Wild Washington

Kate Hayes
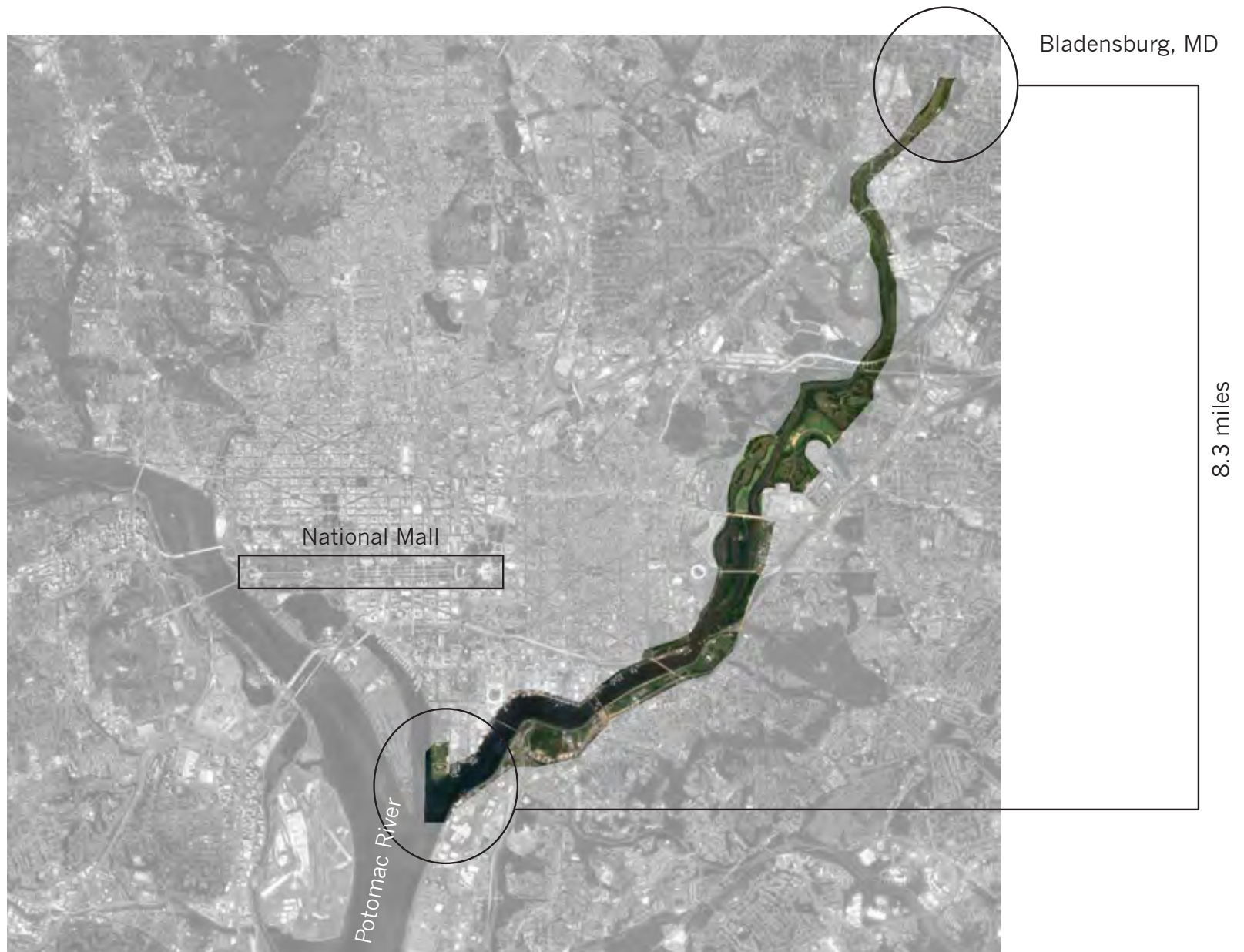*Landscape Architecture Intern*
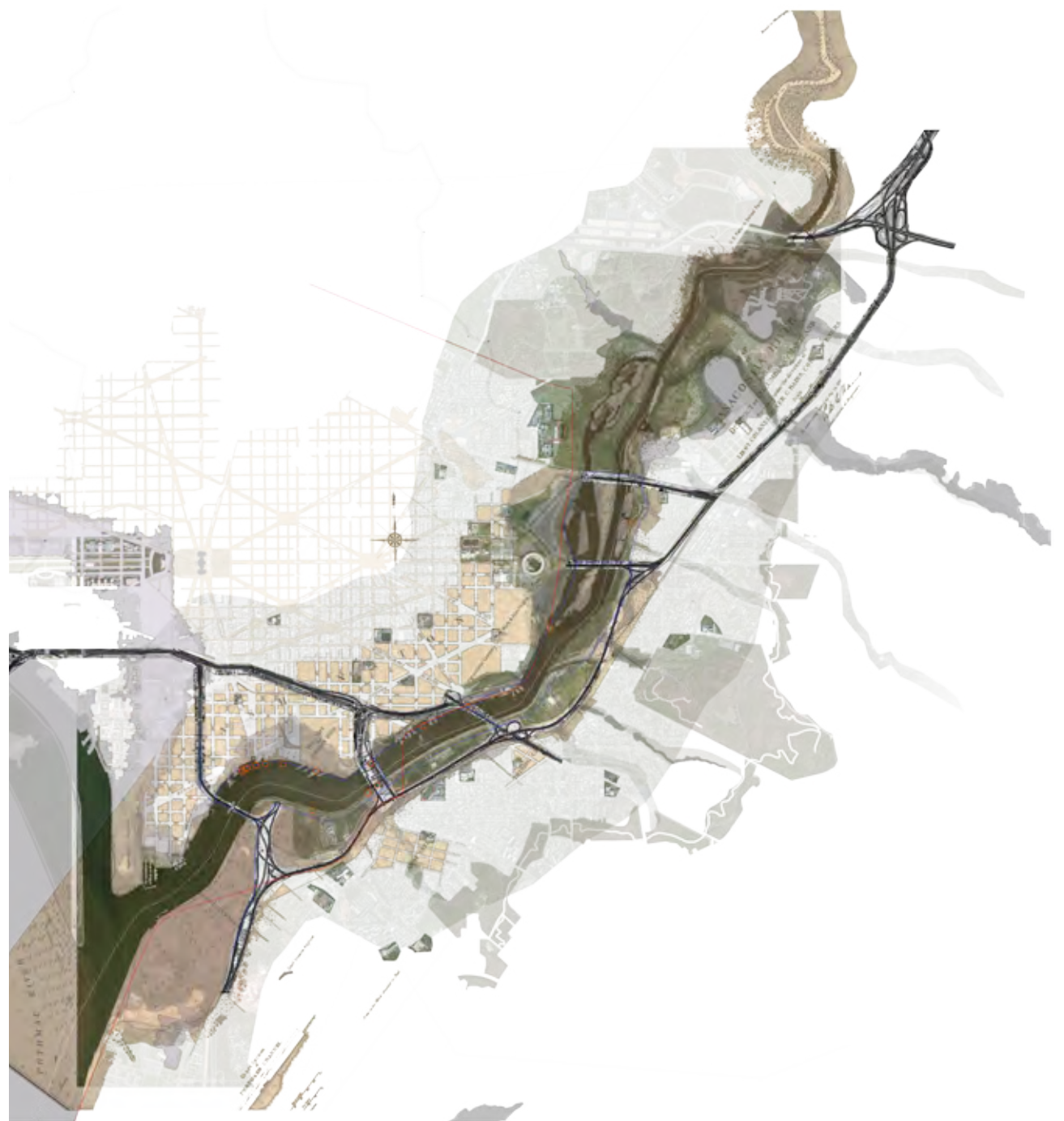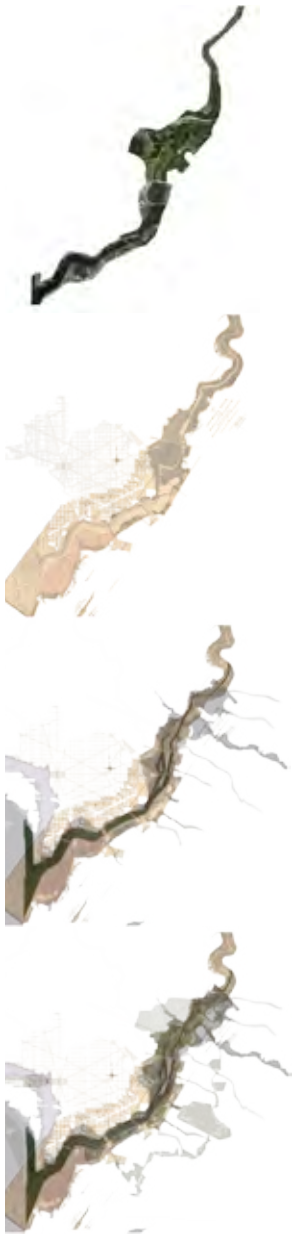
24 July 2013

Wild Washington

As the landscape architecture intern at Dumbarton Oaks, I have spent the summer investigating a "Wild Washington." This research, which builds upon my graduate thesis on "The Wild Anacostia," envisions an alternative perspective of our nation's capital based on the recognition and expression of the urban wild. It is a wild that can be discovered across scales and modes: from a fox crossing Rock Creek Parkway, to the Great Falls on the Potomac, to a dandelion growing from a crack in a parking lot. It is a wild that is not only found in plants and animals, but in stormwater, pollution, topography, and social behavior.

I began my research by exploring the words "wilderness" and "wild," including their relationship to Beatrix Farrand's design for Dumbarton Oaks. Through discussions with National Park Service employees, research in the library, and the creation of original graphics, I worked to situate Dumbarton Oaks within a wild spectrum that marks the D.C. landscape. As a hybrid on the edge of both a social and ecological spectrum, Dumbarton Oaks is an integral part of D.C.'s wild network.
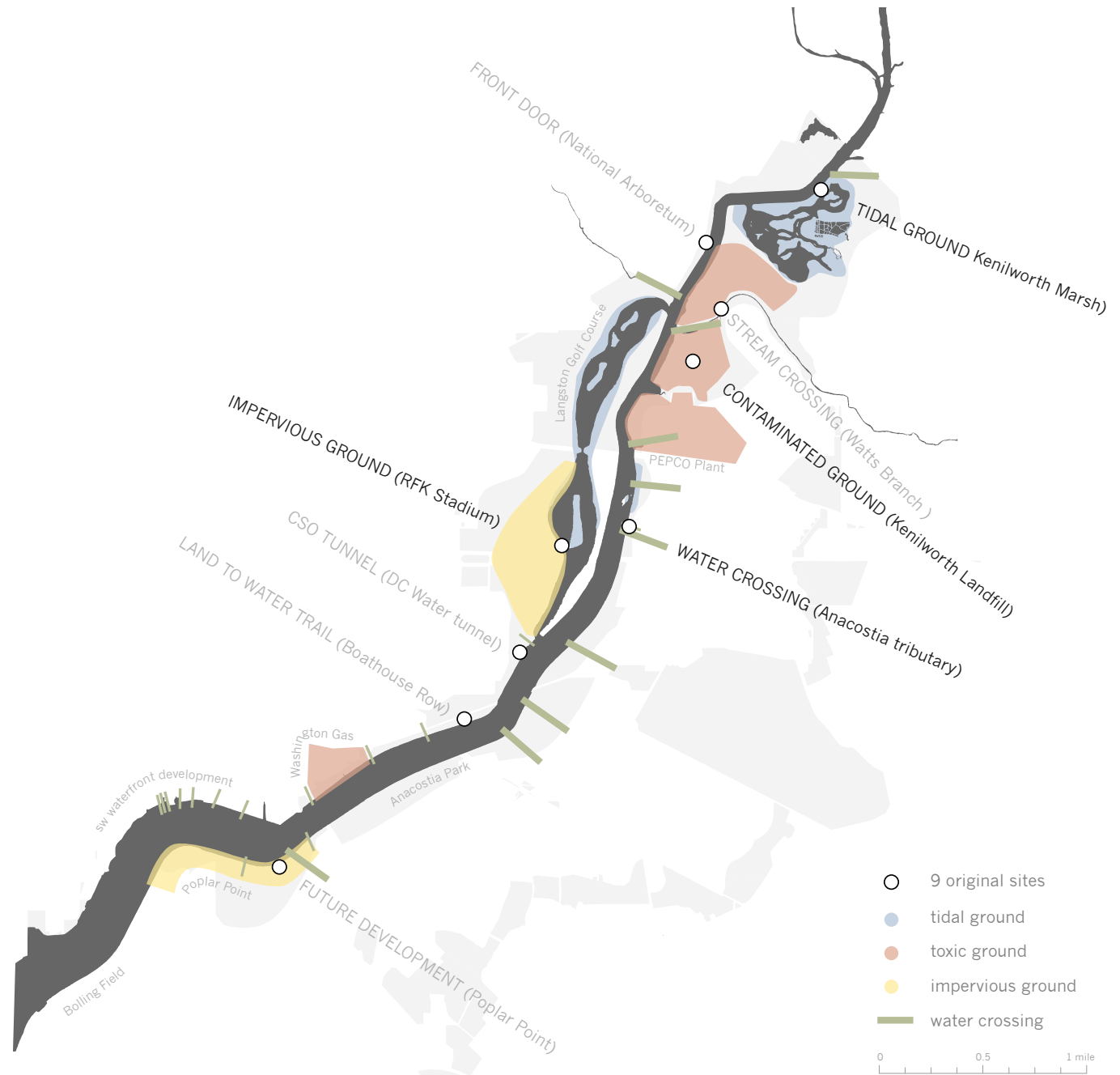
Coming from the perspective of a landscape architect, I view research as a design tool to help the public better understand the ever-changing dynamics in their own cities. Therefore, my goal this summer has been to relate and condense the different aspects and qualities of a "Wild Washington" into a form and concept that can be more easily understood to people living in and visiting D.C. My time at Dumbarton Oaks has fostered my interest in the definition and manifestation of the urban wild, and I plan to carry this research with me as I embark upon my career in landscape architecture.
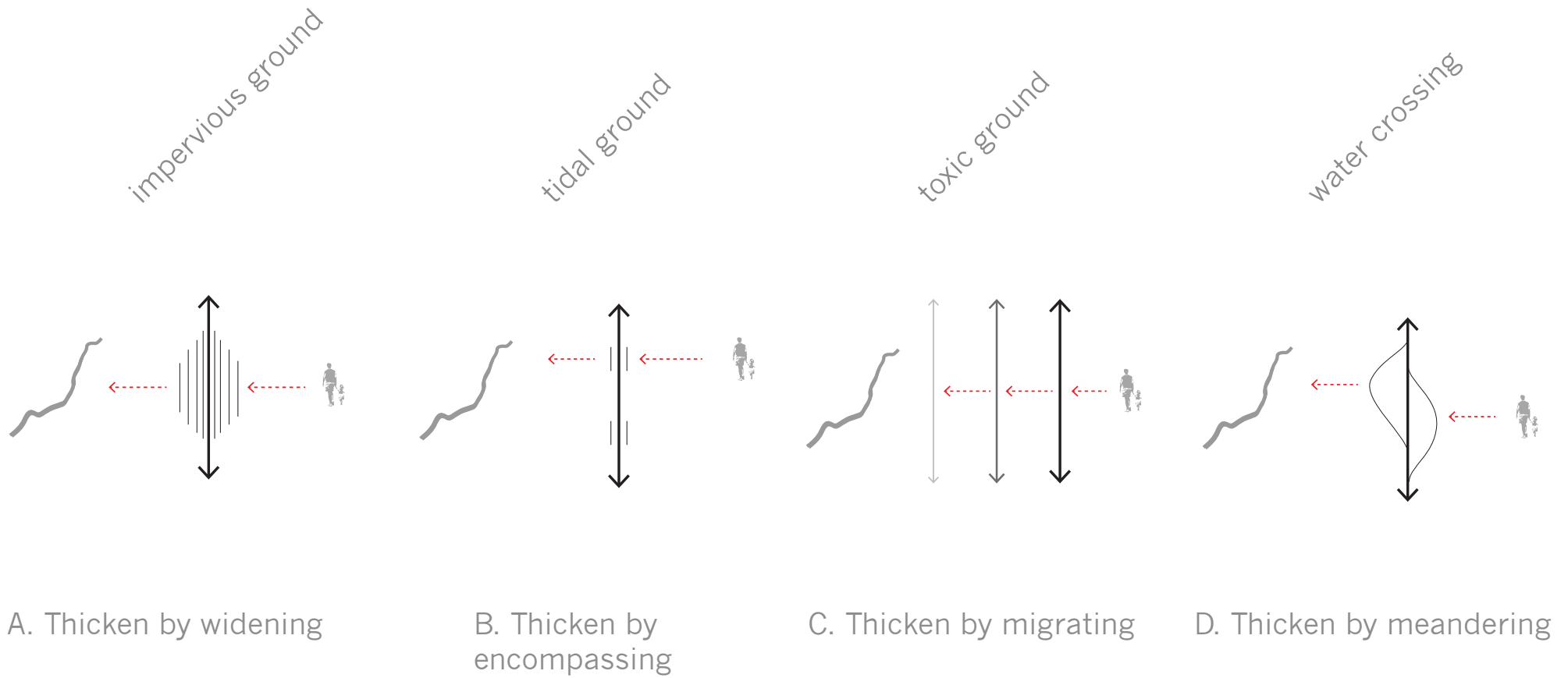
Bladensburg, MD

8.3 miles

National Mall

Potomac River

Thesis: Wild Anacostia

Thesis: Wild Anacostia

FRONT DOOR (National Arboretum)

TIDAL GROUND Kenilworth Marsh)

STREAM CROSSING (Watts Branch)

Langston Golf Course

IMPERVIOUS GROUND (RFK Stadium)

CONTAMINATED GROUND (Kenilworth Landfill)

PEPCO Plant

CSO TUNNEL (DC Water tunnel)

WATER CROSSING (Anacostia tributary)

LAND TO WATER TRAIL (Boathouse Row)

Washington Gas

sw waterfront development

Anacostia Park

Poplar Point

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (Poplar Point)

Bolling Field

○ 9 original sites

● tidal ground

● toxic ground

● impervious ground

— water crossing

0   0.5   1 mile

Anacostia sites

impervious ground

tidal ground

toxic ground

water crossing

A. Thicken by widening

B. Thicken by encompassing

C. Thicken by migrating

D. Thicken by meandering

Thickening strategies for trail design

RFK Stadium

trample vegetation

water

infiltrate

path

path

Urban wild as
spontaneous vegetation

swim once
contamination
levels drop

Path

Urban wild as
hydrology + topography

school children
cultivate seed bank

Phase I: trail heightens the contrast between remediated and toxic ground

Phase II: trail breaks down as landfill is remediated

path

Urban wild as the invisible

Engage + immerse   Play + perform   Observe + absorb

Urban wild as infrastructure

"*Idealizing a distant wilderness too often means not idealizing the environment in which we actually live, the landscape that for better or worse we call home*"
                    -William Cronon

Wilderness: untouched

"Wildness is in our own backyards, of the nature that is all around us if only we have the eyes to see it"
-William Cronon

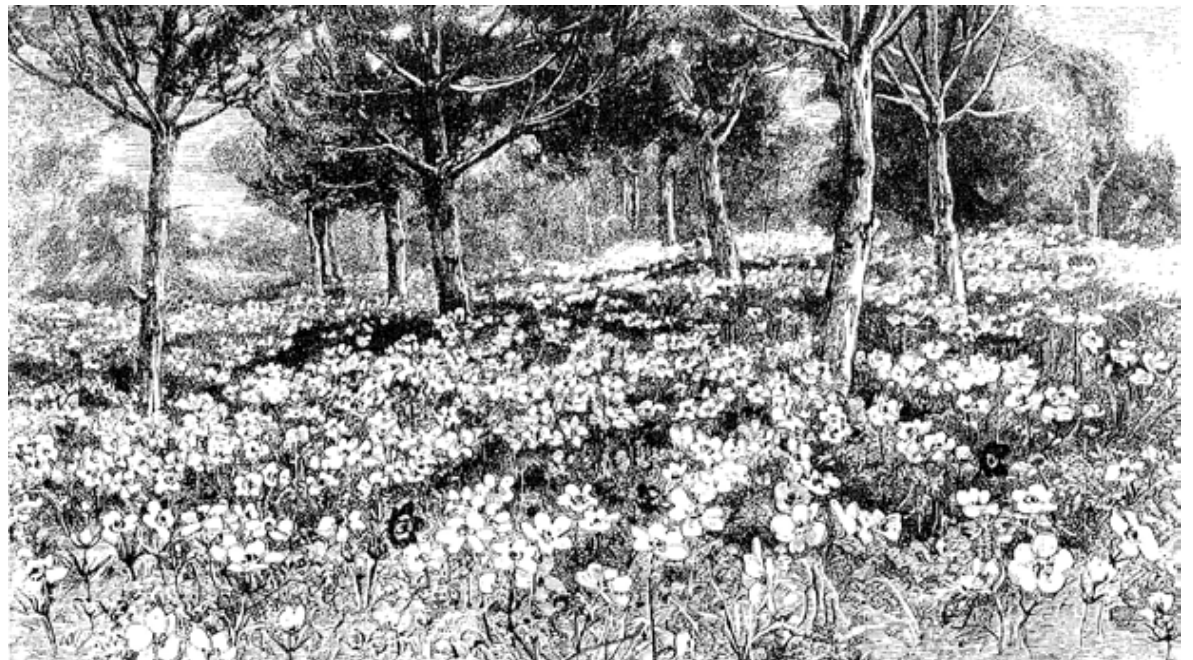Wilderness: a refuge

Wilderness: separate systems

The Wild Garden

The Wild Garden

Beatrix Farrand's wilderness

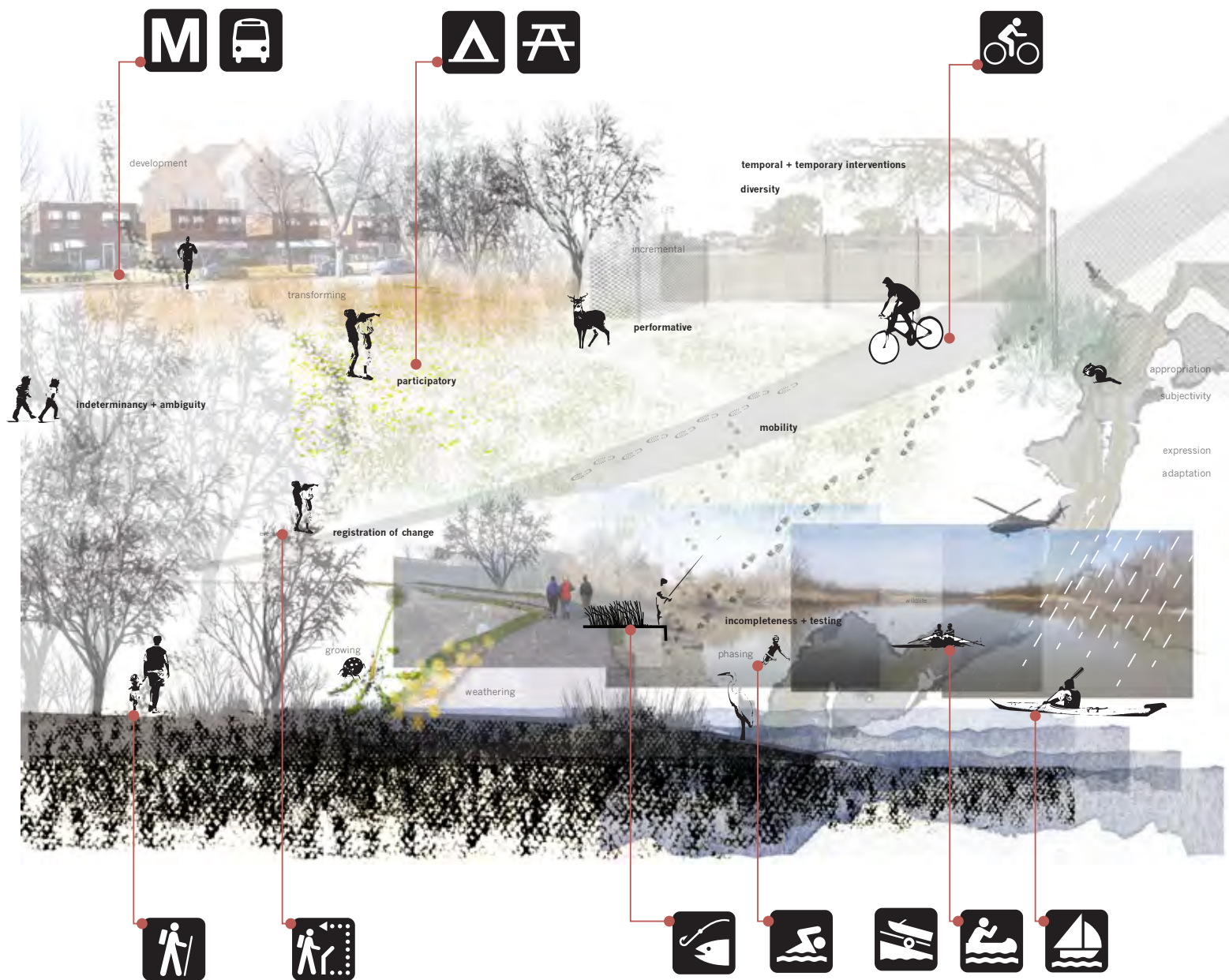Beatrix Farrand's wilderness today...

"Wildness is in our own backyards, of the nature that is all around us if only we have the eyes to see it"
-William Cronon

Wilderness vs. Urban Wild

The Urban Wild

orientation + disorientation

control + uncontrol

wonder + fear

strangely familiar

inderterminancy

ambiguity

incompleteness

registration of change

appropriation

expression

adaptation + evolution

layered

network

connecting processes

burried narratives

children + growth + play

mobility

participatory

performative

temporal + temporary interventions

diversity

phasing

incompleteness + testing

Reading list

Rambunctious Gardens by Emma Marris

Urban Wildscapes edited by Anna Jorgensen + Richard Keenan

The Wild Garden by William Robinson

Planetary Gardens · The Landscape Architecture of Gilles Clement edited by Alessandro Rocca

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv

"Terrain Vague" by Ignasi Sola·Morales

The Wild Places by Robert Macfarlane

People

Bill Yeaman · NPS Resource Management Specialist

Doug Curtis · NPS hydrologist

Scott Einberger · Ranger, RCP

Lou Slade · Dumbarton Oaks Park volunteer

Maureen Joseph · NPS, Park Cultural Landscapes Program

Mark Fray · NPS Exotic Plants Management

Scott Bates · NPS Wildlfie Biologist

Pat Campbell · NPS Inventory Monitoring

Jill Swearingen · NPS Invasive Species Management Coordinator

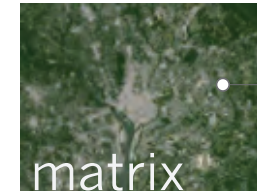NPS Center for Urban Ecology

Research

WATER
flash floods
voluntary tributaries
rapids
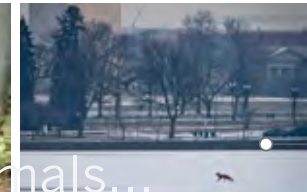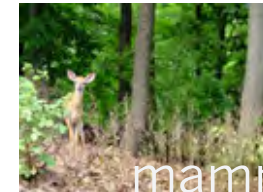stormwater
topography
erosion

channelization
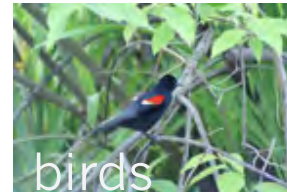
rivers + streams...

Fall Line

FLORA
spontaneous
gardens
natives
invasives
street trees

opportunistic

patch

corridor

matrix

FAUNA

in # and physical size

insects
keystone species

insects

reptiles

birds

mammals...

SOCIAL
ACTIVITIES
programmed
unprogrammed
flash mobs
cruising
Botanic Gardens

private

semi-public

public
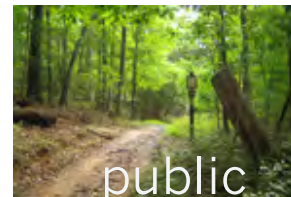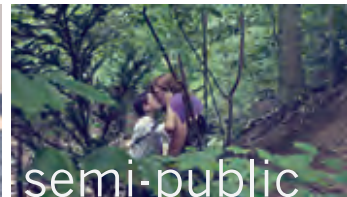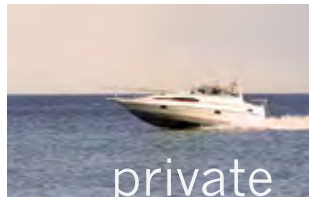
INFRA-
STRUCTURE
topography
culverted streams
green infrastructure
historic

sidewalk

lot

block

neighborhood

city

region
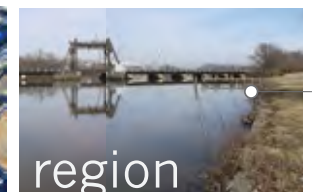
SCALE   smaller, less visible   larger, more visible, assumed

Aspects, characteristics, + the multiple scales of the urban wild

INFLUENCES

pre-construction? · at construction · precipitation · ice · flooding · running · traffic · trampling · lingering · biological · micro-biological · solar

asphalt

native, naturalized, invasive

concrete

brick

succession

grasses · shrubs · +50 yrs+ · young forest · mature forest · +100 yrs

TIME

it's cyclical · phasing potential

280+ exotic plant species

Urban wild palette

LARGE CORRIDORS

Rock Creek
Potomac
Fort Circle Parks
Anacostia

Dumbarton Oaks

PATCH PARKS

National Mall

Triangle Parks

Hains Point

roadside buffers
daylit streams
hedgerows + fence lines
vacant lots
steep hillsides
green roofs
community gardens
trails + paths

SMALL PATCHES
+ CORRIDORS

Wild Washington matrix

fauna

lightening bug
chipmunk
squirrel
cicadas
geese
butterflies
raccoon
damselflies
white tailed deer
wood thrush
snowy egret
Atlantic Sturgeon
coyote

flora

natives
Green Dragon
wild columbine
wild rice
natrualized
White Mulberry
invasives
kudzu
Oriental Bittersweet

social activities

interpreting | hiking | biking | fitness course | fishing + cleaning | swimming | kayaking | wildlife viewing | cruising

infrastructure

trails + paths | roads | Nature Center | bridges | signage | rangers | highways | tunnels

water

hard infrastructure | *green ifnrastructure* | *the extremes* | *the "sublime"*

directing | channelizing | green roofs | rain gardens | drought | freezing | flooding | rapids

programmed
tamed
anticipated
sanctioned

THE NATIONAL MALL

DUMBARTON OAKS

ROCK CREEK PARK

un-programmed
wild
unassumed
unsanctioned

Socio-ecological spectrum of the urban wild

Wild Washington

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