

# Azusa Wilderness Park Phase 2







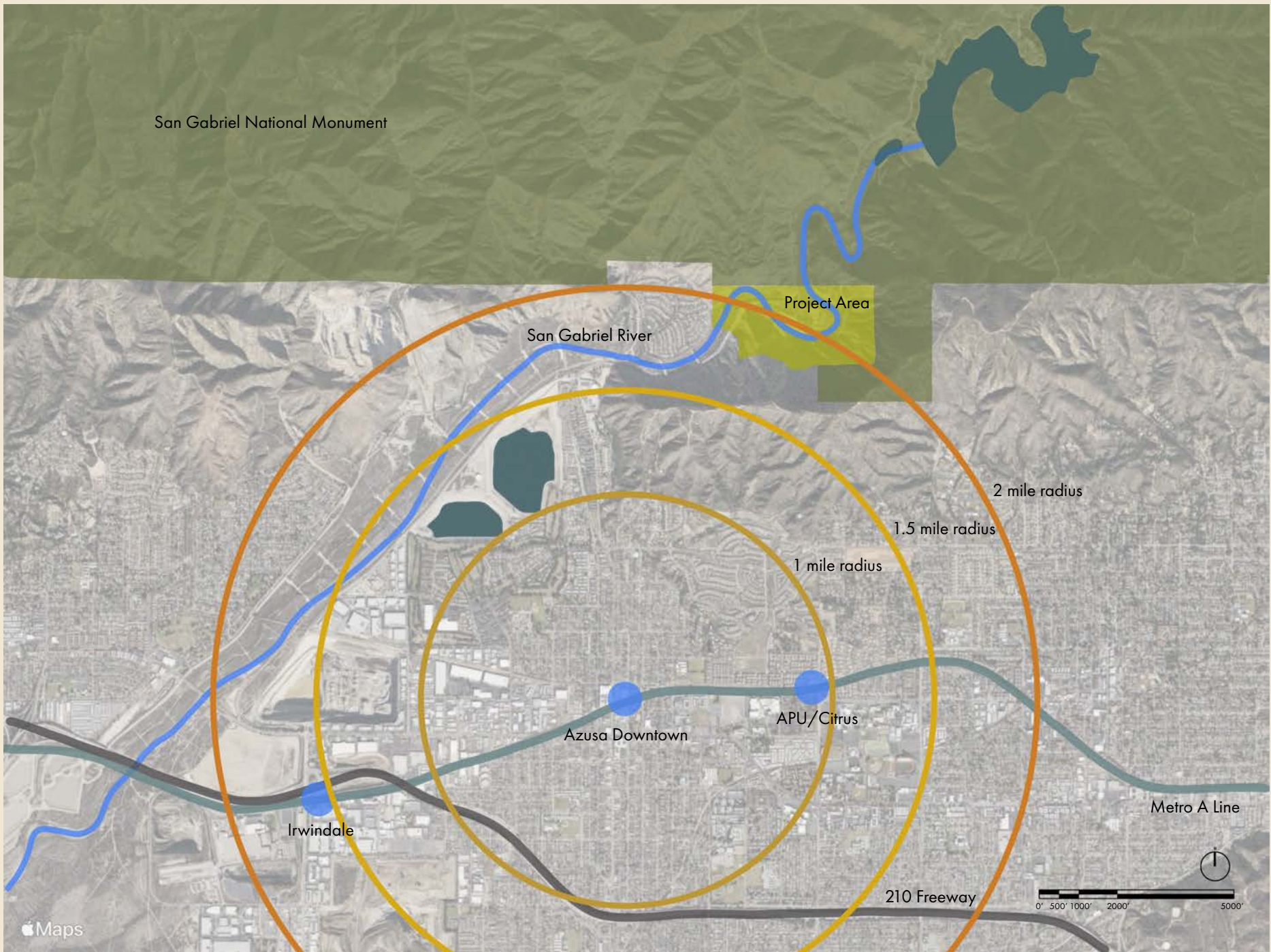
Los Angeles County

Azusa Wilderness Park Site



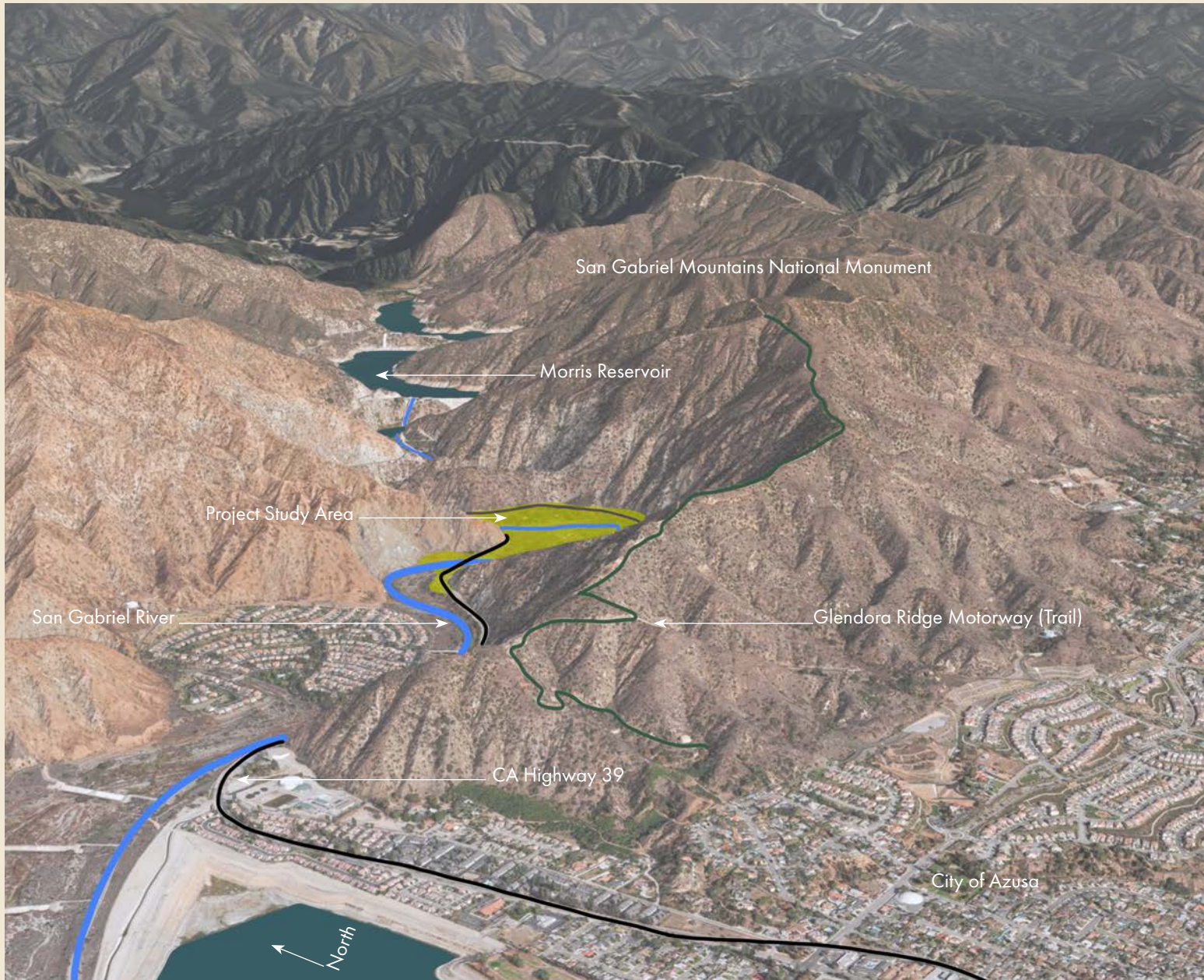
San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

## Regional Context Maps



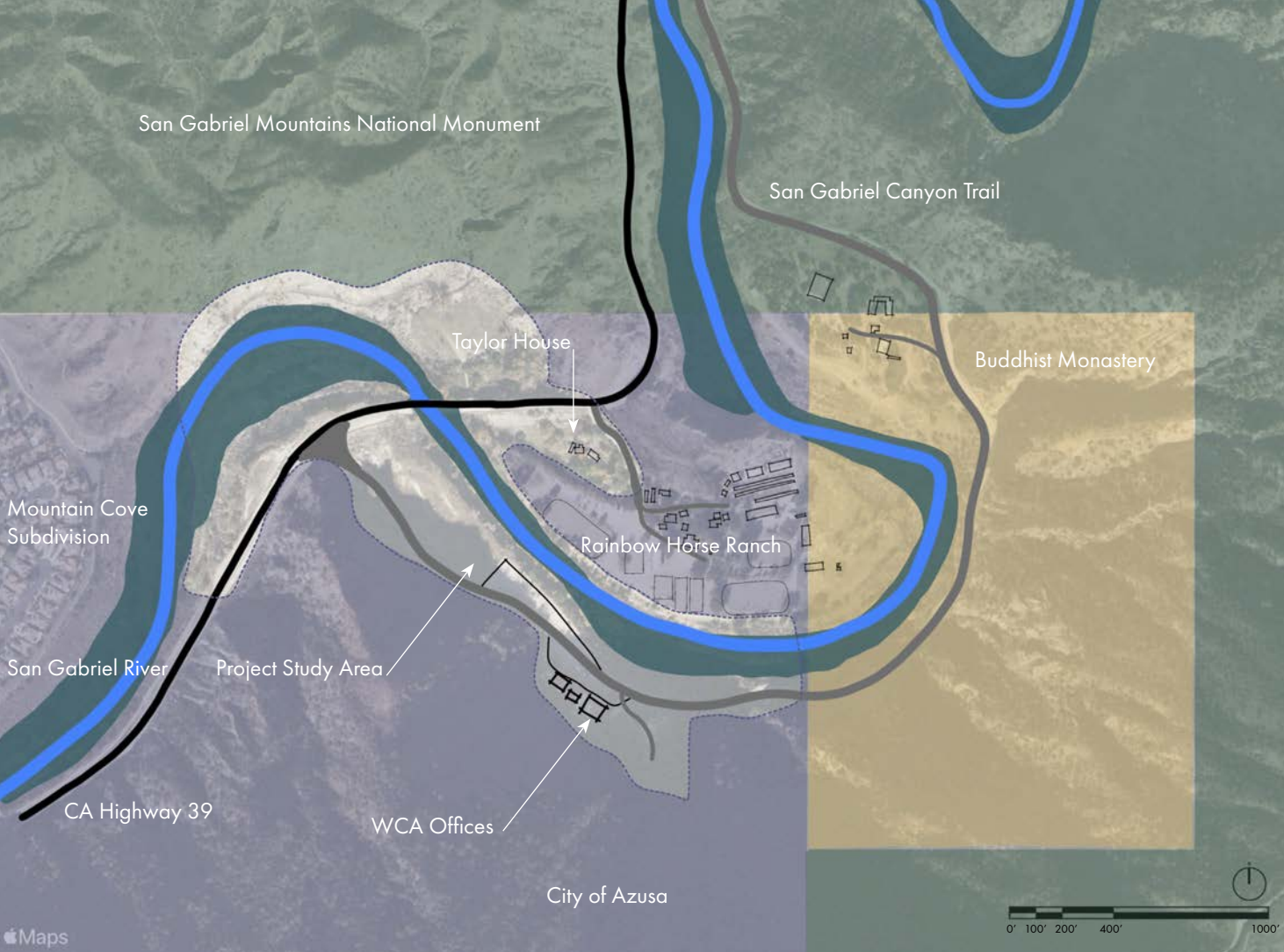
# Urban Adjacencies and Access





## Urban/ Wildland Interface





## Immediate Site Context

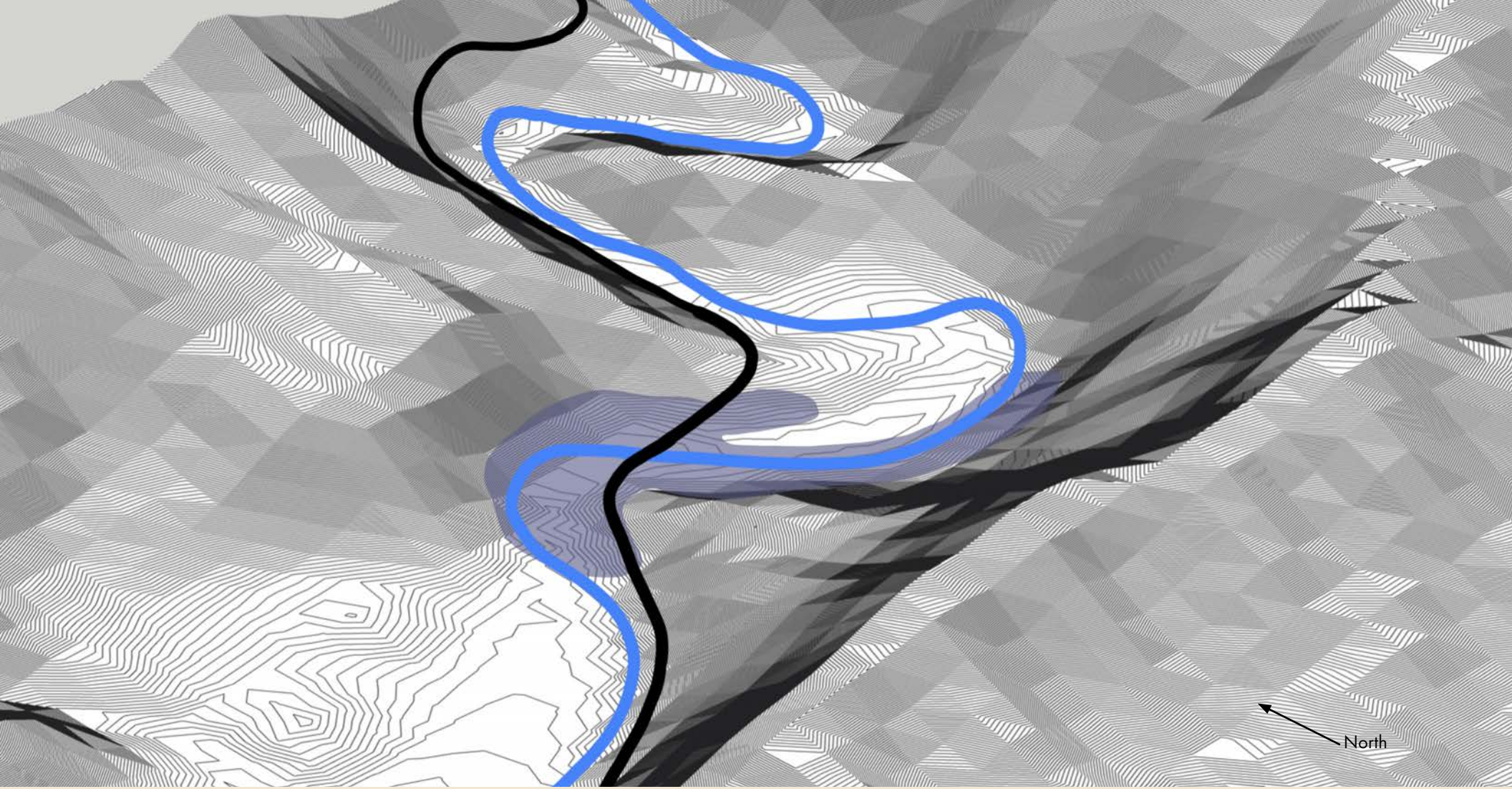
The Azusa Wilderness Park project site sits in a bowl surrounded by steep mountain topography.

It lies between the public land of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and the privately owned Buddhist Monastery property.

The project site is within the City of Azusa, as is the Rainbow Horse Ranch which is a privately run operation on leased publicly owned land.

To the west is a large suburban housing development.





## Topographic Study 5' Interval Contour Lines

The project site is surrounded by the extreme slope of the encircling mountains.

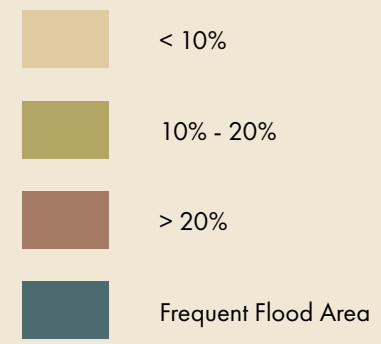
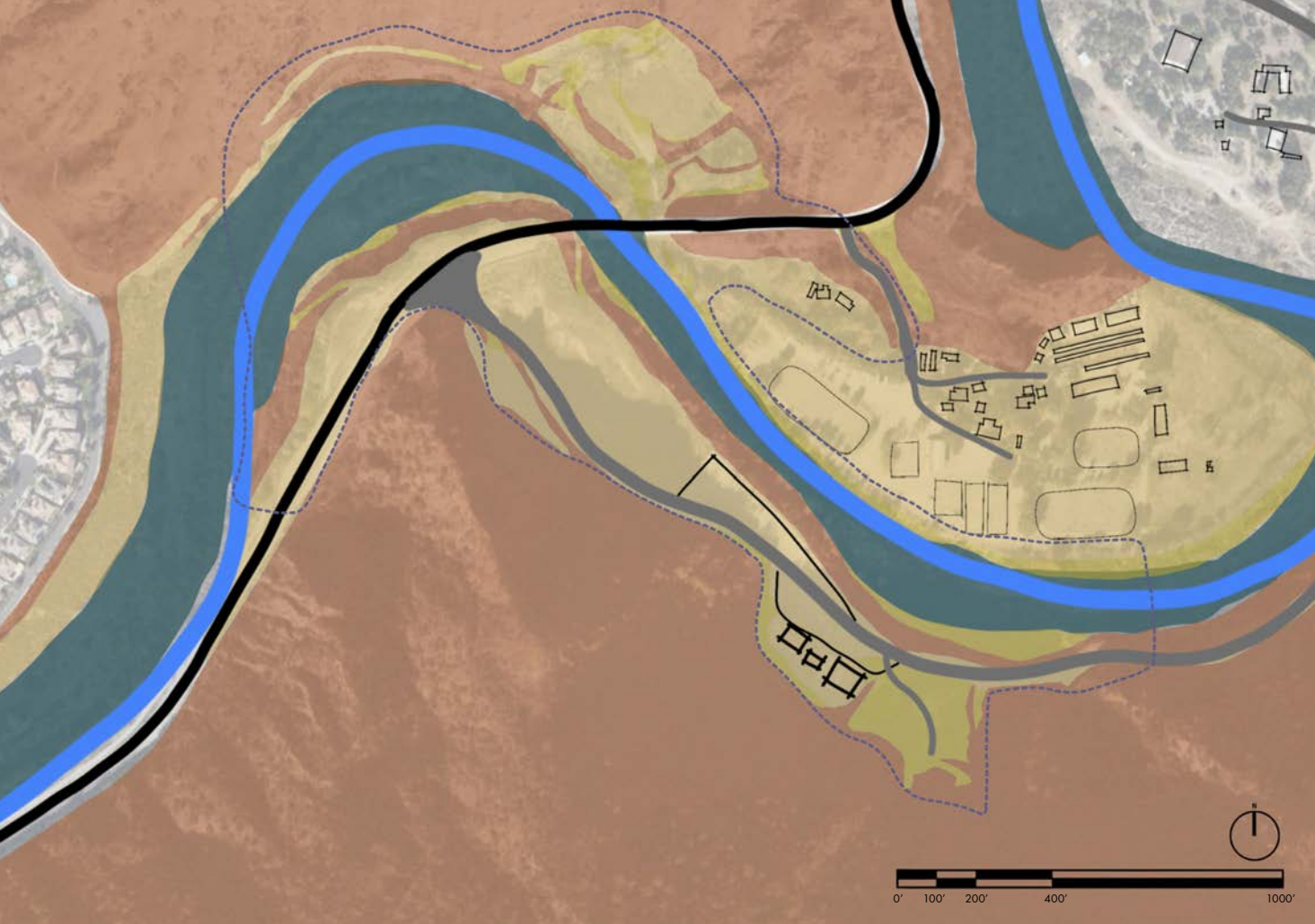
There is a large amount of relatively flat area suitable for a variety of uses. The river bisects these areas and there is a small steep slope between them.

The north side of the river is lower in elevation than the south side. The differential averages about 20-25 feet.



Site Study Area





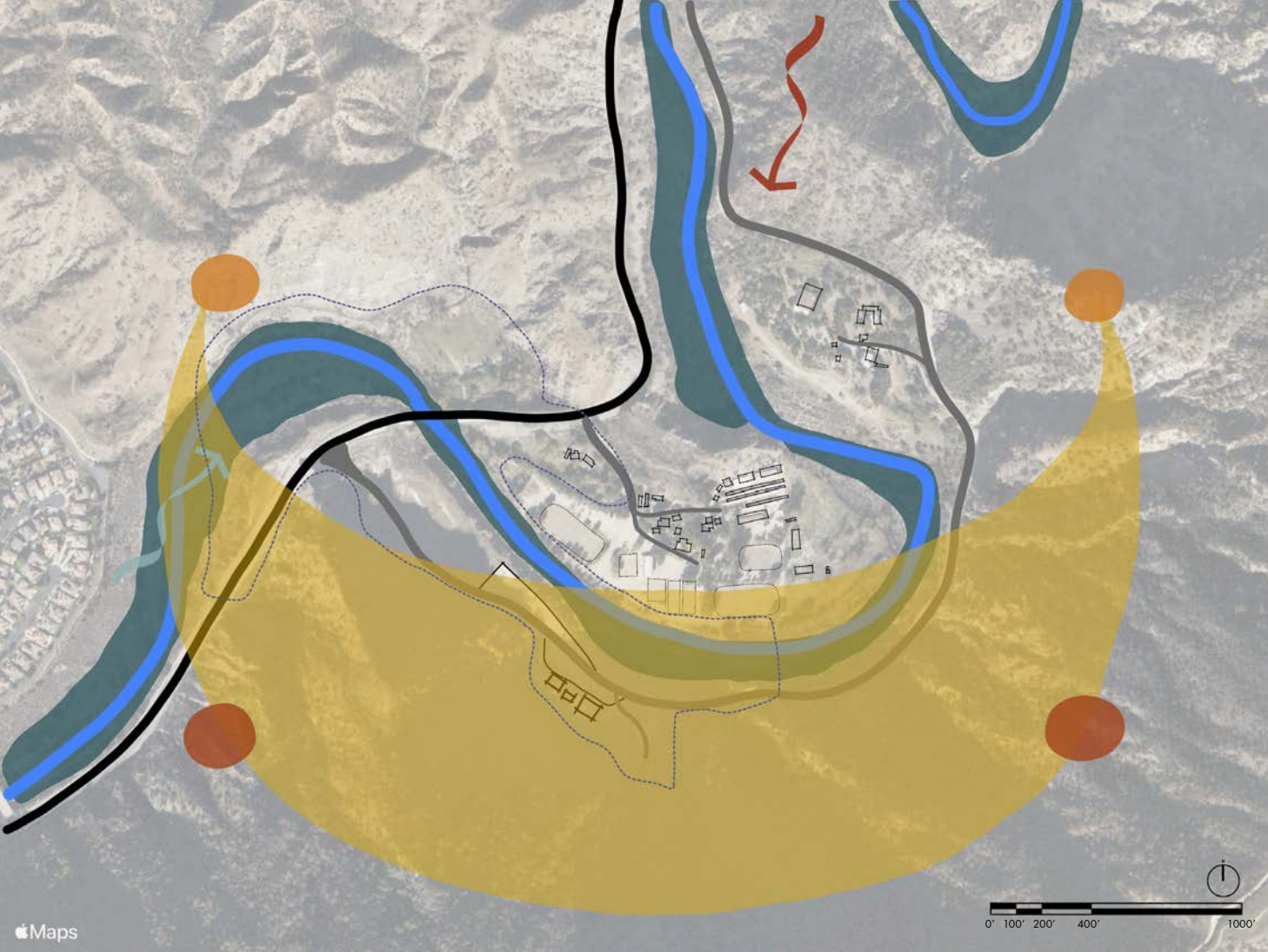
## Slope

The surrounding mountains have an extreme slope of 20% or greater.

The flat areas contain a large amount of contiguous land suitable for development.

Particularly around the river are areas with steep slopes between 10%-20% that also provide opportunities.





- Summer Sun Path
- Winter Sun Path
- Prevailing Winds
- Santa Ana Winds

## Sun and Wind

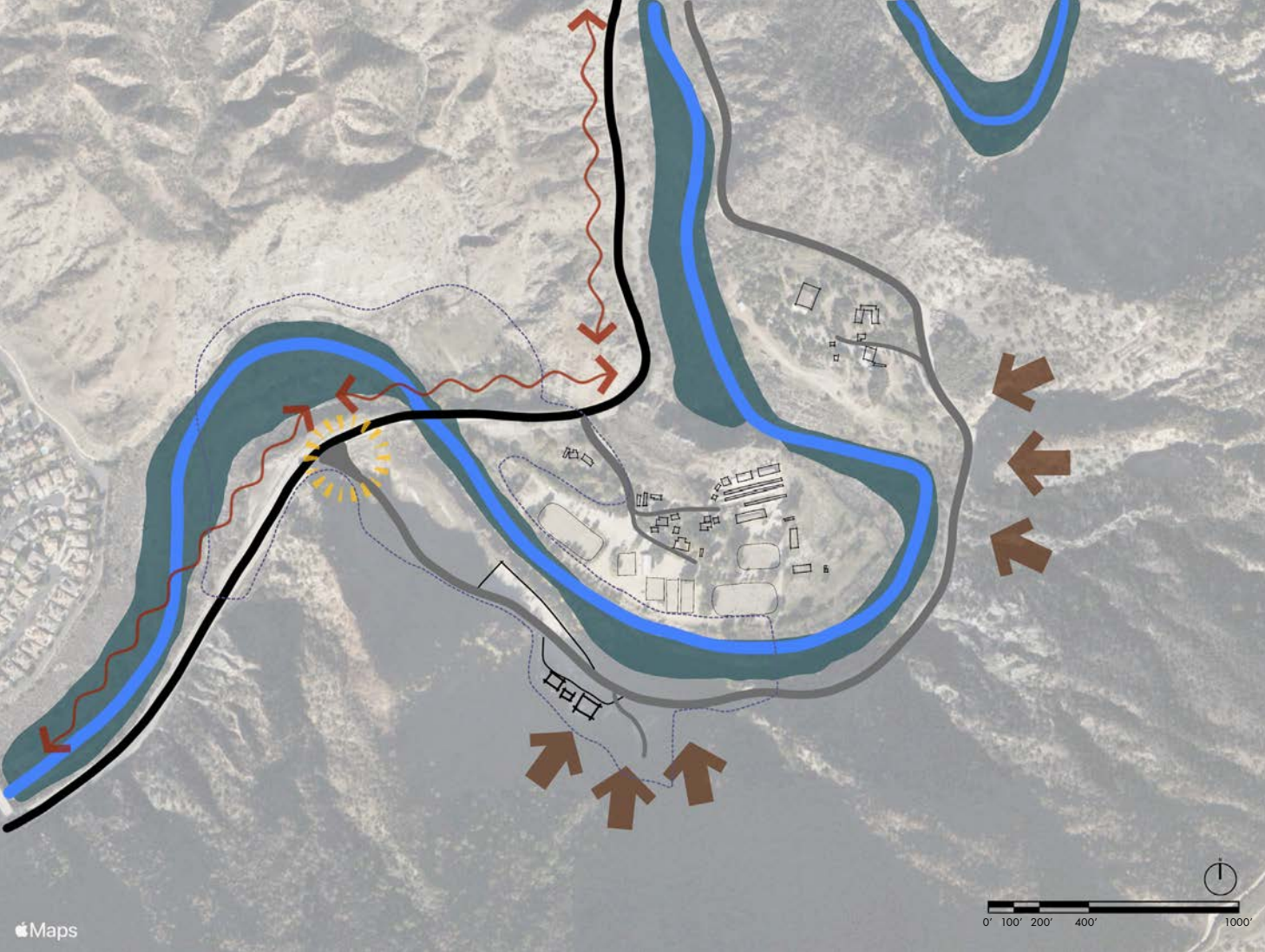
The mountains to the south cast large shadows in the winter months.




The prevailing winds can travel into the mouth of the canyon from the southwest, but most of the project site is sheltered.

Warm and dry Santa Ana winds enter the canyon from the north in the winter.

The extreme pocket of the site's topography largely buffet the wind and provide deep shade at sunrise and sunset at all times of the year.





-  Blind Entrance/ Vehicular Hazards
-  Mudslide Risk
-  Highway Noise

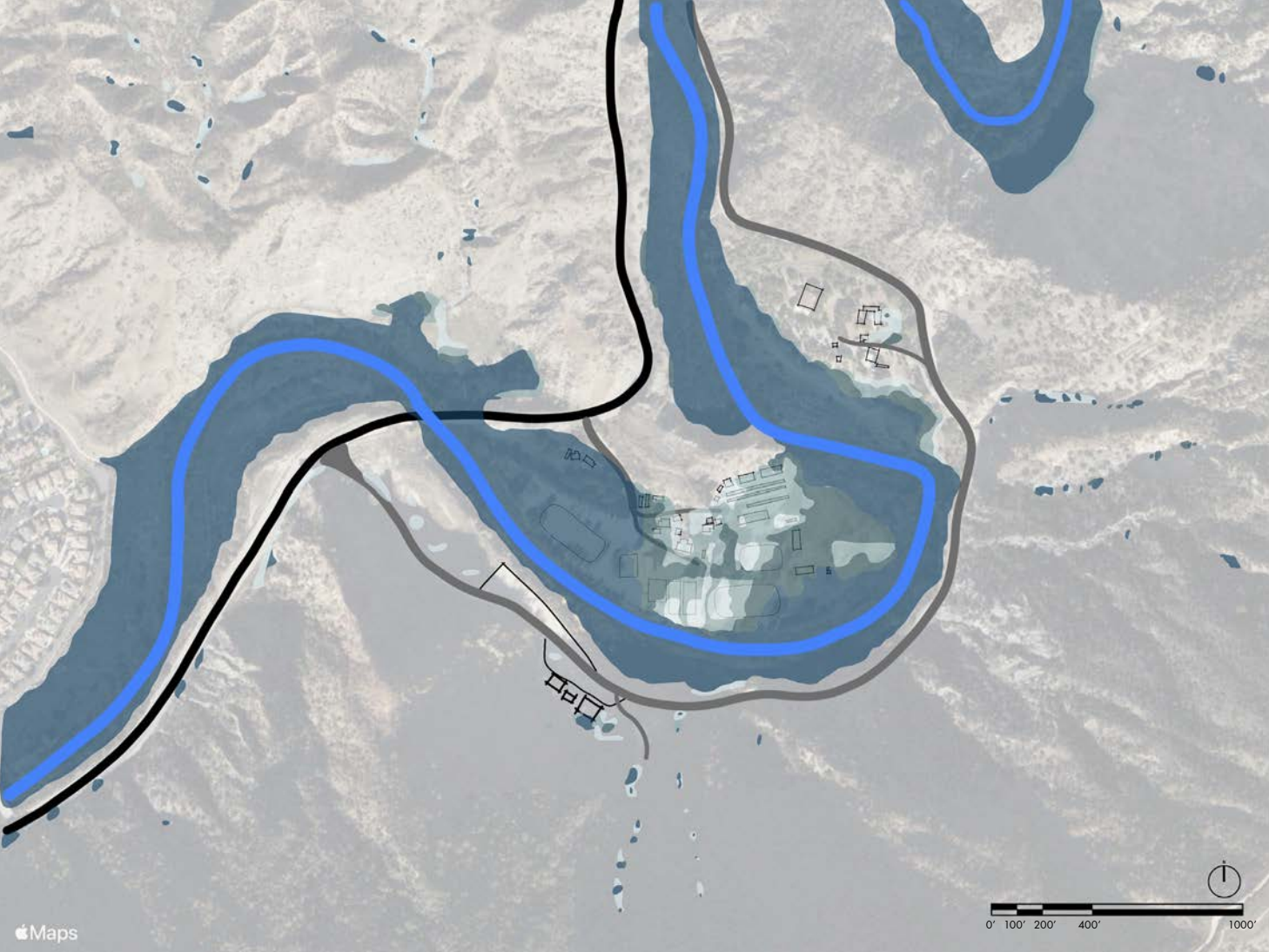
## Environmental Hazards

California Hwy 39 passes through the middle of the site. Traffic travels at high speeds and there is a blind curve at the existing entrance to Azusa Wilderness Park.

Traffic noise is prevalent in the highway adjacent portions of the site, particularly around the elevated bridge where the highway crosses the river.

Past and future mudslides are a constant concern. These mudslide areas are where existing storm water channels flow down the steep topography of the surrounding mountains.





5.5' +	Overhead
3.2' - 5.5'	Waist to Head
1.5' - 3.2'	Knee to Head
0.3' - 1.5'	Ankle to Knee

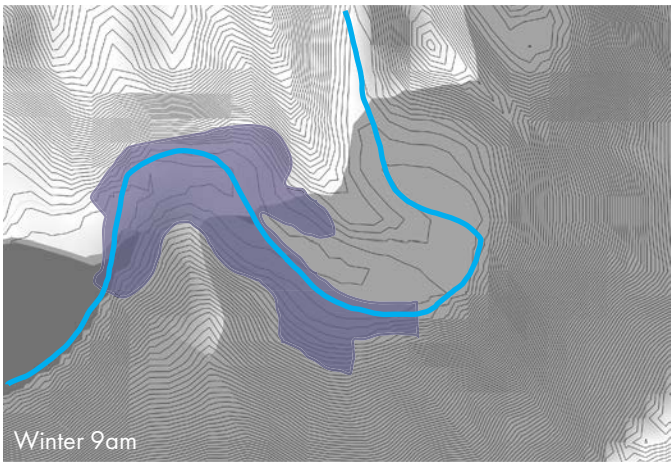
## 100 Year Flood Zone

A large portion of the north side of the project site sits in a flood hazard zone.

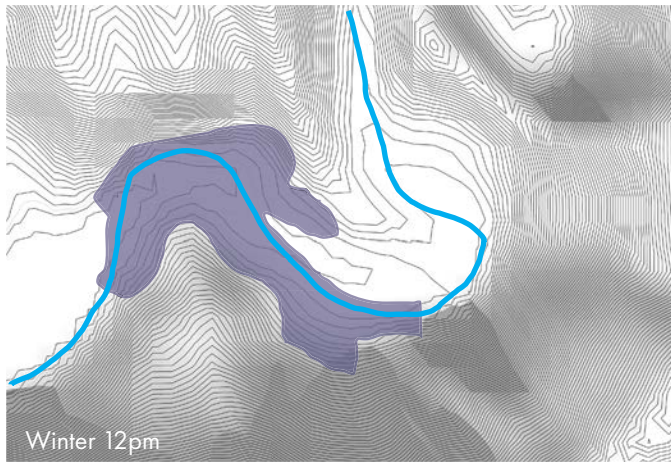
Work along both the north and south side of the river bank must take the constant flood risk into account.

The upstream dams release water throughout the year. While these are scheduled and mostly predictable, the river channel can instantly change in nature from dry or small babbling brook to a fast flowing river with whitewater rapids.

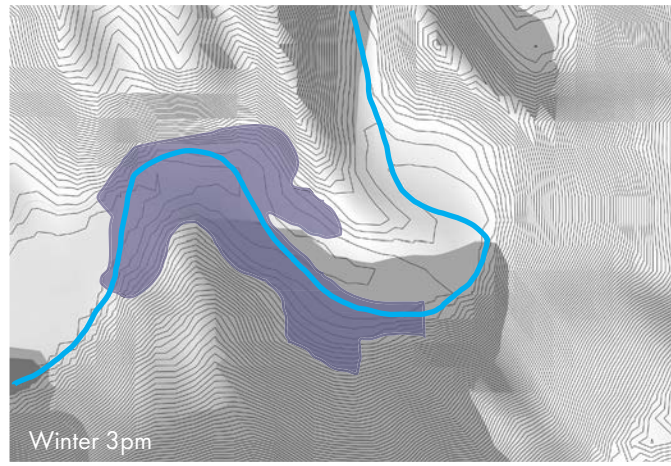




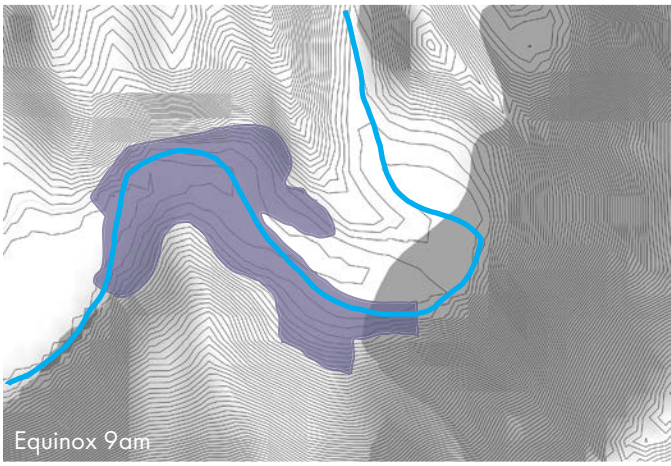
Winter 9am



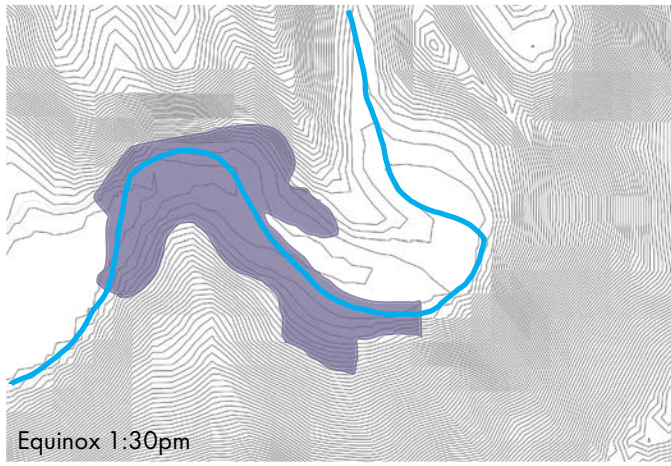
Winter 12pm



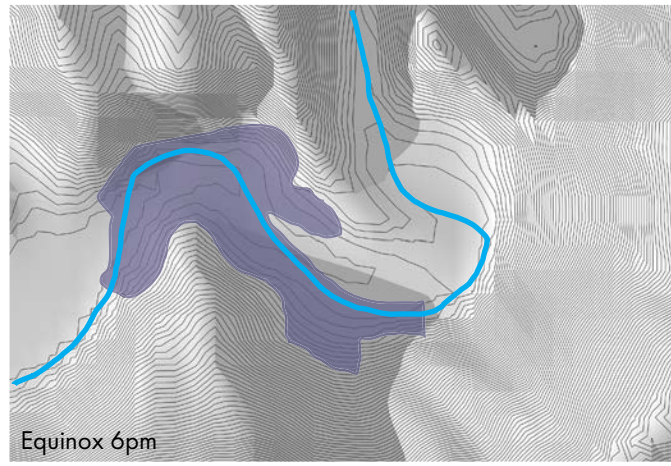
Winter 3pm



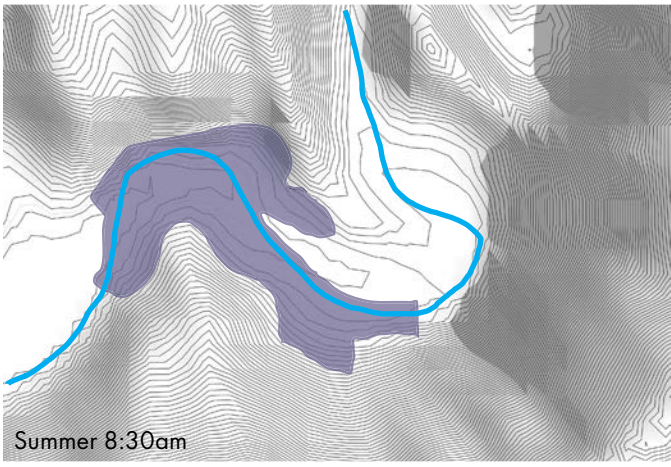
Equinox 9am



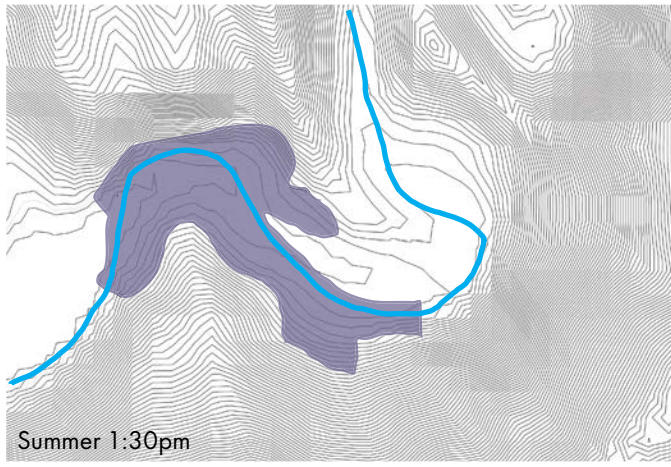
Equinox 1:30pm



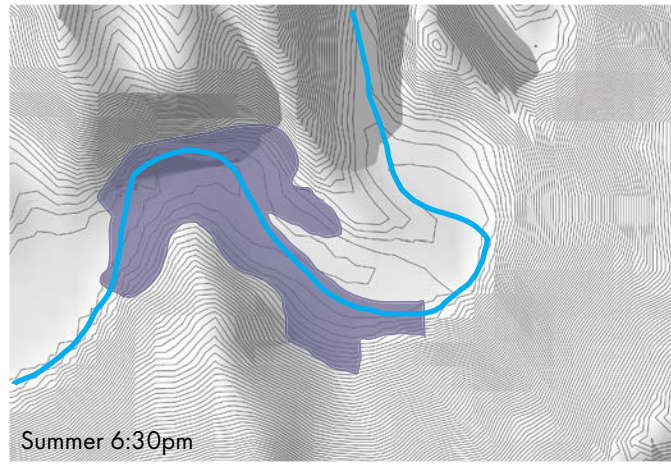
Equinox 6pm



Summer 8:30am



Summer 1:30pm



Summer 6:30pm

# Sun Study

 Site Study Area





## Constraints

1. Extreme topography - along mountain sides and river banks
2. Busy highway - limited crossing opportunities - Blind Curve
3. Existing horse ranch - conflicting uses - awkward siting
4. Mature native trees should remain in place
5. Difficult pedestrian access

## Opportunities

6. Largely untouched site with indigenous cultural significance. Access is difficult and can remain controlled.
7. Historic Taylor House - adaptive reuse opportunities
8. Excellent river views
9. Seasonal waterfall - stunning sheer mountain cliffs
10. High visibility to passing casual users
11. Possible river access area

*Study Area with Project Site*



# Yuma East Wetlands, Phases 1 and 2 Yuma, Arizona



Type Park/Open space  
Waterfront redevelopment  
Wetland habitat creation/restoration  
Native Nation-building

Firm Fred Phillips Consulting  
Collaborators Quechan Indian Nation  
Completed 2010

Size 350 Acres

Key Features

Wasteland to wetland along the Colorado River

Culturally significant site for the Quechan tribe. Water control structures at both ends of the channel allow for the management of waters flowing through the marsh

A grassroots initiative brought together the Quechan Tribe, the City of Yuma, and private landowners to restore over 1,400 acres of degraded habitat

Urban adjacency - Local employment

Educational and volunteer events, including planting days and the annual YEW Youth Cultural Festival and gathers over 80 students from over 12 countries, 4 Indian tribes and 3 communities each year to plant trees, celebrate the healing of the ecosystem, and learn about other cultures.

Endangered species habitat restoration

New access points, overlooks, and trails

Annual, week-long Yuma Birding and Nature festival





# Visitor and Education Center at Monticello Charlottesville, VA



Type Museum/Cultural Center  
Ignored Histories

Firm Michael Vergason Landscape Arch  
Completed 2008

Size 13 Acres

## Key Features

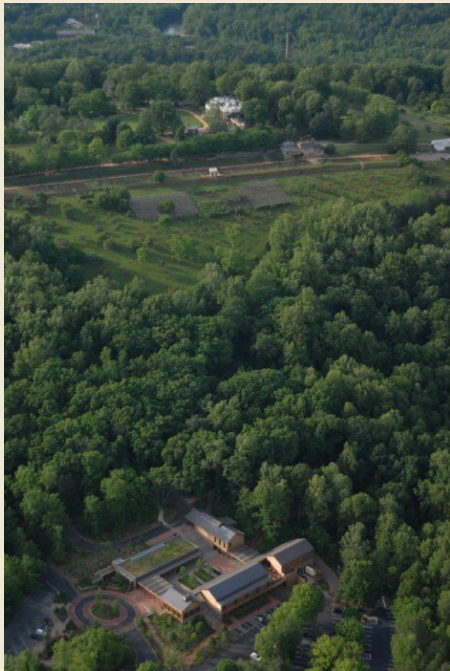
Parking lot and arrival in a terraced native forest

Dramatic sense of arrival - tram takes visitors up the mountain to Thomas Jefferson's estate.

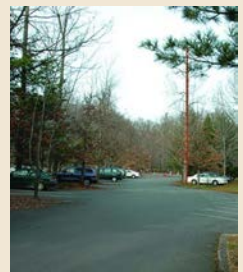
Visitor's center blends into the landscape with subtle materials, level changes that blend into the existing slope, and green roofs including a central courtyard that is a secret green roof. Smith Education Center, Discovery Room and staff offices are buried below grade.

Enslaved African American Cemetery  
Re-centering ignored and forgotten histories  
Eliminated the existing parking and vehicular activity in close proximity to the graveyard and provided it a more dignified setting.

On-site felled timber was re-purposed as five log check dams along the step pools in the greensward between the Visitor Center and the African American Graveyard.



Before





# Katahdin Woods and Waters Ntnl. Monument Welcome Center Millinocket, ME



Type National Monument Welcome Center  
Park/Open space  
Native Nation-building

Firm Reed Hilderbrand  
Collaborators National Park Service and  
Wabanaki Nations

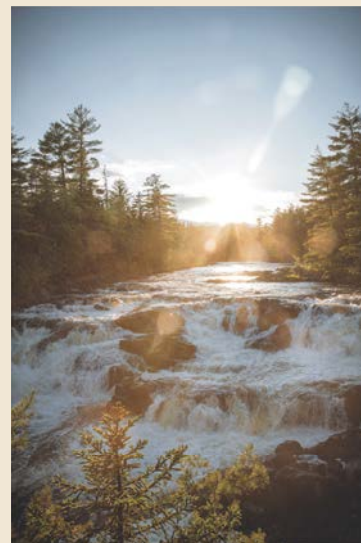
Completed In Progress - Begun 2019  
Size 11 Acres

## Key Features

Reed Hilderbrand joined a process with the National Park Service and Wabanaki Nations to create a visitor contact station with an associated landscape and sequence of paths, lookouts and roads. Work is conceived in dialogue with and will be executed in partnership with a Wabanaki Advisory Board. All Wabanaki Cultural knowledge and intellectual property shared within this project is owned by the Wabanaki Nations.

Innovative use of forest products

A holistic interpretive and creative plan will be grounded with works of Wabanaki people.





# Precedents



Concrete Rubble Reuse

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook - Culver City, California



False Bridge Traffic Calming

Carmel Clay Central Park - Carmel, Indiana



Neat Paths through Wild Nature

Tyner Interpretive Center and Kent Fuller Air Station Prairie - Glenview, Illinois



Views from Education Center



Prairie Green Roof



Sydney Olympic Millennium Parklands  
Sydney, Australia  
  
Raised paths through  
fragile ecological areas





# Goals and Objectives

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## *Enchanted Gateway*

Create a Gateway to the National Monument that is a destination unto itself.

Tell the story of this enchanted valley by highlighting the history of prior uses.

Create new experiences for the casual and repeat visitor that reveal the natural magic inherent to this place.



## *Educate Stewards*

Promote forest and river health by educating the current and next generation of environmental stewards.

Highlight the ecosystems and natural processes of the present and the past.

Create advocates for the responsible use of the valley and the National Monument beyond its threshold through volunteer programs and events.



## *Indigenous Lifeways*

Highlight the Indigenous identity of the river, canyon, and valley.

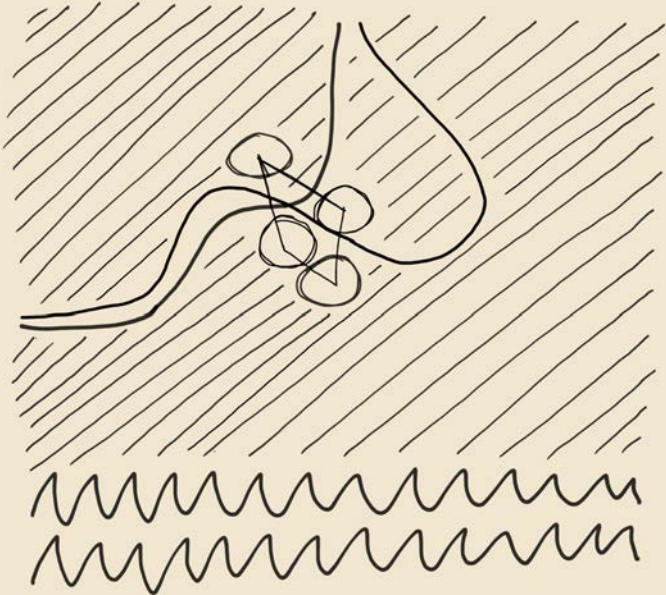
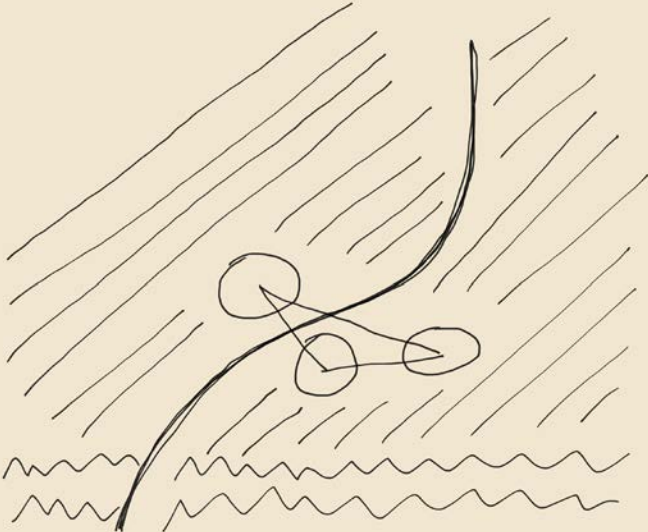
Present Indigenous presence as modern reality rather than distant past.

Facilitate continuous native ecosystem restoration and cultural resource gathering.

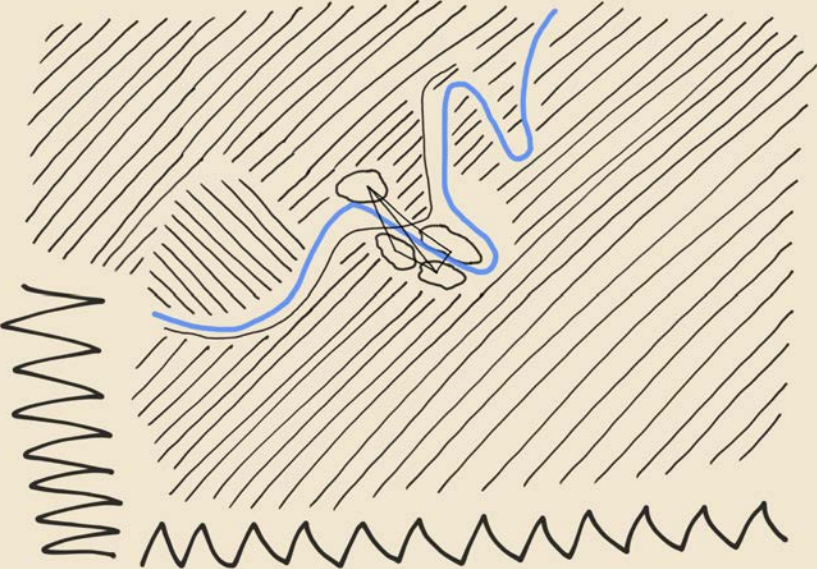
Plan for local native tribe independent agency on site. Indigenous lifeways without asking for permission.



# Non-site Specific Parti



Azusa Wilderness Park lies cradled within a deep mountain bowl carved by the San Gabriel River. It is a world apart hidden from the urban sprawl of the San Gabriel Valley. Yet in reality it is not hidden at all. Easily accessible by a major mountain highway and well known and used, this special area faces intense pressure from over-use.



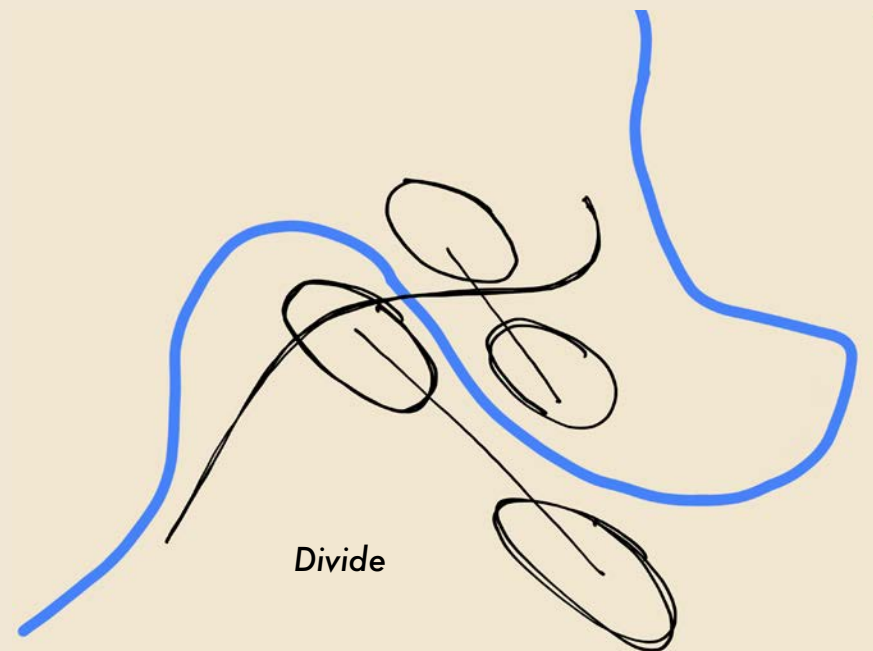
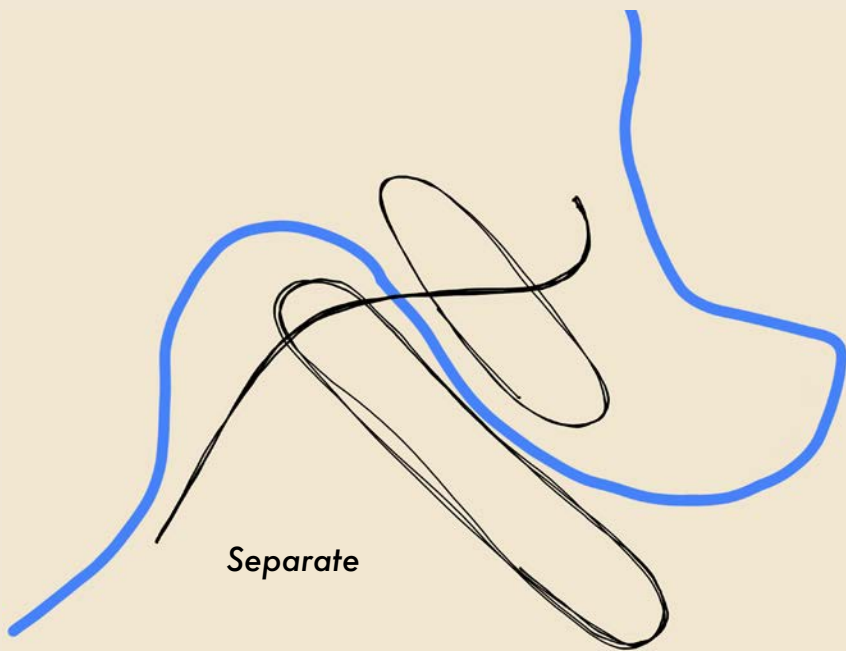
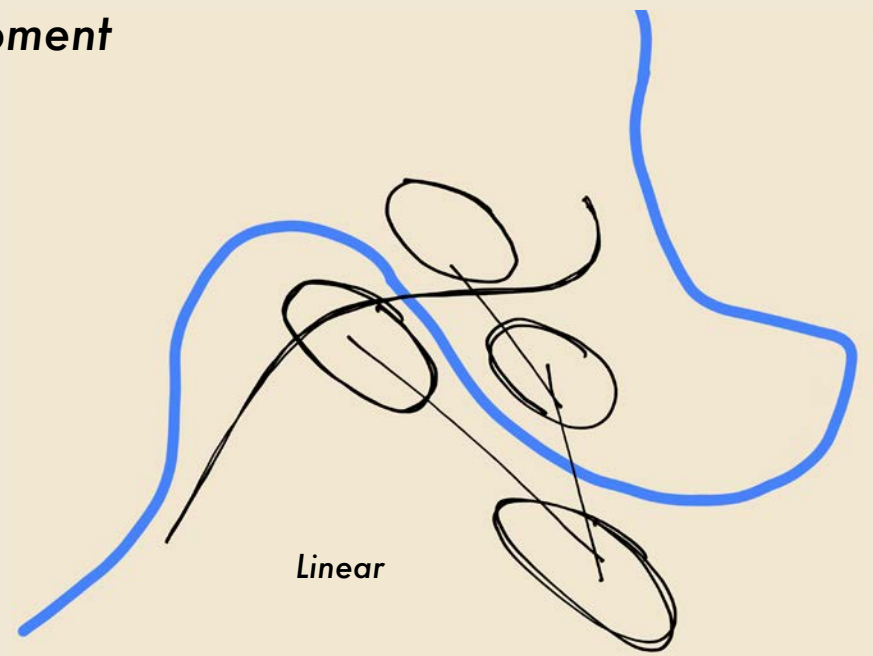
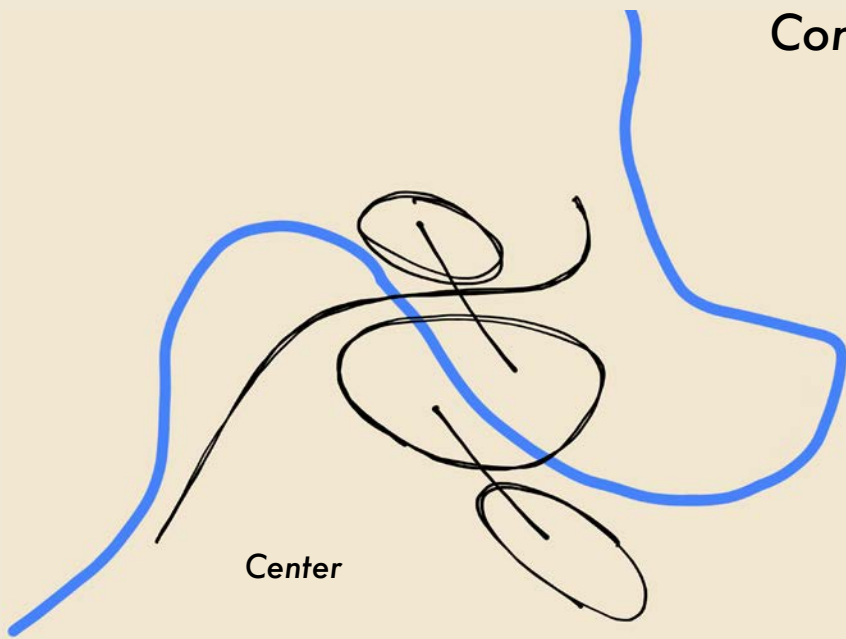
The rare and precious resource, a mountain stream, flows through the wild canyon and shapes the project site.

The pressure of nature lovers, and users, arrives in short order, with high speeds, from the mouth of the canyon to the west.

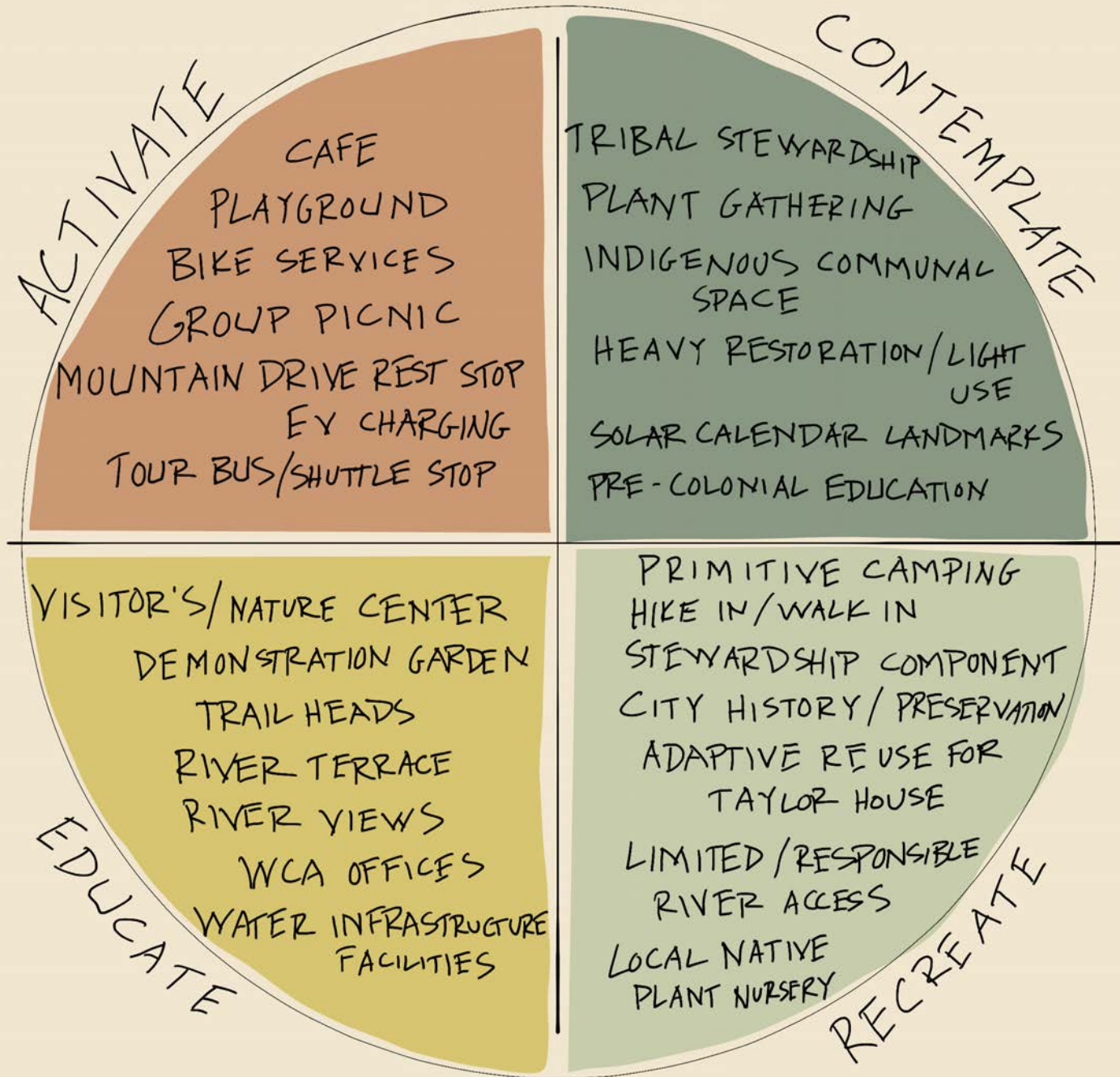
# Site Specific Parti



# Concept Development

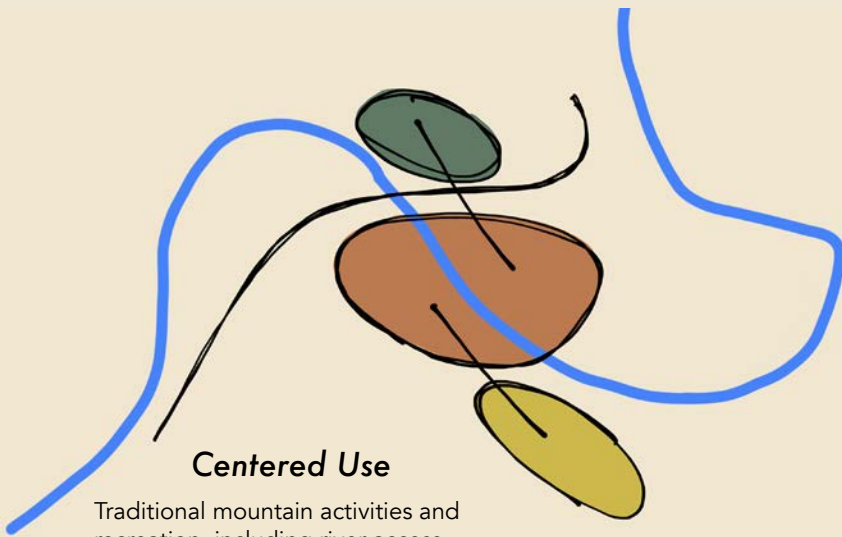






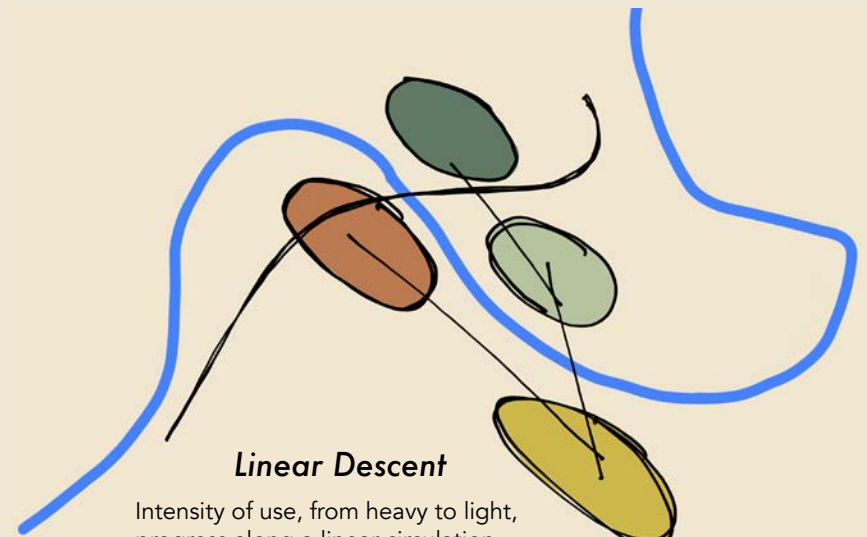


# Concepts



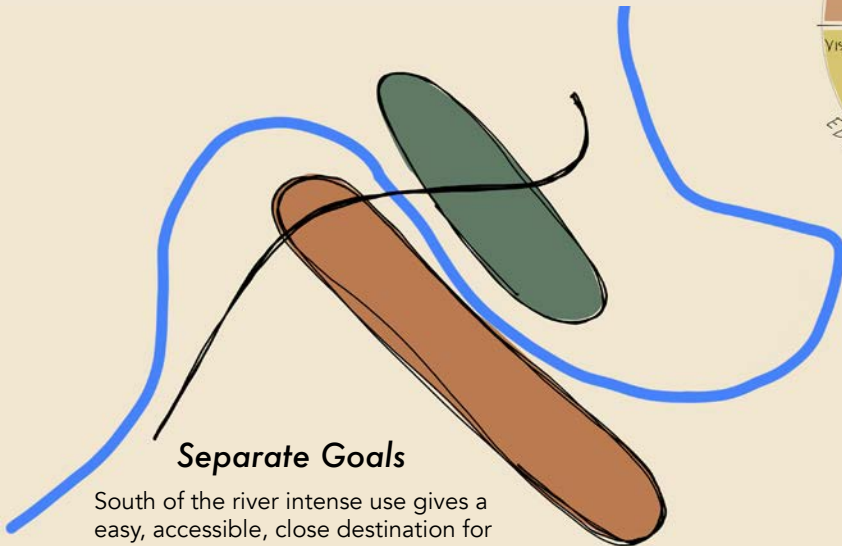
## Centered Use

Traditional mountain activities and recreation, including river access, happen along both sides of the bank. Heavy restoration and light use in the north, education and interaction in the south.



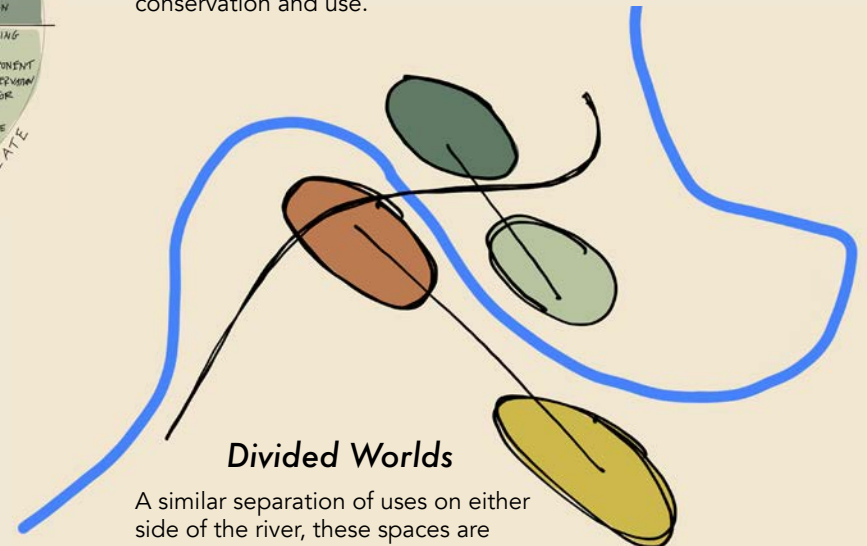
## Linear Descent

Intensity of use, from heavy to light, progress along a linear circulation path, descending in elevation from highway to river. Vehicle forward interaction, then education, across the river to primitive camping and no vehicles, finally a sanctuary of ecologic restoration and indigenous conservation and use.



## Separate Goals

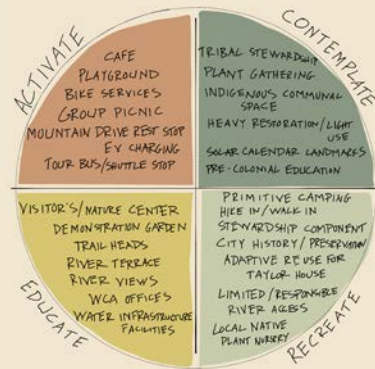
South of the river intense use gives a easy, accessible, close destination for cars and buses. By directing activities into this already developed area of the canyon, pressure from over use of the park and National Monument are relieved. Restoration and light use happen north of the river with access by shuttle or bicycle.



## Divided Worlds

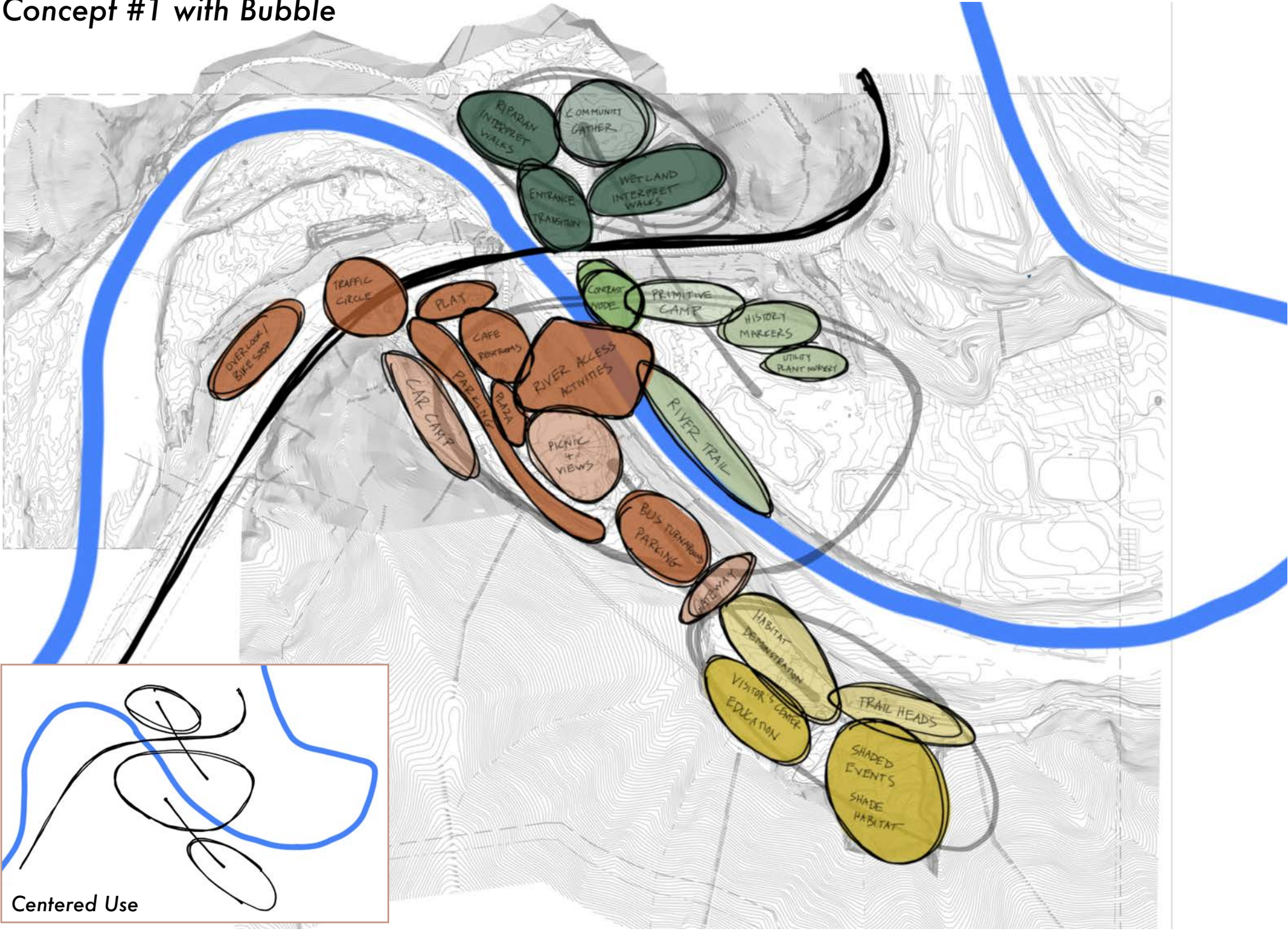
A similar separation of uses on either side of the river, these spaces are further subdivided.

Intense to less intense in the south. Light use and restoration to a sacred indigenous space north of the bridge and river.



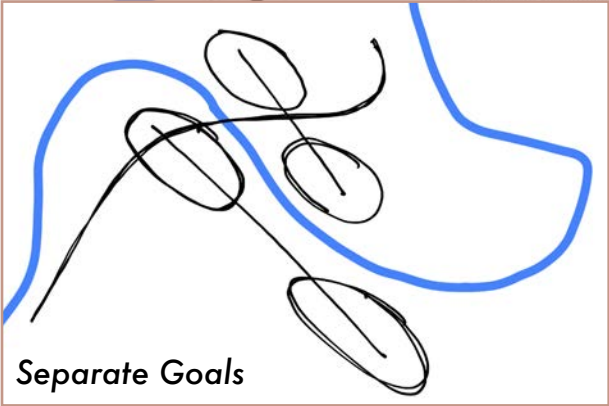


# Concept #1 with Bubble





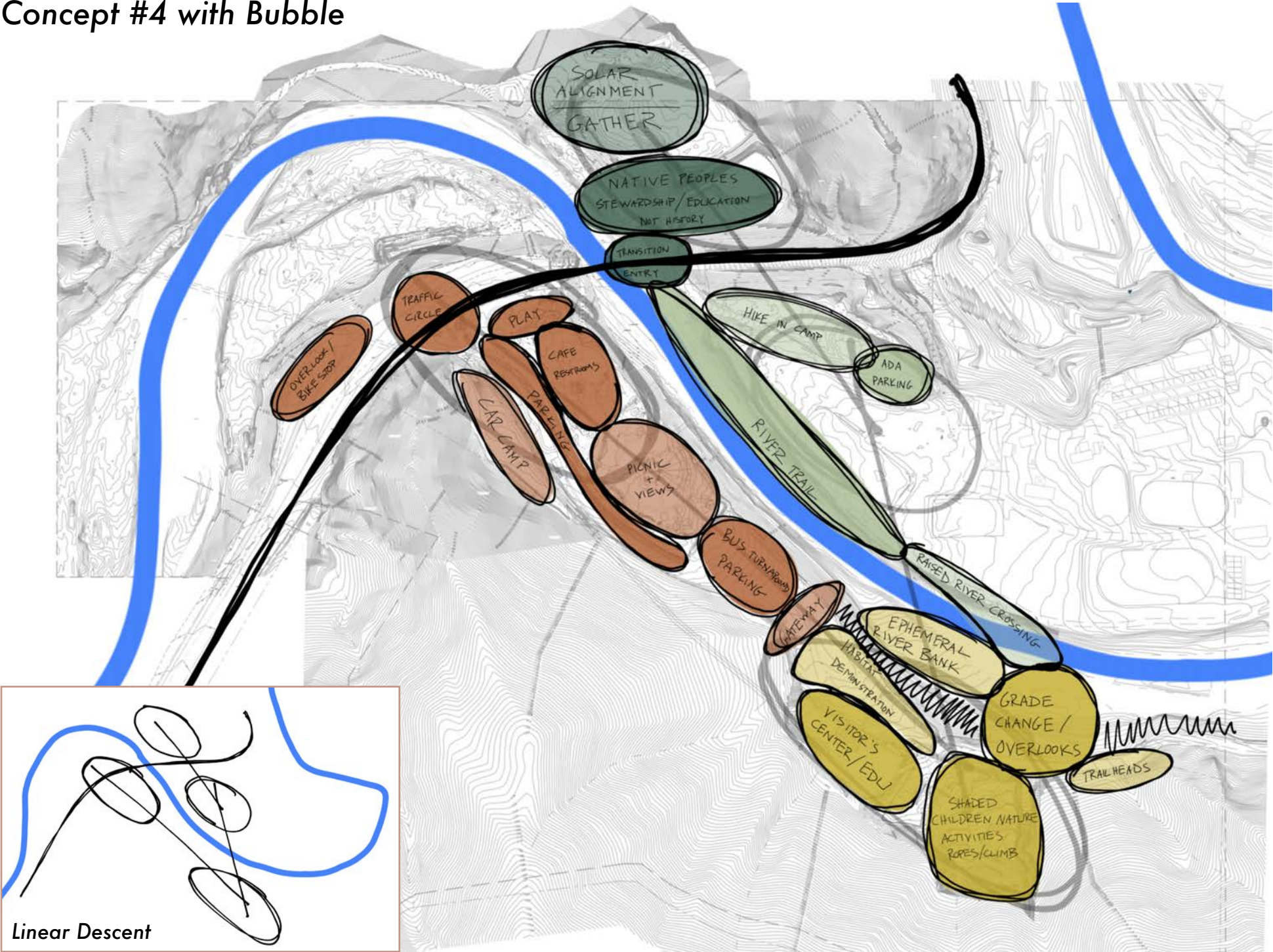
# Concept #2 and #3 with Bubble



Separate Goals



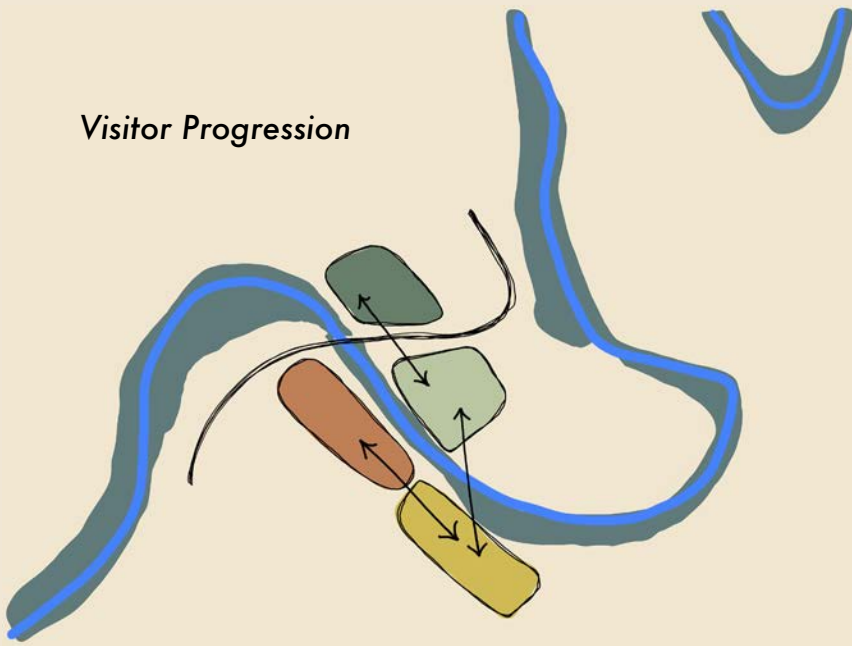
# Concept #4 with Bubble



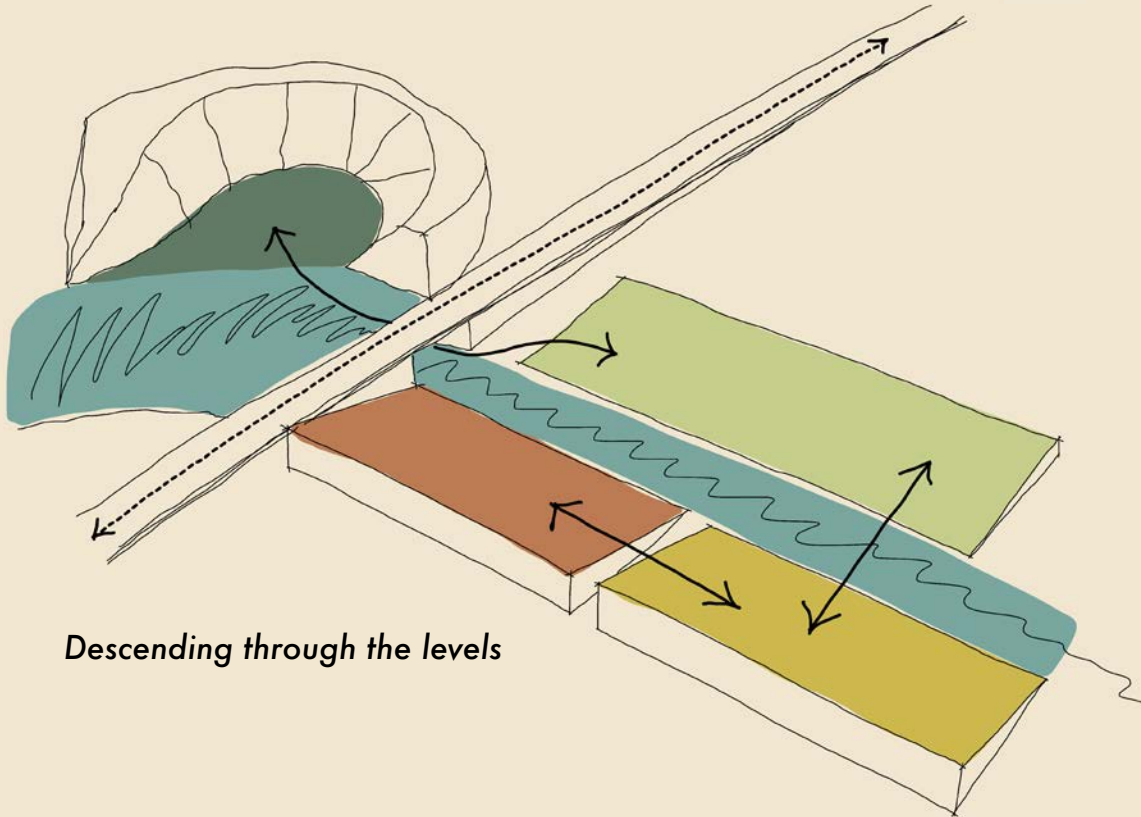
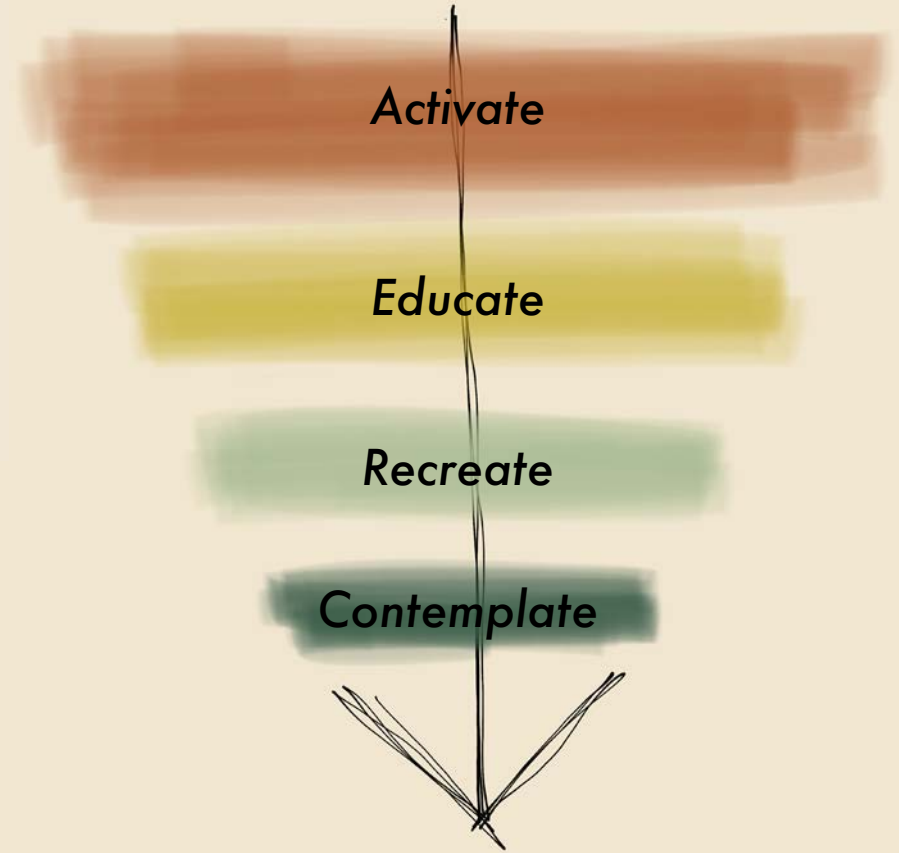
Linear Descent



Visitor Progression



Preferred Concept

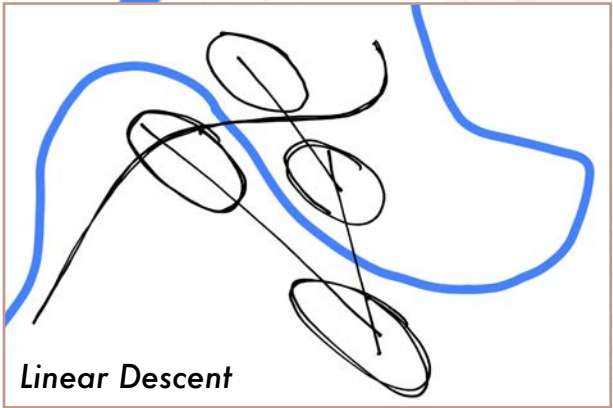
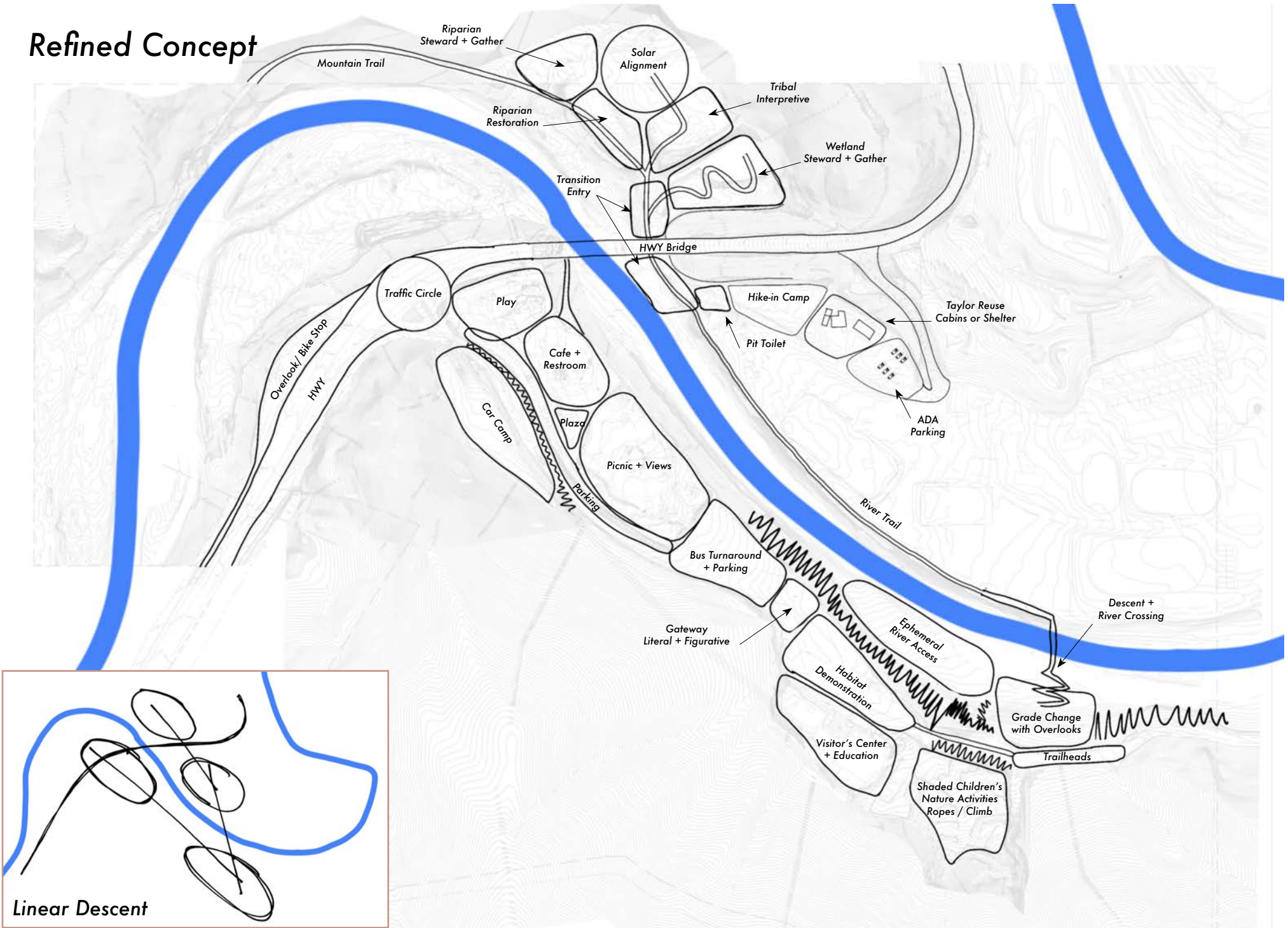


Descending through the levels

Linear Descent



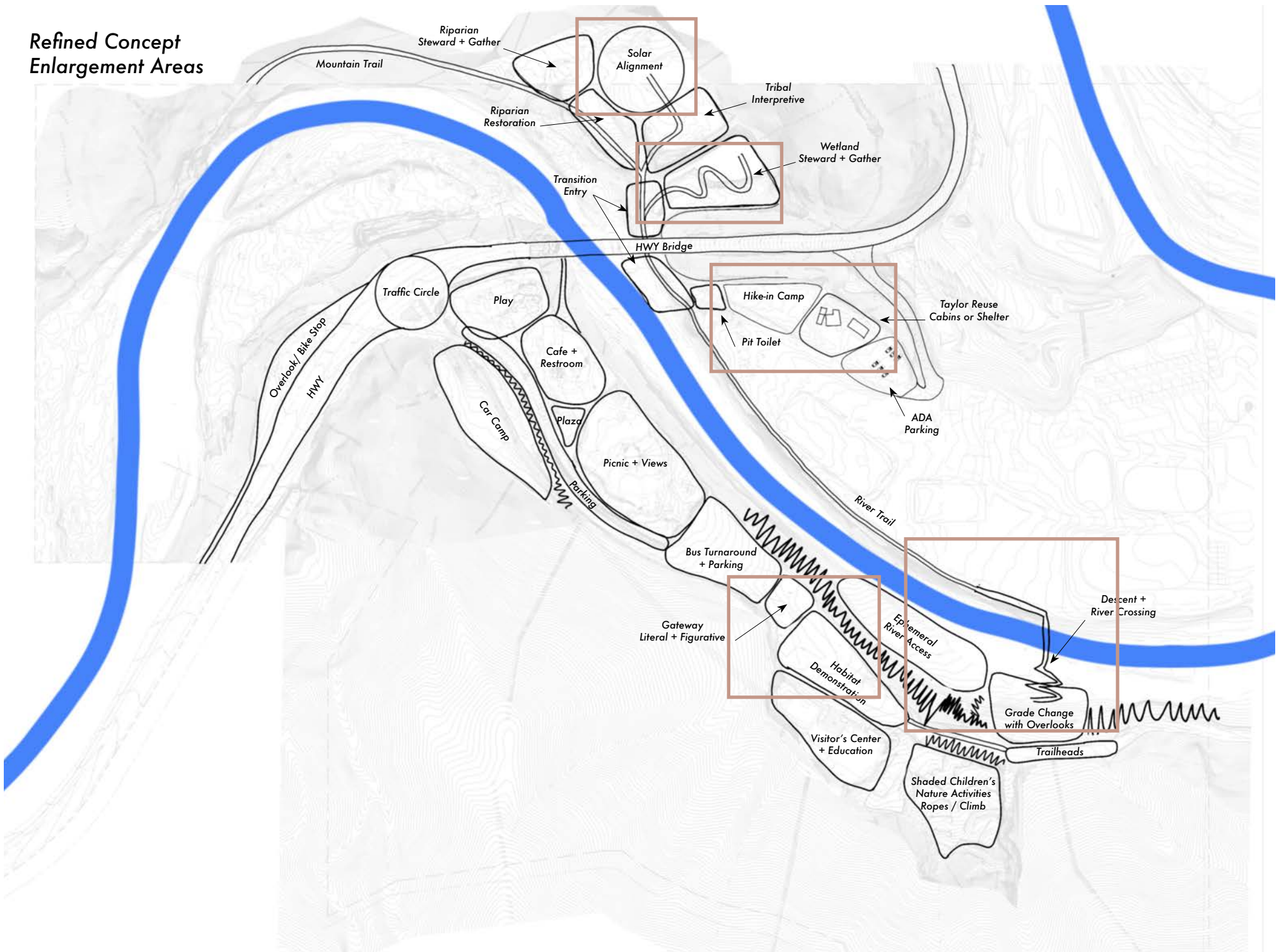
# Refined Concept



Linear Descent

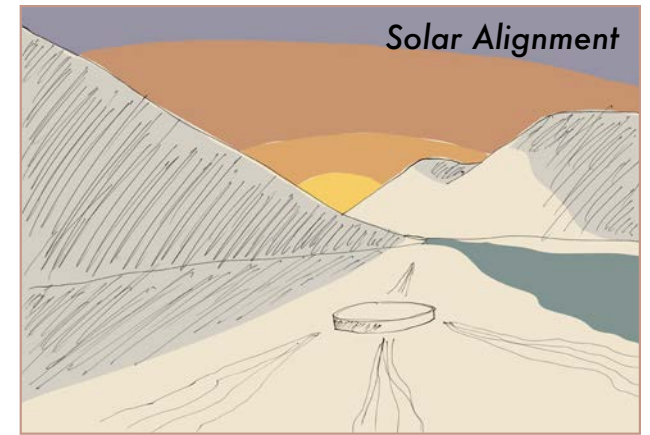


# Refined Concept Enlargement Areas

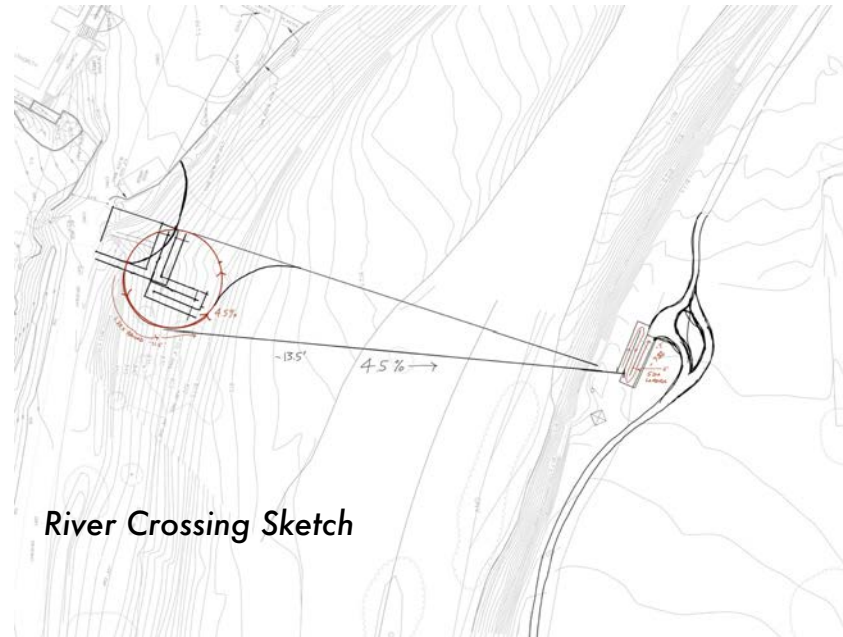
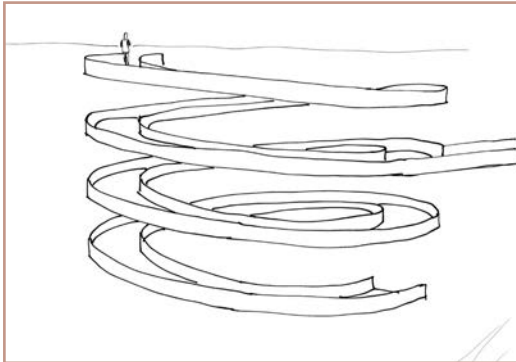




# Study Sketching



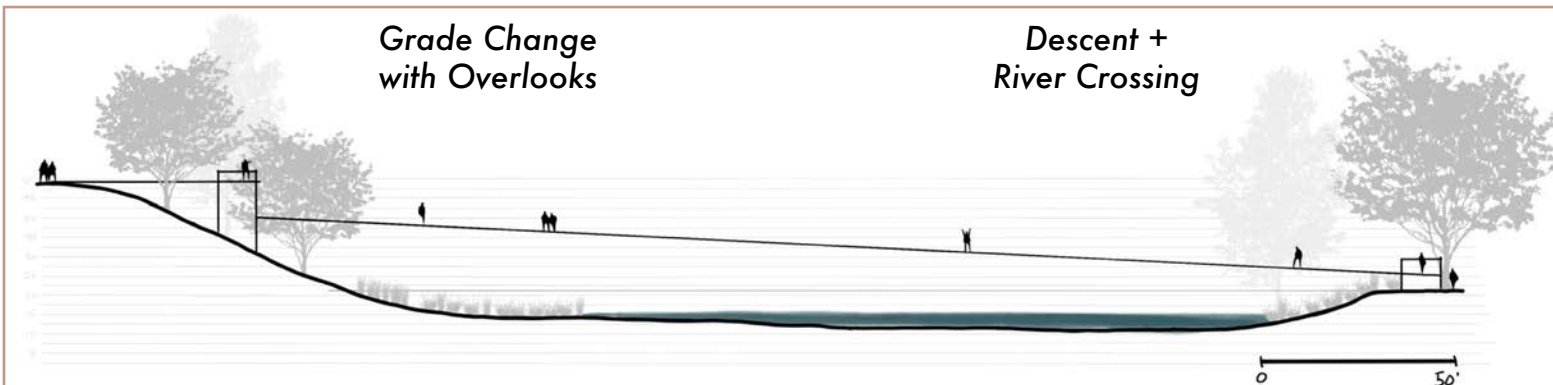
### Spiral Bridge Sketch



### River Crossing Sketch

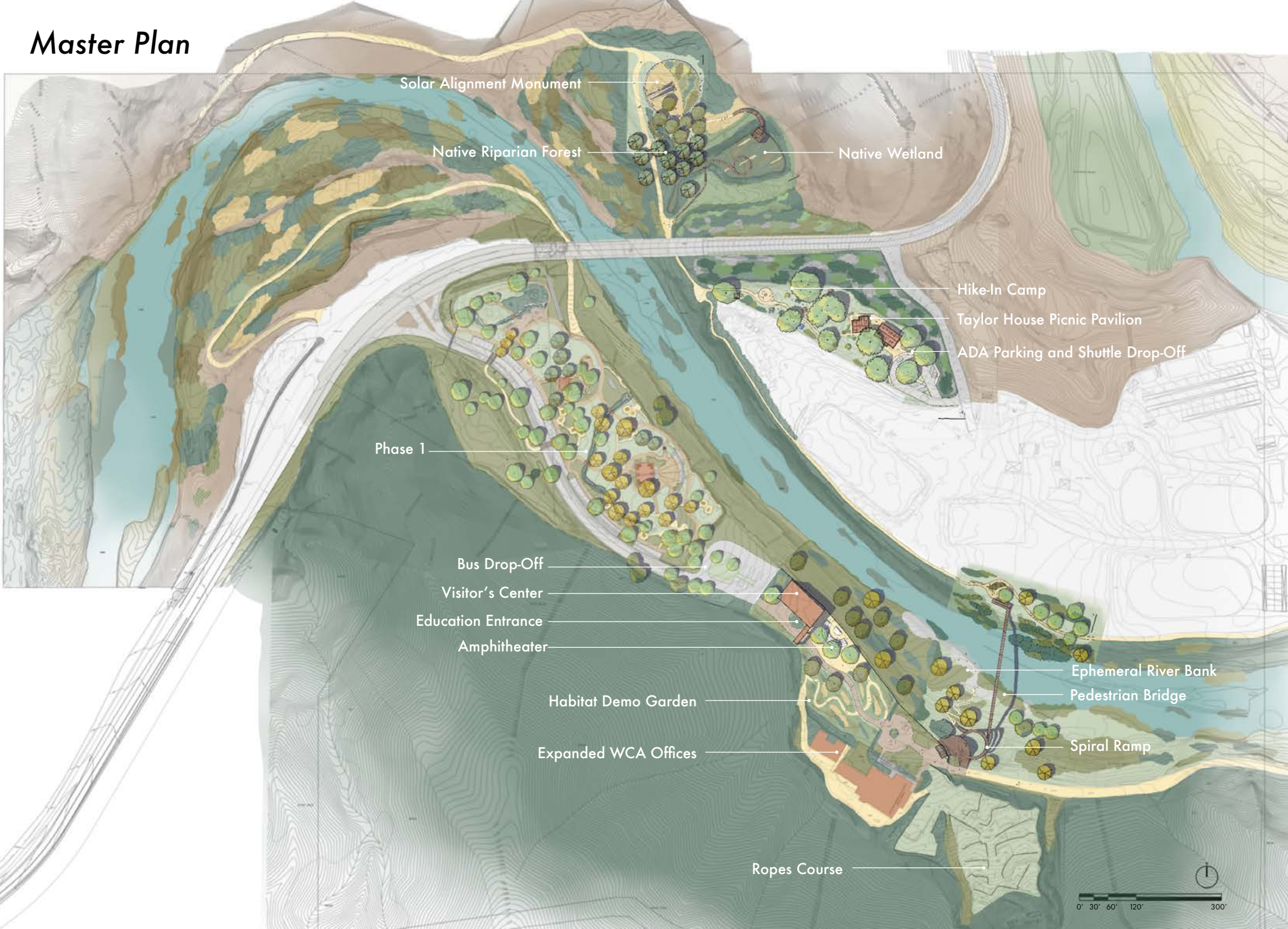
### Grade Change with Overlooks

### Descent + River Crossing





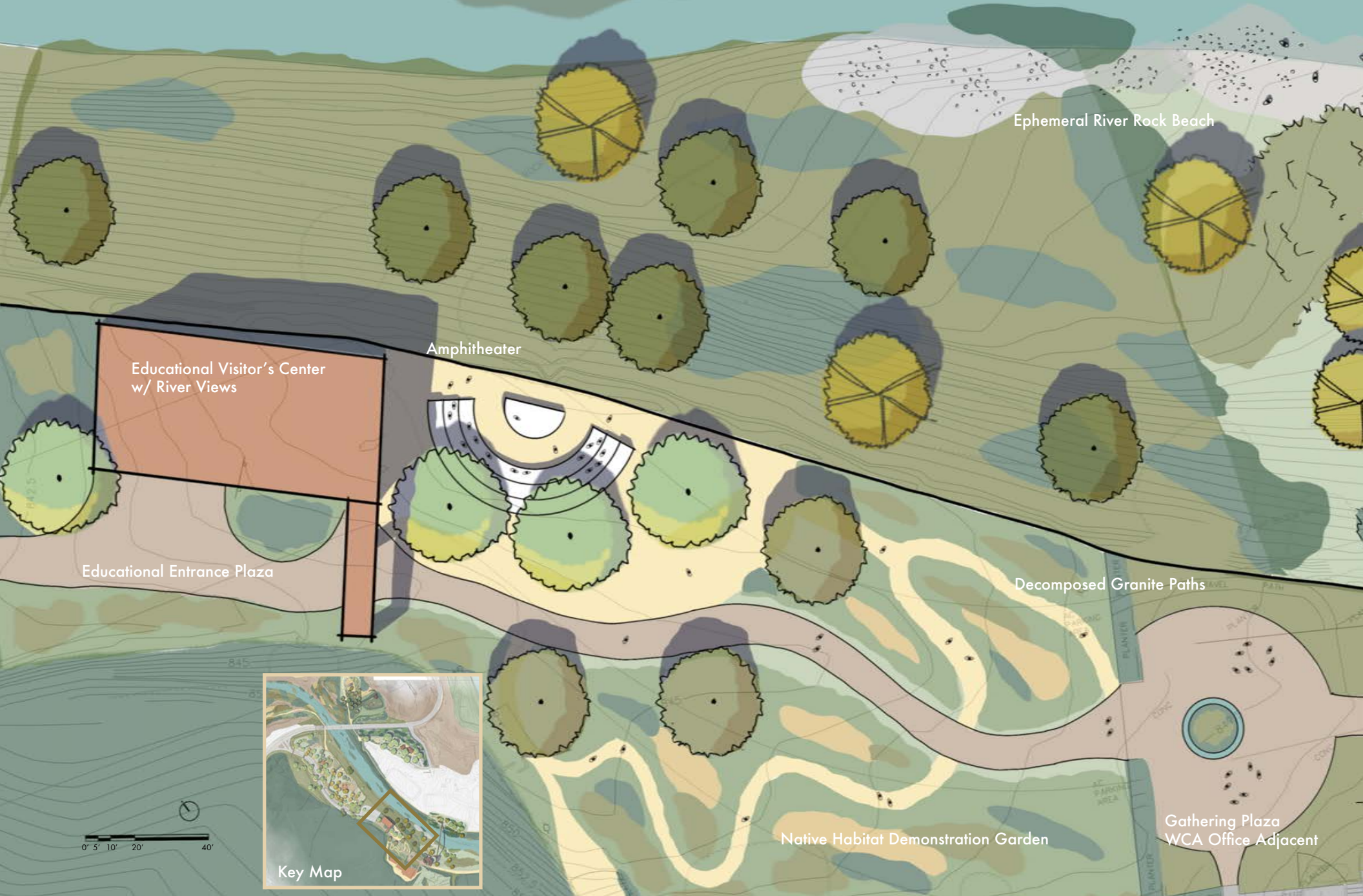
# Master Plan





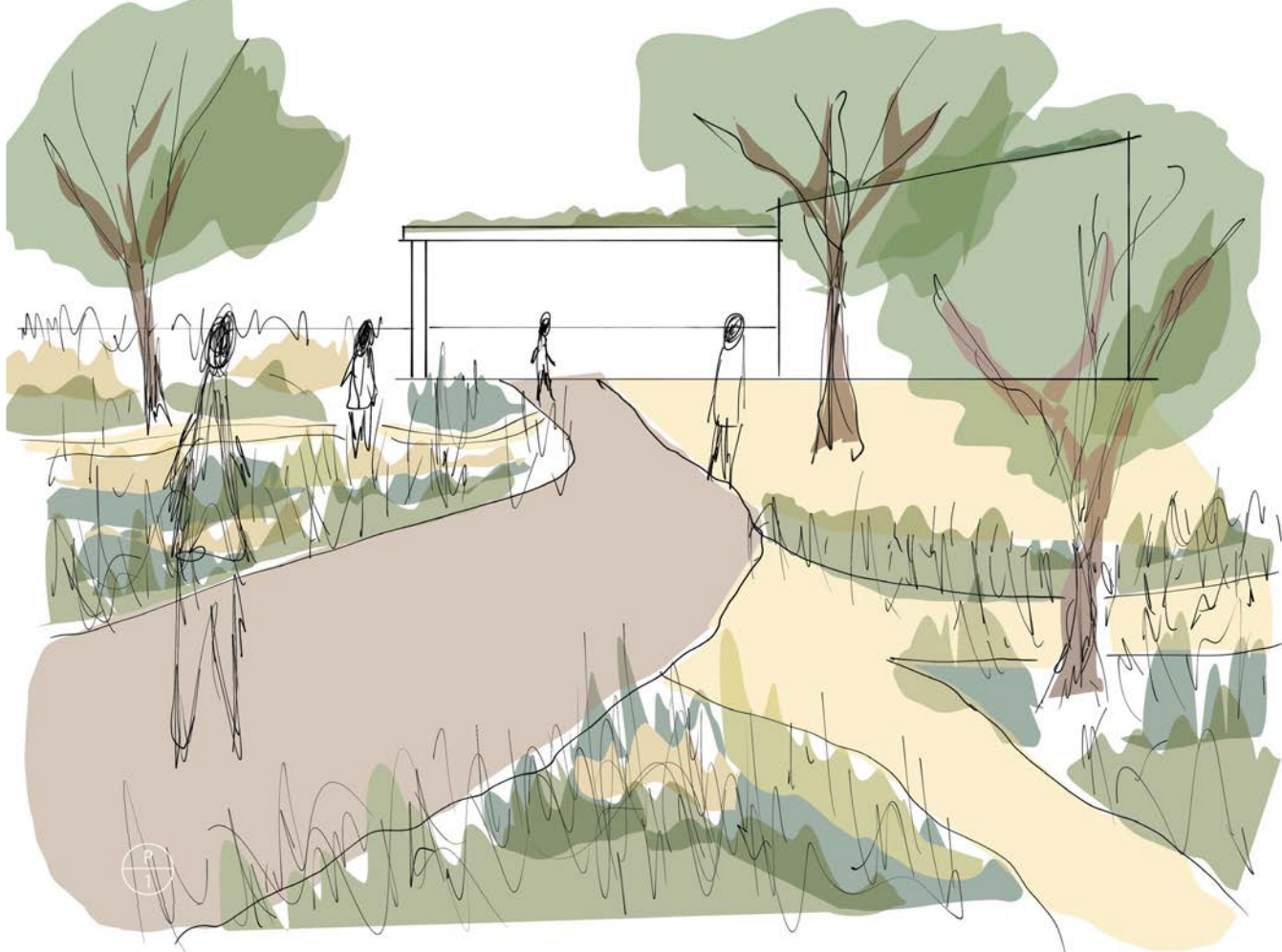
# Gateway and Habitat Demonstration Garden

San Gabriel River





Gateway and Habitat Demonstration Garden



Neat Paths through Wild Nature



Views from Education Center

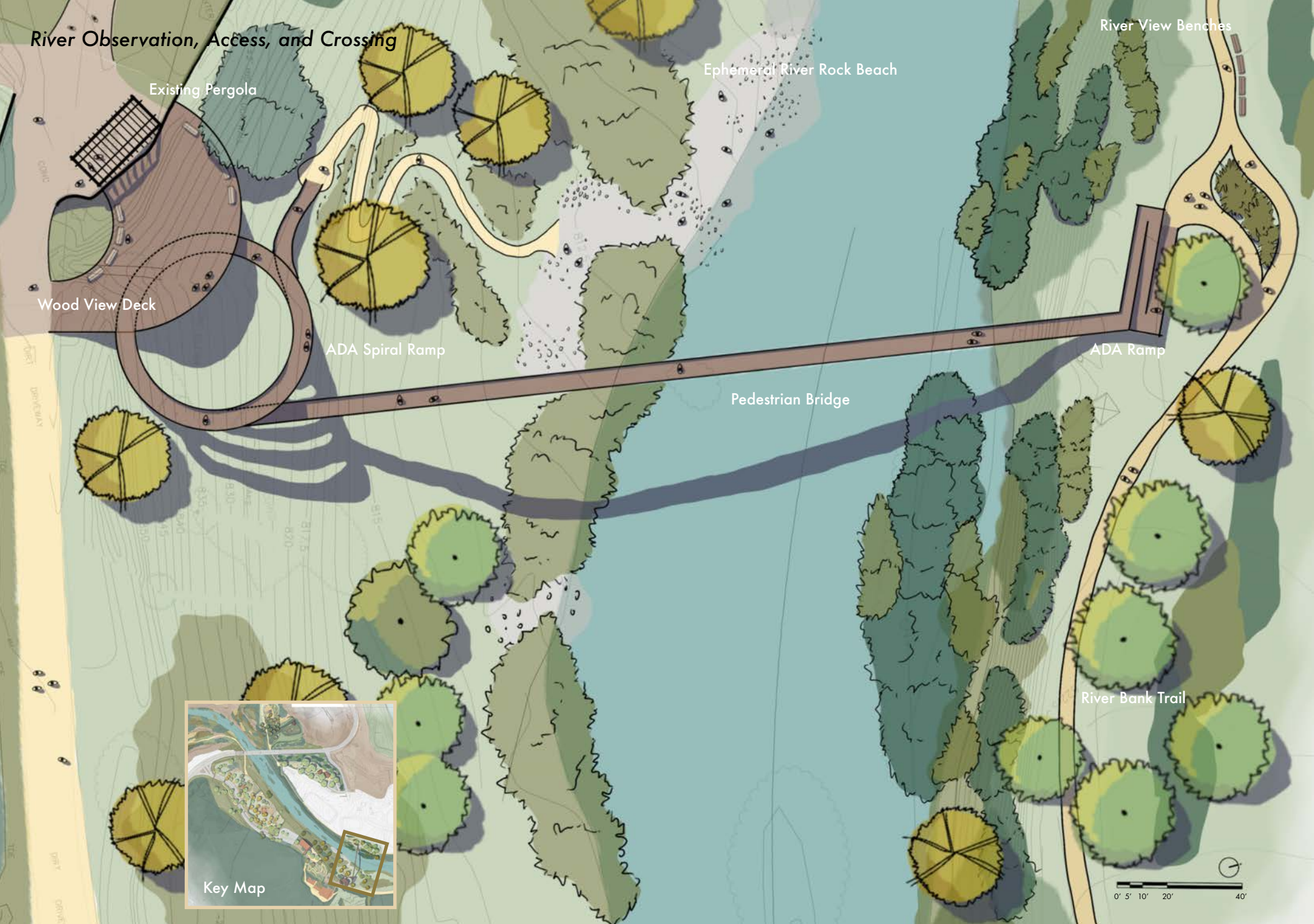


Prairie Green Roof

Tyner Interpretive Center and Kent Fuller Air Station Prairie - Glenview, Illinois



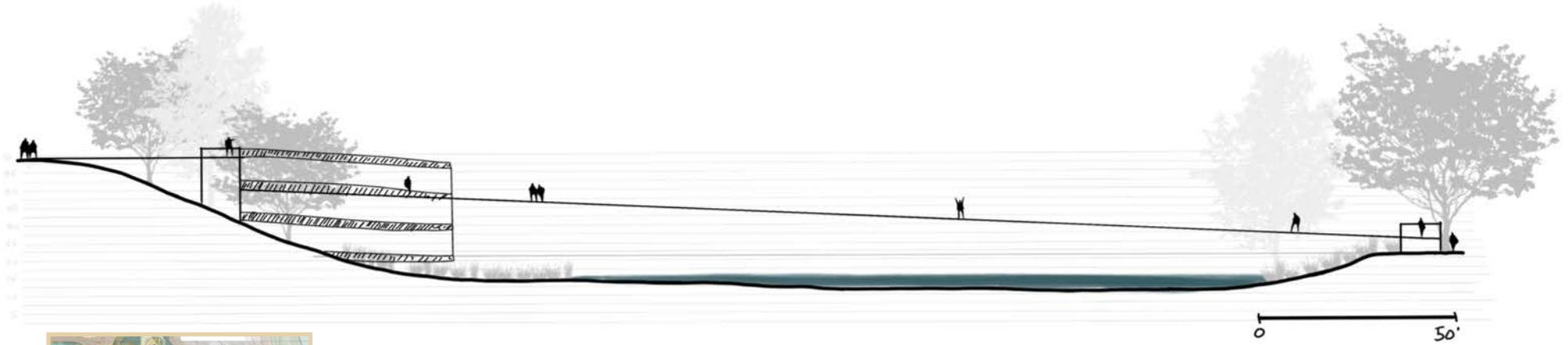
# River Observation, Access, and Crossing







*River Observation, Access, and Crossing*





# Hike-In Camp and Taylor House Re-use



CA Hwy 39

Native Sycamore Grove

Communal Fire Pit

Pit Toilet

Dispersed Tent  
Camping

Taylor House Picnic Pavilions

ADA Parking and  
Shuttle Drop-off

San Gabriel River

Horse Ranch



Key Map



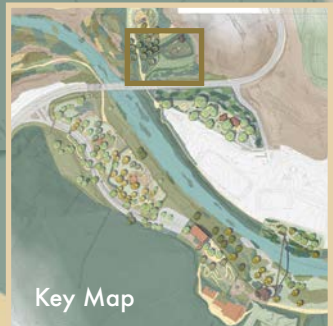
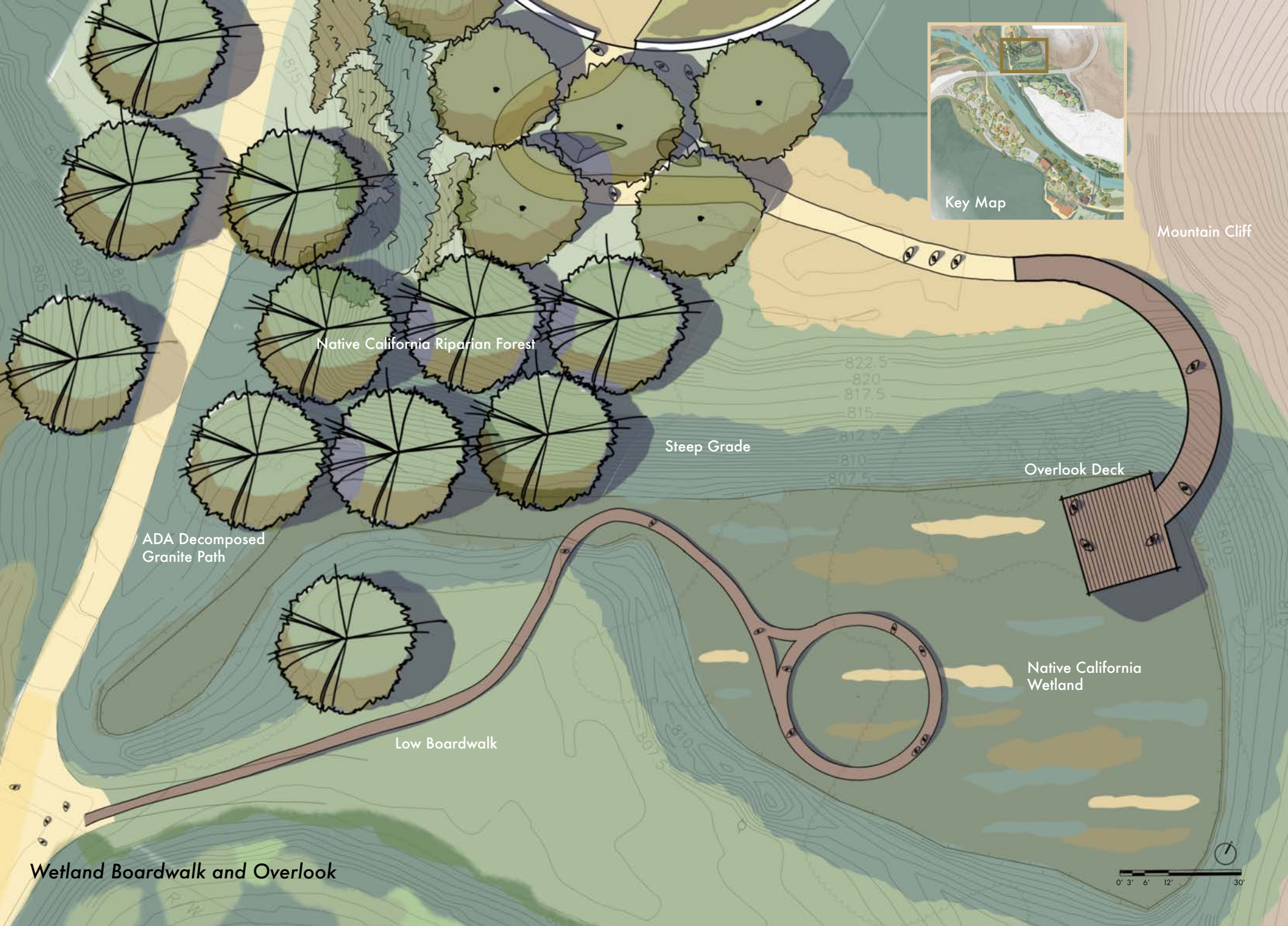


Taylor House Reuse



Hike-in Camp





Mountain Cliff

Native California Riparian Forest

Steep Grade

ADA Decomposed Granite Path

Overlook Deck

Low Boardwalk

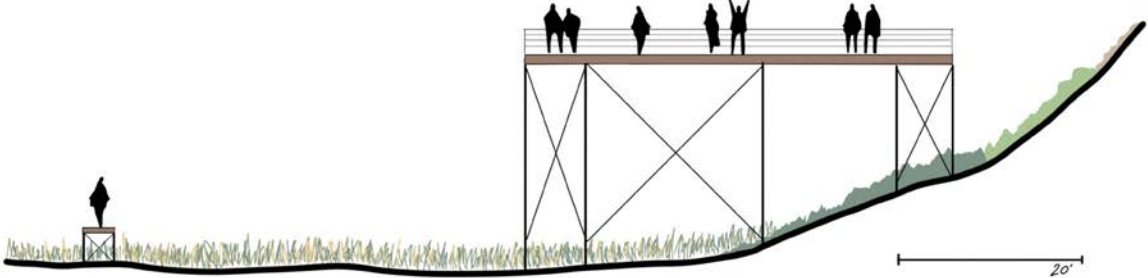
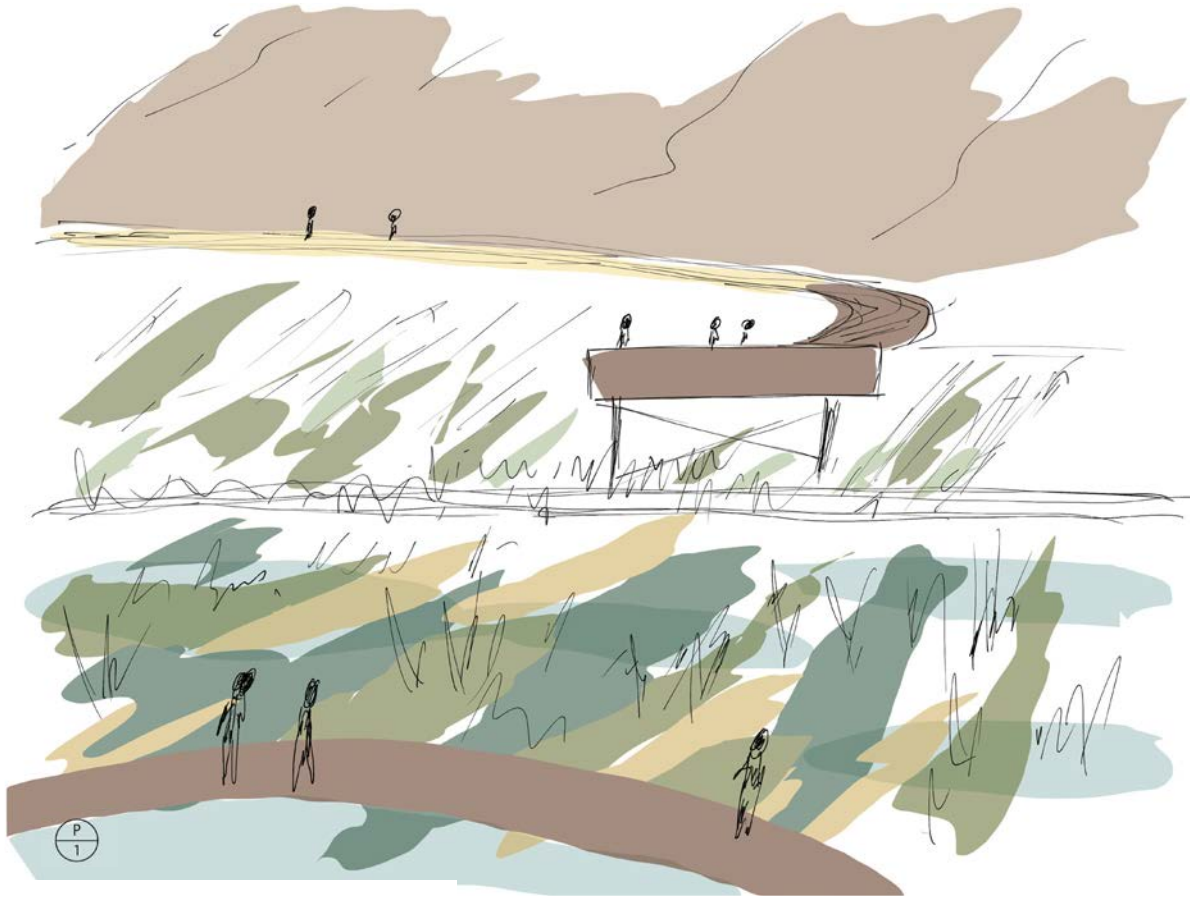
Native California Wetland

Wetland Boardwalk and Overlook





Wetland Boardwalk and Overlook





# Solar Alignment Monument and Indigenous Plant Demonstration Garden

ADA Decomposed Granite Path

Low Seat Steps w/ View to Seasonal Waterfall

Monument Vertical Slabs

Seat Wall

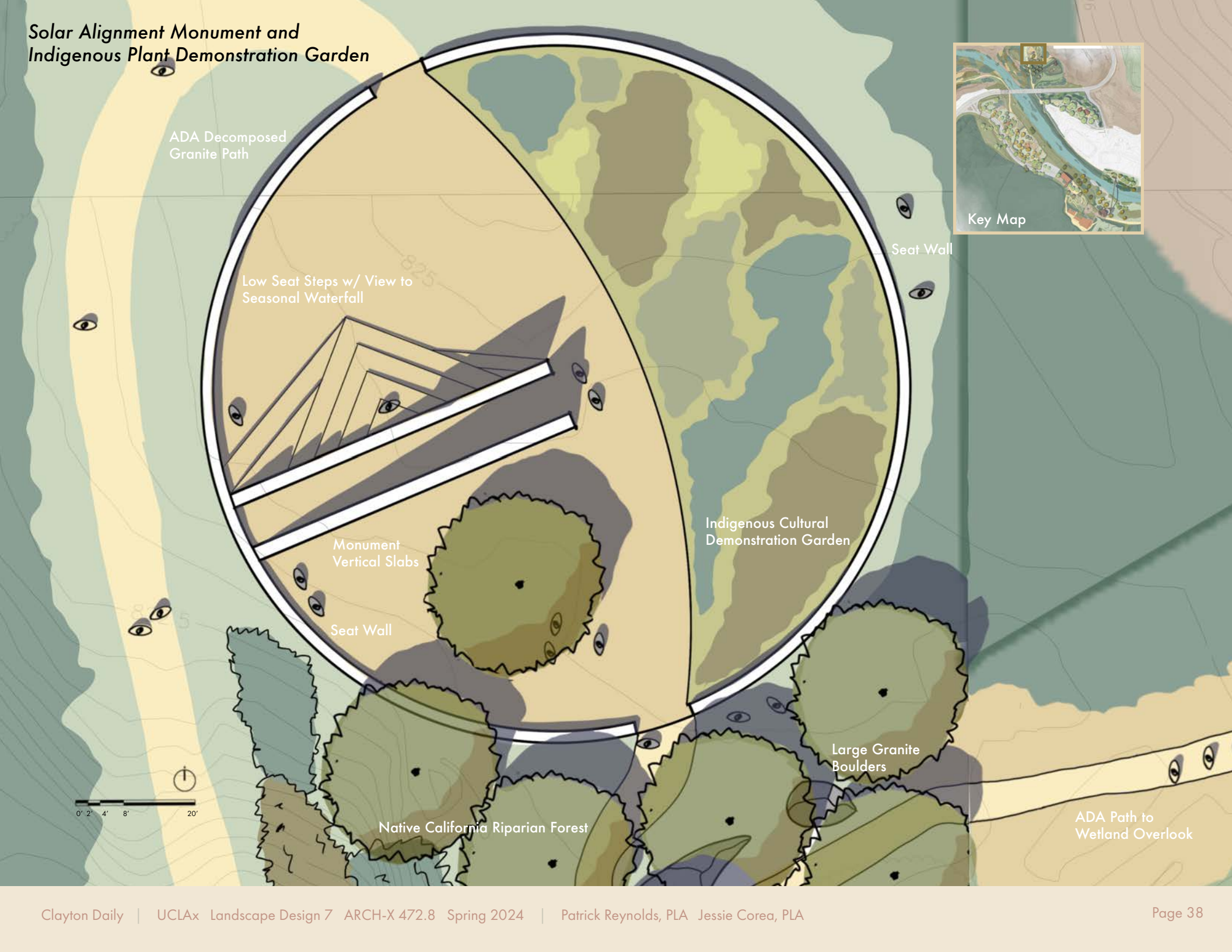
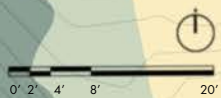
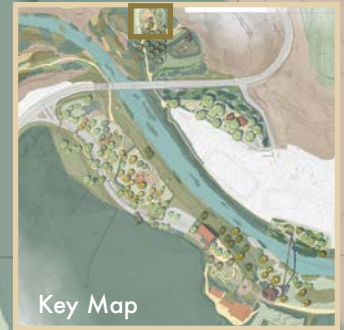
Indigenous Cultural Demonstration Garden

Large Granite Boulders

Native California Riparian Forest

Seat Wall

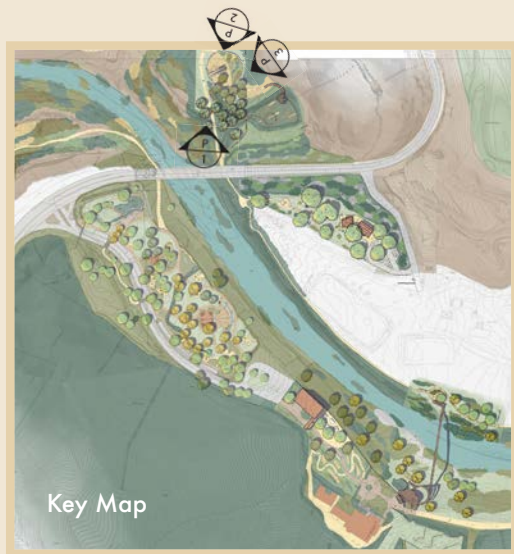
ADA Path to Wetland Overlook







**Solar Alignment Monument and  
Indigenous Plant Demonstration Garden**





# Bibliography

- Beason, T. (2024, April 28). Chuckwalla national monument would protect swath of california desert and preserve a sacred land. Los Angeles Times. Retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2024-04-28/chuckwalla-national-monument-proposal>.
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