The Children’s Forest
The University of Arizona
School of Natural Resources

Faul Preservation Area
Mount Lemmon

Prepared by:
Third Floor Studio
UA ASLA Student Community Outreach Committee
UA Landscape Architecture
The Children’s Forest is a concept for the Faul property on Mt. Lemmon in Tucson, AZ and is a partnership between the US Forest Service, the University of Arizona’s School of Natural Resources and the Tucson Unified School District. The idea is to provide a natural area where TUSD students can go to learn about their environment in conjunction with students from the University of Arizona. The hope is that the Children’s Forest will be a place where children learn how to become stewards of the land through education and opportunities.

The goal of this book is to give the founders of the Mt. Lemmon Children’s Forest conceptual ideas that help guide decision making. The degree to which the land will be developed and funding to implement the forest will also guide decisions. The ideas included in this book are meant to provide a wide range of options.

The mission of the first Children’s Forest in California was to provide opportunities for children to take a leadership role in forest management by giving them a legitimate voice in caring for our local mountains; and through formal education and volunteer programs, evoke a fascination with nature that engenders a commitment to life-long learning and environmental stewardship.
The site is located at the corner of Sabino Canyon Road and Carter Canyon Road on Mount Lemmon. The terrain is extremely steep with the high point being on the west side and sloping down to Sabino Canyon Road on the East side.
Interpretive Signage will be located throughout the site. Specific areas have been identified that provide educational elements such as views, tree rings, etc. within the site. There are a number of other topic areas that are not site specific that can be located in the unlabeled areas or at other areas within the site.
Interpretive elements

Sign Aesthetics

It is recommended that a simple metal sign frame be used as housing for the signage due to its durability and clarity.

Interactive Elements

Small green house

An outdoor miniature model to encourage interaction

Fake animal tracks

Ground level structure that gives a sense of scale for large trees.
Main Pedestrian Entrance

THIS SPACE IS...

- A welcome to the forest
- A view into the site
- A wayfinding experience
- Where you get a sense of the place
- Separate from the road
- Access to the other areas

Welcome sign or indicator

Easily walkable to and from town

Beautiful views into the forest

Steep hill

Views of fire

Natural drainage break in topography

Potential parking; tree removal required

School bus turn around

Good stamp for tubing/interp

High point (DE=344')

Open clearing

Scale - 1" = 50'0"
Main Pedestrian Entrance

WELCOMING

THRESHOLD

INVITING
The entrance to the site should be a clear threshold into a special place of learning. Different materials can be used to create a transition from getting off the bus or out of the car and going into a fun and educational space.
Main Vehicular Entrance

**THIS SPACE IS...**

- a welcome to the forest
- view of the entire site
- a gathering space
- where you forget about the city
- separate from the road
- access to the outdoor classroom

**beautiful views of site and surrounding forest**

change in materials

welcome sign or indicator

views of peaks and fire

**CHILDREN’S FOREST**

SITE ANALYSIS

- Potential parking
- Tree removal required
- Natural drainage
- Break in topography
- Mossy rock outcrops
- Potential lichen infestation

**SCALE: 1”=50′0”**
Sense of Place + transition

- Hand painted sign
- Waiting bench
- Groundplain
- Sculpture
- Welcome
- Obvious change from pavement
- Fun signage
- Waiting space
- Permeable stabilization
Old House Site

THIS SPACE IS...

- a place to get together
- sit down and look around
- a gathering space
- where you can think about the forest
- draw in a field notebook
- eat lunch on a field trip
- learn before you explore
- shelter from the snow and rain
- a storage area for the site

70'
A POP OF COLOR
SHELTER
STORAGE
SEATING
PLAY
GATHER
Old House Site: dETAILS

Teaching Zones

There are over four separate teaching zones within the old house site. This allows for classes or visitors to breakdown into smaller learning groups. Each gathering or teaching zone is dispersed throughout the site, with visual and built barriers creating a sense of privacy. Each zone is also located to direct and enhance the views into different areas of the children’s forest.

Shelter and Deck

The shelter and multi-use built space on site has the opportunity to be playful and functional in its design. The forest is the centerpiece, yet the shelter and extended deck can act as the heart of this special place. The conceptual plan of the Old House Site details a retrofit of a shipping container, but included within this document are a variety of unique ideas for this space.

Picnic Tables

Brightly colored picnic tables add a pop of color within the main gathering area. This seating zone can act as an outdoor classroom, a comfortable place to eat lunch, or a recognizable meeting spot while on a field trip. It is also located away from the main shelter to mitigate lunchtime noise while other classes continue.
Proposed Conceptual Plan

ENTRY ZONE

PATHWAY

PICNIC TABLES

TEACHING ZONE

BLEACHERS BUILT INTO THE HILLS SLOPE

PLAY AREA

ENTRY ZONE

TIERED EXTENDED DECK

SHELTER (SHOWN AS A RETROFITTED SHIPPING CONTAINER)

TEACHING ZONE
Parking

Parking for the Children’s Forest is possible in two areas, along Carter Canyon Road to the west of the site and adjacent to Sabino Canyon Road on the east side. There are pros and cons to each. After reviewing the options, it is recommended that the primary parking be located along Carter Canyon Road and the area along Sabino Canyon be an alternative.

Primary Parking Areas

Pros:
* Less traffic and lower speed limits for children exiting vehicles
* More space as the road is very wide for bus parking

Cons:
* Steep terrain, could be dangerous for children running
* Road is at a slope and dead ends at residential housing

Alternative Parking Area

Pros:
* Located at the bottom of slope
* Road dead ends in Forest Service parking area (although gated and closed in winter)

Cons:
* Higher traffic and less area for children exiting vehicles
* Tree removal necessary
* Difficult to enter and exit the site

The wide part of the road at the top of the hill is approximately 40 ft. wide. According to ASHTO standards, the turning radius of a large school bus (84 passenger) is 39.4 ft. Beyond the pavement on the east side there is stable, flat compacted soil for several more feet offering a little extra room for turning inaccuracy.

Outdoor Classroom

THIS SPACE IS:

- a place to learn
- sit down and listen to the wind
- a gathering space
- where we learn about the natural world
- sing songs about the forest
- listen to teacher’s wisdom
- watch the seasons change

[Diagram of outdoor classroom site analysis]

- Gentle slope
- and nice clearing

- Easily accessible from road
- Great Views
- Mossy rock outcrop
- Potential lichen interpretive
Classroom+ environment+ education

SEATING

LEARN

NATURAL

GATHER
**FENCING**

**THIS ELEMENT...**
- creates cues of care
- limits unwanted access
- defines the site boundaries
- is secondary to the natural landscape
- is permeable to wildlife
- does not limit visual access
- heightens curiosity and interest
- (re)uses natural materials
- ensures safety of visitors

LOW FENCE OF ON-SITE MATERIALS (STONES, LOGS, BOULDERS, LIVING VEGETATION)
FUNCTION + beauty + materials

- REUSE
- VISUALLY 2ND
- NATURAL
- DEFINES
- PERMEABLE
- ARTISTIC
boundary + aesthetics + simplicity

leaf barrel fence

downed wood

latillas

stone
benChes & Site furnishings

- REUSE
- NATURAL
- UNIQUE
- AESTHETIC
- SENSE OF PLACE
Fire eColoGy Area

THIS ELEMENT...

- has great views of the fire
- is an area to watch and learn
- is a somewhat flat area
- has amazing views of the forest
Fire + plants + watershed + people

See-through signage is a fun way to show the changing landscape.

EXPERIMENTING

Osbourne fire finder

an erosion demonstration box

DEMONSTRATIONS

LEARNING

sand box for fire suppression demos
Wayfinding Area

THIS SPACE IS...

- a flexible space for talks or interpretation
- central area within the site
- a place to figure out where to go
- where you forget about the city
- a destination visible from the entrance
- a small group gathering area
Wayfinding Area

- Unusual windvane
- Orientation
- Gathering
- Serenity
- Views

- Small outdoor classroom area
- Waiting seat
- Wayfinding signage
Thank you

This book was prepared by:

3rd Floor Studio
ASLA Community Outreach Committee
UA Landscape Architecture students

Kelly VanDenBerg
Becky Blacher
Autumn Ela
Deryn Davidson
Ana Orozco
Katia Gedrath-Smith