



HARDBERGER PARK at Voelcker Farm

AFTER WINNING THE NATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION, WE LEARNED MORE ABOUT VOELCKER FARM AND THE SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITIES. WE THREW OUT OUR ORIGINAL MASTER PLAN AND PUSHED OURSELVES INTO AN UNEXPECTED NEW FORM OF "PARK" PASSIONATELY DEVOTED TO URBAN ECOLOGY.

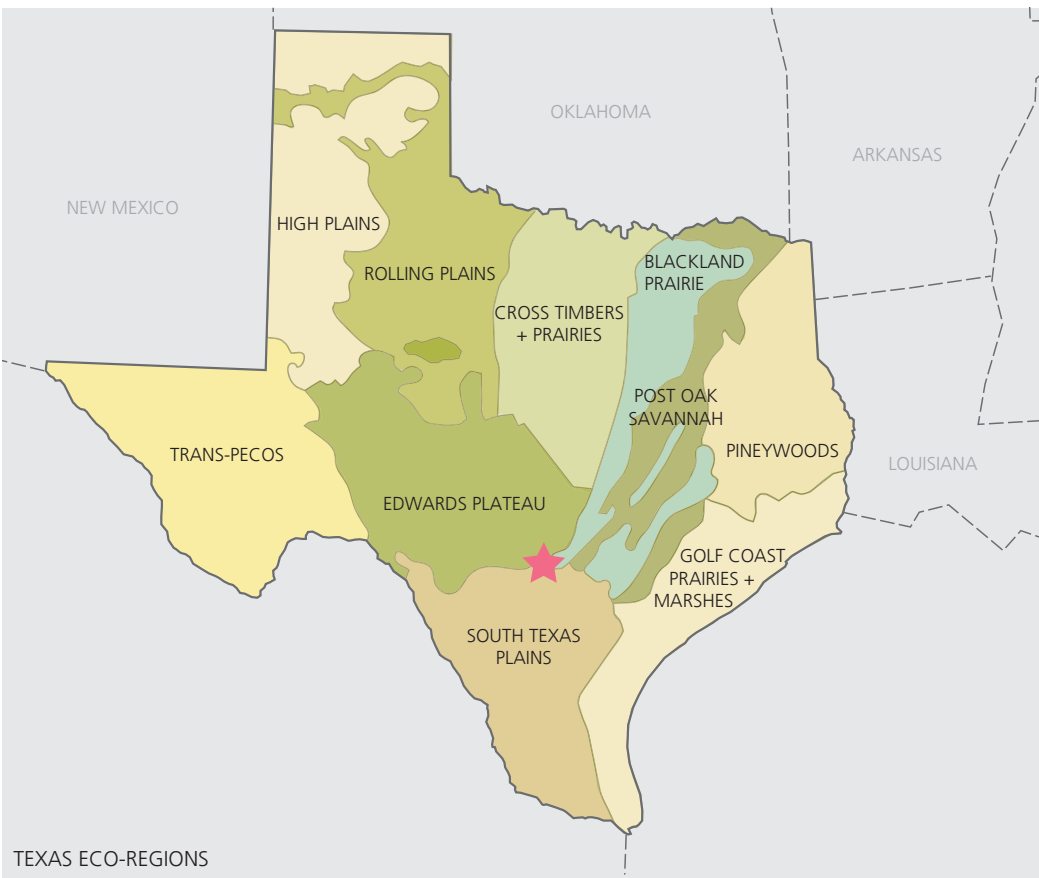
TEXAS TWO STEP

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE REGION INSPIRES THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS PRESERVING CENTURIES OLD OAKS WHILE REINTRODUCING NEARLY EXTINCT TEXAS GRASSLANDS. THE SECOND STEP ASSERTS CULTURAL EXPRESSION OF AN AGRARIAN HERITAGE, REINTERPRETING PRODUCTIVE PATTERNS OF THE MISSIONS.

Irrigated Farm, San Antonio, Tex.



CULTIVATED WILD



PRECIOUS PARCEL

UNIQUELY SITUATED AT THE CONVERGENCE OF THREE TEXAN ECO-REGIONS, THE FORMER VOELCKER FARM PRESENTS AN ANOMALY AMONGST DENSE SUBDIVISIONS DESTINED NOW TO BECOME THE NORTHERN NEXUS OF THE ALAMO CITY'S PARK SYSTEM.

A TREASURE FOR NATURE LOVERS



PHOTOS BY GLORIA FERNIZ/STAFF
 Nick Flores (from left) and his grandchildren, Alex Gonzalez, 10, and Karina Gonzalez, 6, take a walk on a cattle path through Voelcker Park. It is the second time the park has been open to the public.

Plans for Voelcker Park, a gem of urban wilderness, spark a question: Will this city make parks a priority?



Mayor Hardberger says the Voelcker trees might inspire a hug, 'though you won't be able to get your arms around many of them' . . .

TREE HUGGER

MAYOR PHIL HARDBERGER EMBRACED THE POTENTIAL OF THE OVERGROWN 311 ACRES THAT CAPTURED CITIZENS' IMAGINATION OF AN URBAN WILDERNESS. CHARGED WITH MAKING A CITY-WIDE PARK, OUR TEAM PROMOTED AN AMBITIOUS CAMPAIGN FOR BROAD REPRESENTATION OF COMMUNITIES' INPUT.



Community Meeting at Churchhill High
Wednesday, 12 December 2007, 6:30 pm
 12049 Blanco Road, Multipurpose Room

Site Tour of Voelcker Park Property
Saturday, 15 December 2007, 9 am-12 pm
 12000 NorthWest Military Highway

Match the numbers:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Future Wildlife Biologist | 6. Cow |
| 2. Purple Hairstreak Butterflies | 7. Restored Grasslands |
| 3. Native Grasses + Wildflowers | 8. Texas Spiny Lizard |
| 4. Heritage Oak | 9. Ringtail Cat |
| 5. Voelcker Homestead | 10. Mexican Eagle |

Come See What's Happening at Voelcker Park!

Hear about initial community input. Discover what the field scientists have found. Join us to envision design potential for the future of the park.

NATURAL LISTENERS

COMMUNITIES OVERWHELMINGLY VOICED THE DESIRE FOR A 'NATURAL' PARK UNDERSTANDING THE AMBITIOUS UNDERTAKING TO RENEW IT. EVEN MORE THAN RECREATION, THE MOST RESOUNDING REQUEST WAS FOR A LANDSCAPE OF LEARNING ABOUT NATIVE ECOLOGIES IN AN URBAN CONTEXT.



JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS



BODE COMMUNITY CENTER



HARLANDALE COMMUNITY CENTER



ACTION PLAN

THE DESIGN THEMES DEFINED OUR OBJECTIVES BEGINNING WITH ACTIVE VERBS. WHILE FULFILLING THE COMMUNITIES' REQUESTS, WE RAISED THE BAR FOR THE MAYOR'S OFFICE AND THE PARKS DEPARTMENT BY INCORPORATING 'GREEN' TECHNOLOGIES NEW TO THEIR PARK SYSTEM.



MISSION SQUARE

AGRARIAN HERITAGE

Celebrate the cultural history of San Antonio.

NATIVE LANDSCAPE

Preserve and restore the unique ecosystems that converge in Bexar County.

CULTIVATED WILD

Cultivate a unique urban ecology contrasting geometric agrarian forms and organic landscape patches.



WATER CLEANSING

PLAY

Provide inviting park spaces for active and passive recreation.

LEARN

Establish a living laboratory for learning about native and urban ecologies.

INTERACT

Create opportunities for people of all ages to work together towards healthy living in a healthy city.



PRAIRIE PATCH

LAND ETHIC

Foster stewardship of the natural and cultural landscape of Voelcker Park and the larger environment.

RESOURCEFULNESS

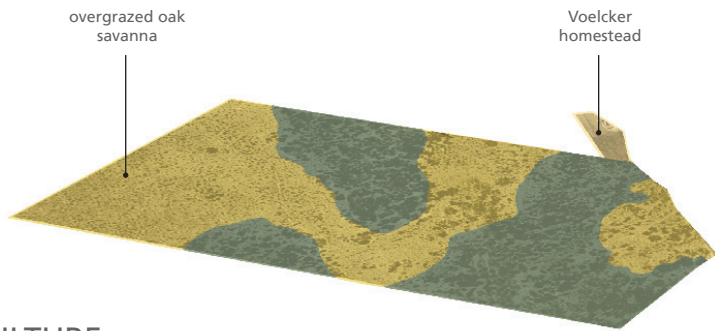
Set innovative examples of integrating "green" technologies to protect our natural resources.

NATIONAL MODEL

Demonstrate the dynamic interaction between natural processes and urban systems, contributing to a national legacy of great parks.

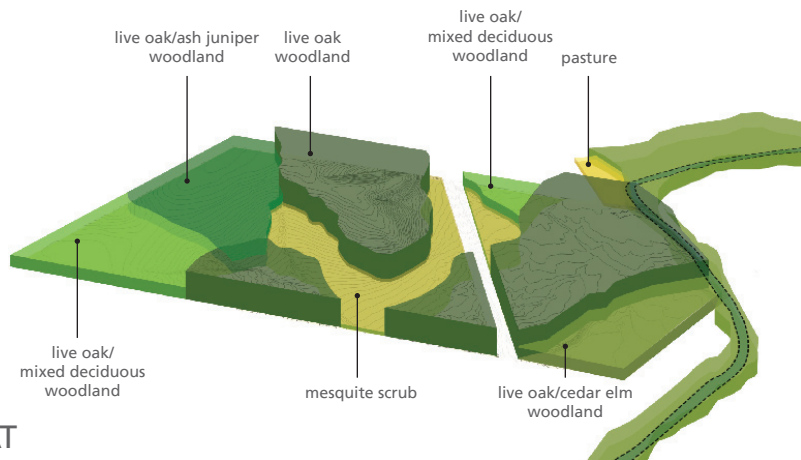
SITE FORENSICS

OUR TEAM OF LOCAL ECOLOGISTS CALCULATED THE POTENTIAL OF THE OVERGROWN OAK SAVANNA AND, DESPITE THE DELUGES OF STORMWATER FROM THE SUBDIVISION AND HIGHWAY, ALL AGREED THERE WERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION OF HARDBERGER PARK'S URBAN ECOLOGY.



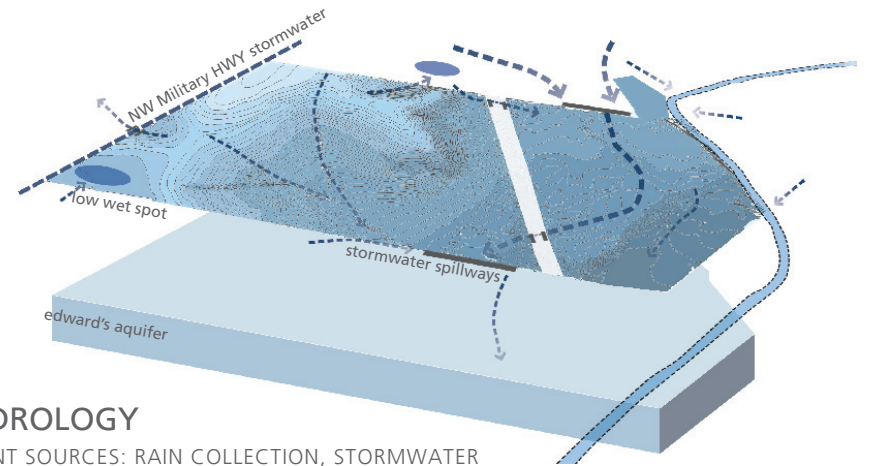
AGRICULTURE

AGRARIAN HERITAGE: REMNANT HOMESTEAD WITHIN WOODLANDS
+ RESILIENT OAKS



HABITAT

VARIED VALUE: GOOD WOODLANDS + OKAY SCRUB; NATIVE
+ NON-NATIVE SPECIES



HYDROLOGY

LATENT SOURCES: RAIN COLLECTION, STORMWATER
CLEANSING, SUSTAINABLE REUSE



CONTEXT

EDGES + CONNECTIONS: BUFFERED NEIGHBORHOODS,
BISECTING THOROUGHFARE, LINKED GREENWAY



LONELY SUBURBAN COW



CHOKED OAKS



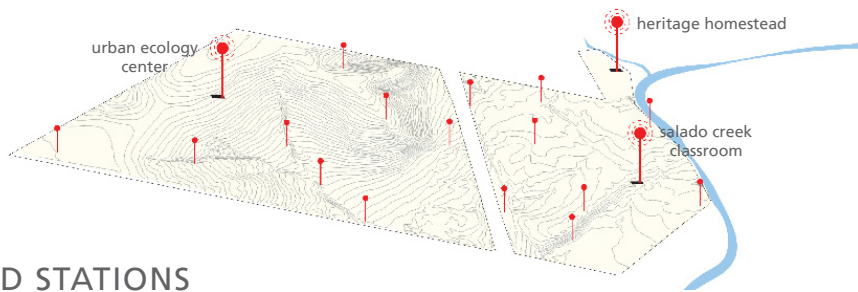
NEIGHBORS' DRAINAGE



DIVIDING HIGHWAY

SITE STRATEGIES

THE REGENERATED LANDSCAPE MOSAIC BECAME THE MATRIX FOR THE LIVING LABORATORY COMPRISED OF VAST EXPANSES OF GRASSLANDS ALONG WITH CAREFULLY CRAFTED COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES.



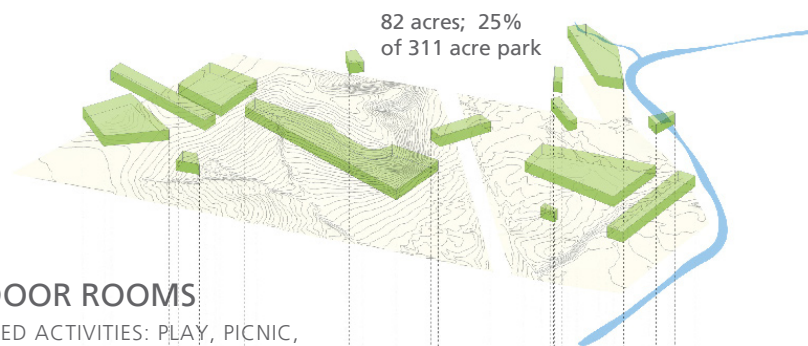
FIELD STATIONS

LEARNING POINTS: GPS ORIENTATION DATA COLLECTION, SECURITY LOCATIONS



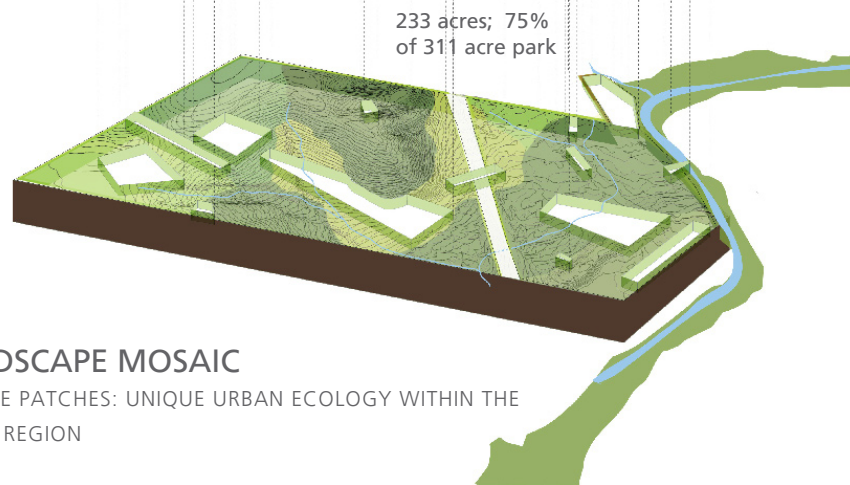
LOOPS + LINES

WAYFINDING: MEANDERING TRAILS WITH LANDSCAPE NAMES, DIRECT ROUTES TO DESTINATIONS



OUTDOOR ROOMS

EMBEDDED ACTIVITIES: PLAY, PICNIC, CULTIVATION, EDUCATION

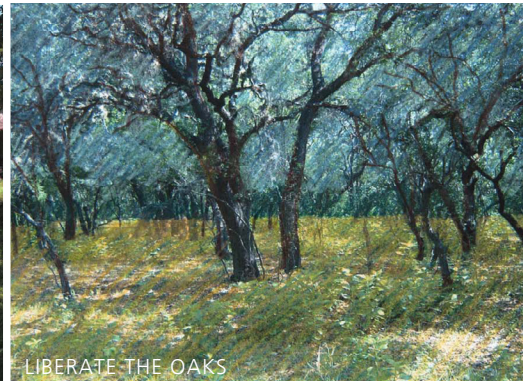


LANDSCAPE MOSAIC

DIVERSE PATCHES: UNIQUE URBAN ECOLOGY WITHIN THE CITY + REGION



CELEBRATE AGRARIAN HERITAGE



LIBERATE THE OAKS



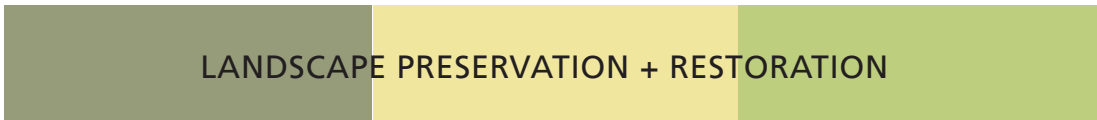
CAPTURE + CLEANSE THE WATER



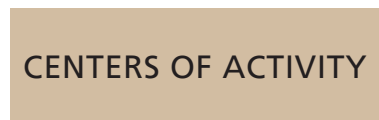
UNITE WITH SALADO CREEK



75%
233 acres

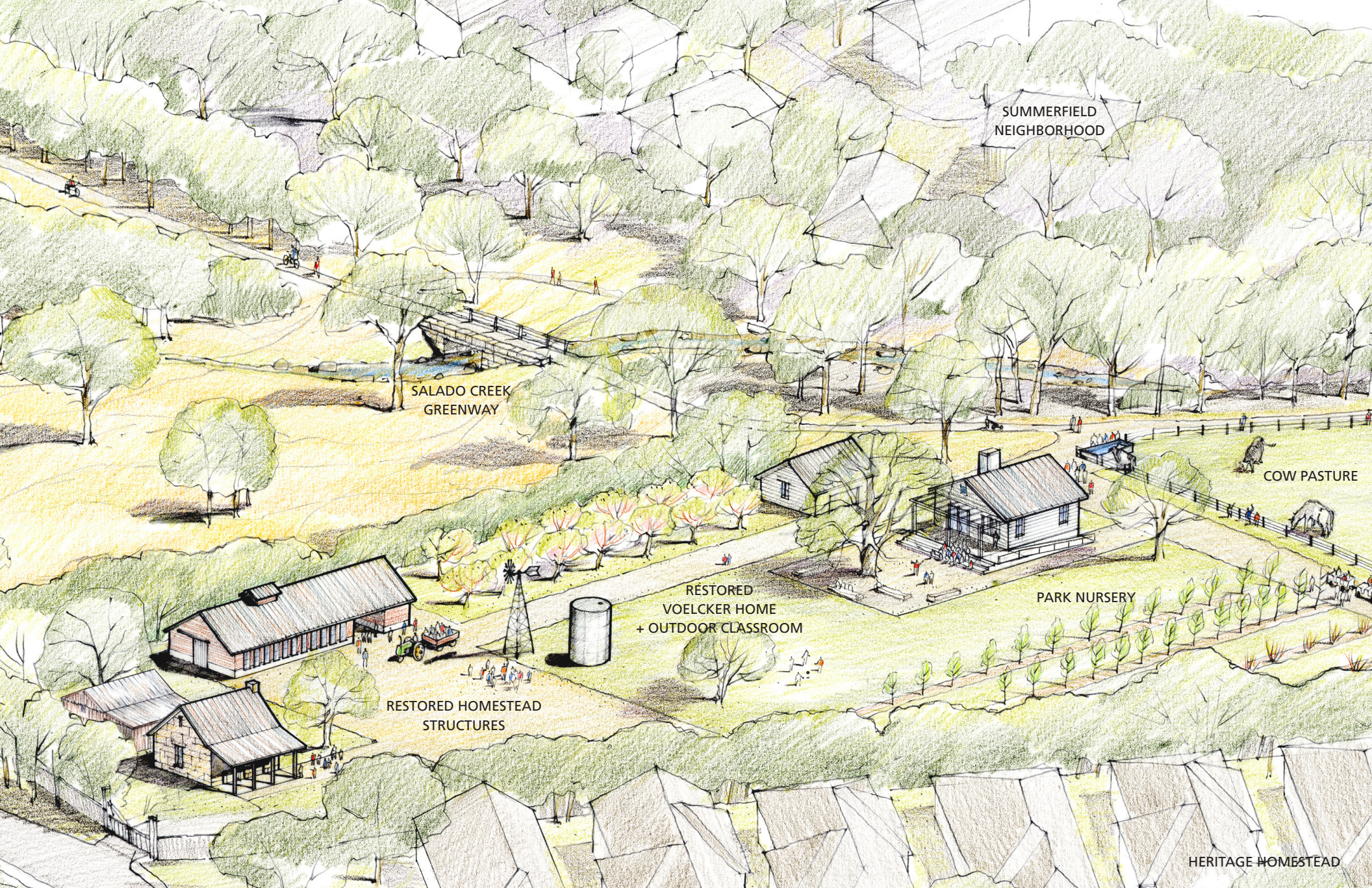


25%
82 acres



THE PROMISE

OUR TEAM MADE A PACT WITH THE COMMUNITY THAT THE MAJORITY OF HARDBERGER PARK WOULD BE COMPRISED OF A RENEWED, NATIVE TEXAS LANDSCAPE WHILE ONE QUARTER WILL BE ACTIVELY PROGRAMMED.



SUMMERFIELD
NEIGHBORHOOD

SALADO CREEK
GREENWAY

COW PASTURE

RESTORED
VOELCKER HOME
+ OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

PARK NURSERY

RESTORED HOMESTEAD
STRUCTURES

HERITAGE HOMESTEAD

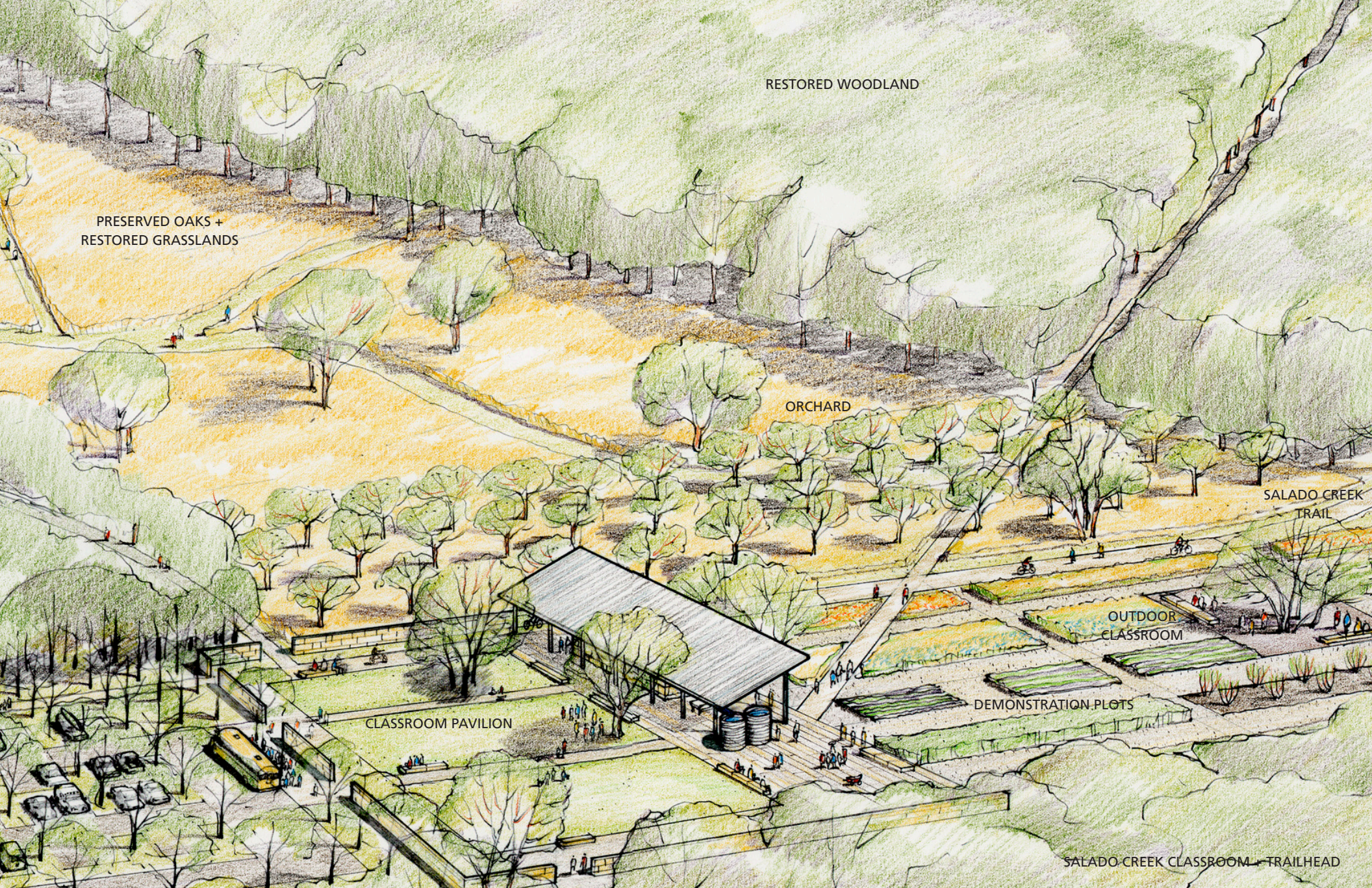
MEAGER REMNANT

THE AGRARIAN NARRATIVE OF THE VOELCKER HOMESTEAD WAS ESSENTIAL TO LASSO INTO THE LARGER PARK. THE OLD FARM LANE NOW DOUBLES AS THE NEW SALADO CREEK GREENWAY AND THE OLD STRUCTURES ARE BACK IN THEIR HAY DAYS.



WHERE BUFFALO ROAM

THE PARK AS LIVING LABORATORY INCLUDES PLOTS DEMONSTRATING MAINTENANCE REGIMES OF THE REINTRODUCED OAK SAVANNA. DESPITE SOME SKEPTICISM ABOUT CLEARING INVASIVE SPECIES (MASQUERADING AS 'NATURAL'), THE IDEA OF AN URBAN PRAIRIE TOOK HOLD OF THE COMMUNITIES' IMAGINATION.



PRESERVED OAKS +
RESTORED GRASSLANDS

RESTORED WOODLAND

ORCHARD

SALADO CREEK
TRAIL

CLASSROOM PAVILION

OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM

DEMONSTRATION PLOTS

SALADO CREEK CLASSROOM - TRAILHEAD

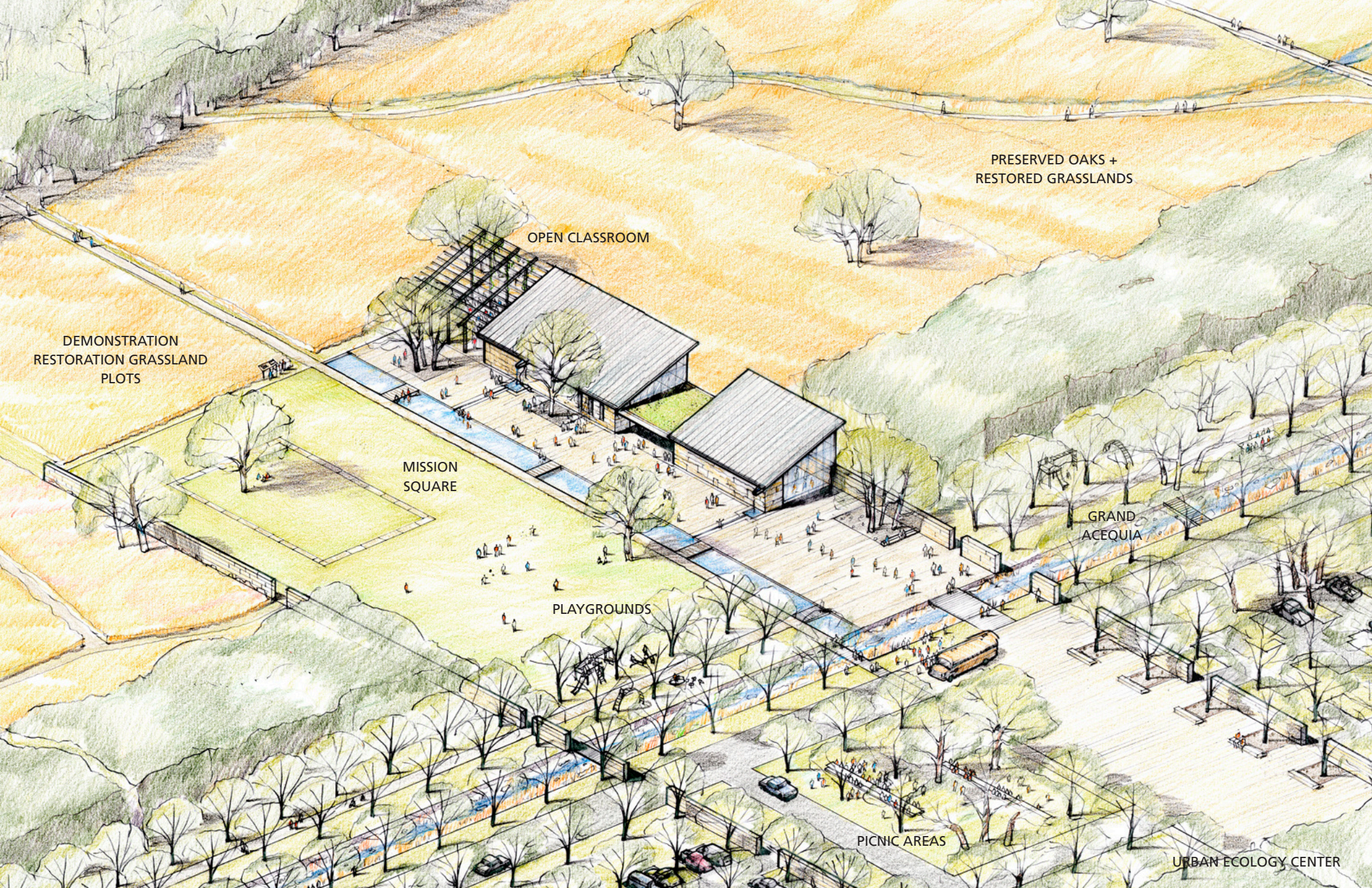
FIELD TRIP

BUSLOADS OF KIDS FROM ACROSS SAN ANTONIO STREAM INTO THE CLASSROOM PAVILION WHERE, ENERGY AND WATER USE ARE LEGIBLE LESSONS. MEANWHILE, BIKERS ARE CRUISING PAST URBAN AGRICULTURAL PLOTS ON THEIR WAY ALONG THE REGIONAL GREENWAY.



CAREFUL CLEARING

HOLIDAY PICNICS AND SHADE ARE A BIG DEAL IN SAN ANTONIO, HENCE THE PRUDENT INSERTION OF BARBECUES AMONGST PRESERVED OAKS. DESPITE PRESSURE FROM ORGANIZED SPORTS ADVOCATES, PICK-UP PLAY FIELDS WON THEIR PLACE IN THE BRUSHLAND AND OAK SAVANNA.



LANDSCAPE OF LEARNING

HARDBERGER PARK'S URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER IS INTENDED TO BECOME A REGIONAL DESTINATION AND TO SERVE AS A LOCAL RESOURCE. HOPES ARE THAT PARTNERSHIPS WILL BE FORMED HERE AMONGST LOCAL COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL GROUPS.



MAKE ONE PARK

THE LANDBRIDGE WAS THE MOST POPULAR IDEA TO EMERGE FROM THE MASTER PLAN. WHEN FORMER MAYOR HARBERGER RAISES FUNDS FOR THE 'DARLING' OF THE PARK, THIS ICONIC STRUCTURE WILL BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN NORTH AMERICA.



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

WITH THE FIRST TWO PHASES OF WORK COMPLETE, VISITORS CAN STROLL THROUGH RESTORED OAK SAVANNA, PICNIC UNDER RECOVERED HERITAGE OAKS AND LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE THE URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER, SALADO CREEK CLASSROOM AND RESTORATION OF THE VOELCKER HOMESTEAD.