McNear Habitat Garden Upgrade

Proposal for Spring 2022/Fall 2023

Background

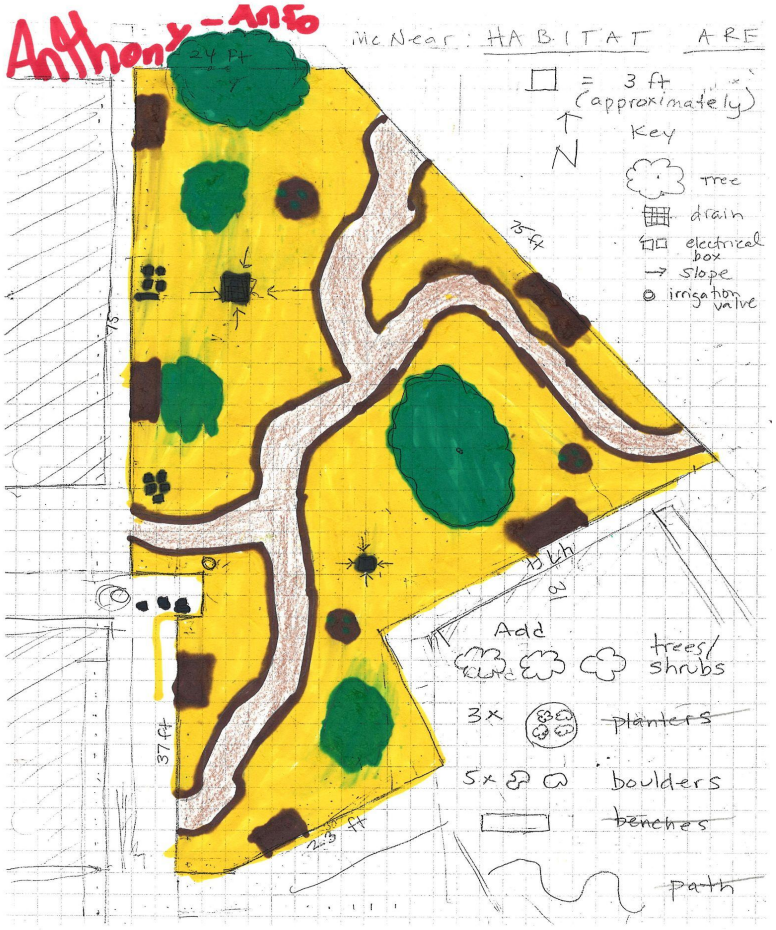
Work on the bird habitat garden at McNear has been ongoing since 2016. Kirsten Franklin initiated the project with her 4th grade classes and has been joined by Amy Turko and Kerry Santia as well as parents, and community members to introduce and tend CA native plants which support local birds and pollinators.

Catherine Sky came on board in her capacity as garden teacher in 2018 and has supported the project through work with students in measuring, mapping and designing the space for educational interactions with plants and wildlife.

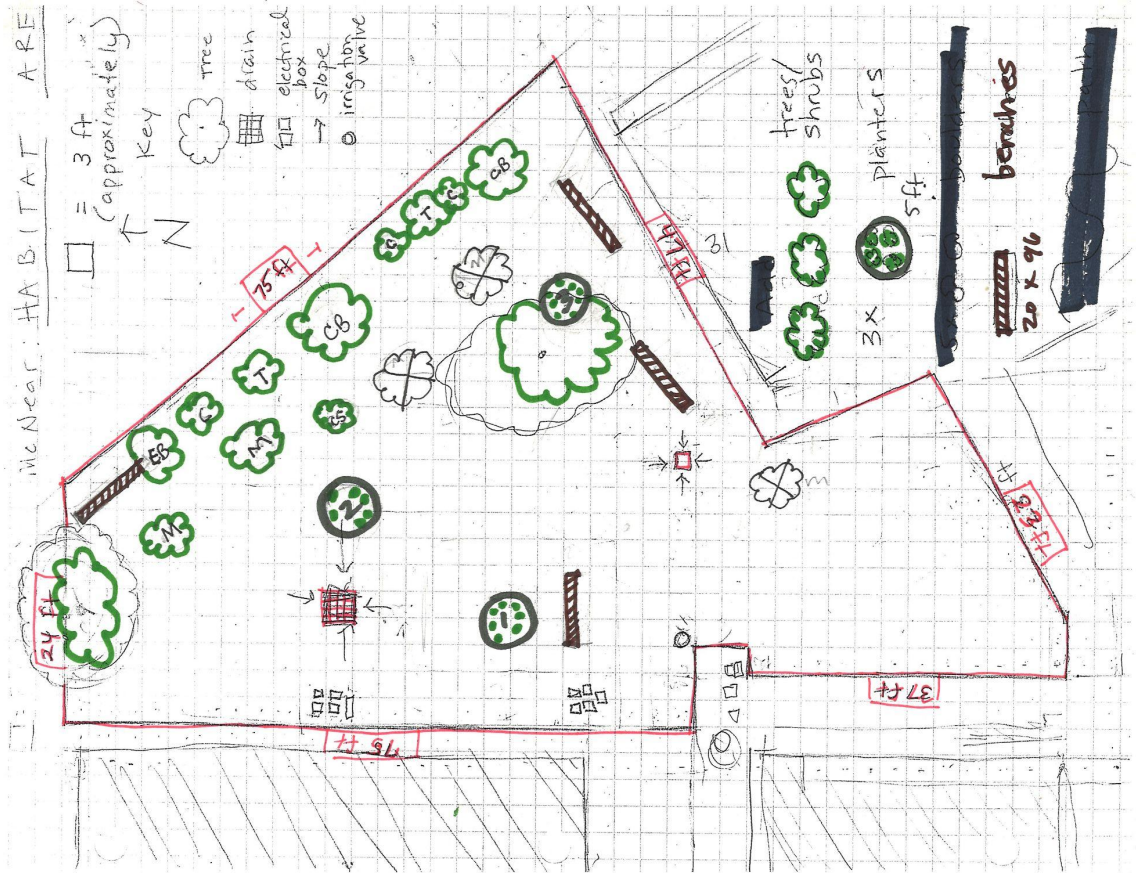
The current plans reflect the need for more plants, additional benches, a paved path and informational signage to communicate place-based ecological meaning to the wider school community.

We hope that with the proposed upgrades, the garden can become a living science lab where students can develop environmental literacy through interdisciplinary, hands-on experiential learning.

Student Designs



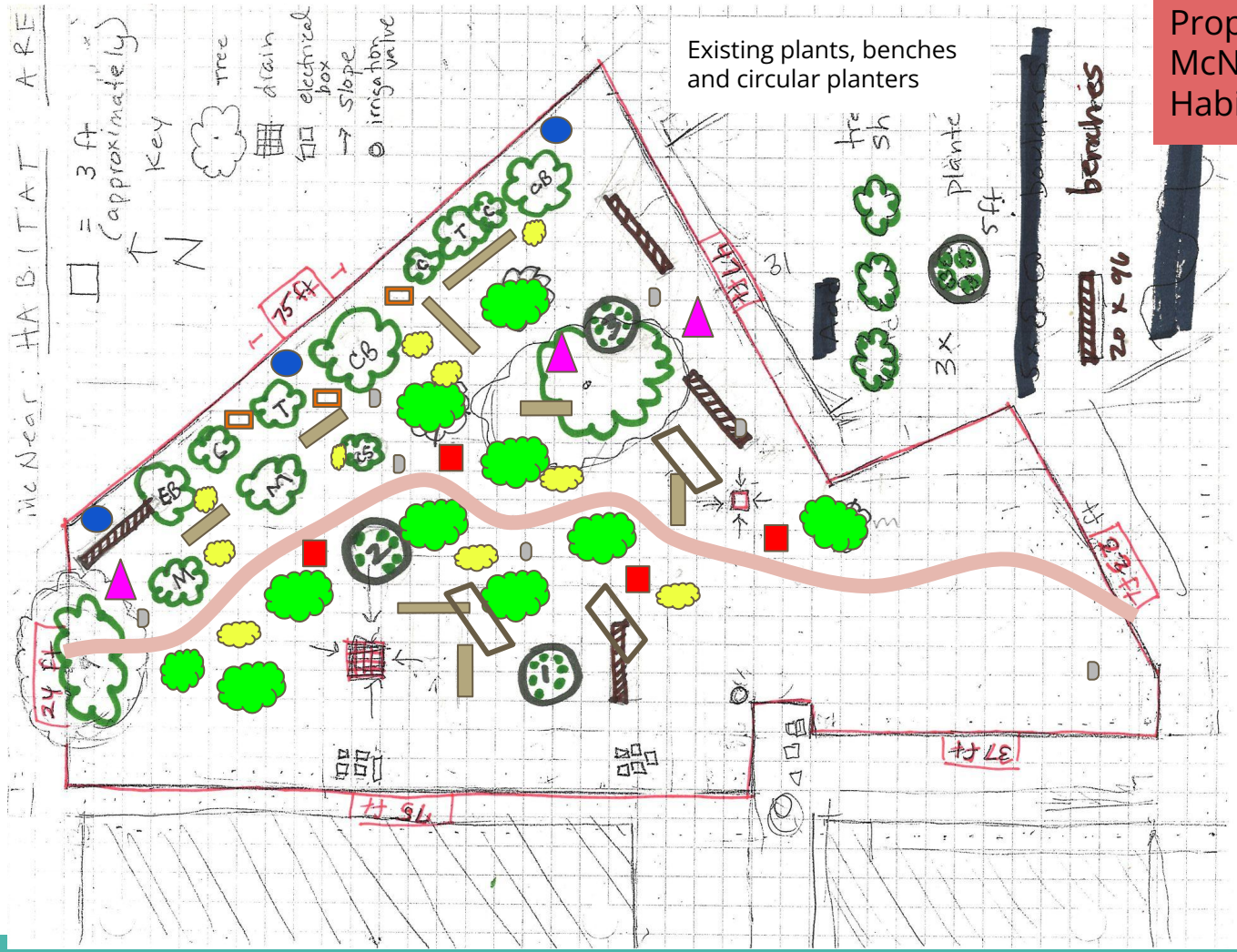
Existing Garden, March 2022



Needs identified at planning Meeting 3/9/22

- More plants large/small perennial shrubs
- More benches to accommodate 30 students - interspersed with plantings for observation of wildlife
- Paved path
- Informational signage designed by students linked to website w. Qr code

Proposed Plan for McNear Elementary Habitat Garden



Proposed elements

- 6-8 additional benches
- large shrub
- Paved path
- Small shrub
- rocks/boulder
- Water source Bird bath
- Informational signage
- Shade tarp
- Nest boxes
- Insect hotels

Plant List

Existing plants (in-ground)
Coffeeberry -2, Golden Currant -3, Toyon -2
Manzanita -2, Cleveland Sage 1
(in-containers)
Yarrow, grasses,

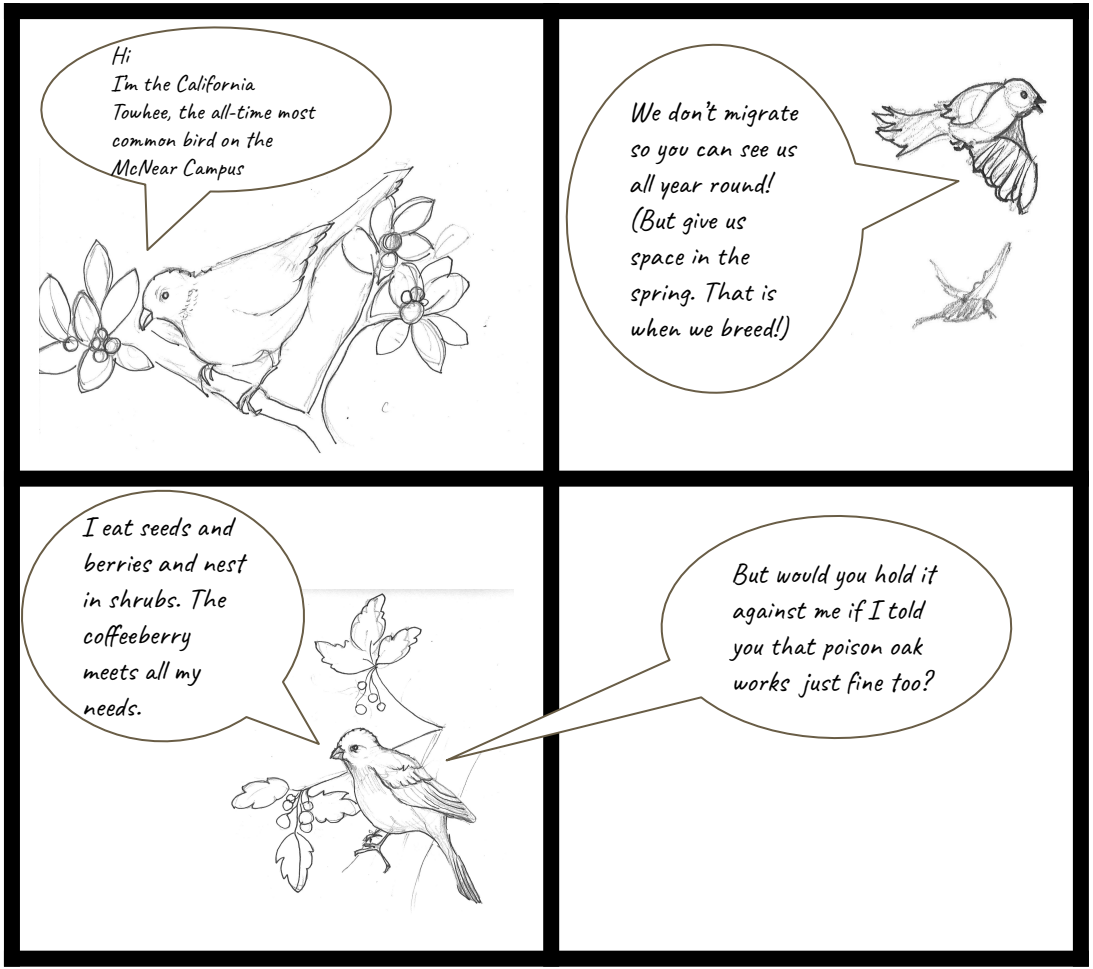
Wish List
Milkweed, California Buckwheat, Ceanothus
Serviceberry, Mallow, Fennel, Gooseberry
California fuchsia
Blue eyed grass
manzanita

Signage

Informational signage is an essential element of the garden design as it provides students with an opportunity to educate the wider school community about the value of the habitat garden in demonstrating environmental principles.
As part of her thesis work in the masters of education program at Sonoma State University, Catherine Sky has designed curriculum to support learning in the habitat garden through arts-based environmental education.

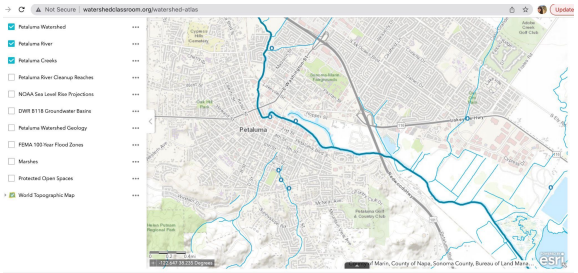
Catherine plans to use seven weeks of upcoming Spring 2022 garden sessions with the 4th grade classes to create mosaic guideposts which illustrate data on bird species detected on the school campus https://soundscapes2landscapes.org/

Images printed on tiles, incorporated in mosaic “guideposts” throughout the habitat garden can be linked through qr code to student made digital presentations with comic style drawings and text



Other ideas for signage

Student designed infographics showing the relationship between the habitat garden and the Petaluma River watershed.



Possible partnering with Watershed Classroom to develop arts and ecoliteracy curriculum around Thompson creek and its relationship to the greater watershed

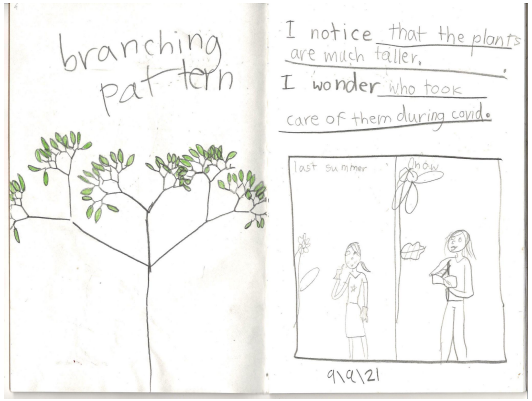
Anticipated Costs -2022/23 school year

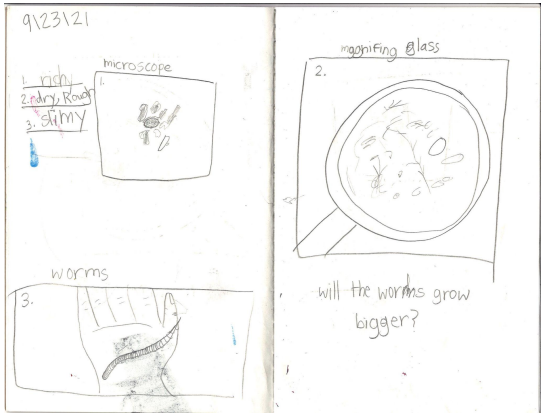
plants		
benches		
path		
signage		
Garden teaching /staff development/project management stipend		
Shade tarps and installation		
Nest boxes		
Insect housing		

3. Water source for birds

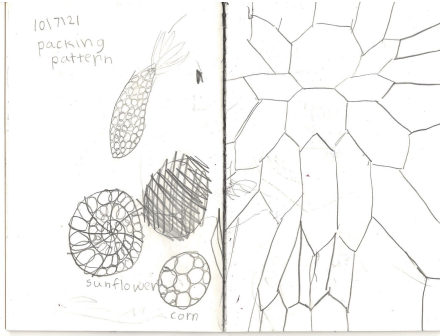
Summer maintenance
Keeping clean and sanitized
Connected to irrigation

Environmental Literacy in the McNear Garden


branching pattern
I notice that the plants are much taller.
I wonder who took care of them during covid.
last summer
now
9\9\21


9\23\21
1. wish
2. dry, Rough
3. slimy
microscope
worms
3.
magnifing glass
2.
will the worms grow bigger?


Learn TO Grow


10\7\21
packing pattern
sunflower
corn


24, 2021
cycle
Leaf
1 pod