

ABSTRACT

PROJECT NAME: White Sand Retreat

LOCATION: Lac Du Flambeau, WI

ENTRY CATEGORY: Residential

100 WORD DESCRIPTION:

How can a constructed landscape both celebrate its natural setting while creating a compatible modern human use? A family retreat on Whitesand Lake is a sensitive repurposing of an existing cabin site that moves away from nostalgia and temporality to permanence and play. The combination of immersive respite, material simplicity and minimal intervention lay the foundation for the landscape framework. The design reflects a landscape led, comprehensive vision through an ecological and pedestrian-centric lens, which places the uniqueness of the client at the forefront of the landscape.

NARRATIVE

SITE

The site is situated within a mixed deciduous and coniferous forest that lies adjacent to Whitesand Lake, a beautiful shallow sand lake connected to the Bear Creek Watershed and located just outside Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. The artist-client acquired the 12-acre property located adjacent to their existing land where the new retreat is located. Originally logged in the early 1900's, and again in the 1960's, the existing cabin and yard had been unoccupied for the last ten years. The site sits 20 feet above the lake creating great views from the hillside and a dramatic transition to the lake.

PROCESS

The landscape architect was asked to transform the whole site into an immersive family retreat. The process for site development began with the establishment of a framework and vision for the whole 22-acre site. The goal for the work was to provide a deeper and more inspired connection between land and the buildings and people to the land and one another. The forest and lake are undergoing shifts related to climate change and steps were taken in our process to plan a sustainable future for the land as well. The landscape architect led the development of the site framework in collaboration with the architect and client, establishing a cohesive vision for the land that helped place and give logic to building and site program. The landscape architect spent significant time through many seasons inventorying plants and trees and spatial conditions of the forest. The landscape architect also engaged in deep research on the ecology, history, community and culture of the surrounding area to ground the project.

FRAMEWORK

The design work was divided into two phases, a Framework Plan and Vision for the whole property, and a Phase One implementation plan and documentation for the new Retreat Site. The overall site programming, combined with strategies for land stewardship and sustainability, reinforce the goal of connecting the family to the land and to each other. Three primary zones were established on the Retreat site with distinct program: the Clearing, Overlook and Lakeside.

CLEARING: The clearing acts as an active transition zone for the Retreat House. A reconfigured ¼ mile aggregate road leads you through the mixed deciduous forest and into a clearing edged with replanted maple trees, transitioning you through a pollinator meadow and onto an aggregate court. Three landforms at the front door, inspired by the client's sculpture, set a tone of delight and whimsy while a bocce court anchors the clearing edge.

OVERLOOK: The overlook zone operates as connective social space. A simple no mow fescue lawn helps transition from forest to the retreat house and lake – it's also a place for passive and active games and gatherings. A locally sourced stone terrace adjacent to the house provides space to cook, eat and watch the sunset. The boathouse terrace, set just below the gathering lawn, allows prospect to the lake and space to connect and watch the loons swim.

NARRATIVE *continued*

LAKESIDE: A carefully sited 50' wide restructuring of the hillside, incorporating a landform and locally sourced cast concrete stairs, mediates the lakeside forest and transitions from the Overlook to the lake. A locally harvested and milled cedar deck- incorporating steps, ramp and a pier- is designed both as a space of gathering as a transition space from shore and boathouse to lake.

STEWARDSHIP:

A focused site stormwater management strategy utilizes a combination of a green roof to slow and pond water and a bocce court which acts as an infiltration field for the roof water passing it into the existing sand subsoil, filtering the roof water before it returns to the lake. A productive landscape was also integrated through a strategy of expanding an existing vegetable garden for produce and integrating bosques of maples into the clearing and forest edges for maple syrup production and forest health. A land management plan helped establish a healthy forest mix and floor with the establishment of tree nursery to plant trees annually on the property by the family.

CONCLUSION

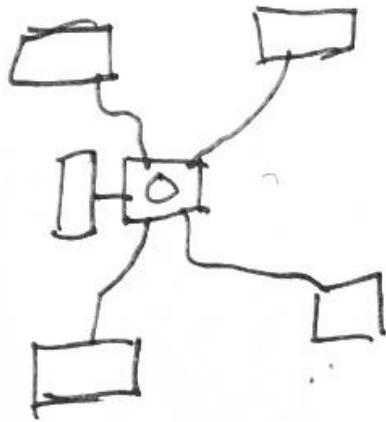
The project sets a precedent for an ecologically sensitive and immersive landscape that stitches site and building program carefully within a cohesive and inspired framework. This project is worthy of an award because it sets a new precedent for the cabin typology and it demonstrates the agency of landscape architects to shape spaces that amplify the richness of regional materials, celebrate native ecological communities through bold design, and imagine new ways a family can deepen their connection to each other and the land.



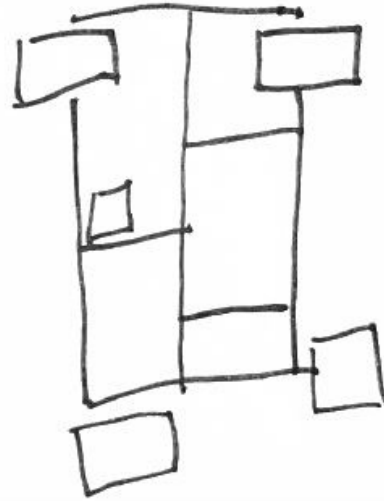
WHITESAND RETREAT

A family retreat in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin is a sensitive re-purposing of an existing cabin site that moves away from nostalgia and temporality to permanence and play. The combination of immersive respite, material simplicity and minimal intervention lay the foundation for the landscape framework.

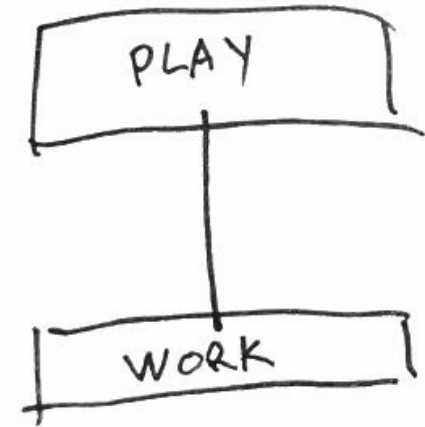
DESIGN CONCEPTS



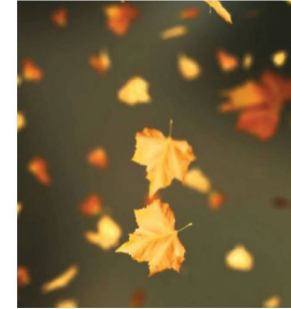
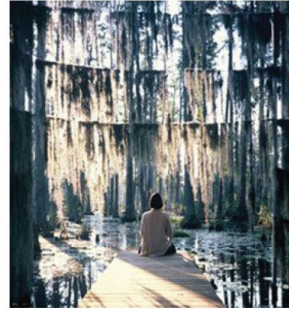
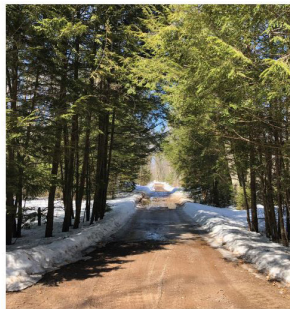
ROOMS



CAMP US



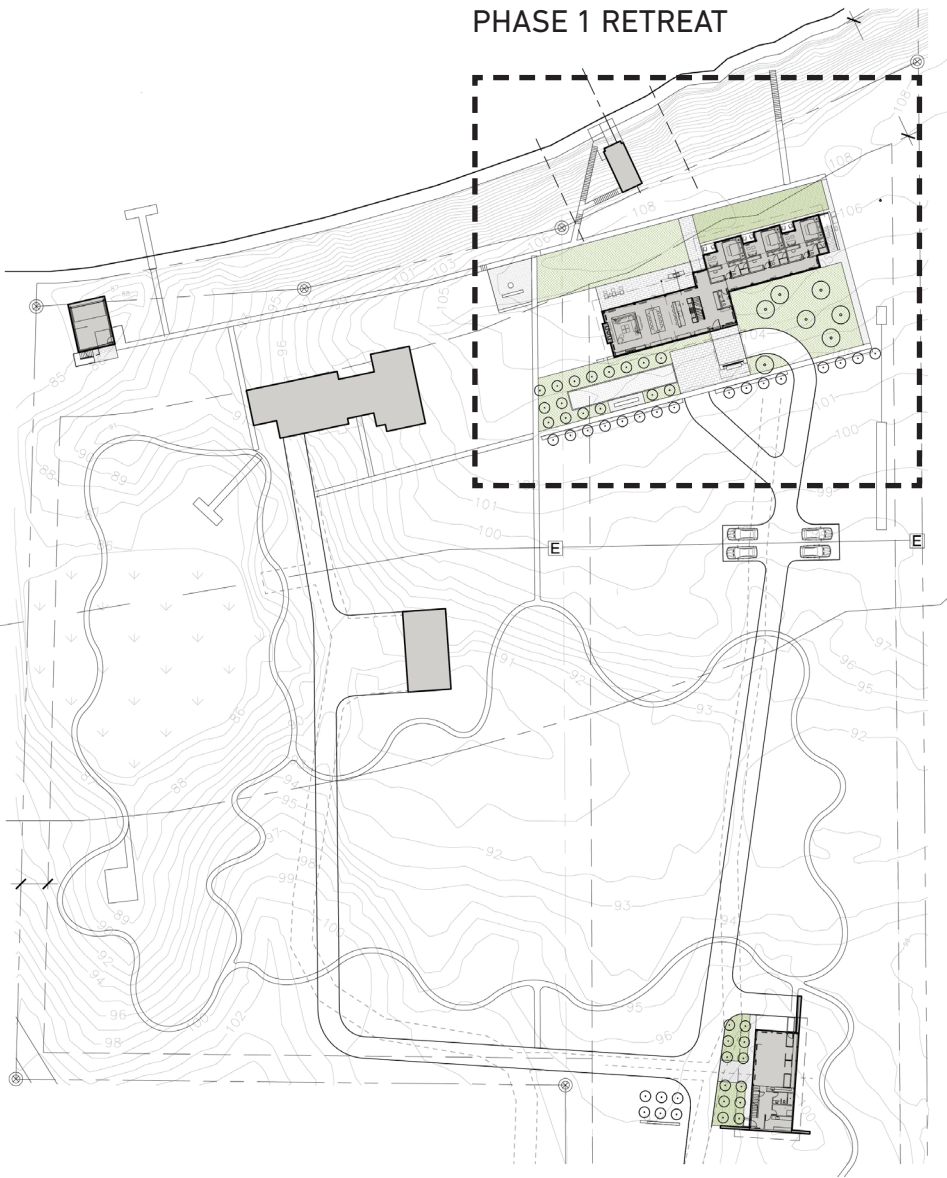
WORK | PLAY



DESIGN DRIVERS

Two primary themes guided the design concepts, EXPERIENCE, the phenomena of the site, the concept of retreat and the dynamics of being with family. TIME and the role it plays relative to experiencing seasons in a place, the altering and slowing of time through shifting rituals and movement.

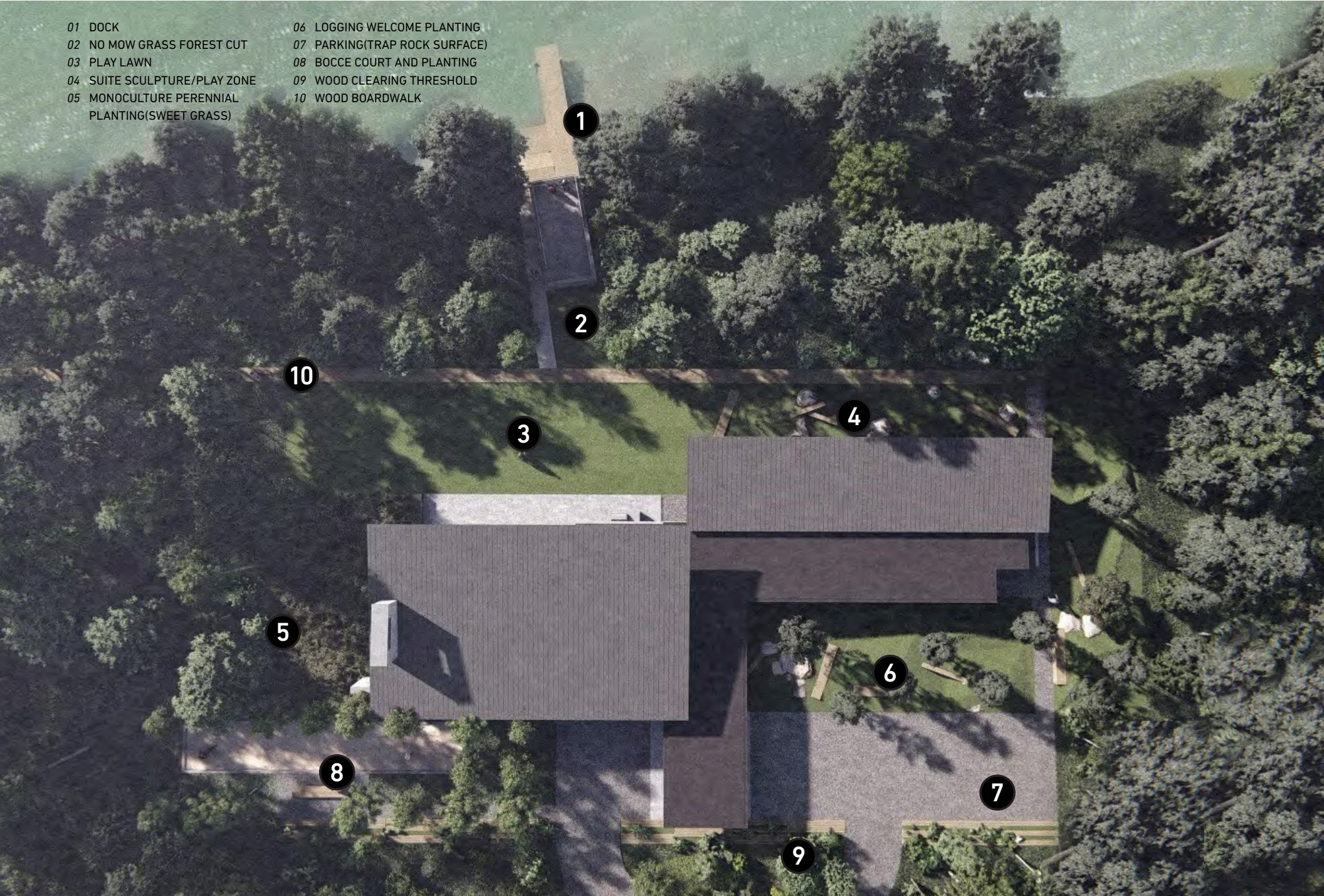
PHASE 1 RETREAT



VISION AND RESEARCH

Left: The design work was split into two phases, a Framework and Vision for the whole property, and a Phase One plan and documentation for the new Retreat Site. Right: To help ground the vision, deep research was done on the ecology, history, community and culture of the surrounding area.

- 01 DOCK
- 02 NO MOW GRASS FOREST CUT
- 03 PLAY LAWN
- 04 SUITE SCULPTURE/PLAY ZONE
- 05 MONOCULTURE PERENNIAL PLANTING(SWEET GRASS)
- 06 LOGGING WELCOME PLANTING
- 07 PARKING(TRAP ROCK SURFACE)
- 08 BOCCIE COURT AND PLANTING
- 09 WOOD CLEARING THRESHOLD
- 10 WOOD BOARDWALK



RETREAT SITE

The overall site programming, combined with strategies for land stewardship and sustainability, reinforce the goal of connecting the family to the land and to each other. Three primary zones were established on the Retreat Site with distinct program, the Clearing, Overlook and Lakeside zones



CLEARING

The clearing acts as an active transition zone for the Retreat House. A reconfigured aggregate road leads you through the mixed deciduous forest and into a clearing edged with replanted maple trees transitioning through a pollinator meadow. An aggregate court, landforms and bocce court anchors the clearing edge.



PROCESS

Left: The team spent significant time on the land inventorying, programming, planning and constructing the site. Right: The landforms were built from stringlines and stakes set onsite by the landscape architect and built in collaboration with the contractor from on-site materials.



OUTSIDE - INSIDE:

The landscape architect worked closely with the architect to establish immersive and experiential transitions from outside to inside and inside out. Left: A pollinator meadow within the Clearing. Right: the playful landforms visible from the Retreat House entry.



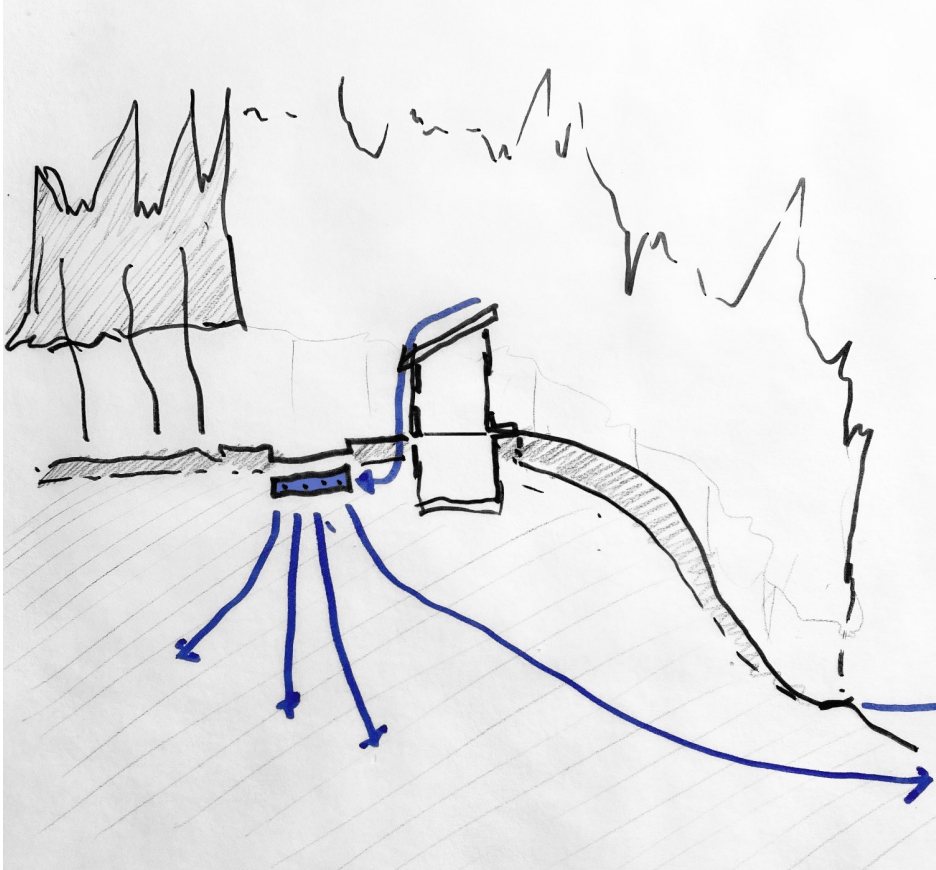
THRESHOLD

Three iconic landforms at the front door, inspired by the client's sculpture, set a tone of delight and whimsy and act as a visual threshold to the retreat in combination with the bocce court and front entry.



BOCCE COURT

Built from all locally sourced materials, the bocce court is a place of play and connection for the family. The court anchors the clearing edge on the west and provides a space of passage to the overlook.



STEWARDSHIP

Left: The stormwater strategy uses the bocce court as an infiltration field passing roof stormwater into the existing sand subsoil, slowing and filtering it before returning to the lake. Right: The land management plan established a fenced tree nursery for the family to plant trees together annually on the property.



OVERLOOK AND WHITESAND

The Overlook zone, which sits 20' above Whitesand Lake, operates as the connective social space for the family. A simple no mow fescue lawn helps transition from forest to the retreat house and lake and a place for passive and active games and gatherings.



PROSPECT

A locally sourced stone terrace adjacent to the house provides space to cook, eat and watch the sunset. The boathouse terrace, set just below the gathering lawn, provides a prospect to the lake and space to connect and watch the family (and the loons) swim.



TRANSITION

A strategic 50' wide restructuring of the hillside, incorporating landform and locally sourced cast concrete stairs, mediates the lakeside forest and transitions from the Overlook to the boathouse and lake.



THE PIER

A locally harvested and milled cedar deck, set amongst existing trees, incorporates seating steps, a ramp and pier - designed both as a space of movement and gathering, and as transition space from shore and boathouse to lake.



RETREAT

The project sets a precedent for an ecologically sensitive and immersive landscape that stitches site and building program carefully into a cohesive and inspired landscape framework.