

ASUKSAVIT

'ONES WHO ALLOWED ACCESS AND PERMISSION TO THE CANYON'

ANDREW STEIGER

CA 39
PROJECT SITE



SITE NOTES



Easy river access on north side of site



Native vegetation will be important to utilize for slope stabilization



Area below highway bridge offers unique area for activation / shade



Hazardous landslide area along service road northbound towards dam



Active residential use onsite with enormous overflow parking



Pavement dominates the ground plane radiating heat



Tributaries and side channels exist creating ideal Steelhead habitat



Indigenous cultural site / vista overrun with invasive vegetation















Steep slopes on south side of park, preventing difficult access to water

SITE ANALYSIS

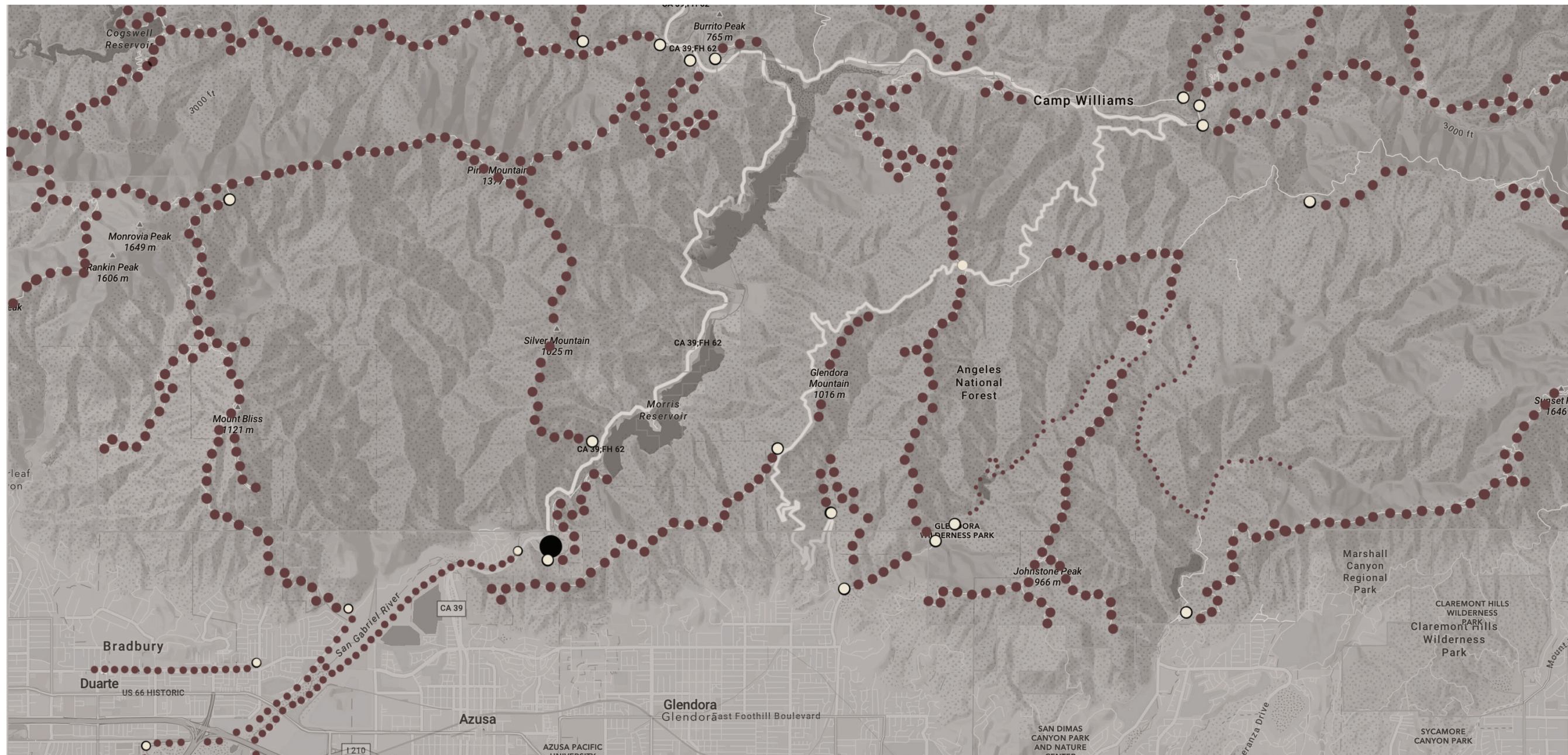


Kinship Legend

-  Asuksavit Village
-  Jaibepet
-  Guinibit
-  Topisabit
-  Uchubit
-  Cucamobit
-  Ajuibit
-  Sibapet
-  Japchibit
-  Tomijaibit
-  Tobpet
-  Project Site

Relationships between indigenous communities has been and continues to be a sacred bedrock for survival and cultural growth. The village of Asuksavit (now the town of Azusa) is one such village site that was in relationship with many nearby villages. The word means 'Ones who allowed access and permission to the canyon.' A complex cultural landscape comprised of many relationships, cultural traditions and practices, these varying line weights connect to neighboring villages and relate to the amount of familial connection was between them. This map is inspired by the work of ethnographer Chester King and is widely used among indigenous groups.

SITE ANALYSIS

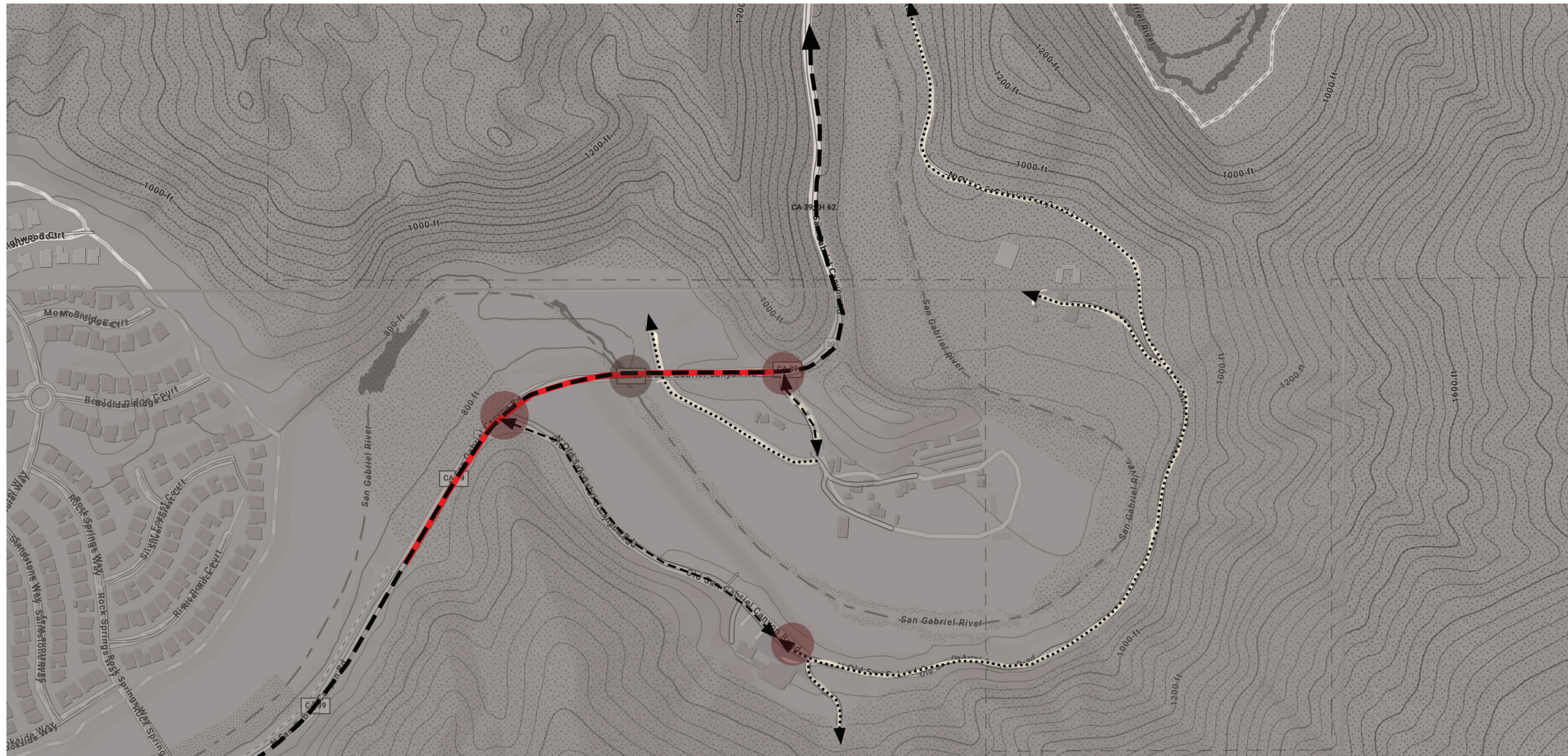


Trail System Legend







- Forest trail
- Urban trail
- Primitive trail
- Trailhead
- Project site

There is an incredible tapestry of trail systems throughout the San Gabriel Mountains as well as the lower elevation urban areas of Azusa and Duarte. Finding ways to connect to them through our park redesign will be paramount to maximizing the available public space and creating new opportunities for park visitors to enjoy the incredible natural areas of the area.

SITE ANALYSIS

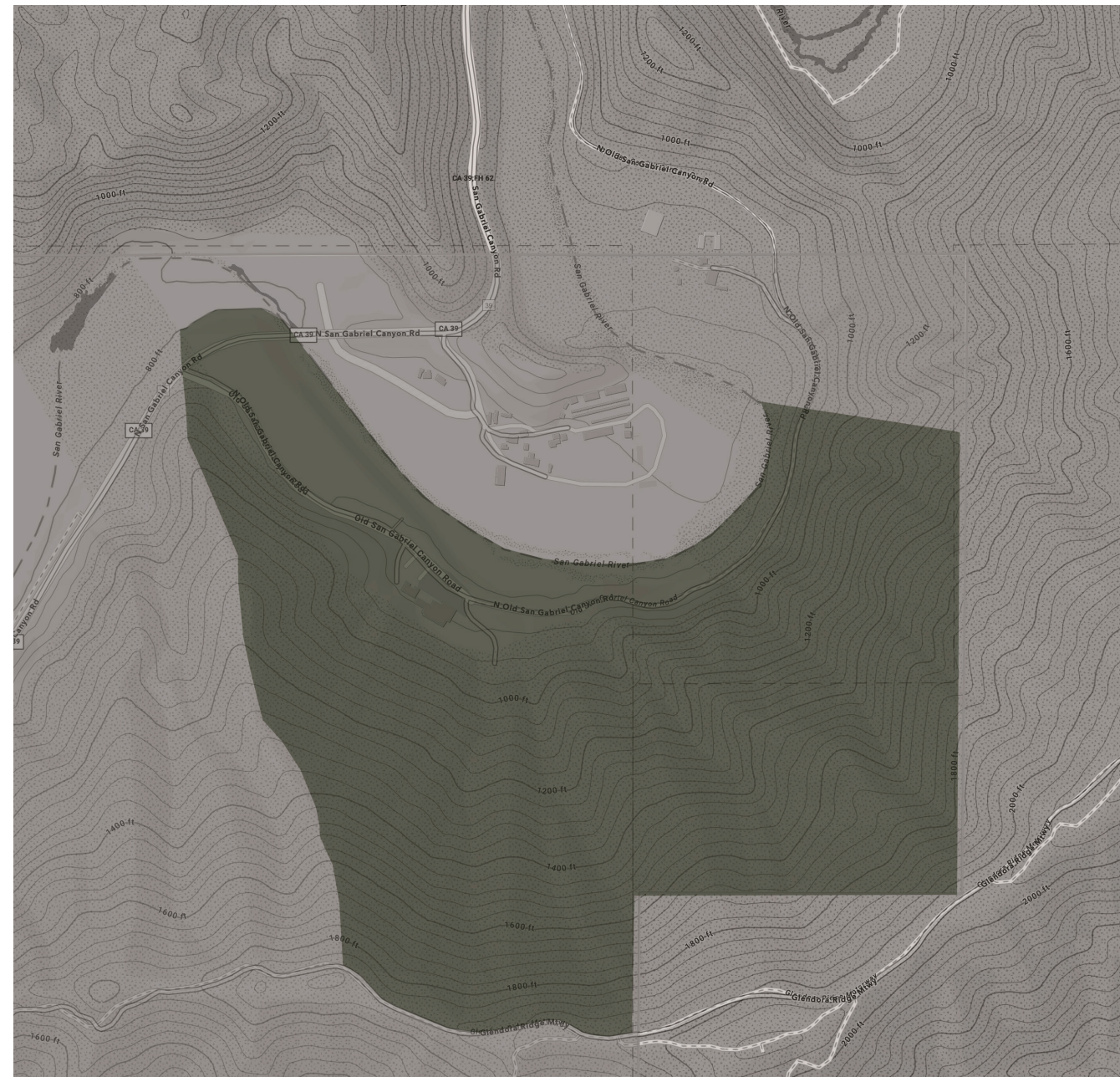


Circulation Legend

-  Connectivity nodes
-  Pedestrian circulation
-  Secondary vehicular circulation
-  Primary vehicular circulation
-  Traffic hazard / caution area
-  CA 39 Bridge

This sheet reflects the sites circulation, flow and traffic hazards. Traffic speed in this area is of great concern, and is a source of noise pollution as well within this highly natural area. With the limited connectivity to existing trails, the future design programming will look at trail loops and connectivity as important design features.

SITE ANALYSIS

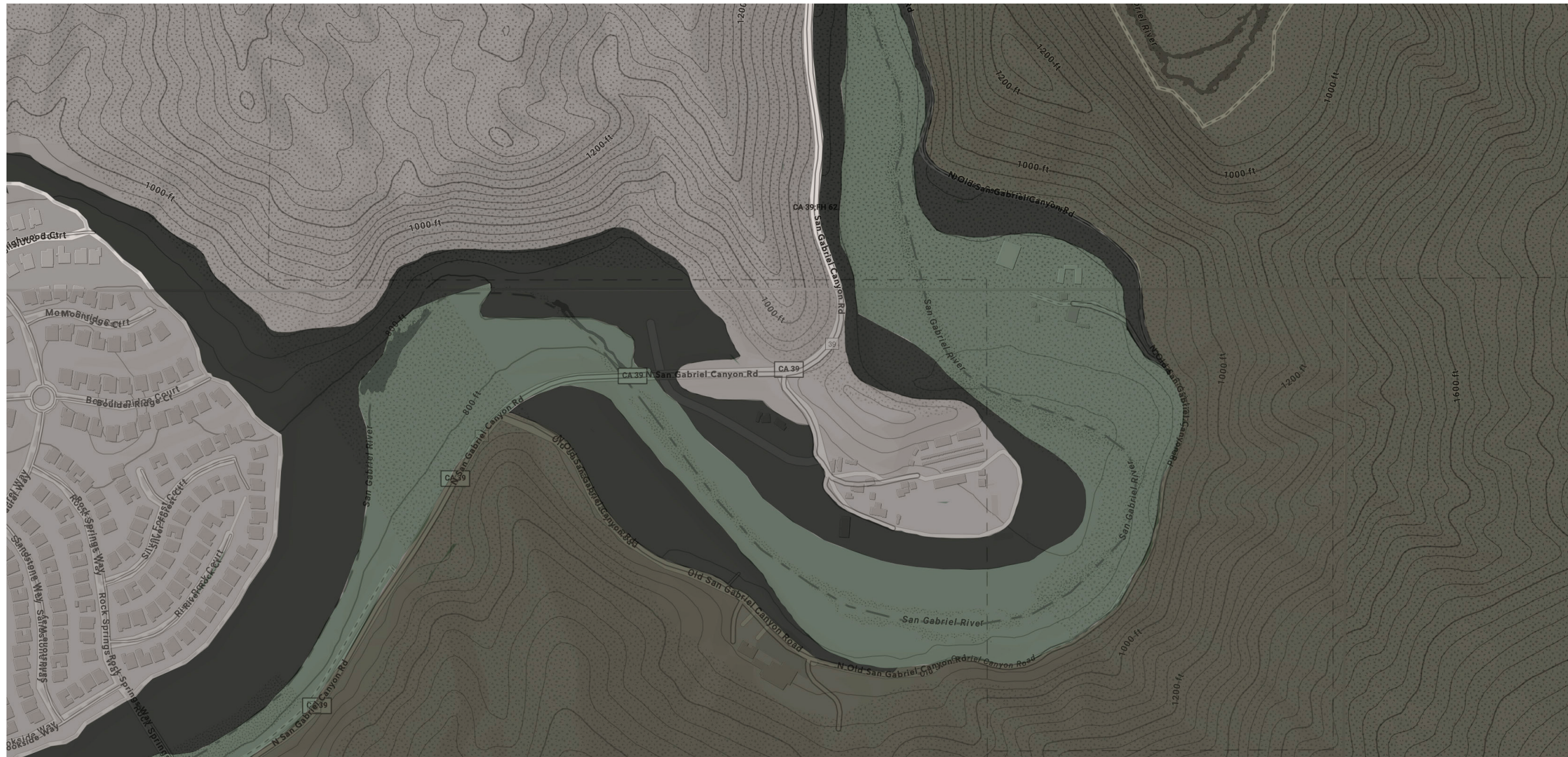


SEA (Significant Ecological Area)




- Critical habitat to preserve
- Project Site

The County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning has designated areas within some unincorporated portions of the county as SEAs, (Significant ecological areas) adding a layer of protection for biotic resources. There are 10 SEAs in the San Gabriel River Watershed. Our project site area is the northern most designated SEA area within the San Gabriel River watershed. All decisions regarding design will need to be weighed against the impacts made to the critical habitat of the site.

SITE ANALYSIS

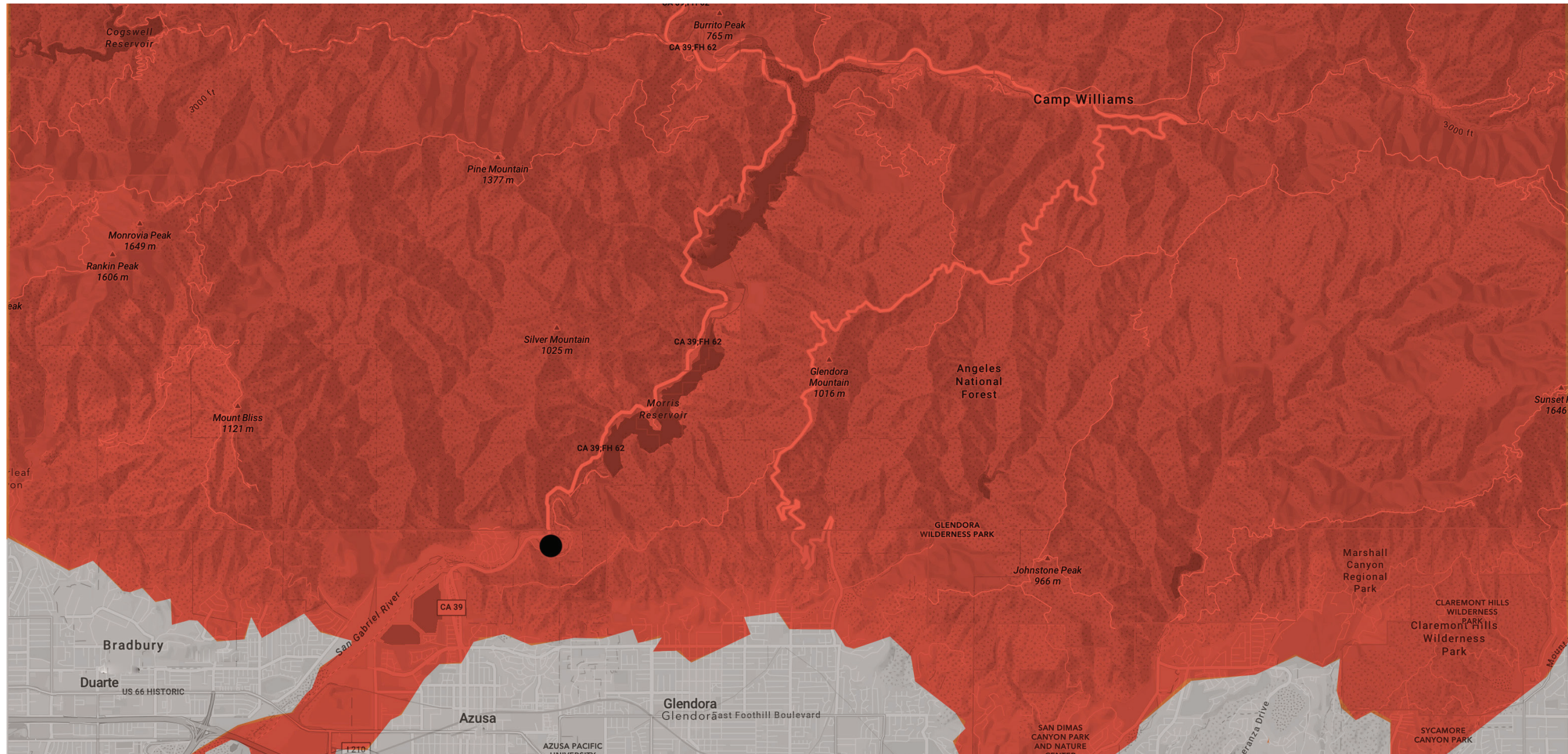


Native plant communities

-  Coast Live Oak woodland
-  Mulefat scrub
-  Willow scrub

*The San Gabriel River hosts a variety of Native plant communities. The immediate project site area features Coast Live Oak woodland (*Quercus agrifolia*) at the higher elevations of the canyon, and Mulefat scrub (*Baccharis fascicularis*) and Willow scrub (*Salix*) both riparian communities that thrive within the floodplain. This habitat area is critical to a rich array of ecologies and natural systems. It is imperative that these areas be preserved and managed to ensure a balanced ecosystem thrives.*

SITE ANALYSIS

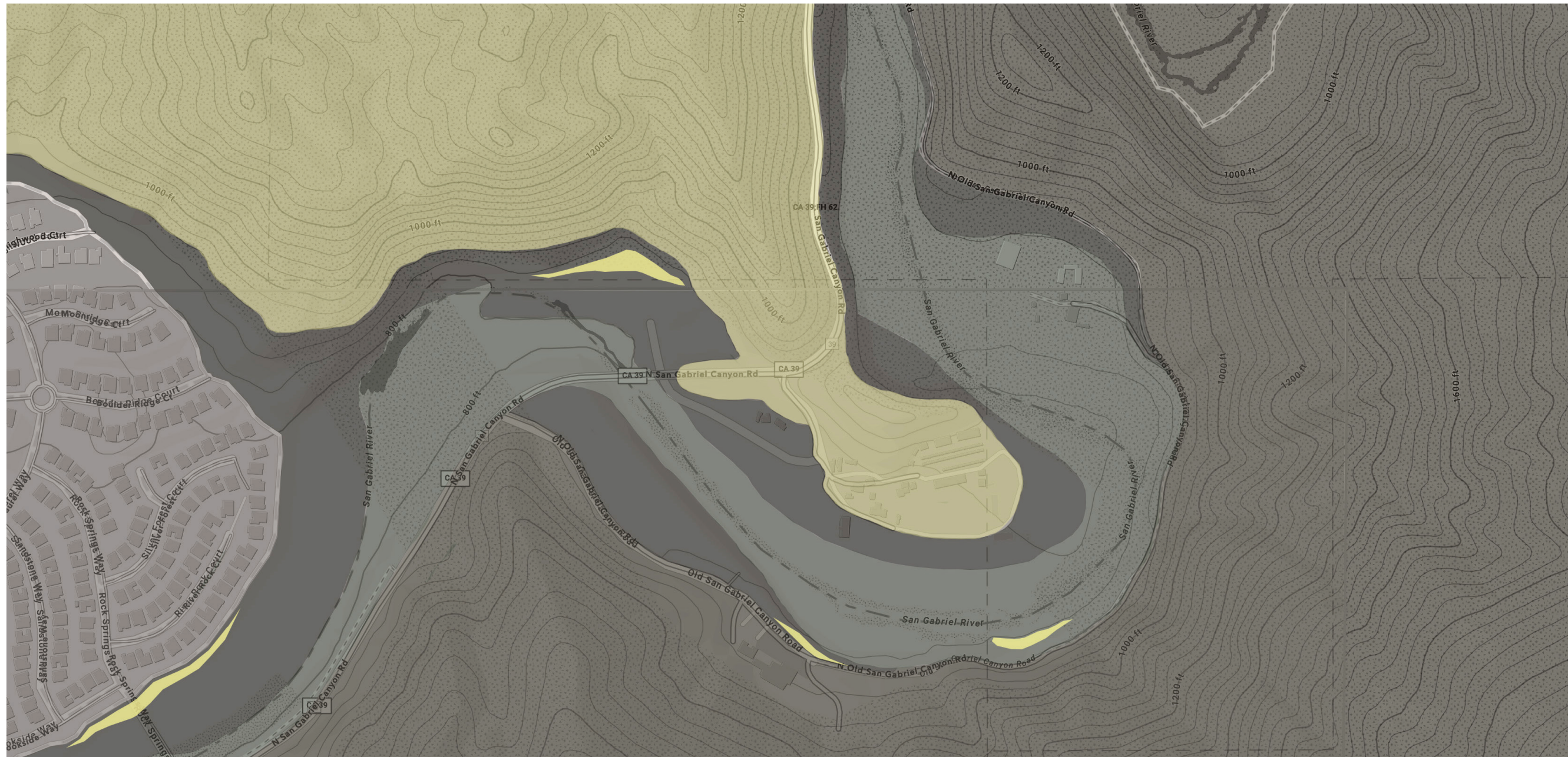


Fire Hazard Severity Zone

-  Fire Zone
-  Project Site

The fire hazard severity zone doesn't need much introduction. Fires have been with this landscape since time immemorial, but climate change is certainly making matters worse. With our project site being within a high fire zone all design interventions must bare in mind these swift and serious natural occurrences on the landscape. Fire education, defensible space demonstrations and fire resistant plants will all be implemented into the design strategy.

SITE ANALYSIS

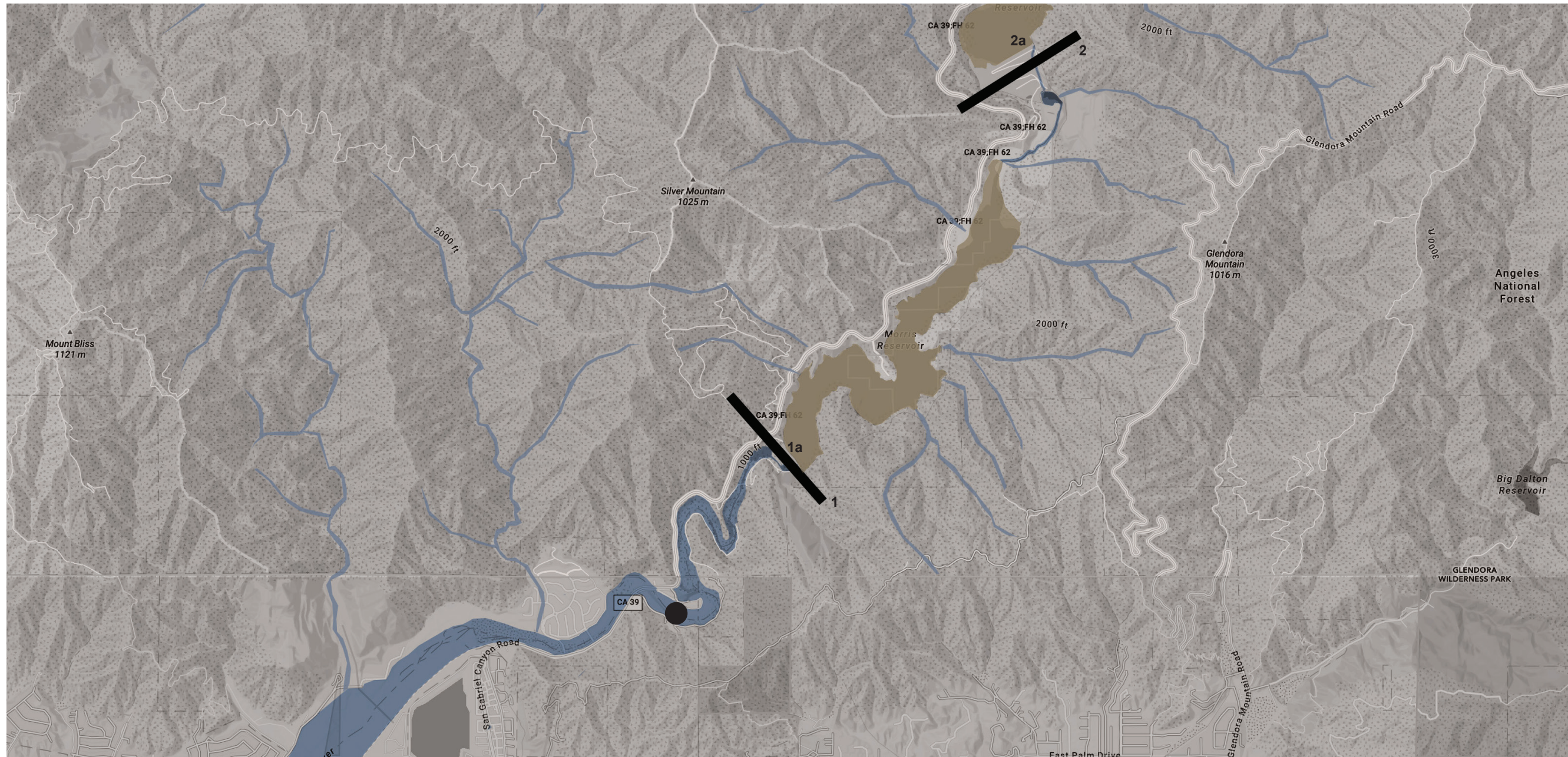


Invasive vegetation

-  Invasive vegetation
-  Coast Live Oak woodland
-  Mulefat scrub
-  Willow scrub

Due to Bobcat Fire of 2020, the northern hillsides of the Wilderness Park were cleared of their native oak woodland vegetation and the hillsides have since been colonized by *Pennisetum setaceum* (fountain grass). Additionally there are river bed areas along the stretch of land adjacent to the wilderness park that are covered in *Brassica nigra* (black mustard) and *Silybum marianum* (milk thistle) *Ricinus communis*, *Arundo donax*. This map tempers the native plant communities historically present on-site and illustrates the disproportionate presence of invasive species that needs to be controlled.

SITE ANALYSIS



Watershed health

1 Morris Reservoir Dam

2 San Gabriel Dam

1a Morris Reservoir

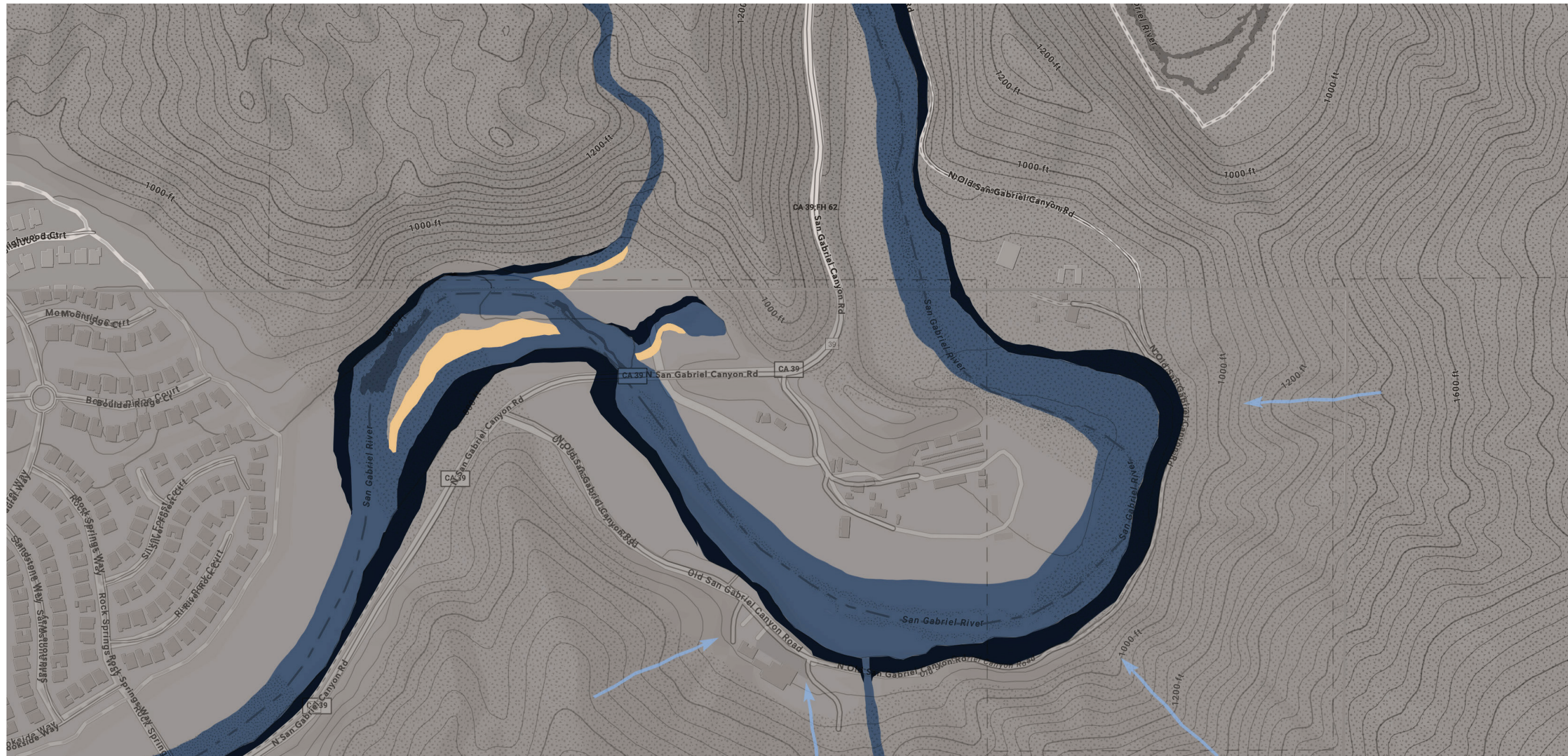
2a San Gabriel Reservoir

San Gabriel River / Tributaries





San Gabriel River

This area of the San Gabriel River is highly modified by human development. The Morris Reservoir Dam and the San Gabriel Dam further complicate natural watershed health by creating stagnant, slow moving lakes that hold less oxygen and higher temperatures - a breeding ground for algae blooms and fish kills. At the area of our wilderness park it is said that the river becomes completely dry at times because the county prevents water from flowing below the dams. These irregularities in water-flow and temperature have profound impacts on the living systems that live within the watershed.

SITE ANALYSIS



River Legend

-  Drainage
-  San Gabriel River channel
-  Steelhead habitat
-  Steelhead spawning habitat

A closeup look at the stretch of river that runs through the Azusa Wilderness Park. This area is uniquely viable for Steelhead habitat and also promotes areas for potential spawning areas. With careful management and water quality preservation this area could once again hold the sacred endangered Steelhead in hopes of restoring populations. Along the backside of the existing buildings of the wilderness park, drainage and erosion are threatening the stability of the structures.

OPPORTUNITIES



Sites proximity to river creates opportunities for different levels of access



Ability to maximize existing view points, manage vegetation



Significant Indigenous cultural sites throughout park boundaries

The opportunities on this site far outweigh the constraints. Existing breathtaking views, river accessibility, the ecological significance of the area, proximity to a major highway and urban areas, existing healthy native plant communities, the opportunity to host and teach large amounts of visitors about the cultural and natural histories of the canyon. Along with so many more great features make this site a unique opportunity to create something truly extraordinary for the local community and traveling visitors alike.



High volume of seasonal visitors to educate about canyon history



Native plant communities onsite supports increasing biodiversity goals



Existing trail structure that can be strengthened and refined



Significant ecological area within park boundaries



Large open spaces for gathering / programing



Converting paved areas into permeable surfaces

CONSTRAINTS



Difficult river access on south side of park



Invasive species vegetation dominating hillsides makes removal difficult



Steep slopes on above and below project site invite landslides and erosion

There are some contributing factors to this site that make design and ecological restoration challenging, some of those include dam control of watershed creating inconsistency within the temperatures and flows of the river leading to fish kills and algae blooms. These water health issues can lead to health problems in humans as well. The area is prone to wildfire and seasonally hosts high volumes of visitors making safety and clear circulations lanes imperative. Seasonal flooding is also a constraint if the dam were to have to release large volumes of water with the increasing likelihood of 100 year storms. The river access from the parking lot side of the wilderness park is extremely steep, making access difficult. Traffic speeds along highway 39 also impose serious risk to hikers, bikers and visitors of the park.



High seasonal visitors with limited areas for river access



Traffic + highway noise



Views, sounds of rainbow ranch equestrian park



High fire risk area throughout entire canyon

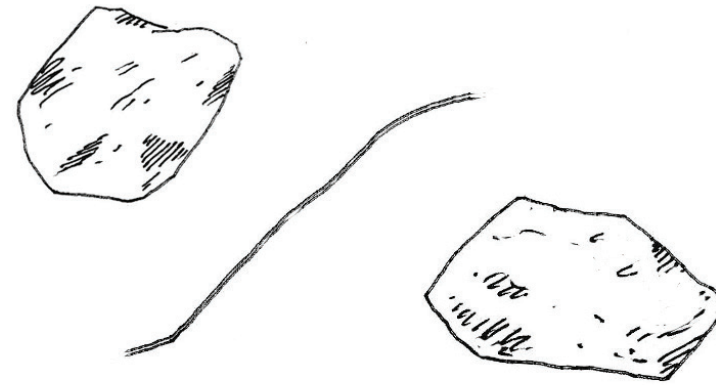


Dangerous vehicle circulation area on CA 39



Waterflow controlled by dams north of side create uncertainty

YESTERDAY / TODAY



GOALS:

Celebrate Indigenous visibility / cultural revitalization

Improve Native plant habitats and biodiversity

Increase accessibility to the wilderness areas

Re-imagine relationship between art / storytelling

Provide public education on cultural / natural history of the canyon

OBJECTIVES:

Made possible through the development of an Indigenous cultural center, food lab, plant harvest areas, ceremonial areas

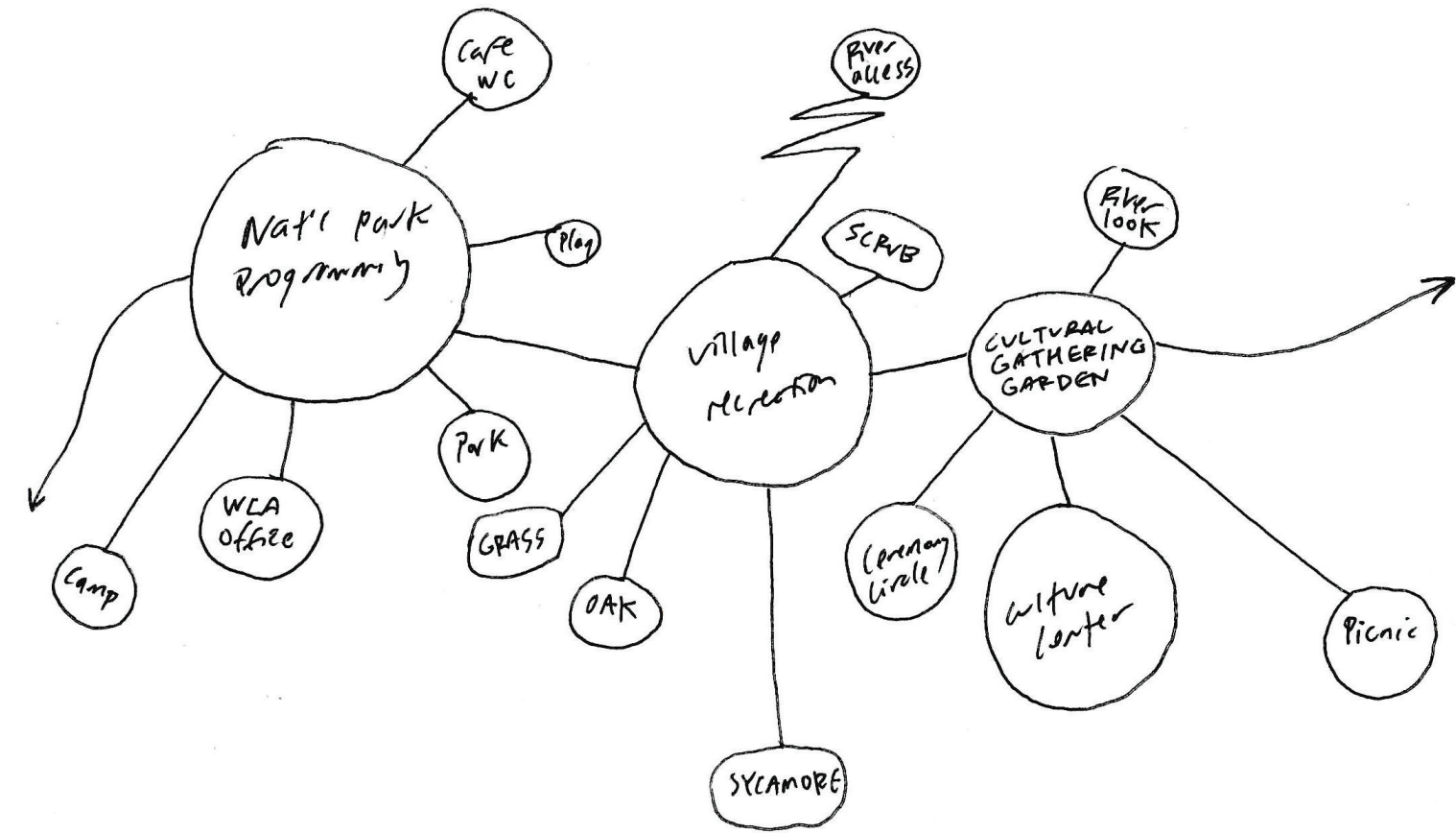
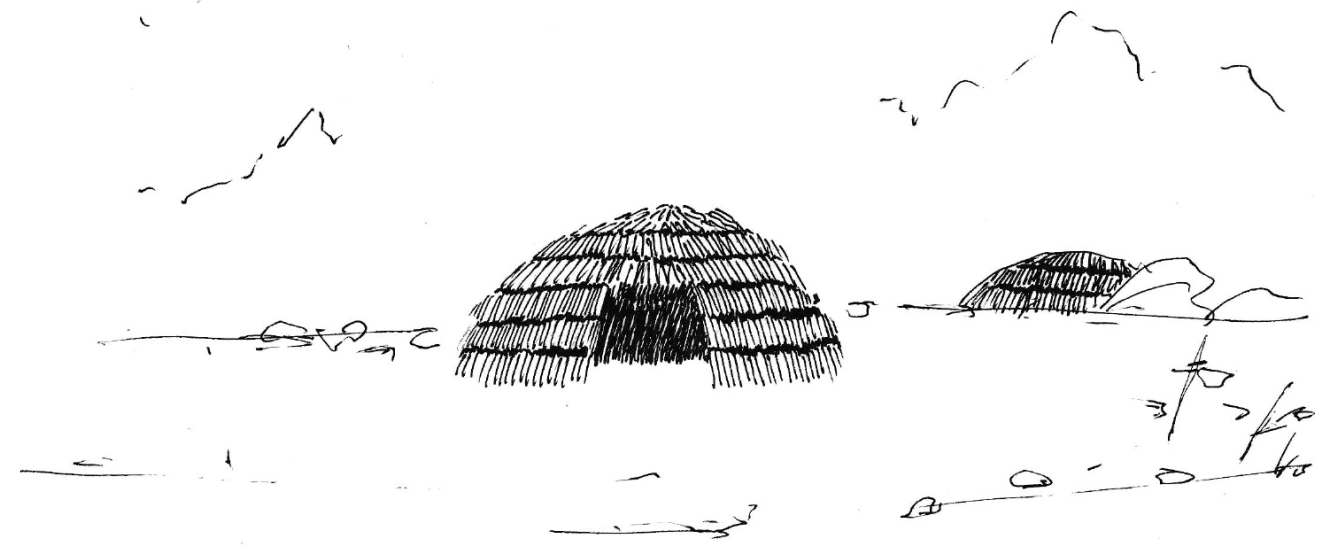
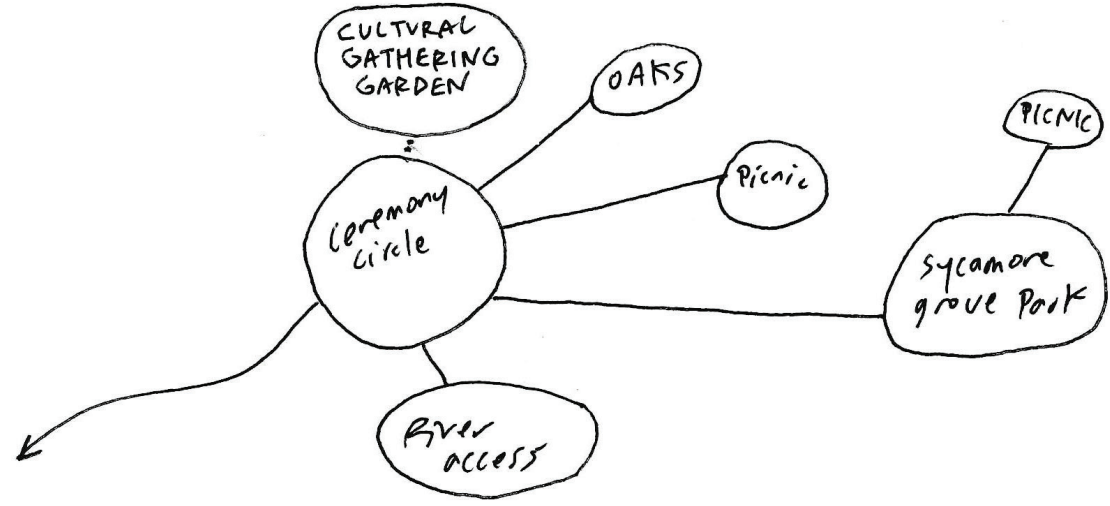
Achieved through invasive plant removal, Native plant restoration, creek restorations, permeable surfaces

Provide areas dedicated to observation, day camping, picnic areas, trail system, river access

*Provide interpretive signage
Natural play
Art installation that communicate visual representations of cultural ecology*

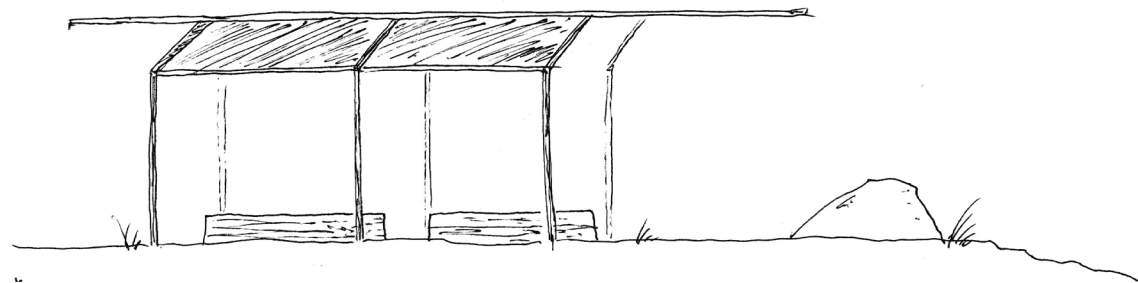
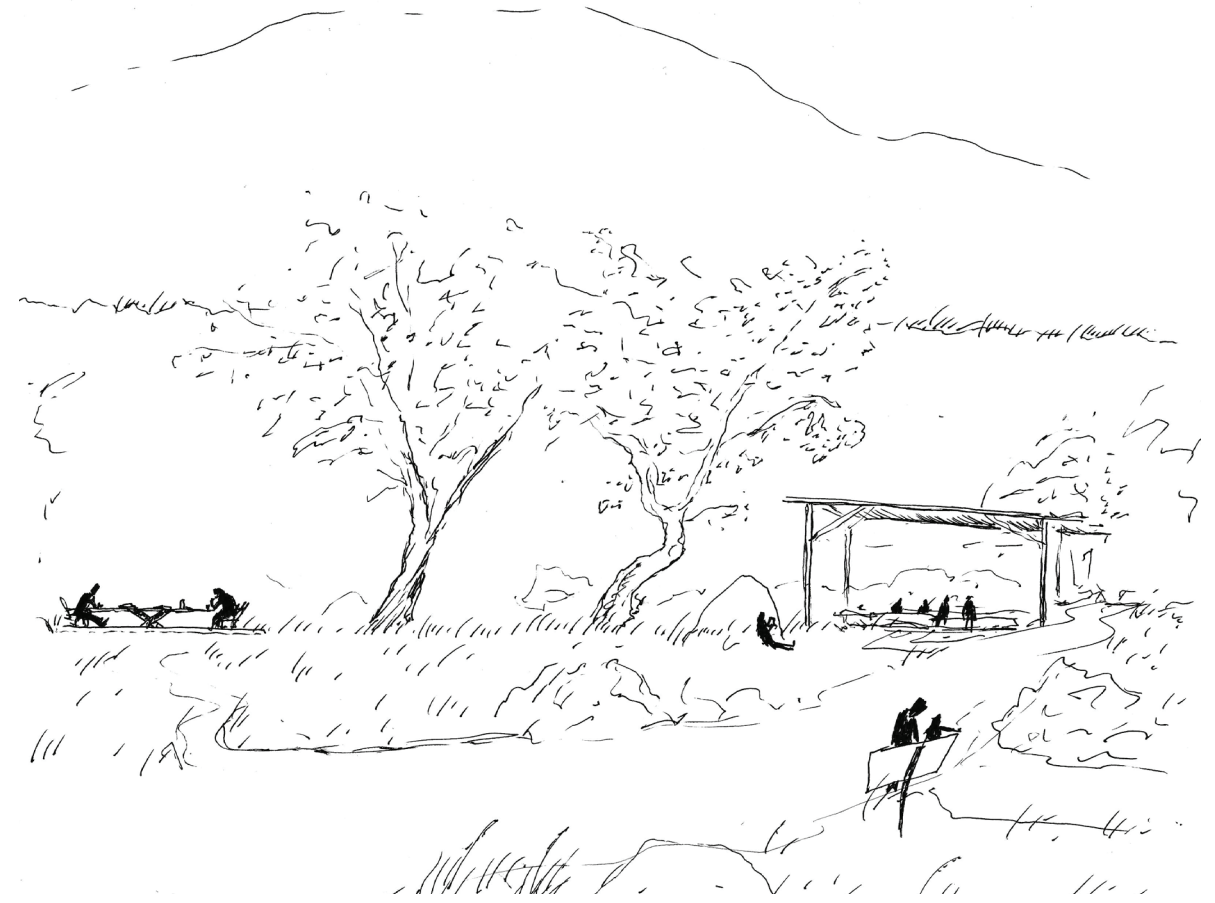
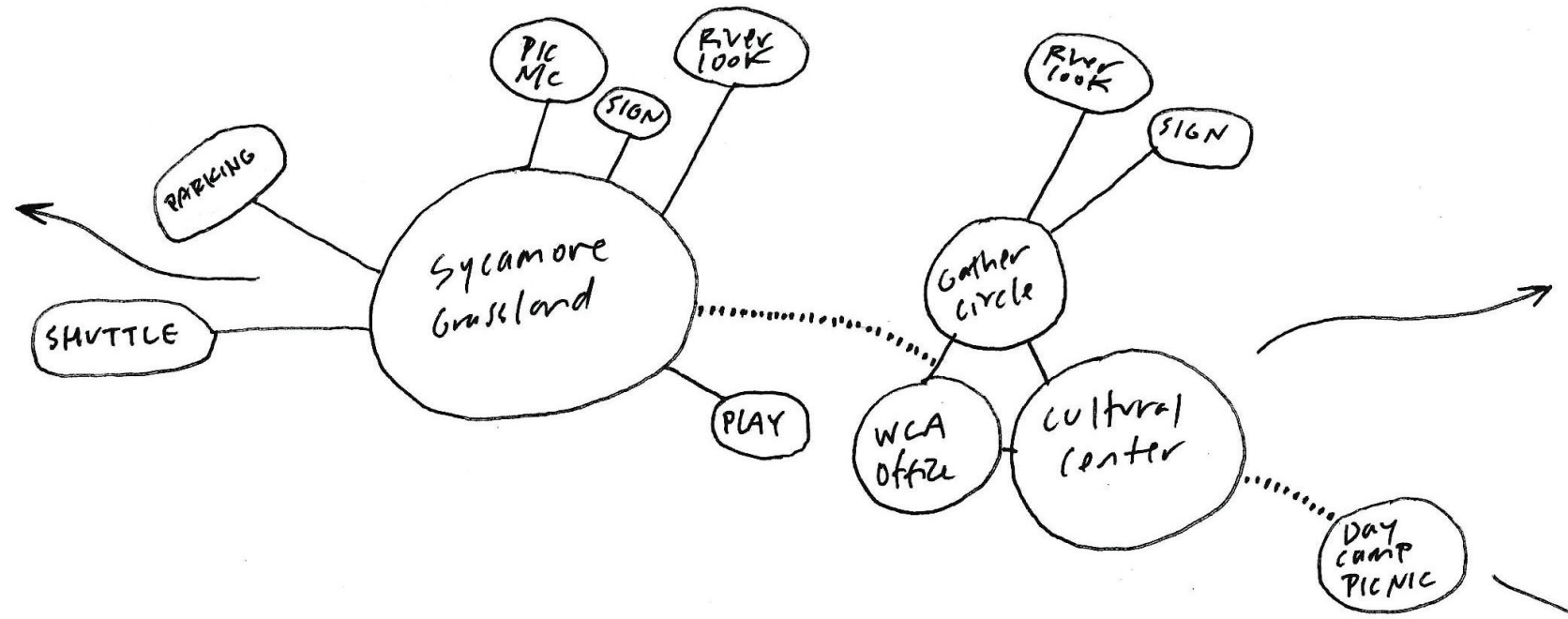
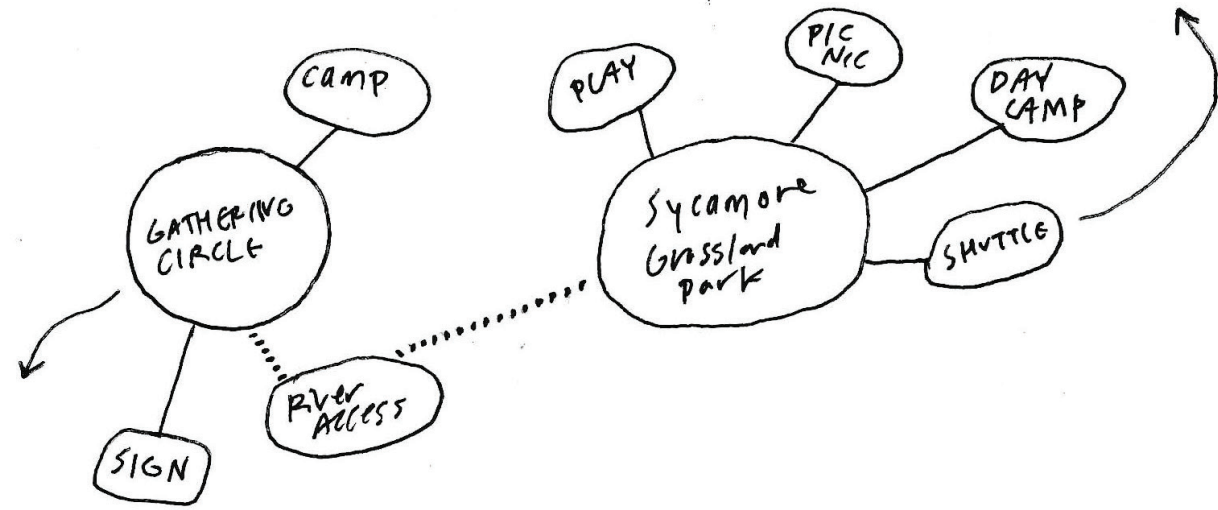
Visitors will be able to learn about Native fire wise gardens, stormwater management, through signage, workshops

FUNCTION DIAGRAM I



'A TRADITIONAL WELCOMING'

- SOFT DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT
- RECREATED VILLAGE SITE
- TRADITIONAL / HISTORIC FEEL
- PLANT GATHERING GARDENS (INDIGENOUS ACTIVITY)
- PRIVATE CEREMONIAL AREAS
- PERMIT CAMPING
- NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION



'BASECAMP'

PREPPING VISITORS TO EXPLORE AND LEARN ABOUT THE CANYON

NATURAL WOODED ENTRY

RECREATION EMPHASIS

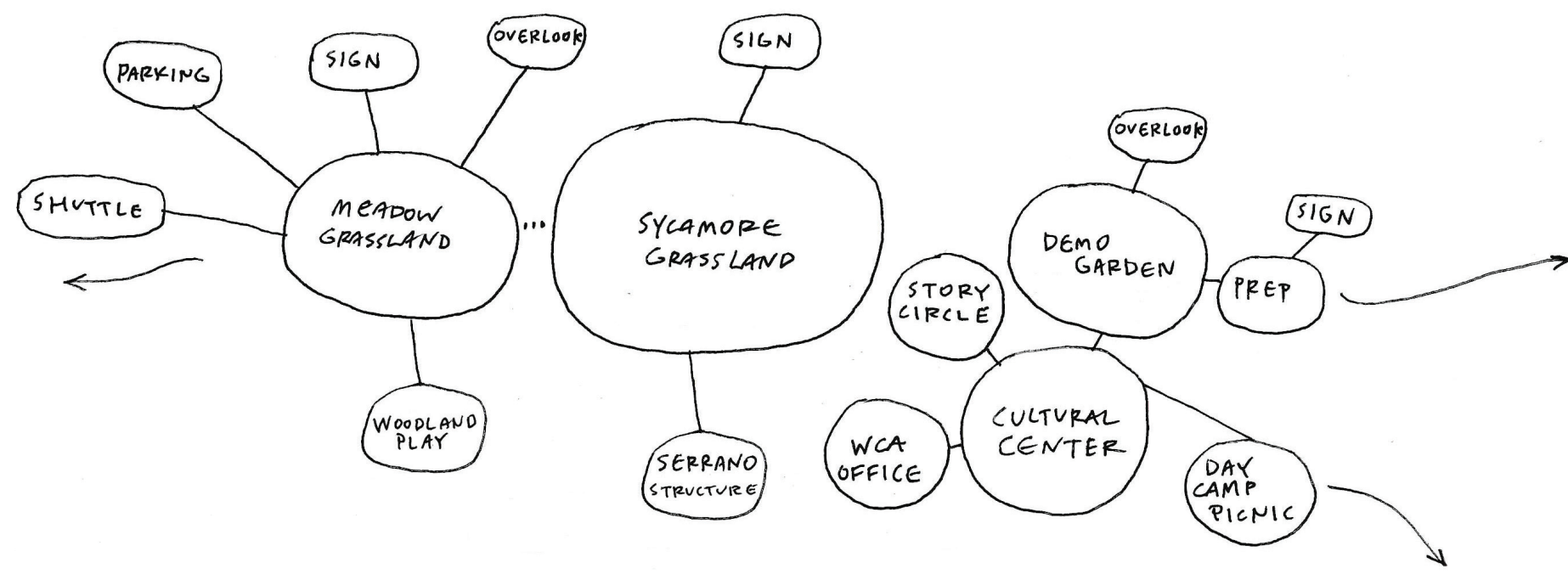
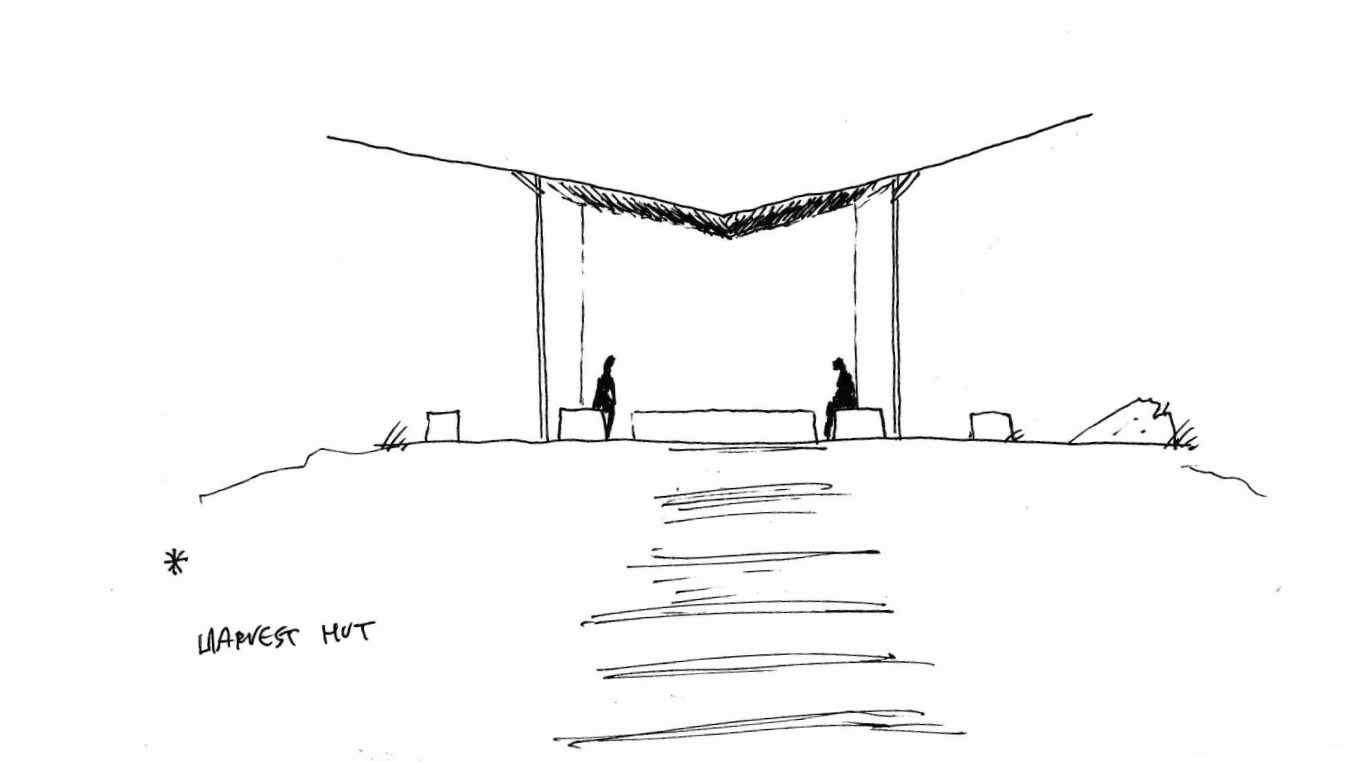
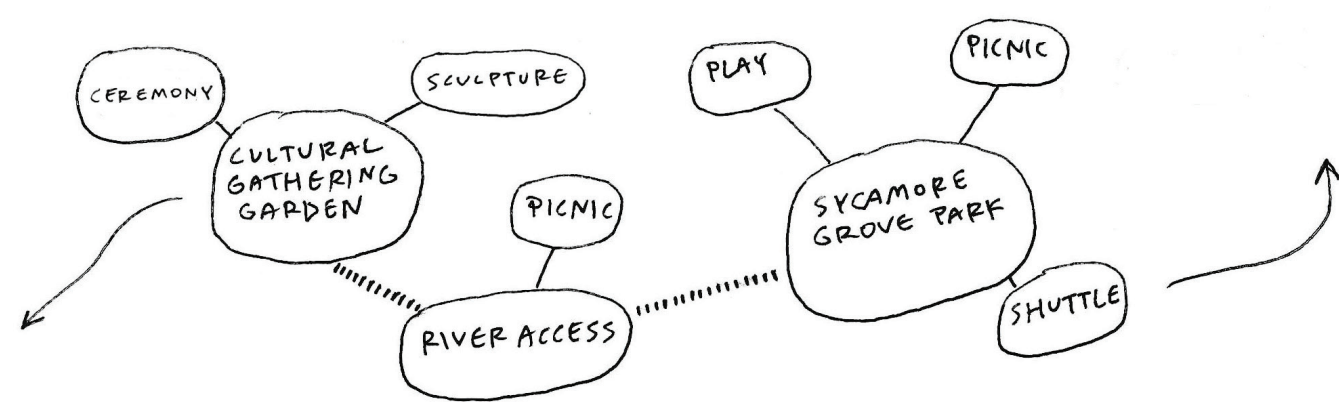
RIVER ACCESS

SEATING, GROUP AREAS, INTERACTIVE MAPS

SHADE STRUCTURES

OVERLOOKS

REFRESHING BEFORE / AFTER HIKE



- 'YESTERDAY, TODAY'
- MULTIPLE ECOZONES
- INTERPRATIVE AREAS
- BLENDING HISTORIC / MODERN
INDIGENOUS CONTEXTS
- MULTIPLE GATHERING AREAS
- PLANT HARVESTING ON
NORTH SIDE
- NATURAL PLAY
- MOST TRAIL ACCESS POINTS

FINAL DIAGRAM

Yesterday, today

An enchanted visitor experience immediately upon entry

South side: Interactive learning about the canyons history and its original caretakers

North side: Active Indigenous practice.

Winding trails through

Grassland meadows

Native firewise demonstration garden

Gathering circle

Cultural center

Winding canyon trails

River overlooks

Pic-nic areas

Natural woodland play

North side river access only

Shuttle to Sycamore Grove

Indigenous cultural gathering areas

Indigenous ceremonial areas

Shaded pergolas





Rammed earth for new buildings is a great way to connect to the nuances of place and create structures that are low impact and comprised of place



The role of light within the story walls



Raptor nest inspiration for kids play area



With very little verbal language, communicate powerful truths and history



Designed natural views imitating wildlife / canyon habitat are fun ways of creative interactive experiences for visitors to become part of the canyon



Preserve and create willow scrub river views that evolve as you move through the park



Biomimicry of shade structures is a playful way to create connections between amenities and the natural processes of the watershed



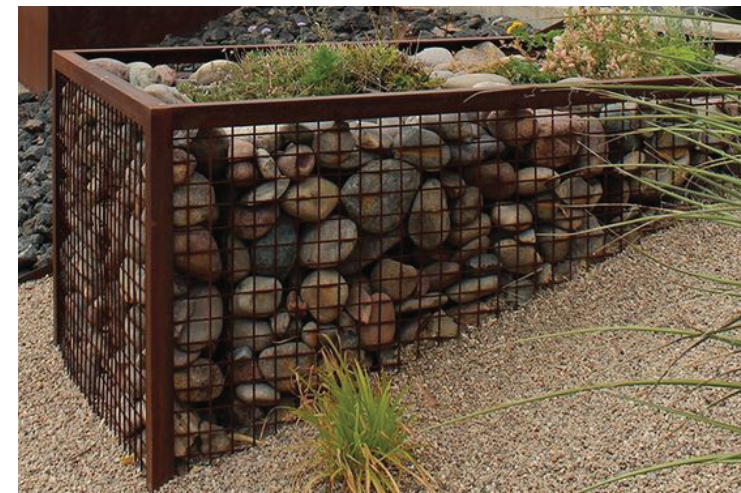
Exploring the idea of spatial tension points, with big spatial release



Rolled COR-TEN steel



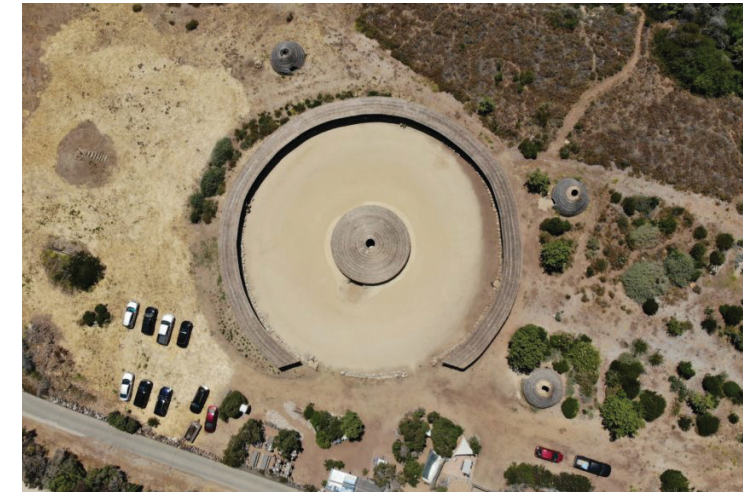
Signage examples within a demonstration garden



Gabion retaining walls to replace existing concrete retaining walls to provide a stronger sense of place



Imagining ways for visitors to connect to wildlife through unexpected trail systems / impressions



Images courtesy of Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation

Wishtoyo Chumash Village

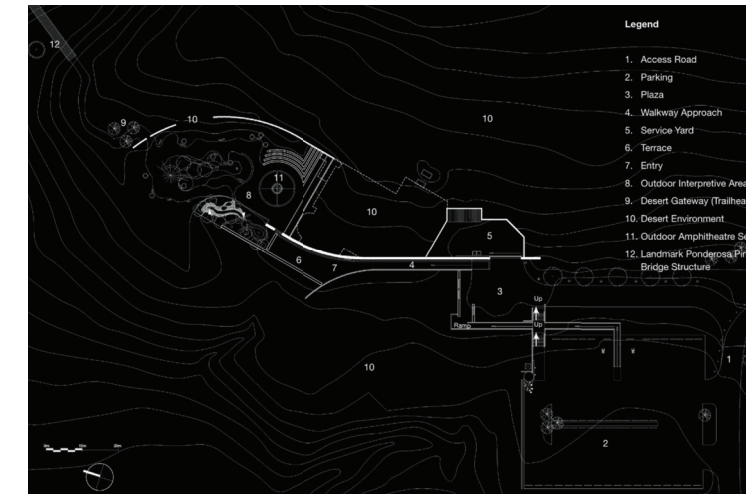
Malibu, California

Wishtoyo Foundation

This traditional Chumash village was built on an 8,000 year old historical village site overlooking the Pacific Ocean near Nicholas Canyon Beach. This 4 acre site is the only living Chumash cultural village of its kind in Southern California. The village functions as an outdoor classroom, a cultural gathering place, scientific field site all in one. Visitors receive an immersive learning experience and the village refers to itself as a living, active landscape that welcomes all.

Site Precedent

Looking at Indigenous designed semi subterranean structures as a way for visitors to experience story telling and community will help demonstrate Indigenous architectural ingenuity. In the low lying areas of the San Gabriel Mountains, circular ceremony structures such as this were used to endure the harsh elements. For Indigenous cultural revitalization to take place, there need to be traditional areas where they can practice and welcome guests. Additionally, the recreation of a traditional village site helps honor the past.



Images courtesy of Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Center

Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre

Osoyoos, British Columbia, Canada

Bruce Haden - Hotson, Bakker, Boniface Haden

This semi subterranean structure of rammed earth, features a living roof an homage to the traditional winter dwellings of the Okanagan First Nation and utilizes the natural insulating properties of the surrounding hillsides. This center features 1 mile of rugged walking trails of the antelope and sage desert. Nk'Mip features indoor and outdoor cultural and nature exhibits and features 2 multi sensory theatres.

Site Precedent

The utilization of materials found onsite and in proximity will be very important for any new structure creation. Creating a sense of place with the hardscape, buildings themselves lends to the idea that the designed environment is mindful of it's surroundings and doesn't take away from the natural beauty of the area. Forms that mimic the natural site conditions along with utilizing clean energy practices is very important.



Images courtesy of Maya Lin Studio

Chief Timothy Park

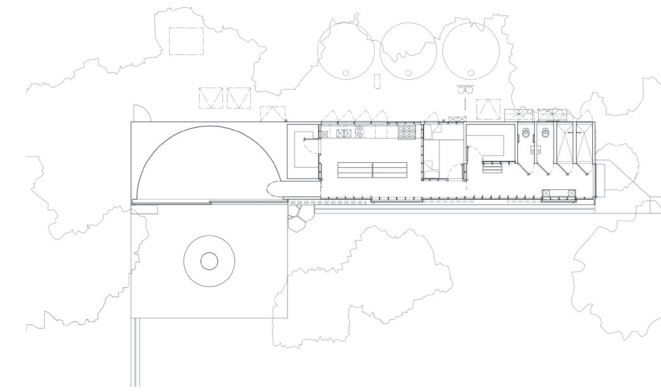
Clarkson, Washington

Maya Lin

Located on an island at the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake Rivers in Clarkston Washington. Featuring locally found basalt. A stoned rimmed earthwork called a 'listening circle' sculpted out of a natural amphitheater at the top of the island. The shape is inspired by a Nez Perce blessing ceremony that took place on the site in 2005. The Nez Perce were involved in the design and consultation to ensure that these areas were built in a good way.

Site Precedent

With the significance of this area to local Indigenous communities, having areas of ceremony for them to gather, are incredibly important. This is a great example of a way to create intimacy while celebrating the vastness of space. An amphitheater comes to mind. These striking, minimal marks are very inspiring and evoke deep reverence and contemplation. Another nod to treading lightly on the landscape.



Images courtesy of Taylor + Hinds Architecture studio

Krakani Lumi Wukalina

Wukalina / Mt. William National Park, Tasmania

Taylor + Hind Architects

Translates to “resting place.” This standing camp designed within the Wukalina / Mt. William National Park is operated by the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania. The spaces recall ancient connections to shelter, place and country without being imitative. A place of storytelling, a fusion of ancient culture and modern amenity. The utilitarian function of being able to close these structures during storms adds to the intrigue.

Site Precedent

This is a great example of looking at traditional Indigenous design methodologies and respectfully, thoughtfully bringing them into the present. To explore bridging the past, present and future with design programming lead by Indigenous voices is an inspiring intersection of design and cultural ecology. I love the minimalist presence of the materials. It feel so at home in this landscape and takes on a spiritual, churchlike quality.



Images courtesy of Taylor + Hinds Architecture studio

Adaptation of the roman site of Can taco

Montmelo - Montornés del Vallés, Barcelona, Spain

Toni Gironés

The remains of this ancient Roman palace have been brought back to life in a way that creates reverence and memory with very thoughtful, site specific interventions and materials. This project succeeded in recovering both the natural and archaeological heritage of the site. Through the process of archaeological excavation, soil and substrates from the site and surrounding areas were used to recreate the footprint of this beautiful structure to honor the past and preserve a place that without effort becomes forgotten.

Site Precedent

Our site has been used by Indigenous group for tens of thousands of years. It would be easy to throw up national park style amenities and programming but I think a deeper look at the cultural heritage and site materials will speak more effectively to a design that and honors place and the original keepers of this area. This sort of attention to detail can go a long way in cultural revitalization. Seeking to create moments of contemplation for all who visit and to push back against the erasure of Indigenous people.

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



MEMORIAL OVERLOOK

SUB CEREMONY CIRCLE

INDIGENOUS HARVESTING FIELD

RESTORED CREEK

HARVESTING HUT

SEASONAL RIVER TRAIL

LOOP TRAIL III

WCA MASTERPLAN

SYCAMORE GRASSLAND

SHADE PERGOLA

STORY WALL

SHUTTLE DROP-OFF

WCA OFFICE

DAYLIT CREEK

PARKING SHUTTLE PICK-UP

RIVER OVERLOOK I

LOOP TRAIL II

MEADOW

INSPIRE OVERLOOK

KIDS PLAY

DAYLIT CREEK

NATIVE CULTURE CENTER

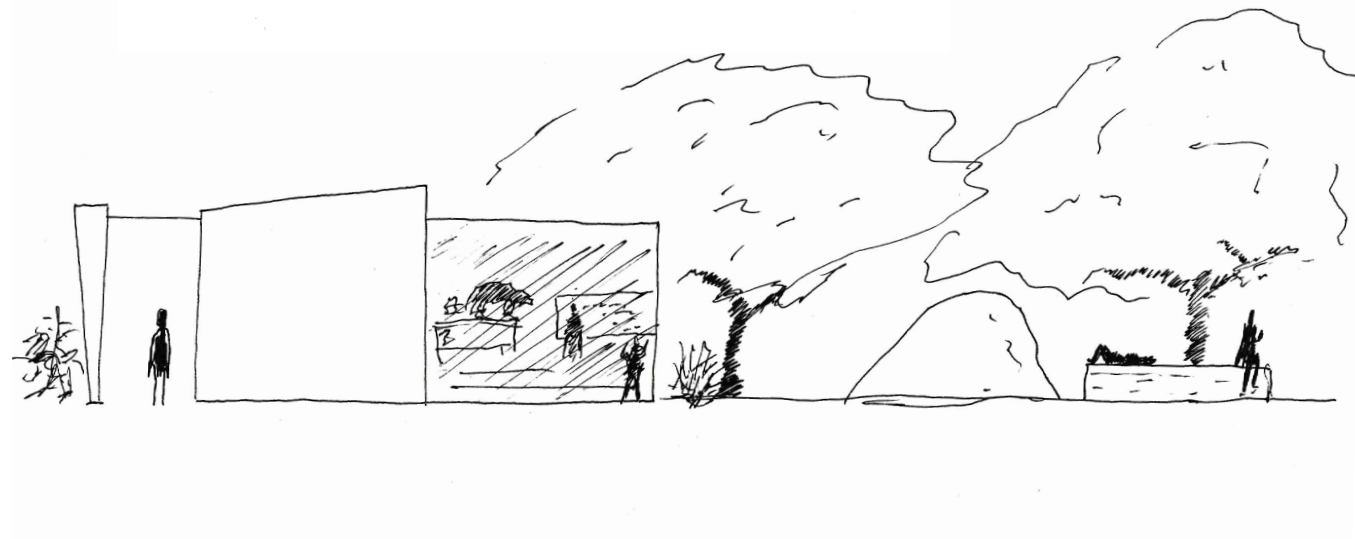
ROCK AMPHITHEATER

LOOP TRAIL I

DAY CAMPING

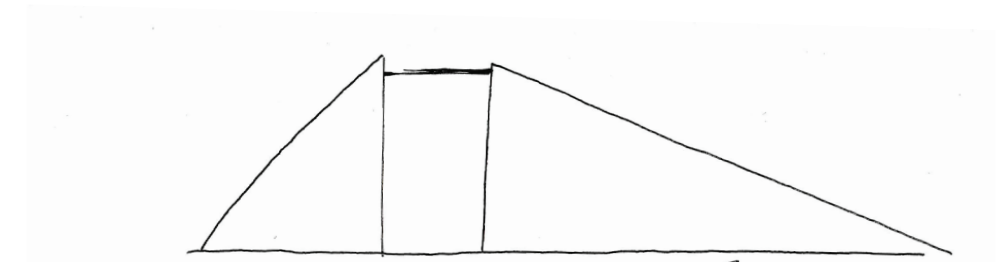
0 250'





First impressions

The cultural center will be the heartbeat of the newly designed wilderness park. With an emphasis on Native led narratives, exhibits and workshops, the original welcoming people of the canyon can once again practice these historic traditions in ways that honor their past and reimagine the future

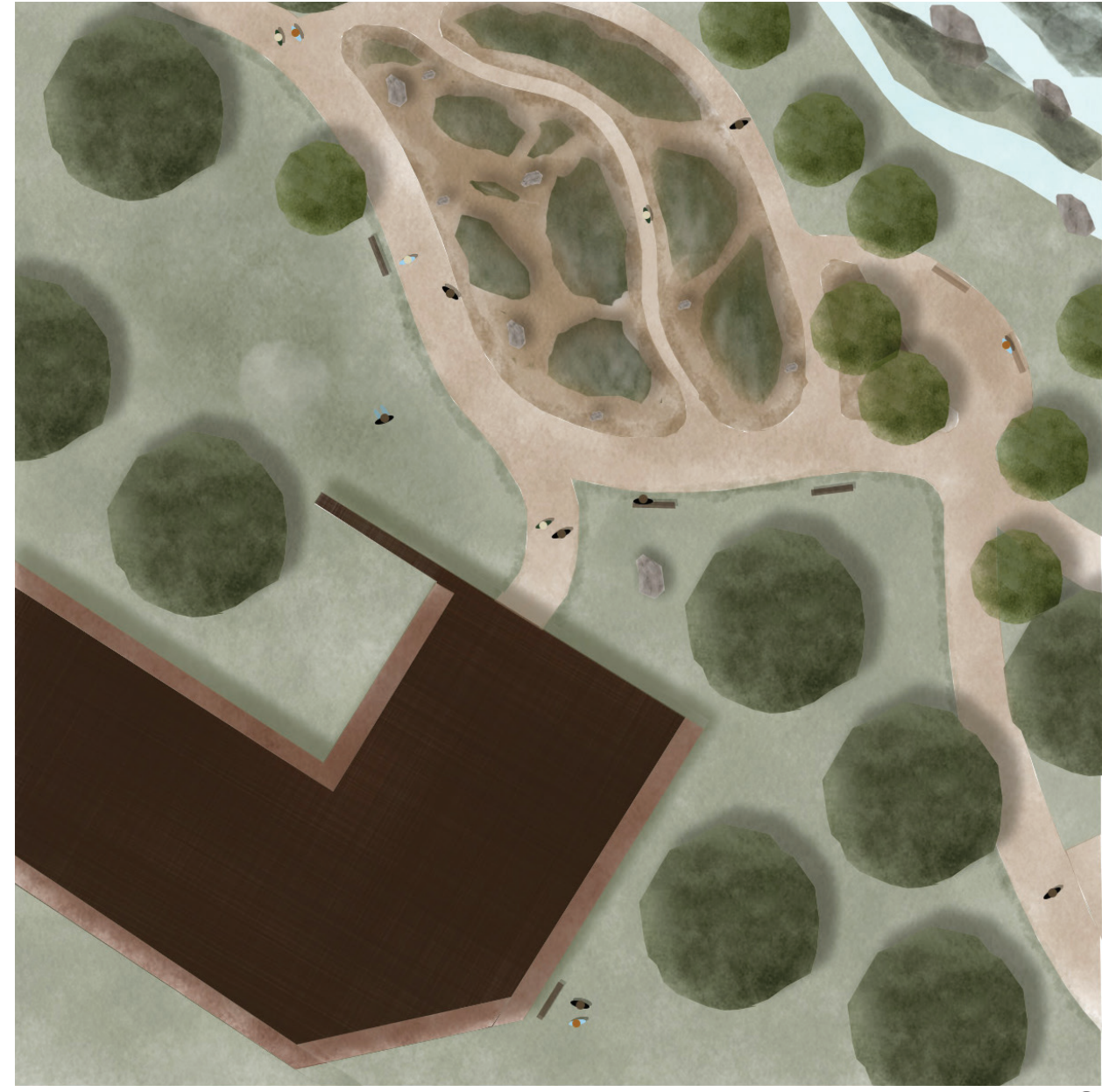


Biomimicry

Drawing inspiration from the peaks and crags of the canyon, visitors will enter the cultural center through these towering corten steel peaks.

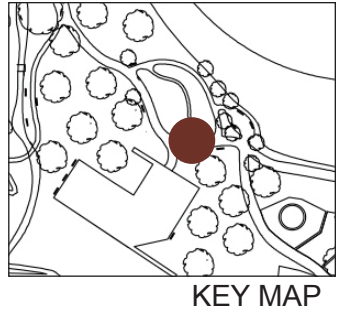
CULTURAL CENTER / FIRE GARDEN

ENLARGEMENT



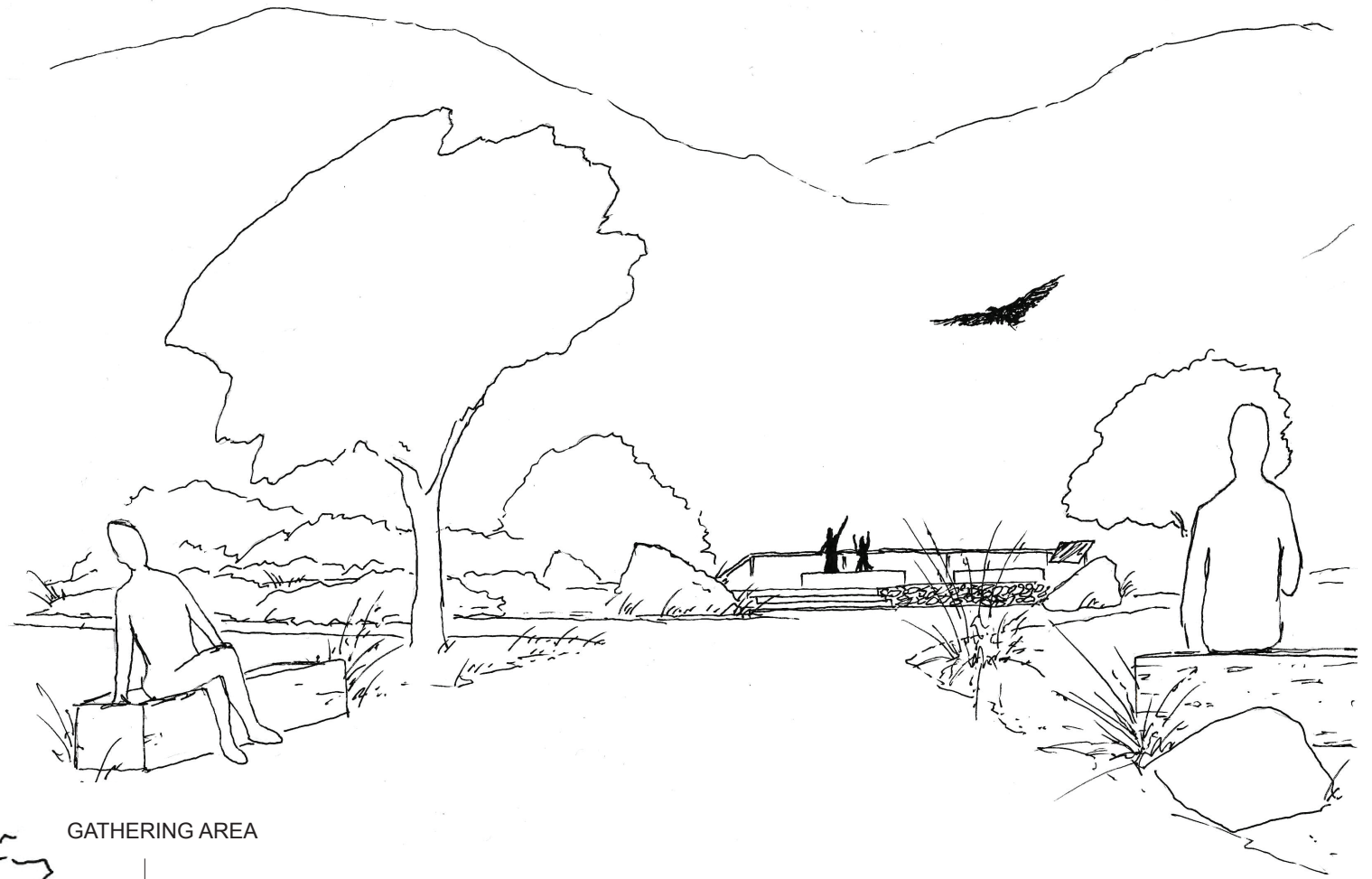
CULTURE CENTER

An Indigenous lead cultural center with educational programming and workshops. A fire wise Native plant demo garden for visitors to learn about defensible space and ecological planting. An area of deep rest, learning, expansion, and cultural revitalization



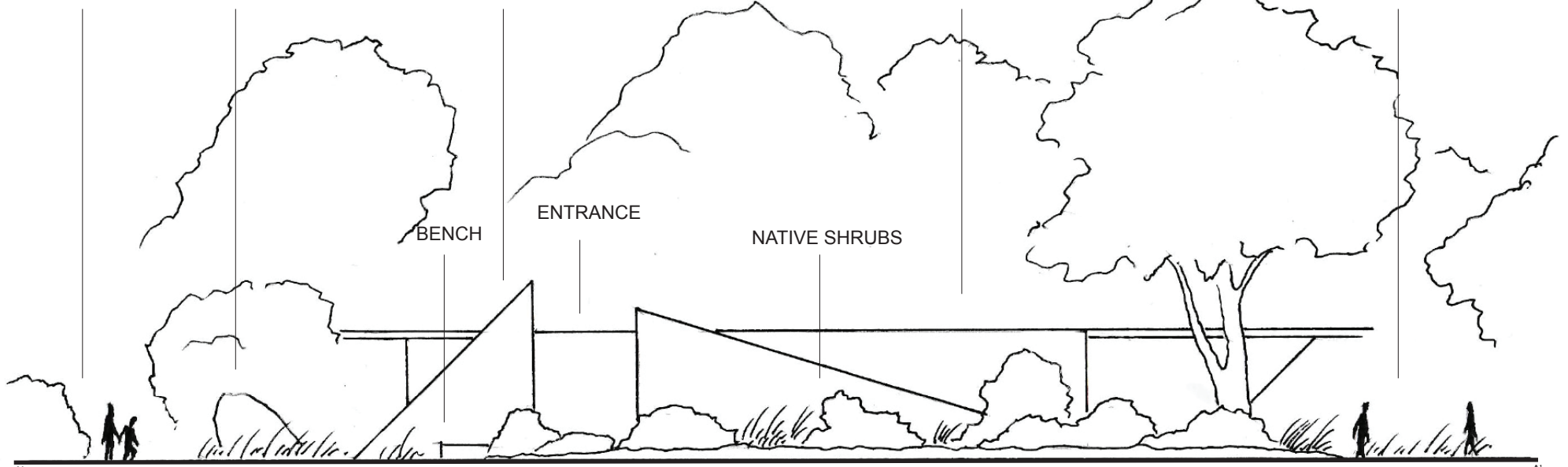
KEY MAP

PERSPECTIVE - LEAVING CULTURAL CENTER

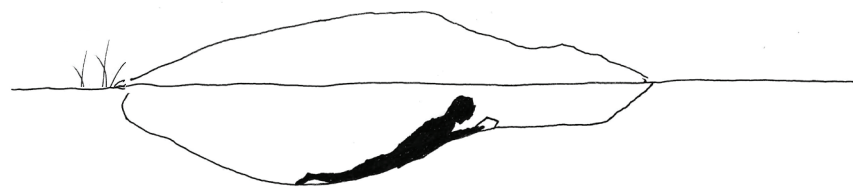


SECTION - APPROACHING CULTURAL CENTER

DAY CAMP TRAIL RESTING ROCK CORTEN STEEL FACADE RAMMED EARTH WALLS GATHERING AREA

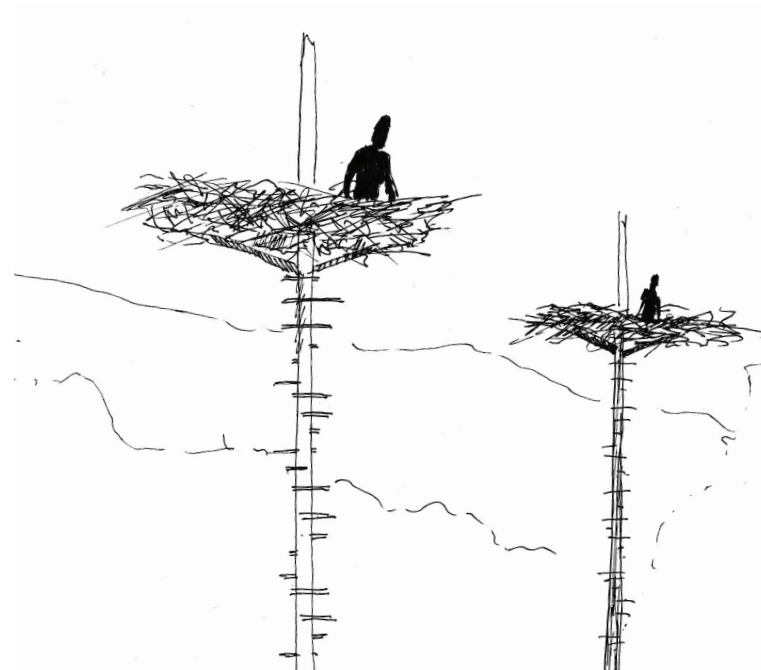


20'



Tunneling caves

By re-imagining natural play with visitors able to experience life burrowing underground like reptiles and certain mammals we create a new awareness of wildlife experience



Raptor towers

Getting a birds eye view of the park from the unique perspective of a raptor nest is memorable experience. Climbing the tower is half the battle



Observing natural systems

By daylighting a hidden stream, visitors will have the opportunity to get up close to wildlife and the natural functions of waterways

WILD PLAY / RAPTOR TOWER

ENLARGEMENT



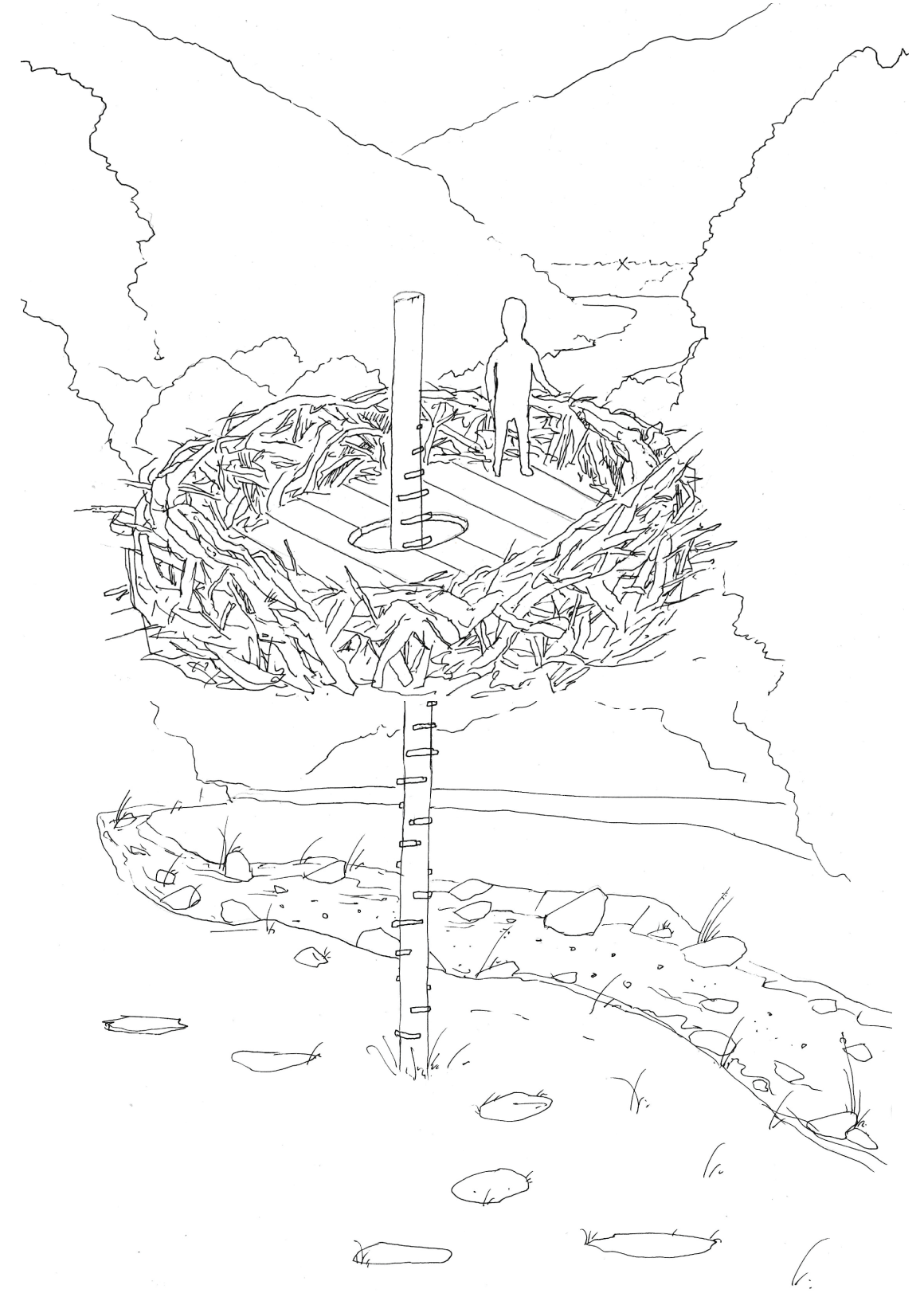
WILDLIFE PERSPECTIVE

Natural play generally consists of fallen logs and climbing boulders. In this play area, features include burrowing tunnels, raptor nests that help people imagine the life cycle and perspective of creatures who call the canyon home.

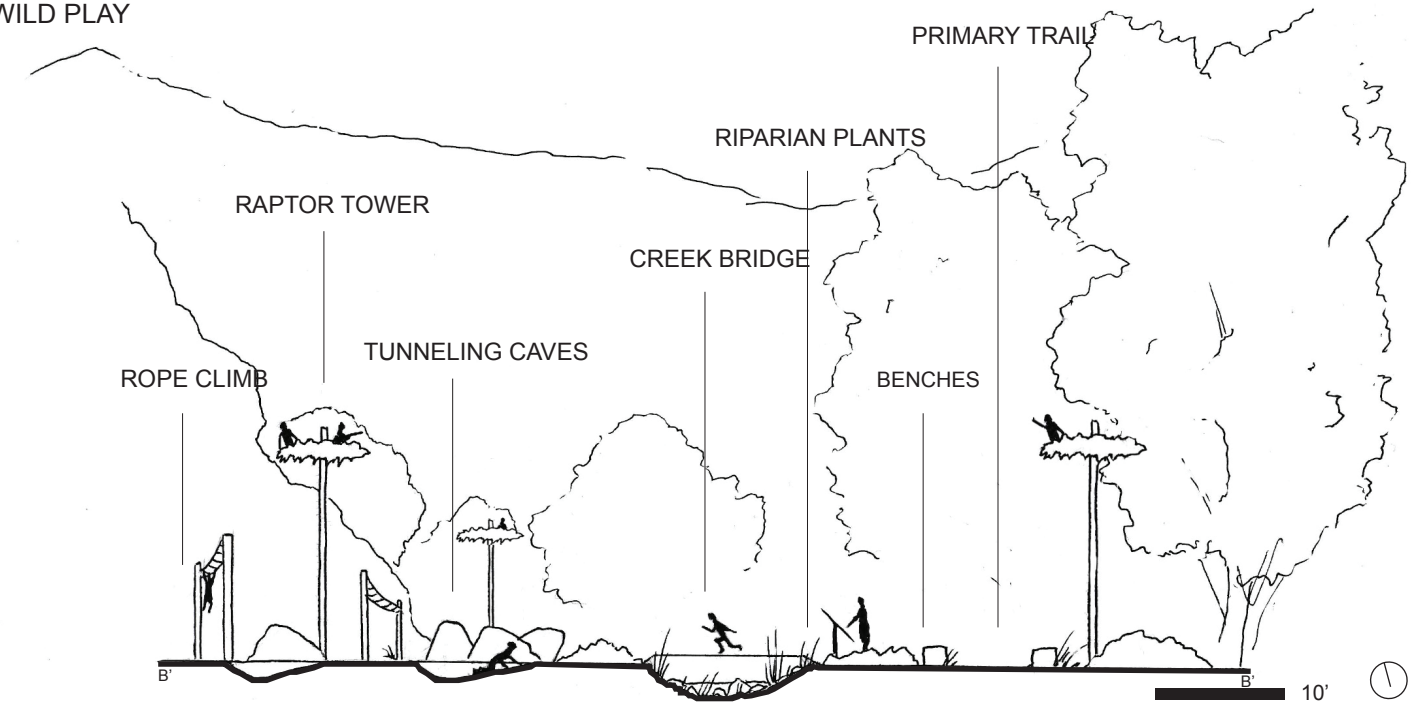


KEY MAP

PERSPECTIVE - BIRDS EYE VIEW



SECTION - WILD PLAY

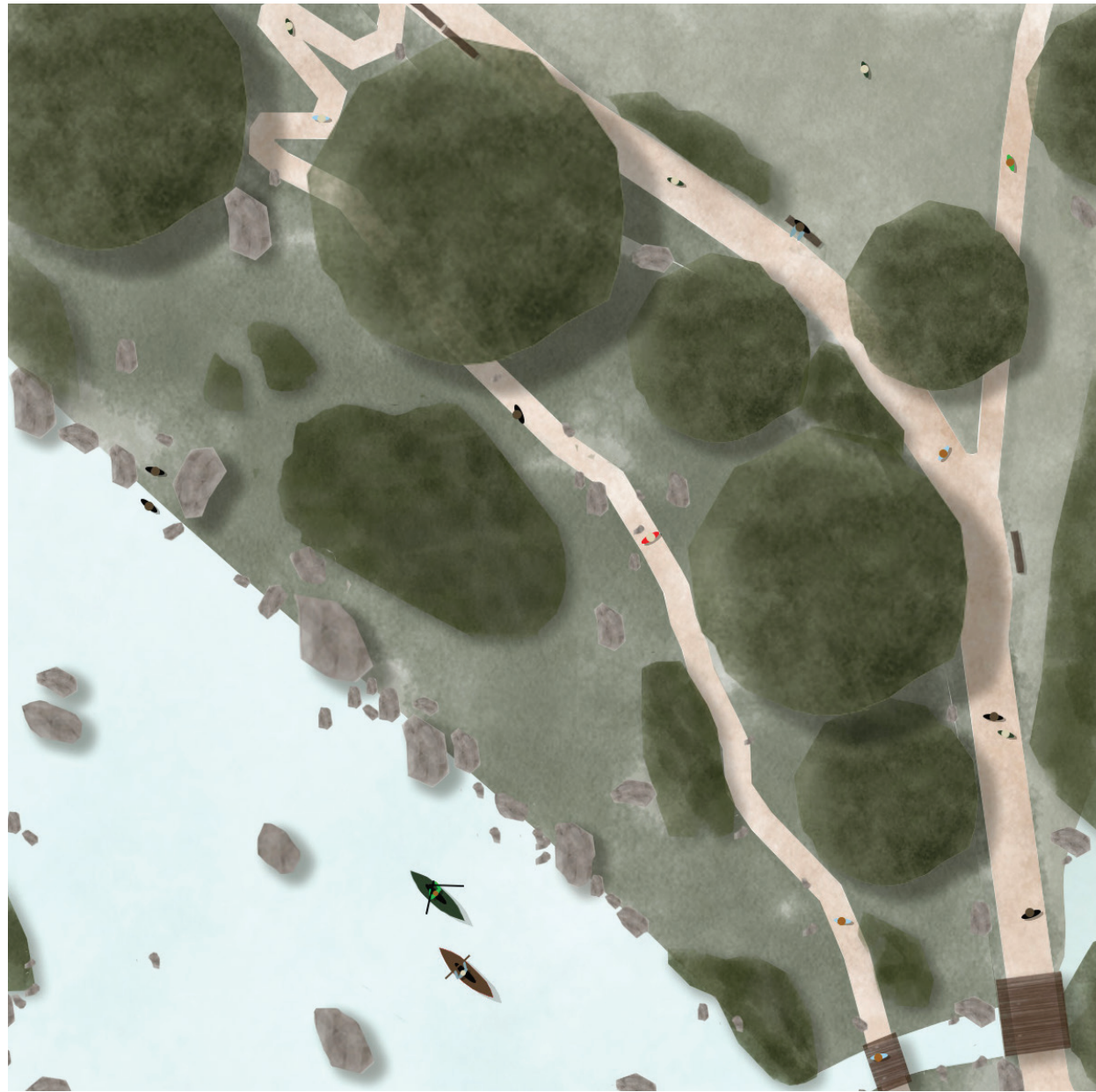


35' 

10' 

RIVER ACCESS / SEASONAL TRAIL

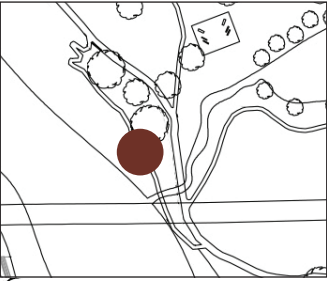
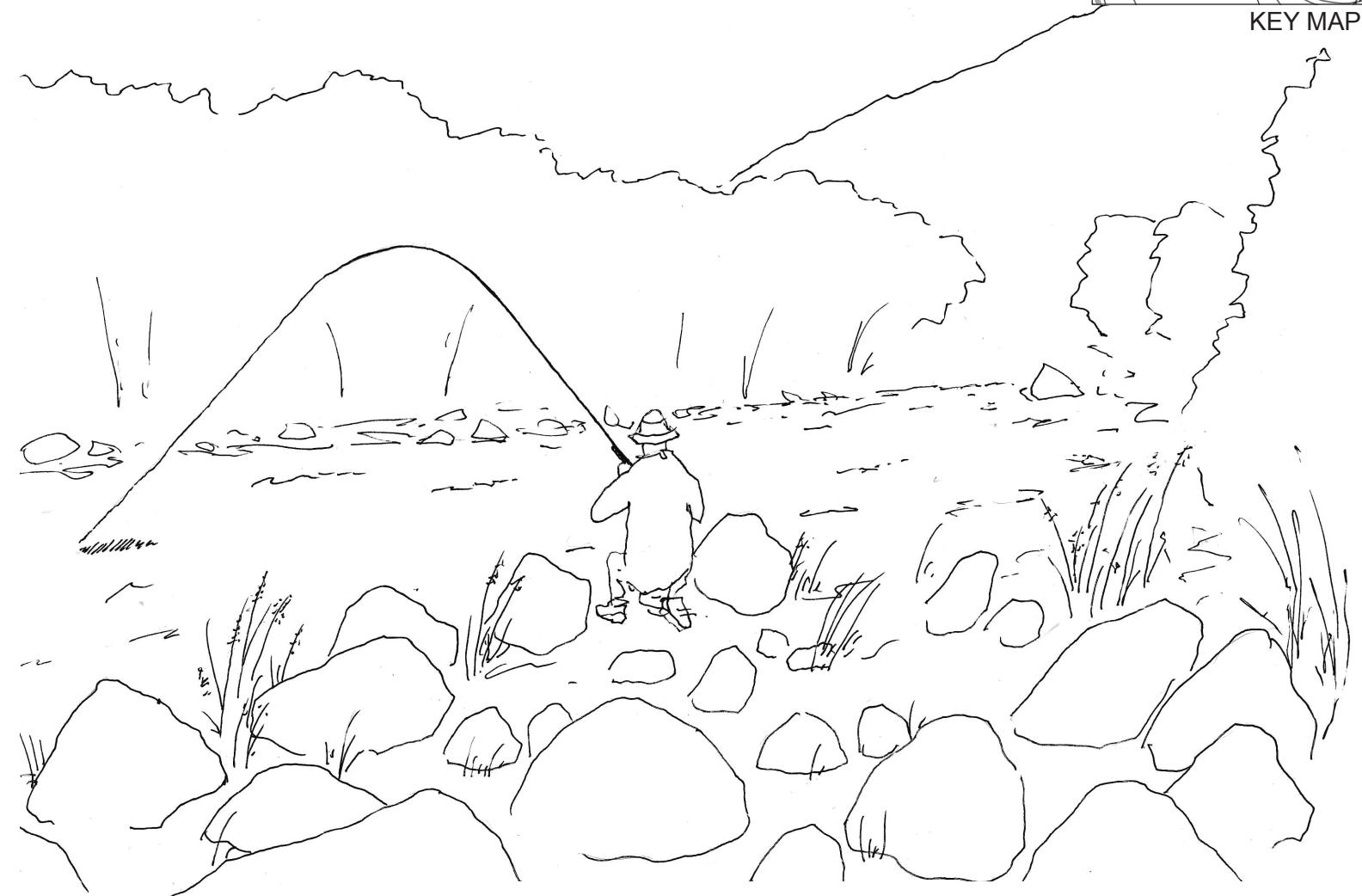
ENLARGEMENT



RIVER ACCESS

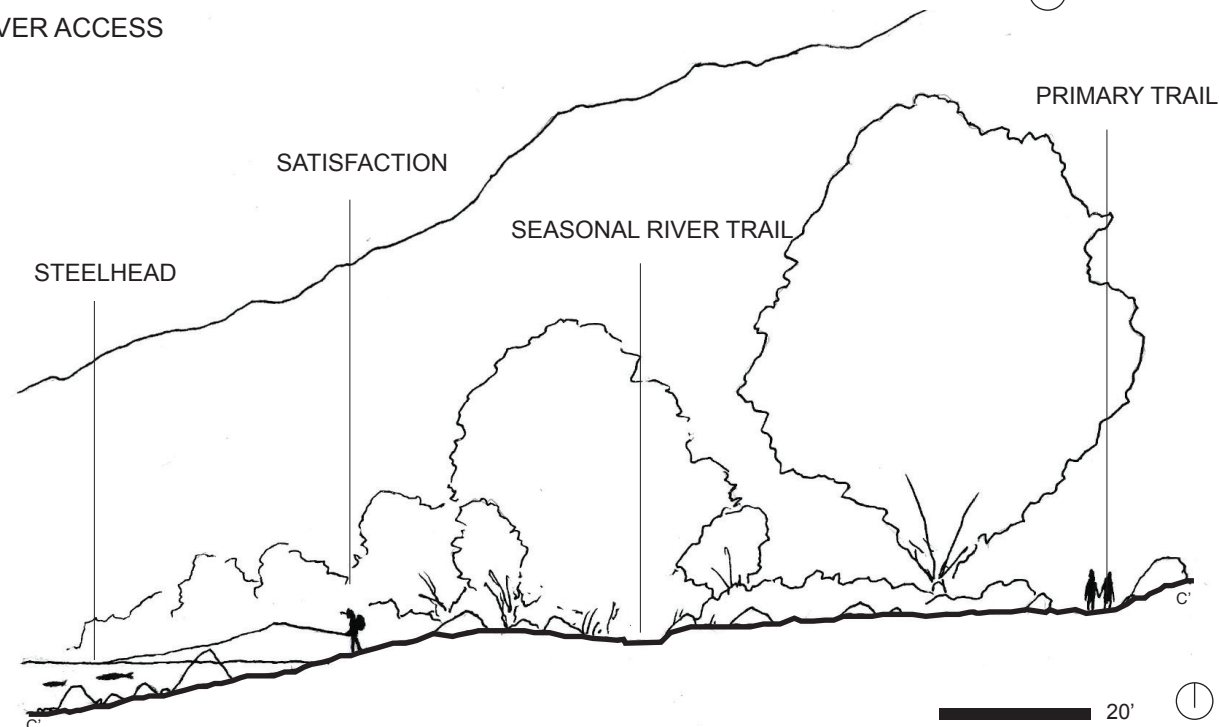
Follow the seasonal river trail for access to the San Gabriel River. A restored river bank, new willows, aspen and sycamore trees line the banks providing refuge for adventurers, folks in need of relaxation or wildlife making their migratory journey

PERSPECTIVE - RIVER ACCESS / FISH, ON

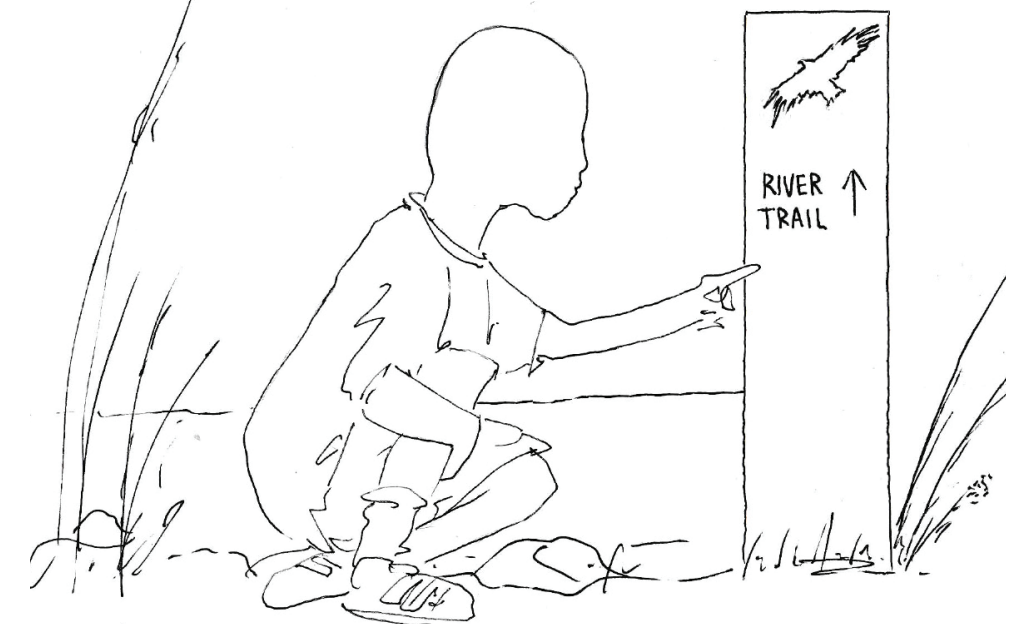


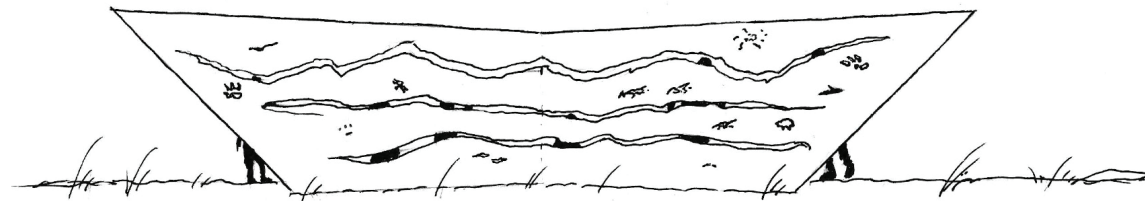
KEY MAP

SECTION - RIVER ACCESS



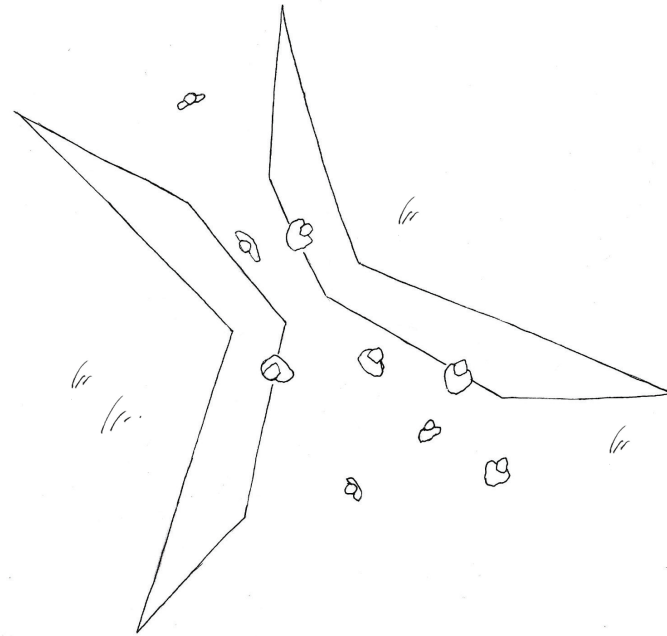
PERSPECTIVE - WAYFINDING





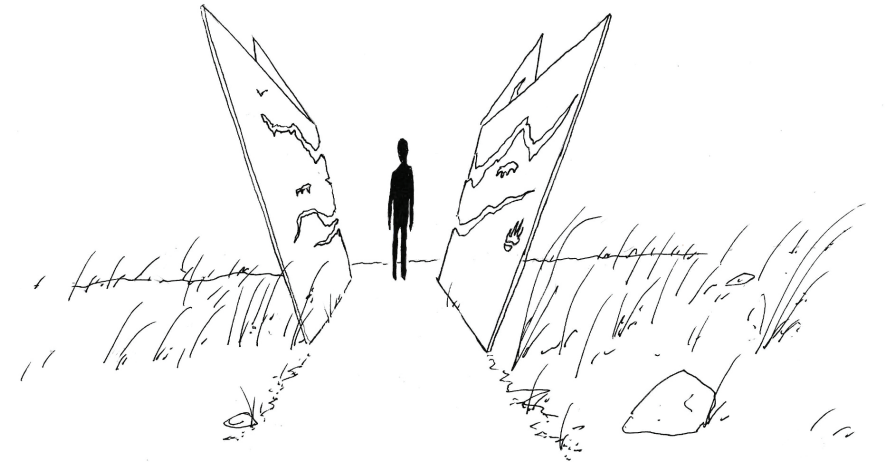
Storywall section

Through cut outs that mimic the natural forms of the mountain range, ground plane and flowing river to depict a history of both the cultural and natural history of the canyon



An aerial view

Viewers are asked to observe from up close, or from afar. The light coming through the slats will change throughout the day

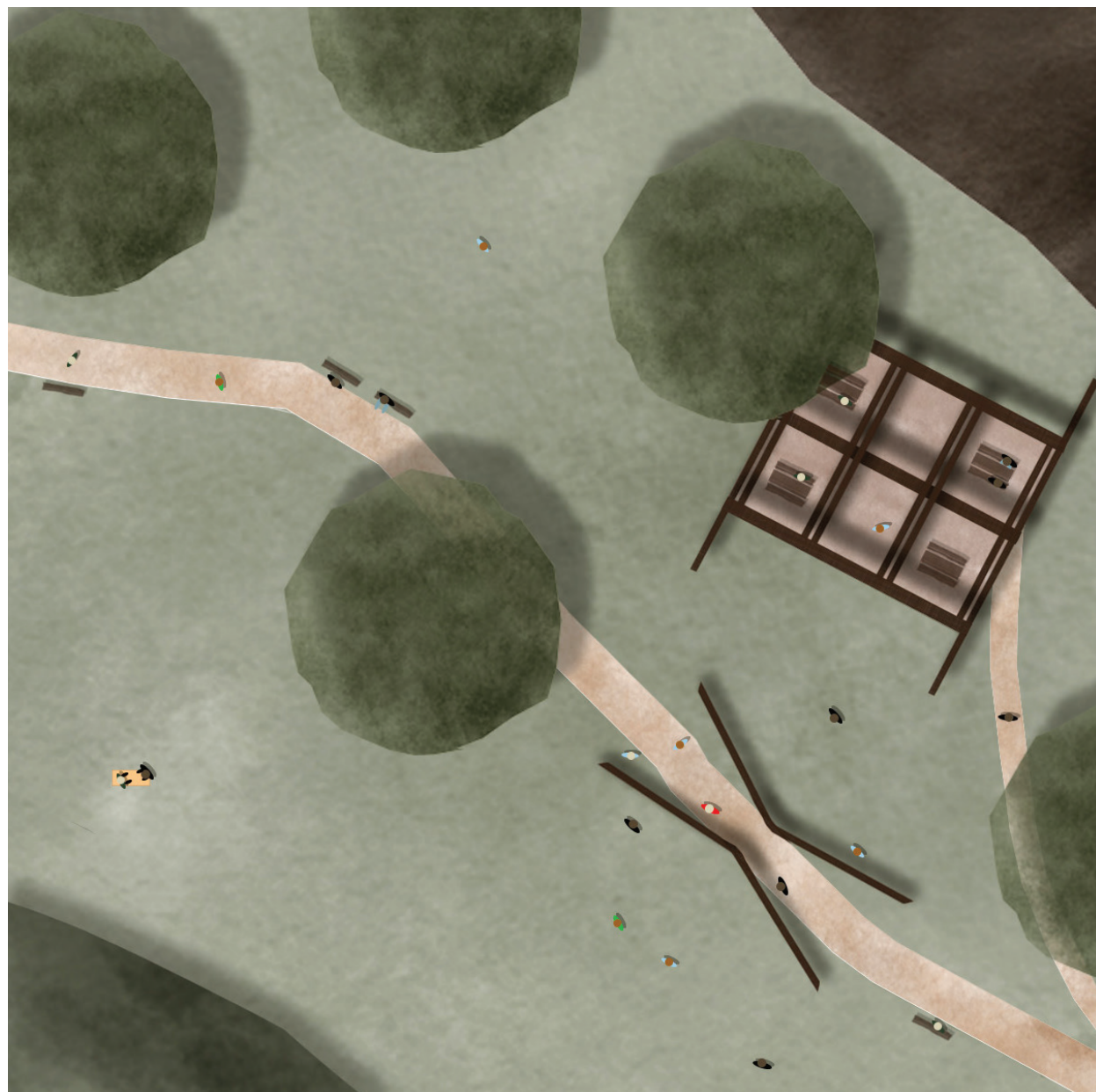


Storywall perspective

To be immersed in a spatial experience that expands and contracts to tell the historic, and future of the canyon and its original people

SYCAMORE PARK / STORY WALL

ENLARGEMENT

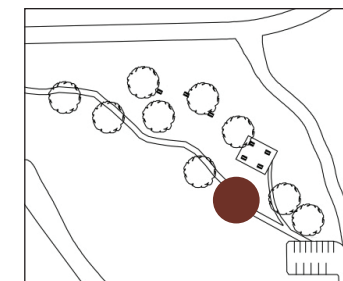


STORY WALL

These angled steel story walls are one of a kind to the people of the canyon. Their leadership and histories regarding the creation of these walls are crucial to the experience of the visitors hearing from the canyons original stewards. Many sacred pictograph sites have been vandalized or lost and these walls help bring these histories back to life

SYCAMORE GROVE PARK

Transforming the Taylor house and existing grassland into a restored sycamore grove with native grasses for day use and river access. Handicap parking, and shuttle access only.



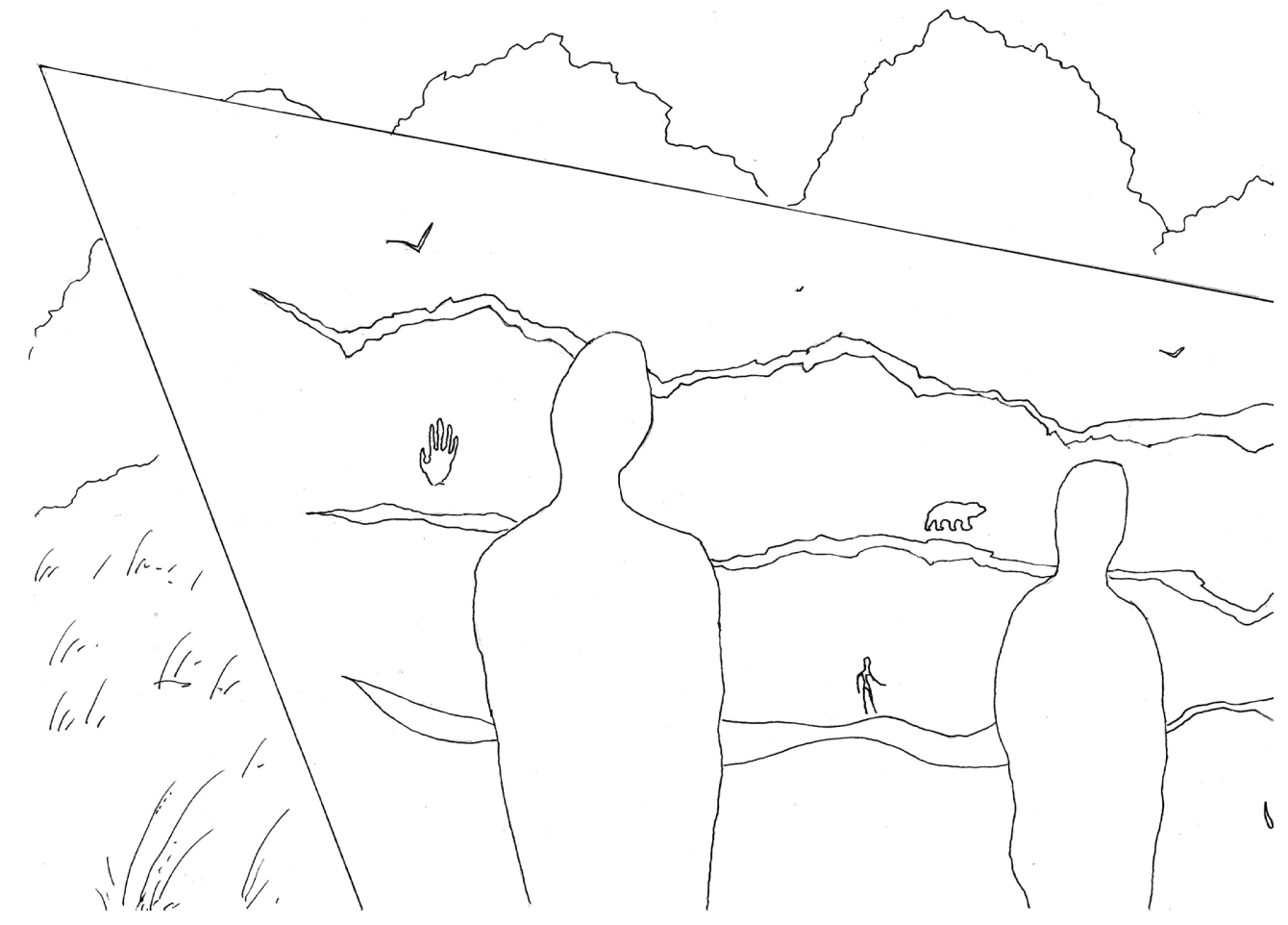
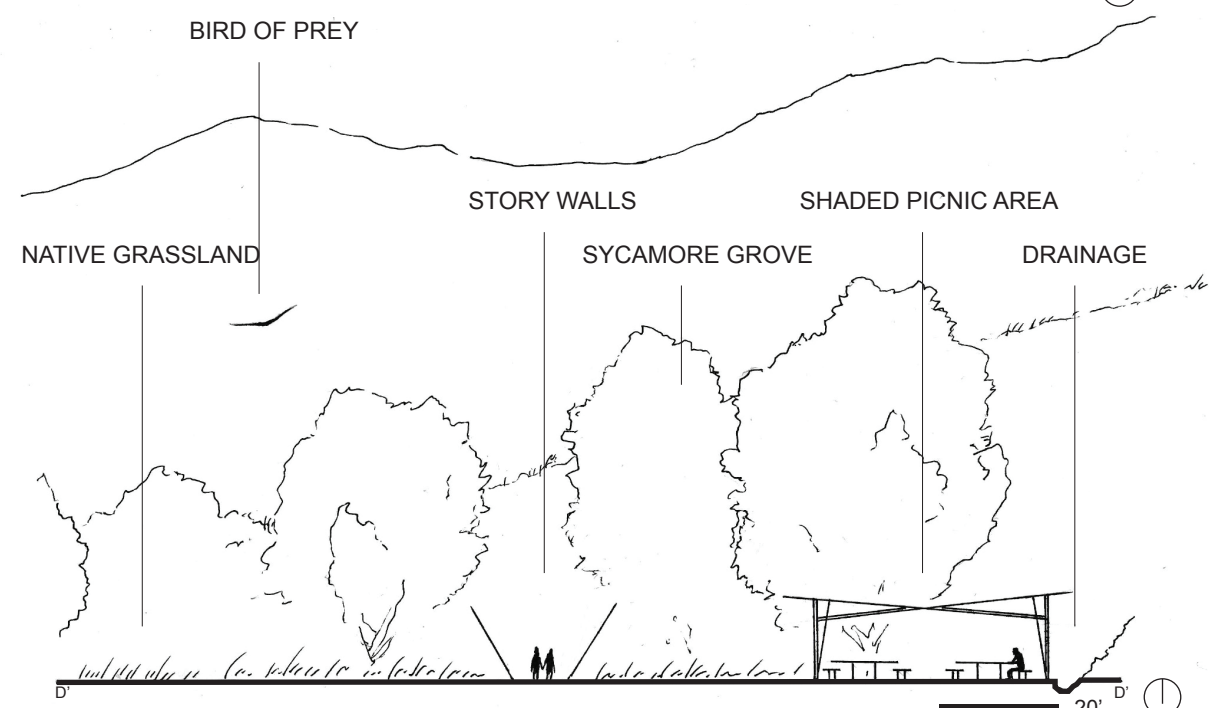
KEY MAP

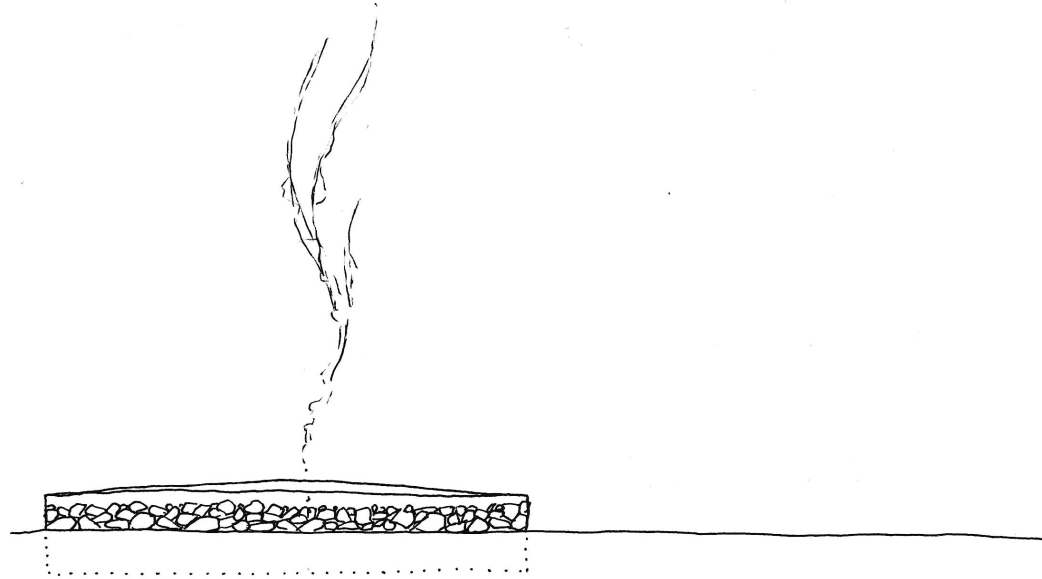
PERSPECTIVE - STORY WALL ENCOUNTER



SECTION - GRASSLAND EXPANSE

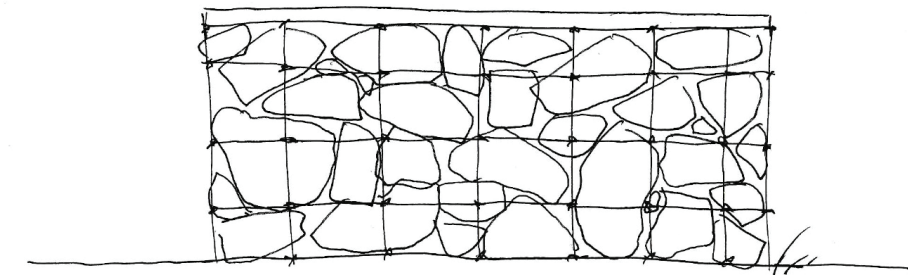
35'





Subterranean ceremony structure

For the private use of Indigenous groups to celebrate and revitalize cultural traditions

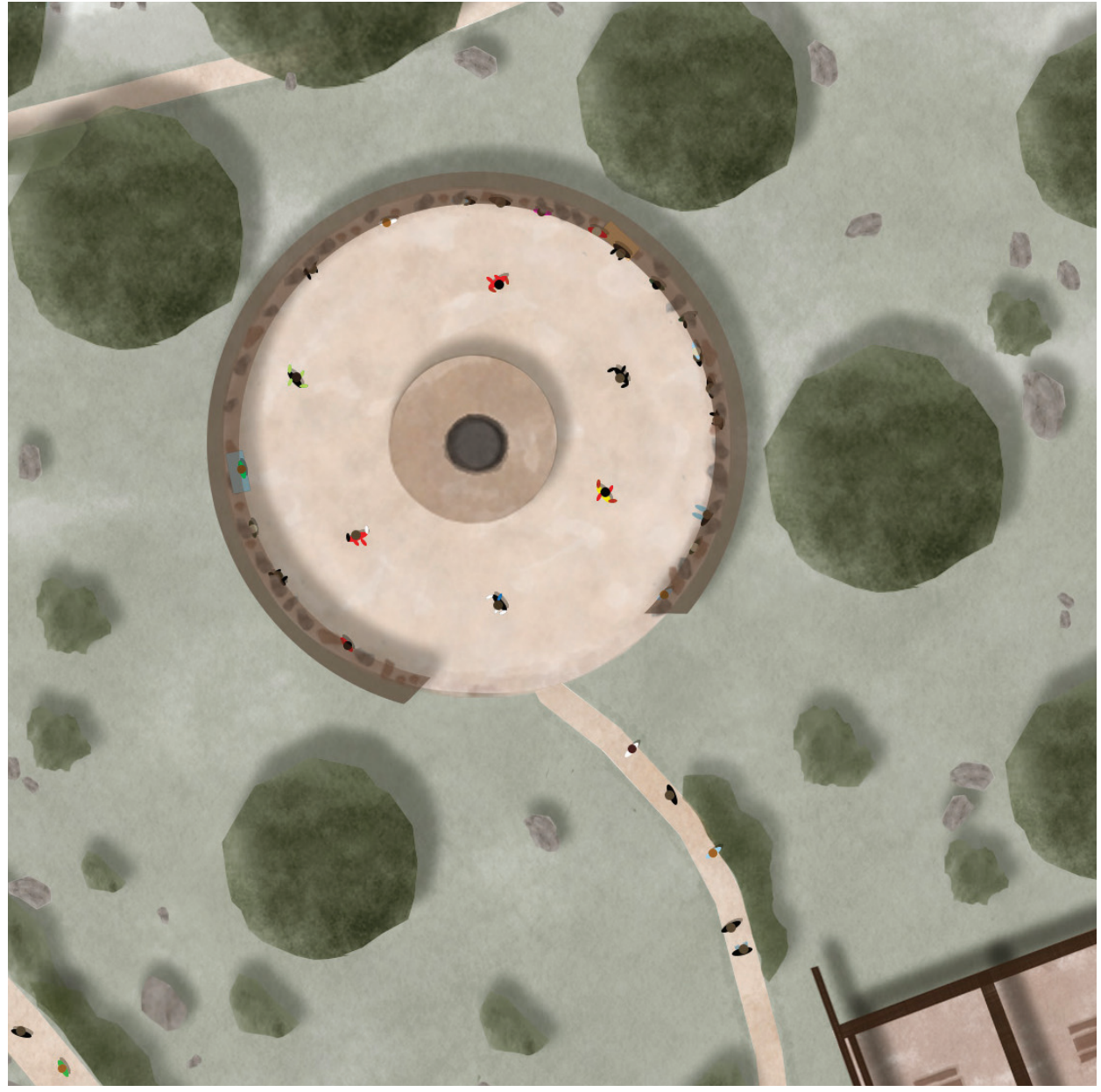


Gabion seating

Utilizing river rock to help generate a sense of place and to remain as connected to the natural materials as possible

CULTURAL FIELD / INDIGENOUS ACTIVE USE

ENLARGEMENT



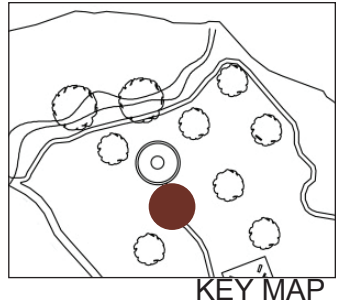
CEREMONY CIRCLE

Subterranean structure for heat retention and stability. These types of structures were used in the mountain ranges by Native people to help provide shelter during cold seasons.

An open air roof will allow for light, smoke and prayers to reach the heavens. Surrounding fields are cultivated Native foods and cultural plants for Indigenous use.

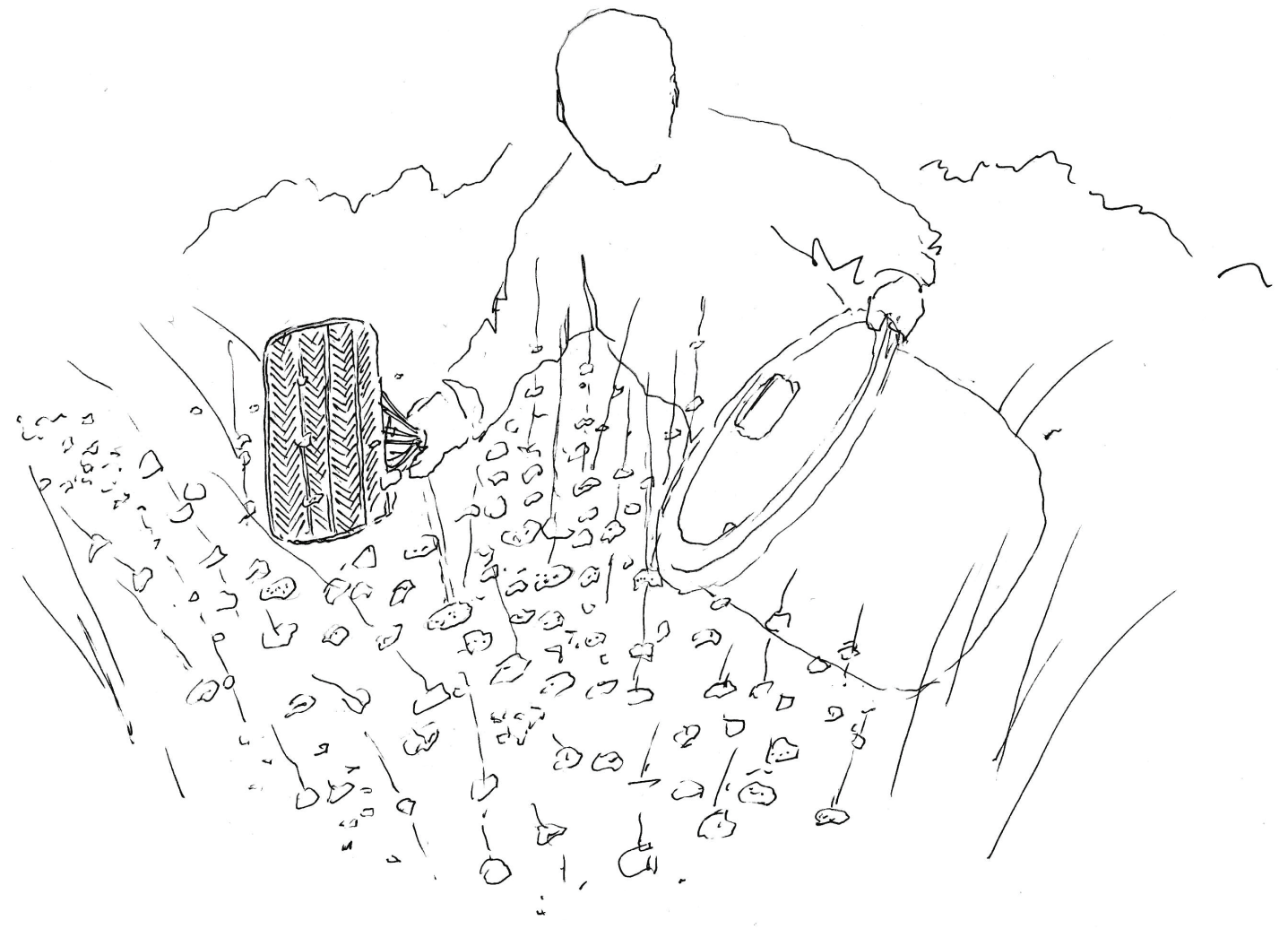
HARVEST HUT

Shaded pergola area dedicated to food processing and community gathering

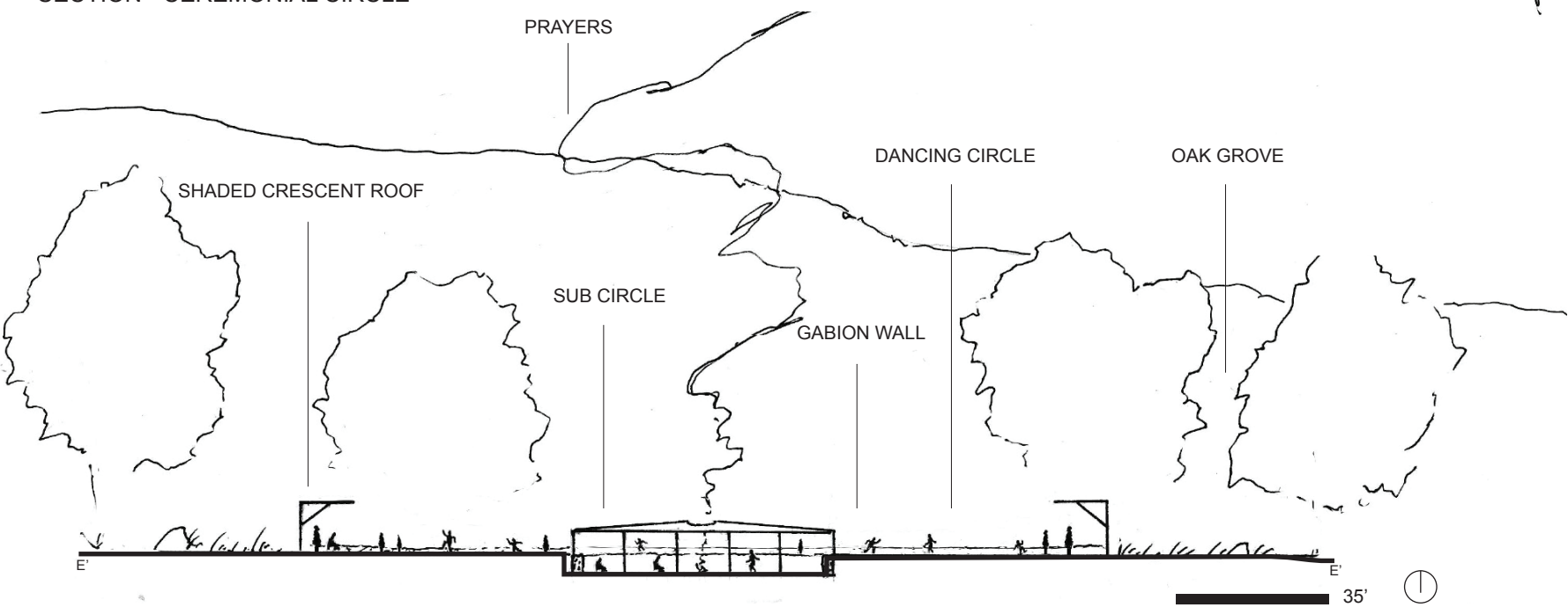


KEY MAP

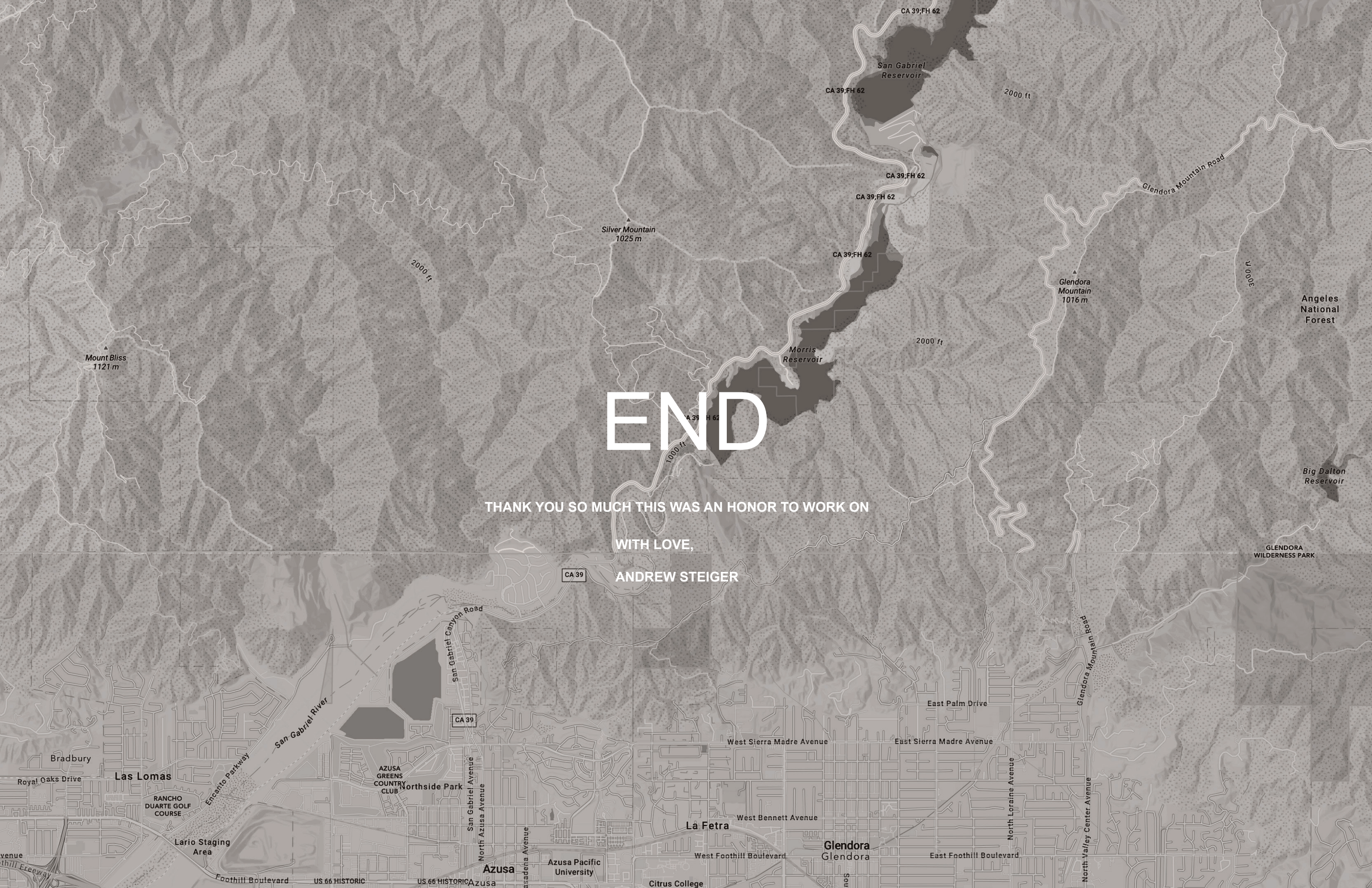
PERSPECTIVE - TRADITIONAL HARVESTING



SECTION - CEREMONIAL CIRCLE



35'



END

THANK YOU SO MUCH THIS WAS AN HONOR TO WORK ON

WITH LOVE,

ANDREW STEIGER