RE-IMAGINING BURNET WOODS
The Art of Urban Ecology

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Burnet Woods is a unique natural treasure, nestled beside the ever-growing campus of the University of Cincinnati. Its lush tree canopy and rolling green hills provide a stark contrast against concrete surroundings. For many, this is what makes Burnet Woods so special: the park offers a peaceful retreat from urban life and a rare opportunity to connect with nature in the heart of the city. Unfortunately, the proper use of Burnet Woods has been hotly contested in decades past, and the park faces many current challenges:

- As the university expands and development is favored by financial stakeholders, Burnet Woods purists struggle to preserve the land, neutralize the threat of encroachment, and increase the park’s appeal without development.
- The park has assumed an increasingly unfavorable reputation in recent years. Cruising and drug activity deter families; remnants of homeless camps, litter, and poor maintenance create a depressed aesthetic; while minimal visibility and local crime breed an overblown sense of physical danger.
- Rampant parasites - particularly the Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorned Beetle - pose a real danger to tree canopy throughout Ohio, with Burnet Woods expected to lose up to 30% of its cover in the coming years.

In a time when community engagement, outdoor play, and appreciation of nature are regrettably low, Burnet Woods is too valuable a space to turn over to developers, or to leave untended. The Art of Urban Ecology is both an ecological and aesthetic improvement initiative, preserving existing resources, introducing new ones, and fostering an appreciation of those resources through powerful visuals. By engaging actors with financial or personal stakes in the future of Burnet Woods, this initiative will combine art, ecological sensibility, and the power of community to guide visitors throughout the park.

Executive Summary

We envision a park where art is integrated with natural features, individuals connect as a community through a shared experience, and feelings of personal security and appreciation of nature emerge from well designed and maintained physical elements.

Visions

The Art of Urban Ecology values ecological planning with an emphasis on community engagement. Goals will be achieved through the following 5 action steps:

1. Create an ecological preservation plan will include elements such as stormwater management, biological diversity, protection of natural resources, and improvement of the overall ecological health of the park.
2. Integrate permanent and rotating art installations which may include any media as well as performance art, and which utilize or enhance natural systems, elements, and forms.
3. Promote community engagement by bringing low impact activities into the park (Yoga, Tai Chi) and organizing community planting/park maintenance days.
4. Clearly define space through landscaping using terracing and distinctive plantings.
5. Improve wayfinding through the development of intuitive pathways. Use art installations that follow natural and defined pathways to guide visitors throughout the park.

Goals & Objectives

Improve stormwater management, biological diversity, and overall ecological health of the park while highlighting its contributions to environmental wellness, providing suggestions for aesthetic improvements, and promoting community engagement with nature.

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Project Statement

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3. Promote community engagement by bringing low impact activities into the park (Yoga, Tai Chi) and organizing community planting/park maintenance days.
4. Clearly define space through landscaping using terracing and distinctive plantings.
5. Improve wayfinding through the development of intuitive pathways. Use art installations that follow natural and defined pathways to guide visitors throughout the park.
HISTORY OF BURNET WOODS
Transformation from 1870 - Present

In the early 1870s, local wealthy landowners William Groesbeck & Robert Burnet created the first incarnation of Burnet Woods, leasing 170 acres of private land to the City of Cincinnati for use as a park. By the 1880s, much of the land had been formally purchased by the city, and approximately 75 acres by the University of Cincinnati, marking the first encroachment upon park territory. In 1950, 22 additional acres were acquired by the university, allowing the campus to develop & expand northward. Today, the park is a comparatively small 90 acres. Powerful stakeholders such as the university & Uptown Consortium see financial gains in further development on the site, while community members fight to keep the park as is. This conflict of interests regarding the appropriate use of Burnet Woods is nothing new, as plans & proposals have historically sparked intense debate. Irwin Krohn posed the big question in 1945: “Shall Burnet Woods be a university, or shall it be a park?” The answer has evaded planners for decades.
1907: Kessler Plan

Renowned landscape architect George Kessler envisioned an interconnected system of naturally beautiful parks for the city of Cincinnati. The specific plan for Burnet Woods included such elements as a striking entrance piece to reflect the grandeur of the space, as well as other architectural embellishments; full tree cover dotted with open recreational areas; fountains & garden features. The design was meant to take inspiration from the formerly completed Kansas City Park System.2

A proposal to utilize Burnet Woods as a parking facility was put forth by the university. The proposal was ultimately rejected on the grounds that the park was a heavily used resource and should not be subject to any further reduction in land area.

1939: University of Cincinnati Parking Proposal

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1945: University of Cincinnati Dorm Proposal

The university requested 19 acres of land from the Park Board for a new dormitory & armory development, arguing that the desired area of Burnet Woods was not useable for traditional park purposes. Public outcry & the input of influential opponents such as Irwin Krohn prevented the development.3

1972: Cincinnati Park Board Plan

This comprehensive plan for Burnet Woods recommended entertainment activities within the park to attract visitors & deter crime. Specifically, this was to be achieved by acquiring homes adjacent to the park on Bishop Ave, and using that space as the site of a new restaurant & parking lot. The plan also called for installation of a storm sewer in compliance with the EPA, a park clean-up/maintenance week, and improved accessibility for pedestrians entering the park via busy intersections. The issue of a restaurant caused an uproar in the Clifton community, and was publicly condemned by councilman David Mann. As such, the plan was never implemented.4

2000: Hargreaves Plan

The University of Cincinnati presented a comprehensive plan led by George Hargreaves. Hargreaves recognized the importance of continuity between the landscape of Burnet Woods & the UC campus, as well as the value of the park’s history. The plan focused on creating physical connectivity via landscaping, while maintaining views of the park from campus. Hargreaves suggested that new trees be planted around the university as a compliment to older trees left from the original park. Landscaping was not the sole component of this comprehensive plan, but this aspect conveyed respect for Burnet Woods as a natural & historical resource.5

2008: Uptown Consortium Plan

Like the 1972 plan, this one by Uptown Consortium called for construction of a restaurant & parking lot within Burnet Woods. This led to significant backlash from both Clifton Town Meeting & the CUF Neighborhood Association, whose Fairview Park would have also been affected by the plan. These groups explicitly expressed their disapproval of construction in Burnet Woods and, as in 1972, plans to develop were quashed.

Due in large part to the continued, impassioned resistance of local residents, several proposals to develop Burnet Woods for financial gain have been defeated. Planners have historically struggled with the site, often unable to balance park promotion with preservation of natural integrity.

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1 UC Historical Walking Tour: https://sites.google.com/site/ucwalks/points-of-interest/burnett-woods
2 Kessler, George. A Park System for the City of Cincinnati.
3 Stradling, David. Shall Burnet Woods be a University or a Park?
4 Comprehensive Study and Master Plan for Burnet Woods, December 1972
5 University of Cincinnati. Landscape Assessment & Treatment: http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/af/pdc/campus_heritage_plan/new_heritage_files/Chapter%205%20%289mb%29.pdf
With the history and present challenges of Burnet Woods in mind, we turned to other parks for guidance in our plan making. Valuing environmental wellness and artistic expression, we sought specific ways to bridge the two notions through ecological planning, preservation, and advocacy. Both national and international parks provided us with strong examples of creative and engaging ecological plans; however, the Vancouver Park Board stood out as an organization that had excelled in incorporating environmental art within its parks.
THE VANCOUVER PARK BOARD has a specific art policy that affirms the integral link between art, community participation, and balanced, healthy ecologies. Through this policy, the Board has created initiatives across Vancouver that bring artists into parks through residencies, that utilize park resources as art materials, and that promote art installations that respond to the ebb and flows of the environment.

From studying Vancouver, we took away many important tenets to apply to Burnet Woods. For example, the necessity of including both permanent and ephemeral art within the park became clear. While having a few lasting, anchoring pieces is important to defining space, art that changes naturally with the environment is integral to protecting natural ecologies and maximizing education and awareness.

One particular project especially highlights the opportunities of responsive, nonpermanent art within parks: the Stanley Park Environmental Art Project. A 2006 windstorm destroyed much of Vancouver’s Stanley Park. Faced with devastation, the Park Board proactively looked for ways to restore and reimagine the space with art. Their project goal was “to honour the park and its special place in the hearts of the citizens of Vancouver by giving six talented artists the opportunity to create art works that will engage through discussion and hands-on workshops; inform and interpret our natural surroundings; and help us to re-envision our relationship with nature so that we may find new ways to co-exist within the environment upon which we all depend.”

Recognizing the diminishing tree canopy in Burnet Woods, we saw Stanley Park as a particularly inspiring illustration of utilizing art to enliven space despite destruction and to create environmental awareness. As we imagined and planned the future of Burnet Woods, we too strove to propose projects that would not only enhance the aesthetic experience within the park, but most importantly, that would draw attention to, and in turn protect, its ever-shifting natural ecology.

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6 Vancouver Park Board: http://former.vancouver.ca/parks/arts/index.htm.

7 Vancouver Park Board: http://former.vancouver.ca/parks/arts/spea/overview.htm.
PLANNING PROCESS
Sensing, Analyzing, Theorizing, Making, and Communicating

Before planning the future of Burnet Woods, it was important to identify the major physical and social influences on park use, attempt to understand these influences, and use that information to develop a comprehensive solution to existing problems. As such, the process was broken into five distinct phases: Sensing, Analyzing, Theorizing, Making, & Communicating. Each phase built on knowledge gained from the one before it, providing a holistic understanding of the elements most affecting Burnet Woods.
In this phase, the team sought data explaining the current environment in and around the park. Topics researched include crime, surface hydrology, demographics of local residents, activities within Burnet Woods, & legal ownership of areas surrounding the park. After collecting preliminary data about factors influencing the park, the team then had the option of narrowing the field of focus in future steps. However, it was useful to keep all of these factors in mind, always considering how they relate to one another. Some topics covered in the Sensing phase were particularly beneficial in developing the final plan for Burnet Woods, such as topography, forest cover, survey of local flora & fauna, and location of existing park trails.

After collecting the initial information and isolating topics of interest, the team proceeded to conduct in-depth analyses of the facts. Guided by the raw data, we took the first steps in understanding the attitudes and perceptions of the local public, what made Burnet Woods a success or not, what level of appeal the park actually had to potential visitors and why. Various elements researched in the Sensing phase were synthesized to draw conclusions about the experience of isolation in Burnet Woods, ease of access from surrounding neighborhoods, social tensions, & many other scenarios affecting the way the park is used every day. Various tools & programs such as statistical cluster analysis, topographic sections, and ArcMap were used to analyze data, and to present the results visually. In completing this phase, the team acquired a more comprehensive, detailed understanding of a few key issues facing Burnet Woods, which allowed us to identify areas of greatest personal interest and move into next steps with conviction.
In this third phase, we used the analyses previously conducted to begin formulating actual steps to solve a problem in Burnet Woods, or just improve the experience there. Based on some of the most popular issues identified in phase II, we developed suggestions pertaining to categories like imageability, access, & programming. This was primarily achieved with a charrette session made up of several small groups, each assigned a particular topic. Considering possible action steps at this more focused level provided an opportunity to expound upon some of the broad ideas & solutions that had emerged from earlier process steps. The initial ideas developed in this phase were the seeds of greater plans, which came to fruition later in the process. For example, this was the first time that the notion of art as a way to promote feelings of safety entered the discussion.

As the name implies, we began making work in phase IV, laying the groundwork for the visual representation of ideas generated in phase III. Inspiration images & hand drawn plans soon transitioned into more refined visuals as our concepts were developed further. Various pieces of work emerged from this phase, including drawings, hand crafted vignettes, digitally rendered before-and-after images, posters, & other multimedia elements made to reflect the artistic nature of the plan. In this phase, more was more, and we generated over 40 individual pieces of work, each conveying some element of the structure or physical manifestation of the plan in its own way.
PLANNING PROCESS
Phase V: Communicating

In this final phase, we edited down the visuals created in the previous phase. Now, rather than display everything we could produce, the goal was to convey the core ideas of the plan in a concise, intelligible manner. Several items were left out of this phase entirely, while others were combined into a single poster. However, some profound pieces which strongly conveyed the physical future of Burnet Woods or partnerships to facilitate the plan, such as 32 individual vignettes & a stakeholder string map, remained in addition to the conventional poster presentation.

With this final presentation of our most essential visuals and informative text, the team was able to bring The Art of Urban Ecology to life in the minds of onlookers.
Stakeholders and Funding
Creative Partnerships

One of the most crucial aspects to the development of “The Art of Urban Ecology” schema is community engagement. To accomplish this, we feel it is necessary to engage local actors with financial or personal stakes in the future of Burnet Woods. We also feel it is important to engage these actors with local stakeholder groups, forming creative partnerships. These partnerships will help to provide the future of Burnet Woods with a powerful, committed community of caretakers who are instilled with a sense of responsible ownership.
Stakeholders and Funding
Identifying Local Stakeholder Groups

The first step in creating active community engagement is to identify who the local stakeholders are. We created a stakeholder map to organize the local stakeholders into primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholder groups. This initial grouping was based on a spectrum on power. In other words, we grouped stakeholders into the three categories based on who we felt had the ability to exert power over the implementation of the plan. For this iteration we identified our primary stakeholders as Mother Nature, the Cincinnati Park Board, the University of Cincinnati, Uptown Consortium and the City of Cincinnati. Our secondary stakeholders were identified as Good Samaritan Hospital, Clifton Town Meeting, Hebrew Union College, and the Ludlow Business District Owners. Our tertiary stakeholders were the homeless population who used the park, local dogs, drug dealers, students attending local schools, residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, and employees of local businesses and institutions.

After evaluating these stakeholder groups, we came to the realization that while power is an important aspect of stakeholder engagement, we did not want the ability to exert power to be the primary defining characteristic of our groupings. So, we created a diagram based on our perceptions of how local stakeholder groups aligned with the values of our plan. The values that we graphed our stakeholders on were: community connectivity, political influence, sustainability, community health and wellness, the park as a natural sanctuary, art, community engagement and ecological health. From this diagram, we created a second iteration of our stakeholder map. In this iteration, the primary, secondary, and tertiary groups were based on the application of our values, as well as the ability to exert power. Our new primary stakeholder group was comprised of Mother Nature, Students, Residents, the Public Library, the Ludlow Business District Owners, the Cincinnati Park Board, Good Samaritan Hospital, and the University of Cincinnati. The secondary stakeholders group was comprised of Clifton Town Meeting, the City of Cincinnati, employees of local businesses and institutions, the homeless population who utilized the park, and local dogs. The tertiary stakeholder group was comprised of drug dealers, Hebrew Union College, and Uptown Consortium.
The next step in identifying stakeholders and funding was to map the local stakeholders and actors spatially, a procedure we accomplished with the creation of a string map. Identified on the string map are: DAAP, CCM, Hebrew Union College, Good Samaritan Hospital, Green Umbrella, the Clifton Cultural Arts Center, Fairview German Language School, the Clifton Branch of the Cincinnati Public Library, the Cincinnati Zoo, City Hall and the Planning Department of the City of Cincinnati, the Civic Garden Center, the Cincinnati Park Board, the University of Cincinnati, Children’s Hospital, Clifton Town Meeting, the Ludlow Business District, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, the School for Creative and Performing Arts, Artworks, the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati Arts Association, Lighthouse Youth Crisis Center, Annunciation School, Hughes High School, Centennial, Corryville Recreation Center, Artswave, the University of Cincinnati Hospital, and the VA Hospital.

All of the stakeholders and actors were linked using string of red, orange, green or blue. Red string indicated the most influential stakeholders/partners. These groups had the ability to donate time, money & resources/art. Orange string indicated our second tier partners, those who are able to provide time & resources but not necessarily funding. Green string indicated institutions that would help generate foot traffic, but not directly donate anything to the project and blue string indicated major institutions in close proximity to the park. Because of their physical proximity to the park, they are technically stakeholders, but we did not expect them to have any role or interest in the project. The map not only shows connections between stakeholders & the park, but also identifies some potential creative partnerships that could be formed between different stakeholder entities.

As part of the process of identifying stakeholders, we also identified potential sources of funding for implementation. A few of the local grants and programs we identified as being applicable were the EPA Surface Water Improvement Fund, the Keep Cincinnati Beautiful Clean & Safe Grant, People’s Liberty Grant, Ohio Arts Council funding, Artswave project funding, and the Cincinnati Arts Association Cincinnati Art Ambassador Fellowship.
Ecological Plan
Flora, Fauna, Trees, and Water

The goals and objectives of the Art of Urban Ecology are to improve stormwater management, biological diversity, and overall ecological health of the park while highlighting its contributions to environmental wellness, providing suggestions for aesthetic improvements, and promoting community engagement with nature. The best way accomplish this goal is through the creation of an ecological preservation plan. The ecological preservation plan developed by the group was divided into four primary ecological sectors: flora, fauna, trees, and water. We felt that these particular ecological systems were currently the most at risk for degradation, and could improve the most substantially through ecological art interventions.
Within each section of the ecological preservation plan we discussed the particular challenges of each sector, the goal of our interventions, the steps we could take to achieve these goals, and potential art installations that could be installed which would help increase both awareness of, and improvement of, the ecological health of Burnet Woods. We also proposed several actions that could be applied to an overall installation that would help increase both awareness of, and improvement of, the sector, the goal of our interventions, the steps we could take to achieve these goals, and potential art installations that could be installed which would help increase both awareness of, and improvement of, the ecological health of Burnet Woods.

Flora

Summary: A greater biodiversity of native plant species should be introduced into the park, with a focus on ground-level plants that will work within the park’s existing woodlands ecology, but that will also attract a richer variety of wildlife. A corridor-type environment will attract pollinators especially, as a continuous section of plantings and grasses will help these species to thrive. Invasive species should be removed through a combination of hand-pulling and more aggressive management. An annual art festival, timed with prime blooming dates, can become a yearly showcase of the park’s wildflowers, helping solidify the park as a space that fosters both natural beauty and artistic expression.

Goal: To increase biodiversity in the park.

Action Steps:
- Utilize native plants that can withstand wet environments in the wildflower corridor (drainage basin) and will provide the benefits of wetlands.
- Remove and aggressively manage invasive species such as honeysuckle
- Plan and hold events during prime blooming dates

Art Installations:
- Trail art to lead visitors through wildflower and conservation corridors

Fauna

Summary: The right blend of local fauna is vital to preserving ecological integrity. Key species broadly impact the environment, contributing to tree growth, pollination, healthy water, and more. Planting bird, squirrel, and pollinator friendly plants; installing cozy squirrel nest boxes and bat houses; and creating a clean environment for mussels and frogs will generate lasting benefits through a natural system of ecological maintenance. Colorful song birds and butterflies will offer a striking visual in themselves, while decorative, creatively arranged bird houses and apiaries contribute to the artistic character of the park.

Goal: To proliferate fauna that contributes to the health of various ecological systems within Burnet Woods, such as fauna that attracts pollinators and other key species.

Action Steps:
- Plant bird, squirrel, and pollinator friendly plants
- Establish an apiary and educational programming about the importance of pollinators
- Construct and install squirrel, bird, and bat houses

Art Installations:
- Creatively constructed and arranged bird houses
- Apiary as art
- Sculpture that could also function as habitat
Trees and Water

Trees
Summary: The ecological stability of Burnet Woods depends on the health of the beautiful trees. Implementing a tree management, removal and reforestation program will keep the woods safe from the threat of Emerald Ash Borer and the Asian Longhorn Beetle. Approximately one in five trees in Burnet Woods are susceptible to Emerald Ash Borer. Employing bio-allies like Chinese Wasps will reduce the population of the beetle. Trees that have already died will be removed for safety and implemented as artwork throughout the park. Trees infested by the Asian Longhorn Beetle will be immediately removed, chipped in place and the chips will be burned. Then it will be up the city, the partnerships and surrounding community to come together for tree planting days to make sure the trees of Burnet Woods will last for generations to come.

Goal: To implement a tree management, removal and reforestation program.

Action Steps:
• Remove dead and dying trees
• Hold tree planting days to increase community participation and education about reforestation efforts
• Chip in place and burn trees infected from Asian Longhorn Beetle to prevent spread of the disease
• Use bio-allies to fight Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorn Beetle as a replacement for pesticide treatment methods

Art Installations:
• Utilize dead trees for various art installations in the park
• Chip burning as performance/live art

Water
Summary: Because of the park’s geography and topography, green infrastructure and art installations should be implemented in Burnet Woods to manage rainwater and maintain water features, while highlighting the ecological functions of water. Native plantings that can handle an influx of water, function as a wetland, and still attract pollinators should be incorporated into the wildflower corridor and surrounding the pond. The wildflower corridor can also serve as a bioretention area, helping to supplement the lake’s water with naturally filtered stormwater runoff. Art installations can include artistic rain barrels placed at park structures, and floating, man-made wetlands in the pond. Both will highlight the role of water in this ecosystem, while contributing to the natural functions & the aesthetic value of the park.

Goal: To manage rainwater and maintain water features through green infrastructure approaches, while utilizing art to highlight the ecological role of water.

Action Steps:
• Direct stormwater runoff to the natural drainage basin at the eastern side of the sub-watershed.
• Address the negative effects of runoff and erosion, which can add chemicals and sediment to water using a Floating Treatment Wetland (Floating Islands).
• Incorporate rain gardens near Ludlow and the nature center, to improve drainage in these naturally low-lying, rainwater-collecting areas.

Art installations:
• Rain barrels at shelters and the nature center
• Pond islands & swales or rain gardens
The spatial plan for Burnet Woods encompasses all previous steps in the planning process, including inspiration, process, and the ecological plan. It further grounds ideas from both the process and ecological plan in place, developing various zones of activity, preservation, or development in Burnet Woods. These zones are based upon the park’s natural features and current development pattern, helping to bring community members into the park through the creation of attractions, destination points, and intuitive pathways. The following documents include the spatial plan, or proposed zones of Burnet Woods, and the explanation of elements, which expands upon and describes each zone.
The Gallery Space will house rotating art installations, as well as community activities, such as Yoga, Tai Chi, or Zumba. The visibility of this space will help to draw people into the park, while its relatively flat and open geography will create an intuitive pathway to guide visitors through the park and its various art and ecological installations.

Event Spaces
The Event Areas will serve as gathering sites for community members and will accommodate performance art or musical events, with other functions may arising based on community interest. These spaces already serve as an intuitive gathering point because of the location of the gazebo, although the integration of art and events in these areas will bring people into the park, serving as a destination within Burnet Woods.

Kid's Art Area
The Kid Art Area will showcase child-friendly art in connection with the public library, such as knitted tree sweaters, large and colorful climbable animals, and bright benches and resting areas. Art will also serve to connect families in the Clifton neighborhood across Jefferson and into Burnet Woods, offering opportunities for reading, relaxing, and playing.

Preservation Areas
These are heavily wooded areas that currently do not encourage human activity. We will allow these areas to remain as they are, aligning with our goal of preserving and highlighting the ecological functions of Burnet Woods.

Landscapeed Areas
Iconic, functional landscaping elements will connect UC students and employees to Burnet Woods and give the south side of the park a new purpose. This concept includes potential terracing along the southern edge of the park, fronting Martin Luther King Drive, and formal landscaping near the intersection of Martin Luther King and Clifton along with a raised, artistic crosswalk to slow traffic and draw pedestrians across the street.

Wildflower Corridor
This corridor will be planted with native species and will serve as a haven for pollinators, such as bees and butterflies. A trail within the corridor will facilitate a beautiful, serene walk through local flora, while the pollinators and wildflowers will provide an important ecological function.

Trail Art
Artwork will be integrated along existing and proposed trails as a means of bringing visitors through the park, creating fluid and intuitive pathways, and connecting community and culture with nature. Installations may include lighted paths and trees or even a connection to ecology through art, such as trails made from wood of fallen trees.
Implementation
Achieving the Spatial Plan

The implementation phase adds an order and timeline to the spatial plan and various elements that are included throughout it, developing a feasible and understandable process. This implementation plan is further expanded upon, including funding opportunities and potential partnerships for various initiatives, taking into account public and private opportunities, grounding the implementation process into reality and providing an ease in navigating and achieving the implementation of the spatial plan.
The grid offers a four-step process for navigating the process of implementation. These four steps include: defining actors, establishing priorities, seeking funding, and linking actors and funding. This order is typical of most planning processes, specifically in the implementation phase.

When defining actors, it is important to determine who will actively contribute and in what form, while ensuring that everyone has a voice and that appropriate partnerships are facilitated. Step two, establish priorities, involves getting community members involved in implementation, while adding features that will strengthen the park's public image.

Step two, establish priorities, involves getting everyone has a voice and that appropriate partnerships are facilitated. Step two, establish priorities, involves getting community members involved in implementation, while adding features that will strengthen the park's public image. The last two steps of the process are intertwined, securing project funding, whether through grants or partnerships, and linking potential actors with those funding sources. Where this process is exceptional, is in its focus on finding funding sources and then matching actors with those funding opportunities, making everything easier for actors.

Following the development of this four step process, we created an implementation chart that takes spaces in the park and directly applies each step to a challenge identified in the ecological plan or the spatial plan. For example, water quality of the lake is poor and creates an unpleasant aesthetic. Actors that we envision assisting with implementation activities on the lake include: the Park Board, Residents of Clifton, Fishermen, and the Cincinnati Zoo. These actors will help to install constructed wetland islands as a water maintenance system, with a dual function as ecological art. A potential grant for this project may be the EPA Surface Water Improvement Fund. These qualities were applied to various other implementable projects, shown in the graphic above.
Visualizations
Illustrating the Spatial Plan

Being a group who values both art and community engagement, we understood the need to have our visuals portray not only the whimsy of a park themed by art, but also the strength of our ideas in promoting responsible ownership, generating valuable creative partnerships, and implementing sustainable ecological improvements. We see the potential that art can have as a catalyst for community inspiration and excitement for the park. So, in order to create this, we produced a set of visuals that could be used as “snapshots of change.” These visuals corresponded with the concrete ideas expressed in our ecological and spatial plans, and served as a tool to allow stakeholders, actors, and community members to visualize for themselves the changes that we envision for Burnet Woods. The vignette trail was the strongest visual tool we prepared. By following the trail through the various spatial zones of the park, one is able to visualize the before and after images of the park in the same sequence as they would experience if they were physically in the park, but instead through a series of vignettes.
The 32 vignettes we created serve to portray the before-and-after of the implementation of the Art of Urban Ecology plan. They provide the visual representations of how our proposed interventions would appear in Burnet Woods. This allows us to inspire the community, promote interest in the project, and market our proposal. Each of the vignettes attempts to speak to a different intervention within the spatial plan and the ecological plan. This highlights how we would incorporate the feature of art into our ecological interventions.
Our final tool for visualizing the product created by the Art of Urban Ecology plan is the plan rendering and section drawing. This visual allows us to represent the pictorial beauty of our proposal not only from an aerial perspective, but also from a vertical perspective. The sections were chosen as a tool to describe the relationship between the various spatial zones of the park. It also rationalized our choice of zone placement from a topological perspective. The colored lines placed below the section cut line correspond to the zone that the section is passing through. The section was chosen because it is a useful tool for allowing a reader of the project to place him or herself within the scheme. The vignettes were included with the plan rendering and section drawing as a way to place the vignettes spatially within their respective zones.
CONCLUSION

The Art of Urban Ecology

The ecological health of the greater urban area surrounding Burnet Woods is at risk. Invasive species are killing the region’s tree canopy and low-lying flora. Intrusive developers are eager to capitalize on any land that could contribute to the ever-growing University district. Burnet Woods is vulnerable to these threats—especially so because negative perceptions keep people from engaging with the park and recognizing its substantial environmental value.

The Art of Urban Ecology was born out of a vision that human creativity and the natural environment could come together in a significant way to better Cincinnati’s beloved Burnet Woods. Through five phases of planning—including sensing, analyzing, theorizing, making, and communicating—we have set forth an overall design that will connect and invigorate space across the park, as well as space spanning into the neighboring community.

While many in the Uptown area and across Greater Cincinnati cherish the park, these groups vary drastically and often have opposing views on what the space should become. Art diffuses that conflict. Art—be it visual or performative, permanent or fleeting—bridges all kinds of people, bringing them together under a common curiosity and appreciation. In Burnet Woods, art will be the catalyst for community engagement—first encouraging individuals into the park, and then transforming them from “visitors” to “owners.” This sense of ownership will come as regular park goers learn more and more about the park’s biological ecologies, and the dedicated efforts that are being taken to protect them.

A redesigned Burnet Woods necessarily depends on the cooperative action of diverse stakeholder groups. Successfully implemented, this plan will serve and protect the ecological health of the park and surrounding environment—in turn, enhancing quality of life for all those who live, work, learn, or visit in the area. By adopting The Art of Urban Ecology vision, the present community will be making a commitment not only to the park, but to all future communities that will share in Burnet Woods.