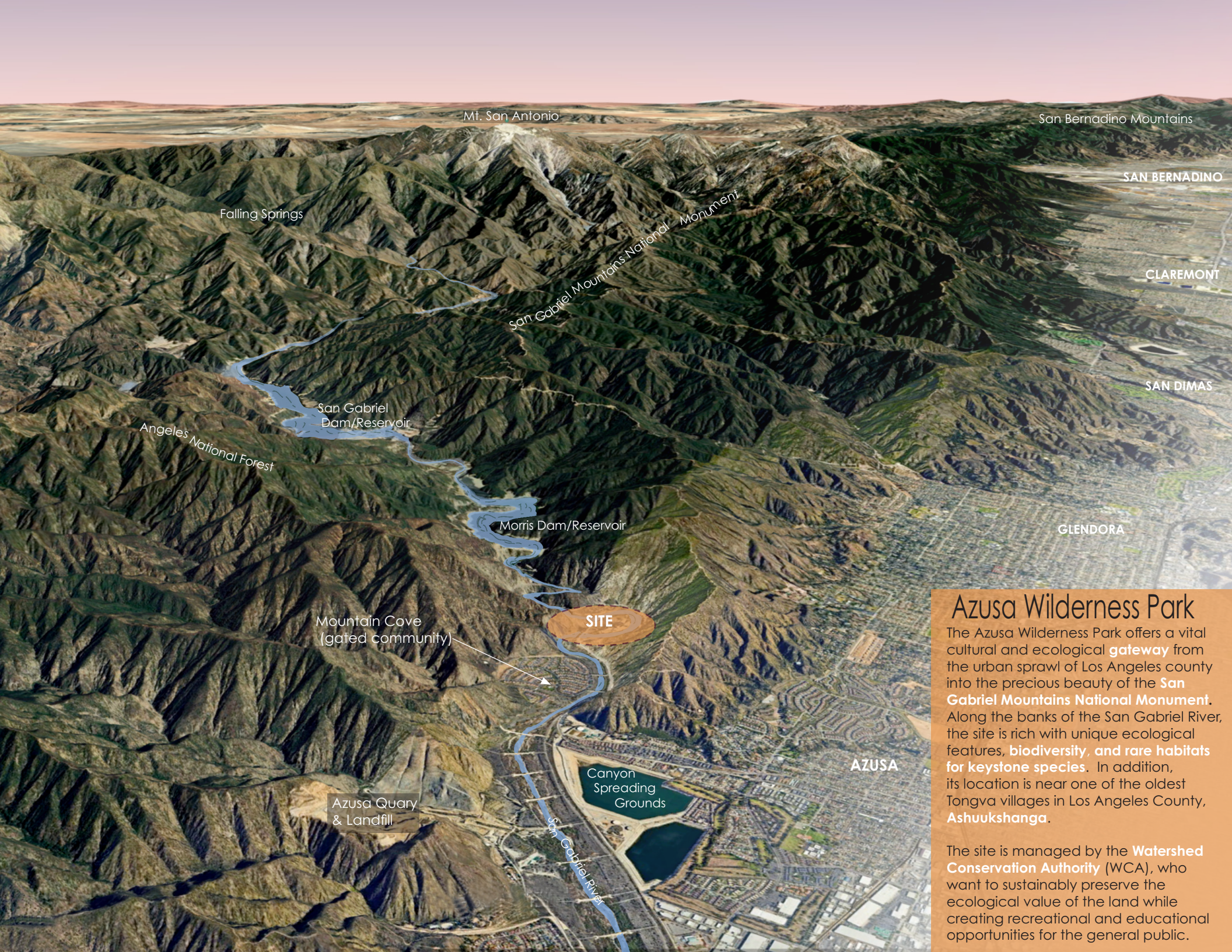




ASUKSAVIT IXASKUSA

“As practitioners of nature, we realize that our species does not exist in isolation from the biosphere; rather, our fate and that of our children and the future depend on it.” Mati Waiya

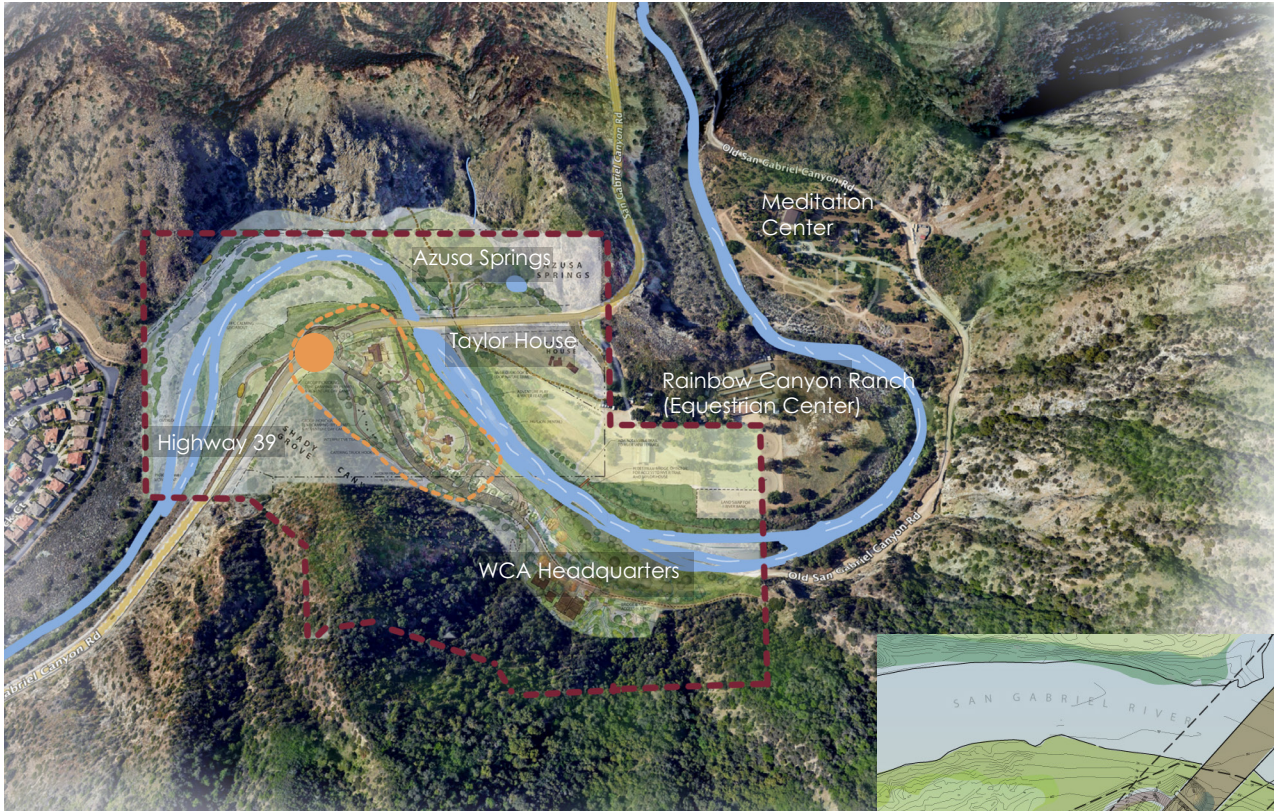


Azusa Wilderness Park

The Azusa Wilderness Park offers a vital cultural and ecological **gateway** from the urban sprawl of Los Angeles county into the precious beauty of the **San Gabriel Mountains National Monument**. Along the banks of the San Gabriel River, the site is rich with unique ecological features, **biodiversity**, and **rare habitats for keystone species**. In addition, its location is near one of the oldest Tongva villages in Los Angeles County, **Ashuukshanga**.

The site is managed by the **Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA)**, who want to sustainably preserve the ecological value of the land while creating recreational and educational opportunities for the general public.

INTRODUCTION | Azusa Wilderness Park Master Plan by WCA



- Entrance to Park
- Park Limits
- Phase 1 Construction

NTS



Current entrance + parking lot to park



VISION

The WCA aims to create a park that will model **sustainable** watershed practices and **open space preservation** for this region. Improved trails, restored vegetation, added recreational and educational opportunities while having minimal impact on the land is their main vision for this **+ - 70 acre park**.

Phase 1 is expected to break ground in 2025. This project addresses Phase 2 of the park.



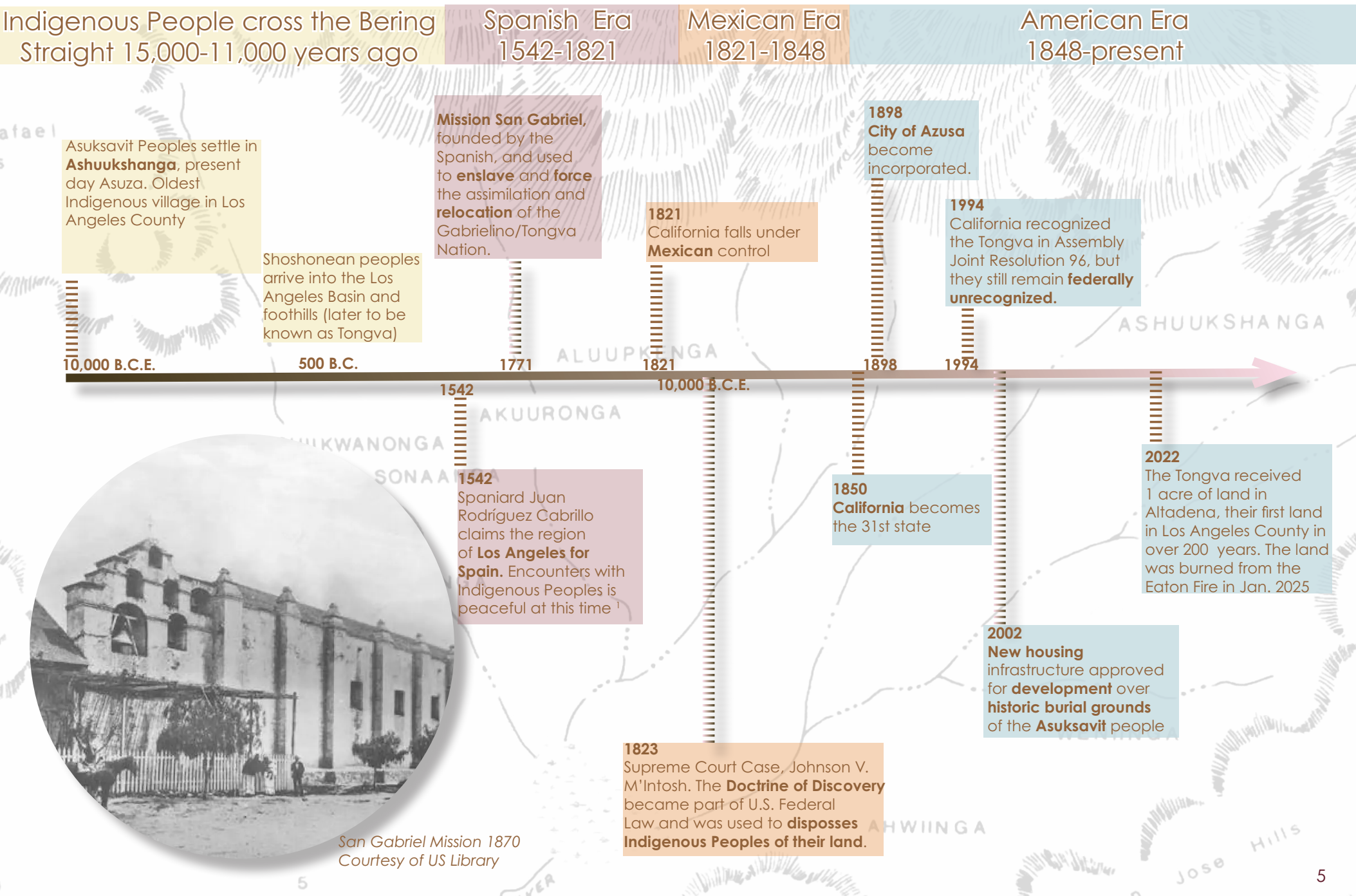
Phase 1: Entry Design Concept

■ Phase 1



SITE HISTORY

According to Gabrielino consultant José Zalvidea, there are 2 translations for *Ashuukshanga*, which survive in the current city name of Azusa: 'asuk, meaning [his grandmother], or *su abuela la tierra* [his grandmother the earth]. Another translation is 'poco vuelta' [little turn] or *little bend in the canyon*.



ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

A **Superfund site** is the **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)**, enacted by Congress in 1980. This law created a tax on the chemical and petroleum industries and provided broad Federal authority to respond directly to **releases of hazardous substances** that may **endanger public health or the environment**.

10,000 B.C.E.

Southern California is inhabited by Indigenous peoples descended from ancient hunters who came to North America through the Bering Strait.

1891

President Harrison designated **federal protection** of forested lands in the San Gabriel Mountains.

~1939

El Encanto Restaurant opens on site.

1943-1993

Morris Dam used as submarine ballistic missile testing site during WWII through the Cold War. Set up by Cal Tech scientists working for the US Navy, a 250-foot concrete ski jump-like ramp was a launch point for thousands of unarmed torpedoes. Dozens of torpedos sank in the mud at the bottom of the dam, not all were recovered.

1985

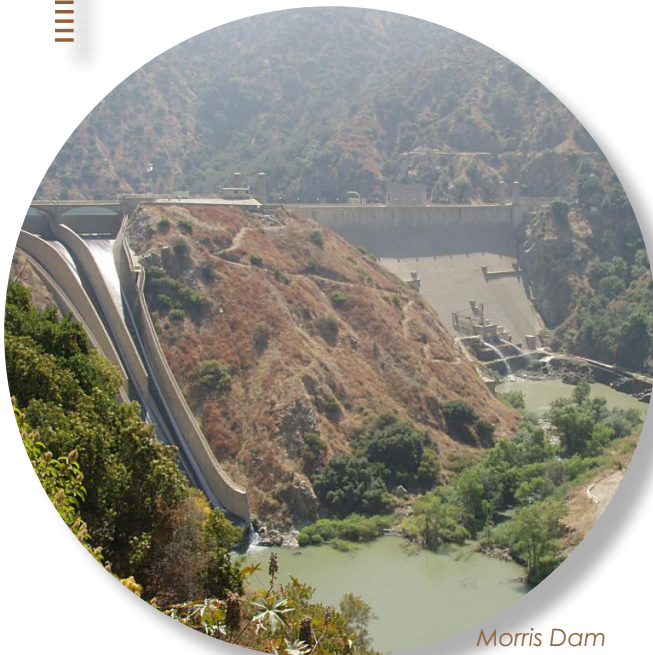
USEPA declared **Aerojet Manufacturing plant** a **Superfund site**, forcing them to clean up the contaminated groundwater. Northrup Grunman purchased plant in 2001.



U.S. Navy Torpedo Test, Morris Dam

2024

President Biden expanded Monument to include 105,919 additional acres.



Morris Dam

1934

Morris Dam built to hold water planned to be piped from the Colorado river. It's 160' deep and 245' wide.

2014

Barack Obama declared the **San Gabriel Mountains National Monument**, protecting **346,177 acres** of land in the San Gabriel and San Bernadino mountain ranges.

2010

17,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil including perchlorates, a cancer-causing type of rocket propellant, arsenic and other dangerous compounds were hauled away to a hazardous waste material dump.



Lario Staging Area

2025

USACE & USEPA designate **Lario Park** just west of Azusa as a hazardous waste sorting site for the **Eaton Fire debris**.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

INDIGENOUS LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



STORYTELLING IN THE FIELD



HONOR HISTORY
PAST

PRESERVE + ADAPT
FUTURE



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING



REVITALIZE + ENRICH
PRESENT

SHEEP + GOAT GRAZING



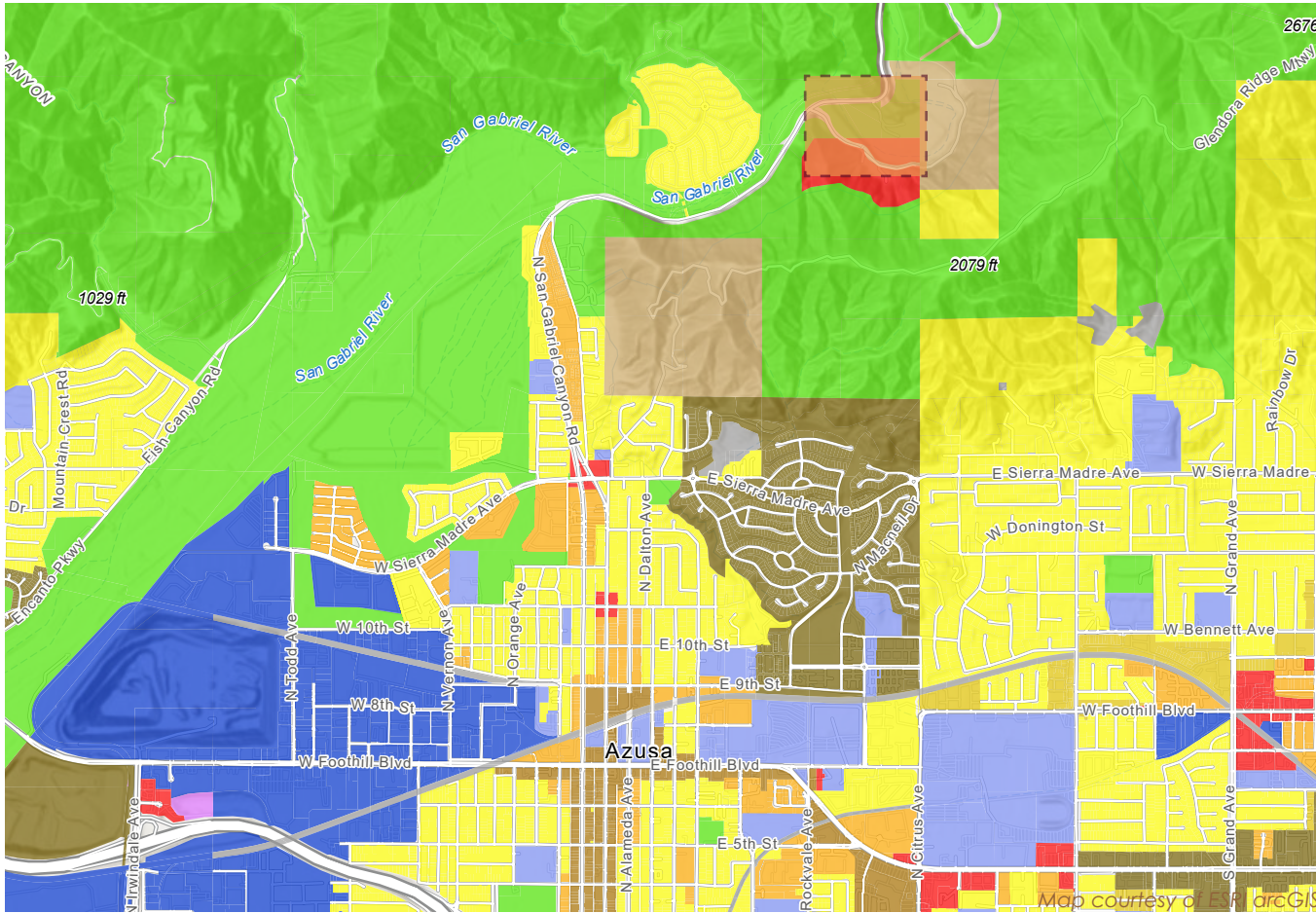
RIVER ACCESS

ENHANCED TRAIL SYSTEM



SITE ANALYSIS | Regional Land use

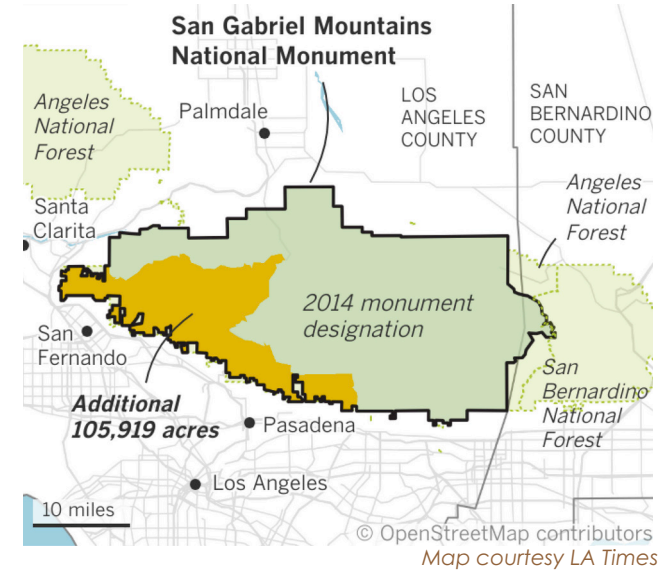
Land use within the San Gabriel Canyon area is mostly low intensity recreation and open space. The project site lies just within the limits of Azusa, in a 70+- acre open space and commercial/services zone. The Los Angeles Department of Public Work' 2006 *San Gabriel River Corridor Master Plan* includes the "Azusa Wilderness Park" as an enhancement project sponsored by the city of Azusa.



LEGEND:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Site | Commercial + Services | Mixed Residential + Commercial |
| Single Family Residential | Facilities | Open Space + Recreation |
| Multi-Family Residential | Industrial | Specific Plan |
| Mixed Residential | Transportation, Communications + Utilities | |
| Rural Residential | Mixed Commercial + Industrial | |

A National Monument is a nationally significant land or body of water set aside for permanent protection. Only a President can create monuments by using the authority granted to them by Congress in the Antiquities Act of 1906. President Barack Obama designated the original boundaries of the National Monument in 2014 followed by President Biden in 2024. The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument designation adds up to 455,407 acres total.



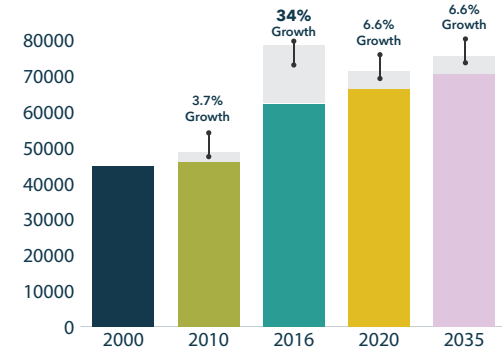
Jurisdictional Agencies:



SITE ANALYSIS | Demographics + Population Density

The City of Azusa is situated 27 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. About **18 million** people live within a **1 hr drive** of Azusa Wilderness Park. Azusa encompasses approximately 9.13 sq. miles and has a current population of 45,000. Projected population growth for the next 10 years is 6.6%. The current population in Glendora, the city just east of Azusa, is 51,350, with an estimated rate of decline over the next 10 years of 1.68%. Monrovia has a population of 36,590 with a 10 year population increase of 3.7%

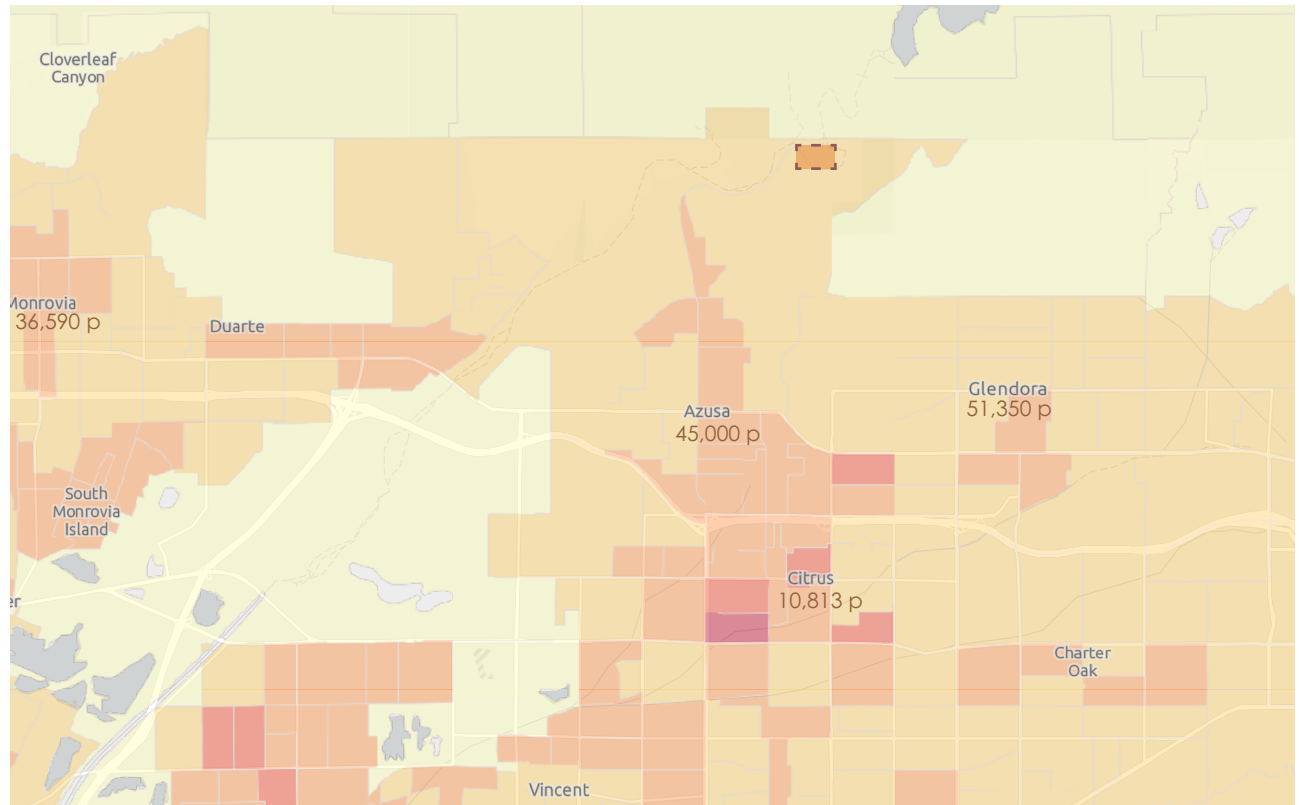
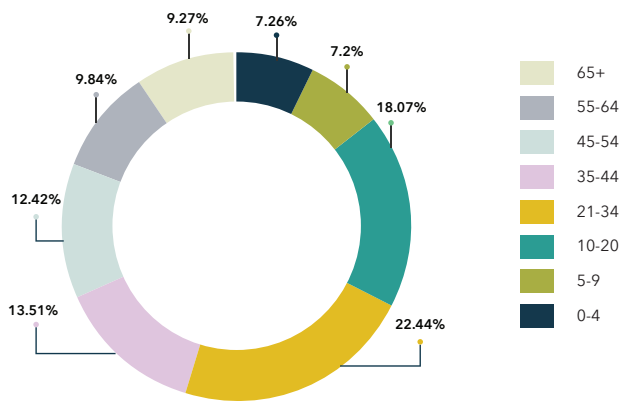
AZUSA POPULATION GROWTH



MEDIAN AGE COMPARISON

- Azusa Median Resident Age
31.7 Years
- San Gabriel Valley Median Age
38.16 Years
- California Median Age
35.7 Years

POPULATION BY AGE

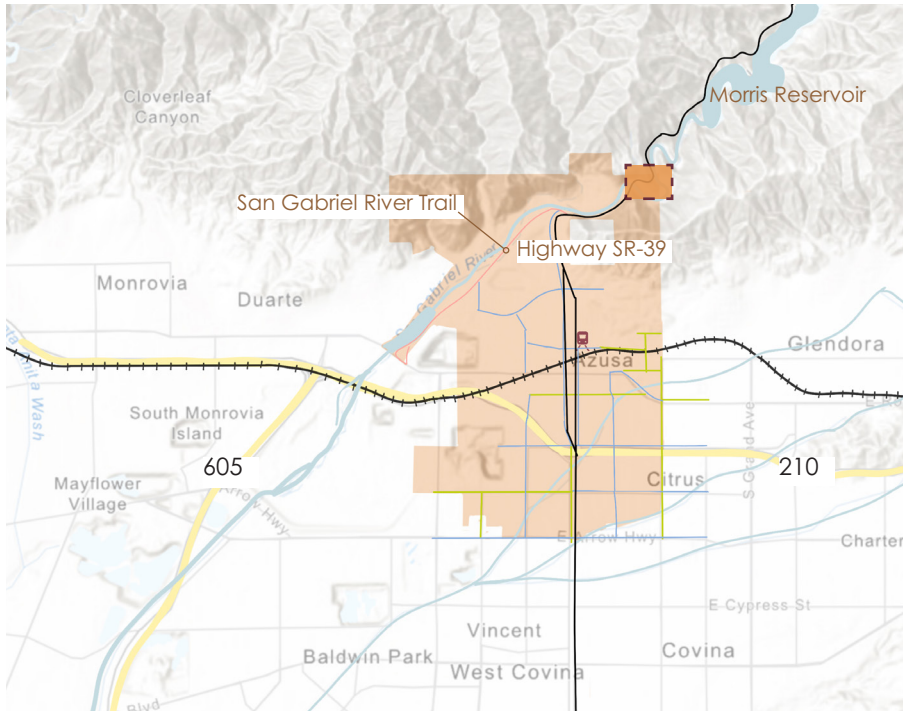


Population Density Map per 2020 Census



Graphs courtesy of the City of Azusa

SITE ANALYSIS | Regional Circulation



LEGEND:

- Site
- Bike Route w/ Signage
- Freeways
- Bike Lane
- Bike Path / Trail
- Azusa City Boundary
- A Line Metro Light Rail
- A Line Metro Light Rail Station to/from Long Beach via Union Station



Old San Gabriel Road at the entrance to the park is easy to miss with traffic moving at high speeds.

STRONG REGIONAL CONNECTIONS:

The **Metro A Line** goes to and from Long Beach to Azusa through downtown Los Angeles. The commute is 1 hr from Union Station to Azusa.

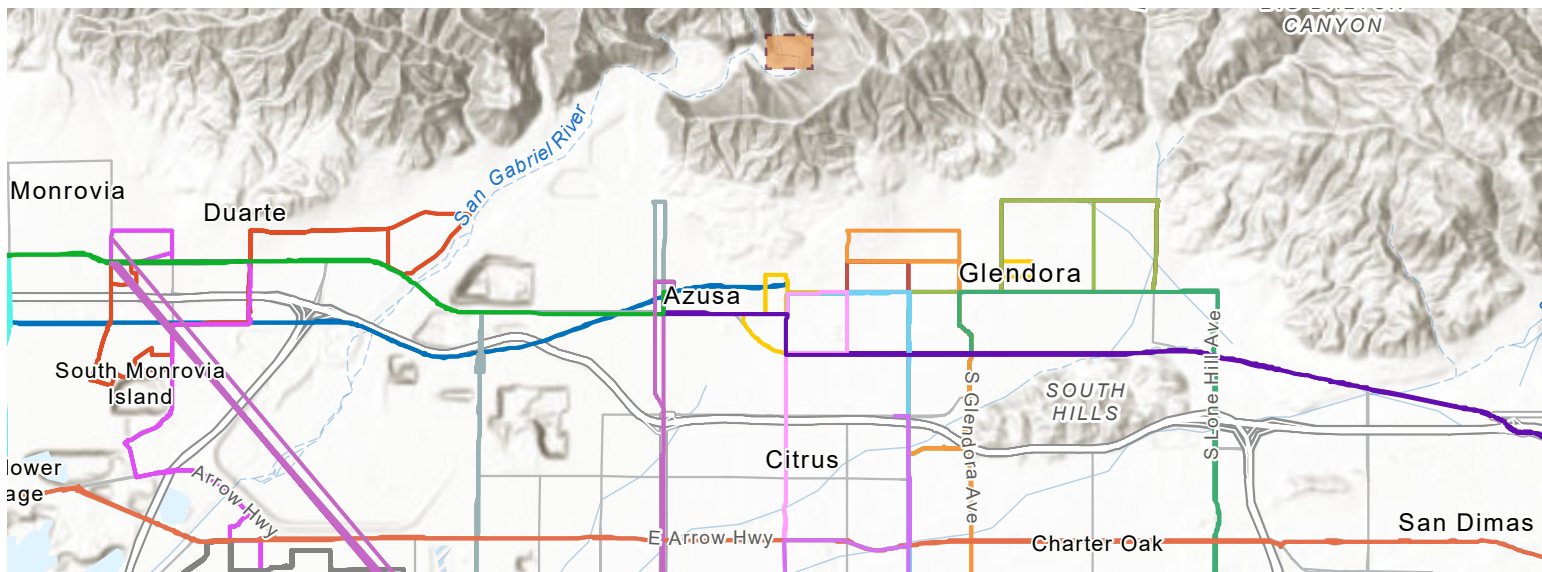
Downtown Pasadena is 18 miles away from the site. The 210 Freeway is 5 miles south of the site.

The 605 Freeway is 6.7 miles away from the site.

California **State Route 39** (San Gabriel Canyon Road) is the **only road access** through San Gabriel Canyon, ending at Crystal Lake Recreation Area. Traffic flows at high speeds, surpassing the posted speed limit of 55 mph. The vehicular bridge just past the entrance to the site offers minimal pedestrian and cyclist protection.

CYCLING:

The San Gabriel Bike Trail travels **39.3 miles from Azusa to Seal Beach**, but it ends at State Route 39, just before reaching the site. In Addition, cyclists share the road with vehicles on State Route 39.

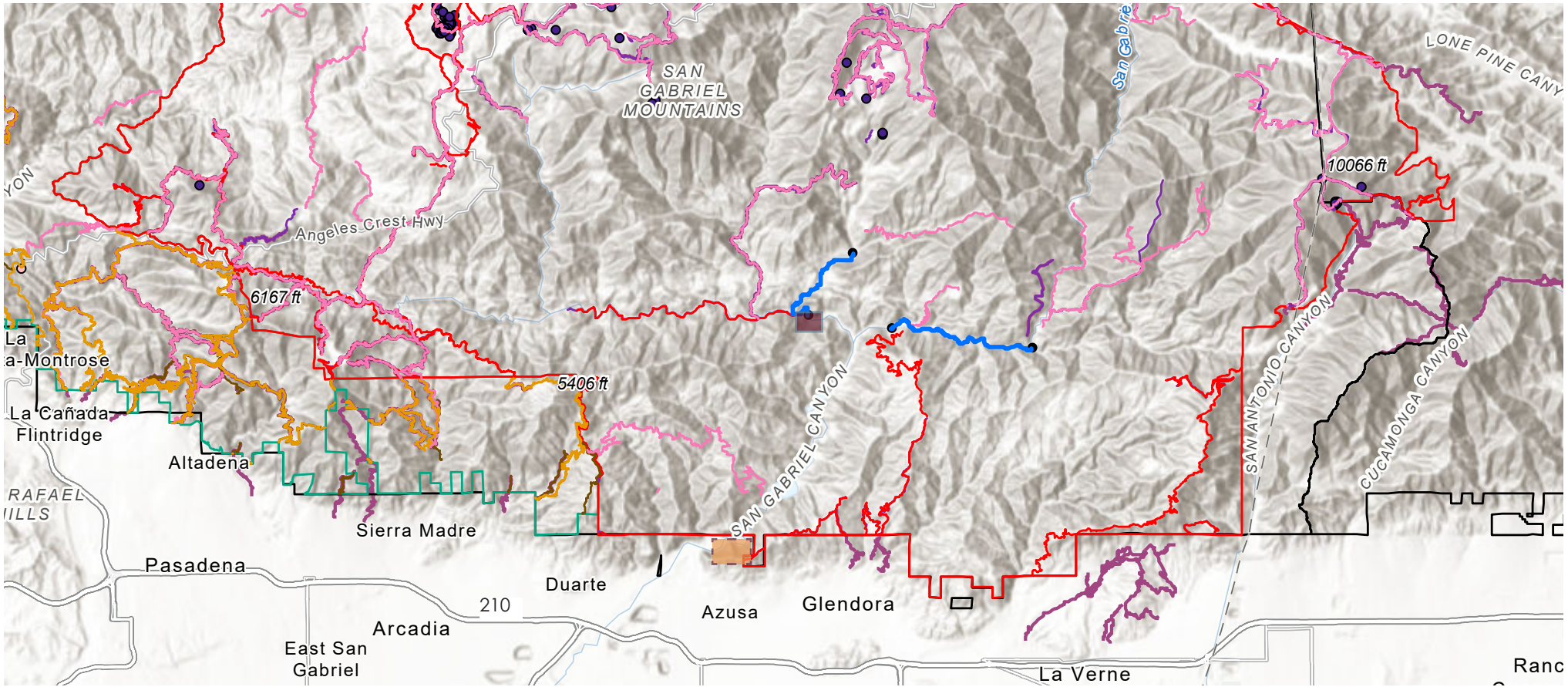


Regional Bus Lines

NTS



SITE ANALYSIS | Trails + Recreation



Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS

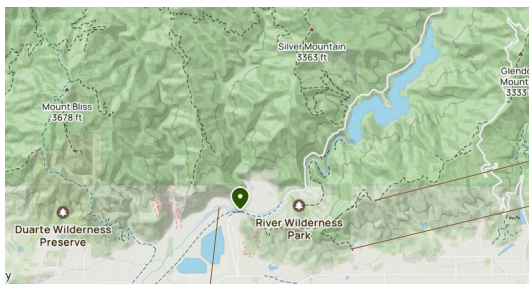
LEGEND

- Site
- River Run
- Hiking Trails
- River Access Sites
- Climbing Sites
- USFS Trails
- Bike Trails boundary expansion
- OHV Area (Off Highway Vehicles)
- San Gabriel Mountains Boundary
- San Gabriel Mountains Boundary Expansion
- Bike Trails
- USFS Trails boundary expansion

There are wonderful hiking trails and camping grounds in the canyon and throughout the Angeles National Forest. Connecting to the closest trails and hikes would be a great asset to the site.

The San Gabriel Mountains have offer 365 miles of roads designated for OHV use, yet limited access to amenities.

Being situated at the base of the canyon offers great opportunities for campers, hikers or OHV riders to stop and eat before or after their recreational activities.



Ridge Trail
Garcia Trail



Old San Gabriel Road



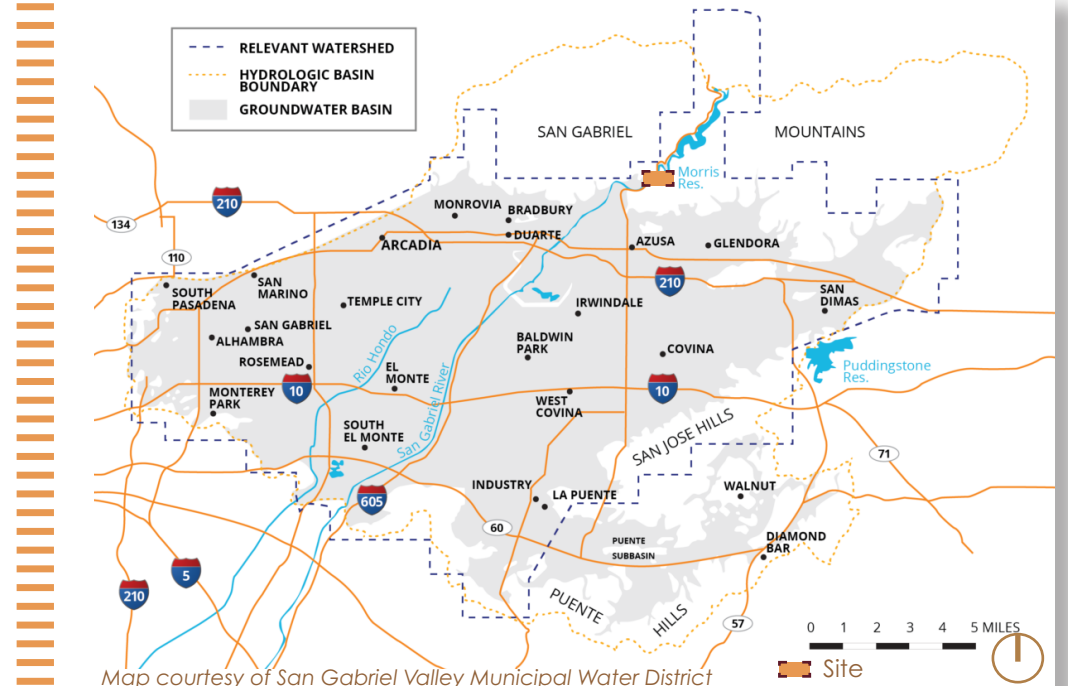
SITE ANALYSIS | San Gabriel River Watershed

The San Gabriel River is an important source of water for L.A. County. The San Gabriel watershed begins in the San Gabriel mountains covering 689 square miles, with a fresh water capacity of 8.6 million acre-feet. Over 46 water departments, private water companies and other water agencies draw about 200,000 acre-feet of water annually to meet potable water needs.

The San Gabriel Watershed drains 689 sq. mi.



San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District Service Area



San Gabriel River watershed Site

Land Use in the Watershed:

- 50% Rural
- 24% Residential
- 15% Commercial
- 9% Other

Total Population within watershed: 2 million

The San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District was formed in 1959 to serve 4 districts: Alhambra, Azusa, Monterey Park and Sierra Madre. It serves to bring water from Northern California through the State Water Project and ensure a reliable groundwater source in the San Gabriel basin. Azusa receives water from the San Gabriel River treated at the Canyon Filtration Plant, 11 wells throughout the basin and through the Devil Canyon-Azusa pipeline.



The San Gabriel River begins in the San Gabriel Mountains and flows 58 miles south through 19 cities, until it reaches the Pacific Ocean. The San Gabriel river is hydraulically connected to the L.A. River at the Whittier Narrows Reservoir. Despite access to fresh mountain water, the region still relies on water sources from Northern California and the Colorado River, from which water is imported to replenish the San Gabriel Groundwater Basin.

Groundwater levels have dipped considerably since 2011

Dams and Reservoirs in the San Gabriel Mountains:

Cogswell Dam: In the West Fork of San Gabriel Canyon, near the headwaters of the San Gabriel River.

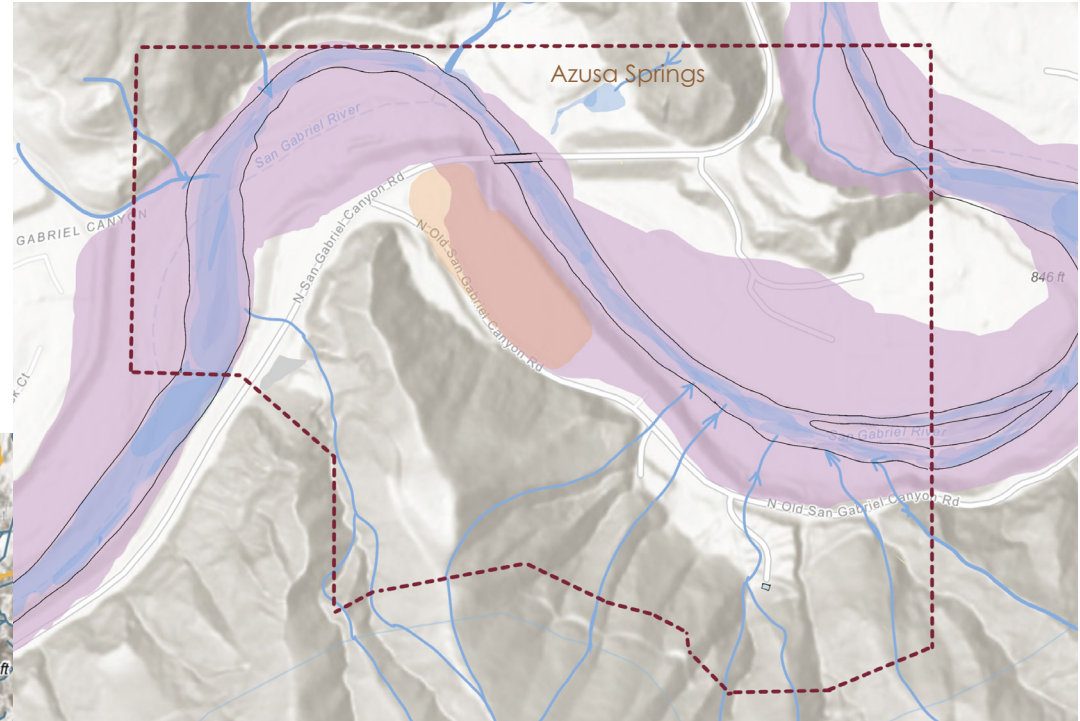
San Gabriel Dam: 7 miles north of Azusa city limits. 325' rockfill dam forms the 44,183 acre-foot reservoir. Used mainly for flood and sediment control

Morris Dam: 1 mi north of city limits, a smaller concrete dam forming a 27,800 acre-foot reservoir. From WWII to the 1990s, the reservoir was used by the US Navy as a torpedo launch site.

Azusa spreading grounds 1 & 2 are used to recharge the aquifer used for drinking water in the San Gabriel Basin. Water is delivered from the State Water Project in northern California through the Devil Canyon-Azusa pipeline.

SITE ANALYSIS | San Gabriel River and Tributaries

The San Gabriel River and its tributaries drain 689 square miles as the river flows south into the Pacific Ocean. Most of the river remains unchannelized until it reaches the lower portion of the Lower San Gabriel Valley. Dams and Reservoirs in the San Gabriel River help with water conservation and flooding, but also pose a threat to habitat by trapping sediment and fragmenting ecosystems. In the event of damn failure, the Cogswell, San Gabriel and Morris dams could severely impact the city of Azusa.



Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Phase 1 of Master Plan
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Water Flow
- Existing potable water pump system to be discontinued



Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS

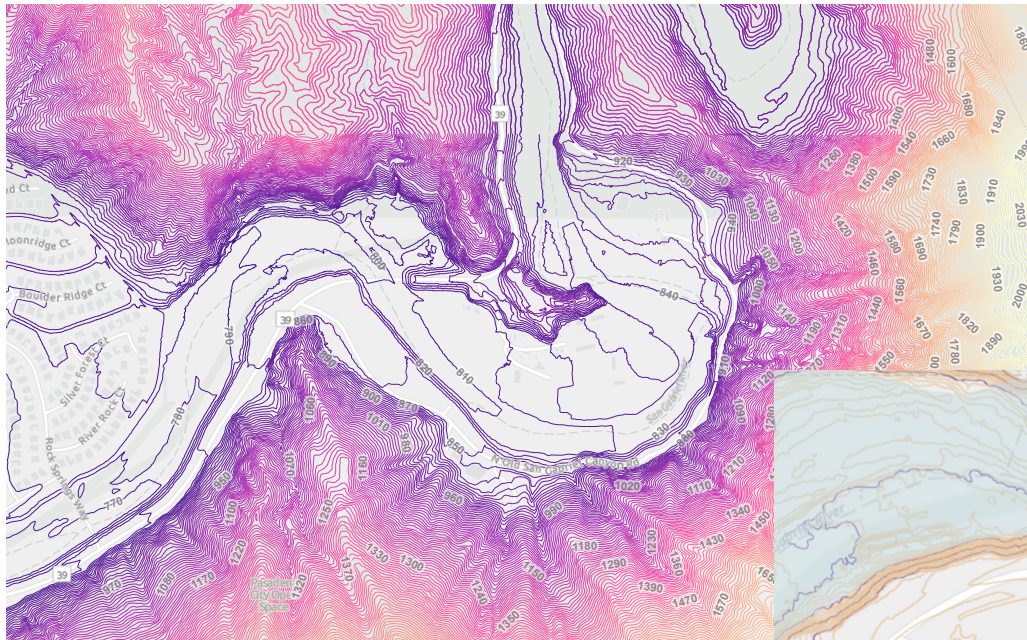
LEGEND

- Site
- California Dam Lines
- Start of San Gabriel River
- USGS Watershed boundary
- Main River flow
- Streams and tributaries

The 1% chance of flooding does not include conditions during a 100-year flood, which are happening more frequently due to climate change. Stormwater management and vegetation buffers will slow and infiltrate stormwater mitigating potential devastation from future floods.

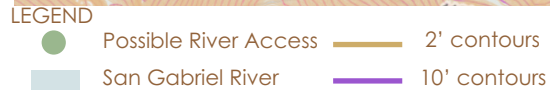
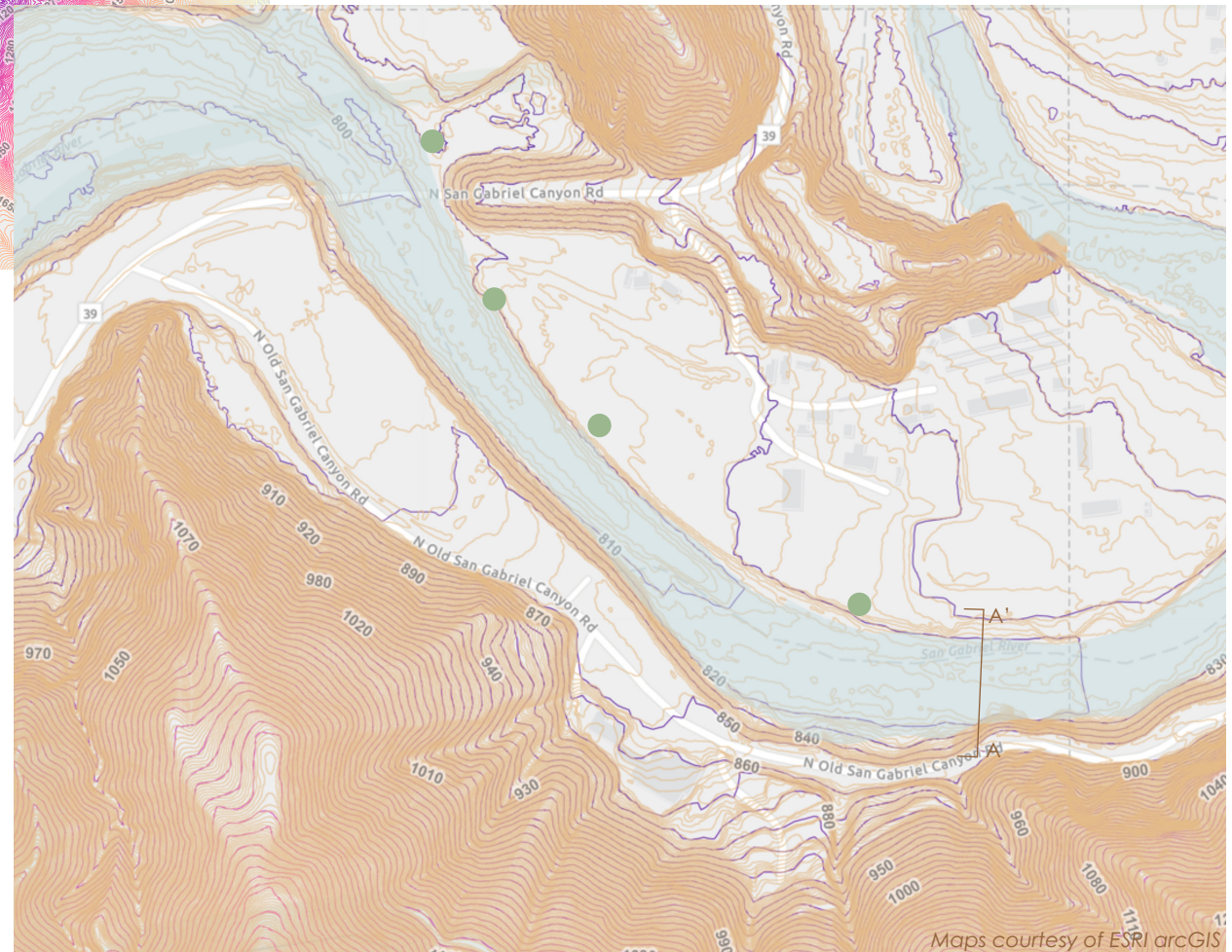
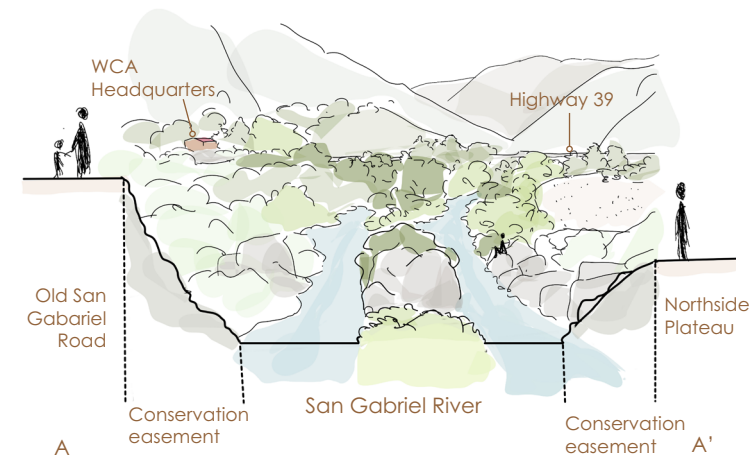
SITE ANALYSIS | Topography

The Steep slopes and narrow ridgelines of the San Gabriel Canyon offer a striking backdrop to the meandering San Gabriel River



The highest peak of the San Gabriel Mountains is Mount San Antonio (Mount Baldy) at 10,066', near the start of the Eastern Fork of the San Gabriel River. The steepest slopes are in the southern portion of the site where the hillside elevation changes from 820' to 1400'. The topography on site consists of flat mesas to steep hillsides on the southern end. Elevations within the project site range from 785' to 860'.

The most accessible points to the river are on the northern bank of the river near the flatter areas of the site.

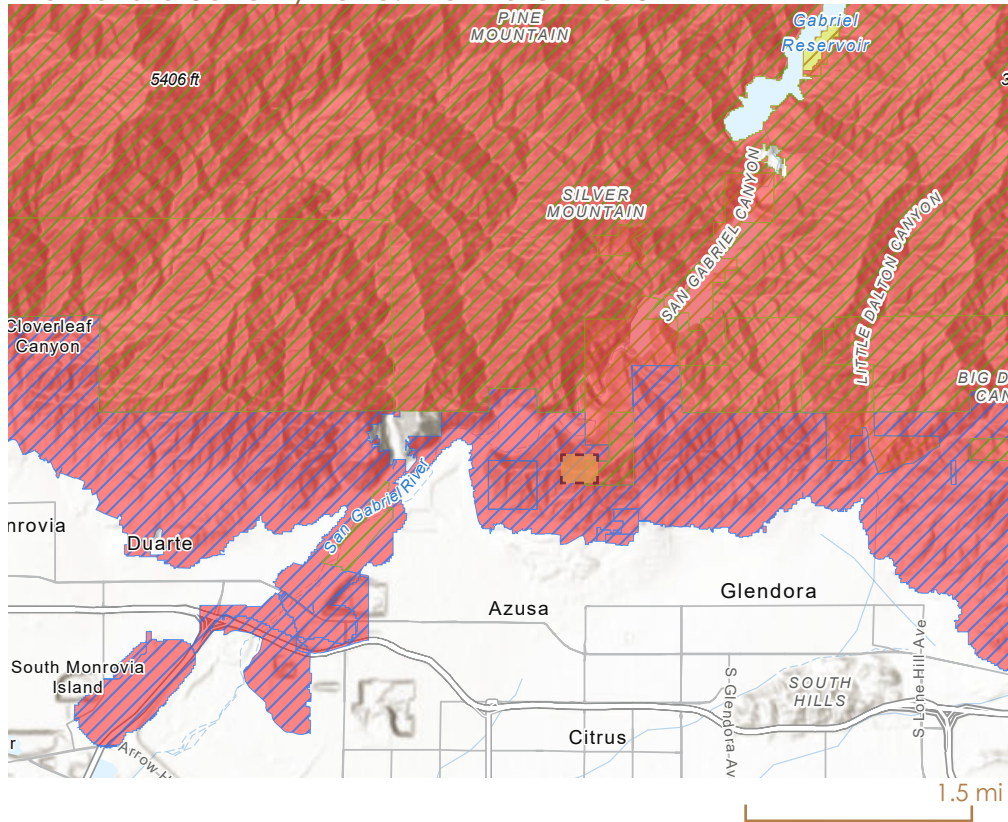


SITE ANALYSIS | Fire + Heat

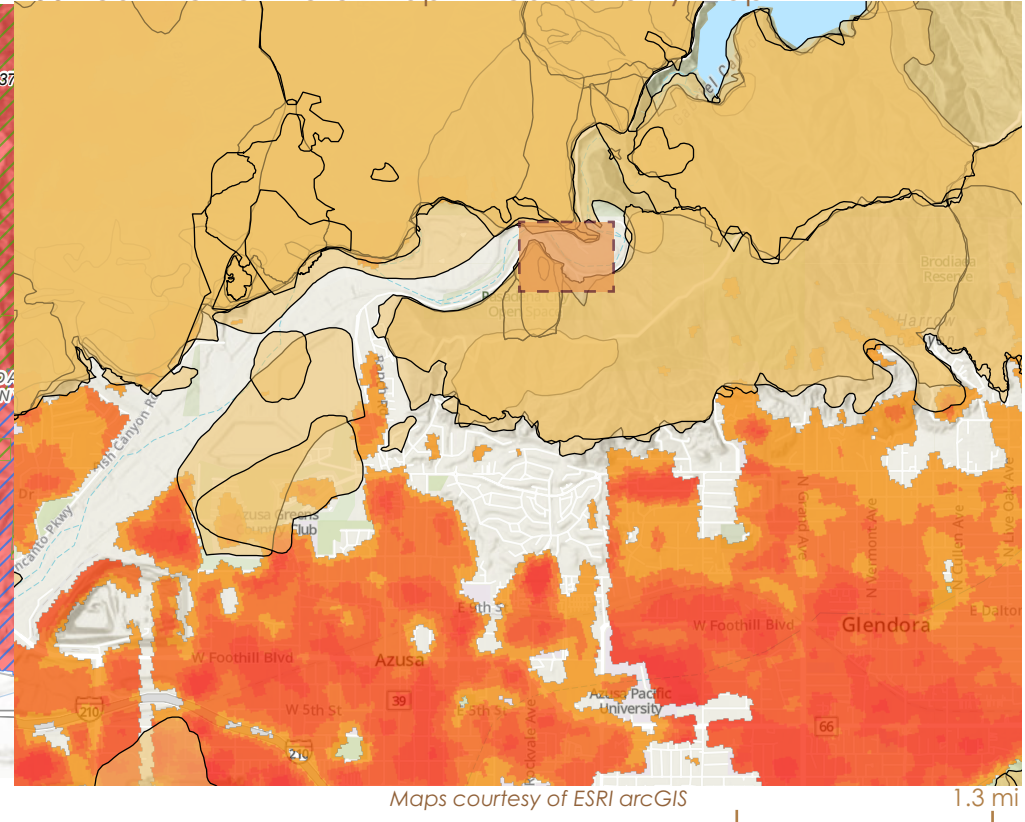
The site exists within a very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ). The devastating Eaton Fire from January 7, 2025, burned through 10,021 acres in the Angeles National Forest and 4,000 acres in the urban valleys below. A lot of native plant communities respond well to wildfires. Most wildfires these days are caused by human activity. The Tongva historically performed controlled burns as an important part of land management practices. Not only did it maintain healthy ecosystems and native plant growth, but it would help prevent larger, more destructive wildfires.

Interestingly, the site has not been subject to a wildfire in the last 100 years. It could be from the unique position of the mountain peaks, which may act as windbreakers, and the bend and flow of the river in this area. Planning properly for fire, is still critical in this area.

Fire Hazard Severity Zone: Pre-March 2025



100 Year Fire Perimeter Map + Heat Severity Map



LEGEND:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| FIRE HAZARD RESPONSIBILITY AREAS | | FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY |
| Site | State | Very High |
| Federal | Local | Moderate |

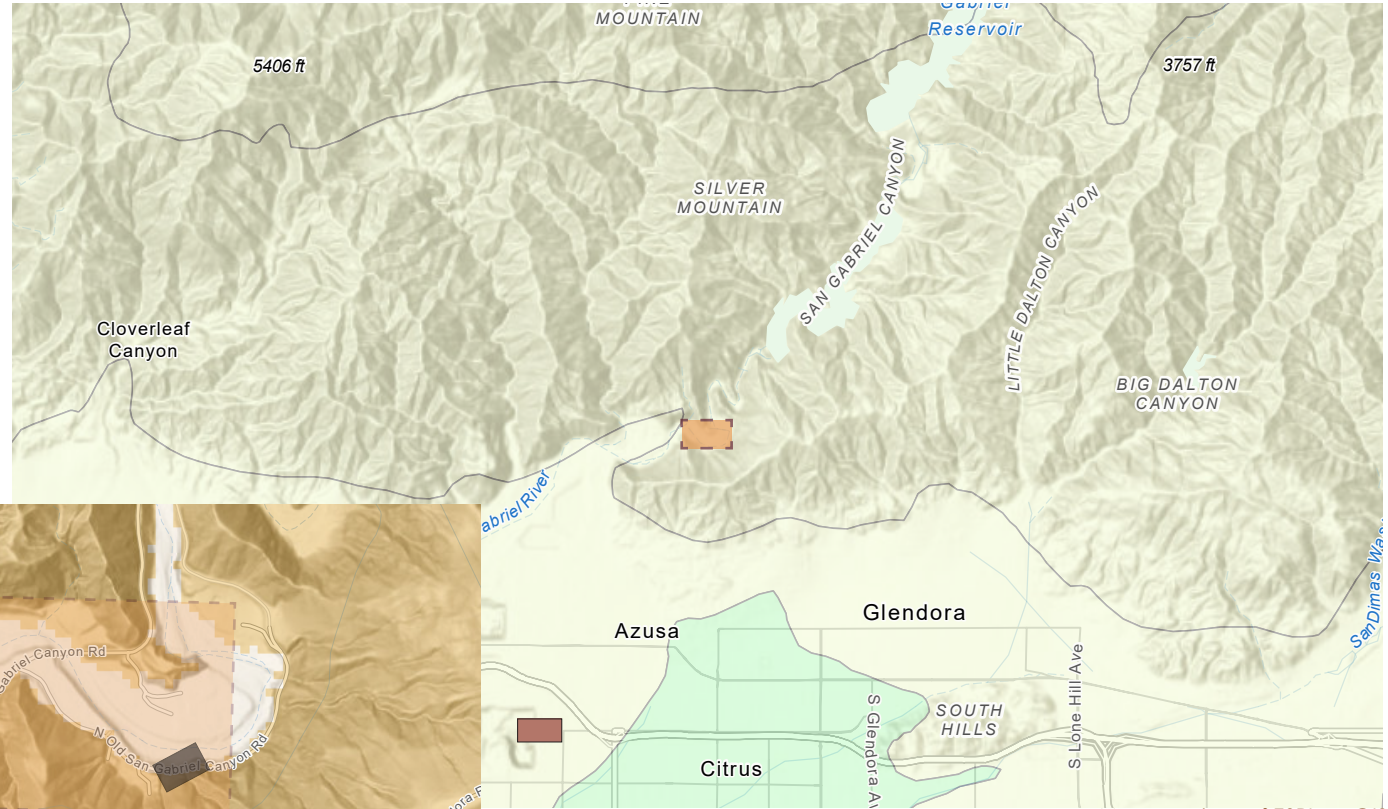
LEGEND:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Site | Very High |
| Historic Fire Perimeters | Moderate |

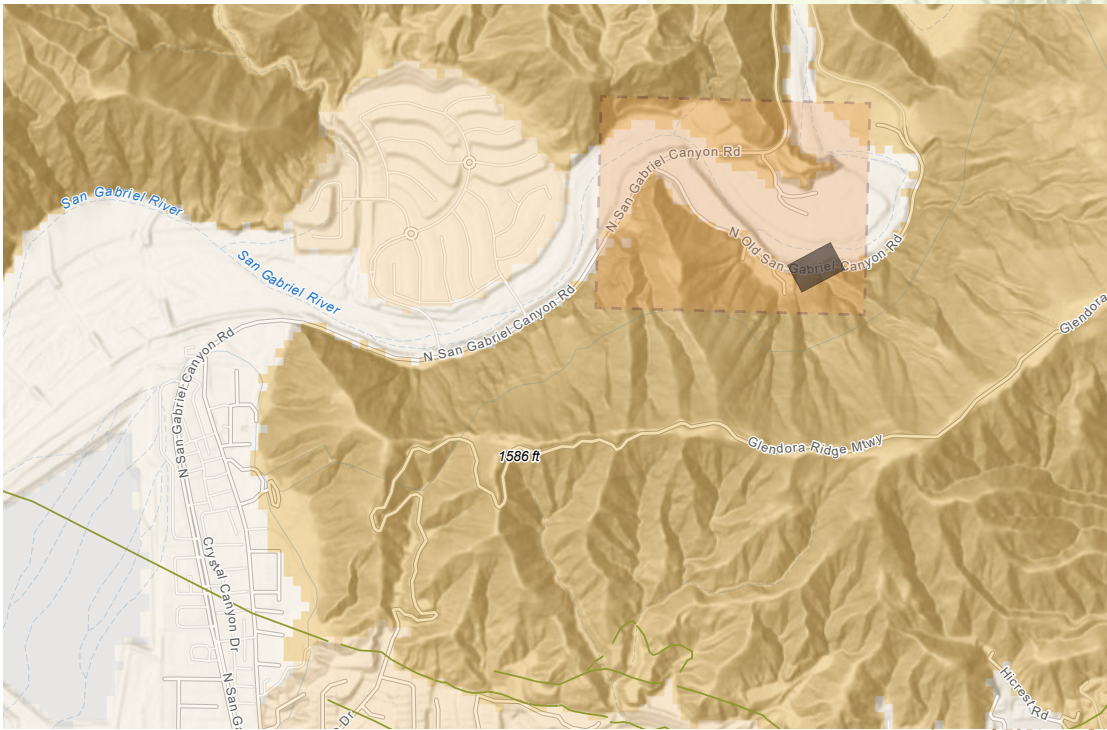
Like much of the San Gabriel Valley, Azusa, Glendora and surrounding cities, suffer from excessive heat during the summer months. This data was collected in 2022.

SITE ANALYSIS | Landslides, Fault Lines + Soil

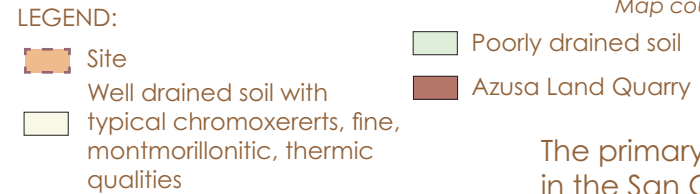
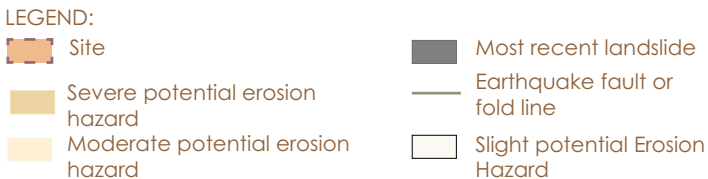
Landslides and rockfalls, particularly debris flows, are common among the steep slopes of the San Gabriel mountains. They usually occur after heavy rainfall, wildfires or earthquakes. The steepness of the slopes and crumbly soil contribute to their occurrence. The most recent landslide on the site blocked Old San Gabriel Road, the only access road to Morris Dam and the Meditation Center.



Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS



Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS



Remains of landslide on Old San Gabriel Road

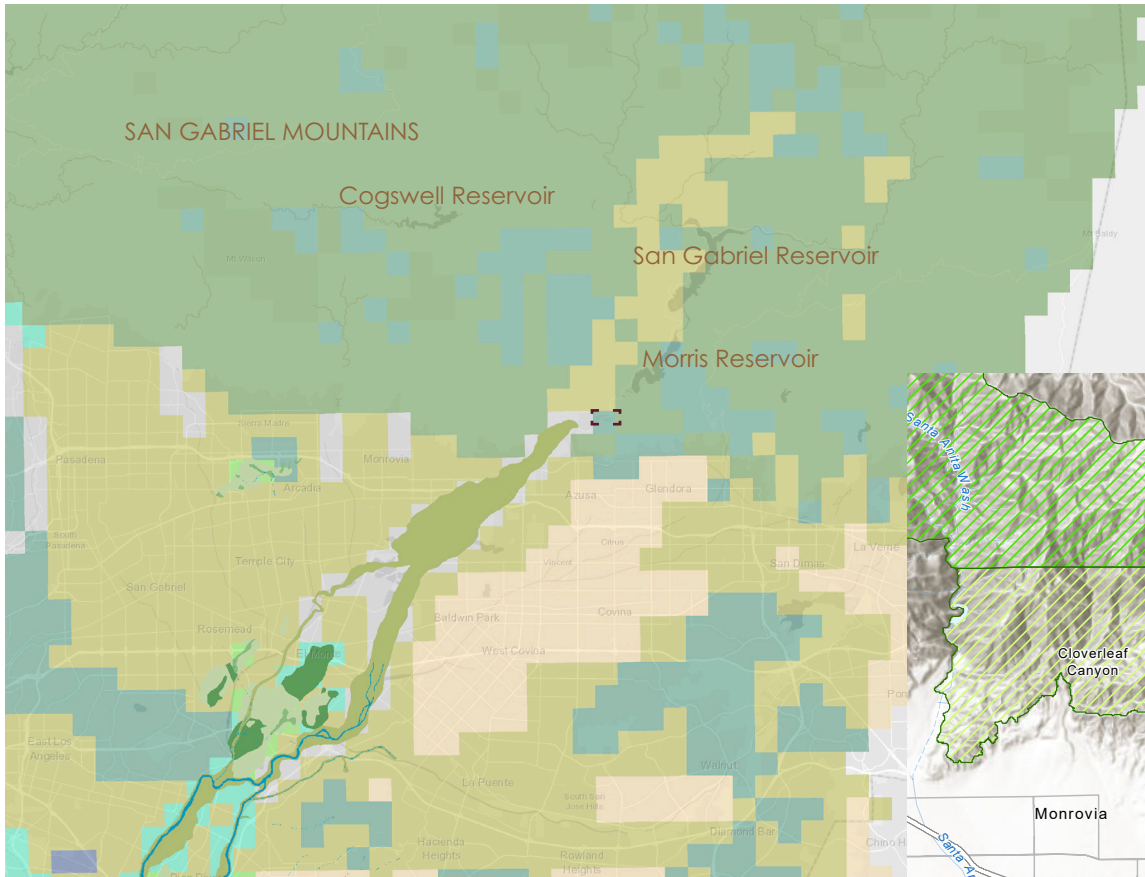
The primary geology in the San Gabriel Mountains are silt loam and sand. Alluvial deposits are present at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, which are primarily made up of boulders, gravels, cobbles, in a silty sand mix.

SITE ANALYSIS | Historical + Significant Ecology of the San Gabriel Watershed

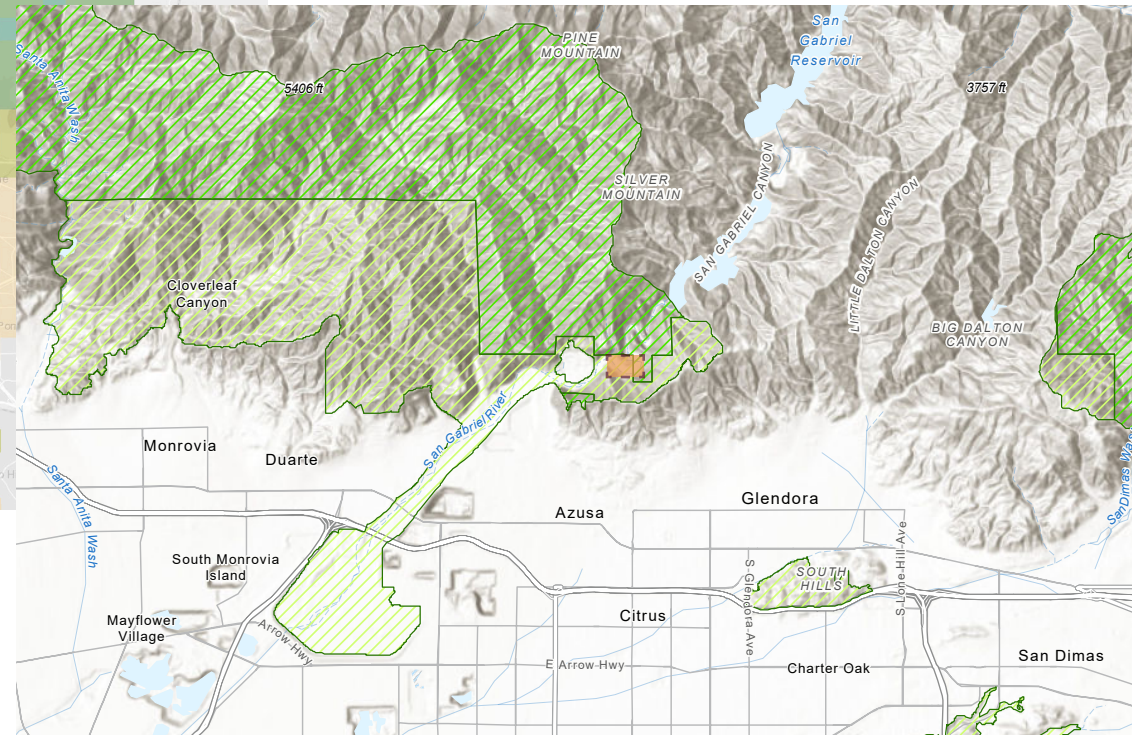
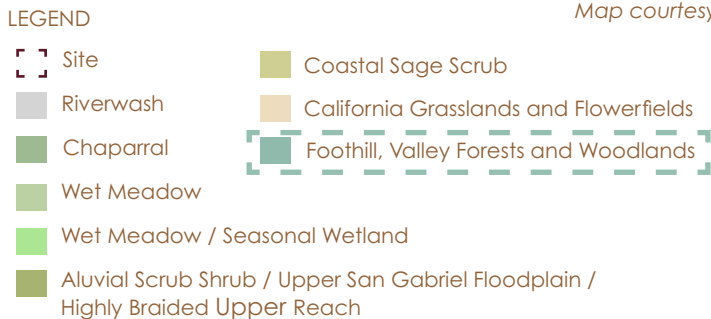
The historical ecology of the San Gabriel Mountains was primarily Chaparral, mixed with Foothill, Valley Forests & Woodlands. In addition, Coastal Sage Scrub and Riverwash existed around the northern parts of the San Gabriel River. The site's ecology historically consisted of Foothill, Valley Forests, and Woodlands.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, there are over 500 native plants and fungi living in the San Gabriel Mountains.

The SEA Ordinance was set up by the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning to conserve genetic and physical diversity for the purpose of balancing natural biodiversity with property rights. The San Gabriel Canyon contains plant communities that are highest inventory priority due to their restricted distribution in Southern California.



Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS

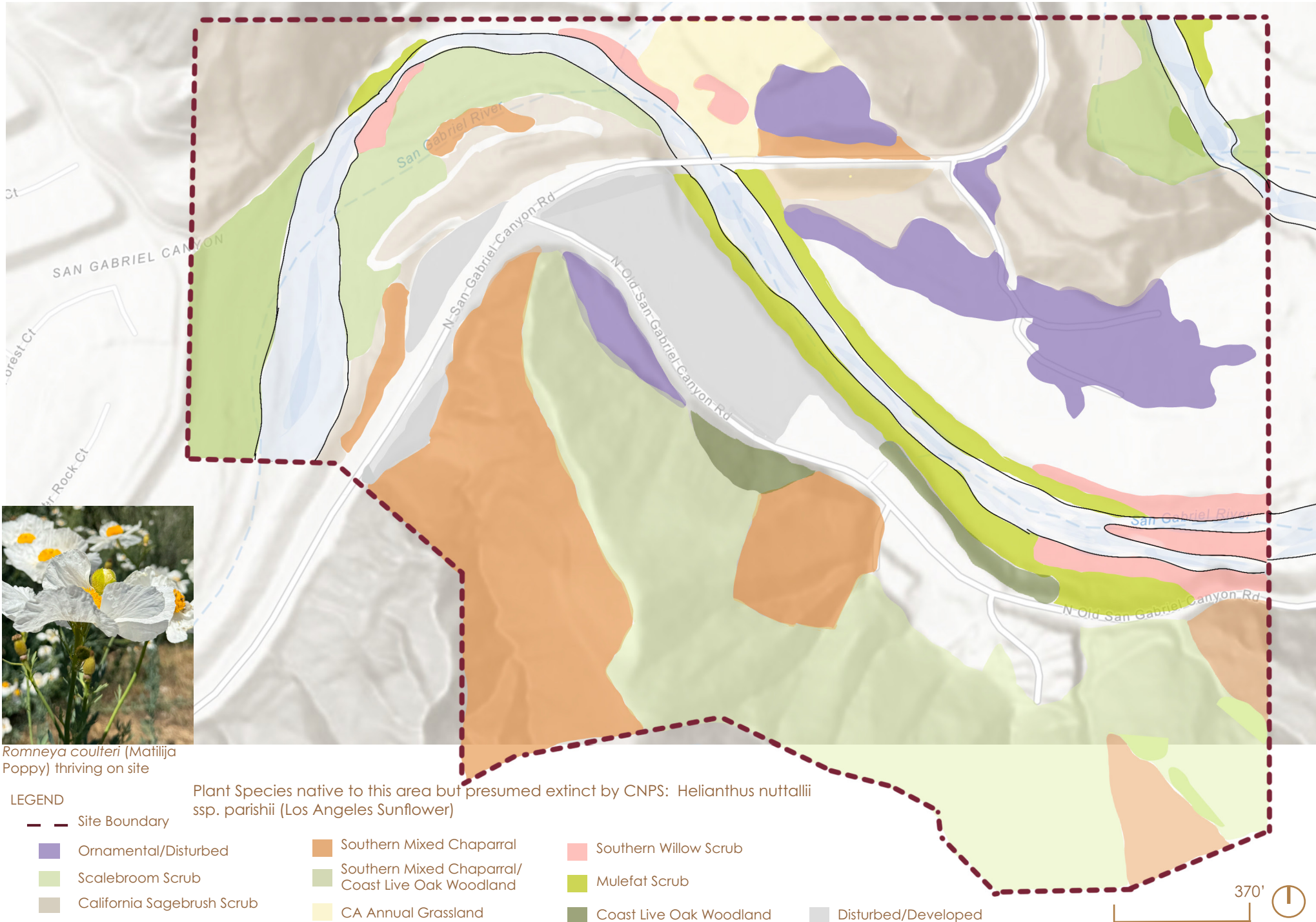


Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS



SITE ANALYSIS | Vegetation Types Found on Site

Important plant communities to the Canyon: walnut woodland, oak riparian woodland, southern willow scrub, coastal sage scrub, and alluvial fan scrub

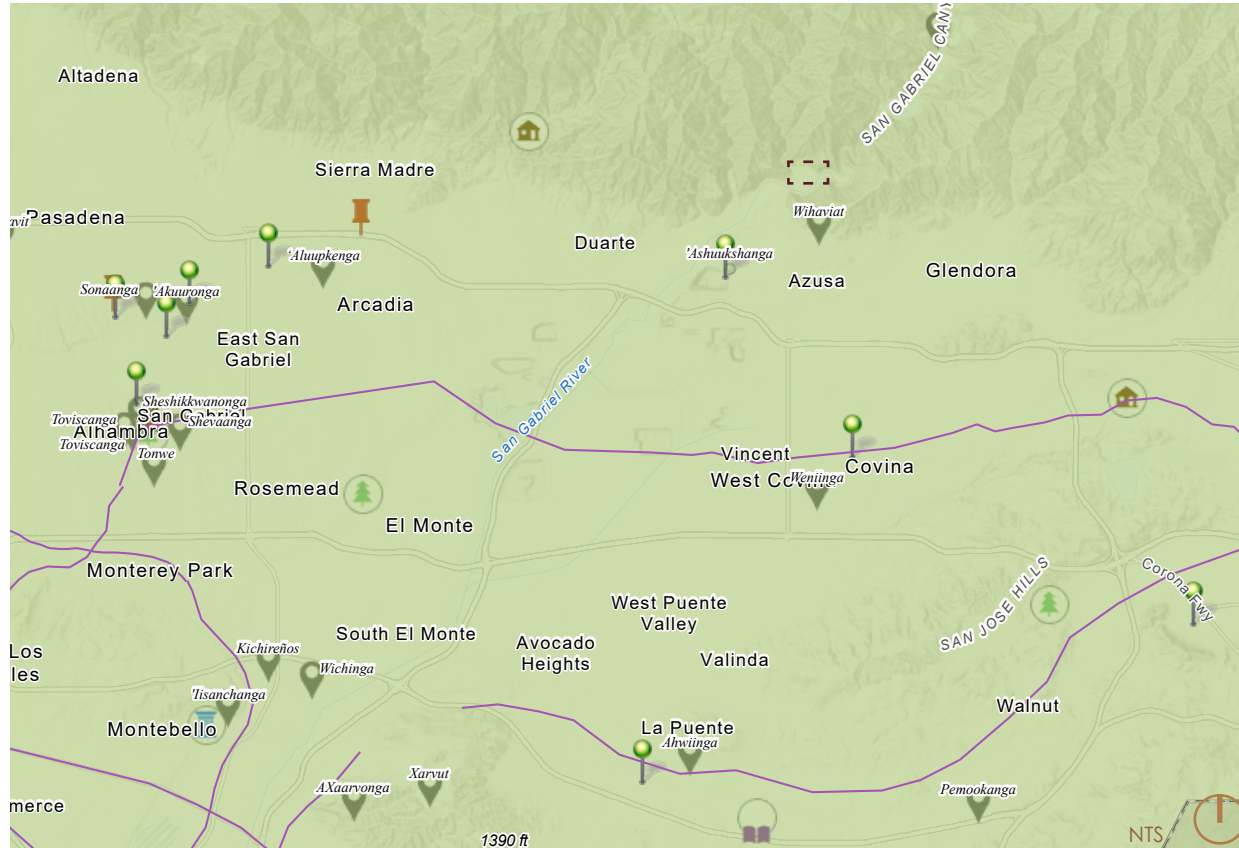


Romneya coulteri (Matilija Poppy) thriving on site

- LEGEND
- Site Boundary
 - Ornamental/Disturbed
 - Scalebroom Scrub
 - California Sagebrush Scrub
 - Southern Mixed Chaparral
 - Southern Mixed Chaparral/Coast Live Oak Woodland
 - CA Annual Grassland
 - Southern Willow Scrub
 - Mulefat Scrub
 - Coast Live Oak Woodland
 - Disturbed/Developed
- Plant Species native to this area but presumed extinct by CNPS: *Helianthus nuttallii* ssp. *parishii* (Los Angeles Sunflower)

SITE ANALYSIS | Cultural Context + Indigenous Peoples

California has the second-largest Native American population in the United States, but they only own 4.9% of the land. The Indigenous Peoples who lived in the San Gabriel mountains were the Gabrielino, Kizh, or Tongva, and the Chumash, Kitanemuk, Serrano, and Tataviam peoples.



Base Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS

Wihaviat and *Ashuukshanga* were two villages thriving from the vast watershed of the San Gabriel River. The Ashukhavit were one of the oldest tribes living in the San Gabriel Basin, over 10,000 years ago.

Once the Europeans recognized the value of the San Gabriel Canyon they forced their culture on the indigenous tribes, often killing, enslaving or forcefully assimilating them to near extinction. Those who survived were separated from their homelands and cultures, slowly erasing their cultures and histories.

For the indigenous community, all was kin: from granite boulders, to acorns, to the elements of nature. Out of respect for these relationships, hunting and gathering expeditions were done in moderation, taking only what was needed at the time. Fishermen caught Steelhead trout from the San Gabriel River using nets woven with Yucca plants, while hunters used Greasewood arrow shafts to hunt rabbits and deer. Their diet was largely comprised of vascular plants, however, which were gathered and processed by women. The manzanita berries, acorns (known as kwi) and chia seeds were food staples.

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Tongva Villages
- 📌 Art
- 🏠 Community Centers
- 🌳 Parks
- Tongva Villages
- Ancient Roads + Trade Routes

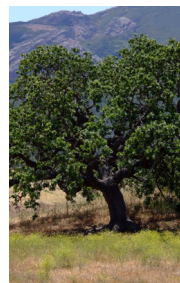
ETHNOBOTANY: A few important plants used by the Tongva for food, medicine, tools, construction or spiritual ceremony



DONKETSIP
Prunus ilicifolia
(Hollyleaf Cherry)



KASILI
Salvia apiana
(White Sage)



WEHT
Quercus agrifolia



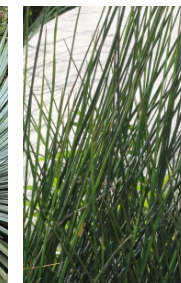
SOBOCHESH
Arctostaphylos glauca
(Bigberry Manzanita)



ASHUWET
Heteromeles arbutifolia
(Toyon)



AKO
Hesperoyucca whipplei
(Yucca)



SOAR *Juncus textilis*
(Basket Rush)

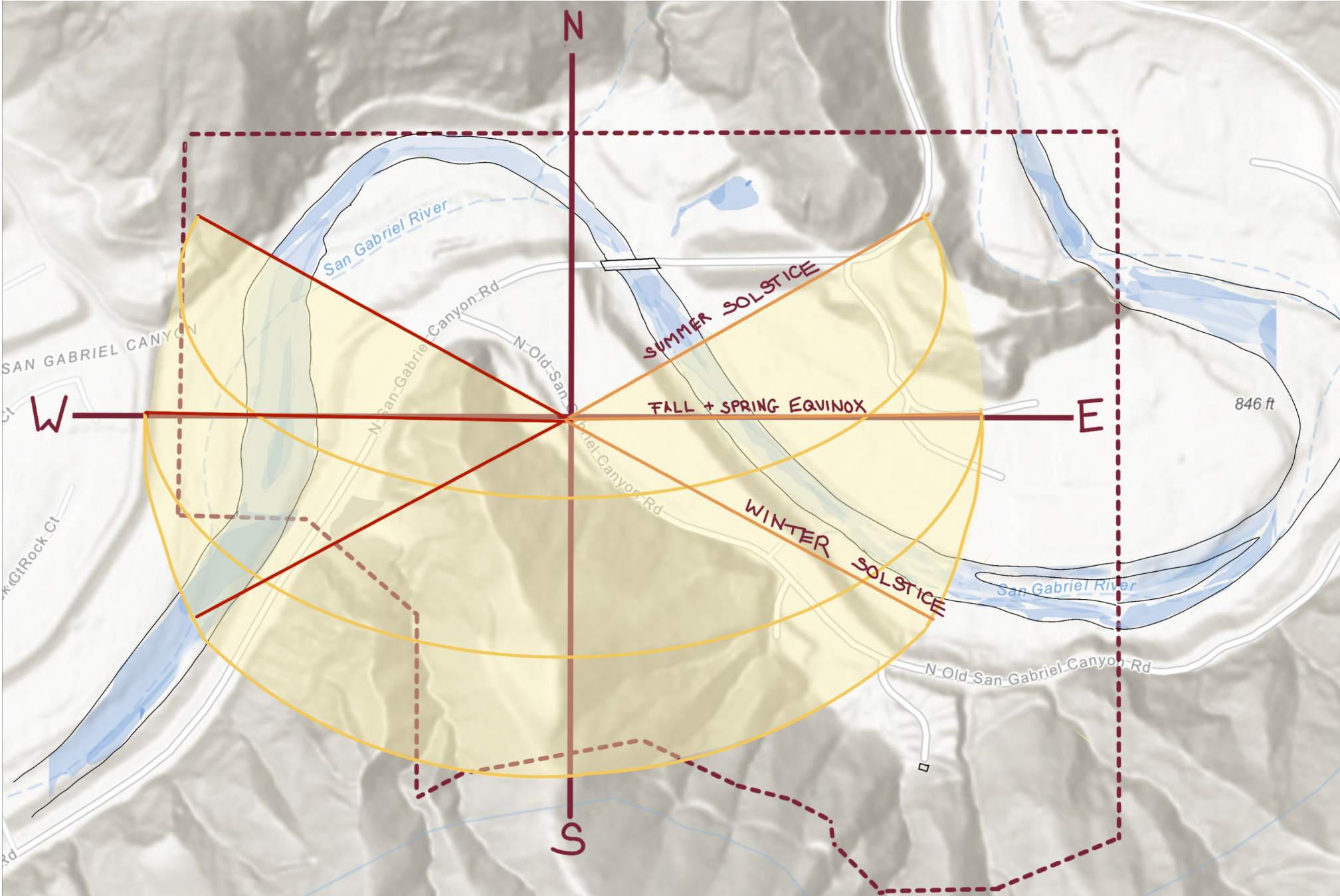


KU.UT
Sambucus mexicana
(Blue Elderberry)



PASHIIY
Salvia columbariae
(Chia)

SITE ANALYSIS | Four Cardinal Directions



LEGEND
- - - Site Boundary

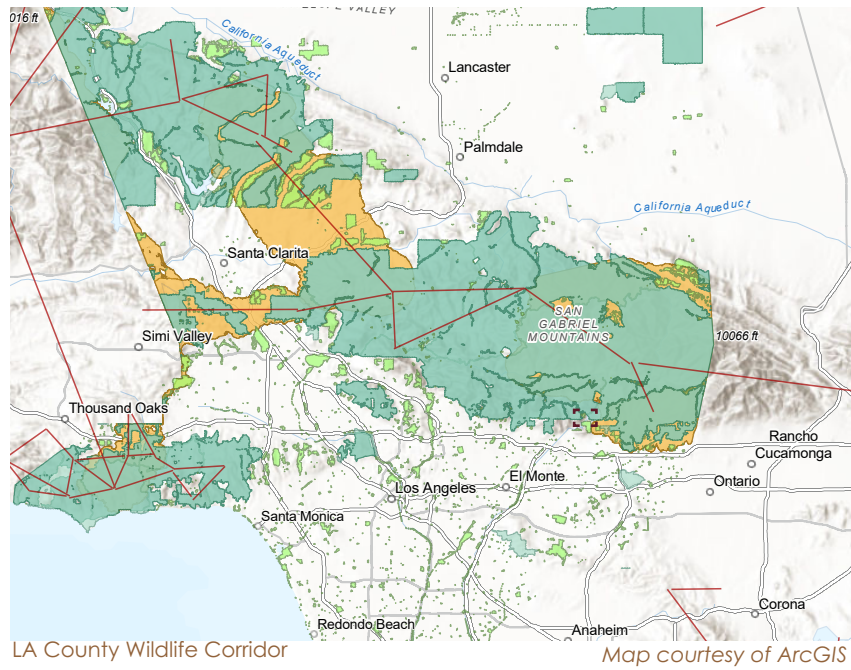
Indigenous Americans see the four cardinal directions as sacred symbols that represent various aspects of life, nature and spirituality.

Base Map courtesy of ESRI arcGIS

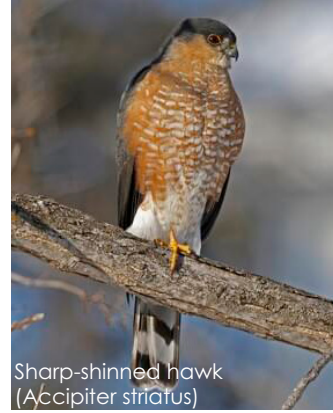


SITE ANALYSIS | Wildlife Habitat

An abundant wildlife diversity is expected to live on site due to the various plant communities that are fed by the river. Habitat linkages are an important resource to ensure regional biodiversity, species movement and habitat connectivity. A wildlife linkage has been designated from the north section of North Claremont through San Bernardino County as one of 11 critical wildlife corridors in California. Below are a few examples of the variety of wildlife that may exist on site, federally endangered species framed in orange:



- LEGEND:
- Site Boundary
 - Natural Landscape Blocks
 - Essential Connectivity Area
 - Natural Areas (small)



Sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)



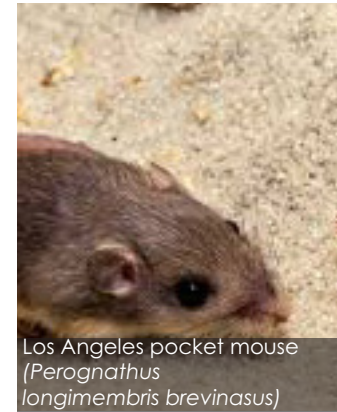
Coastal western whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*)



Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*)



San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus bennettii*)



Los Angeles pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris brevinasus*)



Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*)



Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*)



Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)



American badger (*Taxidea taxus*)



Two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*)



Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*)

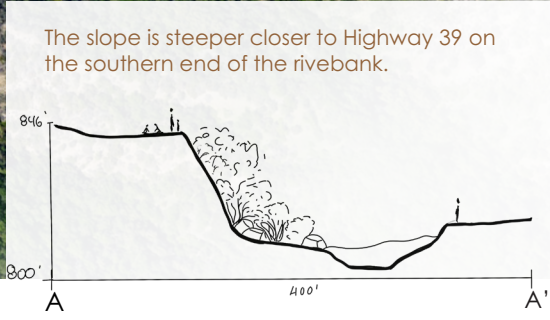


Arroyo chub (*Gila orcuttii*)



Coast Range newt (*Taricha torosa torosa*)

SITE ANALYSIS | Field Study



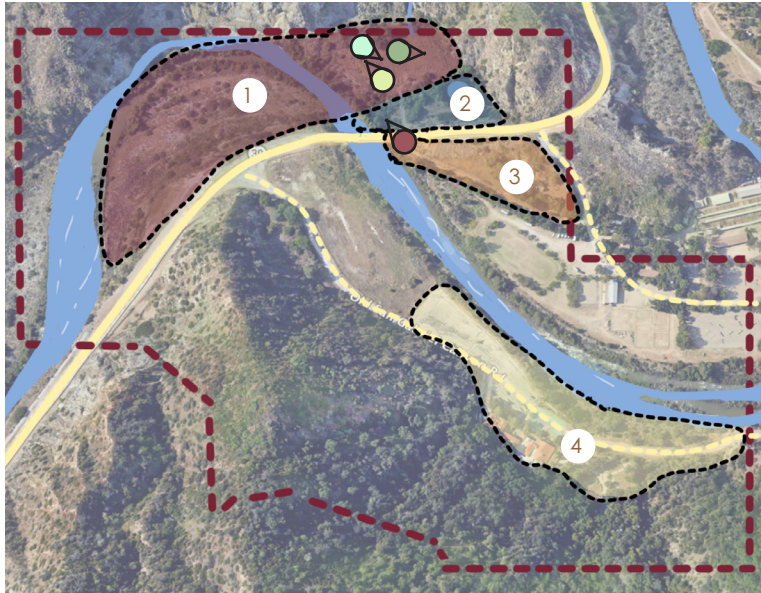
LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Main Vehicular Access
- Secondary Vehicular Access
- Steep slope
- ⊙ Noise from Traffic
- ⊙ Key Views
- Asphalt/Concrete area



OPPORTUNITIES + CONSTRAINTS | Zone 1 - The Plateau

Site divided into 4 zones for clarity



NTS ⓘ

1+2+3+5. Main plateau looking towards Azusa Springs
Invasive *Washingtonia filifera* and non-native ornamentals dominate this area

Opportunities:

1. Ceremonies: Against the backdrop of one of the steepest slopes on site, Zone 1 has a relatively level plateau that offers a great opportunity to host **Indigenous Ceremonies** and gatherings. It's a great location to create **cultural and historical meaning** directly onto the landscape.
2. **Viewpoint**: the beautiful sunset glow reflects against the mountains here is a great opportunity for evening gatherings
3. An Indigenous garden for **foraging** could thrive in this location.
4. The western bank of the river has a lot of native vegetation as well as invasive species. This area would stay preserved with human access only from Indigenous groups.

Constraints:

5. No direct access from the park for users or maintenance.
6. Invasive species will be important to control to encourage native habitat and fire abatement.
7. There is little tree canopy or shade



1+4+6. Reverse photo looking southeast towards Highway 39 bridge and the main entrance to the park. ⓘ



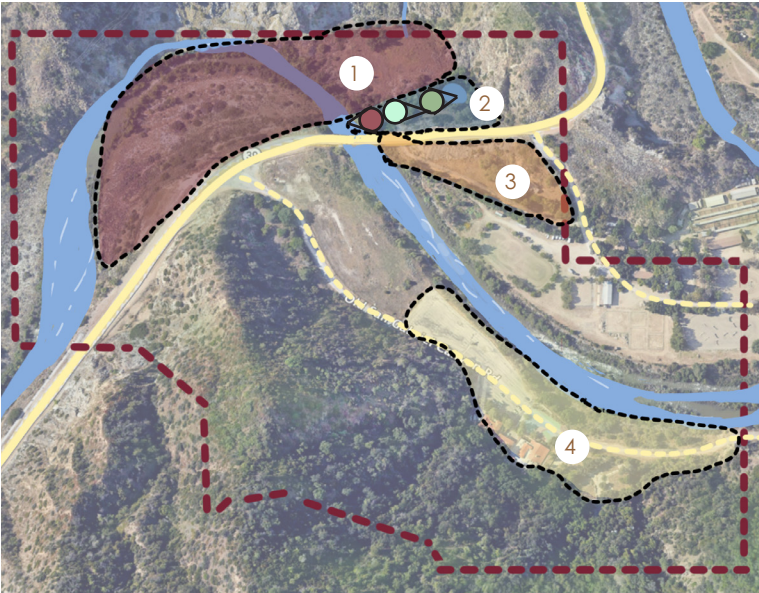
5. Under Highway 39 looking out at the plateau. Opportunity here to connect to the water and the Taylor House ⓘ



7. A *Platanus racemosa* and an olive tree (not pictured) are the few trees on the plateau ⓘ

OPPORTUNITIES | Zone 2 - Azusa Springs

Site divided into 4 zones for clarity



Opportunities:

- 1. Zone 2 features the Azusa Springs, with oasis-like vegetation encircling it.
- 2. Protected access with educational signage will open this area up to the public while preserving it's unique habitat.
- 3. Access to the river exists under the bridge of Highway 39

Constraints:

- 3. No direct access from the park to the Springs for users or maintenance.
- 4. Invasive species will be important to control to encourage native habitat and maintain this important ecosystem.
- 5. Despite trespassing signs, the public still accesses this area under the bridge, leaving trash and debris in the river.

NTS



1 + 4. The natural spring waters of the Azusa Springs. The *Washingtonia filifera* seen here are an example of an invasive species. There are also non-native ornamentals that obstruct the view of this special oasis.



2. A footbridge over this tributary that leads to the springs would welcome visitors



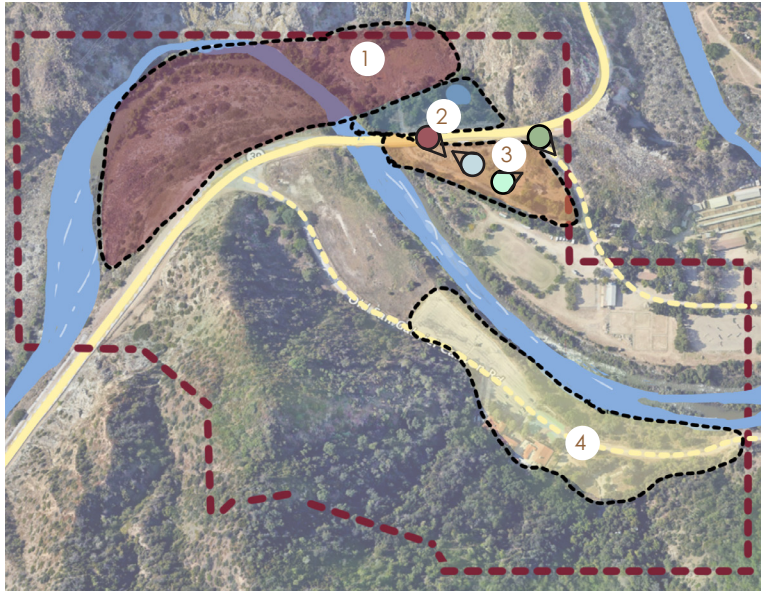
4. Under Highway 39 there is an opportunity to access the river.



On the edge of the Plateau and the mountains, the Azusa Springs feel like an oasis

OPPORTUNITIES | Zone 3 - Taylor House

Site divided into 4 zones for clarity



NTS 

4 + 6. Only current access to the Taylor House is off Highway 39 

Opportunities:

1. Zone 3 offers easier access/connection to the river.
2. It is a relatively flat area and offers great picnicking, camping, exploration and/or field studies of riparian habitat.
3. Great location for edible garden or outdoor/indoor classroom
4. Mature *Platanus racemosa* trees offer shade opportunity

Constraints:

4. The only access is from the road shared with the Equestrian Center just off Highway 39
5. Run-down old mayor's house will need assessment for possible repurposing.
6. There is no direct connection to the park from this area
7. Without tree canopy, the meadow area gets very hot



5. The Taylor House and lawn 



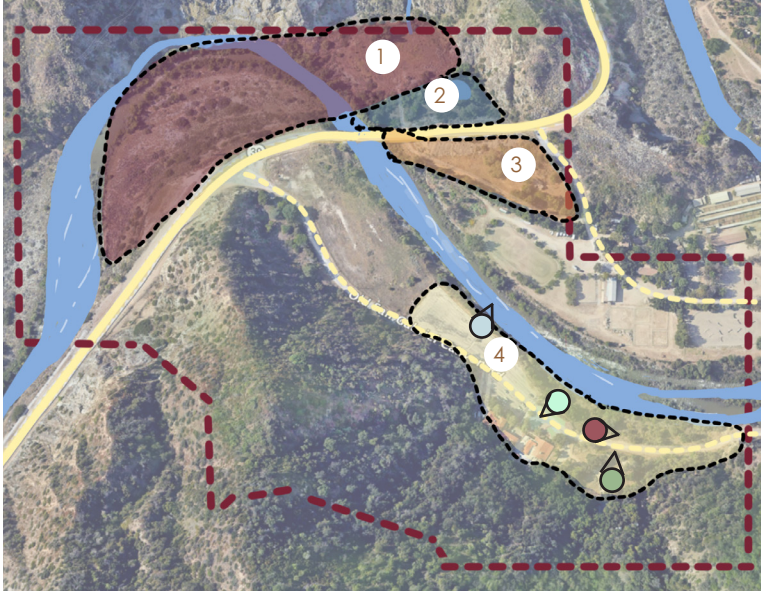
1. View from Highway 39 down to the Taylor House 



2 + 3. An old well that served the Mayor's house next door 

OPPORTUNITIES | Zone 4 - WCA Headquarters + Camping

Site divided into 4 zones for clarity



Opportunities:

1. The RV campground already has individual flat spaces set up for permanent campsites. The steepness of the slope offers great views of the river and mountains.
2. As the site is situated at the gateway of the San Gabriel National Monument, a restaurant or artisanal gift shop could bring economic growth that could help with maintenance costs of the site.
3. A boardwalk that follows the river's edge along the length of the park would allow the user to take in the sights and sounds of the San Gabriel River.
4. A larger lookout and picnic area

Constraints:

5. The WCA building will need some LID upgrades and protections against flooding behind the building. Some design elements are outdated and don't blend in with the site.
6. The old San Gabriel Road has seen occasional landslides.
7. There is a large amount of asphalt and concrete, limiting groundwater absorption and increasing the urban heat island effect.

NTS

1+6. The old RV park has a natural slope that is perfect for vistas, camping or educational opportunities. The impermeable surface of the concrete doesn't allow for stormwater infiltration.



2+5+6. The old Encanto Restaurant, now the WCA headquarters could house a restaurant for economic growth. Large paved area with limited shade or updated stormwater management.



3. Opportunity for a boardwalk along the edge of the river



4+6+7. Large paved area with limited shade or tree canopy, and only 2 picnic tables under the lookout. Opportunity for a pedestrian walkway and bike path along Old San Gabriel Road

CASE STUDY 1 | Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), Santa Fe, NM

“The beauty of learning is enhanced by the beauty of our surroundings” IAIA President

SITE PLAN NTS *Courtesy of Paul Fragua*



SIZE: 140 acres

CO-CREATOR of Master Plan, Paul Fragua @ MIG

PROGRAMMING:

Museum, University, and Research Center serving students and artists from the U.S. and abroad.

FEATURES OF NOTE:

The campus is situated on the **summer solstice axis**, which cuts east to west. The main pathways around the central plaza, which is also a dance circle, follow the **4 cardinal directions**. Various buildings are designed like a Hogan, a traditional Navajo dwelling, with 8 sides and openings to specific viewlines. In addition, there are sweat lodges, designated ritual sites, and various gardens, a greenhouse and ethnobotany lab.

METHODOLOGY:

Inspired by local Chaco culture ideologies and building methods to design a place that matches the beauty of its surroundings, exemplifying the Indigenous cultures' powerful connections to the **earth, water, sun, moon, stars, and all living things**.

TAKE AWAY:

The campus was built on the paths of the sun, with the summer solstice line being the greatest and cutting horizontally through the campus. The materials are tasteful and match the natural landscape of the surrounding mountains, soil and Santa Fe skies. The shapes are **organic, circular and intentional**. The geometry of nature, including that of the solar system is used tastefully in the design throughout the campus. There are several spaces on campus created for meditation, dance or other spiritual practices, strongly honoring the culture of Indigenous People. Using some of these design elements and capturing the magical lighting that exists in the San Gabriel Canyon will be an asset for Azusa Wilderness Park. In addition, having dedicated spaces for ceremony would greatly honor the past of the Tongva People who lived in the San Gabriel foothills.



Every opening for light and views is intentional. *Photo via www.iaia.edu*



Aerial view of first phase of construction showing central plaza *Photo Courtesy by Paul Fragua*

CASE STUDY 2 | Wishtoyo Chumash Village, Malibu, CA

"Being in relationship with the land means to live everyday in ceremony."

CHUMASH VILLAGE Site Plan *Courtesy of the Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation*



SIZE: 4 acres

DATE:

Reconstructed village opened to the public in 2015

PROGRAMMING:

The only living, active Chumash cultural village that serves as an **outdoor classroom, cultural gathering place and scientific field**. It is a Native-led organization established to protect and preserve the culture, history and lifeways of the Chumash, Indigenous peoples, and the environment. It exists on **8,000 year-old Chumash land**.

FEATURES OF NOTE:

7,000 students per year visit the site through field trips set up by the Chumash Maritime Lifeways: Land and Water program. Habitat restoration of Nicholas Canyon Creek has brought back native flora and fauna, revitalizing the riparian ecosystem of the area. The Village offers **sacred spaces** for private or public ceremonies for Indigenous communities.

TAKEAWAY / SYNTHESIS:

The foundation's main focus is on **education and stewardship**. This allows for strengthened preservation of the Chumash culture and their deep-rooted history of sustainability practices. A foundation of this ilk at Azusa Wilderness Park would be an asset to the community at large. Creating a space that would be specifically for Indigenous People, including an educational space where field studies could be conducted, would be greatly beneficial to the area.

The design on the land of the Wishtoyo Chumash Village is **light, sustainable**, and rooted in 8,000 year-old traditions, history and knowledge. It's the only village of its kind in Southern California, and a great example of land stewardship and programming for Azusa Wilderness Park.



'Aps, a traditional Chumash dwelling made of tule and willow. Photo Courtesy of www.wishtoyo.org/the-village



Chumash Village aerial photo Photo courtesy of www.wishtoyo.org/the-village

CASE STUDY 3 | Ein Gedi Nature Reserve, Judean Desert, Israel

SITE MAP - 'Ein Gedi' in both Arabic & Hebrew means spring of the kid (baby goat)



Map via <https://deadsea.com/articles-tips/ein-gedi-nature-reserve/>

SIZE: 3,500 acres

SPECIAL FEATURES:

On the eastern slopes of the Judean Desert, bordering the Dead Sea, this **natural oasis** with fresh water springs experiences a +600 meter change of elevation.

PROGRAMMING:

Ein Gedi is an oasis, nature reserve and archeological site. It offers camping, hiking (easy to moderate), swimming in **springs** and ponds with **waterfalls**, cliff-side cave exploration, and **educational programming**. The site is home to the 5,000 year-old Chalcolithic temple and remains of settlements from the Iron Age, the Persian period, the Hellenistic period and the Roman period. Site attracts 1 million visitors / year.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

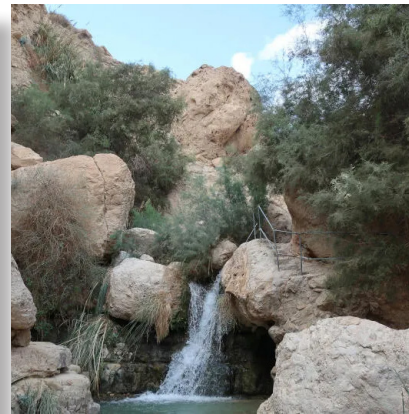
There has been a problem of increasing sinkholes forming from the receding shoreline of the Dead Sea. A thick layer of underground salt is left behind due to increased drought and flash flooding caused by climate change.. The heavy rains dissolve the salt as it sinks into the ground, forming an underground cavity which then collapses under the weight of the surface ground layer. Scientists are using, drones, cameras, water testing and satellite imaging to map the area for safety.

TAKEAWAY / SYNTHESIS:

The reserve has worked hard to **preserve its natural and historic significance** while also offering education and public access. It is a **sanctuary for many species** of flora and fauna, and an important **ecological corridor** for migratory species. The ecology of the area is well preserved despite the 1million + visitors it receives a year.

The country treasures this ecological gem not only for its natural beauty but it's archeological and historical artifacts. The **oasis** holds many stories that draw people to this site year after year.

Though not all hikes are ADA compliant, there are a few ADA nature walks that lead to one of the springs. The site's unique topography invites hikers and nature lovers of all levels from different parts of the world.



Ein Gedi waterfalls & pools via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ein_Gedi

Simple handrails on the rocks blend organically into the landscape

Map via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ein_Gedi

CASE STUDY 4 | Machicomoco State Park, Gloucester Point, Virginia

SITE PLAN *Photo by Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects*



INTERPRETIVE PENINSULA

01. Picnic shelters (2) with shared restroom
02. Multi-purpose open-air education pavilion
03. Visitor Center
04. Crushed oyster shell path
05. Existing Farmhouse: Colonial Period Agriculture
06. Boat Slip Entrance Path
07. Water's Edge and Marsh Terrace Algonquian Subsistence: Foraging and Cultivation
08. Lower Terrace Algonquian Subsistence Plot Rotation
09. Lower Terrace Algonquian Subsistence Plot Rotation
10. Upland Deciduous Forest: Algonquian Burned Forest Garden
11. Upland Deciduous Forest: Algonquian Guided Foraging
12. Visitor Access Road
13. Overflow or Staff Parking
14. Staff House
15. Boat Slips
16. Timberneck Creek
17. Catlett Islands
18. Existing Cemetery



Ground plane historical timeline with oyster shells



Photo by Nick Hubbard

SIZE: A peninsula of 645 acres

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:

Thomas Woltz in collaboration with local Indigenous tribes.

AWARDS:

ASLA Honor Award in Communications 2024

PROGRAMMING:

, biking, camping, educational events, boating, and fishing. There is an **outdoor classroom**, stage, gift shop, and **3 yurts** available for overnight camping.

FEATURES OF NOTE:

The history of the Indigenous Algonquian is carefully crafted into the site design and educational features. The **Interpretive Pavillion** near the entrance is sculpted with artistic spatial awareness, drawing the user in. **Archeological** remains of a shell midden are also presented in an **artistic** and effective way.

TAKE AWAY / SYNTHESIS:

The cultural and archeological features are **successfully communicated** directly on the landscape in this case study. Great storytelling is achieved here through the thoughtful placement of physical artifacts, sculpture and material choices. The design of this park was a collaboration with the Algonquian tribal leaders to ensure the land's **cultural and ecological legacy** was being represented and honored truthfully. Part of the design imagines a successful future for the Virginia Algonquian, by having **terraced gardens and forests** that are used for foraging and cultivation. Camping and boating are offered on site, while certain areas are preserved for habitat **conservation**.

The materials used for signage and sculpture blend effortlessly into the landscape, elevating the site's **natural beauty and historical significance**.



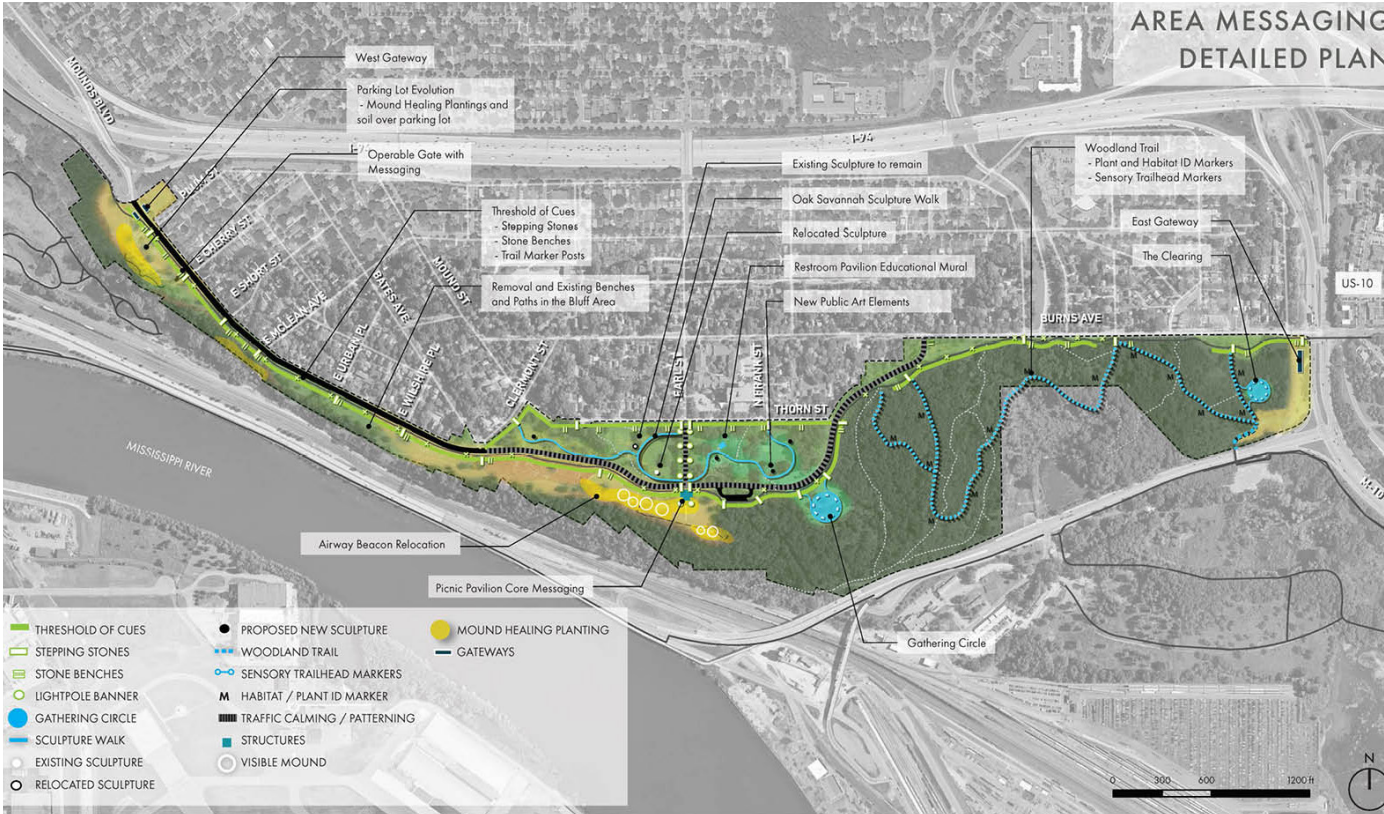
An embedded Algonquian timeline on the ground plane with shell middens found on site. *Photo by Nick Hubbard. All images courtesy of www.ASLA.org*



Inside the Interpretive Pavillion with educational signage. *Photo by Nick Hubbard*

CASE STUDY 5 | Indian Mounds, St. Paul, Minnesota

SITE PLAN *Image credit Quinn Evans*



SIZE: 111 acres

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:

Quinn Evans, Ten x Ten, Allies, Inc. with leadership from: Upper Sioux Community, Lower Sioux Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, Prairie Island Indian Community, and The Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate.

AWARDS:

ASLA Honor Award in Analysis and Planning 2021

PRIORITIES/GOALS:

Creating a platform of inclusion for Indigenous communities to have a say in sites that are significant to them. Changing the community's perception of a public park into a sacred place. Having a **long-term landscape plan** co-developed by Indigenous communities.

FEATURES OF NOTE:

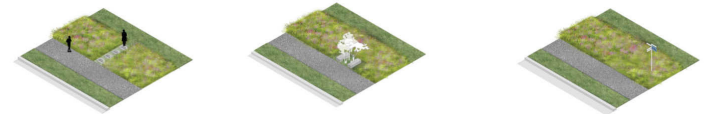
The carefully placed **threshold stepping stones** offer well-designed educational signage on the land. There are sculptures and other forms of art throughout the park that help tell the cultural histories of the burial site. In addition, there are public restrooms, trails, picnic tables and gathering circles.

TAKE AWAY / SYNTHESIS:

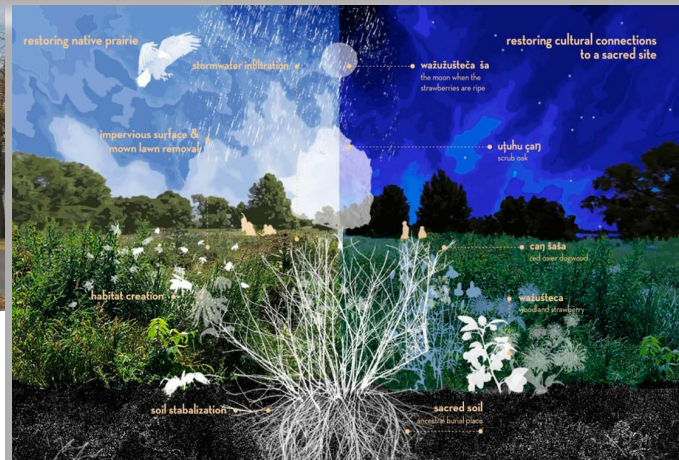
Re-framing this public park to a sacred place of burial is a challenge, but the **close partnership between Indigenous communities**, the designers, and the City, allowed for a strong consistent vision. To inspire people to behave with respect towards the site, **native plant thresholds, traffic calming, paving interventions, limited vehicular access** and consistent tasteful messaging (including digital media) are used throughout the site. The strong emphasis on messaging on this site, both physical and digital storytelling would be greatly beneficial for the Azusa Wilderness Park.



THRESHOLD STEPPING STONES STONE BENCHES AND TREES TRAIL MARKER POSTS



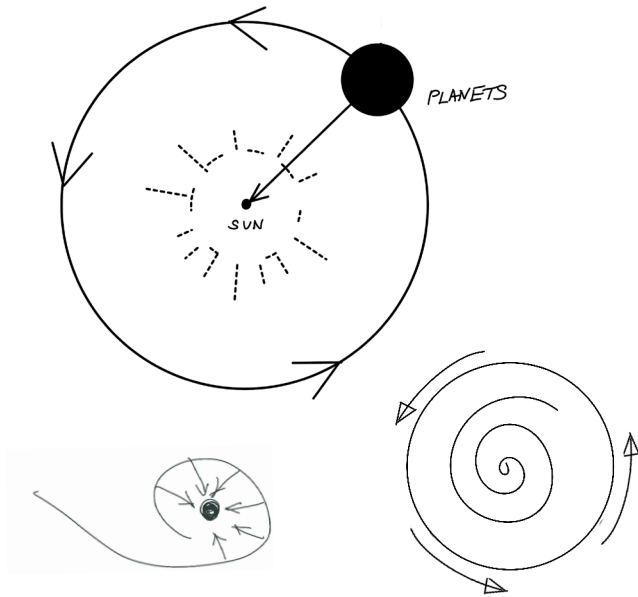
Site-wide messaging with native planting, benches, stones and educational markers. *Image Credit Ten x Ten*



Graphic showing benefits of native plant communities. *Image credit Quinn Evans*

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT | 3 Design Metaphors

CENTRIPETAL FORCE



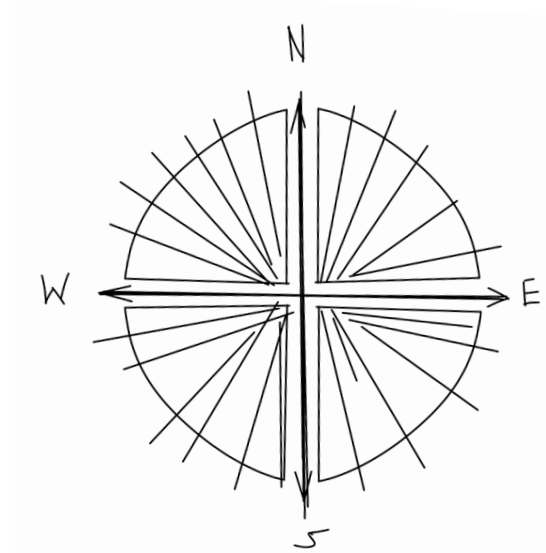
Centripetal is a force that keeps an object moving in a circular path. Like the centripetal forces of gravity and the sun, the park draws **people and nature together**, creating a **symbiotic relationship** where all life forms are pulled together for sustainability.

THE EMBRYO



As an **essential source of life** in the San Gabriel Mountains, the San Gabriel **River** connects and **feeds** its ecosystem. As the Embryo, the park relies on the health of the river for its nourishment, survival, **sense of place**, and **connection to life**.

THE CARDINAL



The four cardinal directions carry meaning beyond navigational tools. These symbolic elements reflect the **culture** and **spirituality** of the first caretakers of this land, where balance and the interconnectedness of nature are sacred.

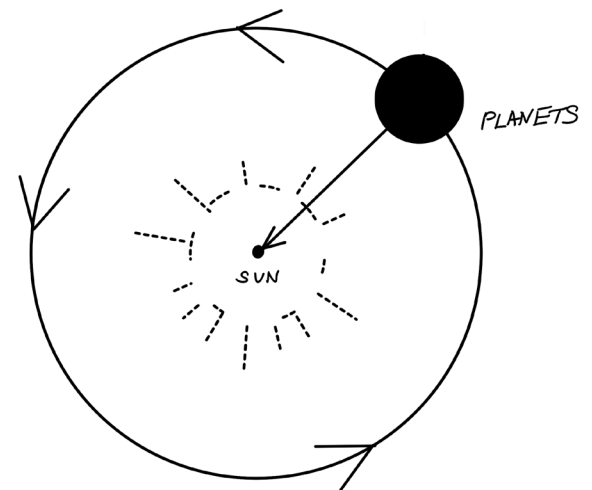
North = Earth, belonging
West = Water, flow & life
South = Fire, energy & renewal
East = Air, spirit & movement

CONCEPT 1 | Centripetal Force: Bringing People + Nature Together

Like the centripetal forces of gravity and the sun, the park serves as a force that draws people and nature together, creating a symbiotic relationship where all life forms thrive together.



PROJECT GOALS



People gravitate into the park for its unique **identity** rooted in:

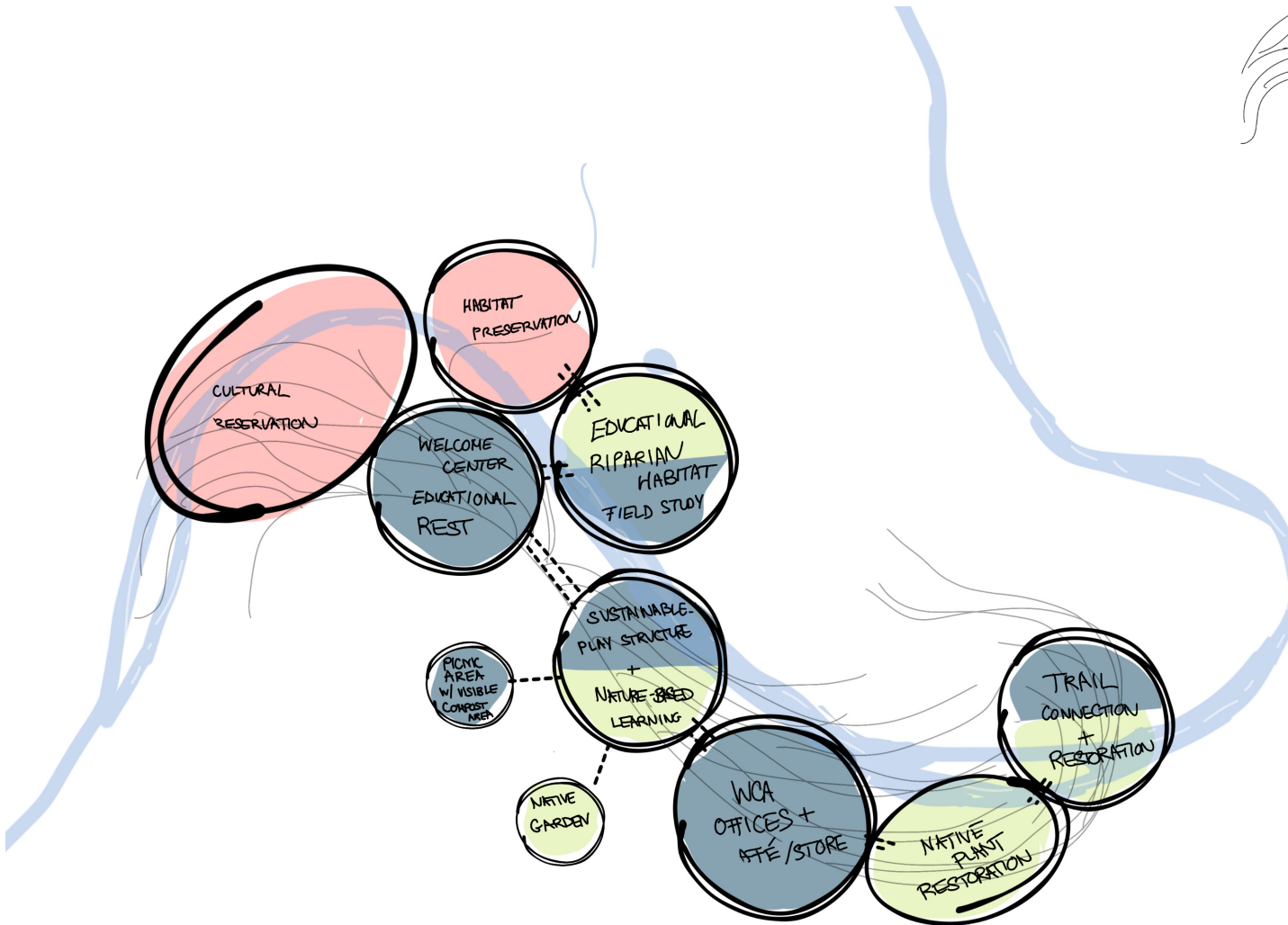
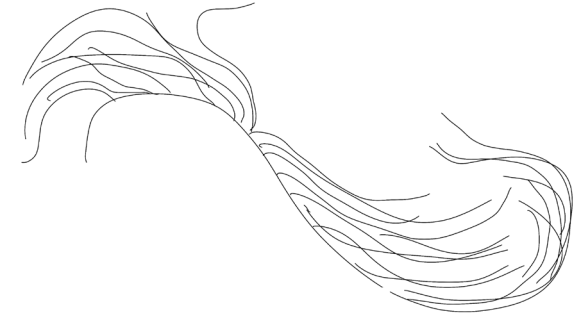
- **presevation** of + access to nature
- honor and **respect** of the past
- interactive education with its ecology + unique **habitat**
- **adaptation** to climate change for generations to enjoy in the future

The cyclical patterns of the San Gabriel Mountains' ecology are witnessed throughout the storytelling of history, the changing of the seasons, and the migration of habitat in its waters. Locals and tourists alike will enjoy a rich recreational program, communal experiences, camping, and access to the river all in one place.

CONCEPT 2 | The Embryo: Connecting to Life

The river is the umbilical cord, a vital life force that connects and nourishes habitat and people. The embryo is a metaphor for new life, vitality and protection offered to the San Gabriel Mountains and Canyon.

PROJECT GOALS



As the Embryo, the park relies on the health of the river for its survival, **sense of place**, and **connection to life**. Without its nurturing source, life would disappear. The Embryo will grow and thrive as long as the umbilical cord of the river is healthy and connected. This symbiotic relationship is evident from the cultural preservation of the area's first peoples, the original caretakes of the land, sea, and air. Although not always in view, but head, the park is connected through the *blood vessels* of the river. Minimal disturbance of this site guides the sustainable design where the habitat of the river takes center stage.

Users of the park will be able to:

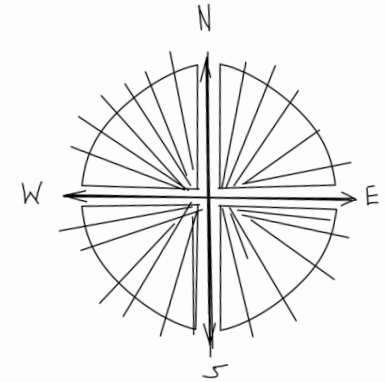
- play
- rest
- learn
- explore, and enjoy the vibrancy of the river

CONCEPT 3 | The Cardinal

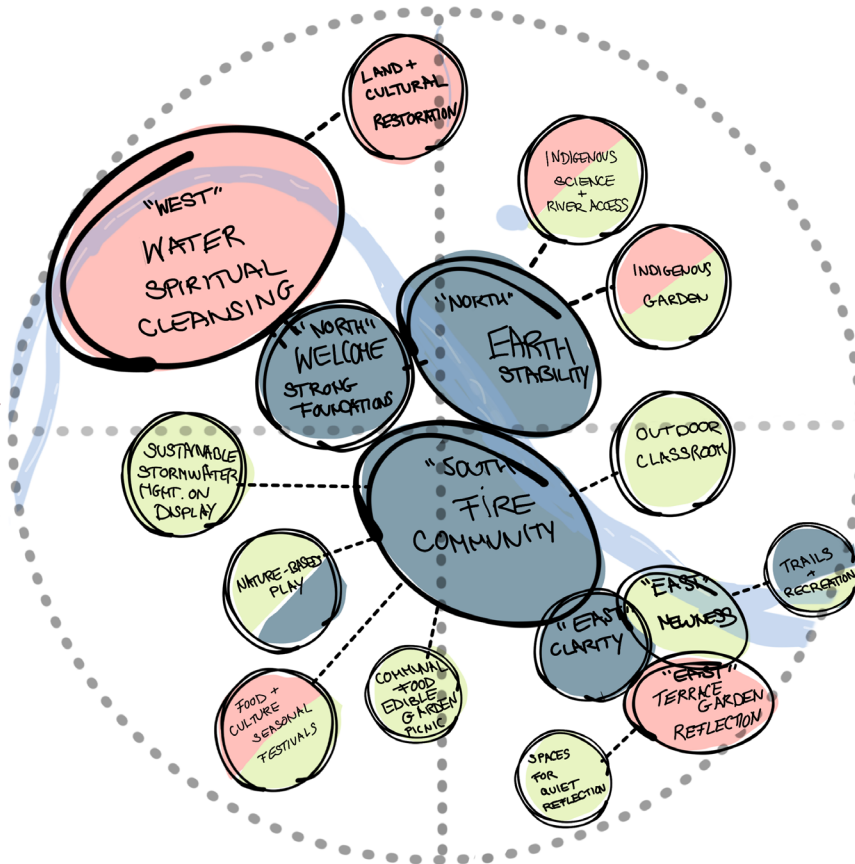
The four directions or elements - North/Earth, West/Water, South/Fire and East/Air - not only represent the physical elements of the world in several Indigenous cultures, but they symbolize the balance and cycles of life.

NORTH
 Element: **earth**
 Symbolism: **wisdom**, rest, stability, patience, ancestors
 Color: **white**
 Season: **winter**
 Animal: **goat**

PROJECT GOALS



WEST
 Element: **water**
 Symbolism: **life-giver**, reflection, endings, ancestors
 Color: **black / blue**
 Season: **fall**
 Animal: **coyote**

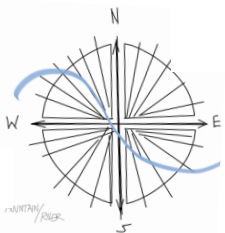


EAST
 Element: **air**
 Symbolism: **birth**, beginnings, breath
 Color: **yellow**
 Season: **spring**
 Animal: **deer**

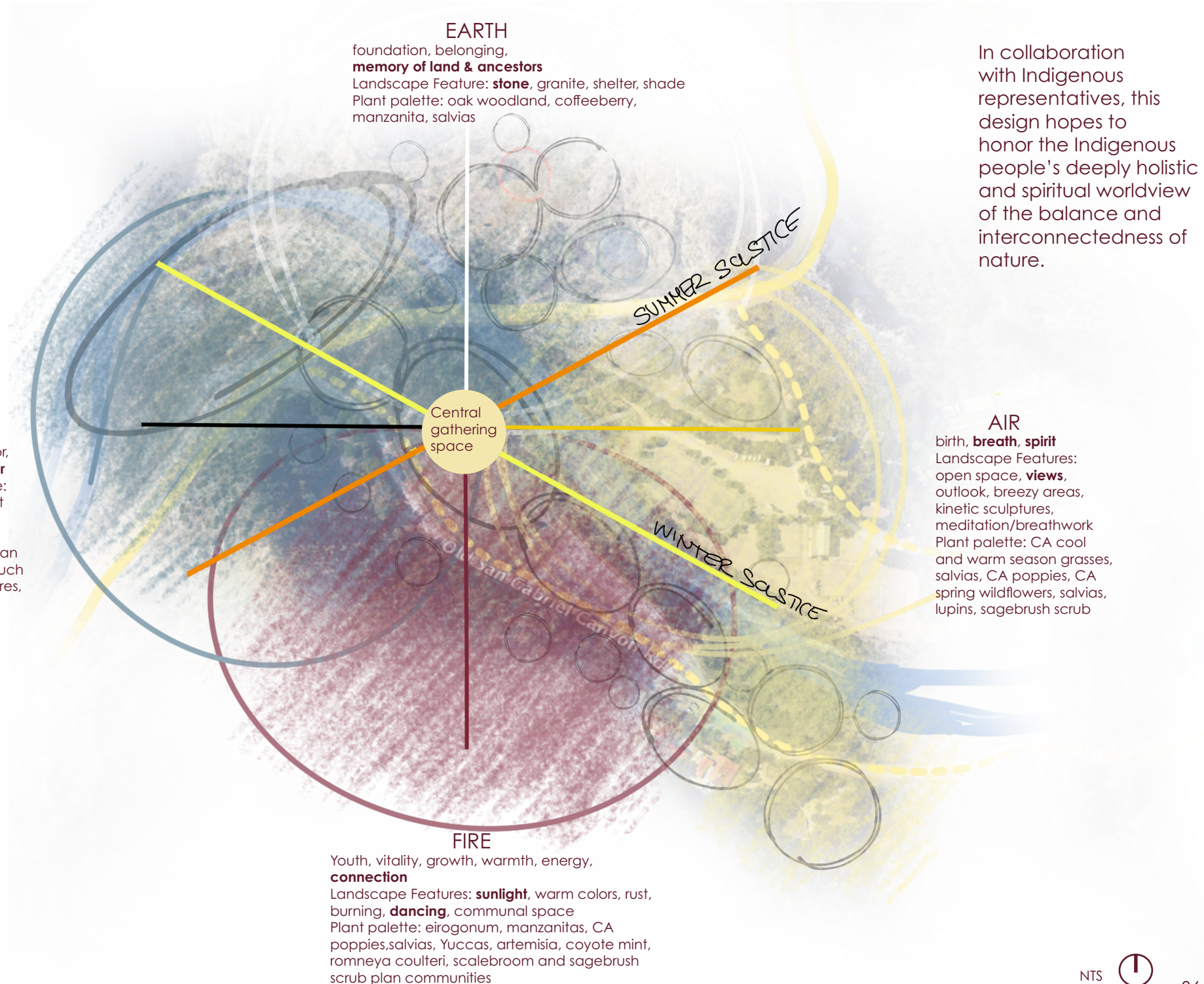
In collaboration with Indigenous representatives, the Cardinal hopes to honor the Tongva people's holistic and spiritual worldview of the balance and interconnectedness of nature.

The four directions carry sacred orientations tied to **cosmology**, **cycles of life**, **colors**, **elements**, **animal guides** and **seasonal changes**. These elements will be used to guide the **cultural storytelling** through restored ethnobotanical gardens, ceremonial structures, interactive education, nature-based play features, and sensorial experiences throughout the site.

SOUTH
 Element: **fire**
 Symbolism: **growth**, youth, energy, abundance
 Color: **red**
 Season: **summer**
 Animal: **fish**

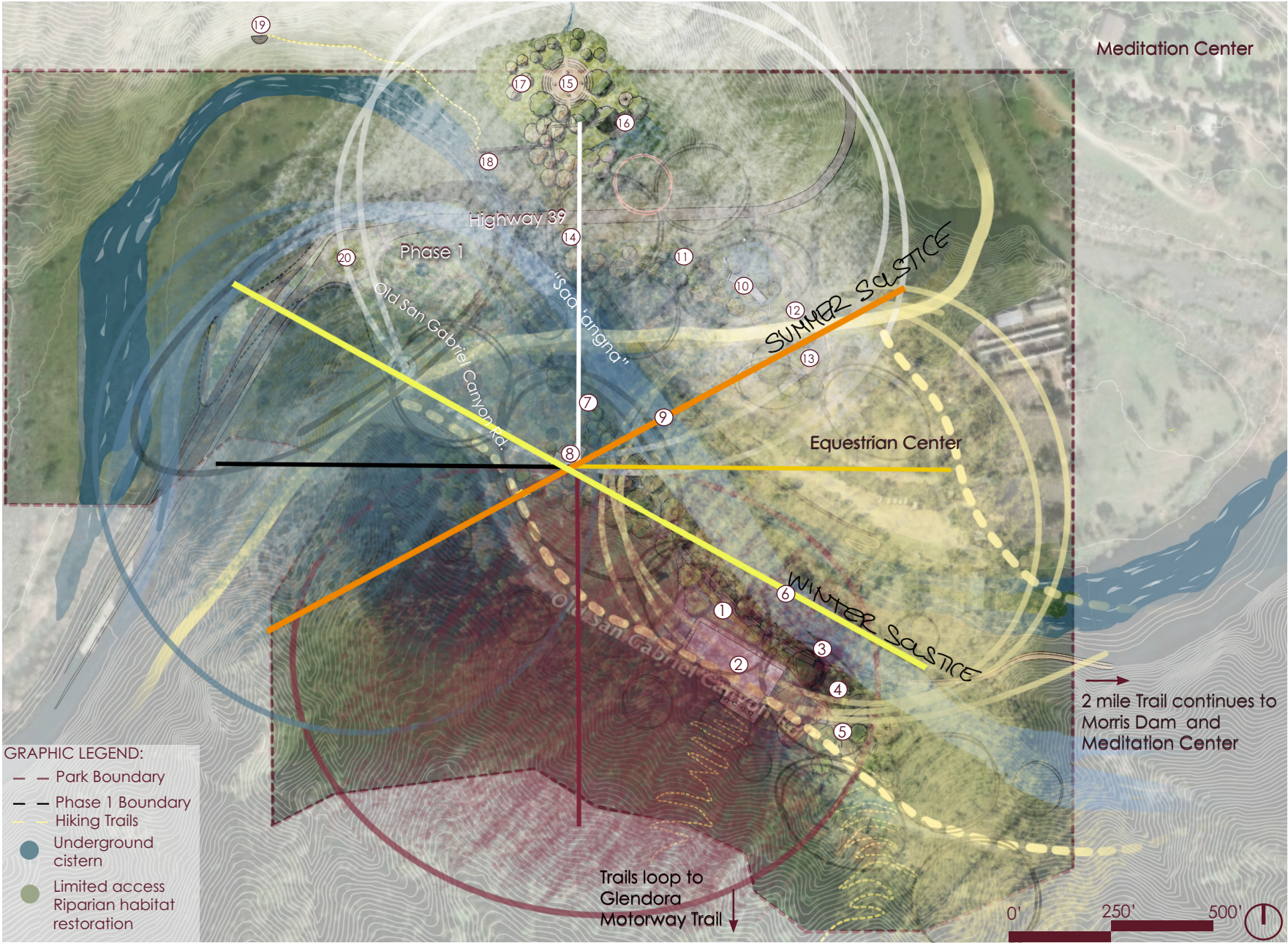


CHOSEN CONCEPT | The Cardinal: A Sacred Journey Where the Four Elements Guide Movement, Memory, and Renewal



In collaboration with Indigenous representatives, this design hopes to honor the Indigenous people's deeply holistic and spiritual worldview of the balance and interconnectedness of nature.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN | Asuksavit



GRAPHIC LEGEND:
 - - Park Boundary
 - - Phase 1 Boundary
 - - Hiking Trails
 ● Underground cistern
 ● Limited access Riparian habitat restoration

LEGEND:

EAST/AIR/EMERGENCE

- ① Sculpture Memory Garden
- ② Asuksavit Center, Gift Shop + Origins Café
- ③ Overlook of Renewal

SOUTH/FIRE/CONNECTION

- ④ Pollinator Meadow
- ⑤ Restorative Camping Zone
- ⑥ River Access

NORTHEAST/SPIRIT/RENEWAL

- ⑦ Elevated River Boardwalk with overlooks + seating
- ⑧ New WCA Offices
- ⑨ Cardinal Bridge

NORTH/EARTH/INVITATION

- ⑩ Education Center
- ⑪ Ethnobotanical Garden
- ⑫ Playground
- ⑬ Bus/Shuttle Drop off

WEST/WATER/REFLECTION

- ⑭ Northeast boardwalk with overlooks + seating
- ⑮ Indigenous Ceremonial Space
- ⑯ Azusa Springs Boardwalk
- ⑰ Foraging Garden
- ⑱ Western River Access
- ⑳ Western Overlook

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN | Asuksavit



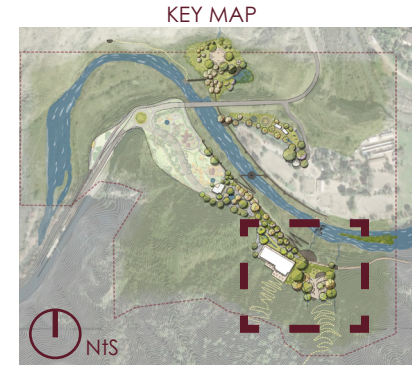
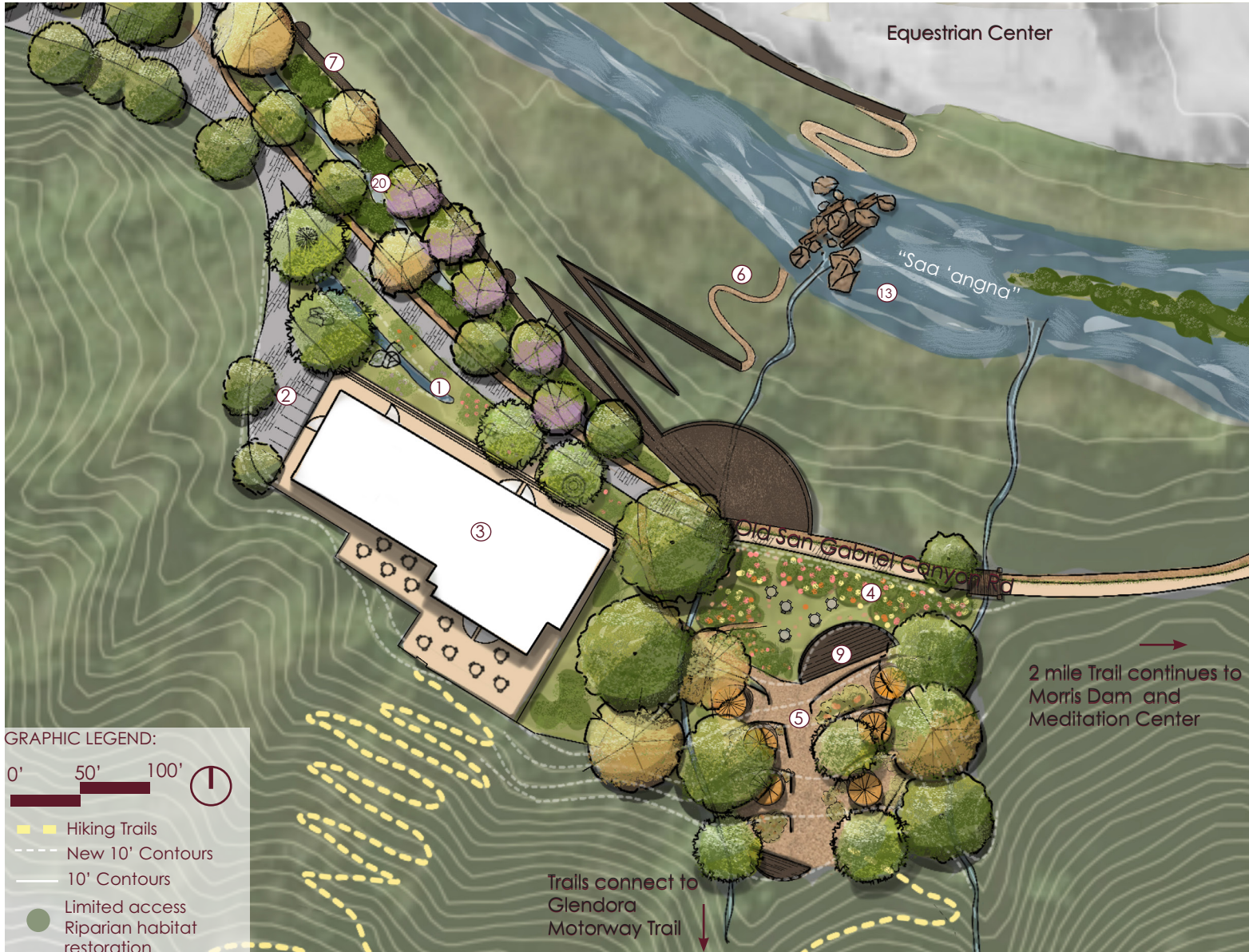
2 mile Trail continues to Morris Dam and Meditation Center

Trails loop to Glendora Motorway Trail

0' 250' 500'

ENLARGEMENT 1 | Eastern Emergence

EAST / AIR / BREATH



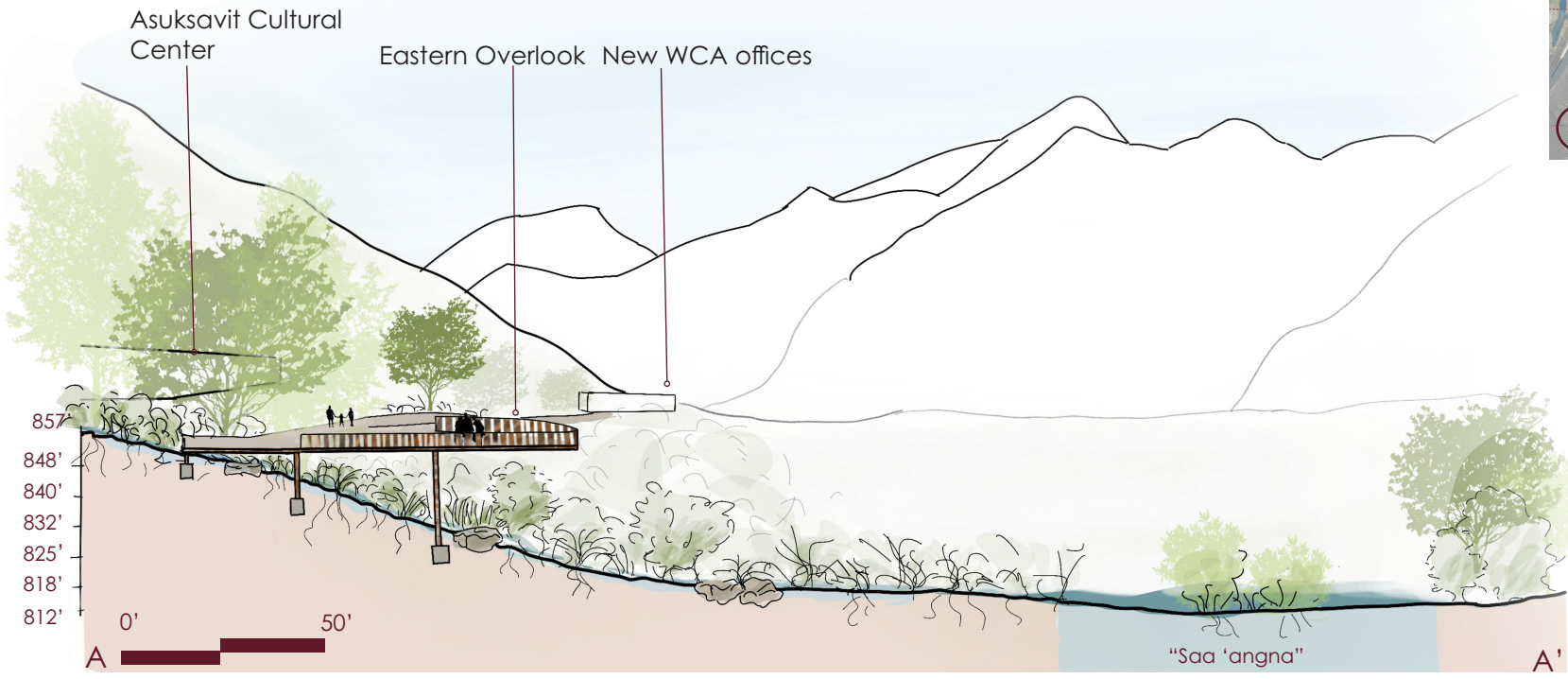
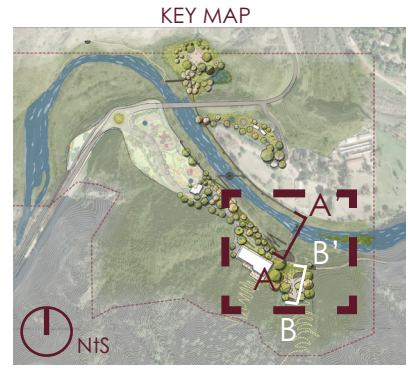
THE EAST symbolizes birth and beginnings. Open **views**, space, breezy areas, kinetic sculptures and **wind-sensitive plants** scatter this area.

Plant palette: CA cool and warm season grasses, *salvias*, CA poppies, CA spring wildflowers, lupins, and other plants from the coastal sagescrub plant community.

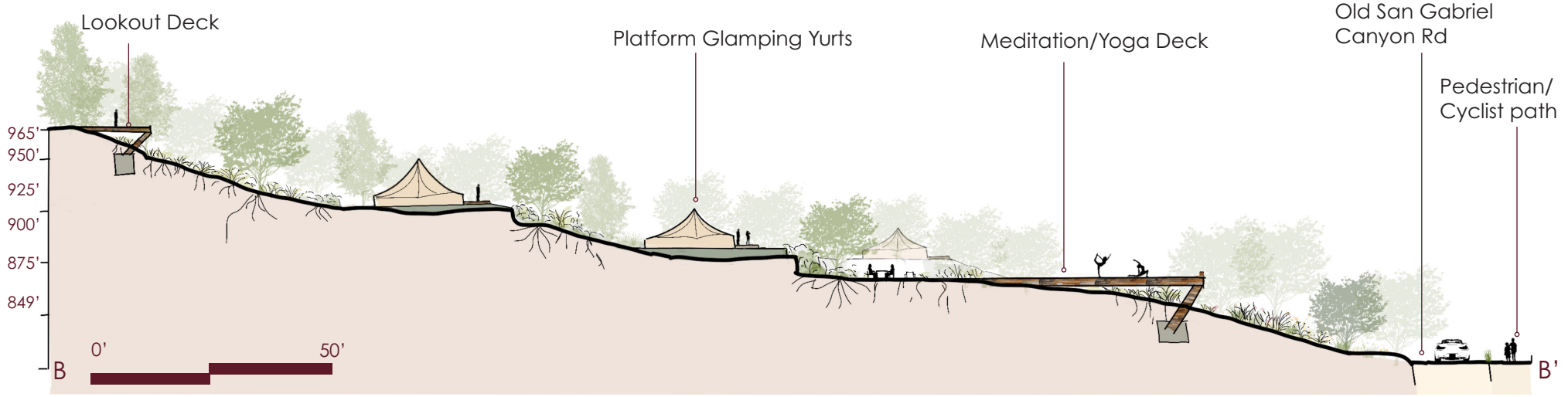
EAST/AIR/EMERGENCE

- ① Sculpture Memory Garden with bioswale and earthworks
- ② Permeable paving with ADA Parking for Cultural Center
- ③ Asuksavit Center + Gift Shop/ Origins Café
- ④ Pollinator Meadow
- ⑤ Restorative Camping Zone
- ⑥ River Access
- ⑦ Elevated River Boardwalk with overlooks + seating
- ⑧ Daylighted Streams
- ⑨ Yoga/Meditation Deck with Kinetic Sculptures

SECTION ELEVATIONS | Eastern Emergence

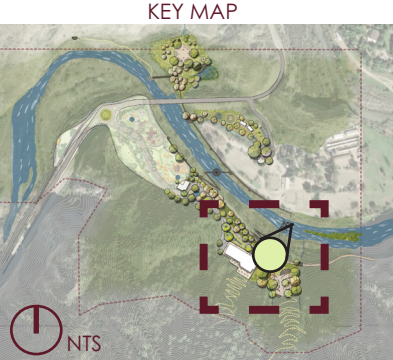
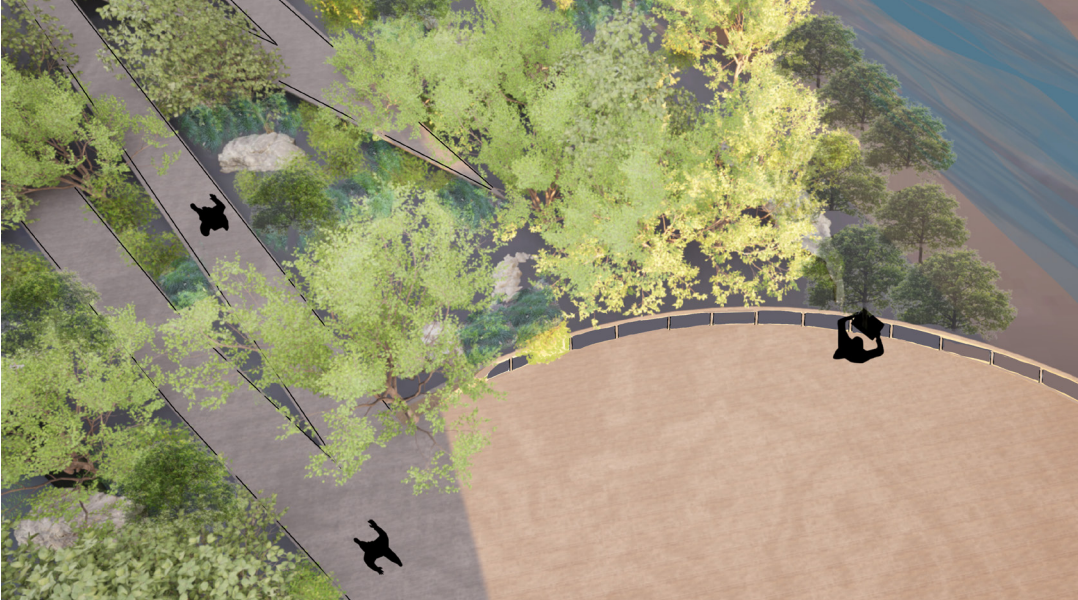


Example of a camping yurt.
Photo courtesy of Pinterest



PERSPECTIVES | Eastern Emergence

Bird's eye view of the overlook and path down to the river



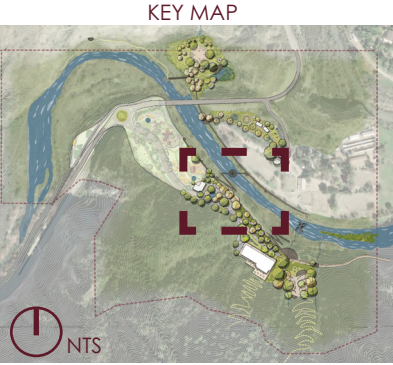
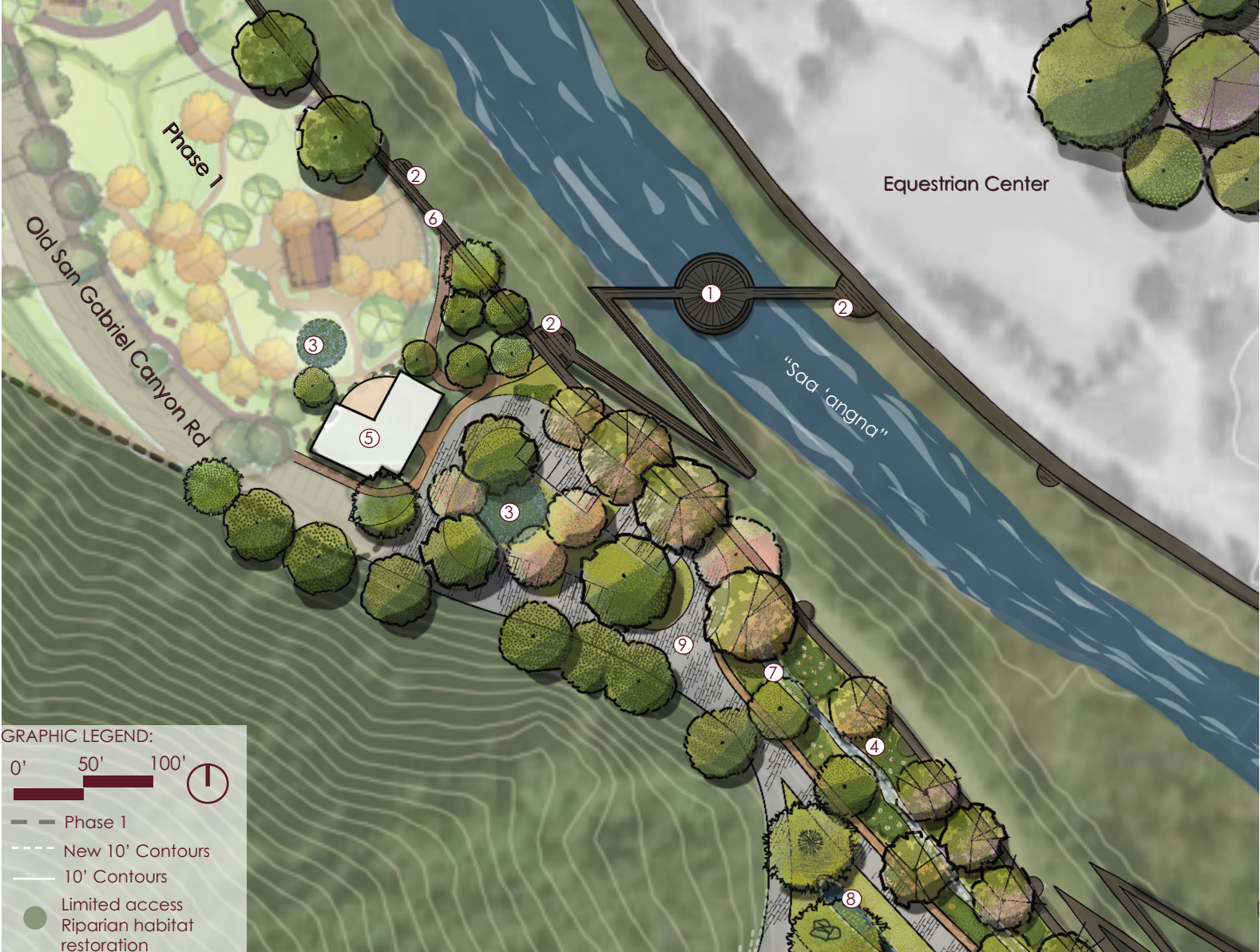
Eastern Emergence Overlook



Rammed earth example for Asuksavit Center

ENLARGEMENT 2 | Cardinal Bridge

SOUTH / ABUNDANCE / FIRE / COMMUNITY



THE SOUTH symbolizes youth, vitality, growth, warmth, energy, and **connection**.

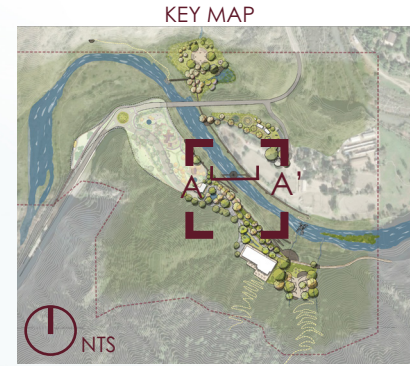
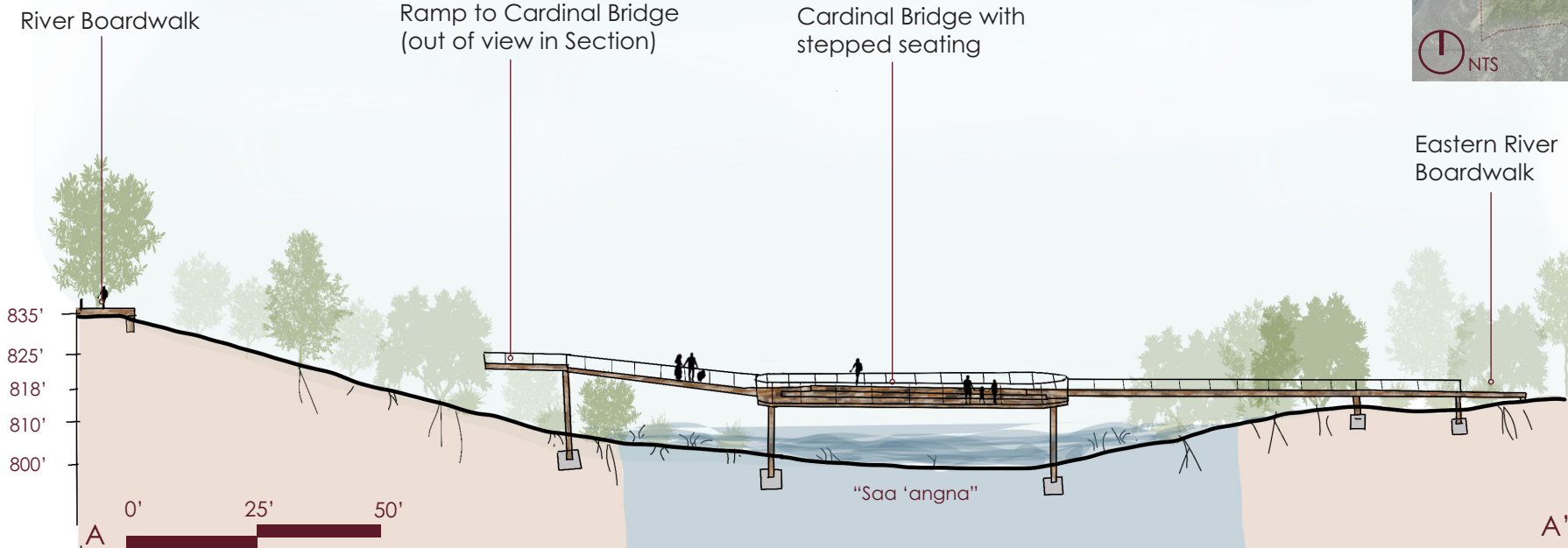
Sunlight, warm colors, rust, burning, **dancing**, and communal space are the main themes of this area.

Plant palette: *erigonum*, manzanitas, CA poppies, *salvias*, *Yuccas*, *artemisia*, coyote mint, matilija poppy, scalebroom and sagebrush scrub plant communities.

SOUTH/FIRE/CONNECTION

- ① Cardinal Bridge with stepped seating
- ② Lookouts with seating
- ③ Underground cistern for stormwater capture/reuse
- ④ Native CA Garden
- ⑤ New WCA Offices
- ⑥ Elevated River Boardwalk with overlooks + seating
- ⑦ Bioswale
- ⑧ Bioswale with sculpture memory garden
- ⑨ Bus/Shuttle turnaround and parking with permeable paving and curb cuts for stormwater capture

SECTION ELEVATION | Cardinal Bridge



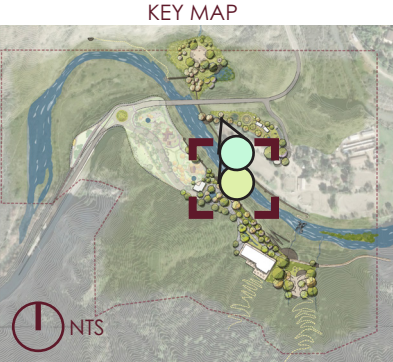
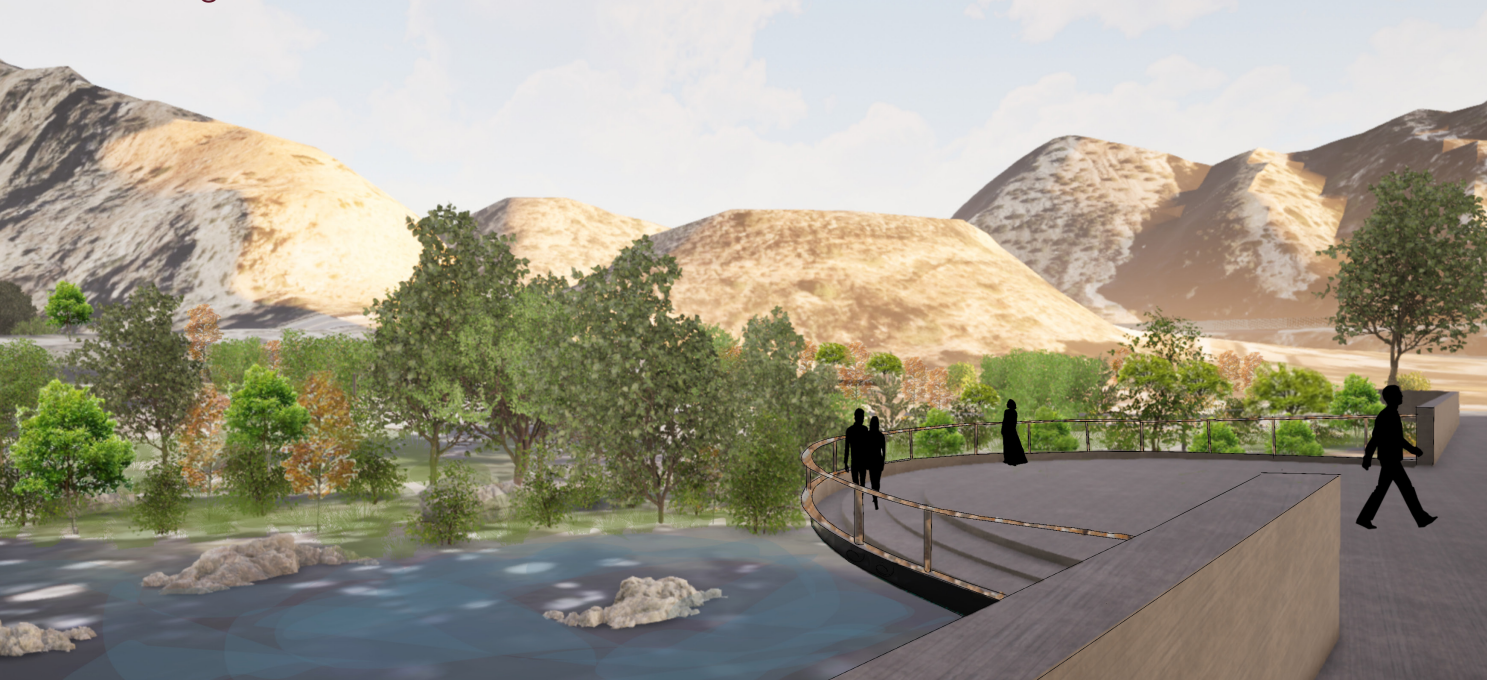
Material example of a boardwalk by the Loures River by Topiaris Landscape



Sample footbridge that blends effortlessly into the landscape.

PERSPECTIVE | Cardinal Bridge

Cardinal Bridge in the center of the site: A moment of connection



River Boardwalk on the eastern banks of the San Gabriel River

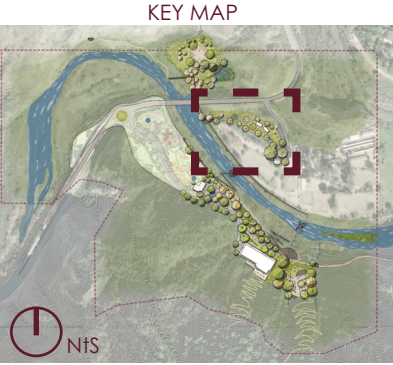


Raised boardwalk inspiration



ENLARGEMENT 3 | Education Center

NORTHEAST / SPIRIT / RENEWAL / EARTH



THE NORTHEAST combines the philosophies of newness with a sense of place, shelter and foundation. This area offers outdoor and indoor classrooms, ethnobotanical learning and sensory gardens.

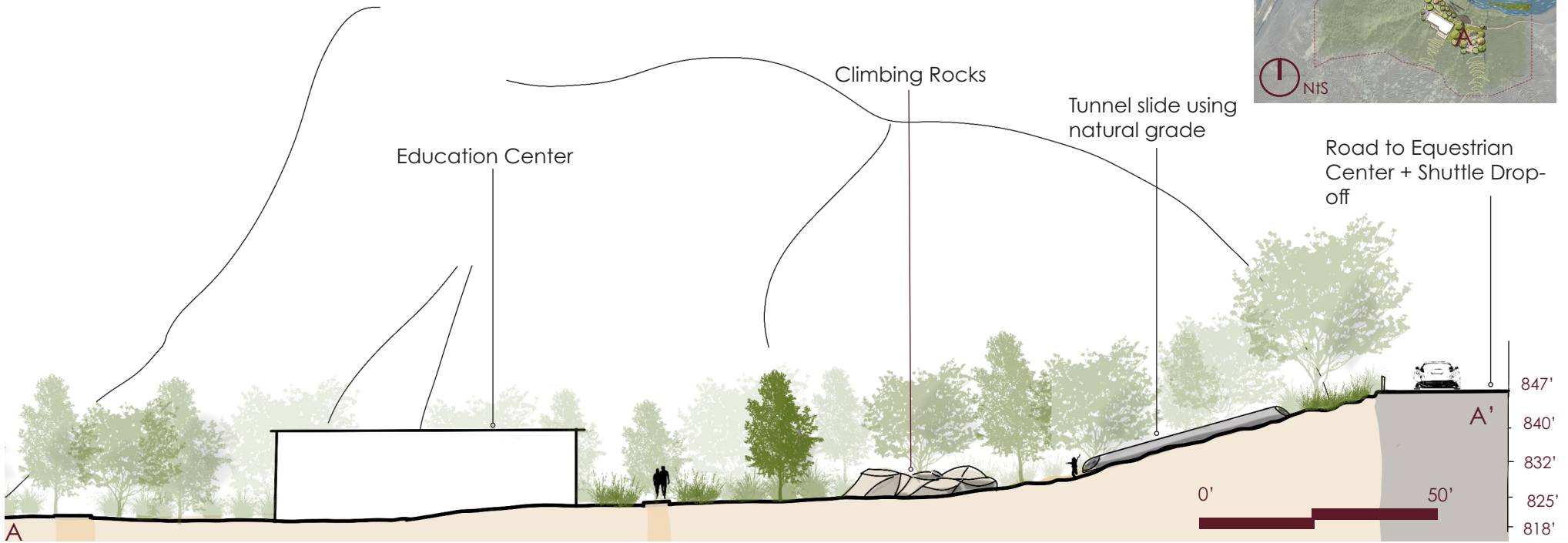
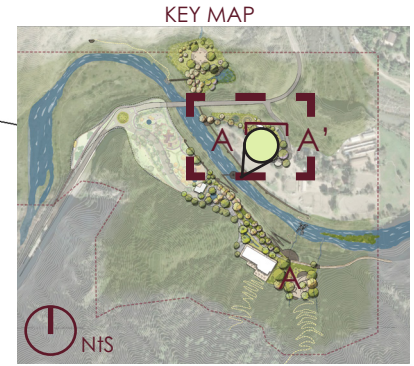
Plant palette: oak woodland, coffeeberry, manzanitas, salvias.

- GRAPHIC LEGEND:
- Phase 1
 - New 10' Contours
 - 10' Contours
 - Limited access
 - Riparian habitat restoration

NORTHEAST / SPIRIT / VITALITY

- ① River Boardwalk
- ③ Underground cistern for stormwater capture/reuse
- ⑤ Ethnobotanical Garden
- ⑦ Tool Storage
- ⑨ Natural Play Area
- ⑪ Shuttle / Bus Drop off with permeable paving
- ② Lookouts with seating
- ④ Native CA Sensory Garden
- ⑥ Classrooms with outdoor areas
- ⑧ Picnic Area
- ⑩ Bioswale

SECTION ELEVATION + SKETCH | Education Center



Perspective sketch looking outside the education building

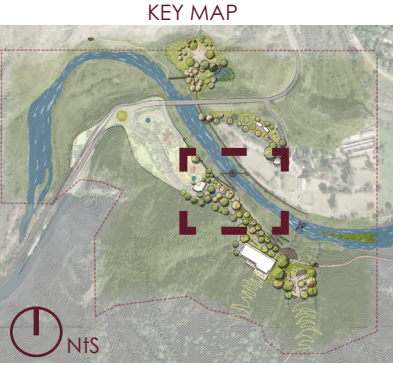


Rammed earth building structure example for the education center, with solar panels and awnings for full sun capture opportunities. Rammed earth offers excellent insulation, can be locally sourced and is fire resilient.



ENLARGEMENT 4 | The North Star

NORTH / RESILIENCE / PATIENCE / ENDURANCE / EARTH



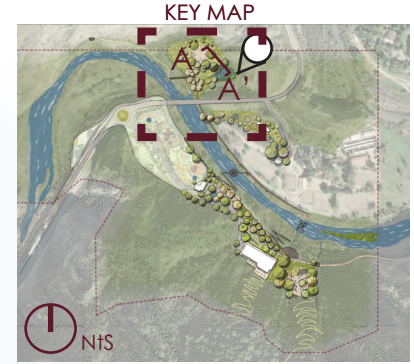
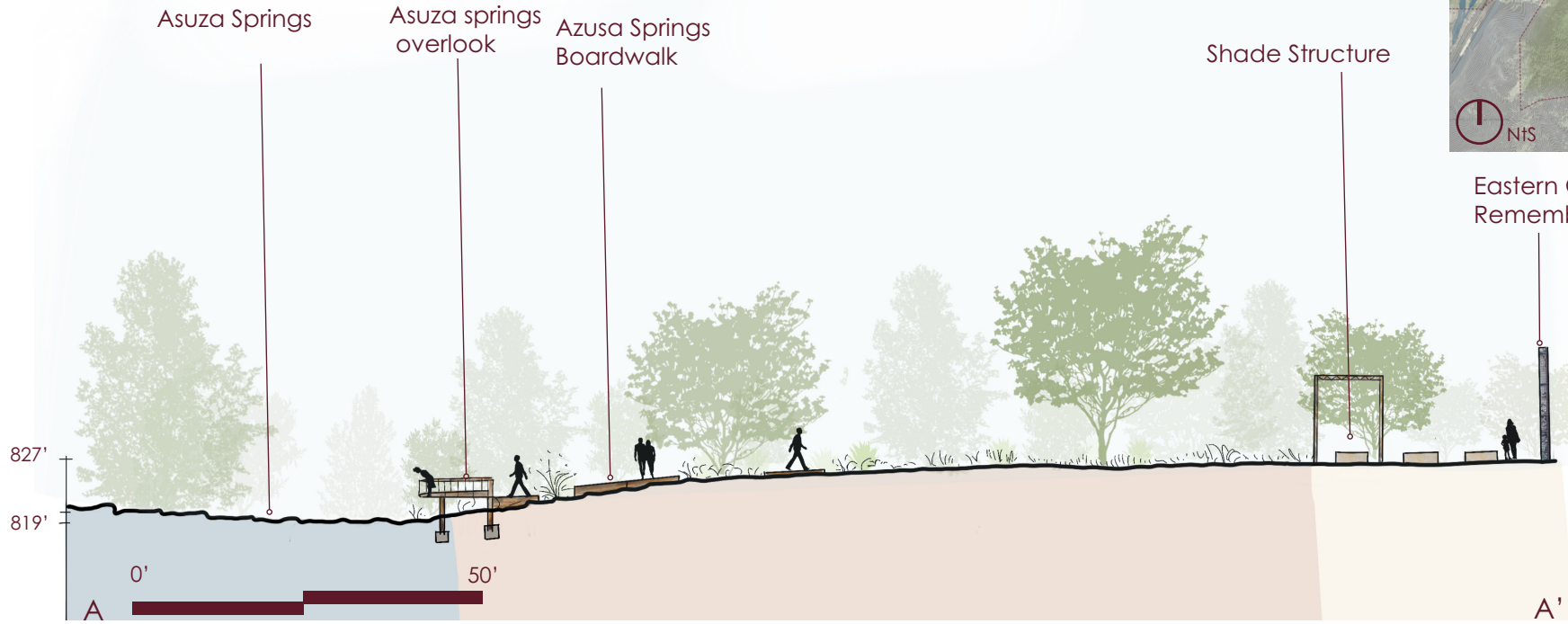
THE NORTH
 The **memory of the land** and its **ancestors** are honored in the Indigenous Ceremonial space where the four pillars are situated in alignment with the sun. The circular seating is made of local granite. Additional Oaks and Sycamores are planted for shade, and a foraging area with ethnobotanical plants are planted around the plateau.

Plant palette: oak woodland, coffeeberry, manzanita, salvias

NORTH/ RESILIENCE/ INVITATION

- ① Northeast boardwalk with overlooks + seating
- ② Indigenous Ceremonial Space
- ③ Azusa Springs Boardwalk with Overlook
- ④ Foraging Garden
- ⑤ Compostable Bathroom
- ⑥ Azusa Springs
- ⑦ Western River Access

SECTION ELEVATION + PERSPECTIVES | The North Star



Eastern Cardinal Remembrance

Bird's Eye View of the Celebration circle below



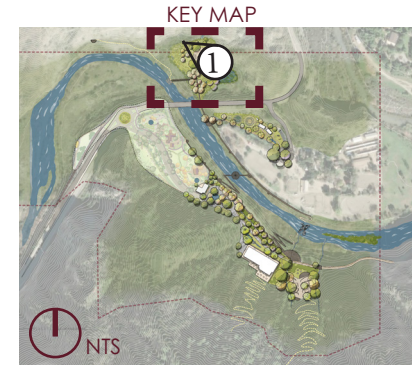
Boardwalk and lookout platform to Azusa Springs



PERSPECTIVE SKETCH | The North Star

The memory of the land and its ancestors are celebrated here. The Celebration Circle is made up of granite benches with temporary shade structures, until the tree canopy fills out. The ground is layered with decomposed granite.

The Cardinals are spatial, cultural and temporal anchors to the site. They each contain a piece of history: dug up asphalt or urbanite, remains of the El Encanto restaurant, rocks from the hillside, etc, all contained inside 14' tall gabion cages that are positioned in the cardinal directions. These are also displayed at the entrance of the park. Signage will help tell the story of each cardinal. Four additional cardinals are displayed at the very entrance to the park.

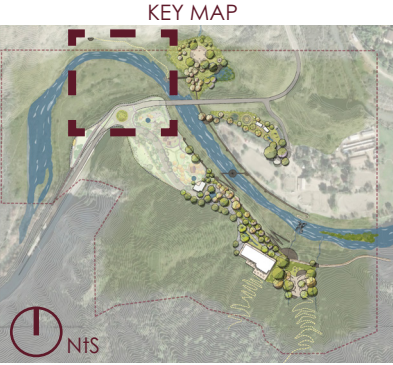


Celebration Circle: benches made from local granite encircle the space with entrances aligned with the equinoxes.



ENLARGEMENT 5 | Western Renewal

WEST / WATER / RENEWAL / THE CONNECTOR



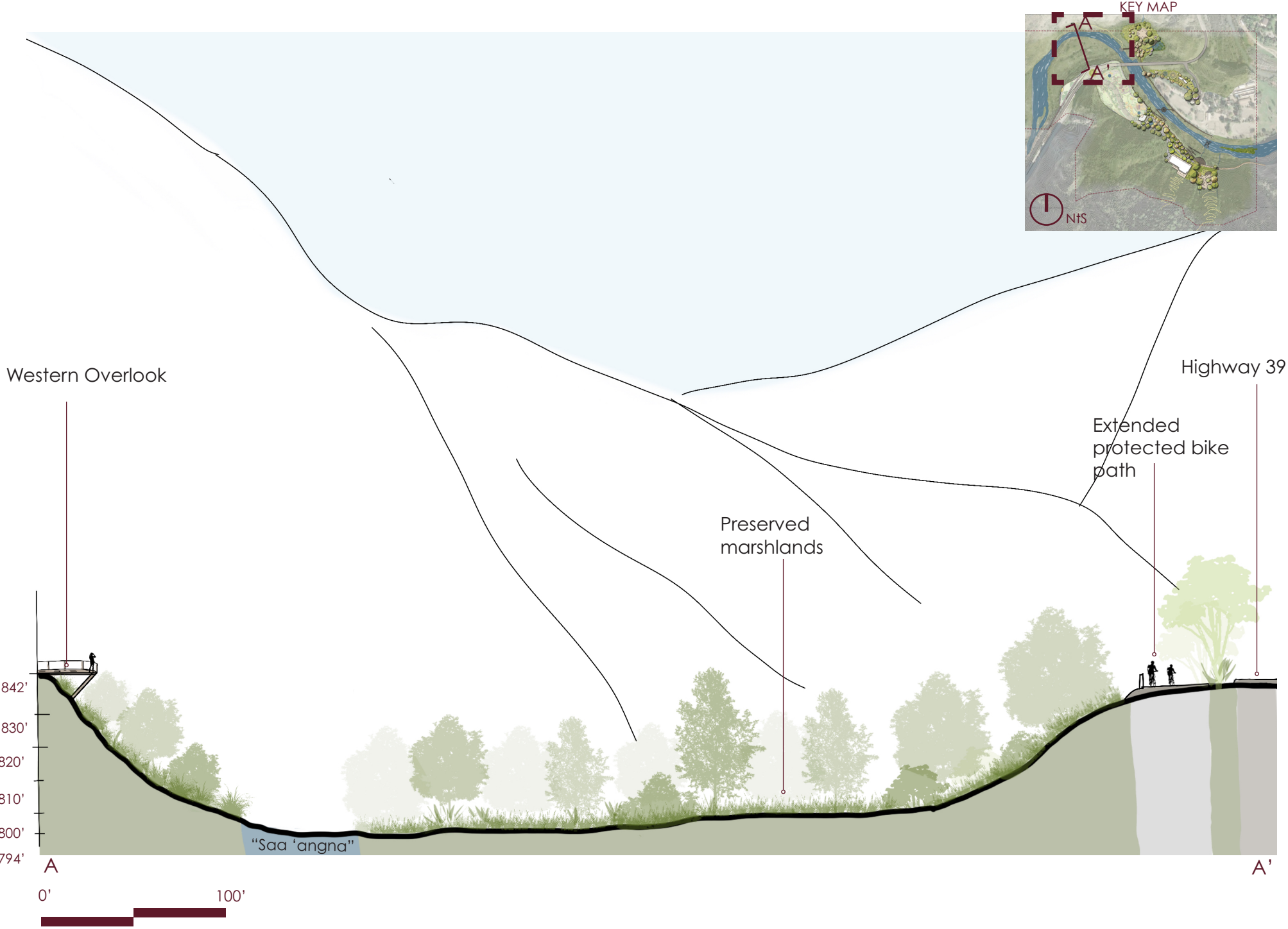
THE WEST is the connector, a cleansing force, a **life-giver**.

Here, users cross a boardwalk over restored habitat to access the river. There is also a trail that leads to a lookout with views to downtown Los Angeles. Plant Palette: riparian plant community such as willows, sycamores, and mulefat.

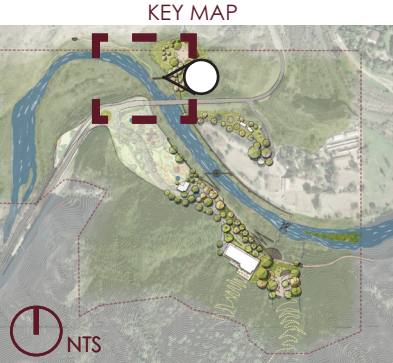
WEST / RENEWAL /

- ① Boardwalk to river access
- ② River access with granite stones for sitting
- ③ The four cardinal pillars at the entrance to the park
- ④ Trail
- ⑤ Western Lookout
- ⑥ Underground Cistern for water storage
- ⑦ Indigenous Ceremonial Space
- ⑧ Foraging Garden

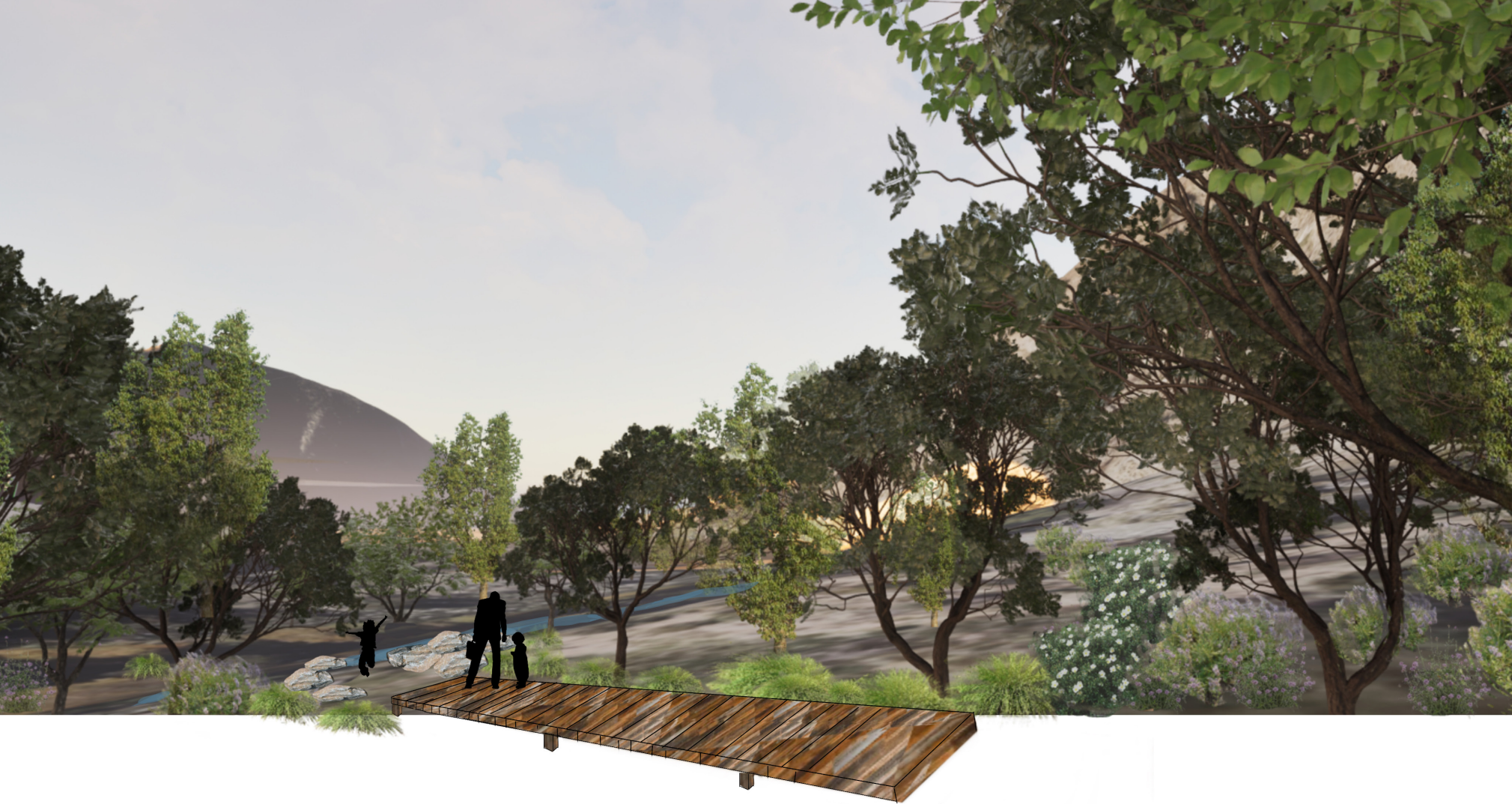
SECTION ELEVATION | Western Renewal



PERSPECTIVE SKETCHES | Western Renewal



Raised Boardwalk to the river. Additional granite rocks are placed for play and/or seating.



CITATIONS

Photos/Maps/Images

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Page Endnote 1. Machicomoco State Park. <https://www.asla.org/2024awards/9431.html> Accessed 4/23/2025

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