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The Great American Squirrel Trail: An Epic Proposal for Large-scale Landscape Restoration through Vision, Belief and Shared Action

To combat the most dire effects of ecosystem decline and climate change, leading academics and ecologists are calling for "transformative change" of existing social and economic practices. Research suggests that changes in land use, specifically large-scale reforestation, could help to achieve sustainability and protect existing biodiversity and ecosystem services. While global governmental organizations receive reforestation pledges, commitments are frequently not realized.

This thesis proposes a Landscape-scale Engagement Platform methodology to encourage multi-scalar participation of government agencies, citizen groups and private-property owners across an entire region in a singular vision of reforestation and ecosystem rehabilitation. As no single group or individual alone may achieve landscapescale change, this effort is driven by a New Power approach that encourages broad participation and provides tools that allow corridors of visibility into landscapes across all scales.

To illustrate this Landscape-scale Engagement Platform approach, this design thesis offers "The Great American Squirrel Trail" as an Atlantic Ocean to Mississippi River reforestation and wildlife corridor proposal that also seeks to revitalize economically challenged counties in the Ohio River Valley and Appalachian Mountains. The activation plan, informed by GIS analysis and cross-country groundtruthing, focuses on "New Power" inspired methods including establishing a vision though landscape concept, garnering belief through landscape design interventions, fostering engagement through social media and digital portals that increase visibility into the regional and local landscape and encouraging stewardship by recognizing partners and patrons of the program.

This Landscape-scale Engagement Platform approach presents a promising method for involving property-owners and stakeholders as active, alwayson participants in the collective vision and health of their regional landscape. And in doing so, it also offers an opportunity for regional social and economic transformative change.

Click here for the full thesis: https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/t3-rc8f-py94





Pacrel-view App to engage and enlist private land oweners in the Great American Squirrel Trail program



TREES - CANOPY SPECIES These are the tallest trees in a forest community. Depending on the qualiti of the site they may be Oaks, Maples Hickories or still other species.

ruckores or still other species. Only species native to the Ohio River Valley should be used in Forest Community Design Plans. <u>Click here</u> for a complete list of preferred local species and a guide of best selection and management practices.

Renderings of proposed Public Connector along Route 7, Southern Ohio.



Interactive Woodland Generator serves to educate and instruct.





Mark Robison is a 2020 MLA Graduate of Rutgers University, 2020 LAF Olmsted Scholar and recipient of an NJASLA 2020 Student Merit Design Award. Formerly, a Creative Director with a background in brand, experiential and digital marketing, using research-led insights and ideation to lead multidisciplinary teams in the creation of highly engaging, customer-centric executions and experiences.

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