

An Architecture of Path and Destination in the Land of Water, Forests, and Peaks

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, I read an article about a proposed huts and trails system in the Adirondack Park. This is a 6 million acre forested, mountainous, and water logged preserve, that is also home to around 130,000 people.

A huts and trails system such as the one proposed is typically aimed at recreational hikers - a sort of tourist in the wilderness- who spend a couple days or perhaps weeks hiking from one spectacular site to another. In thinking about the possibility of introducing such a system, I became interested in the relationship between movement, path, architecture, and place.

Knowing that recreational hikers weren't the only people roaming this region, I wondered what a huts and trails system would look like if it considered the other ways that people approach this place. Consider, for example, the difference between how a forager and how a hiker may move through and stay in the wilderness.

My goal was to re-center the path as a means of understanding how people construct their world through movement, and to use the architecture of going

as the genesis for an architecture of staying.

Following a close study of the Long Lake region of the Adirondack Park and the different groups who use this wilderness, proposals were made that addressed each of the three primary ways that people use this wilderness: one for the recreational hiker, one for the through paddlers on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and one for hunters and gatherers like trappers and foragers. In each case, I sought to understand the characters and their needs through an understanding of their path - how, where, and why they move through the wilderness. This led to an understanding of how to create a home in the wilderness for each. How should one first see and approach the structure? What is the structure's relationship to community, comfort, topography, enclosure, permanence? How is it oriented?

What became clear is that the path is more than a vector with a direction and a distance. It's a way of knowing and making our world that is essential to understanding our place, our home, our selves.

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01. Introduction

1. Where I'm Coming From
1. Where it All Began
3. The Adirondack Park

02. Argument

7. Path and Destination
9. What is Walking?
9. The Pathmakers
15. The Experience of Walking Depends on the Environment
15. Art, Sculpture, Architecture, and the Path
18. Conclusions

03. Site

21. Crumbling and Re-Assembling

04. Narrative / Program

31. The Next Chapter
31. Get to Know the Characters

05. From Path to Destination

39. Choosing the Sites
42. Castle Rock / Forked Lake / Calkins Creek
53. From Path to Destination

06. Design

59. Recreational Hiker
65. Through Paddler
71. Hunter / Gatherer

07. Conclusion

81. Layering, Unfolding and Coexistence

01. INTRODUCTION

[Where I'm Coming From]

I began this project feeling fascinated yet unfamiliar with the Adirondack region in Northern New York. Growing up in the Champlain Valley of Vermont, I was able to see across Lake Champlain to the mountains of the 6 million acre Adirondack Park, often watching the sun set over those distant peaks. For me, it was just that - a view, or an image. That's because there's a strong physical and cultural divide between Vermont and New York, which are separated by Lake Champlain. Author Bill McKibben, who has lived on both sides of Lake Champlain describes the view from Vermont as such:

Though to me this wide expanse looks so like a whole, that's only because unlikely circumstance has let me know all of it with some intimacy. For most of the residents of either side, the lake divides it neatly into two very different kingdoms of the imagination... This line is rarely crossed. Partly that's because most places you need to take a ferry, but much more because the ferry connects two different states of mind... [On the Vermont side] the towns tend towards neatness, gathering themselves around white churches -- Congregational churches, governing themselves without the aid of bishops or the overly active intervention of the Holy Spirit. And town halls, with their March rite of town meeting -- of good, crisp self-governance. It is a tidy place, New England.

Whereas, across the lake, the unruliness of the rest of America begins.

...Indeed they are right to perceive a difference. Cross the lake and you leave behind the neat town green with the bandstand in favor of a more Appalachian look... Boston is suddenly no closer than Detroit. Vermont, too, seems distant, all the way across the lake, a mythical land of Saab-driving, goat-cheese-eating Democrats. The

Adirondacks are higher, colder, and wilder -- people have lived here for fewer centuries in fewer numbers, and have never been able to make farming work for long. And so, over time, huge chunks have been left to rewild themselves, til in places it approaches the primeval.¹

Like most Vermonters, although I made trips to the Adirondacks as a kid, the majority of the area remained largely unknown to me. It is there, across the lake, that this project begins.

[Where it All Began]

In 2014, a proposal was put forth by a coalition of New York Department of Conservation workers, local representatives, and interested individuals to construct a series of trails and huts in the 6 million acre forested, mountainous, and water logged Adirondack Park of upstate New York.² Though much of the park land is protected, the fact that it is home to around 130,000 people and is composed of a patchwork of public and private uses rather than strictly preserved wilderness makes it unique.³ This is a remote region with a struggling economy. The organizers' hope was to attract visitors with a hut and trail network that would connect hamlets and wilderness, allowing skiing, canoeing, and hiking from one place to the next.⁴

A huts and trails system such as the one proposed is typically aimed at the recreational user - a sort of tourist in the wilderness- who spends a couple days or perhaps weeks going from one spectacular site to another. In thinking



Figure 1: The view from the author's childhood home in the Champlain Valley of Vermont, towards the Adirondack Mountains in Northern New York.

about the possibility of introducing such a system, I became interested in the relationship between movement, path, architecture, and place.

Knowing that recreational users weren't the only people roaming this region, I wondered what a huts and trails system would look like if it took into account the other ways that people approach this place. Consider, for example, the difference in the ways a forager and a hiker move through and stay in the wilderness.

My goal was to re-center the path as a means of understanding how people construct their world through movement; and to use the architecture of going as the genesis for an architecture of staying. Francisco Careri writes:

The act of crossing space stems from the natural necessity to move to find the food and information required for survival. But once these basic needs have been satisfied, walking takes on a symbolic form that has enabled man to dwell in the world. By modifying the sense of the space crossed, walking becomes man's first aesthetic act. Penetrating the territories of chaos, constructing an order on which to develop the architecture of situated objects. Walking is an art from whose loins spring the menhir, sculpture, architecture, landscape. This simple action has given rise to the most important relationships man has established with the land, the territory.⁵

It is from the path, a place of going, that places of staying are born as physical constructions of the landscape. This thesis will seek to understand the relationship between path and destination through a proposal for an Adirondack huts and trails system that addresses the many understandings and approaches to this place.

[The Adirondack Park]

The Adirondack Park is the largest protected area in the lower 48 states, larger in area than its neighboring state Vermont. It's a densely forested oval shaped region occupying much of northern New York, stretching about 160 miles, or roughly the distance from Seattle to Portland. But it hasn't always been as pristine as it now seems. Writer Verlyn Klinkenborg describes what it's like to approach the Park:

The soil changes mile by mile on a drive up from the south. Soon a dark wall of trees—red spruce, balsam fir, beech, hemlock—surrounds you, and there's a sudden stony persistence. You're climbing onto the Adirondack dome, an exposure of ancient rock thrusting upward, rising faster than anything around it. Then comes water, some of it visible, much of it secret: ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers, and bogs too saturated to bear the weight of anything much heavier than a beaver. Here is a place, as the philosopher William James wrote more than a century ago, to "aspire downwards."

It's easy to believe, even now, that almost nothing has changed in what James called the "primitive forest." But with few exceptions, almost everything has changed in the Adirondacks. The unbroken green of the summer landscape rolling out from the High Peaks hides a singular fact: New York's Adirondack Park may be the most complicated park on the planet.⁷

As Klinkenborg describes, the untrained eye assumes that the forested parts of the region have always been untouched, but it was the widespread destruction following the arrival of European settlers that prompted its protection by law in the late 1800's, requiring the land to be kept "forever wild." And while the

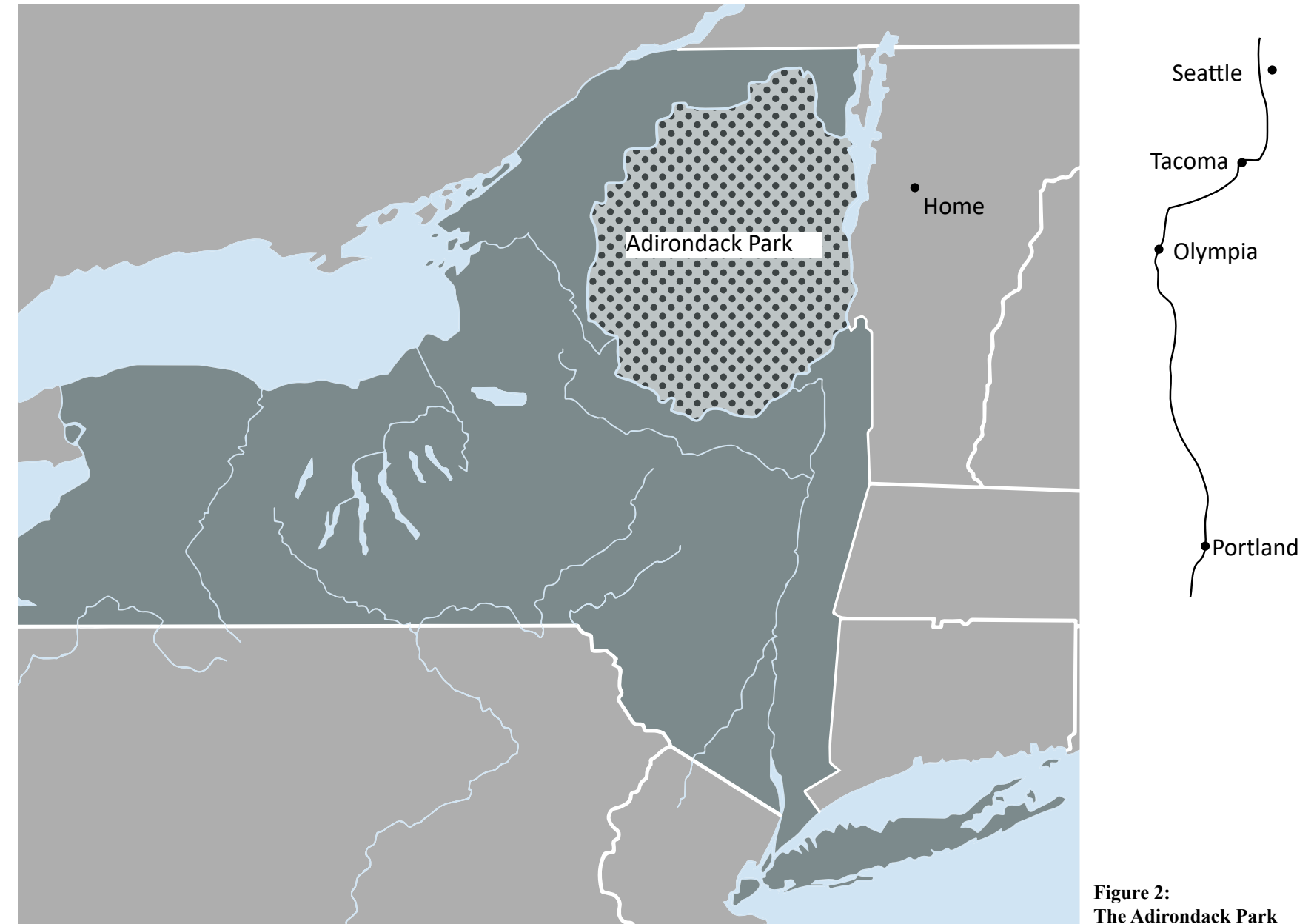


Figure 2:
The Adirondack Park

park contains the best protected land in the United States, (it would take a constitutional amendment to change the classification of state owned land) it remains a place for a wide variety of uses and opinions about the future of the Park.⁸ In fact, only about half of the land within the park boundaries belongs to the state, while the rest is privately owned land used for forestry, agriculture, and recreation.⁹

02. ARGUMENT

[Path and Destination]

At his acceptance speech for the 1997 Pritzker Prize, Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn declared,

Within himself, every man is an architect. His first step towards architecture is his walk through nature. He cuts a path like writing on the surface of the earth. The crushing of grass and brushwood is an interference with nature, a simple definition of man's culture. His path is a sign to follow. And through this initial movement, he requires the movements of others. This is a most elementary form of a composition.¹⁰

This thesis argues that architecture does not begin with the primitive hut or the sacrificial altar - it begins with the path. Walking constitutes the most basic and direct relationship between ourselves and our environment. It's part of our daily life, primarily with the intention of moving efficiently from point A to point B, and often with the help of navigation apps on a phone. But walking can be done in more "present" and often "inefficient" ways - the kind of walking we do when we aren't simply listening to Google. This thesis focuses on less "efficient" types of walking as a form of expression, space making, and way of knowing the world. A starting point for my research was to look at how movement and path have been integrated into the work of several artists. These are artists whose work foregrounds our perception of dimensions such as "time, distance, geography, and measurement."¹¹

If, like Sverre Fehn says, every man who moves is an architect, where did this idea of space making come from? In his book *Walkscapes*, Francesco Careri looks back to humanity's ancestors: the more stationary agriculturalist and the more mobile nomad. He argues that these correspond to different ideas of architecture itself, the former as a "physical construction of space and form" and the latter as a "perception and symbolic construction of space."

Observing the origins of architecture through the nomad-settler polarity, it would appear that the art of constructing space - or what we normally call "architecture" - was originally an invention of the settlers which evolved from the construction of the first rural villages to that of the cities and the great temples. The commonly held belief is that architecture was born of the necessity for a "space of staying," as opposed to nomadism, understood as a "space of going." Actually, the relationship between architecture and nomadism cannot be directly expressed as an opposition of "architecture *or* nomadism." There is a much more profound relation that connects architecture to nomadism through the notion of the journey or path. In fact it is probable that it was nomadism, or more precisely "wandering," that gave rise to architecture, revealing the need for a symbolic construction of the landscape.¹²

I believe our idea of architecture today requires considering a back and forth between its conception as path and destination. Neither can be seen in isolation, and each gives shape and experience to the other.

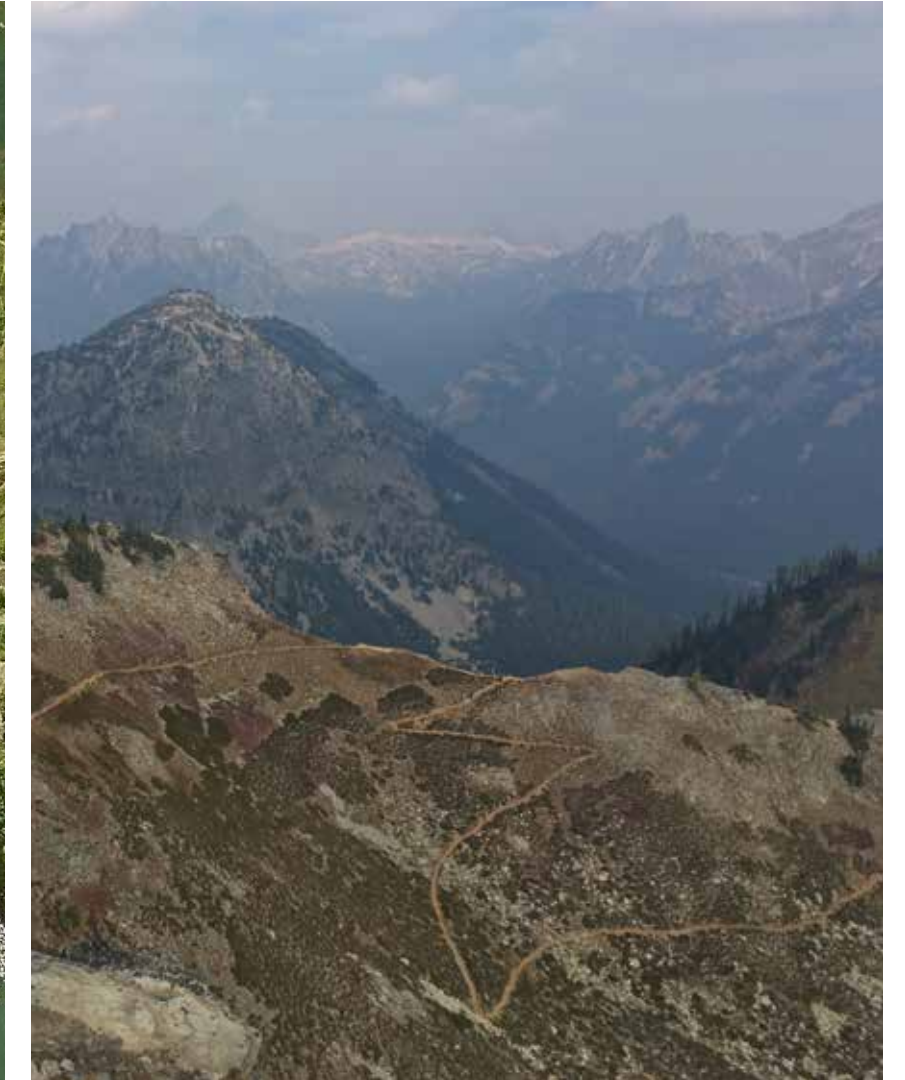
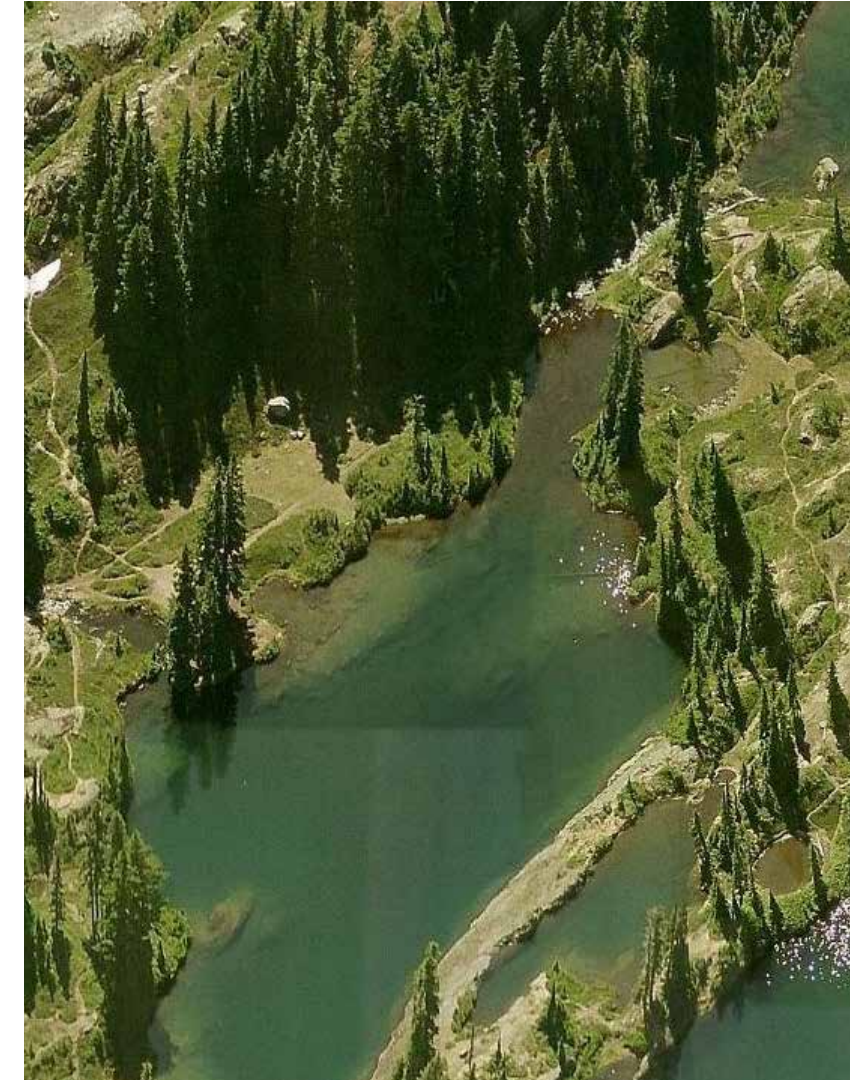


Figure 3 & 4: Trails explored by the author in the Cascade Mountains, WA.

[What is Walking?]

Beyond its definition as a physical act of movement through space, walking is the personal expression and interpretation of one's environment. Through their movement and conversation with the environment, people tell their own story, and in doing so, they make a place and define space. Michel De Certeau writes of pedestrians: "Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city.' They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize."¹³

But a path does not create a static place. It's a conversation between a dynamic self or selves and a dynamic environment. This relationship between the path and time is demonstrated when thinking about how to represent place. Can a place be represented in a static image or biography? Can a place be permanent? Or is it "ever crumbling and reassembling"? Perhaps the shape of a walk is "space unfolding in a continuous present."¹⁴ Nuala Johnson writes,

... to view movement as constitutive of both place and self tacitly counters notions of place as pause in the flow of space-time. Movement of the self through space, rather than arrest through representation, catalyzes place, as for instance an asphalt road becomes a place remade each time I walk down it.¹⁵

In other words, a location becomes a place by the movement of people through it, rather than through a static representation, such as a photograph.

[The Pathmakers]

Walking can be done in many ways and for many reasons. Each path taken reflects a different understanding of the world, different ways of being oriented, and different motivations. A path can be "efficient" and direct or "inefficient" and wandering. It is both mental and physical. I began this exploration by looking at several characters in history that have strong expressions in their movement; trying to understand the relationship between the path and the way they see the world.. Each has a different conversation with their environment - makes the place in their own vision - due to the worldview they embody. This section will start with the most recent character, the *dériveur*, and go back in time to the *flâneur*, the tourist, the pilgrim, the augur, and the storyteller.

Situationists: wandering as a means of resistance

The Situationists were a group of thinkers who arose out of the uprisings in France and around the world of 1968, and in response to the rationalism of the modern movement. They felt that rationalism prioritized the collective interest over the individual interest, and proposed that prioritizing the individual "maximized his or her freedom and potential."¹⁶

Out of this movement, Guy Debord and the Situationists came up with the idea of the *dérive*, which translates to "the drift." "The *dérive* was an unplanned walk through the urban landscape, which was navigated by the individual's emotional reaction to the surrounding cityscape. It was a method of wandering in which the subject's trajectory was determined by the city's psychogeographical mapping. For the situationists, the *dérive* was a revolutionary technique to combat the malaise and boredom of the society of

the spectacle."¹⁷ Debord and his group would conduct walks using maps that were cut up and reassembled, or even use a map of London to navigate through Germany, in order to experience a place in a new way.¹⁸ While the *dérive* seemed to be aimed at navigating a city, members of the Situationist movement also drew a connection between boredom caused by a rational world, and a lack of connection with the natural world. In *Formulary for a New Urbanism*, Gilles Ivain writes:

Darkness and obscurity are banished by artificial lighting, and the seasons by air conditioning. Night and summer are losing their charm and dawn is disappearing. The urban population think they have escaped from cosmic reality, but there is no corresponding expansion of their dream life. The reason is clear: dreams spring from reality and are realized in it.¹⁹

The making of a path through *dérive* was a means of resistance. It valued the present over a historical understanding of society. The *dériveur* navigated the "ambiances" of the city in an effort to reconstruct the city "as a terrain of passion."²⁰ This required the *dériveur* to be in the moment, and attentive to the mood and character of a place. While the *dériveur* may not have a particular destination in mind, the journey was very tied to place. That said, the *dérive* had less to do with the physical topography of the city than the perceived atmosphere.²¹

Flâneur: wandering for pure joy

The *flâneur* is a character that was explored by Charles Baudelaire and others in the 1860's. He is portrayed as an urban man wandering for the sake of pleasure,



Figure 5: Situationists' "Guide Psychogéographique de Paris"



Figure 6: Wandering the arcades of Paris

having agency as an individual. "... the flâneur; that ephemeral character who... killed time by enjoying manifestations of the unusual and the absurd, when wandering about the city."²² However, to kill time was not to waste time. Like all forms of wandering, the flâneur was in constant conversation with his environment, reflecting and amplifying the energy of the city. Charles Baudelaire wrote, "...we might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life."²³

Like the Situationists and the dérive, the path made by the flâneur did not have a pre-determined destination, but responded in time to the life unfolding around him. It had a relationship to history in that the past, or historic buildings and city fabric, was brought alive by its use in the present. It was a slow, "inefficient" path, a walk taken at the pace of a turtle (and sometimes with an actual turtle on a leash). The flâneur followed his inspiration "as if the mere turning left or right already constituted an essentially poetic act."²⁴ Walter Benjamin has said that consumer capitalism meant the end of the flâneur.²⁵

The tourist: wandering as adventure

The path of the tourist is one of seeking adventure and "bagging" sights. The tourist may waver between wandering in search of the exotic to a destination driven path in which one checks off attractions that a guidebook told them they must see. In our daily life, we try to avoid getting lost by keeping track of our landmarks and "buoys" of orientation. But getting lost as a tourist can be a way of orientation itself (in the best case) or a commodity increasingly hard to

find, a form of colonization.²⁶ As opposed to being lost in a risky sense, getting lost as a tourist is used for "the sense of adventure, 'the conquest of space,' that gives us new space for our movements, new friends, new places and extends our mental map. Getting lost in these cases is a condition of beginning, the need and the ground on which to start or to resume getting oriented."²⁷ Today, "the promise of traveling to exotic places has turned getting lost into a commodity affected by the market laws, that is, a scarce commodity to be bought at an increasingly high price."²⁸ By valuing attractions, landmarks, and buildings simply for being old, the tourist relates to time through a linear notion of history in which age has an inherent value.



Figure 7: Map of Yellowstone National Park



Figure 8: Pilgrimage route in Northern Spain

The Pilgrim: walking as a sacred and secular journey

Like the tourist, the journey of the pilgrim - that long, difficult, spiritual quest - is marked by being in a strange land, physically separated from the familiar. But for the pilgrim, "the journey is in itself a "sense," because it is oriented, has a destination, and is an introduction to the terrestrial condition of provisionality, the impossibility of imposing our own settlement order onto the general order of things and the cosmos."²⁹ The pilgrim has a different relationship with history though. While both tourist and pilgrim value monuments, for the tourist it is often seen independently on the value of age, while for the pilgrim it relates to a larger spiritual world view and has "cult value" through tradition.

The pilgrim's journey is largely in a liminal state "in and out of time." Victor Turner, paraphrasing Arnold van Gennep, describes three phases: separation or detachment of the individual from their everyday social structure; liminality, an ambiguous state; and finally reaggregation or reincorporation, back to society with more defined rights and obligations.³⁰

As the pilgrim moves away from his structural involvements at home his route becomes increasingly sacralized at one level and increasingly secularized at another. He meets with more shrines and sacred objects as he advances, but he also encounters more real dangers such as bandits and robbers, he has to pay attention to the need to survive and often to earn money for transportation, and he comes across markets and fairs, especially at the end of his quest, where the shrine is flanked by the bazaar and by the fun fair. But all these things are more contractual, more associational, more volatile, more replete with the novel and the unexpected, fuller of possibilities of communitas, as secular fellowship and comradeship and sacred communion, than anything he has known at home. And the world becomes a bigger place. He completes the paradox of the Middle Ages that it was at once more cosmopolitan and more localized than either tribal or capitalistic society.³¹

While the pilgrim is guided by a sacred destination to a strange place, it is the vigilance required and shared struggle while in the liminal state that means he experiences the local in a more intense way than at home.³²

[The Experience of Walking Depends on the Environment]

The above characters demonstrate the many ways in which movement expresses one's physical and mental approach, is a way of creating a world, and a way of having an embodied experience of a place that is in the moment. An individual's approach or means of orientation is the basis of how they move through space. But as this thesis has argued, movement is always a conversation with the environment. Because this thesis focuses on movement in the forested wilderness, the following section will investigate how conversing with this particular environment may differ from an urban space.

Walter Benjamin noted, "Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling. Street names must speak to the urban wanderer like the snapping of dry twigs, and little streets in the heart of the city must reflect the times of day, for him, as clearly as a mountain valley."⁴¹ The forest is rich with "signs" for our senses, and yet it is experienced in many different ways. Robert Harrison explains that forests are ever changing, surprising us, demanding our attention.

If forests appear in our religions as places of profanity, they also appear as sacred... If they evoke associations of danger and abandon in our minds, they also evoke scenes of enchantment. In other words, in the religions, mythologies, and literatures of the West, the forest appears as a place where the logic of distinction goes astray. Or where our subjective categories are confounded. Or where perceptions become promiscuous with one another, disclosing latent dimensions of time and consciousness. In a forest the inanimate may suddenly become animate, the god turns into a beast... the straight line forms a circle, the ordinary gives way to the fabulous.⁴²

Making or following a path in the forest is revealing of the fact that walking is a practice. When you enter the forest and make or follow a path, you don't see your final destination; it cannot be consumed immediately. The experience emerges as your physical and mental approach respond to the changing topography, light, sounds, smells, time, and the soreness of your body. In this sense, moving through the forest is perhaps most like the way the Situationists envisioned, a consciousness that they wanted to revive. I would argue, however, that topography plays a larger role in the ambiances of the forest. Whether the forest is approached as a terrifying void or a place known well, much like a city, the wilderness is full of signs to interpret, and have a conversation with.

[Art, Sculpture, Architecture and the Path]

Interventions such as art, sculpture, and architecture can shape or respond to our experience of movement and our production of space. There is no correct relationship between movement and structure, but there is a strong relationship to consider. The following case studies show that interventions may shape our experience of movement, reveal something about how we relate to the world or a particular place, or respond to the world one has created through their movement. The works take into account the conversation we have with our surroundings, the relationships we have with time, distance, our senses, and respond to these in different ways. Gilles Tiberghien says in the introduction to Walkscapes, "The idea... is that walking has always generated architecture and landscape, and that this practice, all but totally forgotten by architects

themselves, has been reactivated by poets, philosophers and artists capable of seeing precisely what is not there, in order to make "something" be there."⁴³

Rosalind Krauss argues that the logic of the sculpture parallels the logic of the monument. She says, "Late in the 19th century we witnessed the fading of the logic of the monument," in which a work was on a pedestal and represented one true account of history.⁴⁴ Land artists such as Richard Long, Andy Goldsworthy, and others who began to emerge in the 1960's were responding to this idea that the traditional monument no longer made sense to us. Friedrich Nietzsche had proposed that history got in the way of living by preventing us from being in the moment.⁴⁵ These artists felt that having an embodied experience - one of movement - would be more effective, leaving behind the enclosed and static experience of the museum or gallery, and allowing their work to be experienced as a "becoming" or "in time" rather than "out of time." The following projects demonstrate the use of walking and path making as part of sculptural works that could be thought of as a new form of monument.

Moonlit Path: Andy Goldsworthy, Sussex, England, 2002

Moonlit Path was created by Andy Goldsworthy in 2002 in Sussex, England. He laid a meandering path of crushed chalk through the forest. It is meant to be experienced at night, when the darkness allows you to focus your senses on sounds and the feeling of the earth beneath your feet. The minimal light is amplified by the white path, especially when the chalk is fully dry. Goldsworthy uses the twisting nature of the path to reveal to the walker their relationship to the moon through shadow. He takes the path through thicker and thinner woods, using the presence or lack of moonlight to draw awareness

to the canopy above. By disorienting you through darkness, you understand your relationship to the light more deeply.

Goldsworthy says:

A place is so different at night - it is like being somewhere else. Perception, feeling and senses are changed by darkness. A whole different range of emotions is released. We have fear of the dark - it is unnerving. At first I felt strange being out and alone in the dark in a wood or on a mountain but now I feel a sense of protection under its cover. I want to understand, explore and use the different responses and emotions provoked by night.⁴⁶

This project also draws attention to the relationship between light, ourselves, and our surroundings. Goldsworthy says, "By day we are spectators but at night the division between place and ourselves becomes obscure. Form becomes less defined - the experience is more introspective."⁴⁷



Figure 11: Moonlit Path by Andy Goldsworthy

Storm King Wall: Andy Goldsworthy, Mountainville, NY, 1998-99

This project seems to reveal the sometimes subconscious way that a path forges the “best” route through a given medium. Goldsworthy says:

A wall functions on many levels -- social, historical, environmental. A wall changes the place in which it is built... There is also the way that a wall draws the place through which it travels, often becoming an expression of that place, not unlike old shepherd paths that go up a hill - not necessarily taking the most direct route, but taking the best route.⁴⁸

Drove Arch / Near Pentright / Cumbria : Andy Goldsworthy, Scotland and England, (1997)

The Drove Arch project by Andy Goldsworthy demonstrates the way that a path can be used to give new meaning to the past and vice versa. In this work, he built, deconstructed, and rebuilt an arch at several sites of former folds along an old drove route through Scotland and England. Goldsworthy says of the project:

[It] will have its origin outside Cumbria yet still leave its mark there, in common with people, animals and things which have passed through this area over the centuries, leaving evidence of their journey but neither coming or staying there.

The arch will stay overnight at folds along or close by the drove route. it will be erected and photographed at each site before being dismantled and taken to the next. Some of the folds (still identifiable on the maps) no longer exist; others are in need of repair. Several virtually derelict wooden folds will be rebuilt in stone, continuing what I see as a tradition of first drawing a fold with rail, fence or posts before it is made in stone. The arch will, wherever possible, leave behind it, a trail of revived working folds, a trail of goodwill.⁴⁹



Figure 12: Storm King Wall by Andy Goldsworthy



Figure 13: Drove Arch by Andy Goldsworthy

A Line Made by Walking by Richard Long, 1967

Richard Long was one of the first artists to explore the path as a conscious form of expression. This work, in which the path is the object, left a story of the passage and experience that had taken place through the crushing of the grass. The idea of time explored here was complex: it involved the in-the-moment movements of the artist, the path left behind, the fading of that path, and the recording of the path through photographs.⁵⁰

These works all reflect on the fact that we learn and produce our environment by navigating it. The projects reveal something we may not have known about our surroundings or ourselves through our movement or witness of movement in a particular place and medium (environment). The works leverage one’s movement and the immediate conversation with the environment to create a new kind of monument that is “in time” and embedded in space rather than “outside of time” and static.

[Conclusions]

The path is more than a vector with a direction and a distance. It is a way of knowing and making our world, a “simultaneous reading and writing” of our environment.⁵¹ It “inscribes human experiences of time and movement in a world that is never apprehensible from a single, static point of view.”⁵² Gianni Vattimo proposes an understanding of our world which he calls “Weak Thought” which is neither based on one objective truth, static and written by those in charge, nor the idea that there is no truth, and that each person’s experience is subjective.⁵³ “Weak Thought” is truth as the layering of embodied experiences, the constant production, and the gathering of truths. As we have seen, many



Figure 14: “A Line Made by Walking” by Richard Long

experiences and productions of the same space are possible depending on one's perspective and background. Weak Thought is experience as a network rather than singular. Instead of being given the truth in a "mirror" as was the case of the traditional monument, the path, and these sculptural works are understood through movement, performance and the constant becoming. Inefficient movement, and further the introduction of sculpture or intervention to the path, give us an experience of being and becoming that no static image or efficient route can offer. In this case an "inefficient" route is more effective in serving life.

03. SITE

[Crumbling and Re-Assembling]

Places are “ever crumbling and re-assembling,” and the area now known as the Adirondacks is no exception. Across its history, it has been made and re-made by the people that have moved through it, created their own paths, and forged new connections between the land and themselves - physically and mentally. There have been Iroquois and Algonquin hunters and warriors, fur trappers, miners and loggers, farmers, romantic tourists, health seekers, and nature enthusiasts, each leaving their own trace on the land, and in doing so, revealing changing attitudes towards the wilderness. In many cases, these traces have evolved as new eras of people made use of them. In other cases, the pathways were no longer needed or used and began to fade away along with the ideas that put them there. The layering of pathways was already evident in 1877 when Nathaniel Sylvester wrote:

The remarkable depressions or valleys which surround Northern New York, and through which run its natural and artificial watercourses, have always been great routes of travel.

Through them first ran the old Indian trails. After the white man came, for more than two hundred years they formed the pathways of armies. When the long wars were ended, these routes were thronged with hardy pioneers on their way to the great West; and now the products of the West, the commerce of the world, come back through these thoroughfares.

And after sixty years of smiling peace other armies travel through them, armies of summer tourists, in search of health or pleasure on their way to Saratoga, the Adirondacks, Lake George, the Thousand

Islands, the gloomy Saguenay, Sharon, Richfield, Trenton Falls, Clifton, Avon, Massena, Niagara, the great lakes, and the prairies beyond, in a word, to the thousand attractions which lie in and around Northern New York.⁵⁴

The origins of this region, in more depth, begin about 58 million years ago, when the rocks that are today the Adirondack mountains began to rise, and continue to today.⁵⁵ A hot spot near the surface crust caused a dome shaped uplift, exposing some of earth’s oldest rocks. Over millions of years, weather erosion and glacial movement from the last ice age carved the rocks into the topography of mountains, lakes and rivers we see today. Fault lines running northeast to southwest, coupled with erosion, left behind valleys and lakes that run in this orientation. Large rocks called glacial erratics were transported on the moving ice sheet and deposited in seemingly strange places.⁵⁶ Kettle ponds were formed where chunks of ice sat, causing depressions in the land.⁵⁷



Figure 15: A glacial erratic in Blue Mountain Lake, NY

Pre 1600’s / Hunting, foraging and on the warpath in the “Great Longhouse”

Millions of years later, the first human visitors to the Adirondack forests were the Mohawk of the Iroquois tribe from south of the Adirondacks, and various Algonquian tribes from the north. While their permanent settlements were in the more mild and fertile lands outside the Adirondacks, the Iroquois, who were the primary users of the region, viewed it as part of the metaphorical, spiritual, and physical home, the “Great Longhouse.” “The Seneca kept watch over the western door. The Onondaga tended the central council fire, where important confederacy matters were decided by consensus. The Mohawk were the keepers of the eastern door.”⁵⁸ As a group, the Iroquois called themselves the Haudenosaunee, or people of the longhouse.⁵⁹ Paul Schneider describes the relationship these tribes held with the Adirondacks:

The cliché “impenetrable” forests in which the Iroquois and other Native Americans lived did not possess the quality of “otherness” that most modern European and American notions of wilderness usually imply. This was not only because they possessed the mythic “Indian” ability to survive in a general way, which they certainly did, but also because they very specifically knew their own turf. The principal routes through the forest, like the canoe carry from the Hudson River to Lake Champlain, or the route up the Fulton Chain Lakes to the Raquette River and then over the Indian Carry to the Saranac Lakes, were worn as much as a foot deep by centuries of foot traffic.⁶⁰

The Mohawks from south of the Adirondacks and the Algonquin tribes to the north had an ongoing rivalry, resulting in frequent battles and attacks, attended with war ceremonies. Attacks were almost exclusively Mohawks attacking

the Algonquin tribes on their northern territory, and eventually driving them out of areas. This frequent warfare came from an Iroquoian belief that any death, whether by natural causes or violence (other than drowning) was the “conscious act of some evildoer.” It was usually believed that the person responsible for sorcery was from a distant enemy community and the act required revenge. The practices around death guaranteed that frequent violence would occur between Iroquois and more distant tribes (as members of their confederation were not seen as potential evildoers).⁶¹

During this time, Mohawk and Algonquin tribes navigated primarily on rivers, carrying over land when necessary. Water routes to access hunting grounds were also war paths - the most common being the easiest - following the Mohawk River to the Hudson, on to Lake George, Lake Champlain, and the Richelieu River until reaching Montreal. But other routes that went through the heart of the park were used when it was necessary to be more secretive, or to access areas rich in game.⁶²



Figure 16: Some of the major Mohawk and Algonquin canoe routes



Figure 17: Samuel de Champlain's illustration of a battle in 1609 near Crown Point, NY from "Voyages of Samuel de Champlain"

1600's / Fur trading

With the arrival of Dutch and English fur traders to the south of the Adirondacks (Albany area) and the French to the north of the Adirondacks (Montreal area), the newcomers transformed the vast forest from a sustainably managed seasonal hunting and foraging ground, part of the "great longhouse," to a foreign trading opportunity - a resource to get rich from.⁶³ By involving Native Americans with the fur trade, the Europeans got wrapped up in ancient rivalries; the French siding with the Algonquins and the English with the Mohawks. The Europeans had significantly changed the meaning of the Adirondack region, but their movement through it was on the same ancient water routes.

This was a time when wilderness was considered unattractive and frightening by Europeans, and those associated with it were savages. The Jesuits came in the mid 1600's to "save" the native inhabitants of the wilderness. They were often captured, tortured and sometimes "adopted" by the Iroquois and Algonquin, but the Jesuits felt that their path of suffering was in service to God.⁶⁴

1700's: Dwindling resources + ugly economic transition

By 1700, game in the area was dwindling due to irresponsible hunting and trapping, and wars and disease caused the native tribes to dwindle as well. The Mohawks signed a peace treaty in 1701 and took a more neutral role in the ongoing conflict. Some moved to a reservation near Montreal. As game was more scarce but the economy more robust to the south of the Adirondacks, furs were smuggled from Canada down to Albany over the same water routes - sometimes over ice in the winter to avoid French patrols.⁶⁵

The French and Indian War (1754 -63), sometimes called the Beaver Wars, marked the end of an era when fur trapping was the main use of the Adirondacks. During the wars, the same water routes were used by Europeans, but always accompanied by Native Americans who knew the terrain. Forts were established along the main waterways of Lake George and Lake Champlain. The European fear of wilderness persisted, and New Englanders going into battle alongside Iroquois who had elaborate war rituals, were wary of being seduced "into a state of wildness" by wilderness.⁶⁶

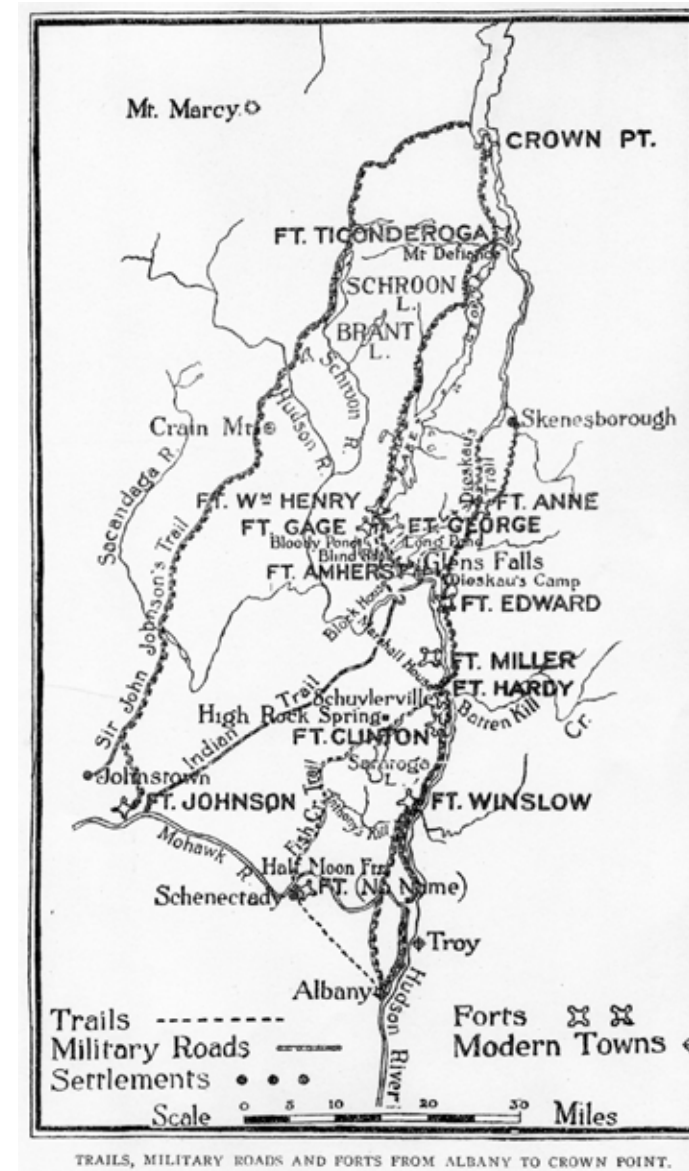


Fig 18: "Trails, Military Roads and Forts from Albany to Crown Point"

Following the wars, with game in short supply, it started to seem inevitable that the region would fill in with farmers and proto-industrialists. A change in the State of New York's rules allowed settlements to move beyond Albany and further into Iroquois territory. The Iroquois began to lose territory through legal and illegal land acquisition by the English.⁶⁷

As the economy began to shift towards farming, native Iroquois and Algonquin from reservations were still using the land for hunting and trapping. But some Europeans were too, and were treating the natives increasingly worse - fighting and sometimes killing them for no reason. As Europeans moved further into the forested region in search of game, the Adirondacks became "a dangerous backwater."⁶⁸ Farmers began establishing towns, and miners and loggers began establishing camps in valleys along ancient water routes. The clearing of land allowed the deer population to flourish, but other game was hunted to near extinction.⁶⁹

Post Revolutionary War / Land speculation

Following the Revolutionary War of 1775 - 1783, land formerly owned by the Crown now belonged to the states. Farming and mining had not yet proven successful, and though the Adirondacks was now thought of as a wasteland, the new states needed money and settlers, so they "eagerly sold vast parcels of land at a cut rate" to anyone who could put a deal together, shifting from an era of land for anyone to one of private land ownership. "Just as bales of beaver skins occasionally stood in for hard currency in the 1600s, so wilderness, in parcels of hundreds of thousands of acres at a time and generally unseen by

its owners, was a relatively liquid asset in the 1700s. It was one of the benefits of wilderness that it could, in a pinch, be traded for tea.”⁷⁰ The unseen towns established by land speculators were laid out in orthogonal grids with hopeful names like Industry and Enterprise, but reality was not so simple. Building and maintaining roads, let alone surviving, was very difficult in a place with poor soil and rugged terrain.

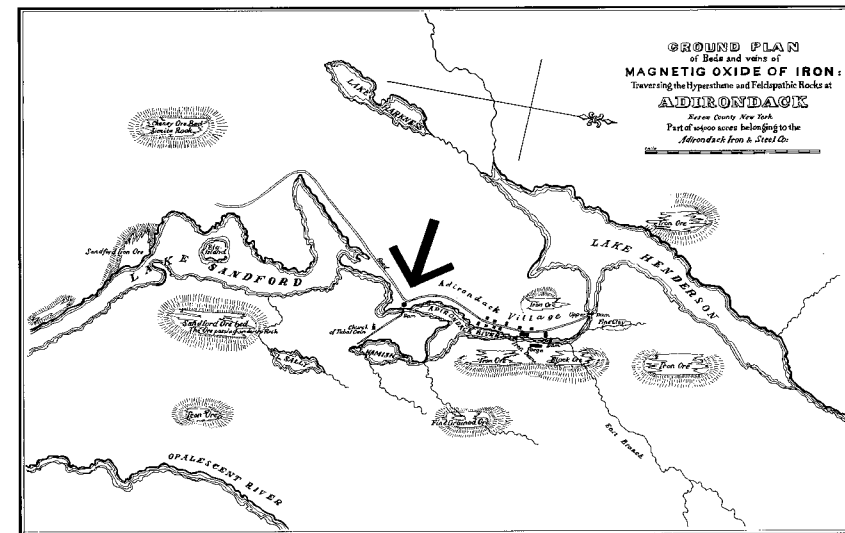
Early 1800’s / Beginning of Farming and Industry

Facing failure in farming, “it was a perfectly sensible extension of the pastoral ideal to hope that the application of science and capital was the answer to the riddle of what to do with such stubborn and remote land as the Adirondacks. ...the notion has never really left the region.”⁷¹ In 1836, the State of New York sponsored a geological survey of the state. This reflected the end of the idea that homesteading would be successful, and the fostering of industry that would hopefully bring growth.⁷²

As industries tried to flourish, the attitude was, as expressed in one industrialist’s point of view, that “if land in that wilderness is to have any value at all, it will only be in consequence of the success of our operation at the Adirondack Works. It has no value now except in the prospect of such success.”⁷³ The economy of value through extraction resulted in millions of acres of clear cut logging, concentrated near roads and increasingly railroads. Tanneries, charcoal makers, forges, and furnaces proliferated. To aid in the extraction, the industrialists tried to (and were sometimes successful at) getting canals, railroads, and dams built. Although there are still a few mining and

tanning holdouts, this hope for the Adirondacks too was largely a failure. Logging continues to have some success today.

In the midst of its destruction, what was once seen as an evil wasteland was becoming a source of pride. “Wild land was one thing the United States had that Europe didn’t, and the primeval landscape helped assuage insecurity about a lack of culture, art, and history.”⁷⁴



FROM "THE ADIRONDACK IRON AND STEEL COMPANY, NEW YORK; PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTORS, (NEW YORK, N.Y., 1854).
Figure 19: A map recording the Adirondack Iron and Steel Company, 1849-1854 used by the US DOI in 1978.

1830’s / The Great Adirondack Guide and the Romantic Tourists

Following industrialization in Europe, a new attitude started to emerge towards wilderness. Romanticism, in which urban life was stressful and spiritually

draining, saw wilderness such as the Adirondacks as spiritually regenerating, a source of “divine virtue.” “The romantic movement encouraged Americans to appreciate the beauties of their country in ways that their seventeenth-and eighteenth-century ancestors had often ignored.”⁷⁵

In 1839, Charles Hoffman wrote “Wild Scenes in the Forest and Prairie” which made an icon of the 19th century Adirondack guide - a tough man who knew how to navigate, hunt, trap and fish in the wilderness. These resourceful men were forced to go further and further into the Adirondacks to find game as populations neared extinction. Following his book and others, city dwellers were inspired to visit the Adirondacks to paint or write, including Thomas Cole, Winslow Homer, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.⁷⁶ These visitors in turn inspired other wealthy city dwellers to visit - the lawyers, doctors, and bankers of the day.⁷⁷

Following the enlightenment, these new romantic tourists were looking for meaning “in a universe that suddenly no longer physically revolved around the human species.”⁷⁸ Guides took the tourists into the wilderness on trails that they often made themselves, or even off trail, serving as “priests or seers” because of their closeness to nature. Words like sublime and terrifying were used to describe the wilderness.⁷⁹ During this transition, hunting evolved from something that everyone did for survival to a fun and fashionable sport.⁸⁰

1860’s

Increasing numbers of city dwellers saw the wilderness as a place for their

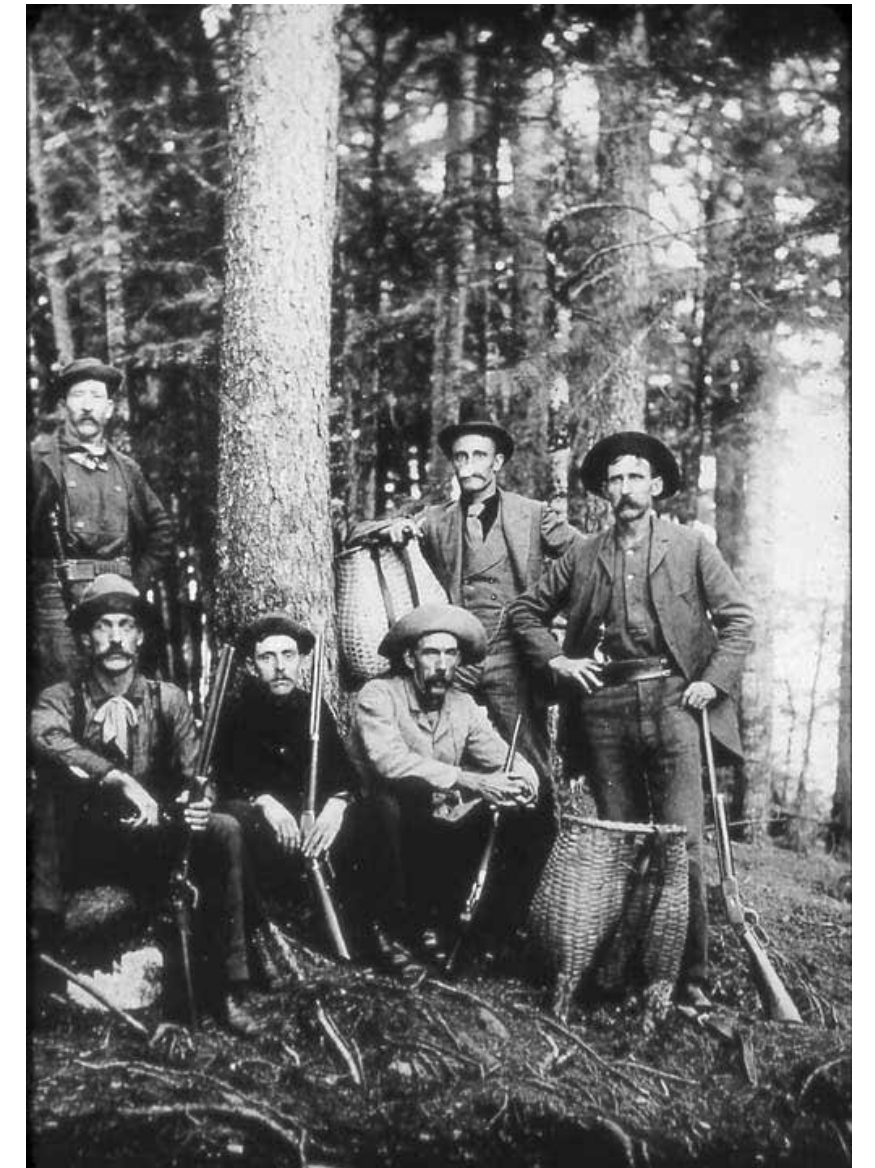


Figure 20: Lake Placid area guides

recreation through trips with guides. Most felt the destruction of wilderness was inevitable, and wanted to see it before it was gone, making their own paths out of self interest. Railroads did not yet fully cross the region, but access to the interior was becoming easier through connections with stagecoaches and steamboats. The droves of “lower class” people and their garbage

angered the earliest tourists. For some, wilderness had become a “tonic” to the industrialized city. In addition to the emotional and spiritual health it offered, by the end of the 1800’s, the wilderness was becoming a destination for tuberculosis patients.⁸¹ A sentiment for preservation was just beginning to emerge.⁸²



Figure 21: “Group of Cottages of the Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium”



Figure 22: Tuberculosis patients getting fresh air on the porch of a “Cure Cottage”

Late 1800’s

While logging had long been a practice in the Adirondacks, it peaked around 1890 - 1910. Logging began as something practiced small scale, then, with rough roads made near waterways and logs floated downstream, became more destructive as technology improved, later becoming even more efficient through railroads, trucks, tractors and heavy machinery.⁸³ As extraction grew more efficient, timber companies even asked for some rivers and streams to be designated as public highways.⁸⁴ The practice was unsustainable.



Figure 23: “The Adirondack black spruce: from the Annual report of the N. Y. Forest Commission for 1894”

The first measures to protect the park were actually out of concern for New York City, and the fact that it could lose importance if rivers no longer protected by trees dried up. The state began buying up logging land that was in default and stopped selling it back to loggers. In 1885 the Adirondack Forest Preserve was created, stating “the lands now or hereafter constituting the Forest Preserve shall be Forever kept as wild forest lands.” In 1892, the boundary of the Adirondack Park was drawn, and the state focused land acquisition within that area, although a large portion of that area is still not owned by the state. In 1894, logging was banned on the forest preserve.⁸⁵

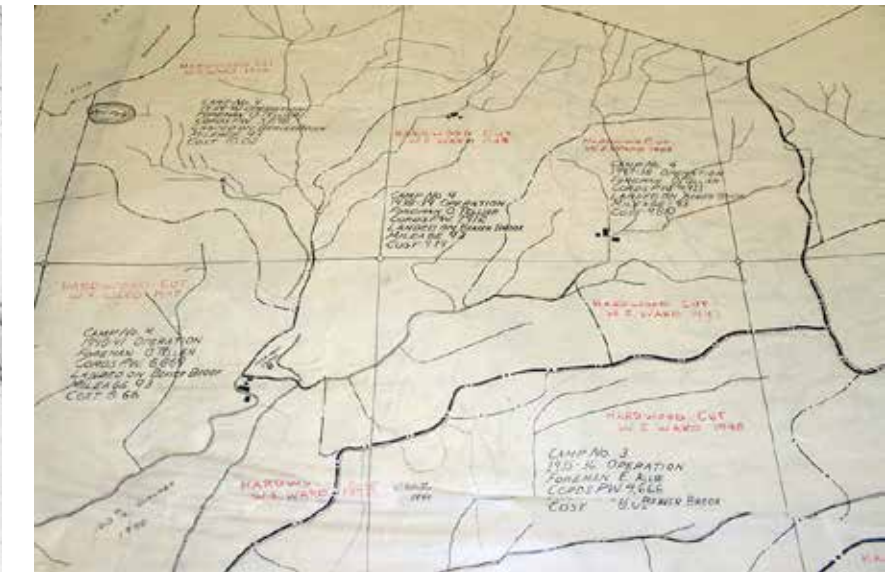


Figure 24: Map showing logging operations by the Finch Pruyn paper company in Newcomb, NY. Logs were transported down rivers until 1950.

1900's

Railroads progressed, crossing the Adirondacks. With increased access came increased tourism, and the advent of the "Great Camps": large and elaborately rustic summer homes. Wilderness for these visitors became a fashion motif in architecture. The paths made by these visitors reflected their desire to be on fashionable lakes, and when train lines didn't reach to where they wanted to go, steamboats picked up the slack. Camps popped up on well connected waterways.

⁸⁶ The tourists coincided with the advent of hiking clubs and increased conservation attitude throughout the 1950's. ⁸⁷



Figure 25: "Tent Life in the Adirondacks" Photo by F.J. Severance, 1897

Figure 26: (right) "Map of the Adirondacks as Reached by the Delaware and Hudson Canal Companys Railroad" 1880



Figure 27: Echo Camp, constructed 1882 - 1883 on Raquette Lake for Phineas Chapman Lounsbury, a Connecticut businessman who later becamee governor. Photo by S.R. Stoddard, 1916

Today

The mix of development, conservation, and extraction continues to be a balancing act today. The Adirondack Park Agency was created to work towards a sustainable relationship between people and the land. Their 1972 and 1973 masterplans designated appropriate uses for state owned and privately owned land respectively. In addition to its many other meanings, with the masterplan, wilderness became a bureaucratic term with a legal definition. ⁸⁸ Preservation efforts have had incredible success, with areas previously destroyed becoming densely forested again, and species being reintroduced.

Today, the park is a mosaic of diverse uses, with capillaries of civilization

reaching into dense, rebounding wilderness. ⁸⁹ Benjamin Schneider recounts that "it is only the blurring of the line between the human and the 'protected'... that makes the park politically feasible." ⁹⁰ While the region was not always treated with respect, it survived total destruction because it was always important to somebody.

As industry fades and the economy now looks for direction, the proposed huts and trails system is the next layer that proponents hope will allow wilderness and civilization to thrive in balance. These years of shifting attitudes toward wilderness left traces on the land that set the stage for the next chapter.



Figure 28: "Backpacking Church Group at the Summit of Mount Marcy, Highest Peak In New York State" by Anne LaBastille, 1973

04. NARRATIVE / PROGRAM

[The Next Chapter]

Even if one assiduously stays within the trail bed, one would still be altering the trail, because every step a hiker takes is a vote for the continued existence of a trail... But paths, like religions, are seldom fixed. They continually change -- widen or narrow, schism or merge—depending on how, or whether, their followers elect to use them. Both the religious path and the hiking path are, as Taoists say, made in the walking. -Robert Moore, from “On Trails”⁹¹

This proposal addresses three major groups who are today re-making the Adirondacks through their path, participating in the ongoing “crumbling and reassembling” of the place. Some of today’s wanderers are year round residents of the Adirondack Park. Others have traveled long or short distances to be there. The first is the most widely recognized “recreational hikers” who flock to the region today to enjoy the scenery. I will also investigate “through paddlers” on the 740 mile long Northern Forest Canoe Trail (established in 2006), and today’s “hunter / gatherers” like hunters, trappers, and foragers. Each will be an opportunity to investigate path and what it has to say about a home in the wilderness. These modern Adirondack pathmakers follow in the footsteps of the Mohawk hunters and warriors, the trappers, loggers, tourists, and others who have given their own meaning to the region through their movement. They add their own story to the land through the conversation they have.

[Get to Know the Characters]

The characters discussed earlier in this thesis (The Augur, Situationist, Flaneur,



Fig. 29

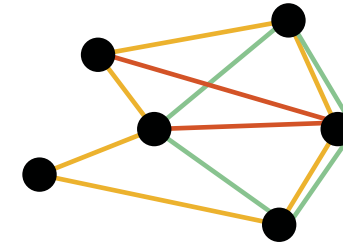


Fig. 30



Fig. 31

Tourist, Pilgrim, and Storyteller) and the wanderers of the Adirondack Park today, demonstrate some of the many ways that a place can be made in time through “inefficient” movement. While they are each uniquely expressive and have differing qualities (to be elaborated on shortly), one way to understand these path / place makers on a broader level is to look at how the path is expressed in relation to space, time, and means of orientation. From this, three expressions emerge:



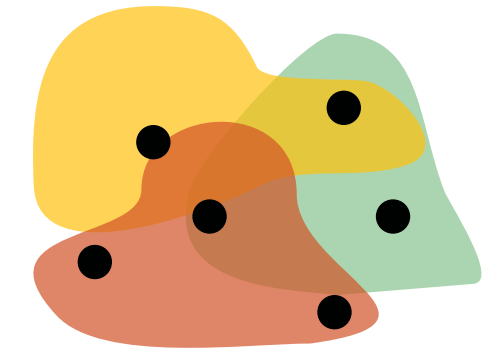
Network:

The first is a short excursion, using established paths connecting historic sites, mountain top views, and novel experiences in infinite configurations, as exemplified by the movements of the Tourist and the Flaneur. Movement on established paths is guided by individual desire and becomes an expression of the self through the route chosen and the sights taken in. This relates most to the path of today’s recreational hiker, and an understanding of history that is linear and values age above all else.



Line:

The second expression is longer, this time with one established route that is traveled in a particular sequence by many people who share in its meaning. This relates to the pilgrim and the storyteller. The path has been there for longer than its followers can remember and serves as a microcosm of a broader understanding of the world. It is marked by places or features with a significance shared by those who follow the path - whether it be place names, natural features, or sacred sites. This is the realm of today’s through paddler, and is closest to an understanding of time that, rather than valuing age, believes in the “art history” significance and stories of landmarks and monuments.



Field:

The third is a series of paths performed over a lifetime in an open space. This space is familiar to the wanderer, but vast, with few or no established routes. In this case, an individual or group constructs their path in conversation with the environment based on a “reading of the signs” - specialized knowledge that only someone who has learned to read them could follow. This relates to the Situationists and the Augur, both of whom make decisions based on an immediate reading of their surroundings. This kind of wanderer may never follow the exact same path. Today’s hunters, trappers, and foragers are aligned with this category, which relates most to an understanding of time as being in the moment, but actions connecting to a “cult value” or knowledge and tradition shared with peers.

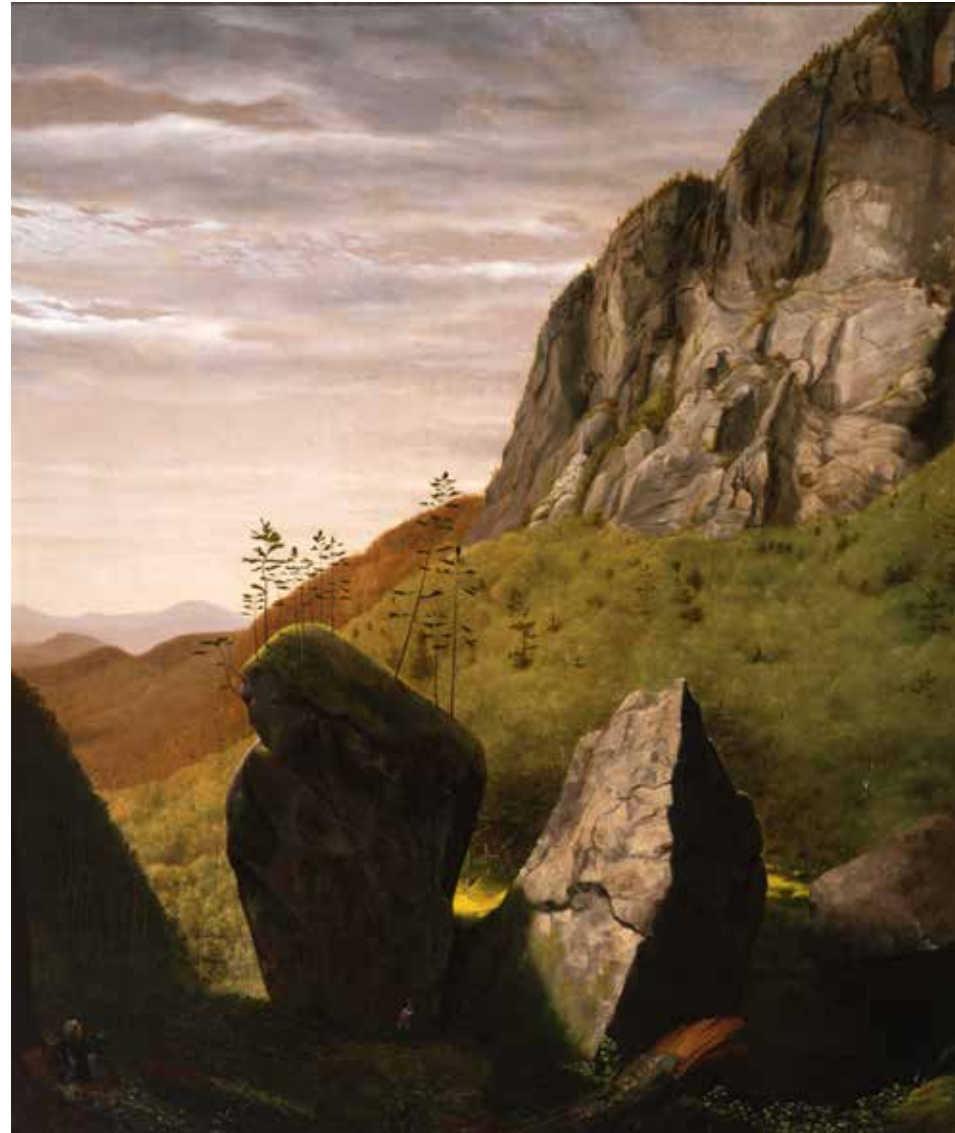


Figure 26: “The Great Adirondack Pass” by Charles Cromwell Ingham, 1837

RECREATIONAL HIKER (Network)

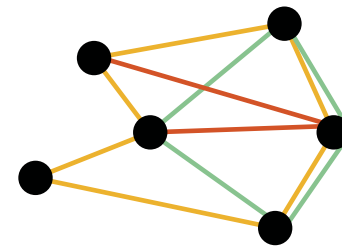


Fig. 33

Recreational hikers in the Adirondacks are the most recognized “wanderers” that would make use of a huts and trails system. Modern day hikers come from a tradition of tourism and conservation in the Adirondacks - seeing the wilderness as a place for personal enjoyment, self determination, and self expression.

Historically, this attitude is reflected in the artists and writers visiting the region during the late 1800’s, producing their own romantic and idealized depictions of it in their works. Later, hikers from groups like the Adirondack Mountain Club were proponents of conservation for the sake of recreation. Today, hikers enjoy preserved land as a place to “take in” views, and project them as a reflection of themselves through media like instagram and facebook.

Wanderers of this tradition, which relates to the Tourist and Flaneur characters introduced earlier, are oriented by their own desire, and an awareness of what their path says as an expression of themselves. What sights did the tourist see? What does the flaneur find most interesting? What mountain peak, fire tower, or lake did the hiker reach? Walter Benjamin describes how the flâneur follows his own desire, even to the point of “occupying” another person: “Empathy is the nature of the intoxication to which the flâneur abandons himself in the crowd. He... enjoys the incomparable privilege of being himself and someone else as he sees fit. Like a roving soul in search of a body, he enters another person whenever he wishes.”⁹²

Recreational hikers have hundreds of options to choose from when picking a hike. There is no predetermined route they must take, and so the path made

by this type of character is different for each individual, but makes use of the same trails and destinations in different configurations. A layering of the routes chosen would certainly reveal a hierarchy of importance, but not necessarily a particular way of connecting sites. A recreational hiker usually spends no more than a few days on the trail at a time, often seeing the outing as a pause in the norms of everyday life.

Each of the modern wanderers I will discuss has a different relationship with the essential Adirondack elements of earth, sky, water, and forest. For the hiker, earth is most prominent, as hikes often take a route up a mountain to offer the reward of a view. Rebecca Solnit writes: “Walking shares with making and working that crucial element of engagement of the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world.” She goes on, “Walking, I realized long ago in another desert, is how the body measures itself against the earth.”⁹³ In the case of the hiker, this involves the physical sensation of pain and exhaustion through the ups and downs. Forest is the medium of movement through, while water and sky represent openings in it - destinations for the hiker who is motivated by taking in views.

For the hiker, going is about knowing the terrain through the sensation of one’s body, working towards a reward that can’t immediately be seen. Staying is about reaching that destination - a place that is given value by its access to views, its history, and the potential to reflect well on one’s self - whether as an impressive physical achievement or picturesque scene.



Figure 34: “Lake George” by John Frederick Kensett, 1869

THROUGH PADDLER (Line)

Like the pilgrim and storyteller, the modern-day “through paddler” or “through hiker” follows a long route that is defined by stories, traditions, and spiritual motivations shared with those who have traversed the same path. This type of pathmaker has existed in the Adirondacks ever since Mohawk hunters and warriors started crossing the region. Later, in the mid 1800’s, romantic tourists made the pilgrimage from the city, hoping to find God in nature at a time when the enlightenment caused them to question their beliefs. Today, the followers of this kind of path are paddlers seeking a spiritual or transformative experience in nature on the 740 mile long Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT) that reaches from Old Forge, NY to Kent, ME. This “trail” follows traditional Mohawk hunting and battle routes as it passes through the Adirondacks. While I want to focus on the through paddler, this character is also reflected in today’s



Fig 35

through hikers of the 133 mile Northville-Placid trail which was established by the Adirondack Mountain Club in 1922, and other such well known long routes.

In a land thick with forests, marshes, and peaks, Mohawk paddlers strung together rivers, lakes, streams, and ponds into paths that were followed time and again by those making the annual hunting trip in the fall, or those launching an attack on Algonquin tribes to the north. While the path was not marked by any physical signage, the names given to places along the way, such as Tsi ietsénhtha - “where one draws up water”, Kahná:wate - “a present rapid,” or Teioniaró:ken - “the river splits into two,” served as directions and reminders that helped one to navigate using knowledge passed down for

generations in an otherwise disorienting terrain.

Modern day paddlers on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail come from different backgrounds and worldviews, but they are oriented in much the same way as Mohawk warriors and hunters, or the pilgrim and storyteller characters introduced earlier, who navigate on traditional routes. On this kind of path, while there are always intersecting and branching trails, travelers are focused on the spiritual and traditional nature of completing the entirety of a specific route that has communal importance rather than reaching a particular location that they are personally drawn to. On the NFCT, accommodations are minimal and long days are spent moving forward toward the ultimate goal: Kent, Maine. People come from around the country and the world to have this experience of connecting with nature, and to accomplish something big. Because this is a known route, saying you completed it is similar to saying that you hiked the Appalachian or Pacific Crest Trail. Like a pilgrimage, the daily struggle, humble accommodations, and camaraderie felt with others making the same arduous passage are all part of the experience.

While their individual motivations vary, people on this kind of path share a liminal or transformative experience through their journey to a common destination. Like the concept of homo viator, they share a view of life in which they are always “on the way,” searching for home. Robert Moore describes some of the through hikers he met on the Appalachian Trail:

A few of them proselytized zealously for one church or another, while others spoke of preparing for a looming ecological apocalypse. Many of the people I talked to were between jobs, between schools,

or between marriages. I met soldiers returning from war and people recovering from a death in the family. Certain stock phrases were repeated. “I needed some time to clear my head,” they said, or ‘I knew this might be my last chance.’⁹⁴

One couple’s experience on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail is reflected in their entry in the logbook - a register at points along the trail where paddlers record their progress, whether they are attempting a section or the whole route in one go.:

My husband and I kayaked and camped for 10 days in the Allagash waterway. We had the most inspiring and cleansing experience together, we say that we saw more moose than people! It was a pilgrimage for us and nature was our teacher. Thank God there are still places like this in the U.S. The campgrounds were pristine, giving the eyes and the spirit a much-needed rest from the “civilized” world.⁹⁵

For the followers of this kind of path, going is about spirituality through struggle, keeping a tradition alive through collective movement. Staying is about contemplating one’s journey as a whole, but also a particular site that may have significance. It’s about weary travelers gathering together as they pause on their shared path. Each day is one chapter in a greater storyline. As a paddler moves away from the familiarity of home and deepens the spiritual or reflective portion of their journey, they must become more acutely aware of their surroundings in order to survive.



Figure 36: “A Good Time Coming” by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, 1862

HUNTER / GATHERER (Field)

Like the Situationists and the Augur, modern day “hunter / gatherers” create a path guided by a “reading of the signs.” Where the Situationists interpreted “ambiences” of the city, and the Augur interpreted the actions of sacred animals, hunter / gatherers find meaning and direction in the signs of wilderness that are hidden to those not in the know. Depending on their practice (whether trapping, foraging, fishing, etc.), they may be reading animal tracks, trees and soil types, water features, topography, animal scat, weather, and much more.

The following 1922 passage on trapping in the Adirondacks describes just one

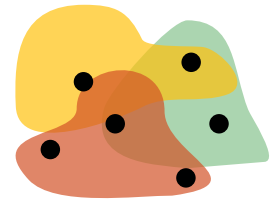


Fig. 37

of these hidden signs.

One of the best means of learning an animal’s habits is to follow its trail in the snow, observing every action and reason for such action by the trail “signs.” A trapper improves his skill in proportion to his intuition for observation. To the “born” trapper and nature student, an animal’s trail is more interesting than one of Cooper’s Leatherstocking stories. There is romance, adventure, humor, suspense, drama, character traits -and all other “story qualities” in an animal’s trail. It only requires keen observation to read these interesting facts from the trail as you would read a printed history of the Fall of Rome.⁹⁶

Tracks are one sign to read, but the signs available vary depending on season, weather, time of day, and other factors. Hunter / gatherers learn over their lifetime of exploring a particular terrain how to have a more meaningful and fruitful conversation with their surroundings through the path. Roger King writes,

A good hunter must learn to link personal thoughts, actions, and moods with the larger forces of nature to increase his chances for success. Being at the right place at the right time is at the core of hunting success. A hunter seeks to blend with the overall field of mind within which we live, putting aside personal ego to increase the intuitive sensing needed to pull out harmonies from the collective consciousness.⁹⁷

This gets at the fact that while the practice of hunting, trapping, foraging, etc take place in the moment, often by an individual, they draw on a tradition and knowledge shared by their peers. That tradition and knowledge goes beyond the tangible skills used to navigate. While on the surface these practices are perhaps seen as serving survival or recreation, they are also a way of connecting the pathmaker to life itself, and ancient practices of sacrifice.

Walter Burkert writes in *Homo Necans*:

The ritual betrays an underlying anxiety about the continuation of life in the face of death. The bloody ‘act’ was necessary for the continuance of life, but it is just as necessary for new life to be able to start again. Thus, the gathering of bones, the raising of a skull or stretching of a sin is to be understood as an attempt at restoration, a resurrection in the most concrete sense. The hope that the sources of nourishment will continue to exist, and the fear that they will not, determine the action of the hunter, killing to live.⁹⁸

Today’s hunter / gatherers follow in the tradition of the many eras of hunters, trappers, fishermen, and trackers that came before. They find themselves at the middle of debate over conservation and land use, which is so emblematic of the ongoing Adirondack story. While some disagree with state land conservation practices, there is also a great degree of public access to land for things like hunting, fishing, trapping, and foraging, even allowing one to set up a temporary camp for the fall hunting season on public land.

At the end of a day in the elements, camp is a welcome refuge. Finding the right place for the night is an extension of the skills required to find mushrooms, fish, or deer. Local hunter Jason Richards describes how he locates his camp:

Once I locate an area I want to hunt, access is key. I take some time and scout the ground. I usually take a spring fishing trip or hike and do this. Spring is a good time because the foliage is not on the trees and that makes it easier to spot old buck sign from the year before. I typically look for lands that have a younger stand of trees. Younger forests usually have more food for deer than an older growth forest and state lands do vary in stand types. Some areas were private lands which have only recently been added to the Forest Preserve. Areas that have been logged will contain old roads which make it easier to navigate, but for me water is the best way to access remote hunting areas. Moving supplies by boat is much easier than packing them in. It’s also much easier to float a two-hundred pound whitetail in a boat than it is to drag it over rough ground.⁹⁹

For this type of wanderer, both staying and going require a reading of the signs, and connect a path made in the moment to a tradition that is as old as time.

05. FROM PATH TO DESTINATION

[Choosing the Sites]

Through research and conversations, I had formed a picture of the three essential pathmakers that move through the Adirondacks region today, arriving at a clear understanding of each character's relationship to path and destination at a large and abstract scale. For the purposes of this exploration, it was now important to understand how their paths and destinations would play out on a smaller scale. This would allow an inquiry into how the recreational hiker's "network," the through paddler's "line," or the hunter/gatherer's "field" was reflected in relation to specific topography, landmarks, history, legend, traces of path, modes of movement, natural features, and more. Moving to this scale would be necessary in working towards the development of three representative "homes" in the wilderness, each serving as a symbolic construction of a worldview or understanding of the landscape.

Where to begin? With a vast area to consider, I made sense of the Adirondacks region through stories from real life recreational hikers, through paddlers, and hunter / gatherers on the path. I read blogs, newspapers, novels, and heard personal accounts from locals. I also considered the pathways that had emerged in a historic analysis of the region. These stories converged on a region around Long Lake, NY at the center of the Adirondack Park, where I was led to three unique sets of paths and destinations. I took this convergence as a sign, and planned my trip to visit the site myself.

Armed with stories, suggestions, and the company of family and friends,

my crew and I walked the paths and paddled the routes that I understood as important to each of the characters. After several days exploring the area, I had chosen three sites: one to represent each character. Each site was seen in relation to other destinations I identified through the idea of "network," "line," or "field." For each, I mapped a likely series of paths and destinations, and chose one site to study in depth that can be seen on the following pages.

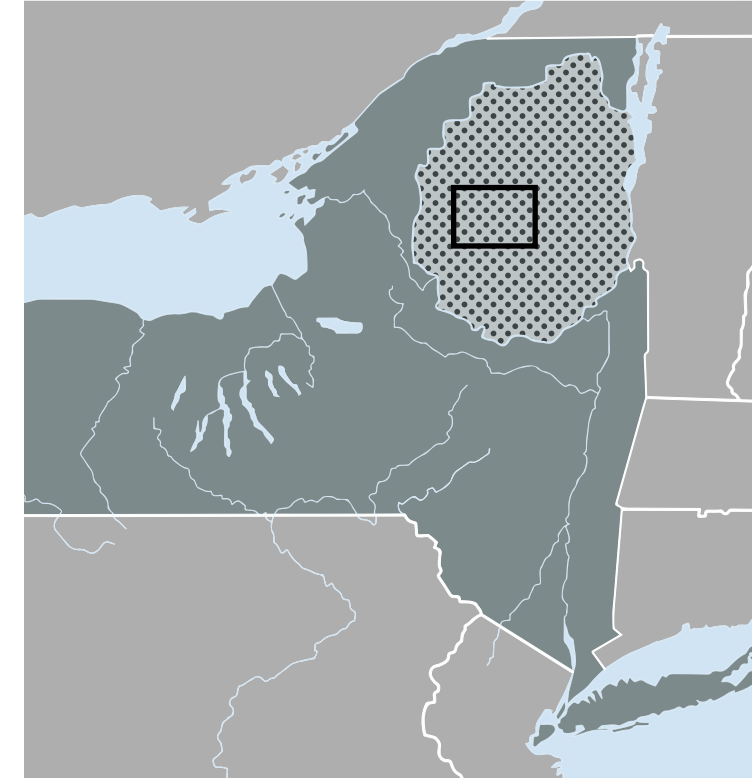
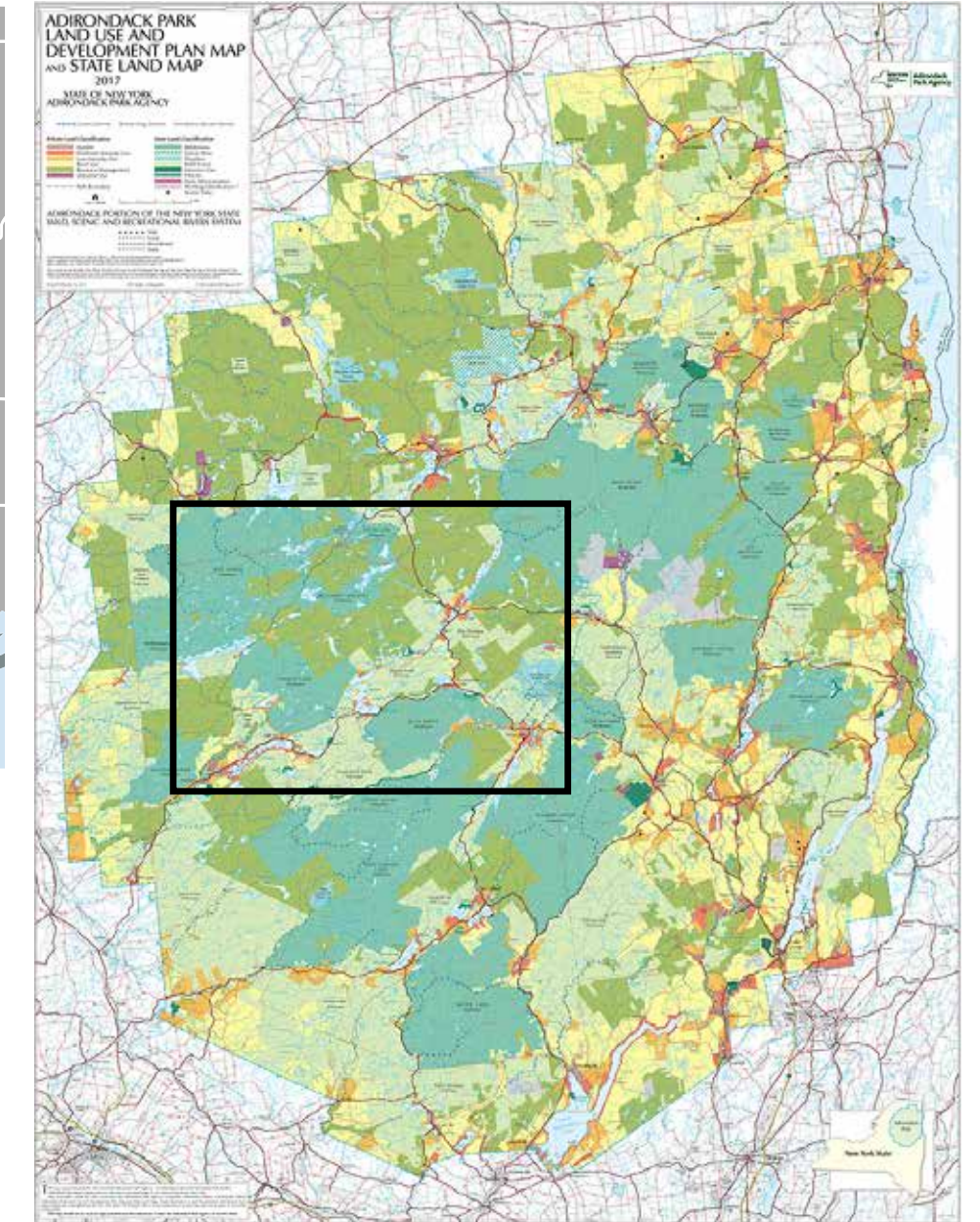
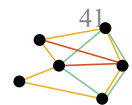
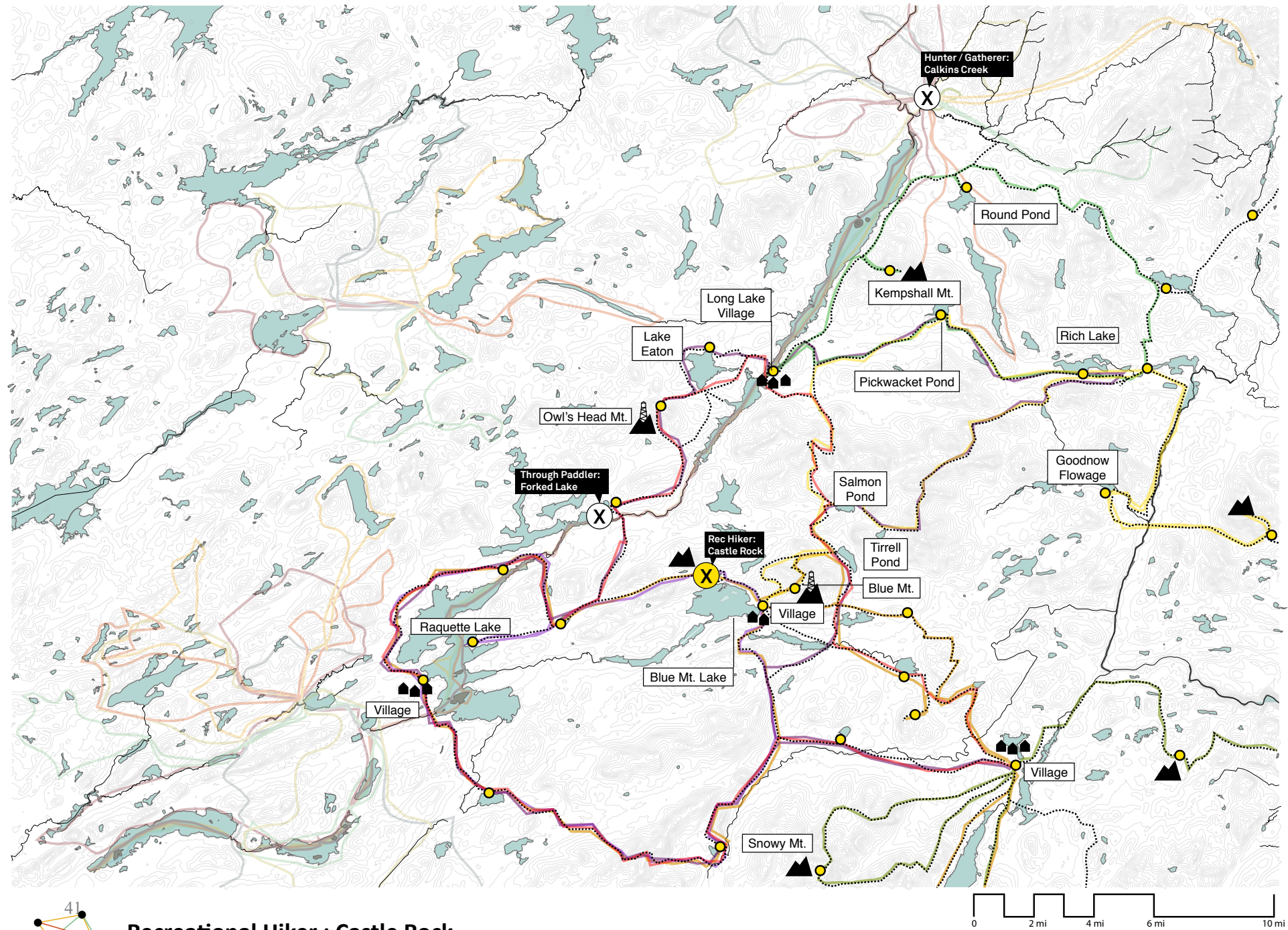


Fig. 38: (above) The Adirondack Park
Fig. 39: (r) Adirondack Park Land Use & Development Plan Map
with the project's focus area outlined





Recreational Hiker : Castle Rock

Castle Rock

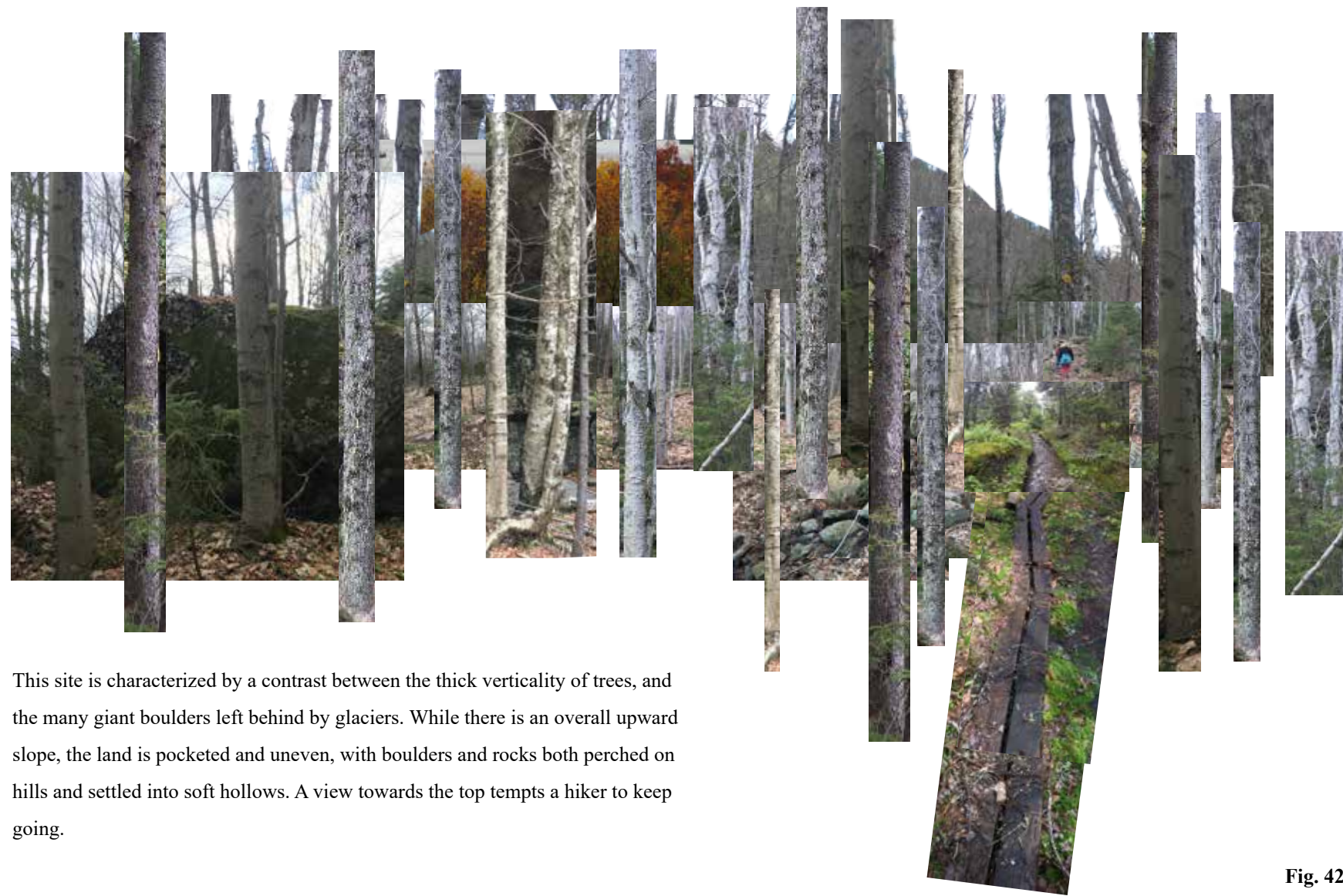


Fig. 40: (opposite) Recreational hiker's map of project site area
 Fig. 41, 42, 43: (above & following page) Castle Rock site analysis

[Castle Rock, Forked Lake, and Calkins Creek]

The first site chosen was an area just below Castle Rock lookout. Like other sites in the recreational hiker's network, Castle Rock is a bare peak poking through the forest, offering sweeping views of Blue Mountain, Blue Mountain Lake, Forked Lake, and beyond. Hikers trudge steeply uphill for several miles

to reach this outlook where they take photos and enjoy the view. Trails branch off at various points, offering a choice to the hiker - will they make their way to scenic sites like Forked Lake, Blue Mountain, and Owl's Head, or are they going to the top of Castle Rock?

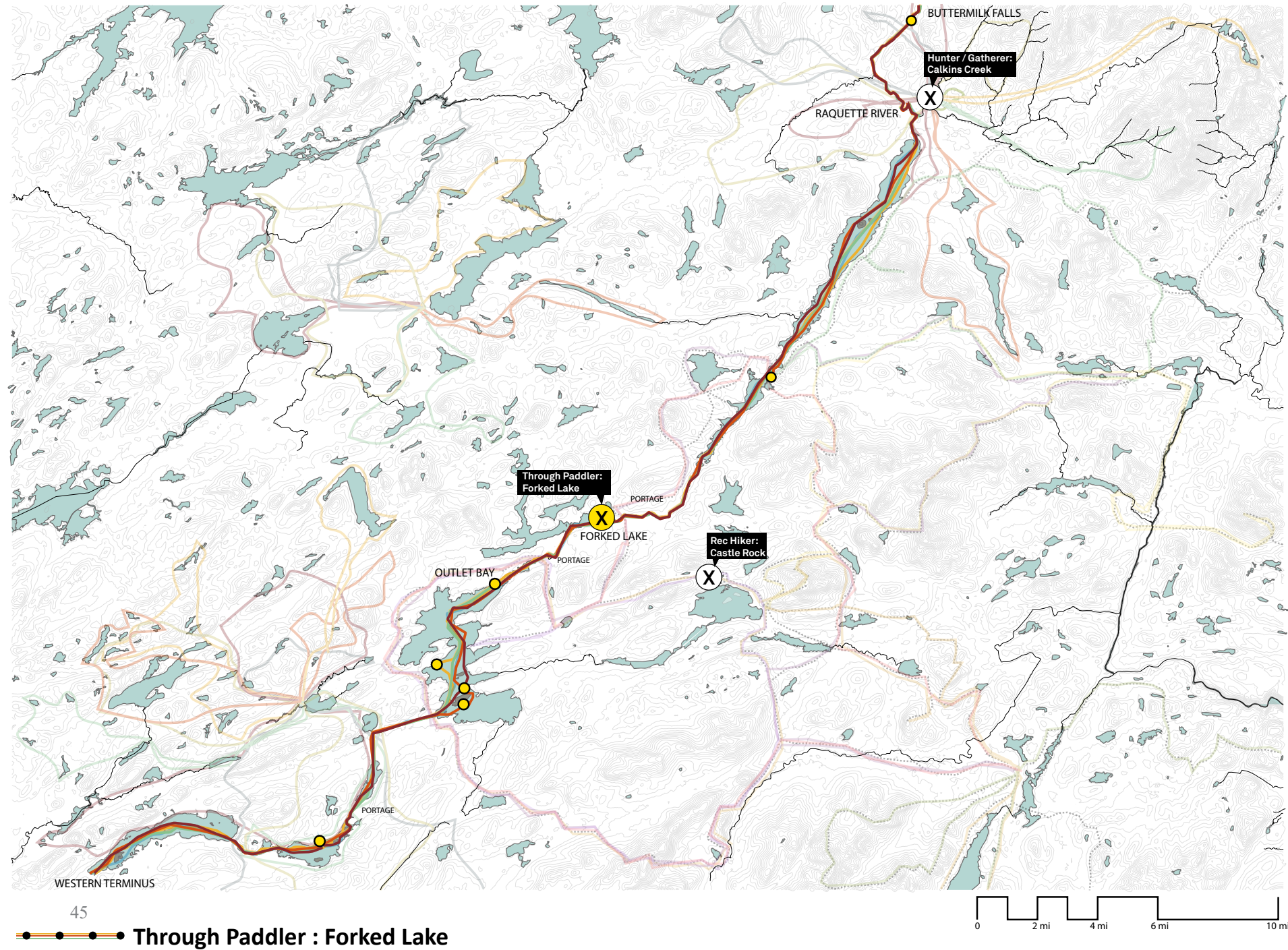


This site is characterized by a contrast between the thick verticality of trees, and the many giant boulders left behind by glaciers. While there is an overall upward slope, the land is pocketed and uneven, with boulders and rocks both perched on hills and settled into soft hollows. A view towards the top tempts a hiker to keep going.

Fig. 42



Fig. 43



Forked Lake



**Fig. 44: (opposite) Through Paddler’s map of project site area
 Fig. 45, 46, 47: (above & following page) Forked Lake site analysis**

The second site is an island on Forked Lake, a wild waterway surrounded by thick forest. Forked lake, and the waterways that the paddler navigates, are dominated by the horizon between water and sky. The paddler spends their days on that horizon, lacking an ability to put their surroundings in perspective.

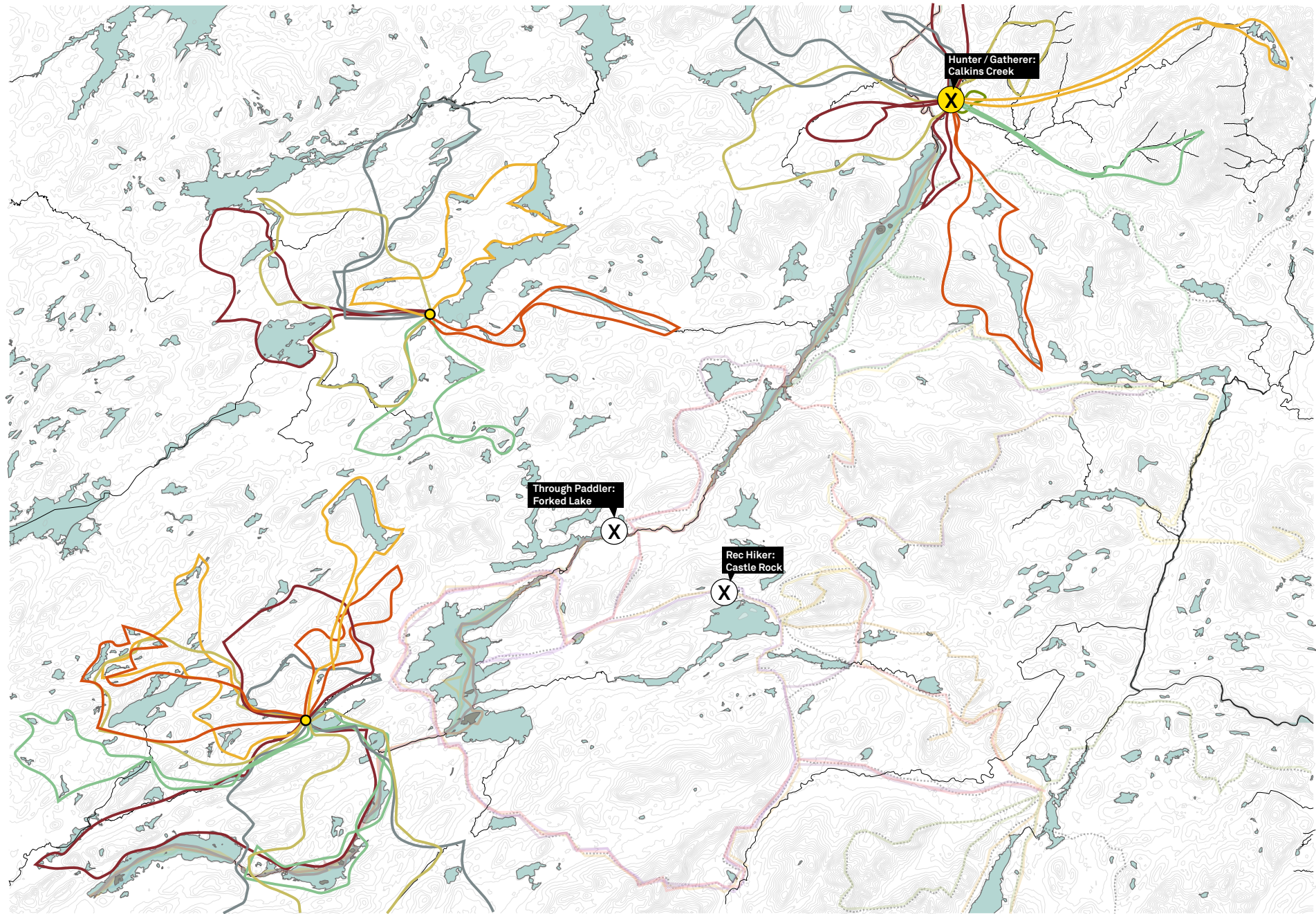
The island is solid rock with a thin layer of soil and a canopy of trees. While it is small and barely shows up on maps, it serves as a welcome stop for weary through-paddlers on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Though not every paddler will stop here, it is part of a chain of sites that comprise the 740 mile route. This island is known to paddlers on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, but is otherwise not a significant destination.



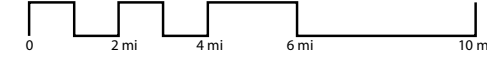
Fig. 46



Fig. 47



 Hunter / Gatherer : Calkins Creek



Calkins Creek



Fig. 48: (opposite) Hunter Gatherer's map of project site area
Fig. 49, 50, 51: (above & following page) Calkins Creek site analysis

The third site is an area adjacent to an old oxbow on Calkins Creek that is used by hunters, trappers, and fishermen. Here, there is a rich variety of conditions - marshes, hills, hardwood and softwood forests, new growth, old growth, creeks, rivers, and lakes. The area is reached by boat, via Long Lake, Raquette River, and Cold River, or by going off trail from the Northville Placid trail, and following Cold River to Calkins Creek.



Fig. 50

Historic maps show logging roads and trails through the area, which are no longer maintained or mapped. Upon visiting the site, I found the old roads grown in with trees, but could still see the flattened roadbed as a trace on the ground plane. At times, a single footpath followed this old road. Newer social trails have emerged, never clear or official, but allowing one to get from camp to the river, and out into the woods where intuition takes over.



Fig. 51

[From Path to Destination]

Having understood the qualities of the three path types and identified appropriate sites for each, my challenge was to explore how the path informs the destination. The path, and the worldview it expresses, is the basis for understanding what a home in the wilderness must be for each character. How should one first see and approach the structure? What is the structure's relationship to community, comfort, topography, enclosure, permanence? How is it oriented? The relationships that are understood through the path help to answer these questions.

I began my understanding of this relationship at the level of an archetype. I thought about how the essential elements of platform, wall, and roof could reflect these relationships, and how each element would interact with features of the landscape which I have categorized as Ground, Water, Forest, and Sky.

Essential Structural Elements



Roof



Skin and Bones



Platform

**Fig. 52 (above), 53 (right), 54, 55 (ollowing pages):
Structure, landscape, community, and their relationships**

Essential Landscape Elements

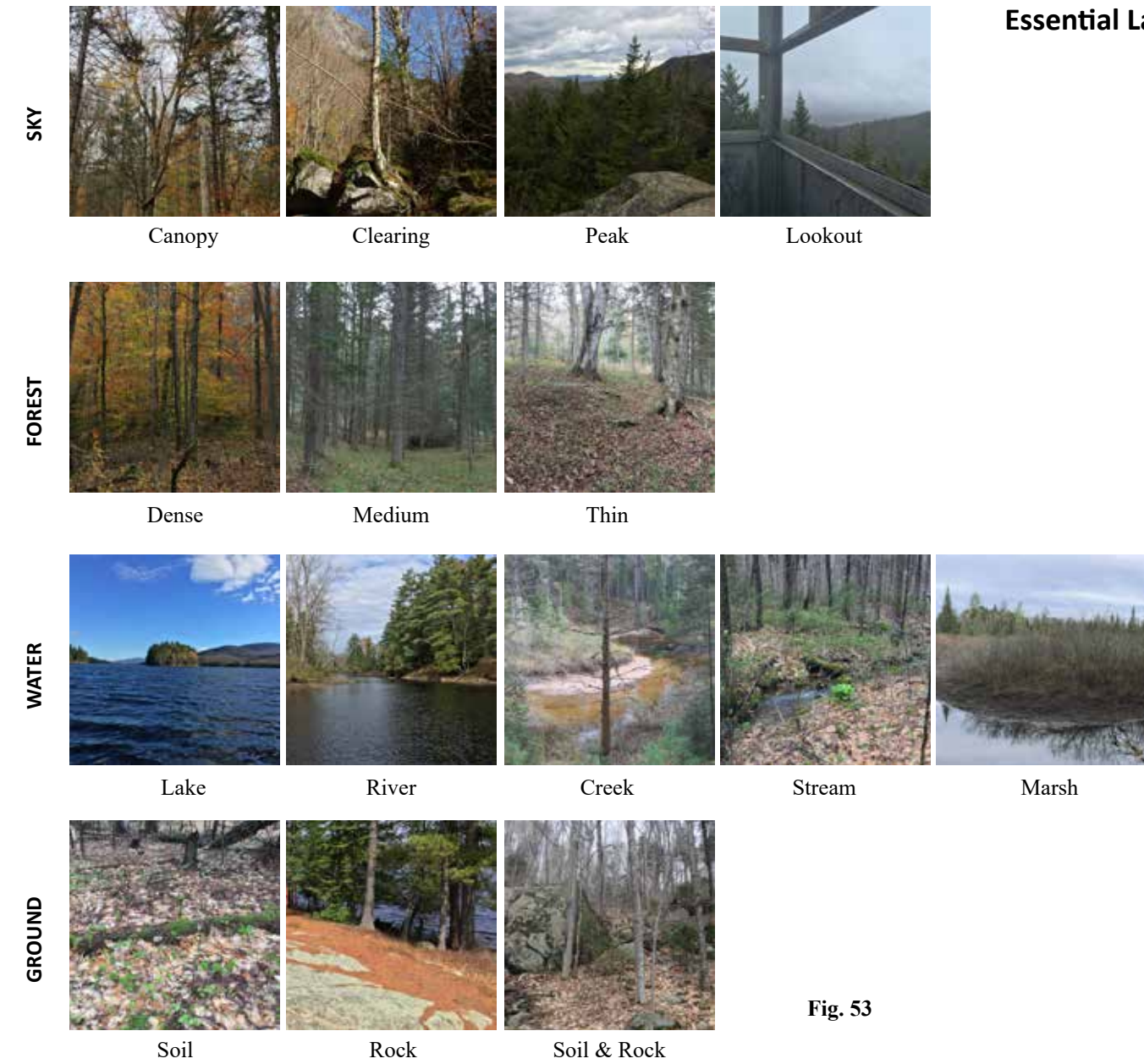


Fig. 53

The following two pages use diagrams to further investigate the relationship between path and destination for each of the characters.

The first diagram reflects hikers' individuality in space and in view. A relationship to the ground that is close, but not touching, and a framing of the landscape that takes place at the horizon. Each frame is unique, offering a different image of the landscape, while also saying something unique about the people who choose to stay there.

The second diagram reflects the paddler's desire for a new perspective - going from the water's horizon through the dense forest, and up to the sky. It is lightly perched, reflecting a temporary relationship between a paddler and the site. At the same time, its raised platform and roof become a subtle landmark that will be discovered by others in the future.

The third diagram reflects the continuity of people, earth, path and destination for the hunter or gatherer. It is a simple extension of the ground. Carved into the earth and oriented centrally, this base camp is difficult to find save for those in the know.

Structure / Landscape Relationship

Hiker: Enclosing and Framing

- Individuality, in space and in view
- Observer of nature - close but not touching
- Horizon: embedded where meeting path, elevated where framing view, flatter, more "imagelike" vs in perspective.

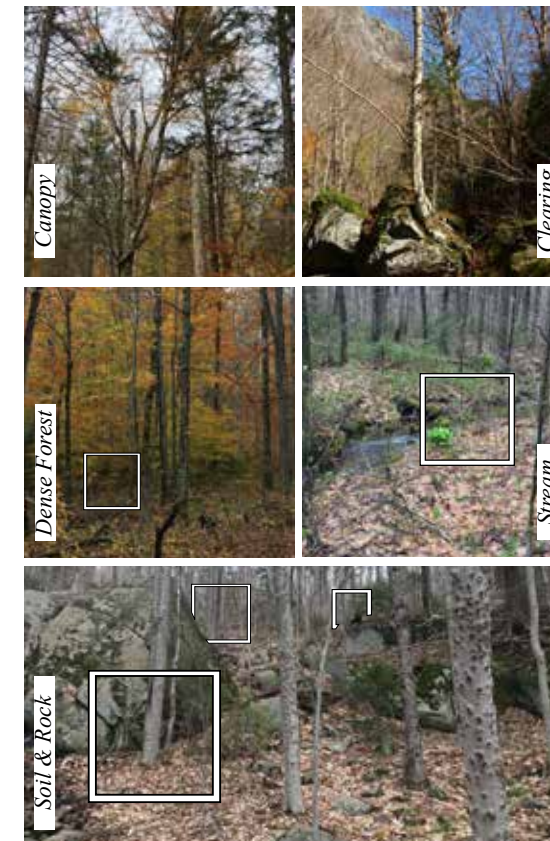
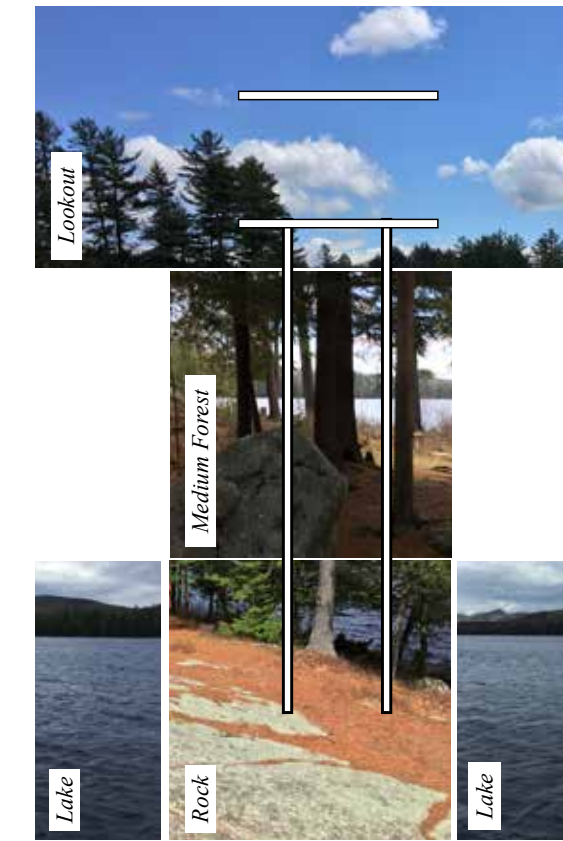


Fig. 54

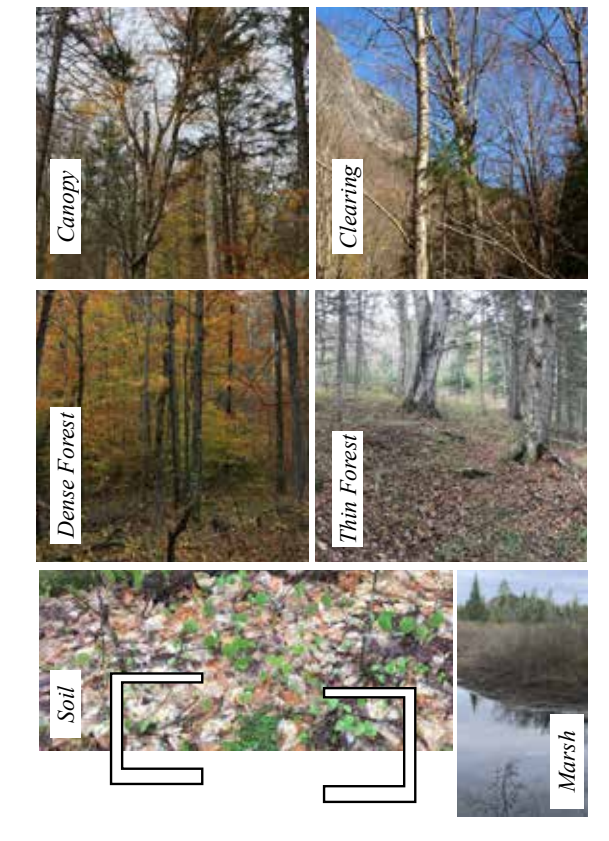
Paddler: Elevating and Orienting

- Sky: verticality as landmark, has presence in sky
- Raised platform allows new perspective, water to sky
- Perched, disconnected from ground, travelers only pause



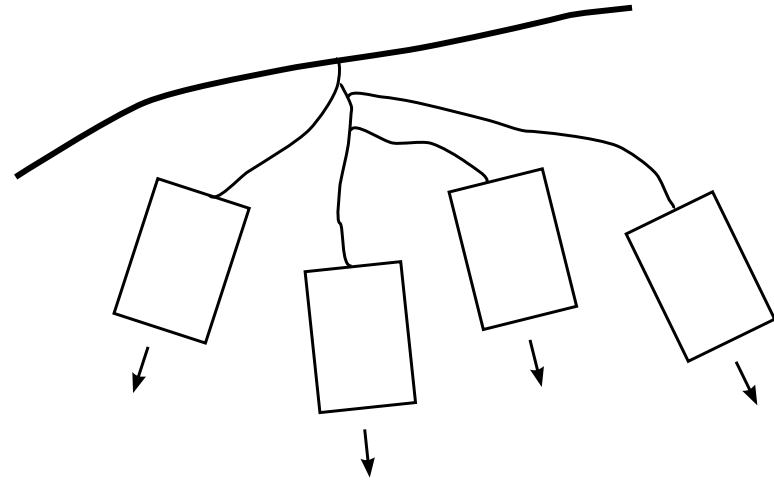
Hunt / Gather: Carving and Gathering

- Embedded in ground: a continuity of people / earth, path / destination
- Centrally facing reflects focus on community rather than view



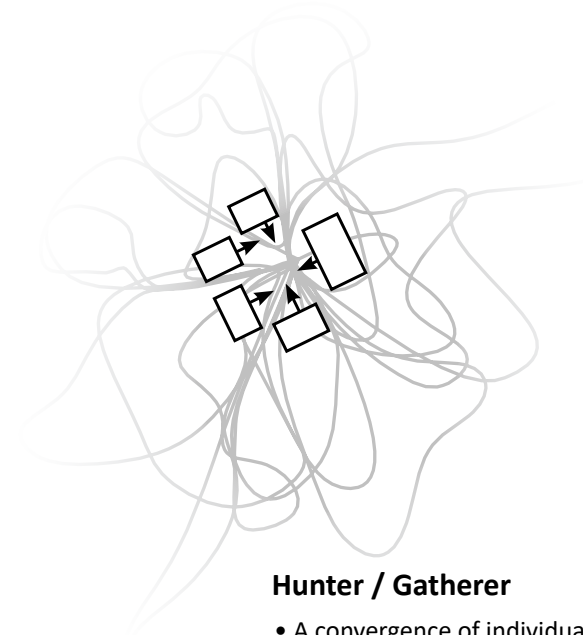
Site Relationships: Structure / Path / Community

Fig. 55



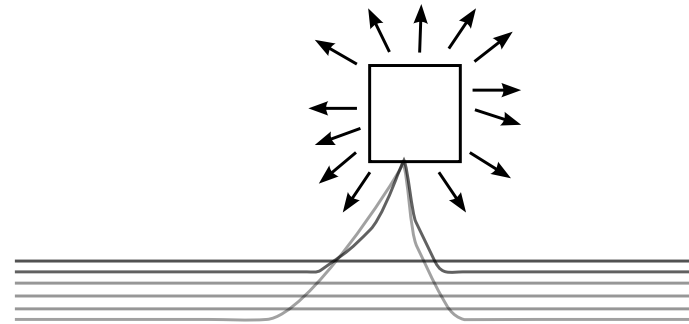
Recreational Hiker

- Comfort in the presence of others while maintaining individual space.
- Structures scattered like boulders
- Each view is unique



Hunter / Gatherer

- A convergence of individuals - community
- Destination is a place with shared importance that emerges at the intersection of pathways
- Paths are more physically visible at center, fade as they extend away from camp.



Through Paddler

- Paddlers don't stay at every stop, shelters are not necessarily adjacent to the most direct route
- Locations of cabins are known among paddlers, but otherwise may be difficult to find. Landforms and other features help one navigate, know where to look.
- Elevated platform allows putting journey in perspective, making connections between the path and destinations behind and ahead.

06. DESIGN

Using the understandings I had gained through a study of each character’s path, I arrived at proposals for three “homes in the wilderness,” each with the characteristics and relationships that are appropriate as a destination for a particular character.

[Recreational Hiker]

The recreational hiker site consists of a series of cabins scattered like boulders around a curving slope, each with its own view and orientation. Cabins are accessed by footpaths that branch off from the main trail, each leading to a single cabin, and reflecting the individuality of this kind of dwelling. While they are each private and individual, they’re close enough for hikers to feel comfort in the presence of others.



Figure 56: Site plan for recreational hiker cabins, Castle Rock

The cabins are visible from the main trail at a point in the topography that allows a view to the rocky outlook above, and an appreciation of the height one has gained by looking backward. However, each cabin has its own very specific view, a framed image of this unique landscape. One enters the cabin at ground level, and doesn't see the landscape until they round the bend to the "view tube" at the end, by now raised several feet above the ground as the topography slopes away. This bend and change in topography causes a

disconnect between the hiker and the ground as they walk the length of the cabin. By denying the reference of the foreground, the "imageness" of what they see before them is reinforced. They stand before the vertical window, possessing their own version of the landscape. While the cabin is largely an unfinished stud wall, upon reaching the view point, the space is lined, emphasizing the framing of the view in front.



Figure 57: Cabins scattered like boulders



Figure 58: Standing in the "view tube"

The hiking cabins each take the form of a simple “L,” with every cabin bending at a different angle determined by the needs and opportunities of the site.

There are two basic layouts allowing for a shared or separate bed. The roof, which protrudes over the entry, follows the “L,” beginning with a clerestory and tapering towards the framed view at the end where the space becomes a fully enclosed “tube.” The platform is slightly embedded in the ground at the entrance, and extends to the elevated end of the structure.

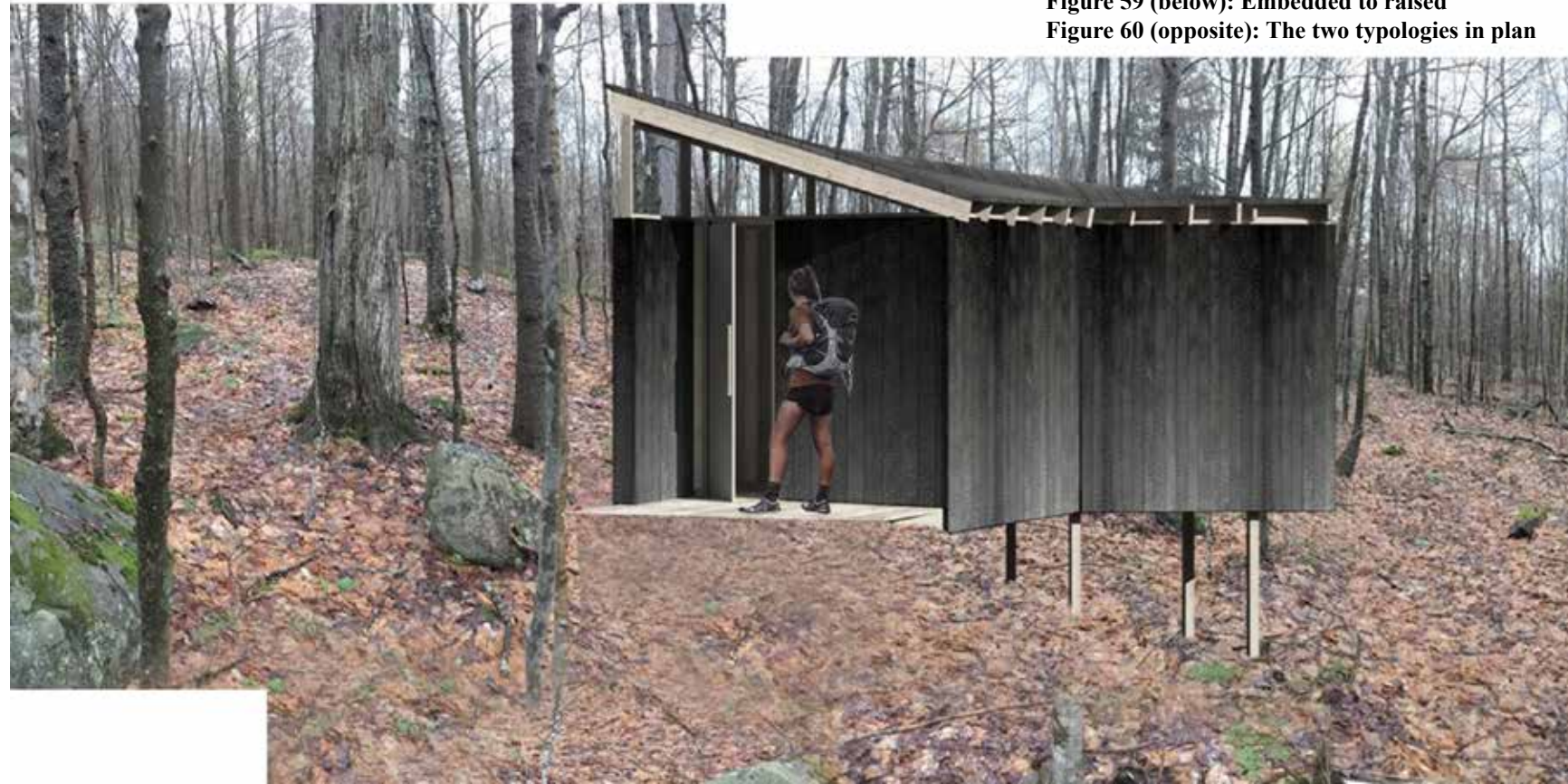
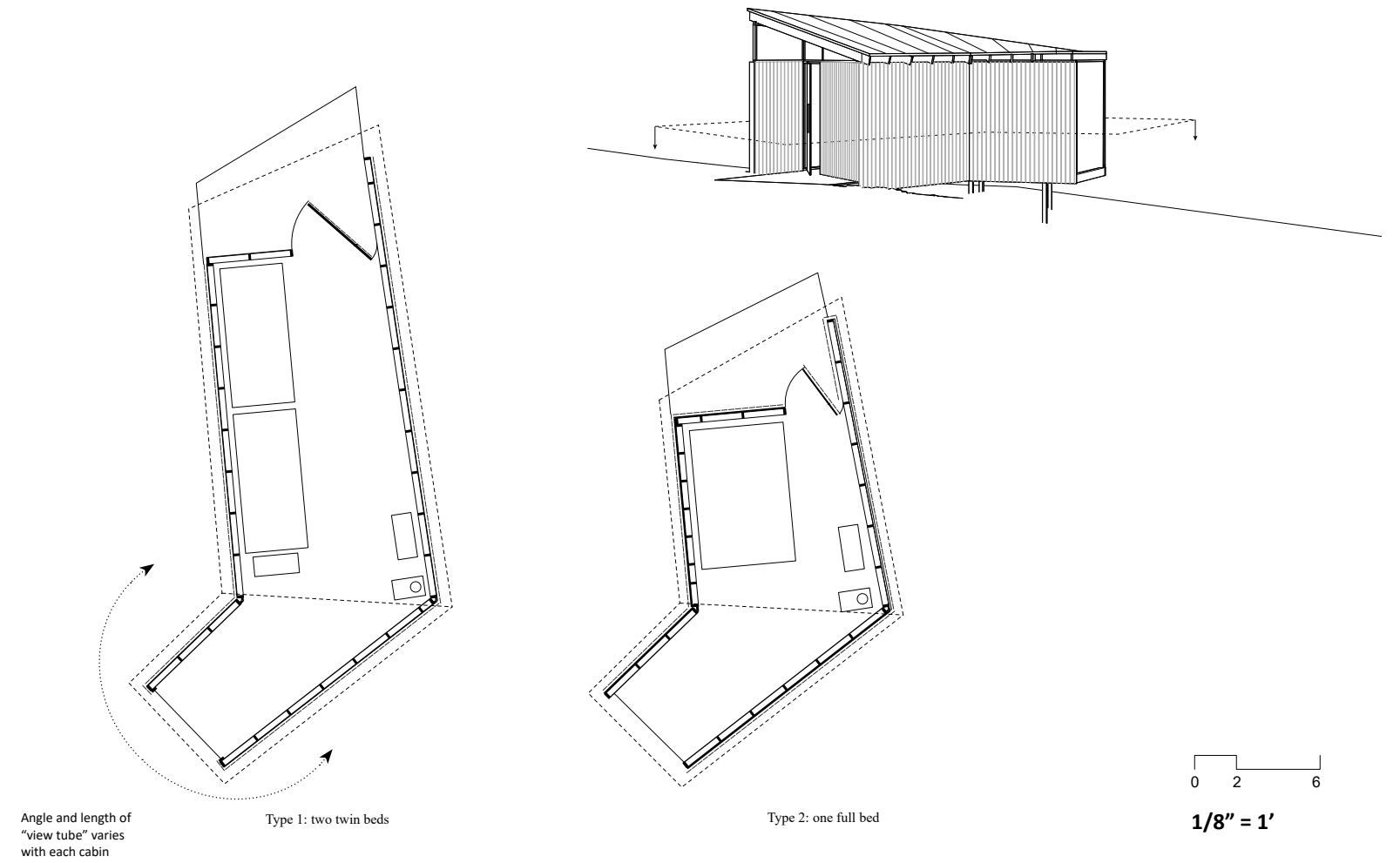


Figure 59 (below): Embedded to raised
Figure 60 (opposite): The two typologies in plan

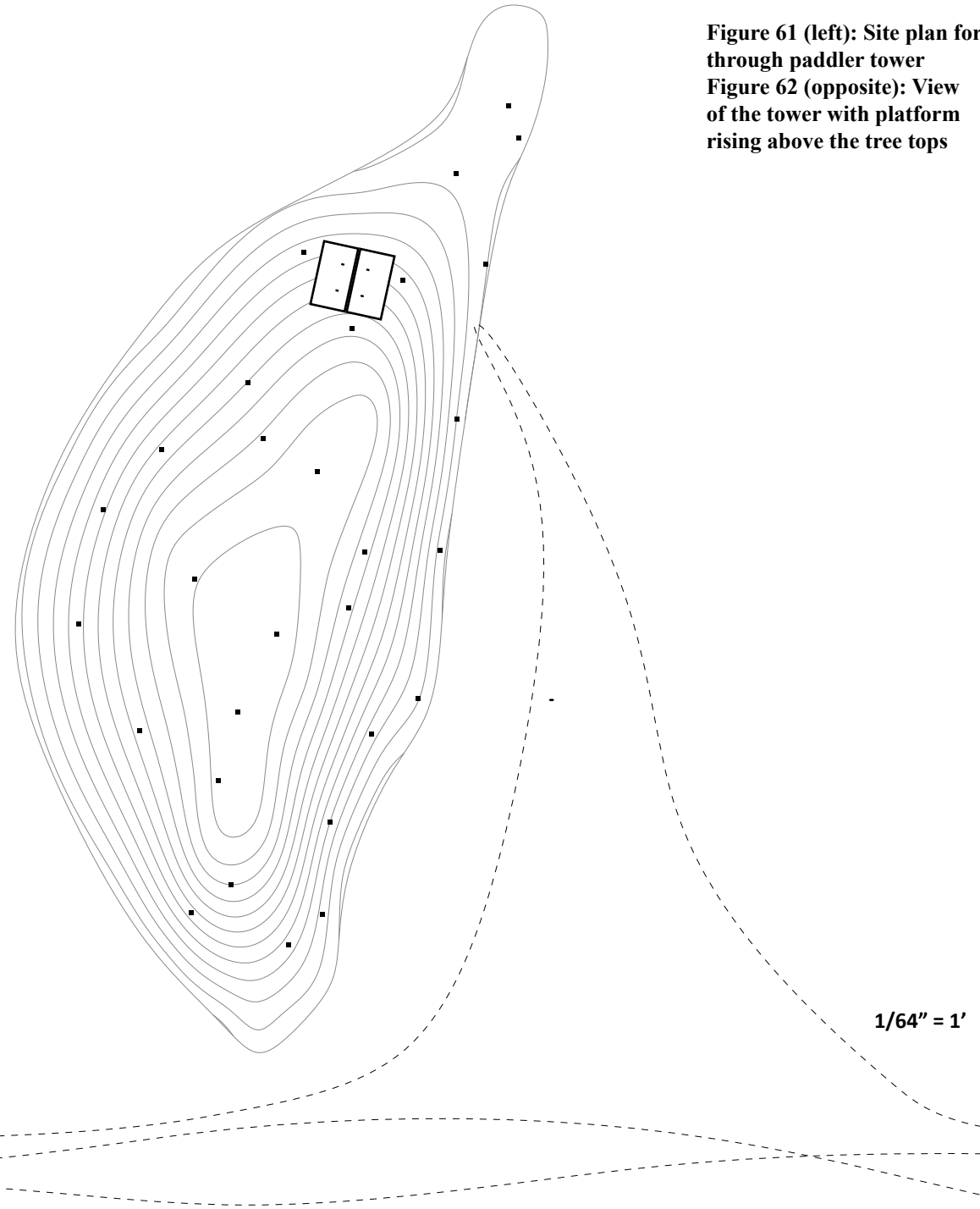
Fig. 60



[Through Paddler]

The paddler site proposes a single tower where strangers can come together, finding a new perspective by climbing from water to sky. The tower offers simple accommodations, reflecting a desire for a challenging but spiritual or transformative experience. It consists of a semi enclosed bunk shelter where 6 people can sleep, located below a raised platform for viewing and gathering.

Like the paddler's trail, the paddler's tower is difficult to find unless its location is previously known either through experience or story. The relatively thin wood framed and corrugated metal clad structure stands tall among the coniferous trees on the edge of a rise, blending in more as it ages.



**Figure 61 (left): Site plan for through paddler tower
Figure 62 (opposite): View of the tower with platform rising above the tree tops**



Fig. 62

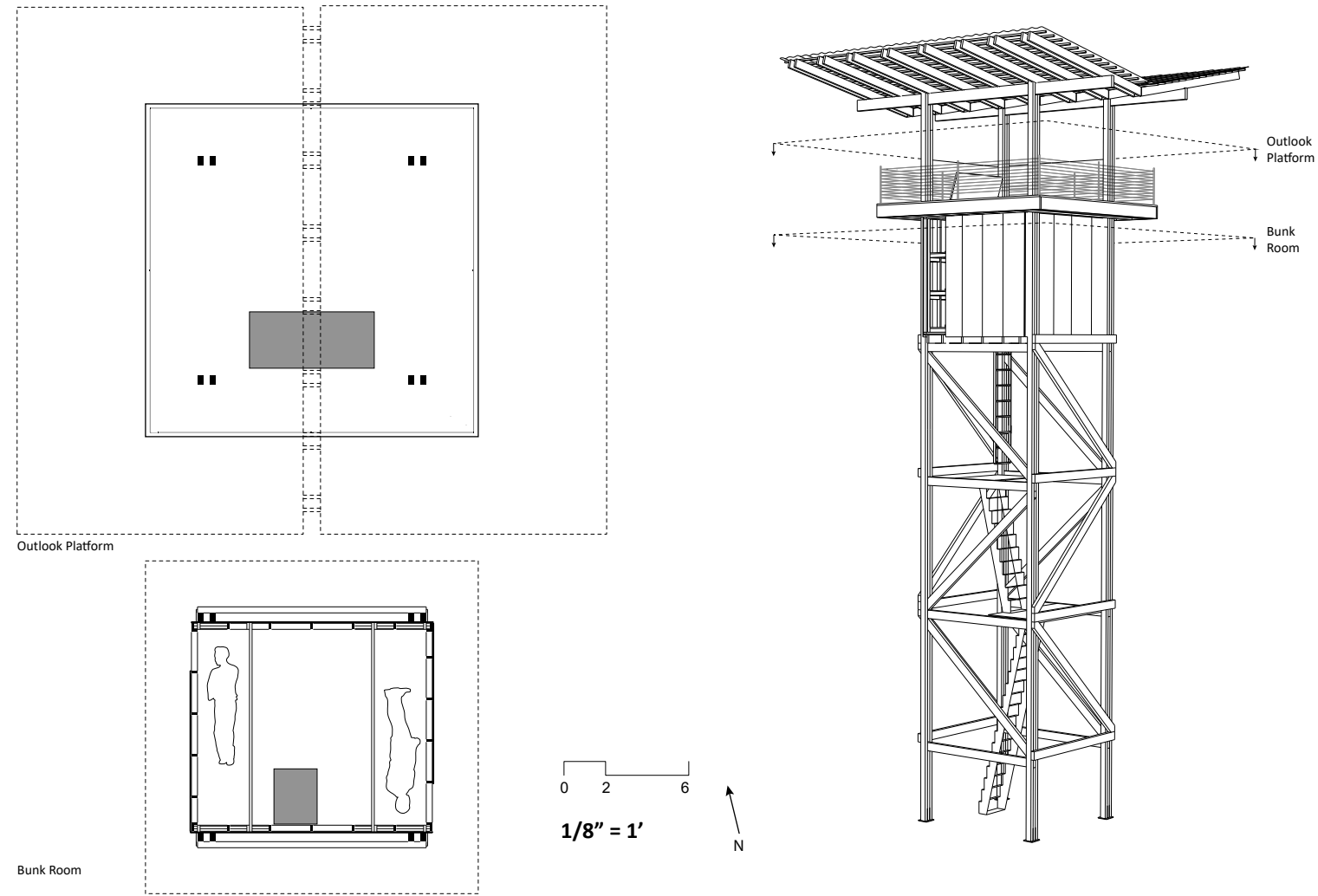


Figure 63 (above): Plan showing semi - enclosed bunk room and overlook platform
Figure 64 (opposite): Bunk room interior



Fig. 64

A paddler makes their way up to the structure, climbing a series of stairs and ladders into the bunk space - an unheated but largely enclosed area to get out of the elements. The wall holds back on either side of the space to allow for a view from the bunks into the tree canopy.



Figure 65: Paddlers getting perspective

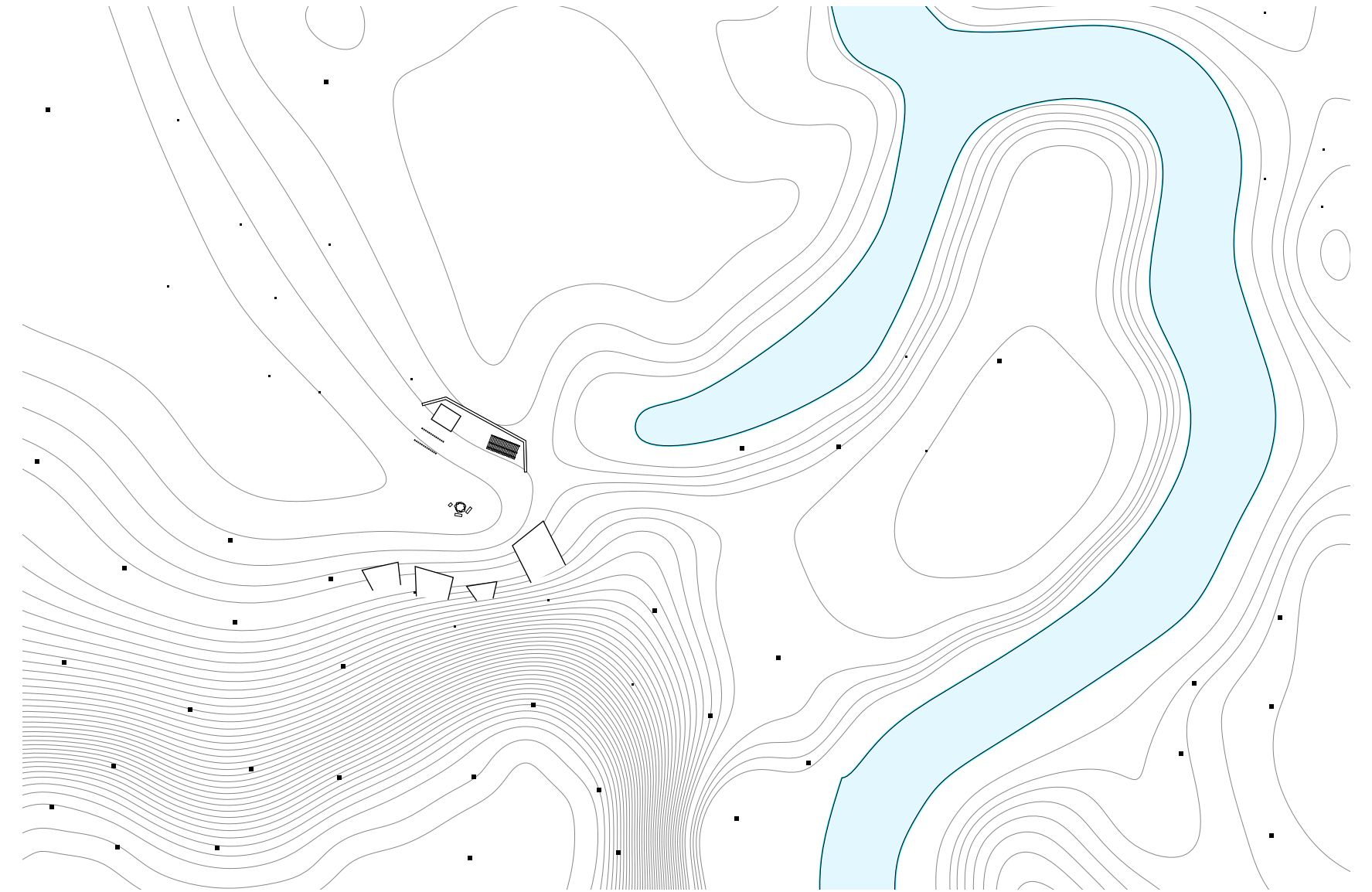
Climbing further up, the paddler emerges just above the treetops onto a viewing platform. This would be a place to gather with other paddlers who have decided to stay the night, and to put a journey in perspective, reflecting on personal and physical achievements. The butterfly roof emphasizes this opening up towards the sky.



Figure 66: The view from the deck

[Hunter Gatherer]

The hunter and gatherer site is a series of shelters where the earth has been peeled up and dug out, each serving a different purpose to the community that returns throughout the year, and who continue to develop and tune the site to their needs. Lined with stone and sod, with a sod roof supported by a log frame, earth becomes the platform for a winter bunk house, storage shed, summer kitchen, summer sleeping area, and processing racks for game and foraged goods.



1/64" = 1'

Figure 67: Site plan for hunter / gatherer shelter

Of the three proposals, the hunter and gatherer site is the least discoverable to anyone who doesn't already know of its existence. The structures are largely embedded in the hillside, loosely clustered around the edge of a hollow. This is a gathering place - a convergence of people who share a tradition. It's about the back and forth between center and edge - gathering together around a fire, and following an animal trail on a solo trek. There is a looseness or fluidity between staying and going.

Fig 68

Plan

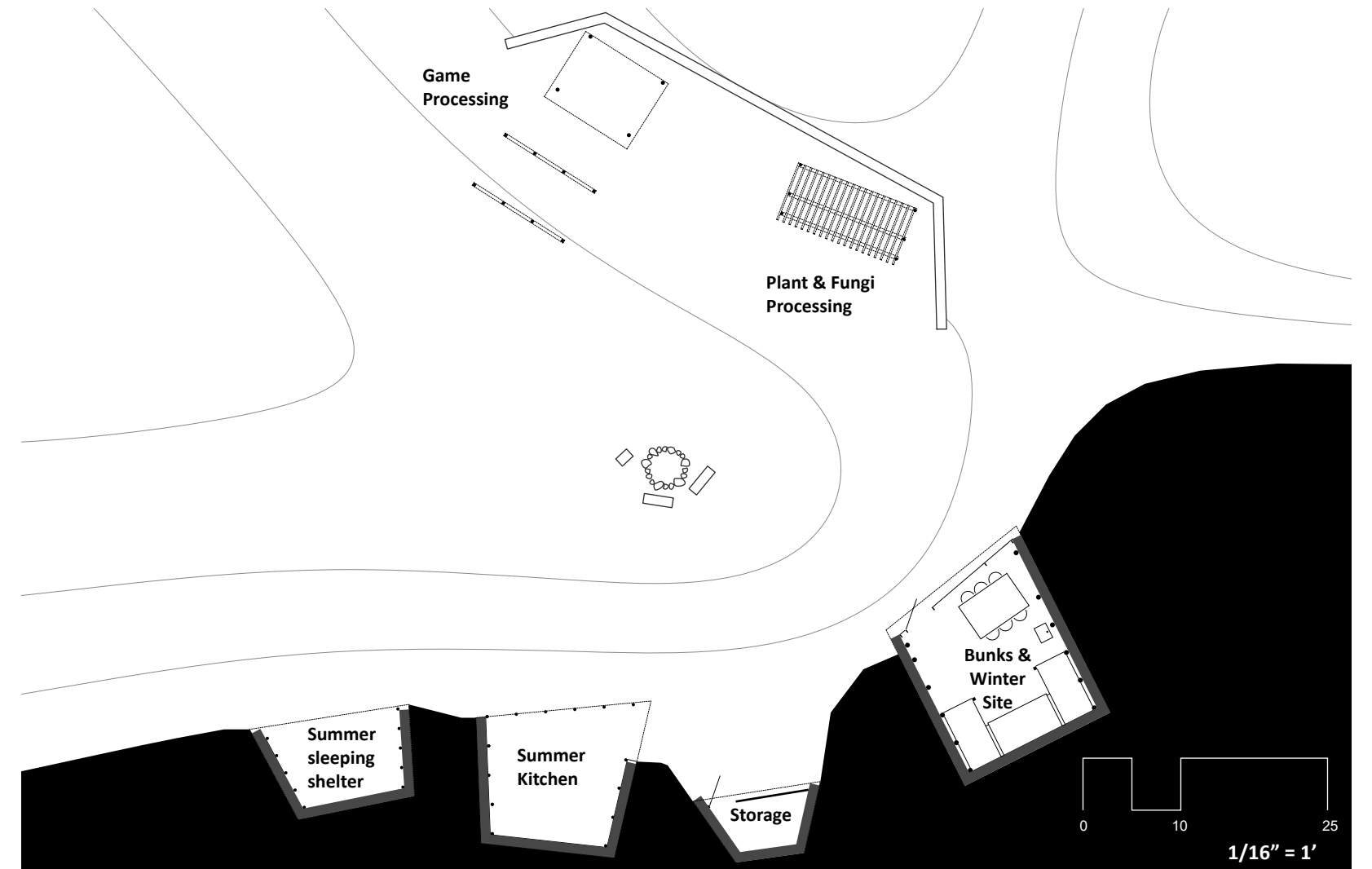
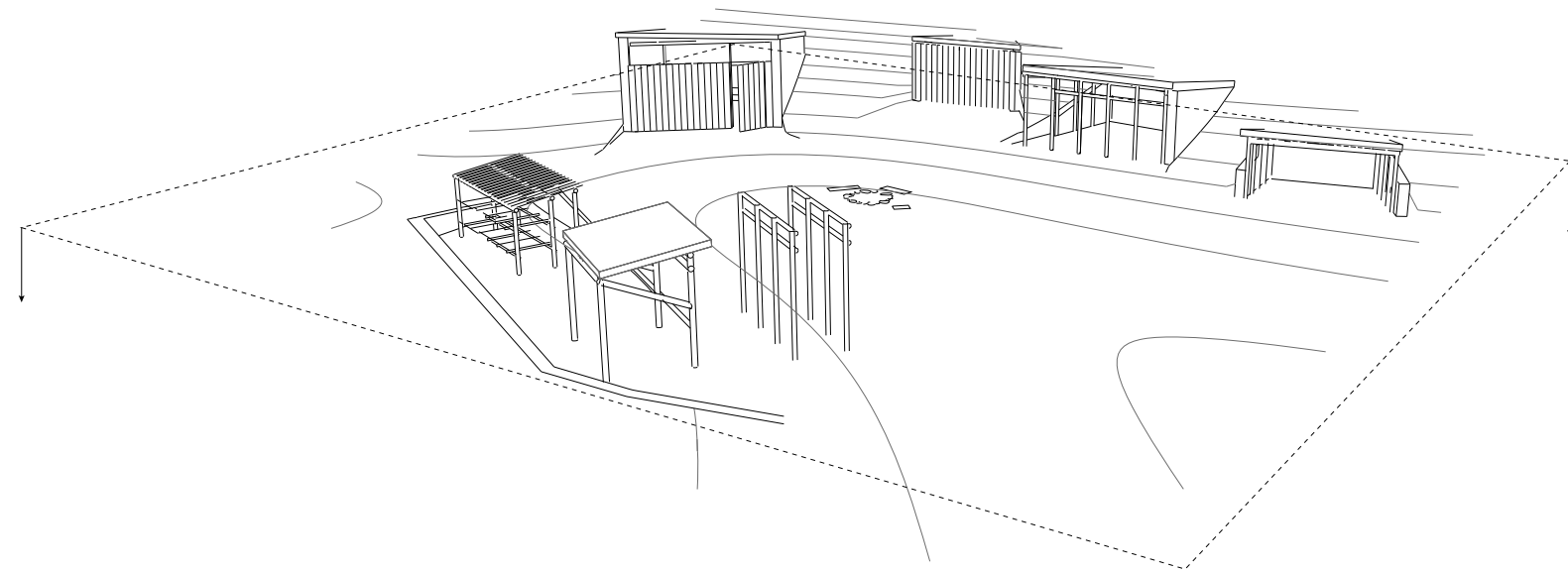


Fig 69

The structures, while each different, share the same language using materials found on or near the site. Where a space is embedded in the earth, there are stone retaining walls topped with sod above grade. A log frame holds up a log and sod roof. Where it is necessary for enclosure, the front wall is framed and clad with wood. Otherwise, the log frame serves as the blurry definition between inside and out. Where no enclosure is needed (as in game and plant processing), the structure is simply a frame or frame and roof, which aligns more with the forest than the earth. These two structures are enclosed only by a small retaining wall.



Figure 70: Stone meets earth, wood and sod rise out of the ground



Figure 71: Shelters at the confluence of coming and going, gathering in a natural bowl, oriented towards the center

[Huts and Trails in the Wilderness]

While the huts and trails system(s) that I propose are less designed and more a reflection of each character's inherent connection with the land, this project explores a relationship with wilderness that supports the active use of wild land as a means of protecting it.

As the history of the Adirondacks has proven (post white settlers), the fate of the region has always been about what the Adirondacks can do for us. Settlers tried to extract wealth from the land through mining, farming, logging, and trapping, none of which was successful for long. The area was eventually protected because the deforestation was leading to diminished water supply for New York City. While we'd like to believe the Adirondack Park will always be protected, the bleak economy in the region creates pressure to change the protections and open up more land to things like logging again.

While some degree of sustainable logging is allowed on certain state land and is seen as an important part of conservation,¹⁰⁰ this thesis argues that a huts and trails system would add to the diversity of ways in which the region can continue to value this ecological resource. One example that accomplishes this already is the Appalachian Mountain Club's huts and trails system in New Hampshire's White Mountains. A study by Plymouth State University found that the huts and trails system brought in over 17 million dollars in one year to the community and created around 200 jobs. Money was spent by visitors on things like food, gas, lodging, and retail.¹⁰¹ Outdoor recreation based economies both reinforce the protection of land and encourage people to know it themselves in whatever way makes sense for them.¹⁰² By generating income

through increased visitorship to the area, the community is incentivized to maintain that wilderness as a resource. This project encourages sustainable use and continued protection of the Adirondack wilderness in the goal of supporting both ecosystems and economies.



Figure 72: Doing site research, on the path to Tirell Pond

7. CONCLUSION

[Layering, Unfolding and Coexistence]

As I have argued, the path is more than a vector with a direction and a distance.

It's a way of knowing, making, and re-making our world that is essential to understanding our place, our home, our selves. Many experiences and productions of the same space are possible depending on one's perspective and background. There is no one Adirondack Park, but rather it is the continuous layering, unfolding, and coexistence of experiences through movement that define this place.

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71. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 138

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77. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 193

78. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 180

79. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 181, 188

80. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 194

81. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 185

82. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 195-198

83. Terrie, *Contested Terrain*, 38, 152

84. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 232

85. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 236-244

86. Schneider, *The Adirondacks*, 270, 283

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LIST OF FIGURES

All images, diagrams, & renderings created by author unless otherwise noted

Figure 1 The view from the author’s childhood home, by Robin Shalline

Figure 2: The Adirondack Park, image adapted from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adirondack_Park_map_with_Blue_Line.svg

Figure 3: Rampart Lakes in the Cascade Mountains, www.maps.google.com

Figure 4: Trails in North Cascades National Park

Figure 5: Guide Psychogeographique de Paris, <https://www.macba.cat/en/guide-psychogeographique-de-paris-discours-sur-les-passions-de-lamour-pentes-psychogeographiques-de-la-derive-et-localisation-dunites-dambiance-3779>

Figure 6: Wandering the Arcades of Paris, by The Smalls Abroad, <http://thesmallsabroad.com/2013/11/the-passages-a-walking-tour-in-paris/>

Figure 7: Map of Yellowstone National Park, <https://www.yellowstonepark.com/park/official-yellowstone-national-park-map-pdf>

Figure 8: Pilgrimage route in N. Spain, margybarcamino.wordpress.com/

Figure 9: Augur marking cardo and decumanus, <http://www.romeacrosseurope.com/?paged=10&cat=3#sthash.BadSJRTN.dpbs>

Figure 10: Songlines, <https://blogs.crikey.com.au/northern/2010/07/10/pila-nguru-how-the-spinifex-people-claimed-their-land-by-painting-it-part-one-of-a-series/>

Figure 11: Moonlit Path by Andy Goldsworthy

Figure 12: Storm King Wall by Andy Goldsworthy, <http://stormking.org/artist/andy-goldsworthy/>

Figure 13: Drove Arch by Andy Goldsworthy, <http://tohatchacrow.blogspot.dk/2013/06/earthworks-inspiring-land-art-of-andy.html>

Figure 14: “A Line Made by Walking” by Richard Long, richardlong.org

Figure 15: A glacial erratic in Blue Mountain Lake, NY

Figure 16: Some of the major Mohawk and Algonquin canoe routes. Graphic by author, routes as described in Stephen Sulavik’s *Adirondack: Of Indians and Mountains, 1535-1838*. (Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press; Adirondack Museum, 2005).

Figure 17: Illustration of a battle near Crown Point, NY from Samuel de Champlain’s “Voyages of Samuel de Champlain” Edited by Edmund F. Slafter, (Boston: Prince Society 1878) http://www.historiclakes.org/S_de_Champ/S_de_Champlain.html

Figure 18: “Trails, Military Roads and Forts From Albany to Crown Point” from <http://newyorkhistoryblog.org/2017/08/02/french-indian-war-bayonet-discovered-near-loon-lake/>

Figure 19: A map recording the Adirondack Iron & Steel Company, 1849-1854 used by the US DOI in 1978., <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.ny0915.sheet.00001a/>

Figure 20: Lake Placid area guides, www.lakeplacidlibrary.org/photos.html

Figure 21: “Group of Cottages of the Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium,” 1898, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/fishimages/id/41617/rec/14>

Figure 22: Tuberculosis patients getting fresh air on the porch of a “cure cottage,” <http://www.saranaclake.com/history>

Figure 23: The Adirondack black spruce: from the Annual report of the N. Y. Forest Commission for 1894, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Adirondack_black_spruce_from_the_Annual_report_of_the_N._Y._Forest_Commission_for_1894_\(1895\)__\(20800211652\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Adirondack_black_spruce_from_the_Annual_report_of_the_N._Y._Forest_Commission_for_1894_(1895)__(20800211652).jpg)

Figure 24: Map showing logging operations by the Finch Pruyn paper company in Newcomb, NY. Logs were transported down rivers until 1950. <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/31419/20160329/adirondack-attic-finch-pruyn-paper-company-forestry-maps>

Figure 25: “Tent Life in the Adirondacks” Photo by F.J. Severance, 1897, <http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/fishimages/id/43040/rec/1>

Figure 26: “Map of the Adirondacks as Reached by the Delaware and Hudson Canal Companys Railroad” 1880, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/normanbleventhalmapcenter/10138206416/>

Figure 27: Echo Camp, constructed 1882 - 1883 on Raquette Lake for Phineas Chapman Lounsbury, a Connecticut businessman who later becamee governor. Photo by S.R. Stoddard, 1916, <http://www.sthubertsisle.com/photos/adirondack-postcards-photos/raquette-lake-summer-homes-1920s/echo-camp>

Figure 28: “Backpacking Church Group at the Summit of Mount Marcy, Highest Peak In New York State” by Anne LaBastille, 1973, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:backpacking_church_group_at_the_summit_of_mount_marcy_highest_peak_in_new_york_state,_In_the_adirondack_forest_preserve_-_Nara_-_554505.Jpg

Figure 29: Adirondack hikers, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D0upoaEqr0

Figure 30: Through paddler on the Northern Forrest Canoe Trail, <https://noordinarylifefite.wordpress.com/>

Figure 31: Adirondack mushroom hunter, <https://natureintoaction.com/2017/12/18/outdoor-skills-club-at-schiff-natural-lands-trust-coming-soon/>

Figure 32: “The Great Adirondack Pass” by Charles Cromwell Ingham, 1837, from The Athenaeum, held by the Adirondack Museum, <https://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=46295>

Figure 33: Adirondack hikers (see figure 29)

Figure 34: “Lake George” by John Frederick Kensett, 1869, Bequest of Maria DeWitt Jesup, from the collection of her husband, Morris K. Jesup, 1914,

<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/15.30.61/>

Figure 35: Through paddler on the Northern Forrest Canoe Trail (see figure 30)

Figure 36: “A Good Time Coming,” 1862, by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait. Adirondack Museum, <http://adirondack.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/336F7371-F2E8-4CEF-88B1-428552229565>

Figure 37: Adirondack mushroom hunter (see figure 31)

Figure 38: The Adirondack Park, image adapted from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adirondack_Park_map_with_Blue_Line.svg

Figure 39: Adirondack Park Land Use & Development Plan Map, https://apa.ny.gov/gis/_assets/ApludpSlmp2017Feb14-1000w.jpg

Figure 40: Recreational hiker’s map of project site area

Figure 41: Looking towards Castle Rock

Figure 42 & 43: Castle Rock site analysis

Figure 44: Through paddler’s map of project site area

Figure 45, 46, 47: Forked Lake site analysis

Figure 48: Hunter gatherer’s map of project site area

Figure 49, 50, 51: Calkins Creek site analysis

Figure 52, 53, 54, 55: Structure, landscape, community, and their relationships

Figure 56, 57, 58, 59, 60: Recreational hiker cabin: plans and renderings

Figure 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66: Through paddler’s shelter, plans and renderings

Figure 67, 68, 69, 70, 71: Hunter / gatherer’s shelter, plans and renderings

Figure 72: Doing site reseach, on the path to Tirell Pond

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