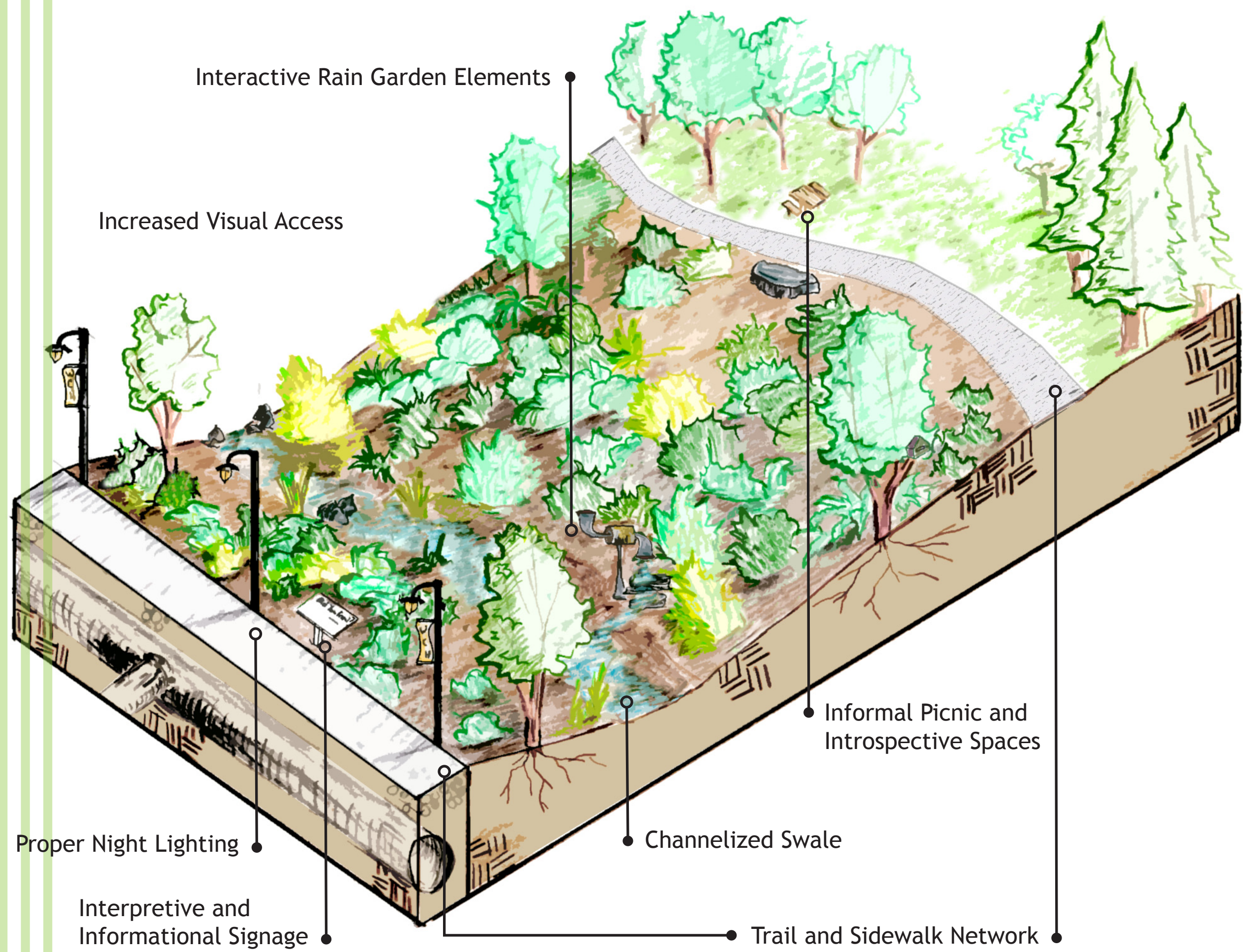


Reclaim and Rediscover



As children, we explore, play, and discover. But all too often we lose the luxury of acting as children, and we, for one reason or another, rationalize that we do not have the time nor the resources to live so actively. In rare cases, such as this, we are given the resources to redefine and reinvent neglected spaces that provide us with the chance to relearn many of the wonders we stumbled upon and had left behind in our youth.

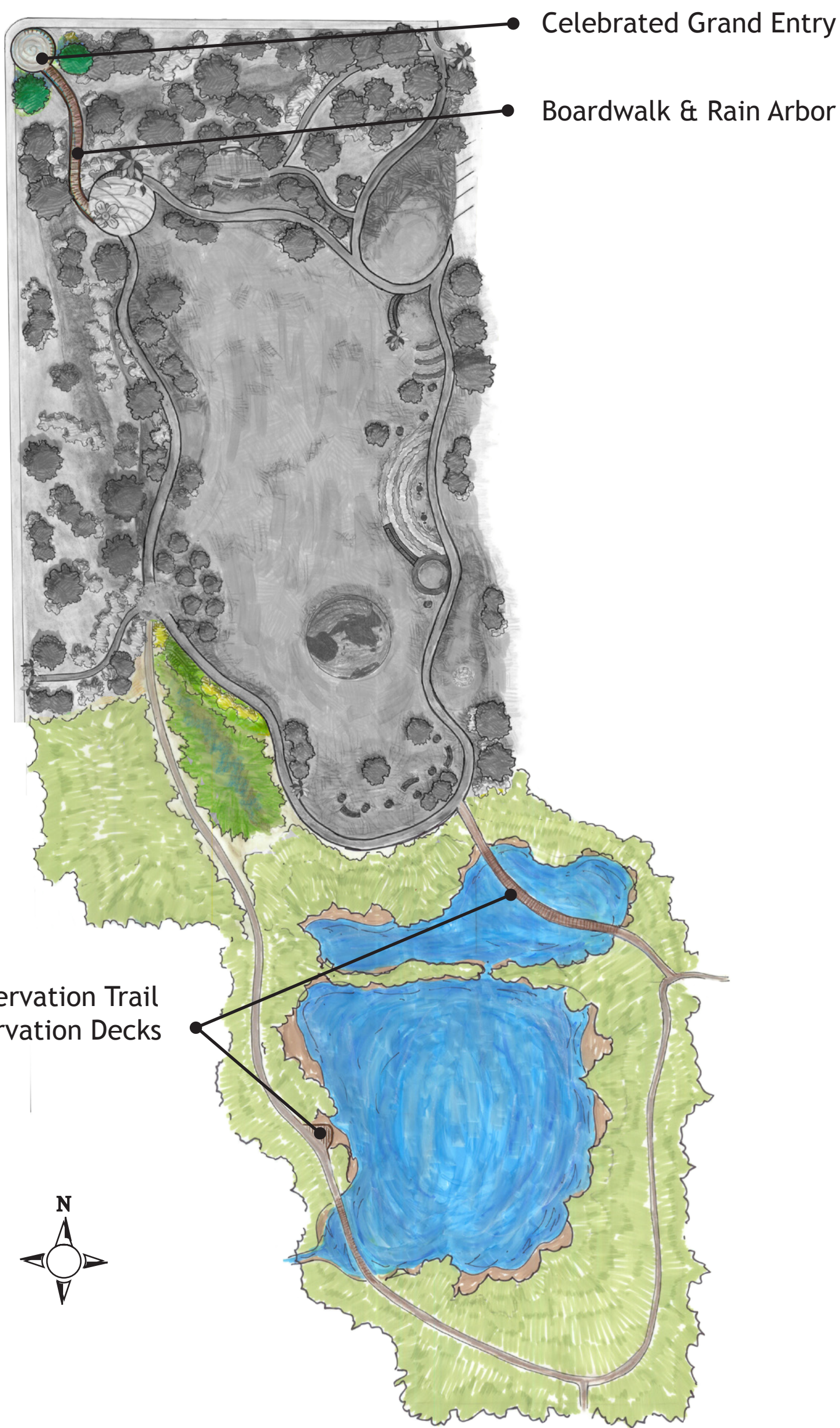
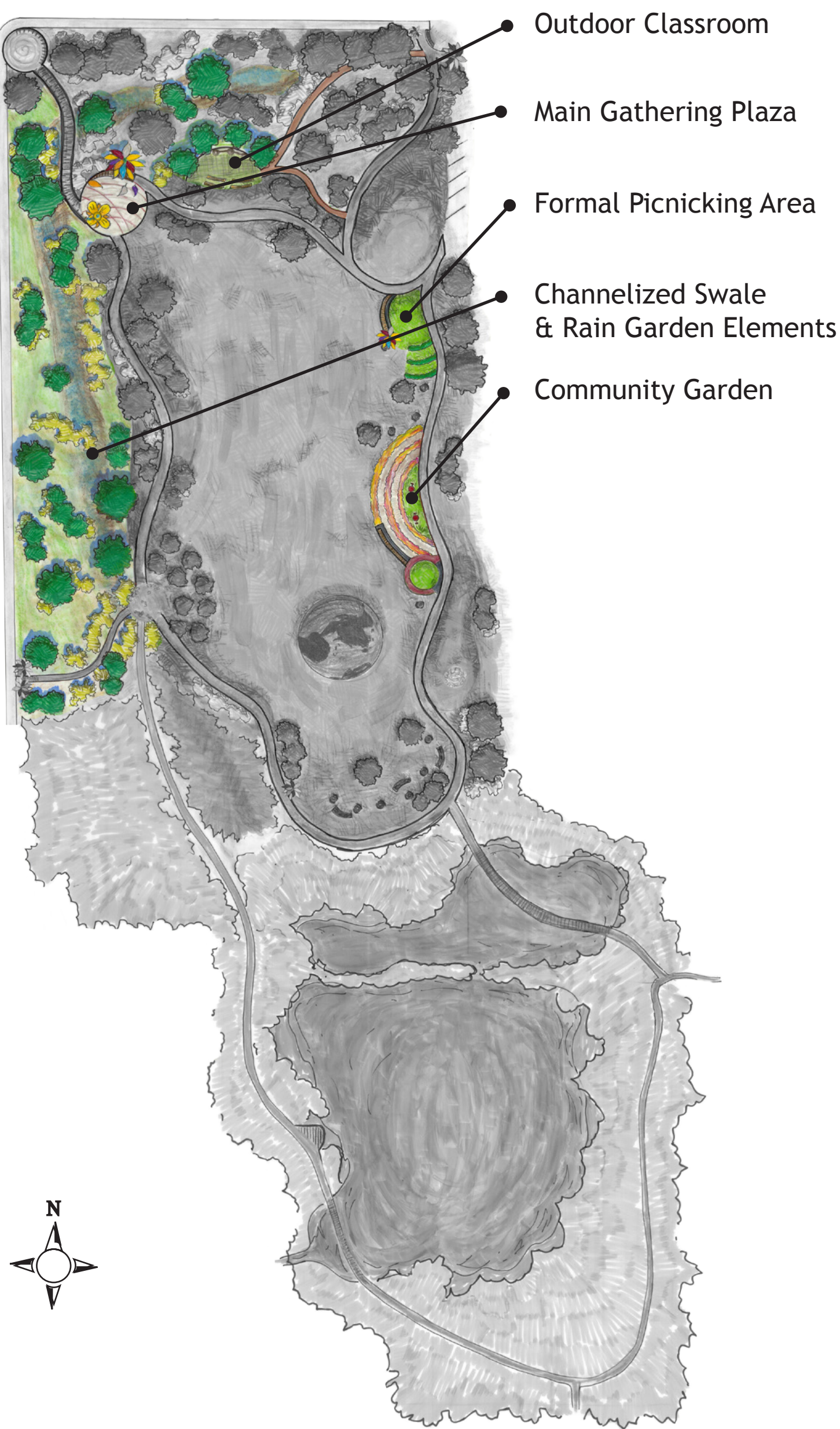
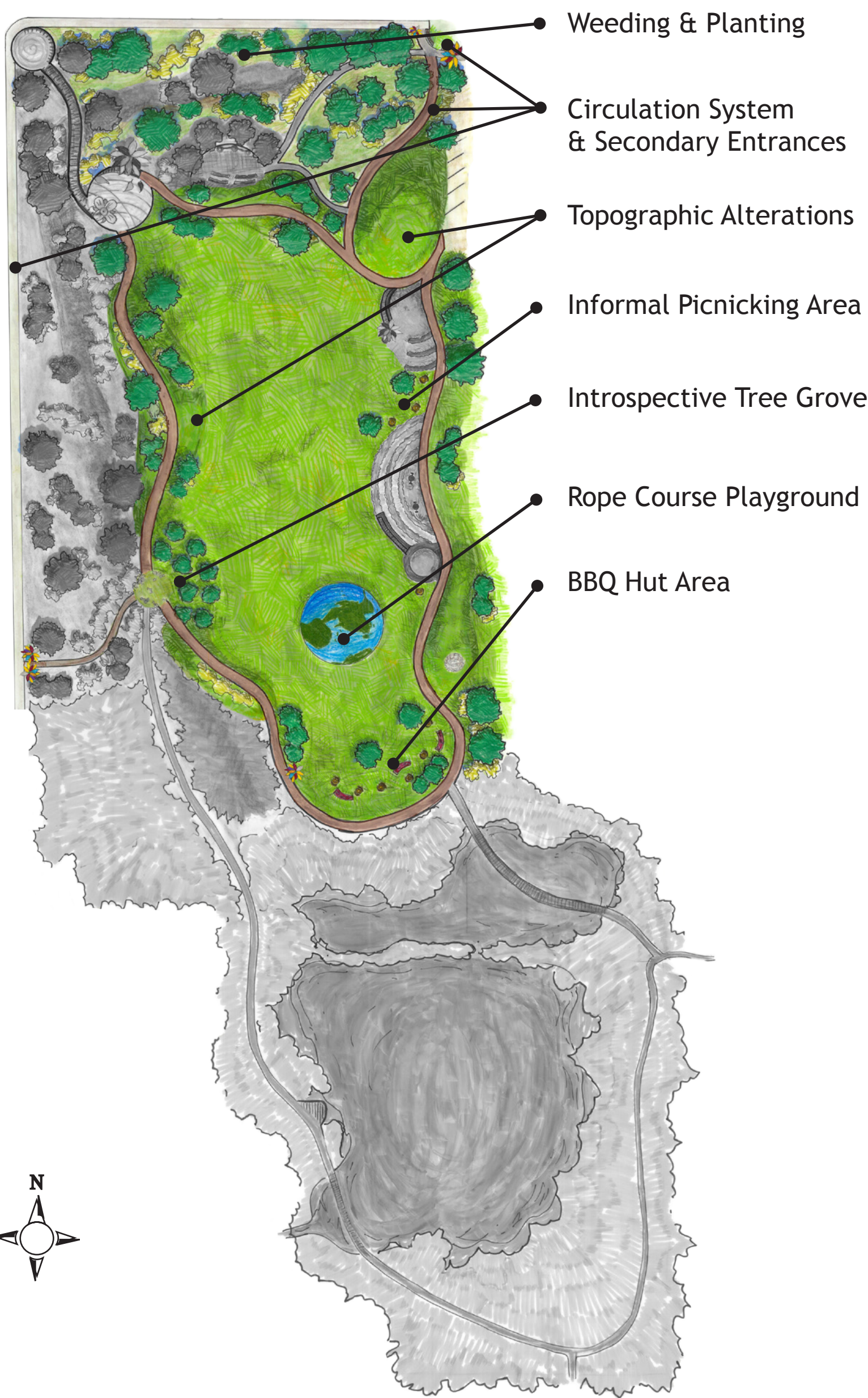
The concept for this design is rediscovery and reclaiming appreciation for everyday beauty within the natural world. In communities that do not receive the attention they deserve, due to municipal boundaries or the economic bracket they fall into, an enlivened spirit and passion for the intrinsic value of what they already have ought to shine forth. This concept highlights the great quality and incalculable value of existing conditions.

A direct expression of this concept is the implementation of space-creating topographic alterations. The alterations take the form of rolling hills reminiscent of the gentle undulation experienced while driving through White Center. As if White Center were stripped of its concrete layering, the mounds in this design harken to the pre-existing topographic experience of a rural landscape on a pedestrian scale. At different levels and in changing pockets of space, this design invites the community to enjoy and experience the park from different perspectives and views.

The treatment of the landscape is underscored by the presence of sun and water throughout the park. Revealing the hydrological processes of the park, this design plays with the movement and gathering of rain water. Where people gather; the rain gathers. And where people move (e.g. along the boardwalk and trails); so too does the water (i.e. in the arbor and swale). In rainy conditions, rain garden elements move and sound to the impact of rain droplets so that the community can encounter water and its manifestation in a new way.

Like the expression of water, the response to sunlight and incorporation of warmth is reverent and playful. Through use of vegetation and varied materials, the sun is covered and exposed to create multiple shapes and intensities of brightness. Many of the landforms include both light and dark conditions and respectively integrate appropriate planting, and structures make use of light colors and various textures to softly reflect light. With so many days out of the year inundated with grey clouds and wet conditions, this design celebrates even more the sparse presence of light and warmth.

Ultimately, the conceptual response to light, water, and land is meant to create a playful environment for community members of all ages. The transitions and blending of the three elements, focused in this concept, form unique active and passive recreational opportunities and foster rediscovery. The concept and approach of this design will refresh White Center Heights Park and enliven the spirit of play.



phase 1 (June 2007)

Phase one provides a dramatic transformation to White Center Heights Park; a fresh makeover for the community to engage, explore, and enjoy. The focus is to lay the bold foundation on which the rest of the park will unfold.

A main aspect of this project, which determines the elements included in phase one, is the feasibility of construction within seven days. All elements of phase one can be completely constructed within the scheduled time of one week.

Phase one also addresses the issue of community investment and planning for the parks continued success as a well used, functional space. By heightening community ownership and providing programs that will activate an under-utilized open space, the park will reach its potential as a community amenity.

- Topographic Alterations
- Circulation System (i.e. secondary entries, connective trail network, street sidewalks, and handicap accessible parking spaces)
- 'Top of the World' Rope Course
- Interpretive Art Trees (various locations)
- Barbecue Hut Area
- Introspective Tree Grove
- Invasive Mitigation

phase 2 (2008-2009)

Phase two of this design is where all the remaining elements (not located in ecologically critical areas) are installed. Phase two includes the extensive planting and channelizing of the swale located on the western border of the site. The elements of phase two are important for the community because they help foster a greater awareness of the natural world.

The interactive gathering spaces reveal natural processes and integral elements of those processes in a visual way. Providing these mediums for the community, to interact with the park on a mental and physical level, elevate the park to serve the community best as a restorative and engaging environment.

Both the outdoor classroom and community garden are places of commitment and growth. It takes time for those committed to the space to organize and coordinate, and it takes an equal amount of time for there to be a return on the initial investment (e.g. plant growth and personal growth). By being in phase two, each space has enough time to be organized and planned for by park officials and community members

This phasing scheme recharges community enthusiasm towards the park in a different way. The addition of new programmatic elements that incorporate the people of White Center will continue the excitement and interest, from phase one, in a more permanent fashion.

- Outdoor Classroom
- Main Gathering Plaza
- Formal Picnicking Area
- Channelized Swale
- Community Garden

phase 3 (2010-2015)

The third and final phase is the grand unveiling of the park. Even though the park will have been in use for several years, the most valuable portion of the park will not have been accessible to the community until now. In most residential areas, in and around Seattle, very few naturally occurring wetlands of this category and size exist. It is for this reason that the proper time and care be taken in honing and constructing the design which allows the community to rediscover such a wonderful feature of this park.

The permitting process reflects the importance of altering the state of wetlands, and coincides with the value sets and time line of this design. As a symbolic gesture, the main entrance to the park will not be constructed until the proper time has been taken to ensure the safety and quality of White Center Heights Pond.

When finished, the newly opened entrance will speak to the presence of the pond and water at the park, by gathering rainwater in a playful way and transporting it to the primary gathering area and channelized swale.

- Celebrated Primary Entry
- Elevated Boardwalk & Rain Arbor
- Wetland Observation Trail
- Pond Observation Decks

[design concept & project phasing]

White Center Heights Park

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