

Gena Wirth, ASLA

Design Principal & Partner, SCAPE Landscape Architecture DPC

ASLA Council of Fellows Nomination: WORKS

EDUCATION

Master of Landscape Architecture & Master of Urban Planning with Distinction, Harvard University, 2009

Bachelor of Science, Landscape Horticulture, University of Delaware, 2005

SELECT HONORS & AWARDS

2009 | Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship, Harvard University

ASLA Professional Awards (with SCAPE unless otherwise noted)

2023 | ASLA: Honor Award, Urban Design, Town Branch Commons

2023 | ASLA: Honor Award, Analysis & Planning, Chattahoochee RiverLands

2019 | ASLA: Honor Award, Analysis & Planning, Public Sediment for Alameda Creek (SCAPE, DRC)

2017 | ASLA: Honor Award, Communications, *Toward an Urban Ecology*

2016 | ASLA: Honor Award, Communications, DredgeFest Event Series (DRC)

2013 | ASLA: Honor Award, Communications, *Petrochemical America*

Other National Awards

2024 | AIA: Architecture Award, Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts

2023 | OBEL Award, Living Breakwaters

2022 | Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): Environmental Excellence, Town Branch Commons

2021 | SARA Award of Merit, Urban Design, Alafia

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the New York Chapter, it is my privilege to nominate Gena Wirth, ASLA, for your consideration.

Executive Summary

Gena's long dedication to exemplary idea-driven work, composed of unique projects united by a strong conceptual design vision, has solidified her reputation as a passionate advocate for resilient urban ecosystems. Through her indepth dedication to exposing hidden systems of geology, ecology, and hydrology in the urban fabric, she is a leader in large-scale resilience and climate adaptation projects that advance landscape architecture on many levels, making lasting connections between people and nature. Her work serves as groundbreaking new precedents for ecological, nature-based design that inspire other design professionals and will certainly elevate standards to which the future of our profession will be shaped.

Design Ideology and Early Professional History

Throughout her practice, Gena Wirth has focused on advancing urban projects that evolve the field through innovation in resilience, climate adaptation, and multi-species design. Gena's work is rooted in living systems, stemming from her early childhood in the Piedmont foothills of Delaware, and bolstered through undergraduate studies in Plant Science and Horticulture at the University of Delaware. As an undergraduate she explored the world of horticulture, apprenticing at the country's most notable display gardens (Longwood Gardens, Ganna Walska Lotusland, the Mt. Cuba Center) which catalyzed a passion for the power of the designed landscape. In her studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, her interests broadened into the study of urban landscapes, cities, and regional planning, and she completed a dual degree in Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning. She began her formal career in 2009, a turbulent time for the profession, when she joined a small design firm, SCAPE Landscape Architecture, in New York City.

Gena has visibly shaped the meteoric rise and evolution of SCAPE as a practice, evolving from a boutique 5-person office when she joined to a world-renowned 90-person firm spanning three coastal locations—New York City, New Orleans, and San Francisco. Her title and responsibilities have evolved countless times, yet her conceptual role has remained consistent—she leads the design of projects that position the firm at the forefront of the emerging fields of climate resilience, adaptation, and urban ecological design. As SCAPE's sole design principal, she has emerged as a thought-leader in the profession and explores research threads within client-commissioned projects, bridging research and practice. She has shaped the firm over a 15-year trajectory, leading innovative projects and advancing unique forms of landscape storytelling. She is deeply committed to design mentorship, where she has structured a model for inquisitive office design culture that breaks down barriers and trains new generations of design leaders. Her influence at SCAPE was acknowledged at an early age through her promotion to principal in 2016 and equity partner in 2019, and she remains

Gena Wirth's longstanding commitment to progressive design practice has produced visionary projects in the public realm, connecting social equity, climate resilience, and ecosystem health. Her mentorship has inspired a new generation of students and practitioners. From advancing resilience work at SCAPE, to developing new methods of public outreach, to envisioning flux with the Dredge Research Collaborative, Gena has shaped a disciplinary approach to design research across systems and scales, from tiny pollinators to vast watersheds.

Catherine Seavitt
Nordenson, FASLA, FAIA

Meyerson Professor and
Chair, Dept of Landscape
Architecture, University of
Pennsylvania

Gena Wirth, ASLA

2019 | National Design Award, Cooper Hewitt (SCAPE)

2018 | The Architect's Newspaper: Best of Design, Honor Award, Representation (Analog), Public Sediment for Alameda Creek

2015 | American Academy of Arts & Letters: Planning Achievement Award, Environmental Planning, Living Breakwaters

2014 | Rebuild by Design Competition, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Living Breakwaters

2014 | Buckminster Fuller Challenge Winner, Living Breakwaters

Regional Project Awards

2024 | NYC Public Design Commission (PDC): Excellence in Public Design, Gowanus CSO Tank Facility & Salt Lot

2024 | ASLA-Potomac: Honor Award, General Design, Neal Place Park

2023 | ASLA-GA: Honor Award, General Design, Town Branch Commons

2023 | ASLA-KY: Honor Award, Constructed Work, Town Branch Commons

2023 | LC-ASLA: Honor Award, General Design, Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts

2023 | ASLA-SERC: Merit Award, General Design, Town Branch Commons

2023 | ASLA-NY: Merit Award, General Design, Town Branch Commons

2023 | ASLA-GA: Excellence Award, Analysis & Planning, Chattahoochee RiverLands

2022 | ASLA-NJ: Merit Award, Communication, "Designing Landscapes for Insects and

a committed member of SCAPE's collaborative leadership team alongside fellow equity partners Kate Orff, Alexis Landes, John Donnelly, and Pippa Brashear.

Outside of her award-winning work at SCAPE, Gena is committed to service, education, and design advocacy. Her volunteer work for over a decade with the non-profit Dredge Research Collaborative has led her to become a subject matter expert in the design of human-modified sedimentary systems, culminating in her recent collaborative book *Silt Sand Slurry: Dredging, Sediment, and the Worlds We are Making* (2024). She has been a visible leader in the field and served on the ASLA National Professional Awards Jury, the Mayor's Institute of City Design, and volunteered with the Gowanus Canal Conservancy and New York City Pollinator Network. She has lectured extensively within the US and internationally and taught as a design critic and lecturer, including an award-winning options studio at the Harvard GSD titled "ENTO: Design with Insects" and interdisciplinary courses in Urban Ecology at Columbia University, mixing students from design and ecology programs. Gena's work spans diverse scales and typologies and is united by a deep commitment to advancing the field's presence in the worlds of urban ecology, climate resilience, and interspecies design.

Exceptional Accomplishments

Gena's accomplishments are grounded in long-term projects that start with a unique conceptual design provocation and evolve, with community input and stakeholder coalition building, into exemplary built works. Early in her career, she played an essential role in idea-driven research projects like SCAPE's Oyster-tecture exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (2010), which envisioned an oyster reef protecting the shorelines of New York City in the face of new climate realities, and the award-winning book *Petrochemical America* (2012), a deep visual investigation of the impacts of America's oil and gas dependence on the social-ecological landscape of Southern Louisiana. These projects allowed Gena to explore themes of climate advocacy, social justice, and interspecies design—while sparking her development of a unique landscape representation style that remains a model for representation at SCAPE and other firms across the world.

A central theme of Gena's advocacy is the incorporation of living systems and non-human species (interspecies design) into large-scale resilience and climate adaptation projects. Gena witnessed the destruction, social upheaval, and ecological damage of Hurricane Sandy in NYC in 2012. She was concerned with the reactionary design responses that emerged, prioritizing hard edges and walls. In response, Gena advanced design projects that hybridize built and natural systems and incorporate living systems into a resilient waterfront edge. Directly after Sandy, Gena led the development of SCAPE's contribution to New York City's Special Initiative in Recovery and Resilience, incorporating how living infrastructure (breakwaters, oyster reefs, dunes) could play in the city's recovery. This coalition building directly informed SCAPE's submission for the HUD Rebuild by Design competition in 2014, where Gena was a lead designer in the competition phase of the award-winning project "Living Breakwaters," a proposal for a half-mile necklace of near-shore habitat breakwaters in Staten Island, NY that is widely considered an international model for climate resilience and nature-based infrastructure. A large and interdisciplinary team advanced the complex project for ten years and recently completed construction in 2024, a landmark moment for the field of Landscape

Gena Wirth is an inspired designer who sees connections among processes, publics, materials, and the realm of plants and animals that we share the planet with, and she makes these connections manifest in a range of complex and significant projects at SCAPE. Moreover, Gena's work with the Dredge Research Collective embraces infrastructural landscapes in flux and formation, centering on larger policy context in which regional landscapes are made over time. I fully support her nomination to be a Fellow of the ASLA.

Kate Orff, FASLA
SCAPE Landscape
Architecture

Gena Wirth, ASLA

People,” Gena Wirth and Steven Handel

2021 | ASLA-NY: Honor Award, Analysis & Planning, Chattahoochee RiverLands

2021 | ASLA Florida: Honor Award, Analysis & Planning, McCoy’s Creek Recreation & Restoration Plan

2021 | ASLA-SoCal: Honor Award, Analysis & Planning, Hayward Regional Shoreline Adaptation Master Plan

2020 | Georgia Water Coalition: Clean 13 Award, The Chattahoochee RiverLands

2020 | APA-Georgia: Outstanding Planning Document, Chattahoochee RiverLands

2018 | AIA California Council: Merit Award, Urban Design, Public Sediment for Alameda Creek

2018 | ASLA-NY: Honor Award, Analysis & Planning, Gowanus Lowlands

2017 | NYC PDC: Excellence in Public Design, Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center

2015 | ACEC-NY: Engineering Excellence, Grand Honor Award, Living Breakwaters

2014 | ASLA-NY: Design Award, Collaborative Design, NYC SIRR Coastal Protection Plan

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

2018 | International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) World Congress, Presenter

2024, 2022-2023 | ASLA Annual Meeting, Presenter

2022 | ASLA Professional Awards, Jury Member

2017 | Oyster Conference, Stockholm, Presenter

Architecture, recognized in 2023 with the international Obel Award.

Parallel to this work, Gena translated the same concepts of nature-based infrastructure and resilient design into community-scale urban sites, notably with her long-term work on the Gowanus Lowlands plan in Brooklyn, NY. An active Superfund cleanup site, Gena worked with the non-profit Gowanus Canal Conservancy to develop a design vision for the sustainable development of this canal-front community facing enormous social, physical, and ecological change, as well as damage from flooding after Sandy. The masterplan provided a framework which guided private landowners, city planners, and agency stakeholders toward a more equitable, ecologically vibrant, and resilient waterfront. Eight years later, Gena is leading the physical design of nine distinct privately and publicly owned canal-front sites.

Another cornerstone of Gena’s work is her interest in the hidden systems that shape landscapes, exemplified through her volunteer research with the Dredge Research Collaborative (DRC). Gena helped organize all four DredgeFest events hosted by the DRC—interdisciplinary symposiums and landscape tours that brought attention to the design of sediment systems in New York, California, the Great Lakes, and Louisiana. She ran the DRC’s internship program for three years, which introduced young designers into the world of designing with sediment. SCAPE and the DRC partnered in the Bay Area “Resilient by Design” challenge to develop the award-winning project Public Sediment for Alameda Creek, a visionary example of how to work with nature’s systems of water and sediment to grow a more resilient future over time. In the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration, Gena helped organize a workshop between the DRC, other landscape architects, and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineering that catalyzed the collaborative program “Engineering with Nature and Landscape Architecture.” Through this grant program, Gena has provided design advisory services to multiple USACE local districts, helping bring more socially responsive and ecologically viable design responses to national engineering work.

Projects that demonstrate outstanding quality and impact

Gena has advanced cutting-edge resilience and climate adaptation projects at SCAPE. Spurred by innovative design competitions inviting creative approaches, these projects have set a standard for how landscape architects can use nature-based systems and community engagement to challenge traditional notions of coastal protection.

Public Sediment & the Dredge Research Collaborative

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA Honor Award, Communications; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; AIA California Council Merit Award, Urban Design; The Architect’s Newspaper Honor Award, Analog Representation

Originally developed as the SCAPE team’s proposal for the Resilient By Design: Bay Area Challenge, Public Sediment for Alameda Creek is a watershed-scale climate adaptation vision that addresses sea-level rise, drowning bayland ecosystems, and sediment scarcity in the South Bay. Public Sediment proposes “unlocking” Alameda Creek to re-connect upstream sediment to downstream baylands, sustaining protective marshes and mudflats. By broadening focus to include the entire Alameda Creek watershed (the largest tributary feeding the Bay) rather than just the coastal edge, Public Sediment engages climate issues at an ecosystem scale — reconnecting migratory fish to their historic spawning grounds; introducing a floodable creek corridor; and building regional

Gena Wirth leverages her career in landscape architecture to challenge the way people view and interact with their local landscapes. Her masterful leadership of a complex, multi-year, and multi-faceted planning process resulted in the innovative vision outlined in SCAPE’s widely celebrated, 2020 Chattahoochee RiverLands Study. This plan serves as a new and sustainable framework to introduce metro Atlanta its hidden river.

Walter W. Ray, PLA
Director of Chattahoochee Program, Trust for Public Land

Gena Wirth, ASLA

2014 | Mayor's Institute of City Design, Resource Team

SERVICE

2012-present | Dredge Research Collaborative (DRC) Non-Profit Member

2024-2025 | NYC Pollinator Working Group

2010-2014 | Public Lab Volunteer

2009-2014 | Gowanus Canal Conservancy Volunteer

PUBLICATIONS

2024 | *Silt Sand Slurry*, Dredge Research Collaborative

2022 | "Fostering Insect-Human Relationships through Design," *Ecological Restoration* 40 (2)

2016 | *Toward an Urban Ecology*, SCAPE (as Design Principal)

2012 | *Petrochemical America*, Kate Orff and Robert Mistrach (Project Manager/Designer)

VISITING PROFESSOR

2021 | Harvard Graduate School of Design, ENTO: Fostering Insect-Human Relationships through Design

2022, 2018, 2016 | Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Urban Ecology Seminar

2015 | Syracuse University

2012 | Rutgers University

SELECT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Keynotes

2024 | LABash Conference

2019 | Indian Society of Landscape Architects (ISOLA) Annual Conference

2018 | Freshkills Reclaimed Lands Conference

stewardship around sediment resources. The team also proposed the monitoring and adaptive management of Alameda Creek to address changing environmental conditions over time. Gena led the design of this project and incorporated the final work into Silt, Sand, Slurry.

Living Breakwaters

Staten Island, NY, 2024

Awards: Rebuild by Design Competition, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; Buckminster Fuller Challenge; American Academy of Arts & Letters Planning Achievement Award; ACEC-NY Engineering Excellence, Grand Honor Award

Widely considered a model for climate-adaptive nature-based infrastructure, Living Breakwaters is a \$111 million project with a layered approach to risk reduction—enhancing physical, ecological, and social resilience along the South Shore of Staten Island. Gena led the conceptual development of this project in the early competition phases from 2014 to 2018.

The project consists primarily of 2,400 linear feet of near-shore breakwaters that break waves, reduce erosion of the beach along Conference House Park, and provide a range of habitat spaces for oysters, fin fish, and other marine species. The Living Breakwaters concept was developed by a large, multi-disciplinary team led by SCAPE as part of a winning proposal for Rebuild By Design, the design competition launched by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) after Superstorm Sandy.

Completed works that demonstrate mastery of landscape architecture

Gena advances long term, multi-stakeholder projects that reveal hidden systems of geology, ecology, and hydrology in the urban fabric. The following projects are long-term plans for linear urban landscapes that aim to reconnect cities with their local waterbodies and express their unique characteristics.

Town Branch Commons

Lexington, KY, 2022

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Urban Design; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Excellence; ASLA-GA Honor Award, General Design; ASLA-SERC Merit Award, General Design; ASLA-KY Honor Award, Constructed Work

Town Branch Commons is a transformative vision for a multi-modal transportation and linear park system tracing the path of the historic Town Branch Creek through Lexington—a ribbon of native Bluegrass landscape weaving through downtown. Gena led SCAPE's involvement in the project since the design competition in 2012.

Rather than introducing a single daylight stream channel into the city, the design uses the local limestone (karst) geology as inspiration for pools, pockets, and stream channels that brings water into the public realm. The greenway links into the Town Branch Trail and Legacy Trail—altogether, a 5.5-mile network that connects downtown Lexington to rural communities to the North and West.

The project was won through a design competition in 2013, and was followed by feasibility studies, traffic analysis, and community engagement events including the "Water Walk," a podcast and walking tour of the buried waterway. This work provided momentum for a successful TIGER grant application by

Gena's leadership on the Lowlands Framework has been exemplary. The Lowlands Vision has been instrumental in the advocacy work of the Gowanus Canal Conservancy and has already translated into high quality public spaces and innovative ecosystems that function as social spaces reflective of community identity. The Gowanus transformation would not have been possible without her deep engagement with the city on the zoning regulations that shape built landscapes such as tidal habitats and resiliency features.

Sagi Golan
Deputy Director of Urban Design, NYC Dept. of City Planning

Gena Wirth, ASLA

Academic Lectures

2025 | University of Waterloo
2024 | U Penn Weitzman School
2024 | Ohio State
2023 | U Penn Wharton-Weitzman Future of Cities Conference
2022 | Dalhousie University
2022 | Syracuse University
2022 | University of Oregon
2021 | The Cooper Union
2019 | University of Rhode Island
2018 | University of Toronto
2017 | Tulane School of Architecture
2017 | University of Sydney, Australia
2017 | University of Arkansas
2016 | University of Nebraska
2015 | Syracuse University
2015 | Harvard GSD, Design Competition Conference

Public Lectures

2024 | AIANY Democratizing Design Panel
2022 | New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL) Annual Symposium
2019 | Chattanooga CIVIQ Speaker Series
2018 | Pensacola CivicCon
2017 | AIA Baltimore
2017 | NYC Department of Design and Construction Design Talks
2017 | Tuscon Museum of Art

EXPERIENCE

SCAPE Landscape Architecture

2019-Present | Design Principal & Partner
2016-2019 | Design Principal
2009-2016 | Designer

the city of Lexington, catalyzing the construction of the project, completed in 2022.

Gowanus Lowlands

Brooklyn, NY, ongoing

Awards: ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications

Gowanus Lowlands is a community-based vision for a new public realm and open space network centered around the Gowanus Canal and its watershed—a federally-designated Superfund site currently in the process of being cleaned up. Gena has directed SCAPE's Gowanus portfolio since its inception in 2017, and originally forged connections with this group as a volunteer.

Inspired by the historic hydrology of the Gowanus as a tidal estuary fed by freshwater creeks, the Gowanus Lowlands proposes spatial concepts that address multiple issues including urban heat island, lack of tree canopy; sea-level rise, coastal flooding, storm-water management and a combined sewer system; and lack of connectivity to open spaces across the neighborhood. At the heart of the vision is a clean and thriving waterway and high-quality open space network, a restored waterfront edge, and a cohesive material palette that preserves the unique identity of the neighborhood as it changes over time.

Eight years later, the project is entering a critical phase with the canal cleanup ongoing and large scale rezoning changes cueing private and City investment in the public realm. Gena is also leading a citizen science pollinator survey of the canal to understand the role that newly built landscapes can play in supporting native bees and insect life.

The Chattahoochee RiverLands

Atlanta, GA, ongoing

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA-GA Excellence Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; ASLA Kentucky Merit Award, Analysis & Planning; Georgia Water Coalition, Clean 13 Award; APA-Georgia, Outstanding Planning Document

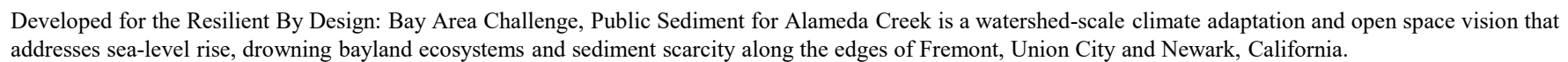
In the backyard of Atlanta, the Chattahoochee River is an overlooked resource of extraordinary historic, economic, cultural, and ecological value. The Chattahoochee RiverLands is a vision to reunite the river with the Metro Atlanta Region and link suburban, urban, and rural communities into a continuous public realm and greenway that centers the river as a regional resource. Gena led the design of the Chattahoochee RiverLands plan as Design Principal from 2018 to its completion in 2021, and continues shape individual projects that emerge from this study.

At its core, the RiverLands proposes a 125-mile uninterrupted multimodal trail that extends from Buford Dam to Chattahoochee Bend State Park. Gena led a multi-disciplinary team of experts and local partners to develop this vision, holding community and stakeholder engagement sessions with nearly 290 groups over seven counties through public forums, design charrettes, and "river ramble" outings. The vision aims to bring people to the water's edge, promote continued stewardship and conservation, and reveal the subtle magic of the Chattahoochee to all.

Summary by Chapter President

Gena Wirth not only shaped the evolution of a small 5-person studio to a world-renowned design firm but also the profession of landscape architecture nationwide and internationally. As Design Principal at SCAPE and through her non-profit volunteer work, she is a leader in the emerging fields of climate resilience, adaptation, and urban ecological design. Her work represents the best of what landscape architecture can do, and it would be an honor to have such a distinguished and dedicated landscape architect among the ranks of ASLA Council of Fellows.

Annie (Anchalee) Phaosawasdi, PLA, ASLA
New York Chapter President

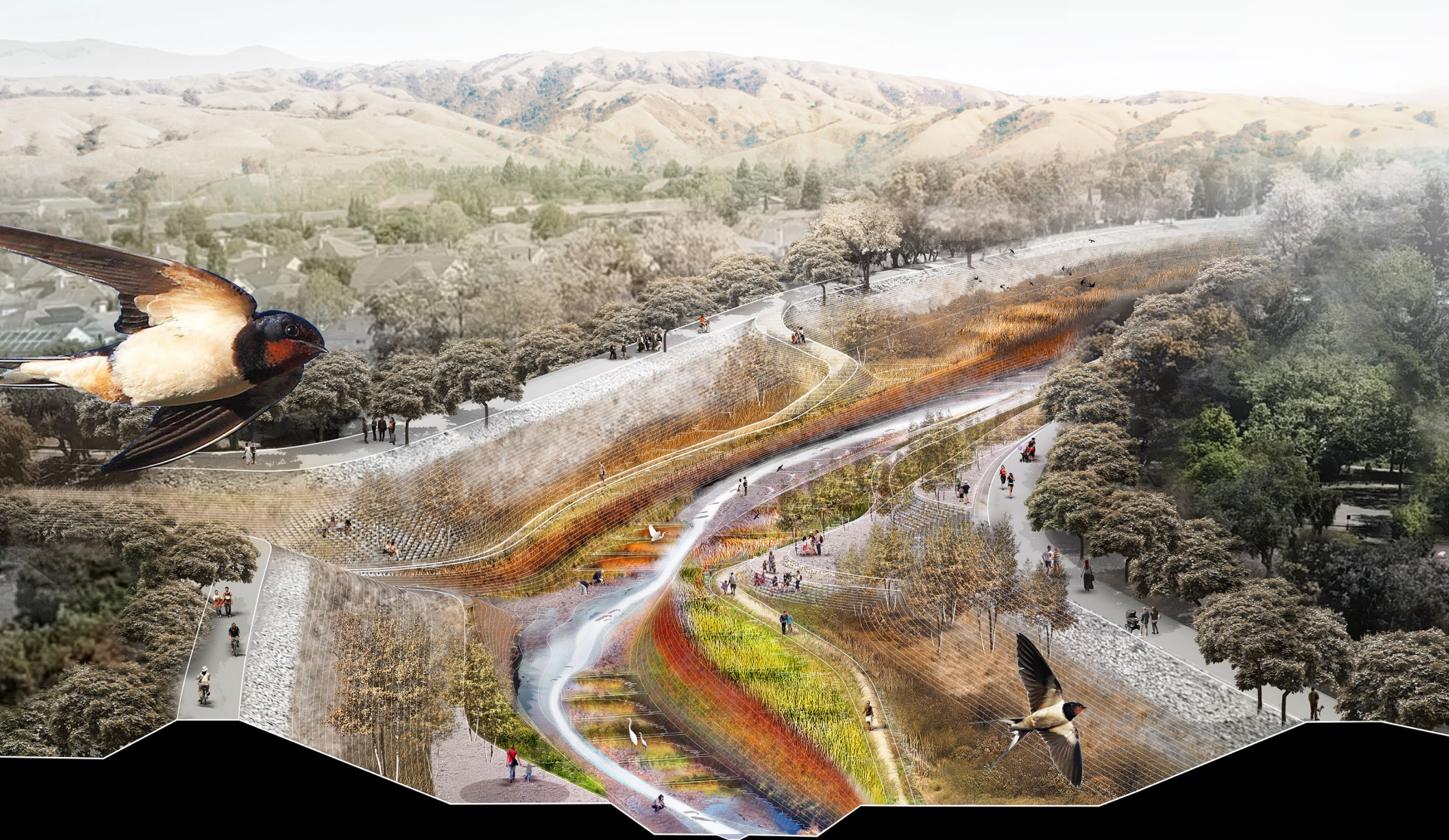




Wirth Image 02
Public Sediment

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA Honor Award, Communications; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; AIA California Council Merit Award, Urban Design; The Architect's Newspaper Honor Award, Analog Representation

The design was sparked by the Dredge Research Collaborative's research into subsidence and loss of the Bay's tidal wetland ecosystems due to sea level rise and low sediment supply. Rather than fortifying the waterfront edge, the proposal looked upstream, to tributaries that once delivered abundant freshwater and sediment downstream.



Wirth Image 03
Public Sediment

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA Honor Award, Communications; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; AIA California Council Merit Award, Urban Design; The Architect's Newspaper Honor Award, Analog Representation

Alameda Creek was chosen as it is the largest local tributary that feeds the Bay, with the most potential to offset wetland subsidence. Channelized by the Corps in the 1970s, the design re-sculpts the channel bottom and re-introduces stabilizing vegetation to enhance sediment transport during floods and improve ecological functions.



Wirth Image 04

Public Sediment (*Silt Sand Slurry: Dredging, Sediment, and the Worlds We Are Making*)

The project aims to design with mud and make sediment part of the public conversation throughout the Bay Area. The project represents a paradigm shift in climate change planning—rather than hardening the edge, we must invest in living systems that will grow over time to adapt to sea level rise.

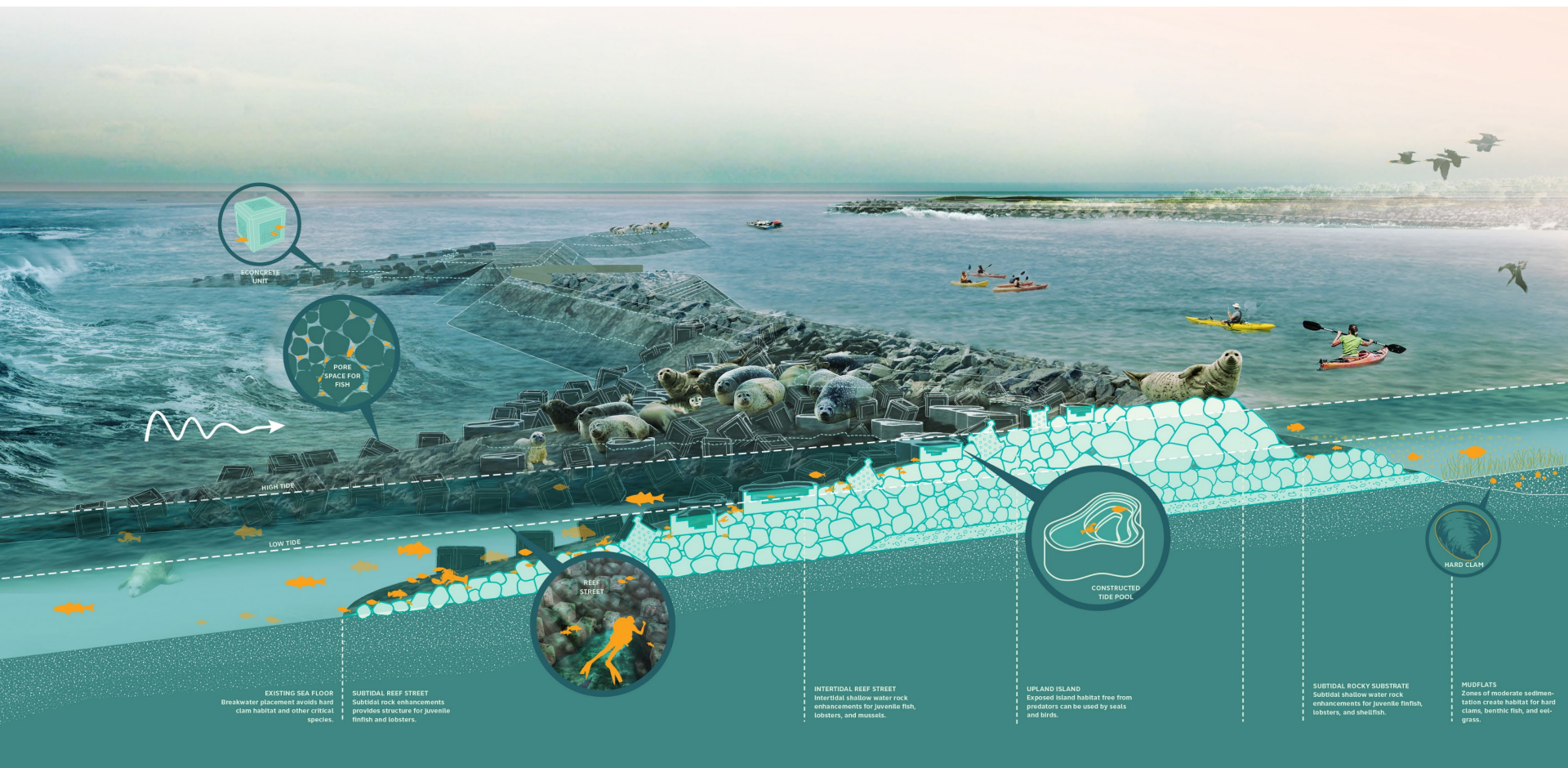


Wirth Image 05

Living Breakwaters

Awards: Rebuild by Design Competition, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; Buckminster Fuller Challenge; American Academy of Arts & Letters Planning Achievement Award; ACEC-NY Engineering Excellence, Grand Honor Award

Widely considered a model for climate-adaptive nature-based infrastructure, Living Breakwaters is a \$111 million project with a layered approach to risk reduction—enhancing physical, ecological and social resilience along the South Shore of Staten Island.



Wirth Image 06

Living Breakwaters

Awards: Rebuild by Design Competition, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; Buckminster Fuller Challenge; American Academy of Arts & Letters Planning Achievement Award; ACEC-NY Engineering Excellence, Grand Honor Award

The breakwaters are designed to reduce impacts of climate-intensified weather events on the coastal community of Tottenville, which experienced damaging waves and tragic loss of life during Superstorm Sandy. The breakwaters are constructed with “reef ridges” and “reef streets” that provide diverse habitat space, with live oyster installation after completion.



Wirth Image 07

Living Breakwaters

Awards: Rebuild by Design Competition, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; Buckminster Fuller Challenge; American Academy of Arts & Letters Planning Achievement Award; ACEC-NY Engineering Excellence, Grand Honor Award

Beyond the physical breakwaters, the project builds social resilience in Tottenville through educational programs for local schools in partnership with the Billion Oyster Project, as well as years of engagement through the Citizens' Advisory Committee, a coalition of local stakeholders, and unique tools like the Living Breakwaters school curriculum.



Wirth Image 08

Living Breakwaters

Awards: Rebuild by Design Competition, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development; Buckminster Fuller Challenge; American Academy of Arts & Letters Planning Achievement Award; ACEC-NY Engineering Excellence, Grand Honor Award

Constructed in 2024, Living Breakwaters is already working to accrete shoreline sediment, break waves, and rebuild local habitats. Species recently documented on the breakwaters include Harbor Seals, Blue Crabs, Atlantic Silverside Fish, and Red Beard Sponge.



Wirth Image 09

Town Branch Commons

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Urban Design; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Excellence; ASLA-GA Honor Award, General Design; ASLA-SERC Merit Award, General Design; ASLA-KY Honor Award, Constructed Work

Town Branch Commons is a transformative multi-modal trail linking 2.5 miles of green infrastructure and public space in Lexington. The project completes a regional network of trails that unites urban and rural communities and solves for vehicular congestion and pollution, incorporating a “road diet” to slim vehicular streets.



Wirth Image 10

Town Branch Commons

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Urban Design; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Excellence; ASLA-GA Honor Award, General Design; ASLA-SERC Merit Award, General Design; ASLA-KY Honor Award, Constructed Work

The Commons are a dramatic investment in green infrastructure—managing stormwater runoff and urban heat across downtown Lexington. Signature paving references the cross-hatch of limestone and horse fences found across the Bluegrass region, dissolving across intersections.



Wirth Image 11

Town Branch Commons

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Urban Design; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Excellence; ASLA-GA Honor Award, General Design; ASLA-SERC Merit Award, General Design; ASLA-KY Honor Award, Constructed Work

Informed by local karst hydrogeology, limestone is threaded through nearly every aspect of material design. Limestone walls define space for bicyclists and pedestrians, direct water, and protect plantings. Inspired by traditional dry-laid fences that rely on gravity, the walls were a collaboration with local stonemasons.



Wirth Image 12

Town Branch Commons

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Urban Design; Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Excellence; ASLA-GA Honor Award, General Design; ASLA-SERC Merit Award, General Design; ASLA-KY Honor Award, Constructed Work

Recirculating water features bring the karst geology of Central Kentucky to the streetscape along the former path of Town Branch Creek. Bringing a ribbon of native Bluegrass landscapes into Lexington, the Commons are a love letter to the state's unique ecology and cultural history.



Wirth Image 13

Gowanus Lowlands Master Plan

Awards: ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications

The Gowanus Lowlands is a community-based vision for a restored open space network in the Gowanus Canal and its watershed—a federally-designated Superfund site. Designed to guide a transitioning neighborhood, the plan is a successful advocacy tool and has shaped the quality and character of new canal-side public spaces.



Wirth Image 14
Gowanus Lowlands (300 Huntington Street)

The plan laid a template for living, climate adaptive landscapes that reference the industrial history of the canal. The first new open space embodying the goals of the plan is 300 Huntington (SCAPE). A tiered esplanade lifts canopy trees out of the flood zone and steps down to the water.



Wirth Image 15
Gowanus Lowlands (300 Huntington Street)

Industrial-inspired details evoke site history while creating space to bring human and ecological life back to the canal. The design showcases the Lowlands material palette, which emphasized durable and contextual guardrails, paving, and seating. Elements were incorporated into NYC zoning through community advocacy and are required for other canal sites.



Wirth Image 16
Gowanus Lowlands (Projects in Construction)

As the neighborhood transforms, a network of public spaces emerges along the canal's edge. Superfund canal cleanup continues, pointing toward a cleaner canal. The Lowlands advocacy is clearly visible in new landscapes with floodable edges, resilient plazas, street creeks, and get-downs that embody the potential of a new urban ecosystem.



Wirth Image 17

The Chattahoochee RiverLands

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLAGA Excellence Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; ASLA Kentucky Merit Award, Analysis & Planning; Georgia Water Coalition, Clean 13 Award; APA-Georgia, Outstanding Planning Document

In Atlanta's backyard, the Chattahoochee River is an overlooked waterbody of extraordinary economic, cultural, and ecological value. The Chattahoochee RiverLands is a vision to link 100 miles of suburban, urban, and rural communities into a continuous public realm, greenway, and blueway that centers the River as a natural resource.

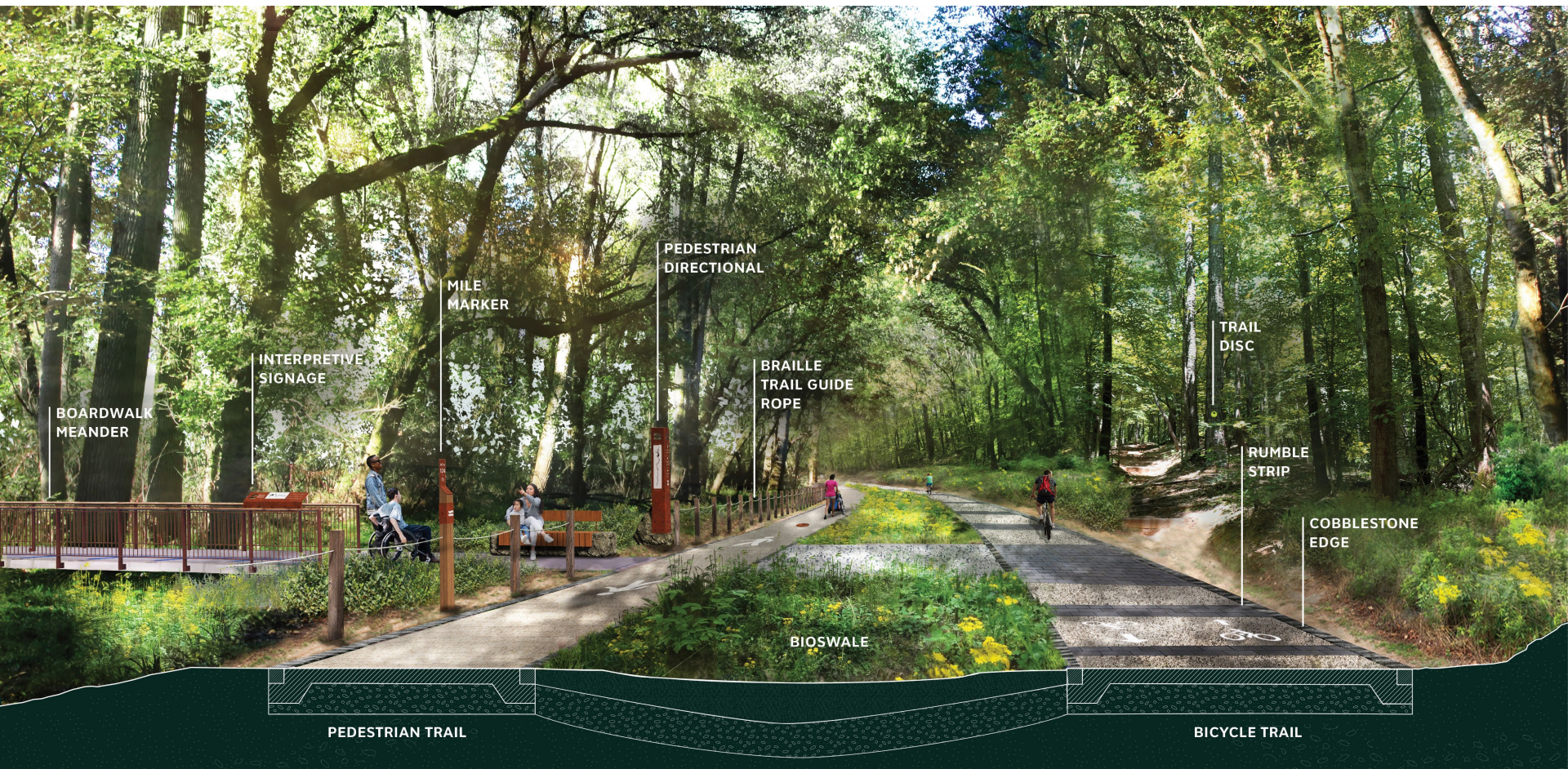


Wirth Image 18

The Chattahoochee RiverLands

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLAGA Excellence Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; ASLA Kentucky Merit Award, Analysis & Planning; Georgia Water Coalition, Clean 13 Award; APA-Georgia, Outstanding Planning Document

Encompassing 1 million users, 125 miles, 19 cities, and 26 parks, the RiverLands is a generational project transforming reginal open space. The large and diverse site elevated the need for robust community engagement—hundreds of meetings engaging over 6,000 residents and 66 member organizations helped forge consensus around the plan.



Wirth Image 19

The Chattahoochee RiverLands

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLAGA Excellence Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; ASLA Kentucky Merit Award, Analysis & Planning; Georgia Water Coalition, Clean 13 Award; APA-Georgia, Outstanding Planning Document

Design guidelines were developed to span diverse sites and inform trail design, identify, materiality, and ecological impacts. In all aspects, the vision incorporates conservation goals, protecting and restoring critical ecosystems and habitat while sensitively enhancing access to the River's edge.

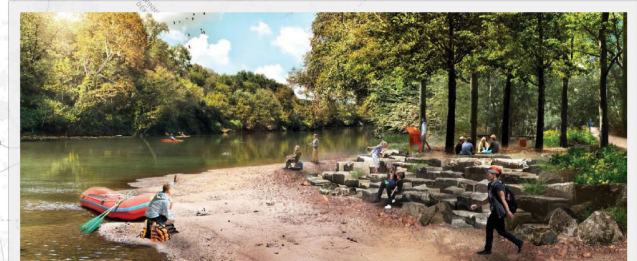
PLANNED, FUNDED & BUILT

OVER \$250M INVESTED IN NEW RIVERLANDS PROJECTS TO DATE (2023)

LEGEND (Note: Select projects, subject to change. All budgets approximate.)

1. **McIntosh Reserve Park** | Large-scale expansion of existing park (\$2.57M - acq.)
2. **Chattahoochee Hills RiverLands Park** | Construction of campsite & new regional park (\$1M - Phase 1)
3. **Campbellton Park** | New camp site & boat ramp (\$1M - camp site; \$140K - boat ramp)
4. **Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail** | Design & construction of new regional trail (\$46.87M)
5. **South Metro RiverLands Greenway** | Planning study for new greenway (\$6.6M)
6. **Buzzard Roost Island** | Design & construction of new camp site (\$1M)
7. **Mableton Parkway Greenway Trail** | Design & construction of new trail (\$5M)
8. **RiverLands Showcase Project - Regional Trailhead** | Construction of new trailhead (\$3.2M)
9. **RiverLands Showcase Project** | Design & construction of new trail & park (\$41M)
10. **Proctor Creek Greenway** | Extension of existing trail (\$4M)
11. **Unity Bridge** | Feasibility study for new bridge (\$900K)
12. **Chattahoochee Brick** | Design & construction of new park & memorial (\$27M - acq.)
13. **Lower Paul Avenue Park** | Design & construction of new park
14. **Standing Peachtree Greenspace** | Rehabilitation of existing park; launch for Camp & Paddle Trail (\$1M)
15. **Paces Mill Unit - CRNRA** | Rehabilitation of existing park (\$11.8M)
16. **Sandy Springs Master Plan** | Visioning study for RiverLands opportunities (\$200K)
17. **Chattahoochee Nature Center** | Capital improvements to existing nature center (\$6M)
18. **Azalea Park** | Rehabilitation of existing park
19. **Ace Sand Park** | Design & construction of new park
20. **Sandy Springs Parcels - CRNRA** | Two parcels purchased for RiverLands access & new trail (\$10.5M)
21. **Crooked Creek Trail** | Design & construction of new trail (\$3M)
22. **Abbotts Bridge Unit - CRNRA** | New trail extension (\$4M)
23. **Cauley Creek Park** | Design & construction of new park (\$20M - Phase 1)
24. **Rogers Bridge** | Bridge replacement & new trailhead (\$8M)
25. **James Creek - CRNRA** | Expansion of CRNRA (\$1.26M - acq.)
26. **Unnamed Creek** | Stream restoration project (\$30K)
27. **R.C. Acres - CRNRA** | Expansion of CRNRA (\$2.9M)

CASE STUDY | RIVERLANDS SHOWCASE PROJECT



Mableton, GA — Fully realized pilot project to showcase all aspects of the RiverLands vision, including a trail, park, kayak launch, and new regional trailhead. Initiative in partnership with Cobb County & City of Smyrna. \$3.2M land acquisition; \$41M in design and construction. Set to open in Spring 2026.

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The Chattahoochee RiverLands

Awards: ASLA Honor Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLAGA Excellence Award, Analysis & Planning; ASLA-NY Honor Award, Analysis, Planning, Research & Communications; ASLA Kentucky Merit Award, Analysis & Planning; Georgia Water Coalition, Clean 13 Award; APA-Georgia, Outstanding Planning Document

The goal of the project was to catalyze and organize public and private investment along the River. Since the release of the vision, over \$250 million has been invested in RiverLands projects to date across the region, with many advancing quickly into construction.