

# THE HERO'S RETURN

CREATING A THERAPEUTIC EXPERIENCE ON MT SHASTA FOR MILITARY VETERANS

MATTHEW BELANGER



This mixed media image was created using pencil and ink on sketch, then photoshop rendered with an image taken from the site visit on April 21, 2018. It is the first time you see the volcano once venturing into lower sand flat trail. It is also the one of the most inspiring views and one that continues to orient you on your journey through the woods.

## SIGNATURE SHEET

PROJECT TITLE:

The Hero's Return: Creating a Therapeutic Experience on Mt Shasta for Military Veterans

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# ABSTRACT:

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder has become a major concern for veterans returning from overseas. With options in treatment ranging from cognitive therapy, body experiencing, and art therapy, there remains a need to find continued methods to elicit healing in the suffering veteran. Using the learned methods in

healing trauma, a design methodology was created to address healing in the form of pendulation associated with somatic experiencing. With a five and half mile reflection path created on the awe-inspiring Mount Shasta, in California, there is an opportunity to pull the veteran out of trauma, so that he may

address the emotional weight in the presence of nature and other veterans. This method uses what is already inspiring about nature, and uses practices used in therapy to return the veteran to wholeness in mind, body, and soul.



FIGURE 1. Veteran in smoke with trauma lurking

# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION	7	DESIGN SOLUTION	28
BACKGROUND	8	CONTEXT	31
<u>Traditional Therapy</u>		JOURNEY BEGINS	
Somatic Experience	9	The Ordinary	33
Psychomotor Therapy	11	The Call	33
<u>Alternative Methods in Healing</u>		The Refusal	33
Nature As Healer	13	Aid From the Supernatural: Inspiration	35
Art Therapy	15	Crossing the Threshold: Confidence	37
Interactive Art	17	Road of Trials: Perverserance	40
Prospect Refuge	18	Road of Trials: Gratitude	42
RESEARCH METHODS		Road of Trials: Courage	43
Pendulation In Somatic Experience	20	Meeting with the Goddess, Atonement with the Father:	
Scope	21	Forgiveness	45
SITE ANALYSIS	22	Apotheosis: Joy	48
Joshua Tree	23	Road of Trials: Vitality	50
Mt Shasta	24	Symbolic Death and Rebirth: Serenity	52
Site Visit	25	Receiving the Ultimate Boon: Accomplishment	55
Inventory	26	Magical Flight Pursued by the Guardian: Hope	58
Existing Opportunities	27	Transformation: Optimism	59
		Sharing the Elixir of Wisdom: Altruism	61
		CONCLUSION	62
		WORK CITED	63

# LIST OF FIGURES

All figures are by the author unless otherwise noted

FIGURE 1	Veteran and smoke	
FIGURE 2	Shasta view from the west	HikemtShasta.com
FIGURE 3	Light bulbs pendulating	Dreamstime.” Dreamstime, <a href="http://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/light-bulb-pendulum-idea-concept.html">www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/light-bulb-pendulum-idea-concept.html</a> .
FIGURE 4	Psycho Therapy	<a href="http://static01.nyt.com/images/2014/05/25/magazine/25memory_ss-slide-XZ1K/25memory_ss-slide-XZ1K-master1050.jpg">static01.nyt.com/images/2014/05/25/magazine/25memory_ss-slide-XZ1K/25memory_ss-slide-XZ1K-master1050.jpg</a> .
FIGURE 5	Tree with light	Caldwelltreecare.com
FIGURE 6	Art Therapy	Bitchmedia.org
FIGURE 7	Interactive	CandyChang.com
FIGURE 8	Denali AK	Britannica.com
FIGURE 9	Joshua Tree Cacti	Tripsavy.com
FIGURE 10	Upper Sand Flat Inventory	
FIGURE 11.	Mt Shasta and Black Butte	<a href="https://www.outdoorproject.com/blog-news/under-radar-wildflower-spotting">https://www.outdoorproject.com/blog-news/under-radar-wildflower-spotting</a>
FIGURE 12.	Hero’s Journey Wheel	
FIGURE 13	Context. mountains and I-5	
FIGURE 14	Context. site and A10 road	
FIGURE 15	Proposed and existing trail	
FIGURE 16	The Ordinary	

FIGURE 17	The Call	
FIGURE 18	The Resfusal	
FIGURE 19	Mixed-media mountain view	
FIGURE 20	Inpiration	
FIGURE 21	Confidence	
FIGURE 22.	Perserverance	
FIGURE 23	Gratitude	
FIGURE 24	Courage	
FIGURE 25	Forgiveness	
FIGURE 26	Joy	
FIGURE 27	Vitality	
FIGURE 28	Prospect Persepective	
FIGURE 29	Prospect Refuge Section	
FIGURE 30	Prospect Refuge Plan	
FIGURE 31	Accomplishment	
FIGURE 32	Euphoria	
FIGURE 33	Pileated Woodpecker	<a href="http://Allaboutbirds.org">Allaboutbirds.org</a>
FIGURE 34	Section Labyrinth	
FIGURE 35	Plan Labyrinth	

# INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

PTSD is a brain disorder that occurs when a victim of severe trauma is unable to relieve the memory and stress from the traumatic event. The trauma becomes implanted within the everyday experience and is a major hindrance in the person's life. PTSD sufferers often attempt to subdue the memories and feelings associated with the disorder by attempting suicide, drug and alcohol addictions, and other detrimental actions.

With this disease working its way through our population at an alarming rate since the wars in Iraq, we see that there is still much work to be done. In a recent occurrence in Yountville, California, a veteran with PTSD shot 3 women therapists and then himself. The victims had been providing his therapy just a week before. (nytimes.com) This shows how real and close to home this disease can strike the ones we love.

This disorder has become a burden to my own family, as I have a sister who served in the USAF for 10 years before returning home to find that she was

afflicted with constant stress, stemming from trauma suffered in past deployments. Having served and deployed to overseas locations myself, I have witnessed some of the awfulness that war inflicts on our veterans, and hope to inspire healing using the landscape around us.

With PTSD becoming a more prevalent sickness in the vast population, and especially our veterans, it is becoming increasingly clear that we must address the situation in all ways necessary. Those who suffer from PTSD are plagued with the inability to cope with past traumatic experiences. This unfortunate disorder has affected millions of people around the world, and many millions of U.S. Veterans since our independence. PTSD numbers have increased most significantly in our war-time veterans. Since 2002 there have been 118,000 diagnosed veterans with the disorder, and there are believed to be 460,000 undiagnosed veterans. (nerdwallet.com) Whether these veterans are refusing help because of the nature of the trauma, or the lack of re-

sources, there is a very real need for these individuals to find relief in the country they have given much of themselves to protect.

One such asset that our great country possesses is the natural awe-inspiring places that reside within its borders. With natural sublime landscapes protected in parks such as Yosemite, Yellowstone, Denali, and many more, there is opportunity for nature to re-create and inspire millions from around the world. If veterans are aware of the possibilities that reside close to home, such as Mt Shasta in Northern California, then they too can experience a retreat from the ordinary with relative ease by utilizing that landscape beauty of these awe-inspiring places. In addition, an awe-inspiring place such as Mt Shasta provides the opportunity to design with nature to create a site design to address methods in healing. Using pendulation therapy and the landscape I will design a trail, so that veterans can hike, reflect, and hopefully gain perspective.



# BACKGROUND:



FIGURE 2. Shasta view from the west.

# TRADITIONAL THERAPY

## SOMATIC EXPERIENCE

One of the ways those affected with PTSD can begin to heal happens through a technique referred to as somatic experience. This process was created by Peter Levine in the early 70's and has proven to be a beneficial practice. (ptsdunited.org) The process takes the patient who is affected through the trauma and attempts to enable them to listen to the body's reaction when re-immersed into the traumatic experience. The body goes through a fight or flight reaction once introduced to something horrifying. Those suffering from the trauma often remain stuck in a psychological place where the trauma is still present. (Neukrug) Levine did intense work with animals, in which studies showed that animals were either

able to release the trauma through flight reactions, (running, jumping, panting) or were reduced to shock, where the normal bodily functions no longer performed properly. This same response is a reaction that all animals have, including humans. However, humans are equipped with many more cognitive connections, which can make it harder to handle trauma in life. This animalistic process of therapy attempts to return the affected to their primal self, and allows healing at the root of the problem. To bring one out of an immobile position, tests must be performed to see how patients will react to certain situations, whether through sensations or images. This allows for a resetting of the emotions and under-

standing of how one reacts to painful or pleasant experiences. One such method used to address the body's sensational reactions to trauma is called "Pendulation." This technique takes the patient to the pain, and then back to their pleasant life experiences places. The aim here is to reawaken their emotions and cognitions, allowing them to be an active participant in their feelings. (Neukrug pg.952) At a certain point in therapy, the patient can return to the trauma in their mind, but now with a more active and defensive posture that allows them to bypass the trauma and move forward in their healing.



FIGURE 3. Light bulbs pendulating

## SUMMARY: PENDULATION

Shifting from positive to negative emotions can be beneficial in establishing a baseline emotional space where the afflicted can maintain strong associations to the feelings.

Establishing a safe welcoming environment that orients the person to their surroundings is important in establishing a place of healing.

# PSYCHOMOTOR THERAPY

Treatments vary for those suffering from PTSD, and some may look for alternative practices. It is these practices such as Psychomotor therapy, which attempt to relieve the trauma by assigning role playing elements to the victim and others sharing the recalled event with him or her. Within this practice there is an element of artistic poetry in place, that I believe can be relived and nurtured in a landscaped environment. Those who suffer from trauma have a tendency to live in the present, so much so, they will eventually drown themselves in some sort of activity, whether working out or drinking, so to evade the memory of the trauma.(KOLK)

By incorporating design elements into a therapeutic setting that activate

movement through hiking and evoke pleasant feelings through plant and setting selection, we can make a place that supports this process.



FIGURE 4. Kolk working with students

## SUMMARY: PSYCHOMOTOR THERAPY

Returning to a conscious active state where the trauma occurred with the guidance of therapists or others who can help hold your hand through the experience can be highly beneficial, yet it also poses great risks.

The reward from CBT is that it attempts to erase the negative connotations associated with a previously traumatic event, and therefore addressing it as is, with a much lighter emotional response to it.

# ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT:

## NATURE AS HEALER: DENALI STATE PARK, ALASKA

Palka looks at the experience observed by many visitors of the Denali Park in Alaska. He looks at why the site is so intriguing, calling many from across the world to visit. Palka takes a close look at the observer's reaction to the place. He also looks at what makes the place so therapeutic besides its natural settings. He states that Denali, for him and the visitors who enjoy the trip, provides an experience of relaxation they have never felt before.

The text allows us to partake in the visit to the national park as well, by detailing the different bus stops along the visit into the massive natural park. The excitement of the passengers on the bus as well as the descriptions of the sights and sounds

brings us into the traveler's experience. He also surveys the passengers on why they feel this visit has healed them in some way and why they were visiting in the first place.

The exercise that takes place on this journey to Alaska involves many social interactions with others on the trip; this in and of itself acts a healing mechanism to those who have suffered from trauma. I believe the writing gives us an idea of how important it is to be in nature, and how getting away from the hustle of modern life can be highly beneficial. It takes a person out of the ordinary and opens their mind to new opportunities.



FIGURE 5. Trees with light

## SUMMARY: NATURE AS HEALER

Takes someone away from their ordinary lifestyle and introduces them to something new, provides the opportunity for new ways of thinking.

The natural elements, earth, wind, and water provide positive energy to help the body get reintroduced to the elements.

# ART THERAPY

Art therapy is a method used by therapists to help those suffering from trauma to open up about feelings and memories that have been suppressed. In veterans with PTSD, this is particularly helpful because when trauma occurs the body and mind go into a repressed state to subdue the memory of the event. (Neukrug) The problem is that by suppressing the memories, the body is doing more damage to itself than good, by holding that negative energy and preventing that energy from being addressed. Art therapy is effective in that it can give everyone a voice, providing an avenue for processing the trauma. What is ironic is that the voice is in fact a non-verbal one, hence,

providing an outlet for the body to process the traumatic event. This acts as a positive feature of art therapy as many suffering from trauma are unable to voice their trauma without it. The method of art therapy touches on non-verbal parts of the brain to do this, therefore accessing the emotions and visual imagery associated with it. One of the most important benefits of this method is in being able to communicate shared experiences with a group, and therefore make the veteran's trauma more common to the collective. (Becker) In addition, this interaction with a group provides a bonding experience with others, which is crucial in social development. Being able

to use art to tap into locked-up feelings is a key benefit as well, bringing issues to the forefront. In the same way, art therapy can be calming and act as a temporary retreat to one's traumatized mind. One method of art therapy is creating or coloring in mandala designs. The main purpose of a mandala is to tie a person back to their center. By anchoring someone back into their center, mandalas act as a healing mechanism in re-rooting them back to a more secure place. Some form of art participation in an outdoor setting can be a highly effective way to bring forward positive aspects to the veteran's outlook on life.





FIGURE 6. Different renditions of art in therapy

## SUMMARY: ART THERAPY

This method allows the veteran to speak through the art they create.

It is highly affective for those who hold a high amount of social anxiety associated with the trauma.

This method may reveal a direction for treatment not previously revealed to the afflicted.

# INTERACTIVE ART

There are many different methods in which art can be expressed, whether through written, spoken, or visual, but there is another form in which it is the participation of others that makes the art what it is. In interactive artworks the dynamic of the art is changed through the participation of those observing and interacting with it. For those with PTSD, interactive art can provide many benefits. The art allows the inflicted to have a shared experience, garnering trust with others in a social setting. In addition, it gives the veteran a sense of accomplishment, whether it's shared with others or the self. Lastly the artwork lives on, and is shared with others who will come across it later, thereby giving the art a life of its own.

## SUMMARY: I.A.

This method of interaction allows for a deep reflection within yourself, and provides the opportunity to share thoughts and feelings with others.



FIGURE 7 Before I Die section

Allows the user to be anonymous however active as a participant to a creative endeavor.

## PROSPECT REFUGE

This design approach is based on creating a place where one can feel protected by creating a refuge, but also allowing the person to witness all that is taking place around them, the prospect. This type of design touches on the primal hunting instinct from thousands of years ago.

Utilizing the design intervention allows for the veteran to partake in the scenery, while feeling safe to reflect on all that transpires positive and negative among the elements.

Creating a prospect refuge can take place in many forms, from sitting on a rock atop a mountain view, or on a bench with a wall hiding your view from others at the back. ([ernestjournal.co.uk](http://ernestjournal.co.uk))

# RESEARCH METHODS

## HEALING PTSD WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE



FIGURE 8. Denali AK

## PENDULATION ASSOCIATED IN SOMATIC EXPERIENCE: MT SHASTA

After a thorough dive into the brain disorder I found that besides prescribed medication, there were a few effective methods in healing those veterans affected by trauma. The treatments required many months and even years of therapy. The findings associated with traditional treatments revealed that to fix the trauma, the trauma had to be either revisited or focused, to then address the trauma and expel the negative associations related to the PTSD. Somatic experience uses a technique called pendulation, that introduces the shift in positive and negative experiences to address the emotional responses to those experiences. This

creates stronger associations to those feelings so that trauma can be addressed without interference. (Neukrug)

Using this information, I found that pendulation is an ideal PTSD healing modality to pair with the beauty of natural awe-inspiring landscapes, like Mt Shasta. If the veteran with PTSD is under chronic high-stress, pendulation will provide the veteran a healing space of constant positive emotional feedback. This can be done by introducing the war affected veteran to different stopping points along the trail, that evoke positive emotions and scenarios. Using the research in art-therapy, interactive art,

labyrinth designs, and the theory laid out by Jay Appleton in prospect refuge, I will create a trail design upon the beautiful volcanic Mount Shasta. Using the existing trail at Sand Flats, I will diverge to create a new path to bring forth all the proposed mountain trail has to offer.

## SCOPE

Researching Mt Shasta, I found a lot of outdated trails and roads that took visitors right past the sand flat area. The parking was minimal and there were no restrooms available. The trails are undeveloped and unkept. With a few nodes to help the visitor interact with the existing landscape there is potential to incorporate programmed spaces to create a narrative for the visitor. By incorporating places that play on natural views, and interactions with the elements, there is potential to incor-

porate design in correlation with research methods. The site also is located at one of the most significant chakra locations in the world, which provides the initiation into healing. With Mt Shasta's symbolism representing the crown chakra, which absorbs universal energies, that in turn can provide a transformative power.

# SITE ANALYSIS

## SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

To find the ideal site for a reflection and healing trail, there were certain criteria that would need to be met.

The first was that the location would need to be in a place that removed or isolated from every day experiences. This was important, because for the veteran to escape the stress of everyday life, a new thought-provoking place would need to be introduced to elicit the responses necessary for pendulation.

Second, the location needed to be accessible to a significant veteran population. After researching where the main veteran hospitals in California are, and even further throughout the country, two main intake facilities for veterans returning from war or who have been diagnosed with PTSD were identified. Walter Reed, in Bethesda Maryland and Balboa Naval in San Diego. With San Diego being closer to home I start-

ed to look for awe-inspiring sites that would meet the design methodology. In addition, Mount Shasta sits between two veteran centers in Yreka and Redding and is 77 miles north-east of the Northern California Veterans Cemetery. One of the largest in the state for veterans.

Lastly, I hoped to find a site that I could visit to develop unique site-appropriate design recommendations.

## The possibilities in Joshua Tree National Park

I identified Joshua Tree NP rather quickly as a possible location for this healing trail and investigated its feasibility. This national park has natural beauty that elicits awe and provides a new scenery to most, with unique plant and animal species. It also is far from the city, but close enough to venture to in a day-trip from Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego. Lastly, and most importantly, it was a place that would act backdrop with similar features to the middle-east landscape where many veterans were inflicted with the trauma.

Although these positive aspects of Joshua Tree were compelling, I also identified that there were some limitations to this location. It lacked opportunities to create variation in the trail stopping points. Design factors such as including seasonality and plant diversity would be somewhat limited. In addition, maintaining the site could become an issue since it is far removed and in the desert.



FIGURE 9. Joshua Tree Cacti



## The Pull of the Mountain: Mount Shasta

With the area near Joshua Tree not meeting all my site selection criteria, it became apparent that a new site was necessary to fulfill the project goals. I began to research natural awe-inspiring places and became aware of the theory behind vortexes and chakras, and the power they hold on earth. (citation) These locations are places where your emotions are magnified and then released to the elements. There are only a few dozen sites on earth that have been deemed vortexes and chakras. The main difference between the two, is that vortexes magnify your energy and send it outward, where as chakras are points where positive energy is bestowed back to the earth. Mount Shasta is the main chakra for the entire planet and provides an ideal site selection. Known as the Crown

Chakra it holds divine support as it stands strong and above all other mountains in the area. (Citations) It represents “All that is” and supports a connection to your divine self, giving you the power of knowingness. It was these qualities that informed my search for a site on Mount Shasta for future veterans to visit.

I first began my search through a review of Google Earth images. I located an area halfway up the mountain that would provide a perfect opportunity to situate a trail. For a site to reside on the mountain it would need to have an area that was somewhat level as programming different areas would be key to the site design. I also was looking for a site that’s elevation would not reside too high up the mountain as to avoid the thick snow in the winter. One import-

ant aspect was finding an area where a prospect refuge could reside as well. I was surprised to find that there was an existing trail that ventured off the road into the site I had selected known as Sand Flat. However, certain areas were unexplored and according to my maps, would provide ideal areas for framed viewing and reflection locations in site design.

From my visit to the site, I find that the scale in my mind did not match the scale of the site. I found that the area was quite vast and had many more opportunities than what I had previously believed about the site. The site did not disappoint in providing an ideal location to situate a new trail to incorporate the intentions in design.

## SITE VISIT

With a prospective ideal area to situate the PTSD reflection and healing trail design it became necessary to visit the mountain myself. I started to feel a pull to the mountain as I could hardly wait to see this volcanic natural wonder that resided just outside my relative backyard. I wondered how I would come upon the mountain for the first time. Would it be just slightly larger than the mountains around it? Would it be capped with snow? Would I see it only once arriving at its base?

All of these questions were answered over one hundred miles away from its base. Driving up I-5 I was struck with awe while passing through Red Bluff, and before I realized what had happened the mountain was right in front of me. Towering above the mountains around it, and all white from the storm just a few days before, I could not take my eyes off of it. It was inspiring, and it was no wonder multiple Indian tribes from the past, ecologists,

writers, advocates, and towns people all worship it, and are called to it every year.

I came into town and settled into my hotel room, I proceeded to the hotel restaurant where locals were playing liars dice at the bar, a game of bluffing and chance. It didn't take long to meet John a local in the town of Shasta. He was a free-spirit who had rebelled against the military at one point. He recalled moments with other service men, and we laughed about our time at basic training, as that is something all branches can relate to. John tells me his story before he left for military training. He said being from Eureka, you don't get a chance to see the mountain which is over a hundred miles away, unless you're in the sky. It was on the plane to a place where yelling in your face is normal and simple pleasures are rare, that he found home outside the plane window. It was the first time John had seen the mountain, and like many others, it called to him. He now

lives in Mount Shasta.

On the mountain, I park near the lower sand flat entry point where there is an access road to the trail head. I find many viewpoints along the trail with a very impressive first view. The sand flat clears the way, revealing the mountain towering above me, providing what felt like a constant and divine support. With the trail leading to the crest, halfway through I find that there is comfort in knowing once I reach my ideal view, I will be able to breeze back down.

I find that the site will need some deviation from the existing trail, but all signs point towards the mountain. The mountain is light, and it is beautiful, and left me feeling renewed in body, mind and spirit. Never have I experienced a place that inspired me to move forward and achieve. The positive reverberations from my visit are with me still, and I most definitely will be visiting again soon.

# INVENTORY

## SAND FLAT TRAIL

This trail already exists and creates a decent line in meandering through the site location, however does not create ideal views.

## GEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

Rock and Sand areas allow for different elemental experiences. Some areas are also flat, which allows for future site program elements.

## MARKERS

Markers indicate where the hiker should continue on during the winter season.

## SIGNAGE

Signs are located to indicate where the trail leads giving context to the hike.

## PARKING

The parking is located just off the A10 road that leads up the trail, this location resides still 1 mile away from the sand flat opening

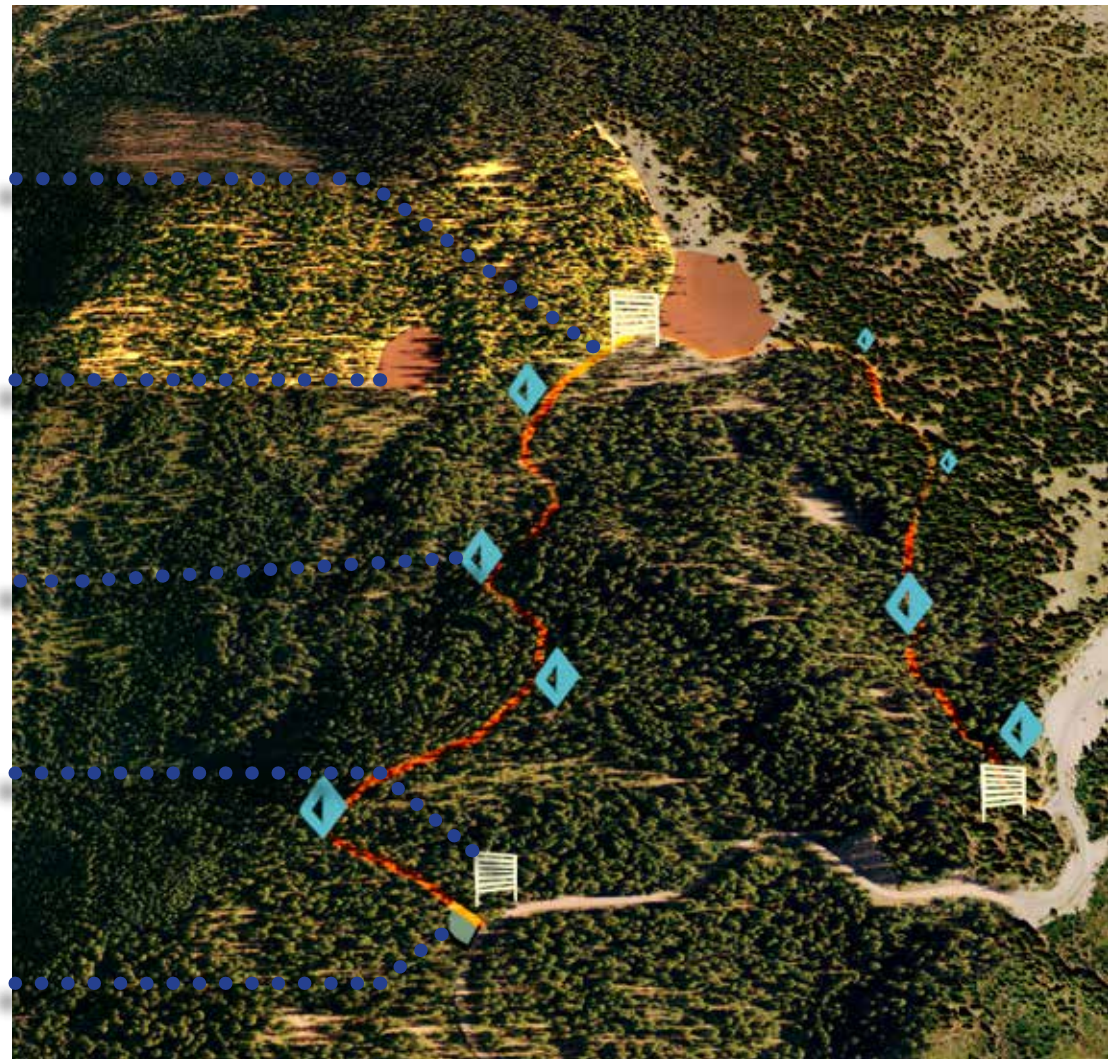


FIGURE 10. Upper Sand Flat Trail Inventory

# EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES



FIGURE 11. View of Mt Shasta with wildflowers and clouds.

## SEASONALITY:

The site being located in the Cascade Mountain range in northern California, provides an opportunity to experience the site during different seasons, bringing a different aspect to the site at all times of the year.

## AWE INSPIRING LOCATION

The mountain does well to create an aura of light and positivity, holds great power within it. The mountain is a volcano, and knowing this adds to the mystical nature it radiates as well.

## CHAKRA LOCATION:

Largest crown chakra location in the world provides divine support, and inspiration.

# DESIGN SOLUTION:

## THE WARRIORS JOURNEY & REFLECTION TRAIL

Using the beauty and elevations on the Volcanic Mount Shasta I'm proposing a trail design that capitalizes on the warrior's heart, and its ability to fight through adversity. This reflection journey uses the existing topology and elements to create a narrative for the veteran suffering from PTSD to follow as he takes on the mountain.

Applied pendulation in somatic experience on Mount Shasta, with methodology based on Campbells Monomyth in the hero's journey, there is a theme that corresponds to therapeutic methods and symbolism in mythic heroes and the journeys that led them to salvation, and profound wisdom

With many of the stopping

points representing the positive nature of being in the outdoors and especially the inspiring greatness of Mount Shasta there is a correlation to a positive emotional response when partaking in the reflection journey. Each stop has a theme of sorts in eliciting the response, and uses research on traditional and alternative methods in healing:

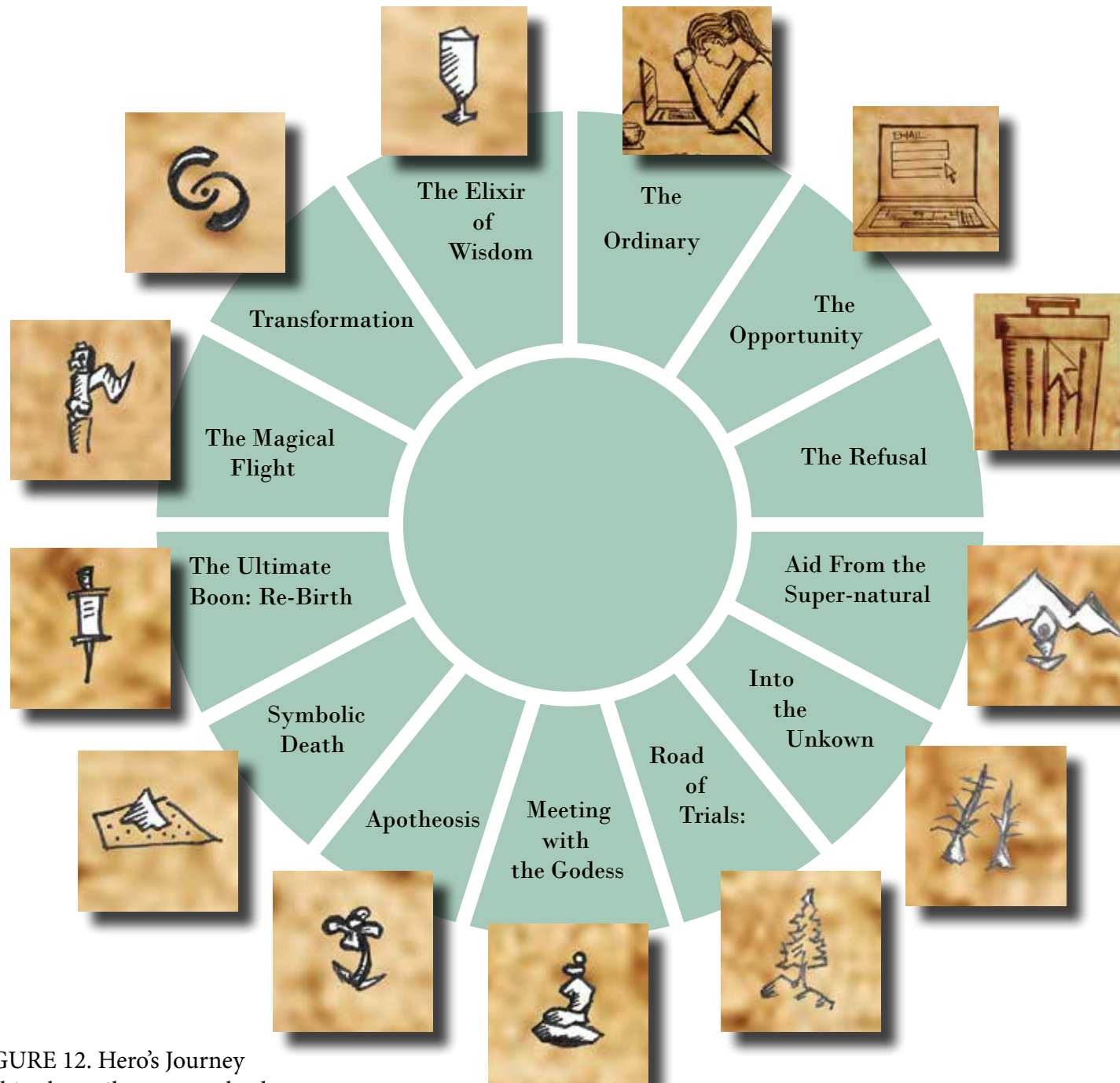


FIGURE 12. Hero's Journey within the trail concept wheel.

SEPERATION

Stop 1: Aid from the supernatural: Meditation: Inspiration: Deck

INITIATION

Stop2: crossing the threshold: confidence: tunnel of trees

Stop3: road of trials: perseverance: tree rock

Stop4: road of trials: gratitude: carving tree

Stop5: road of trials: courage: lava rock vitality

Stop6: Meeting with Goddess, Atonement with the Father: forgiveness: cairn stack

Stop7: Apotheosis: Joy: wild flower meadow

Stop 8: Bouldering Rocks

Stop9: Symbolic Death: serenity, relief: Prospect Refuge

Stop10: The ultimate Boon: Re-birth: satisfaction, accomplishment:

RETURN

Stop11: The magical Flight: euphoria, hope: short quotes on signage

Stop 12: Transformation: optimism: Ying Yang labyrinth.

# CONTEXT

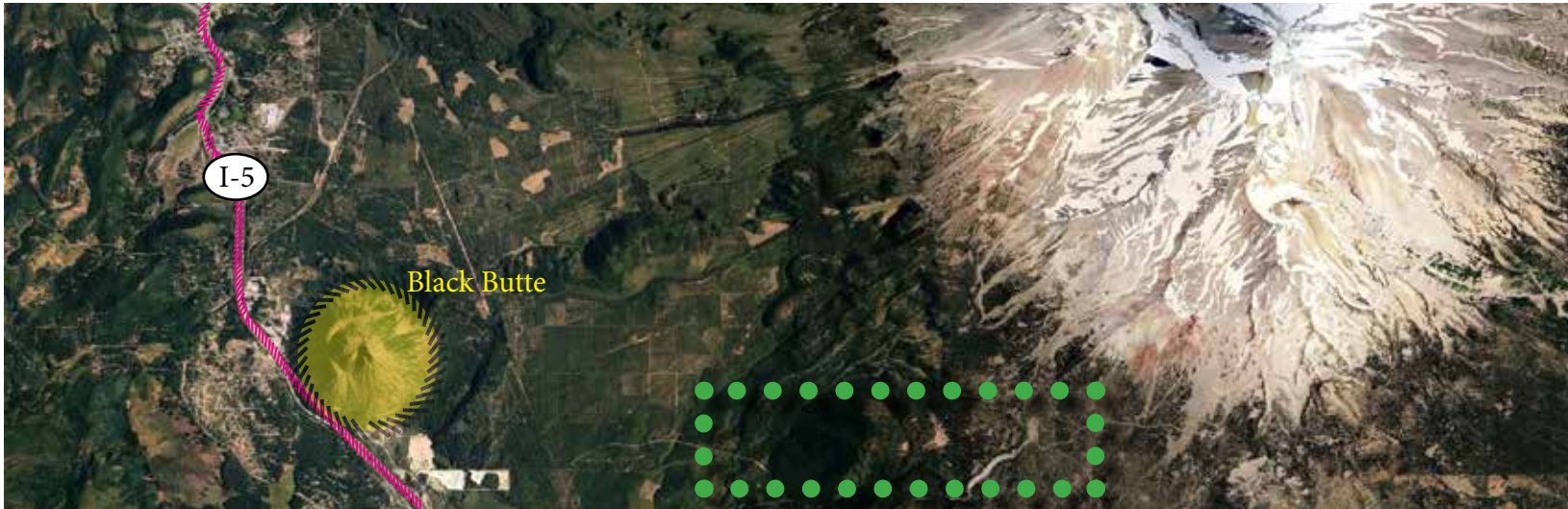


FIGURE 13. Mt Shasta and Black Butte Volcanoes in relation to



FIGURE 14. Road A10 and Existing Upper Sand Flat Trail Head in relation to site.



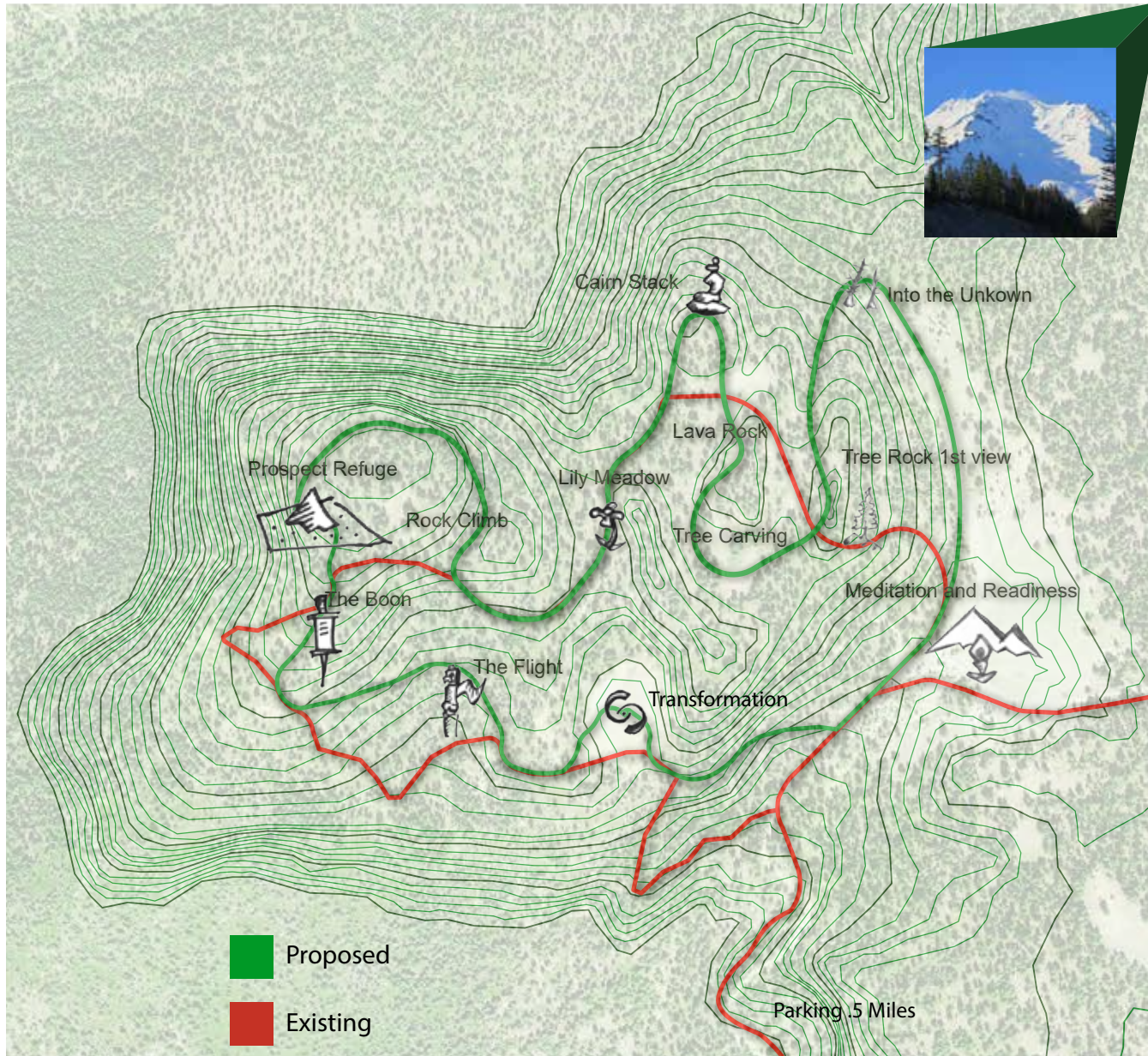


FIGURE 15. Proposed and existing trail.

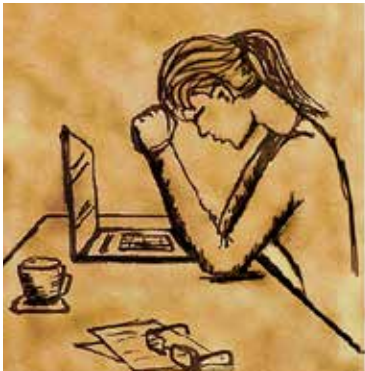


FIGURE 16.

## The Ordinary

Having endured years of trauma already, the veteran is stuck in a flight mode preventing him from finding peace. The ordinary becomes pain and sadness inflicted daily as the idea of happiness drifts farther away. The cyclical nature of trauma has created a tailspin for the veteran as he finds himself at the bottom of another bottle.



FIGURE 17.

## The Call

Organizations that treat veterans provide the call in the form of retreats to the mountain. Here the veterans have been selected and invited to join others on a reflection and healing adventure to Mount Shasta. A road trip in a van or bus with other veterans brings back the comradery associated with serving in the armed forces.

The trip starts to pull on his heart strings, beginning the pendulation affect by bringing him to the Northern California Veteran Cemetery which is one and a half hours south of the site. Here he pays respect and reflects on the lives of those who passed.

Continuing his journey, he sees the mountain for the first time. This elicits a sense of curiosity and adventure that replaces the ordinary with a chance at something different; a new life.

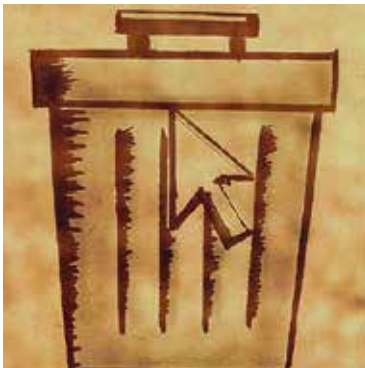


FIGURE 18.

## The Refusal

Although he is excited to see the mountain and all that it has to offer, he is also struck with a realization that he is about to embrace his trauma in this place. Like someone learning to public speak for the first time he is suddenly in a state to refuse the help he may receive by venturing to the mountain. This is an important step to overcome, because not taking it means another day without hope.



FIGURE 19. View of mountain from sand flat trail head.

## Aid from the Supernatural: INSPIRATION

The flatness of the area is a welcoming site for hikers as the parking lot is one mile away. This spot allows the veteran to check his gear and wits, as the mountain view in front of him Inspires confidence. It says bring it! Gather your courage. Like the flame that resides in the mountain so to can you conquer what is next. I believe this can be represented by a meditation area. Whether, on the sand during the summer months or on a deck during the winter. With the view locked on the mountain in

front of him, meditation ask the veteran to become centered, as he begins his journey to healing.



FIGURE 20. Yoga and meditation before the journey.

## Crossing the threshold: CONFIDENCE

Obtaining the confidence to take on the mountain after a centering of oneself, post meditation, the journey begins. With a renewed sense of vigor the eagerness grows to complete the path ahead. The path leading into the treeline, establishes the first steps into an uphill and unknown place. Although the tree line upon this first portion is somewhat dark, the path asks you for your continued trust by giving you a small window of what comes next. Through the trees and up the hill we can start to see the first open space along the climb. Hiking over downed trees and through the snow provide very capable obstacles. The topology of this section leads up a gradual slope to about 60 feet above where the threshold

begins. The meadow beyond is a light in a dark tunnel giving the passenger their first relief upon their journey. With relief points along the path, a continued trust in the trail and the mountain are obtained to put the veteran at ease, and to allow them to fully enjoy the awe-inspiring greatness that awaits them upon the mountain. In addition to the meadow, continued markers let the passenger know where they are going when the trail is covered by snow in the winter months.



FIGURE 21. Into the light

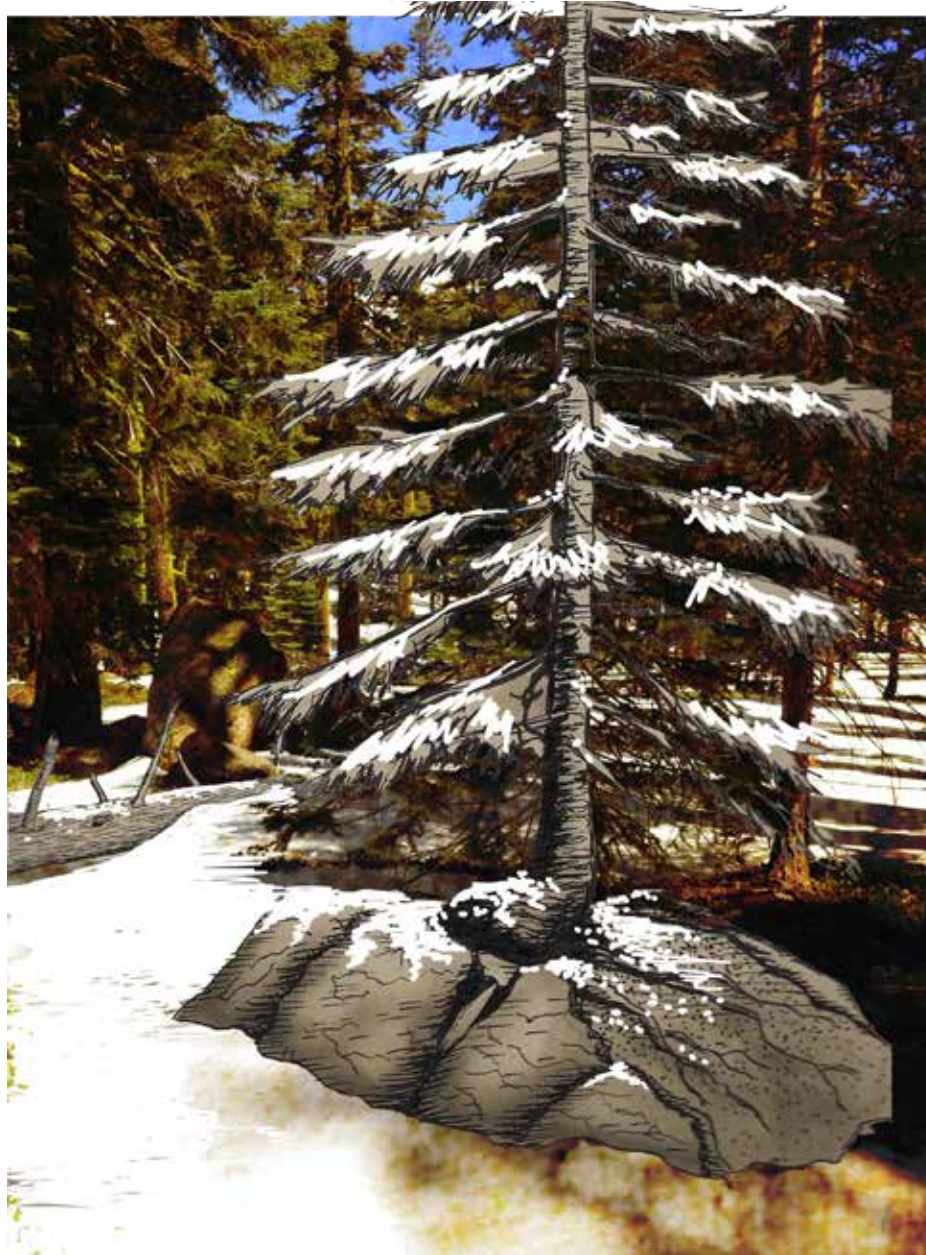


FIGURE 22. The tree finds solid ground despite circumstances.



## Road of Trials: first view of peak: PERSEVERANCE

Just as in life, many trials and obstacles are risen as we aim to accomplish our tasks and reach our goals, the road of trials upon this reflection trail is no different, however these trials represent an opportunity to gain more perspective in a positive light. As the passenger continues upon this portion of the path the reflection experience takes on new life. With a raised view now of the open space below the path continues upward for a few hundred feet. At this point she comes across a rock with a tree growing from it. This tree reminds her that with perseverance anything is possible. The

tree did not have a choice to be confined to such a space, just as she did not ask for the trauma to be inflicted upon her. Yet, the tree continues to grow despite the circumstances and in fact has found a way to prosper. So too then can she find healing upon the mountain. Here there is the first view of the volcano on the trail since the beginning. There will be continued views of the mountain as she continues, to reassure her of her place on the mountain, and to be sure that the mountain is still powerful and present in this journey with her. She is not alone.



FIGURE 23. Carving in a word of thanks

## Road of Trials: GRATITUDE

On his way back down from the mountain viewing point, he comes across a tree that has two purposes. It acts as an ideal opportunity to rest and it provides a space to get creative and share with others and with the mountain. With the ideal opportunity to practice art-therapy and interaction with others, the tree invites him to use a chisel and hammer to carve a symbol, of what he is thankful for, into the wood. This will evoke positive emotions and allow him to share a piece of himself with the mountain

and with others who may come after him. In the same sense he sees the gratitude of others who have come before him.

## Road of Trials: second view of peak: COURAGE

As she continues, the path leads her back up to the 2nd viewing of the mountain. While doing so she comes across a giant lava rock that reminds her of the power that resides in the mountain. Like the mountain, she is forever changing, and like the mountain, there are moving pieces within her. This rock represents the solidity within ourselves even though the emotions within us may never be. The rock also reminds her that she too has a power within her to endure anything that may come her

way. In this way, the rock inspires strength within her, and determination to tackle further obstacles.



FIGURE 24. Lava rock

# Meeting the Goddess, Atonement with the Father : FORGIVENESS

The veteran reaches this area of the trail still looking for forgiveness and atonement. The hero's journey is initiated in confrontation with the father, or the power that influenced his decisions, in the form of a stacked stone cairn. The size of the cairn is symbolic in representing the weight that the father's influence had on him. Yet, the cairn also represents a beacon, providing a light. Here the light shines on a blind spot that needs atonement for past wrongs. The veteran can take a rock that he has collect-

ed on this journey to add to the beacon of stone, symbolizing something inside the hero's heart that calls others to this place, so they may also find healing.



FIGURE 25. Cairn stack provides a weight to let go of.



FIGURE 26. Wild-flowers encompass the veteran.



## Apotheosis: JOY:

Natural wild flowers are extremely bountiful on the mountain during spring-summer months. The path leads through the open field, before reaching the next upward portion of the trail. After being forgiven and reaching a level of atonement, the veteran approaches a meadow of wild flowers. Here there is a sense of beauty and wonder of what may come next. Most importantly, he is now supported with realizations from his past and has addressed some major hurts. This meadow returns him to a place where

joy and awe are very much present. This is important as he ventures upward towards the trail's crest, where the final confrontation with what is affecting him most will be left to the mountain.



FIGURE 27. Bouldering a rock provides a view.

## Road of Trials: VITALITY

This next stop for the passenger is another reminder of how far he has come on his reflection journey. This is done by bringing him face to face one more time with the mountain before reaching prospect refuge. He is assured that the guidance of the mountain is with him as he confronts his ultimate trauma. Bouldering from one rock to the next the veteran earns a view of the mountain and a place to rest, fill his lungs with the clean air, and gather himself before the final ascent.

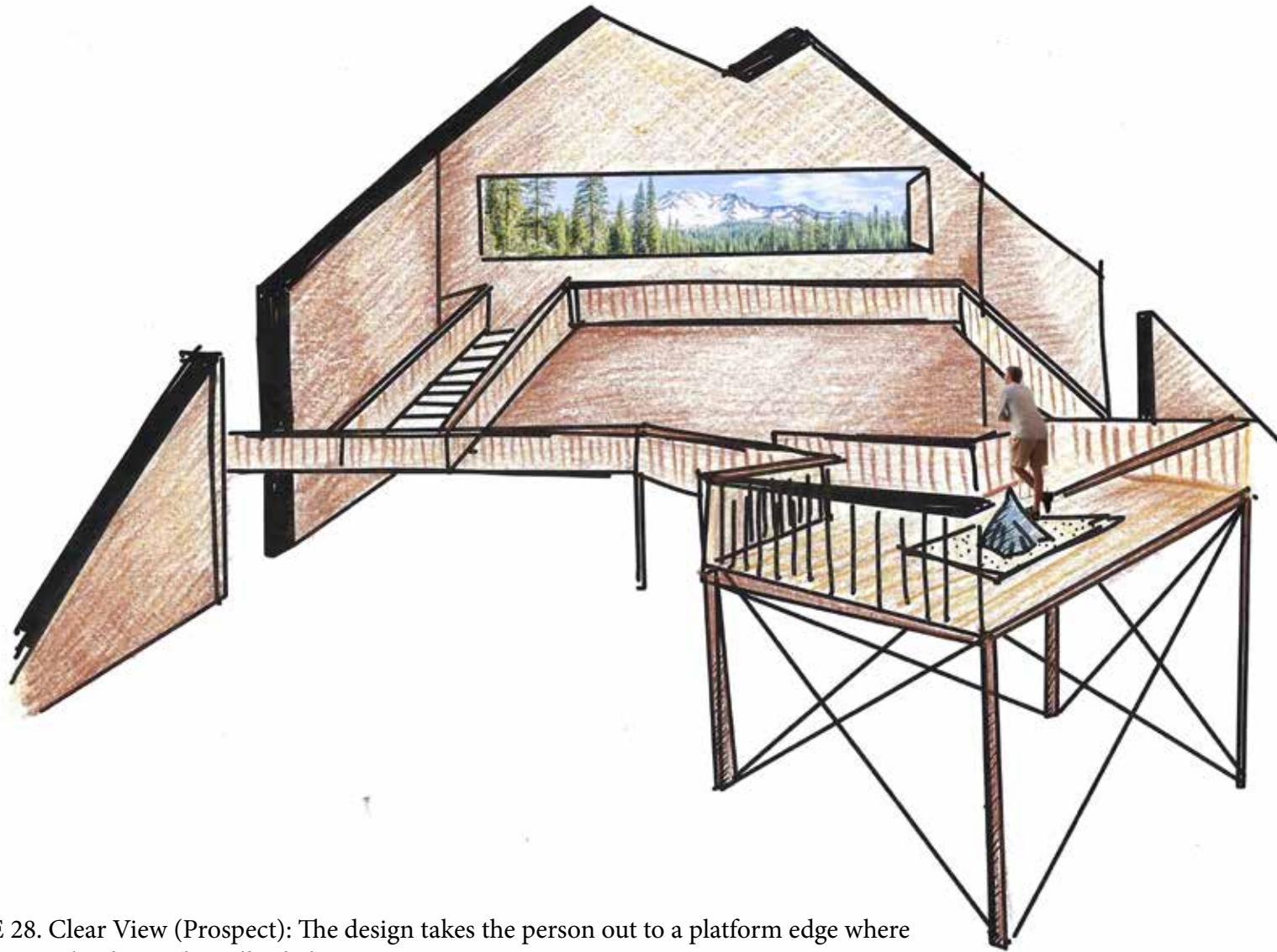


FIGURE 28. Clear View (Prospect): The design takes the person out to a platform edge where they can now clearly see the valley below.

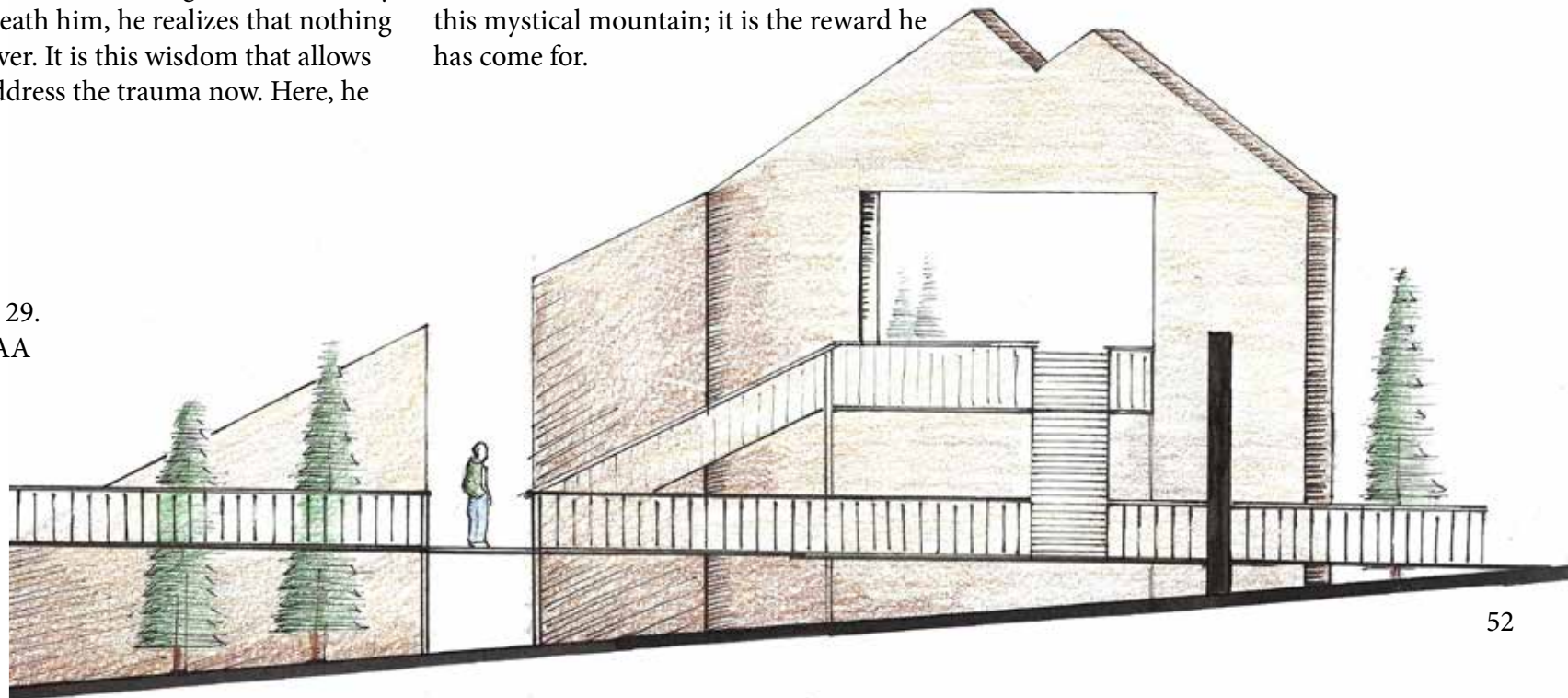
## Symbolic Death and Rebirth: SERENITY, RELIEF

Having reached the highest point along the trail, he can now start to see glimmers of the valley below through gaps in the tree line. However, there is still no clear view unless he ventures forward. Refuge arrives in the form of a platform resembling the mountain. Here he can walk out on the platform and see clearly what ground he has covered below him. With Black Butte, the extinct volcano sitting across the valley floor beneath him, he realizes that nothing lasts forever. It is this wisdom that allows him to address the trauma now. Here, he

releases his trauma to the elements, by writing in the sand pit, what has hurt him most: war, addiction, pain, suffering, anxiety, etc. The elements and mother nature erase his writings, and simultaneously transmute his trauma.

He feels comfort in releasing that chapter of his life, about letting it go, so a new chapter can be written. This is the reason he has ventured into the woods on this mystical mountain; it is the reward he has come for.

FIGURE 29.  
Section AA



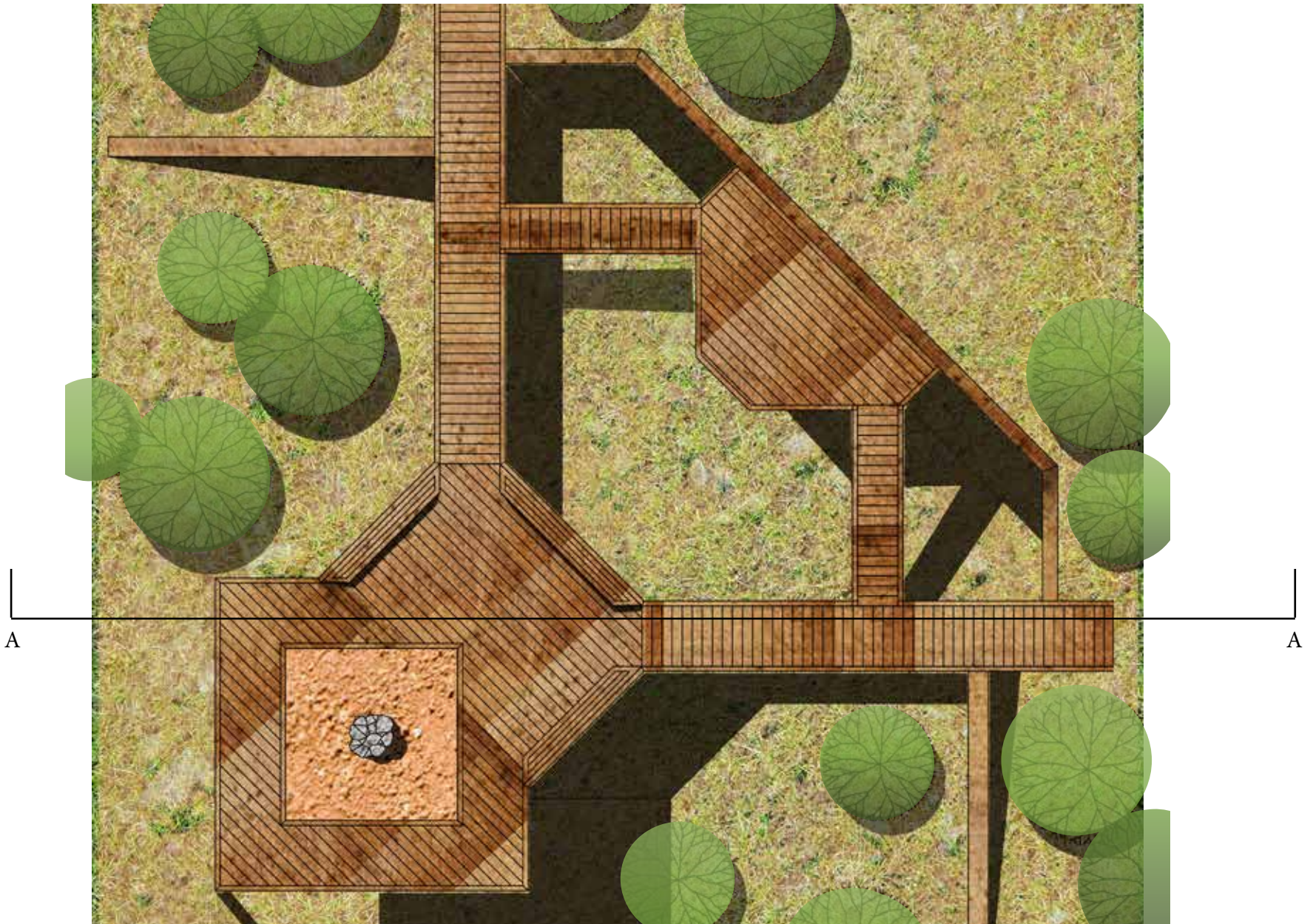


FIGURE 30. Plan view of prospect refuge.

Safe Place (Refuge): The platform design has taken the form of a wedge to create a refuge for those enjoying the view.

Mountain support: after having had multiple framed views of the mountain, the veteran feels comforted knowing his place, and the mountain's in correlation.

Black Butte: The extinct volcano in clear view, the veteran is provided time to reflect on life, and is reminded that we are a glimpse in time, so enjoy what is present now.

Southern Facing: This ensures that the site is under constant sun, and that shadows are not projected or dominating the space.

## Receiving the Ultimate Boon: SATISFACTION, ACCOMPLISH- MENT

Granted the boon of rebirth he is awakened to his true self and purpose in life. With this new outlook he is inspired to achieve new heights. Returning home to family and friends, the veteran is reminded of the new possibilities life has to offer. Positive words on art type scrolls leading downhill help segue to another portion of this path, representing the flight. Each quote inspires the veteran to look at life from a wholistic perspective.

## QUOTE IDEAS:

Every moment is a fresh beginning.

-T.S. Eliot

Make each day your masterpiece.

-John Wooden

Wherever you go, go with all your heart.

-Confucius

It is never too late to be what you might have been.

-George Eliot





FIGURE 31. Signs of a new beginning.

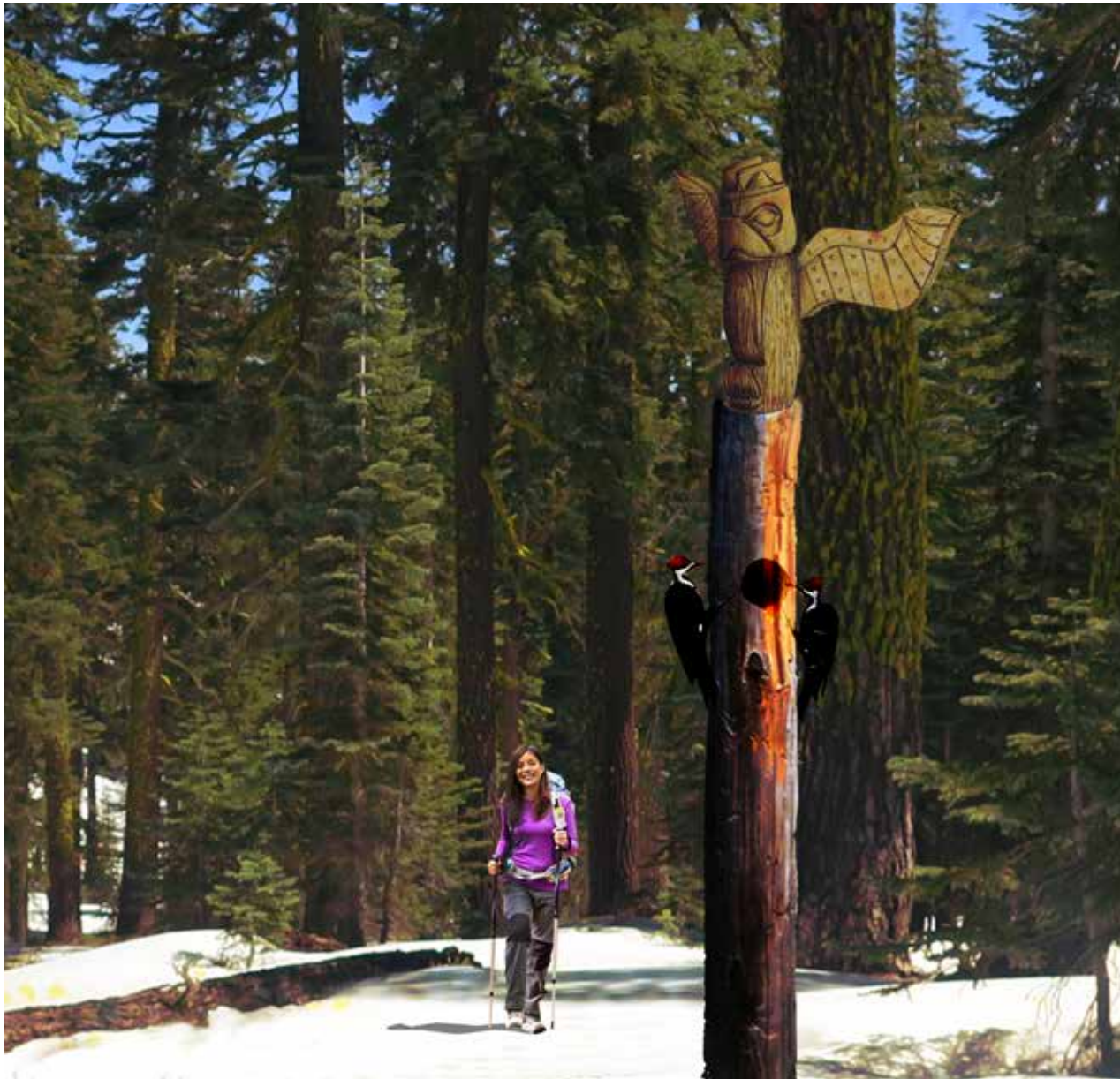


FIGURE 32. Woodpecker totem.

## Magical Flight Pursued by the Guardian: EUPHORIA, HOPE

With so much gained from the experience on the mountain, he realizes he is returning home with a new hope. The flight in the hero's journey is represented by returning home with the reward. As the path leads him steadily down, it resembles the flight of the native Pileated woodpecker.

Here the veteran can witness one of the most beautifully colored and uniquely behaved native bird species drumming on the pines around him. The beat of the woodpecker's beak represents a new rhythm to

life, and provides cadence to his now much lighter steps down the hill.



FIGURE 33. Pileated Woodpecker

Pileated Woodpecker: *Dryocopus pileatus*

The bird is unique in its up and down flight pattern and its ability to make holes in trees big enough to cause its failure. However, their ideal home resides in dead pine and cedar trees.

The flight is represented by totem poles made with native wood to allow for woodpecker habitation.

## Transformation: Bringing both worlds together: OPTIMISM

In this place she's provided the opportunity to think and reflect on what has transpired thus far on the mountain. Sitting upon a stone in a yin yang labyrinth design, the veteran uses her newfound optimism to transcend the past, leave the trauma behind her and move forward into the future. She has been transformed in her thinking, and that allows her to now pass along the wisdom and benefit she has received in coping with her past traumas.

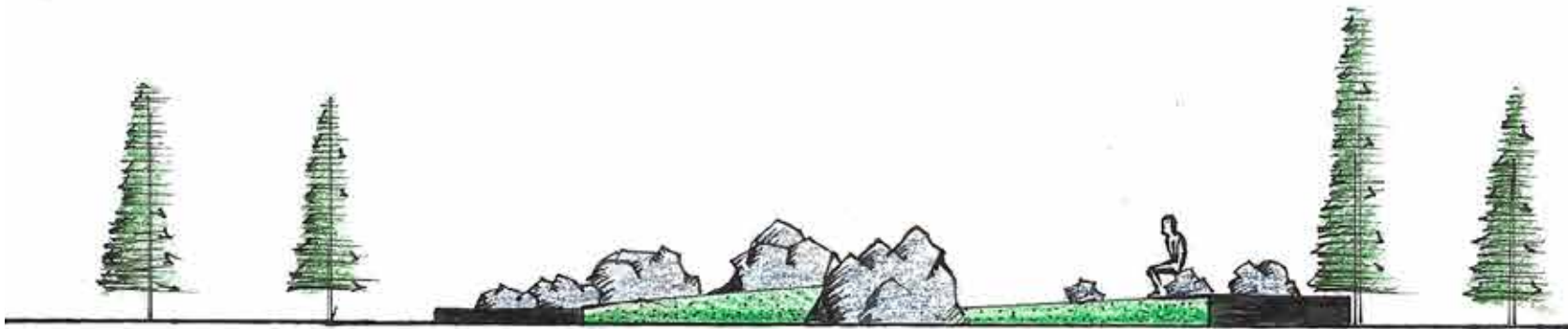


FIGURE 34. Section BB of labyrinth.

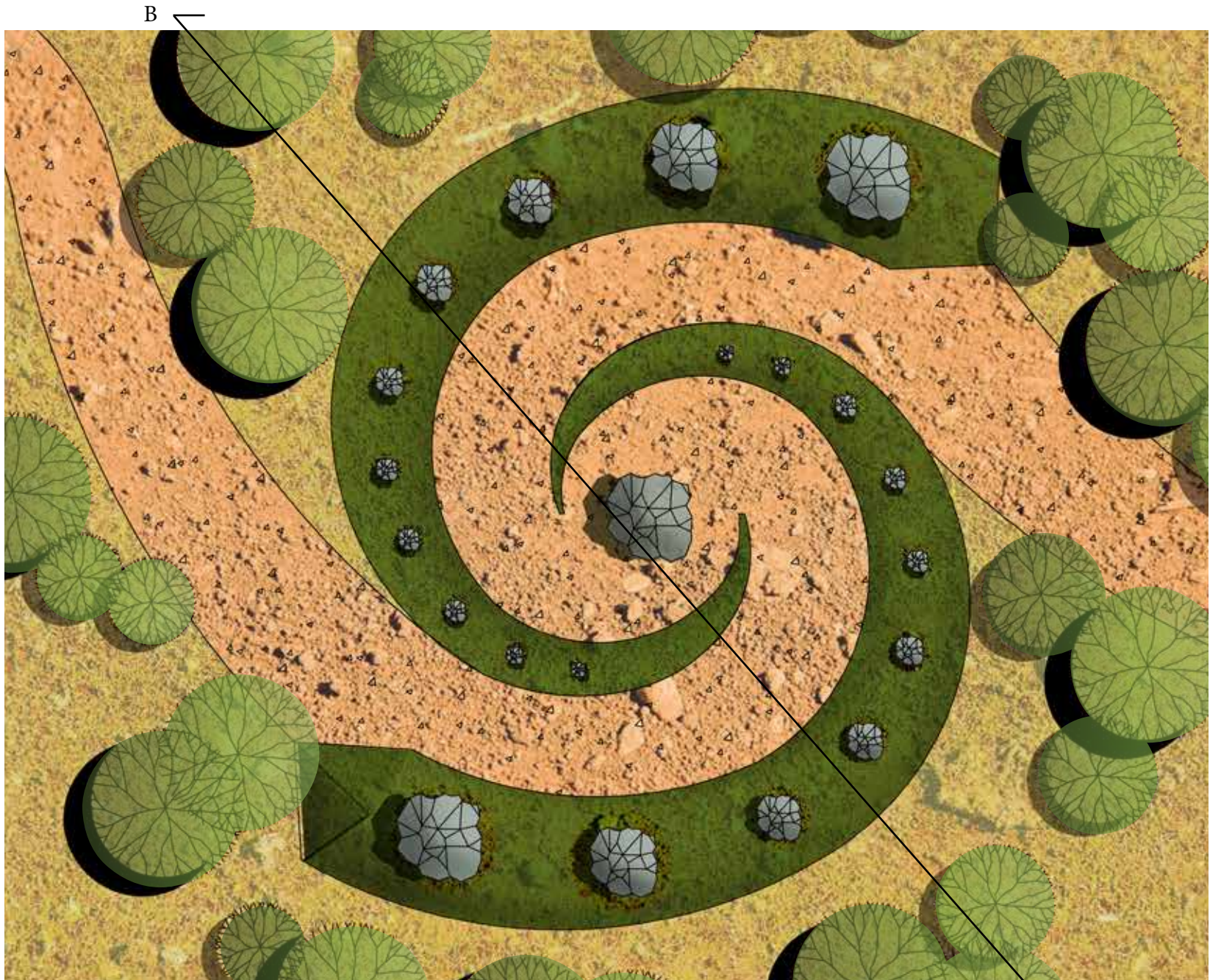


FIGURE 35. Labyrinth

B —

## Sharing the elixir of wisdom: ALTRUISM

Returning home with wisdom of himself, he can now share the experience with others. He is motivated from the power the mountain has bestowed upon him, having garnered purpose to help others who may really need it. Going home aware of the change in himself, his new purpose is to integrate positivity into his everyday life and share it with others. Remembering the pain, in this sense, can help him remember to be thankful for the life he still embodies.

## CONCLUSION

For the veteran who embarks on the hero's journey on Mount Shasta, the work may never be over. Their lives now take on new meaning and purpose, as their new mission becomes helping other brothers and sisters in healing from PTSD, if they are in fact able to recover from trauma themselves.

Knowing the insidious nature of this disease, we must look for alternative methods to address it. Therefore, finding new methodology in treatment is essential, for assisting the veteran in moving

towards understanding and acceptance of the trauma.

After coming to an understanding of the established healing modalities for veterans afflicted with PTSD, a design method became clear. Using pendulation therapy in conjunction with the supportive natural environment of Mt Shasta, I created a site design with programming elements to bring forth the positive emotional reactions needed for therapy to be effective.

With each stop along the path

representing a different emotional component in correlation to the hero's journey, (Campbell) the site rests within a narrative that represents healing for the wounded warrior. This aspect of the design entices those looking for adventure and may represent a trial for veterans unaware of the healing they may still need. By merging cognitive therapy with nature, this design creates a unique opportunity to return the PTSD sufferer back to a state of wholeness.

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