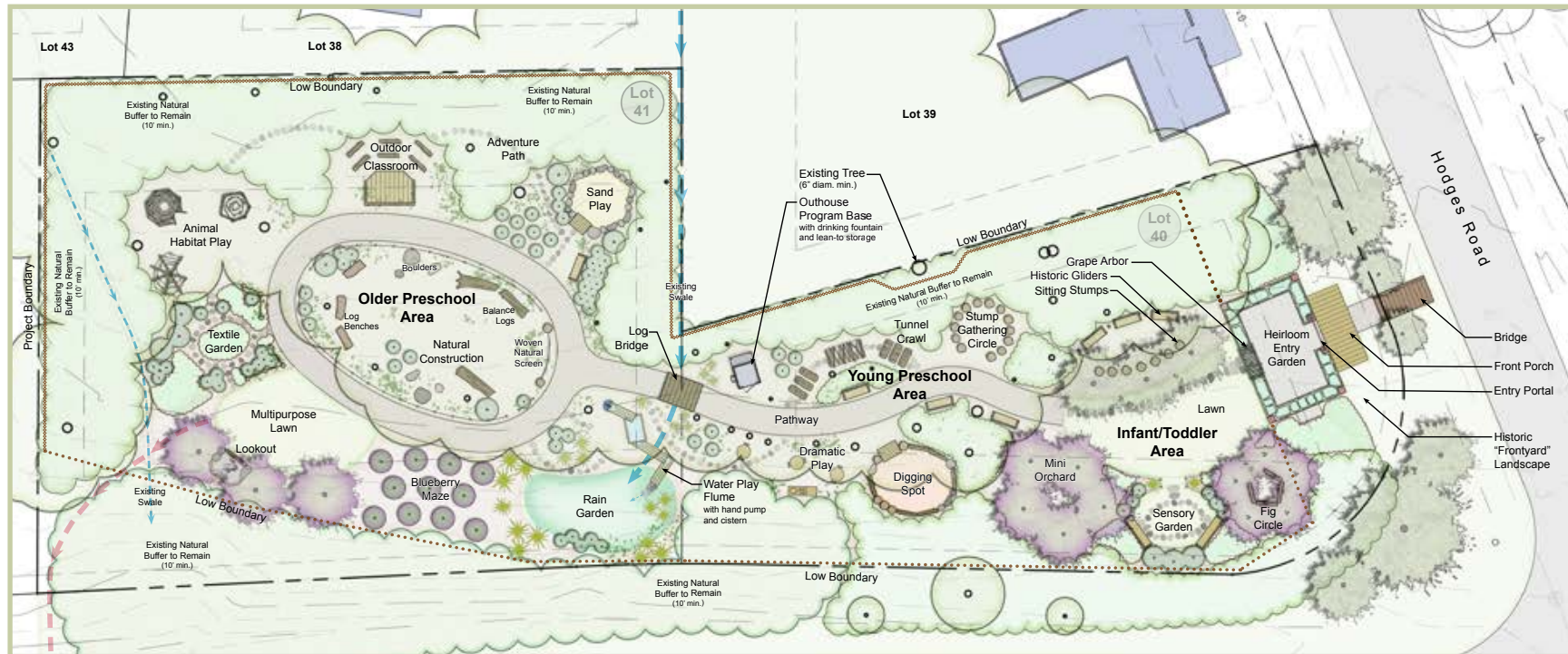


Program

Creating a Model Outdoor Learning Environment

Glencoe Mill Village, Burlington, NC



June 2012



Alamance Partnership for Children

Program

Creating a Model Outdoor Learning Environment

Glencoe Mill Village, Burlington, NC



Research and community facilitation by
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June 2012

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Mission and Goals

The program is framed by the following mission and goals proposed by participants in the first stakeholder workshop.

Mission

The Alamance Partnership for Children Model Outdoor Learning Environment is a child-focused, hands-on, natural, therapeutic environment, intended to provide professional education to early childhood professionals and enjoyment of residents and visitors, while respecting the historic context.

Goals

A place to have fun.

- Children learn through play.
- Increase opportunities for play and physical activity.

A place for learning – children, parents, childcare professionals.

- Children, very young to school age, opportunities to learn.
- Parent education/training.
- Childcare training.
- Experiential learning.
- Create teachable moments.
- Guided instruction.

A place for rest.

- Restful, peaceful.
- Healing, therapeutic garden.

A place to explore nature.

- Free exploration of the natural world leads to tacit knowledge – i.e. learning through experience.
- Nature stimulates creativity.
- Supports development of long-term interest in nature.

A place with history.

- Reflects historic landscape elements, including setbacks, plant material, drainage swales with bridges.
- Tribute to children who grew up working in Glencoe Mill.

A place within a larger system/context.

- Glencoe Mill Village.
- How can this approach be replicated in Glencoe Mill Village backyards?
- Themes could be extended into adjacent parks and trails.
- New Urbanism development has been proposed – 22 acres adjacent to village.
- Old Glencoe School is to be redeveloped.
- Mountains-to-Sea trail passes by the Model OLE site.
- Natural systems.



Stakeholders identify key words to be incorporated into the project mission.



Stakeholders list goals and potential user groups for the Model OLE.

User Groups

The following potential user groups were identified by the stakeholders:

Glencoe Mill Village residents.

Whole community – open access.

- 82 year old father-in-law still swings from trees/vines.
- ‘Staycation’ for Alamance County residents. Glencoe not well known by community.
- Bed and breakfast visitors.

Children – 0-5yrs and school-age, children with disabilities (autism spectrum).

- Focus on younger children but not exclude older children.

School teachers and children.

- Field trip destination.
- School superintendent wants to get children outdoors.

Homeschoolers.

Training/education groups.

- Childcare providers.
- ACC course work.
- Elon University Environmental Studies Program.

NC Birding Trails.

Artists – photographers, painters, textile artists.

Bee keepers – bee yard in GMV.

Long distance cyclists and hikers on Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

Textile Heritage Museum visitors – garden with historical dye plants.

Alamance County Children’s Museum visitors.

Community gardeners.

- Could fit within historic context of backyard garden plots.

Former residents and mill workers – interested in learning what’s going on, what’s changed, and what used to be.

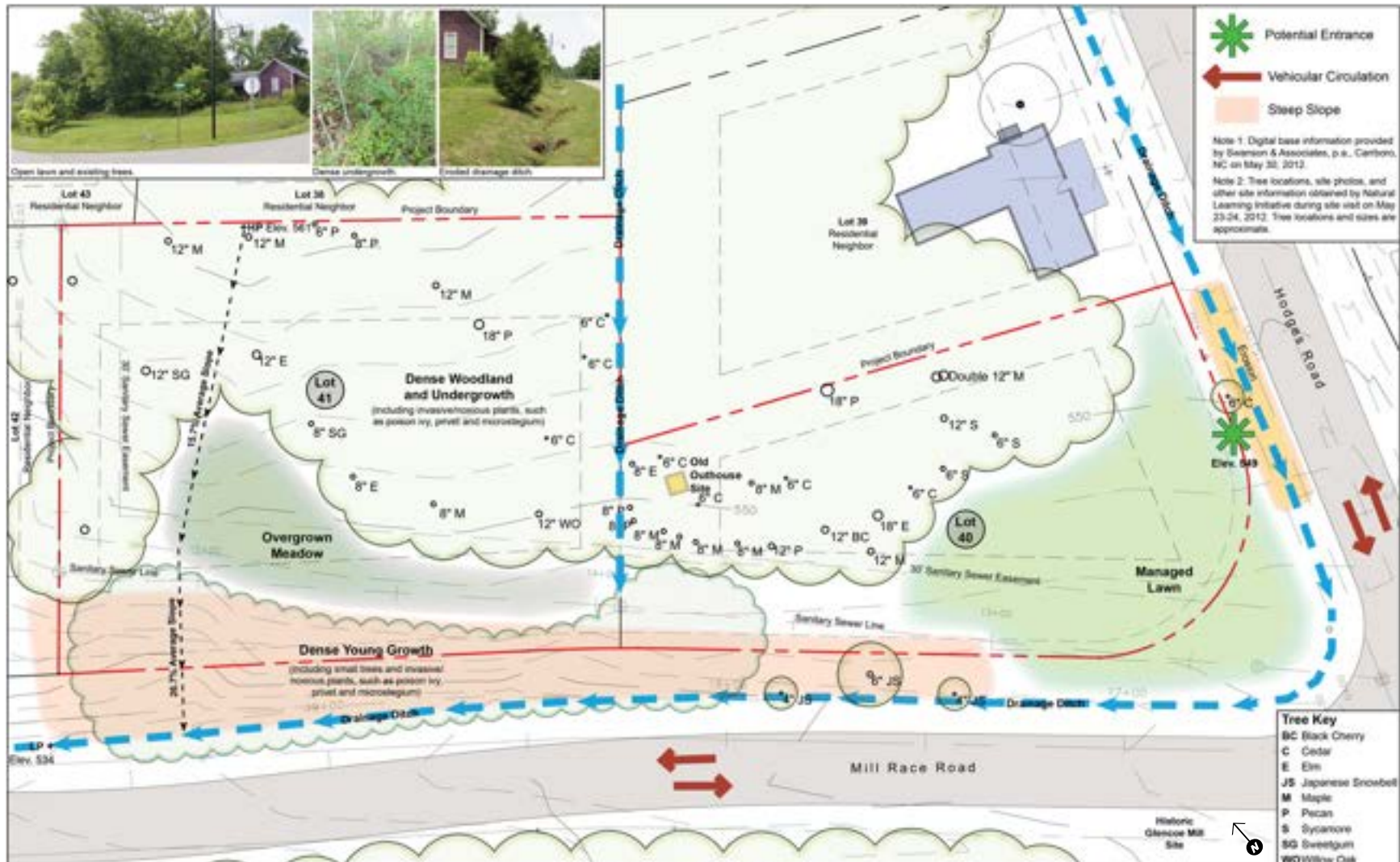
Local churches – particularly pre-K and afterschool programs.

Other Partnerships for Children.

Non-human users

- Osprey, barred owls, deer, coyotes, bald eagles, beaver, snakes, lizards, turkeys.
- Highlighting wildlife might help engage children in what lives in their own neighborhood.

Site Opportunities and Constraints



During a site visit on May 23-24, 2012, information about site opportunities and constraints was gathered. Locations and sizes of trees within dense woodland are approximate. An old

outhouse site was discovered in the northwest corner of Lot 40. Drainage ditches are located along the property boundary between Lots 40 and 41 and along Hodges Road and Mill Race

Road. The average slope of the interior of Lot 41 is 15.7% and the average slope along Mill Race Road is 26.7%.

Model Outdoor Learning Environment Layout



Note 1: Digital base information provided by Swanson & Associates, p.a., Carrboro, NC on May 30, 2012.
 Note 2: Tree locations, site photos, and other site information obtained by Natural Learning Initiative during site visit on May 23-24, 2012. Tree locations and sizes are approximate.
 Note 3: Layout not meant for construction.

The Model Outdoor Learning Environment is sub-divided into three areas: Infant/Toddler, Young Preschool, and Older Preschool. Developmentally appropriate settings are located

within each area. Several settings link to the historic context of the site, including the Outhouse Program Base, Water Play Flume, and Textile Garden. The Historic "Frontyard" Landscape

mirrors others in Glencoe Mill Village and includes a Bridge and Front Porch. The Heirloom Entry Garden marks the footprint of a typical mill house and creates an entry into the Model OLE.

Historic Front Yard Settings

1. Bridge

The *Bridge* mirrors historic pedestrian bridges that cross drainage swales throughout Glencoe Mill Village.

2. Front Porch

The *Front Porch* mirrors the front porches typical of mill homes throughout the Village. The Front Porch is constructed of painted timber and, for accessibility, is flush with the ground.

3. Entry Portal

The *Entry Portal* serves as the “front door” and creates a welcoming entrance to the Model OLE.

4. Heirloom Entry Garden

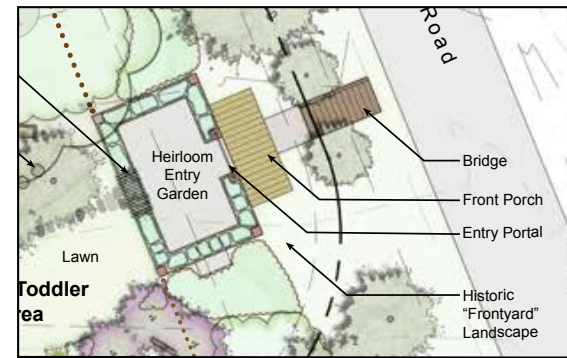
The *Heirloom Entry Garden* provides a welcoming/gathering space and marks the footprint of a typical mill house. Selected heirloom varieties of vegetables, fruit, and herbs represent edible and medicinal crops historically grown by Glencoe Mill residents. The Heirloom Entry Garden offers accessible working areas where children can seed, weed, water, and harvest. Brick foundation piers mark the corners of the Heirloom Entry Garden/mill house footprint.

5. Grape Arbor

The *Grape Arbor* is constructed of timber and covered in heirloom grape vines.

6. Legacy Trees

Four large, historically appropriate *Legacy Trees* line the street and provide abundant shade.



Entry Portal.



Bridge over swale.



Historic Front Porches and an example of Legacy Trees.



Heirloom Entry Garden and Grape Arbor.

Infant/Toddler Settings

1. Lawn

The *Lawn* provides a versatile, multi-purpose space that supports a variety of activities, including rolling, crawling and napping. A stepping stone path crosses the Lawn linking the Heirloom Entry Garden to the Entry Path. The Lawn also provides a gathering space for training sessions and hands-on workshops.

2. Historic Gliders

The *Historic Gliders* are located on the edge of the existing woodland where it meets the Multipurpose Lawn. The Historic Gliders offer a shady spot to swing, relax, and gather in a natural setting.

3. Fig Circle

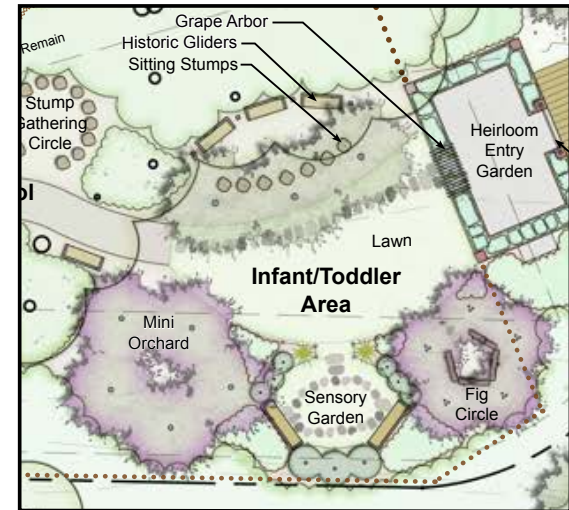
The *Fig Circle* supports small group gatherings and individual getaways. Five multi-stem fig trees provide shade and privacy for log seating. Once established, the low, multi-stem branching of the fig trees afford low “climbing” by children.

4. Sensory Garden

The *Sensory Garden* includes a small lawn with an informal stepping stone pathway wrapped in sensory plantings. Benches and pull-up rails define the edge between the lawn and sensory plantings and afford sitting and cruising. Sensory plantings of various heights immerse children in fragrances, textures and colors and could include rosemary, lavender, and thyme.

5. Mini Orchard

The *Mini Orchard* provides an opportunity for children to observe the fruiting cycle from blossom to pickable fruit. The Mini Orchard offers local cultural links through the planting of traditional varieties of fruit trees, which activate curricular connections.



Lawn and Sensory Garden.



Historic Gliders.



Fig Circle.

Young Preschool Settings

1. Pathway

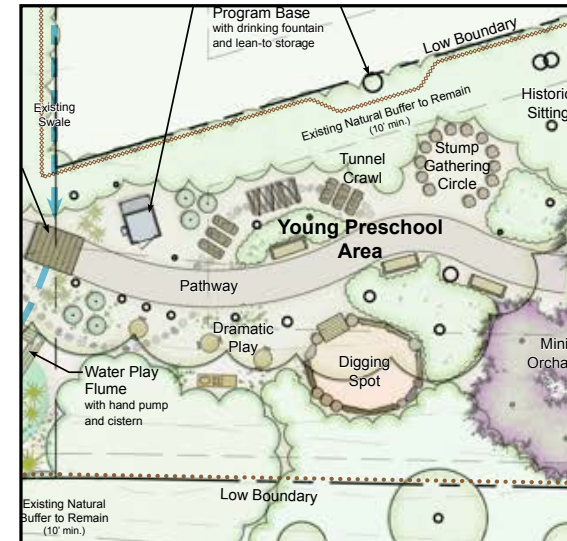
The *Pathway* (6' wide) provides easy access through the existing woodland and connects the principal settings. The Entry Pathway is constructed of fine crushed stone or wood chips.

2. Dramatic Play

The *Dramatic Play* setting supports a variety of dramatic play activities and includes child-sized café tables and chairs, a timber-construction stove and supporting kitchen props such as pots, pans, plates, utensils, measuring cups and mixing bowls. Dramatic Play is located adjacent to the Digging Spot and diverse plantings that provide year-round loose parts.

3. Digging Spot

The *Digging Spot* affords hands-on activity and whole body exercise. Children not only dig but also create small structures with twigs, pebbles and other natural materials. The digging spot is enclosed by large boulders and hardwood logs found locally. The Digging Spot is adjacent to the Dramatic Play Area, making dramatic play “ingredients” readily available.



Entry Pathway.



Dramatic Play.



Digging Spot.

4. Stump Gathering Circle

The *Stump Gathering Circle* provides a space for groups of children and/or adults to gather on stumps. Each stump is less than 18" tall.

5. Tunnel Crawl

The *Tunnel Crawl* consists of three child-scale tunnels that create a short, secondary pathway loop. The tunnels are constructed of sliced hollow logs and woven grape vine.

6. Outhouse Program Base

The *Outhouse Program Base* follows Village precedent of converting outhouses to garden sheds and provides enclosed, secure storage for materials, tools, and equipment and has easily accessible shelves. The Outhouse Program Base is located on the site of an old outhouse. It meets historic covenant guidelines for outbuildings, and includes lean-to storage for digging, dramatic play and water play loose parts.



Stump Gathering Circle.



Tunnel Crawl.



Outhouse Program Base historic precedent.

Older Preschool Settings

1. Primary Pathway

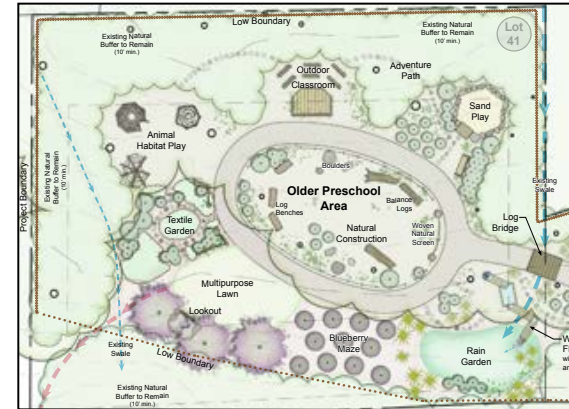
The *Primary Pathway* (6' wide) creates an accessible route throughout the Older Preschool Area connecting the principal settings. The Primary Pathway is constructed of crushed stone or wood chips.

2. Log Bridge

The *Log Bridge* provides a dry crossing over the drainage swale, marks the threshold between the Young and Older Preschool Areas, and is constructed of rough-hewn, local timber.

3. Water Play Flume

Children use a hand pump to draw water from an in-ground cistern into the *Water Play Flume*, which affords pouring, measuring, splashing and cooling off and includes elements, such as water wheels and check dams inspired by the mill history. Water flows along the flume, onto carved splash stones, down the Play Stream, and into the Rain Garden. The Flume is constructed of timber and is large enough for 10-12 children to comfortably play together. The Water Play Flume is easily accessible by all children at 18"-24" high, 3"-4" deep. It includes three narrow (18"-24" wide) flumes and a wide (6' by 5') water table. Above the water table a facsimile of the Glencoe Mill Village water tower is constructed. The splash stones step down from the splash table and are carved from local stone. The existing drainage swale is redirected to flow under the Water Play Flume and into the Rain Garden.



Water Play Flume with pump. Courtesy Richter Spielgeräte GmbH.



Primary Pathway loops through the woods connecting settings.



Log Bridge.



Splashing in the Play Stream before water reaches Rain Garden.

4. Rain Garden

Water flows from the redirected drainage swale and Water Play Flume into the lushly planted *Rain Garden*, which cleans the water via natural processes. Perennial plants, such as Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) and Muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*), that tolerate fluctuations in water level are selected for the Rain Garden. River pebbles and mulch serve as ground cover.

5. Sand Play

The *Sand Play* setting is enclosed with large, local boulders and/or hardwood logs and includes accessible storage for sand play props. The sand is well drained and a minimum of 18 inches deep. At the entrance, a small deck threshold helps remove sand from shoes as children exit.

6. Adventure Path

The *Adventure Path* is a secondary route that winds through the existing woodland providing opportunities for exploration.

7. Outdoor Classroom

The *Outdoor Classroom* provides an elevated space (approximately 6") for training presentations, impromptu performances, dramatic play, and gathering. A wrap-around, vine-covered lattice creates the backdrop. Seating is provided for a small group to gather and takes advantage of the existing slope.



Rain Garden planted lushly with native plants absorbs the water from the Water Play Flume .



Sand Play in the woods.



Children explore the Adventure Path.



Outdoor Classroom. Vine-covered lattice would replace arch.

8. Animal Habitat Play

Animal Habitat Play includes frameworks of three child-sized animal homes: bird nest, beaver lodge and fox den. Natural loose parts are provided for children to add to the construction of the nest, lodge, and den. Animal Habitat Play supports dramatic animal play, natural construction, science learning, and other play and learning opportunities. A textile theme runs through Animal Habitat Play and links it to the Textile Garden.

9. Textile Garden

The *Textile Garden* includes fibrous plants, such as cotton and flax, used for weaving textiles and plants that contain natural dyes, such as beets, blackberries, golden rod, mulberries, and Virginia creeper. Woven Natural Screens mark the entrance to the Textile Garden and engage children in large-scale weaving.

10. Woven Natural Screen

A *Woven Natural Screen* is a woven sculpture of grape vine and other natural materials serving as a focal point at the entrance to the Older Preschool Area and directs users along the looped Primary Pathway. Children are encouraged to add to the woven sculpture, which evolves with time.



Cotton. Courtesy ipm.ncsu.edu/cotton. Flax. Courtesy flaxland.co.uk.

Beets and blackberries ready for dyeing (or eating).



The Textile Garden includes fibrous plants and plants containing natural dyes and is adjacent to the Lawn.



Woven Natural Screen supports weaving and an intimate space for quiet lessons or activities.



Animal Habitat Play encourages children to be the animal and complete the lodge, den or nest.

11. Natural Construction

The *Natural Construction* setting provides opportunities for building an array of structures, from fairy houses to forts using natural materials. Storage is provided for large, natural materials such as sticks and bamboo. Natural loose parts can be harvested from the existing woodland that surrounds the Natural Construction setting. Boulders and logs (all less than 18" tall) provide seating and opportunities for building lean-to structures. The setting includes:

- Log benches
- Balance logs
- Large boulders

12. Multipurpose Lawn

The *Multipurpose Lawn* provides a versatile, multi-purpose, open space for activities such as music, art, dance, large gatherings, programmed group activities, training sessions and hands-on workshops.

13. Lookout

The *Lookout* provides views out from the site towards the mill and river. Children's binoculars are provided for viewing wildlife and spying on friends.

14. Blueberry Maze

The *Blueberry Maze* supports diverse play, ranging from chase games to intimate social interactions, within an edible landscape. Blueberry shrub spacing is based on mature size, so children can move between them. The blueberry shrubs should be maintained at a height that does not block adult supervision.



Natural Construction.



Blueberry maze.



Blueberries ready for harvest.



Children view the Haw River and wildlife from the Lookout.

Using the Alamance Model OLE as a therapeutic garden

The Alamance Partnership for Children Model OLE will serve as a therapeutic garden to be used by traumatized children and their therapists. One of the few documented models supporting this type of healing is the Therapeutic Garden (described in “Healing Gardens for Children”¹), which was part of the former Institute for Child and Adolescent Development, Wellesley, MA. Landscape architect Douglas Reed and Institute Clinical Director Sebastiano Santostefano worked closely on the design to create a garden containing a variety of symbolic landscape elements that supported child and therapist on unique journeys towards recovery. Clients were individual children who experienced the garden in a variety of ways to “untie body knots” resulting from traumatic experiences. In the Wellesley garden natural settings, child and therapist engaged each other in a landscape of symbolic equivalents within the metaphor set by the child so that embodied meanings were gradually enacted, elaborated, and revised during the healing process.

The natural forms and elements of the Model OLE provide diverse therapeutic opportunities. These include territorial exploration, enabling the child to progressively extend his/her “journey” along the pathway, overcoming the feeling of being lost, reaching a distant landmark, finding a refuge, a safe home. The path loops around to the starting point and connects to many experiential, symbolic events for child and therapist to explore along the way, including digging *in* soil, passing *through* a tunnel, crossing *over* a bridge (from “here” to “there”), secluded *inside* an animal habitat, playing with *flowing* water, enjoying the buzzing life of a rain garden, feeling *enveloped* by the blueberry maze, and *looking out* (prospect and refuge) from the lookout. Many other potentially therapeutic affordances could be activated according to the clinical skill of the therapist.

1 Moore, R. 1999. In Cooper Marcus, C. and Barnes, M. (Eds.). *Healing Gardens*. New York: Wiley. Pages 323-384.

Appendix A: Results of Community Survey, conducted May 2012



Alamance Partnership for Children

Model Outdoor Learning Environment

Glencoe Village, Burlington, NC

COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY RESULTS

May 2012



Respondents

A total of 26 community members responded to the on-line survey conducted in May 2012. The majority (50%) represented public or private organizations active in the community followed by administrators/teachers at local child care centers (31%), community residents (27%), groups active in the community (27%), and Alamance Partnership Board members (19%).

| Affiliation | % | # |
|--|-----|----|
| Public or private organization active in the community. | 50% | 13 |
| Administrator or teacher at a local childcare center. | 31% | 8 |
| Resident in or near the community. | 27% | 7 |
| Group active in the community. | 27% | 7 |
| Alamance Partnership Board. | 19% | 5 |
| Administrator or teacher at a local public or independent school. | 12% | 3 |
| Parent with children that live near the site and/or go to school nearby. | 8% | 2 |
| Staff member at the Alamance Partnership | 8% | 2 |
| Other (not specified) | 4% | 1 |

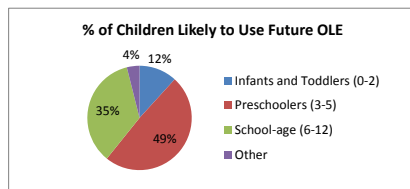
Benefits of Children and Nature Connection

All but one of the respondents agree or strongly agree that children benefit from contact with nature in several ways.

- 96% strongly believe that contact with nature supports children's development.
- 96% strongly believe that children learn about the natural world.
- 92% strongly believe that contact with nature supports children's health.
- 85% strongly believe that children develop their thinking abilities by being in nature.
- 73% strongly believe that children improve their ability to concentrate when they can play in nature.

Ages of Children Likely to Use OLE

Respondents believe that preschool children (49%) and school age children (35%) are most likely to use the future OLE.



May 2012

Outdoor Play Space/Public Park Access

The majorities (82%) of respondents have access to an outdoor play space or public park in the nearby area, only 4% do not; 15% indicated NA. More than half (57%) reported that this space is adequate for children's use, although 26% viewed it as inadequate, and 7% indicated NA.

Respondents reported using the following outdoor play spaces and parks:

- City Park
- Joe Davison Park
- Public parks & schools
- ABSS outdoor playground
- ARMC Family Enrichment Center
- Little Delights Educare
- Parks and Recreation facility
- South Graham Municipal Park
- Lake MacIntosh
- North Park
- Many parks in Burlington

Model OLE Purpose

A majority of the respondents (85%) strongly agree that the top three purposes for the model OLE could be a demonstration site for OLE best practices, a training site for early childhood educators, and an outdoor classroom for environmental education. Other priority uses include play and learning areas for children and families (77%), followed by field trips for area childcare centers and schools (62%), and community gardening space (54%).

| Model OLE Purposes | % |
|---|-----|
| Demonstration site for OLE best practices. | 85% |
| Training site for early childhood educators. | 85% |
| Outdoor classroom for environmental education. | 85% |
| Play and learning area for children and families. | 77% |
| Field trips for area childcare centers and schools. | 62% |
| Community gardening space. | 54% |
| Other: | |
| • A place to sing and make music and tell stories with older kids, while the younger kids had something to occupy them! | |
| • Location creates some logistical concern for wide access to the broader community. | |
| • Even existing organizations (potential volunteer sources) could utilize such a space in collaborative efforts. | |
| • Joint use agreement for public use. | |

May 2012

Features in Future Model OLE

More than half of the respondents indicated that they would like to see the following features in the future model OLE. In summary, interest in seeing the space developed naturalistically was overwhelming.

| Features in Future Model OLE | % |
|--|-----|
| 85% or More | |
| Flowering plants. | 85% |
| Open grassy area. | 85% |
| Trees for shade. | 85% |
| 70-85% | |
| Wildlife garden (i.e. birds, butterflies, etc.). | 77% |
| Edible gardens for children. | 74% |
| Sand and earth play. | 74% |
| Area for building with natural objects. | 70% |
| Creative arts area. | 70% |
| Sensory gardens (taste, touch, smell). | 70% |
| 50-70% | |
| Herbs. | 63% |
| Walking trails. | 63% |
| Variety of ground surfaces. | 59% |
| Water play. | 59% |
| Greenhouse. | 52% |
| Topographic variations (mounds, terraces, slopes). | 52% |
| Less than 50% | |
| Pathways for wheeled toys. | 48% |
| Climbing equipment. | 37% |
| Trees for climbing. | 32% |
| Shrubs. | 26% |
| Other/comments | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration area with seating - like an amphitheater. Small, raised platform for play acting and declaiming The site has natural hill for rolling. Also some existing trees, plants. | |

May 2012

Features for Comfort in the Future OLE

More than half of the respondents strongly agree that the most desirable amenities include: bathrooms (73%), water fountain (70%), parking (67%), places to sit (63%), lighting (52%), picnic-type tables (52%), and fencing and gate to enclose the OLE (50%). The least desired is manufactured play equipment (15%).

| Features for Comfort | % |
|--|-----|
| Bathrooms. | 73% |
| Water Fountain. | 70% |
| Parking. | 67% |
| Places to sit. | 63% |
| Covered group meeting / picnic shelter. | 54% |
| Lighting. | 52% |
| Picnic-type tables. | 52% |
| Fencing and gate to enclose the OLE. | 50% |
| Play areas separated by age (infants, toddlers, etc.). | 38% |
| Bike racks. | 19% |
| Manufactured play equipment. | 15% |
| Comments: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have land, and parking promised. Our bathroom and water facilities are nearby but not "convenient" by rating scale standards. I may have answered these differently if I knew the exact site location. | |

Interested in Project Development

A total of 20 respondents (74%) indicated they would like to be involved in the development of the project.

Other Comments

- "I am willing to help see this project completed."
- "If a variety of age-appropriate features and activities are offered, then I suspect that more of the 6-12 aged children will participate. A key will be making the entire community aware of this project."
- "Make it accessible to the community, both families and as many organizations as possible."
- "There are many opportunities to do collaborative work with other groups, including the Cooperative Extension, our Shape NC model learning center, Be Healthy Alamance, Parks and Recreation, etc."
- "Very excited regarding the possibilities of this innovative project."
- "Hope this can be the beginning to a future nature/environmental center."

Appendix B: Report of Community Presentation, held May 23, 2012



Model Outdoor Learning Environment

Community Presentation Report

Facilitated by the *Natural Learning Initiative*
College of Design, NC State University
May 23, 2012, Glencoe Mill Village, Burlington, NC

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Alamance Partnership for Children: Model OLE, Natural Learning Initiative

1



Site Selection

- Support the idea/program, but concerned by site selection
- Could Model OLE be integrated into the adjacent public park?
- Could Model OLE go on other park land already owned and operated by county parks and rec?
- Existing park supports environmental education, especially for local 4th graders

Covenants

- Covenants must be followed
- PNC says these two lots should only be houses
- No permanent structures are allowed on the site due to the covenant
- Development of Model OLE considered landscape issue and a temporary/interim use
- Glencoe Mill Village cannot have another vacant lot or one on the market for extended period
- Homeowners bought into rules that seem to get interpreted differently at different times
- It is a shame PNC is not at this meeting
- Most of the elements presented (by Robin) would not meet the covenant
- Need to make sure covenants will still apply to remaining residential lots

Need for Effective Communication

- Plans for the site and this meeting were not sufficiently shared with neighbors/community
- Homeowners not invited to complete user survey
- Many Glencoe Mill Village homeowners not aware of the meeting until 45 minutes before meeting

Create a space for children who live in Glencoe Mill Village and surrounding community

How many children are within walking distance of the site?

Could natural loose parts that are age appropriate be collected and brought to the Model OLE?

Intentionally plant species that could be harvested/used as play props

Created a public space could increase the value of the homes

Dye House to include public restrooms to serve users of Model OLE

Don't know best way forward for neighbors and Model OLE

Partnership can't own property or permanent structures

Alamance Partnership for Children: Model OLE, Natural Learning Initiative

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Appendix C: Report of Stakeholder Workshop, held May 24, 2012



Alamance Partnership for Children
Model Outdoor Learning Environment

Stakeholder Workshop Report

Facilitated by the *Natural Learning Initiative*
 College of Design, NC State University
 May 24, 2012, Glencoe Mill Village, Burlington, NC



Participants

| Name | Position | Organization | Email |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Carrie Theall | Executive Director | APC | ctheall@alamancechildren.org |
| Gaby Quinteros | Parent Educator | APC | gquinteros@alamancechildren.org |
| Bryan Hagood | Director | Alamance County Parks Department | bryan.hagood@alamance-nc.com |
| Carrie Ehrfurth | Historic Preservation Specialist | Hedgehog Holdings | cehrfurth@hedgehogholdings.com |
| Julie Walker | Librarian | Alamance County Public Library | |
| Toni Murray | Resident | GMV | yellowmillhouse@bellsouth.net |
| Tony Laws | Director | Burlington Parks and Recreation | tlaws@ci.burlington.nc.us |
| Hank Pownell | Resident | GMV | --- |
| Cindy Hardy | Resident | GMV | --- |
| Cathleen Turner | Regional Director | Preservation NC | cturner@presnc.org |
| Joyce Dickey | Board Member | APC | glenmariewinery@aol.com |
| Allison Gant | Executive Director | Alamance Citizens for Education (ACE) | allison@aceed.org |
| April Durr | Director | Healthy Alamance | adurr@armc.com |
| Glenda Linens | Wellness Nurse | Alamance County Health Department | glenda.linens@alamance-nc.com |
| Ann Hess | TA/Early Childhood Specialist | APC | ahess@alamancechildren.org |
| Emily Bell | Shape NC Hub Specialist | DEPC | ebell@depc.org |
| Robin Moore | Director | NLI | robin_moore@ncsu.edu |
| Nilda Cosco | Education Specialist | NLI | nilda_cosco@ncsu.edu |
| Jesse Turner | Landscape Architect | NLI | jesse_turner@ncsu.edu |
| Michele Rivest | Project Associate | NLI | michele_rivest@ncsu.edu |
| Brad Bieber | Design Associate | NLI | brad_bieber@ncsu.edu |

Workshop Opening

Carrie Theall, Executive Director, DEPC

- Smart Start's mission is to ready children for kindergarten.
- Smart Start gives local partnership lots of autonomy.
- Alamance PFC Mission: *The Partnership shapes opinion and mobilizes resources to support Alamance County families in creating and sustaining nurturing environments for their children.*
- Shape NC grant prompted partnership to pursue Model OLE.
- Childcare center cooks received healthy meal preparation training at Queens University, Charlotte – one way to support healthy eating.
- Excel Christian Shape NC center will have Shape NC Model OLE.
- Want all childcare providers in Alamance to have access to an OLE, so creating model site at Partnership to host trainings for CDC staff. Encourage centers to take children out, even when weather isn't great, whole mindset change in Alamance Co. Reason program was started and why we are here.
- Project feels a bit rushed, once this portion is completed by June 30th, we can slow down.

Robin Moore, Director, NLI

- We need to collectively brainstorm content of OLE, create an outline program to develop concept for outdoor space.
- Time crunch to meet grant deadline.
- NLI facilitates efforts to develop parks, zoos, nature play spaces, and childcare center OLEs. NLI is a research and professional development unit in early childhood OLE development. Rich outdoor settings support preparation for school and provide an environment where children can reach their own potential.

Participant Introductions

Cindy Hardy – neighbor to lot 41 at end of River Road.

Joyce Dickey – retired CDC director, interested in Haw River, wants muscadine grapes to grow on the site.

Toni Murray – worked with children using outdoors for therapy/healing.

April Durr – Healthy Alamance – supports healthy living, physical activity, and tobacco use prevention.

Tony Laws – Burlington Parks, highlights children's programs. Environmental education center has been a dream for a while. Idea is to convert Dye House into Environmental Education Center.

Cathleen Turner – Preservation North Carolina (PNC), adding to the layers of Glencoe Village would be more important than recreating history.

Michele Rivest – homeowner of mill house in Carrboro with many years of early childhood experience.

Alison Gant – supporter of local public education, pre-K programs within initiative.

Mission/Vision

Important to articulate the mission at the beginning of the process as an umbrella statement that crystalizes the overall project purpose. Participants were asked to decide on four most important keywords to describe the Model OLE, one word/Post-it. Collectively, participants clustered keywords into categories. Compiled results:

- Child-friendly (2)
- Soothe, energize, unique, state of the art
- Context/Community sensitive (2), historic, mill, axial, meaningful
- Education/educate/educational (3), learn (2), guided discovery
- Hands on/Interactive (3), discovery (2), fun (2), challenge, explore, creative, experimental, collect, captivating, flowing, play, build, enriching
- Welcoming/welcome (2)
- Nature (2), true, "green", textured, color
- Connected (2), inclusive, partnership
- Maintained, monitored

Model OLE mission statement

The Alamance Partnership for Children Model Outdoor Learning Environment is a child-focused, hands-on, natural, therapeutic environment, intended to provide professional education and enjoyment of residents and visitors, while respect the historic context.

Goals and Objectives

Primary goals to be accomplished with Model OLE were developed as follows:

A place to have fun.

- Children learn through play.
- Increase opportunities for play and physical activity.

A place for learning – children, parents, childcare workers.

- Children, very young to school age, have an opportunity to learn.
- Parent education/training.
- Childcare worker training.
 - Experiential learning.
 - Create teachable moments.
 - Guided instruction.

A place for rest.

- Restful, peaceful.
- Healing or therapeutic garden.

A place to explore nature.

- Free exploration of the natural world leads to tacit knowledge – i.e. learning through experience.
- Nature stimulates creativity.
- Supports development of long-term interest in nature.

A place with history

- Reflect historic landscape elements, i.e. setbacks, plant material, drainage swales with bridges.
- Tribute to children who grew up working in mill.

A place within a larger system/context

- Glencoe Mill Village.
- Themes could be extended into adjacent parks and trails.
- New Urbanism development has been proposed – [22 acres adjacent to village](#).
- [Old Glencoe School](#) is to be redeveloped.
- Mountains-to-Sea trail passes by the Model OLE site.
- Natural systems.

Users

- Glencoe Mill Village residents.
- Whole community – open access.
 - 82 year old father-in-law still swings from trees/vines.
 - ‘Staycation’ for Alamance Co. residents, Glencoe Mill Village not well known by community.
- Children – 0-5yrs and school-age, children with disabilities (autism spectrum).
 - Focus on younger children but not exclude older children.
- School teachers and children.
 - Field trip destination.
 - School superintendent wants to get children outdoors.
- Homeschoolers.
- Training/education.
 - Childcare providers.
 - ACC course work.
 - Elon University Environmental studies Program.
- NC Birder Trails.
- Bed and breakfast visitors.
- Artists – photographers, painters, textile artists.

- Bee keepers – bee yard in GMV.
- Long distance cyclists and hikers on Mountains-to-Sea Trail.
- Textile Heritage Museum visitors.
- Children’s museum visitors.
- Community gardeners.
 - Could fit within historic context of backyard garden plots.
- Former residents and mill workers – interested in learning what’s going on, what’s changed and what used to be.
- Local churches - particularly pre-K and afterschool programs.
- Other Partnerships for Children.
- Non-human users – osprey, barred owls, deer, coyotes, bald eagles, beaver, snakes, lizards, turkeys.
 - Highlighting wildlife might help engage children in what lives in their own neighborhood.
 - How can this approach be replicated in Village backyards?

Settings

Settings should be light on the ground, constructed from nature, not permanent.

- Water feature with different play elements – echo water tower, mill race or river, water wheel.
- Place to dig.
- Places to explore hands-on.
- Hollow trees.
- Low climbing trees.
- Logs.
- Rocks.
- Large grape vine on site.
- Ditches and bridges.
- Bird blind.
- Fort building (modeled after kidZone).
- Existing features – i.e. rock formations.
- Outhouse as an excavation site.
- Native wildlife habitat.
- Climbing vines.
- Rolling slope/hill.
- Place to rest or read.
- Therapeutic/healing garden.
- Garden plots.
- Natural buffers from neighbors and road.
 - Would break visibility into site, is that better or worse?
 - Sometimes gating public parks proves helpful, but park rules are still broken.

- Plantings
 - Should follow traditional patterns.
 - Placement of trees should take into mind future location of houses.
 - Street trees – difficult to add with tight lots and ditches along road.
- Edge boundary.

Setting notes

- Connections to hydroelectric?
- Trash in the river – how can that connect? (Art with trash collected from river).
- Fabric/textiles – Sunbrella.
- 1889 – 11 hour days, children earned 40 cents/hr. Glencoe was first mill in NC that required children to attend to school.
- No “keep off” signs, nothing is hands-off.
- Could previous/future house footprint be incorporated into plan?

Discussion

Model OLE is an awesome opportunity for children but should be located in a different location in Village, nobody disagrees with program itself.

Model OLE should be located in a space that is buffered, off-set from road, not intruding on neighbors.

Parking will be available at Mill site, no on-street parking.

Visibility/supervision

- Don’t want Model OLE to become a late night hangout for troublemakers.
- Visible location will have “eyes on it.”
- Don’t want people causing trouble, spent 10 years getting them out.
- Undesirable elements tend to get pushed out by desirable elements, Glencoe Mill Village is still in transition, mill still feels uninhabited, once buildings occupied and lots of visitors – undesirable elements will disappear.
- Between 2-5 am undesirable element still there.
- Space needs to be policed tightly from beginning.
- All parks in Burlington vandalized to some degree.
- Residential population will be able to monitor space, creating a security blanket.
- Teach children through Model OLE to be better users of public spaces.
- Sheriff called when things happening, still are but decreasing.

Maintenance/management

- If worn down and weedy not attractive.
- Scouts, seniors/retirees, church groups, Elon Volunteer Program, garden groups are available.
- Must think big picture with management of space – can’t abandon space and think it will take care of itself.

- Must get right crew to get management/maintenance plan developed for long-term success.
- Partnership will have regularly scheduled maintenance as part of budget. Will have to contract out through landlord, with dedicated Partnership staff.
- Burlington Parks and Rec may be able to help with maintenance.
- Partnership doesn’t plan on moving but could operate Model OLE even if office moved.
- Parks and Rec would like to maintain site long term
- Model classroom at Partnership – initially underused but increased rapidly once started doing childcare during parent trainings. Truly became a training tool. Similarly, the Model OLE will become useful once it is used.
- Partnership proud of being first onsite Model OLE
- Partnership feels like part of GMV community.

Other comments

- Community gardens add value to neighbors, if you create ownership, people will care for the space.
- Access can be double-edged sword, can’t limit access, must provide access to everyone, must not stop mission/goals.
- Dye House to serve as future Environmental Education Center and provide restroom facilities.
- Currently, several weekly local farmers’ markets.
- Aug 18th – homeowners are sponsoring reunion picnic for former residents, some have told story to Village historian.
- Model OLE must be replicable but set a high standard.
- Users should go home with ideas to apply in their own world.
- Lots slated as residential, would revert back to residential.

Next Steps

- NLI to develop Model OLE layout.
- Community Stakeholder sub-group to review plan and NLI to make revisions – two rounds of reviews?
 - Use Skype or online whiteboard.
- Sketches and photos to illustrate site and proposed settings.
- Share meeting report with stakeholders.
- When will things get implemented?
- Next fiscal year, Smart Start money will be available to get started, hoping for in-kind and local donations.
- With clearly defined, inclusive plan, fundraising much easier/feasible, connections already made, folks already on board.
- Folks interested in being a part of review process should let Carrie know
- Tony Laws (Burlington P & R) would like to be involved in reviews.

Appendix D: Resources

Glencoe Research Forum: <http://www.glencoenc.com/>
Great collection of historic photos (<http://www.glencoenc.com/gallery/gallery.htm>)