST BOARDWALK
To East Thorton Lake observation area
Nicholas Sund

“Balancing Act”
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 carved 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 hogar a muchos tipos de fauna, incluyendo dos especies en peligro de extinción.

2. The Savanna / La Sabana

Humans eventually settled in the valley and created a new landscape. First Americans, like the Kalapuyans, used fire to convert forests into wet 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 Kalapuyas, utilizaron el fuego para convertir los bosques en bosques de sabina húmeda para caza y agricultura. Los árboles de roble antiguos todavía crecen en el parque, pero la sabana está desapareciendo.

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 immigrantes europeos establecieron nuevas ciudades 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.
Po Ying Hsu

“Celebrating Oregon White Oak & Oak Savanna”
Zone 3 - Restoration Area (Con't)

Learning about Oak Associated Animal Species

Outdoor Learning Center

East Thornton Lake Viewpoint
Turtle habitat restoration area

Midpoint

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.

Summer Plant Palette in the Picnic Area

Spring Interest
Fall Interest

Threshold
Creating an Oak Savanna Landscape inspired by Kalapuyan Tribe

Forest Edge Boardwalk
View from the Boardwalk
Shelbi Stagi

“Window to the Past”

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.

Precedent: Mount Pisgah
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.
The park offers visitors the experience 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
- Raised Boardwalk
- Sunken Path
- Water Management on Site

Modern Play Area
Park Programming Options:

European Settlement/Agriculture

White Oak Savanna

Riparian Forest

Notable Non-Native Invasives:
- English Ivy, Herzia helix
- Blackberry, Rubus
- Mazzard Cherry, Prunus Avium
- Teasel, Dipsacus
- Canadian Thistle, Cirsium arvense
- Tansy Ragwort, Jacobaea vulgaris

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

Site Plan

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.

- Represents the early European settler mindset of being above or separate from nature.
- Boardwalk keeps visitors above soggy ground.
- Space under walkway leaves room for wildlife to cross underneath.
- Represents being one with nature.
- Walking on this path feels like you are part of the oak savanna.
- Path runs along the ecotone between the riparian zone and savanna.

Path Through Savanna: The edible native buffer hides the view of the oak savanna from the orchard; breaks in the vegetative screen create windows to the past ecosystems (framed views) the plants inform visitors to the park about Native American foraged diet and creates transition between the savanna and European Agriculture zones.

- Designed by Shelby Stagi
This design draws from the historical food-based systems of the First Tribes. It is a natural area to create a park that addresses food security, and sustainability, as well as the City of Albany's nutrition goals for oak savannas, upland prairies, riparian zones, and aquatic habitats.

The park design is centered around three trail systems that are each unique in experience. The first has direct roots derived from the two main historical oak savannas, and the third path system is a continuation of the two transformed into a passive and interpretive landscape. The first uses of the site were of a native landscape harvested and foraged by the Kalapuya Tribe. The second historical use was the more recent European agricultural usage after the settlement era, manifested by the third and proposed use of the site for a park that creates not only an enjoyable place of nature, but also a productive urban landscape in terms of both natural as well as cultural and educational needs.

We propose that the City of Albany partner with a local non-profit to create a start-up that is engaged to lead the community garden project in this park design, and to assist people who volunteer to work in the garden. Food harvested from the garden can then be distributed through the community through food banks, after-non-profits organizations, and given to volunteers who help maintain the garden.
Path Dynamics

6' 0" Mulched Native Pathway

4' 0" Cement European Pathway

2' 0" Mowed Grass Step

6' 0" Pea Gravel Civic Pathway

See Image to the Top Left
Tori Murphy

“Trust Your Neighbor”
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.

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.

THE LUMBER YARD

“The Lumber Yard” encourages individuals or groups to work together to walk across inspired by the timber industry important to the livelihood of Albany in the 1890-1950s.
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 Coos 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.