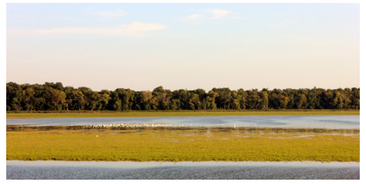
Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge
Twelve-week project
Fall 2014 ***/*** Champaign, IL

40°22'43.70"N 89°58'49.29"W

40°22'38.98"N 89°59'21.98"W

40°23'22.35"N 89°58'14.74"W

40°21'11.39"N 90° 1'58.52"W



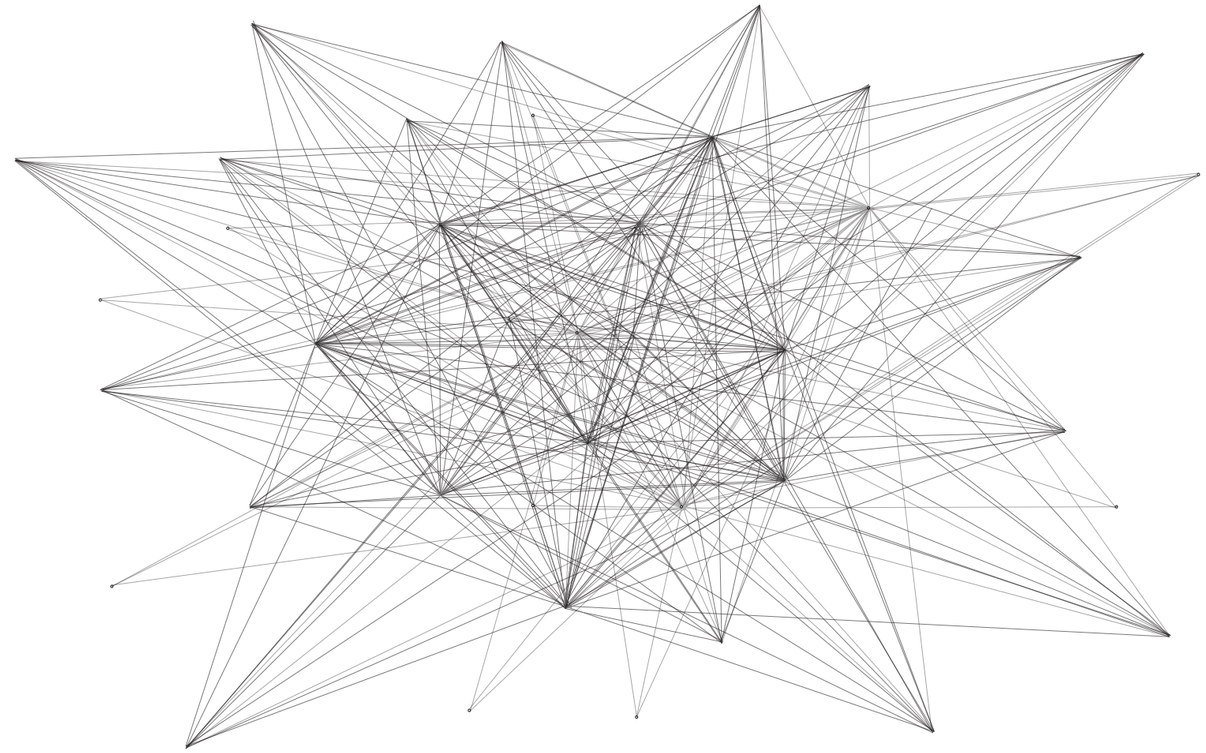
40°21'56.81"N 89°59'54.41"W

40°23'57.92"N 89°56'39.78"W

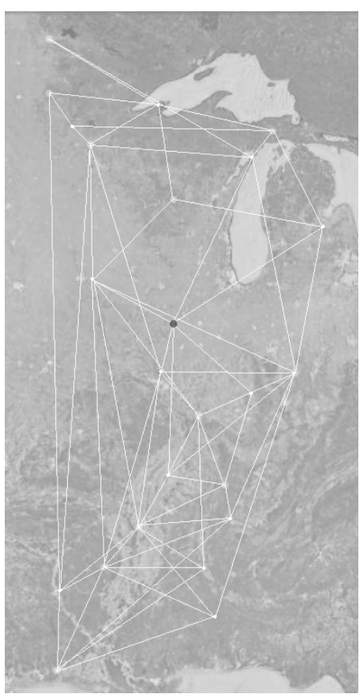
40°23'56.99"N 89°57'39.32"W

40°23'6.49"N 89°59'23.69"W

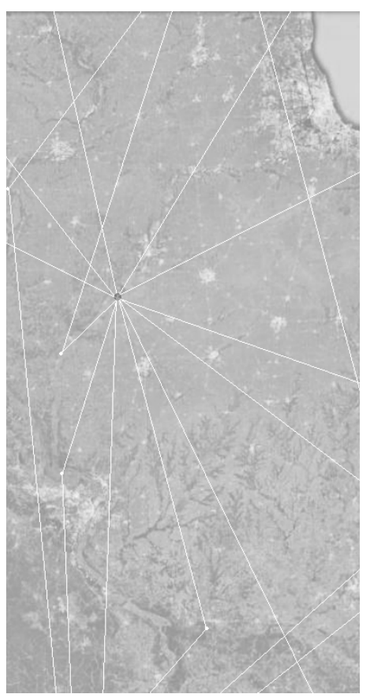
40°21'22.88"N 90° 1'0.19"W



Network Concept Sketch



Regional view of Mississippi Flyway

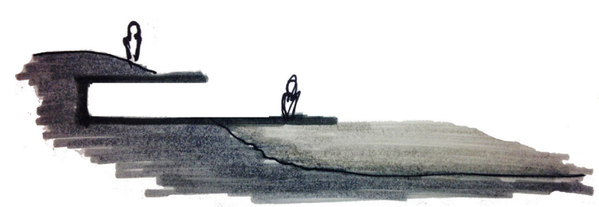


Illinois state view of Mississippi Flyway

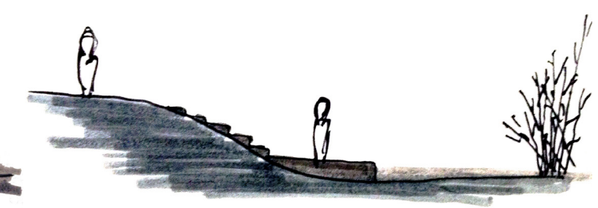
Network concept applied to Chautauqua

Chautauqua Wildlife Refuge outside of Havana, Illinois is a node within the network of the Mississippi flyway, one of four migratory routes for North American birds. A network is a system of hubs and nodes, relatable through their established connections. The birds passing through the 4,388 acre site act as the connections between Chautauqua and the other refuges, parks, and wilderness used in the migratory network. The network only works if the connections remain. A proposal for a new visitor's center at the park became the outlet to address experience through the concept of networks. The diversity of such a large site can become secondary in a visitors experience if the proper infrastructure is not there to motivate further site exploration. The placement of a comprehensive visitor's center at one specific location within the park would discourage the exploration of the majority of the site.

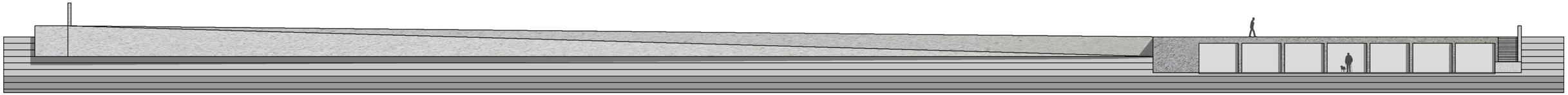
The suggested design utilizes the network concept to expand the program of the proposed center across the entire site, creating a system of hubs and nodes to prompt a broader experience across the refuge. Conditioned small scale buildings situated within the existing man-made weirs act as the hubs, providing guidance on the layout of the park network and educational information on the diverse wildlife and ecosystems. Unconditioned pavilions spread across the site act as the smaller nodes, minimal structures providing alternative frameworks for approaching the rich, unique landscape. Architecture becomes the catalyst of the network; as birds continue to connect Chautauqua to the larger Mississippi flyway, visitors to the refuge continue to explore its vast, diverse landscapes, aided by the guidance of minimal design intervention.



Conceptual drawings for Chautauqua hubs



Conceptual drawings for Chautauqua nodes

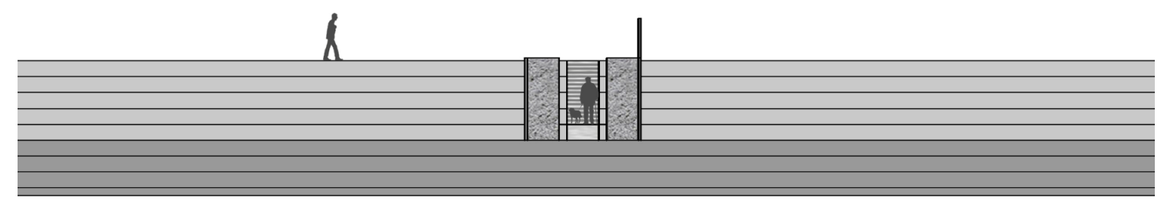


Conditioned Hub Elevation

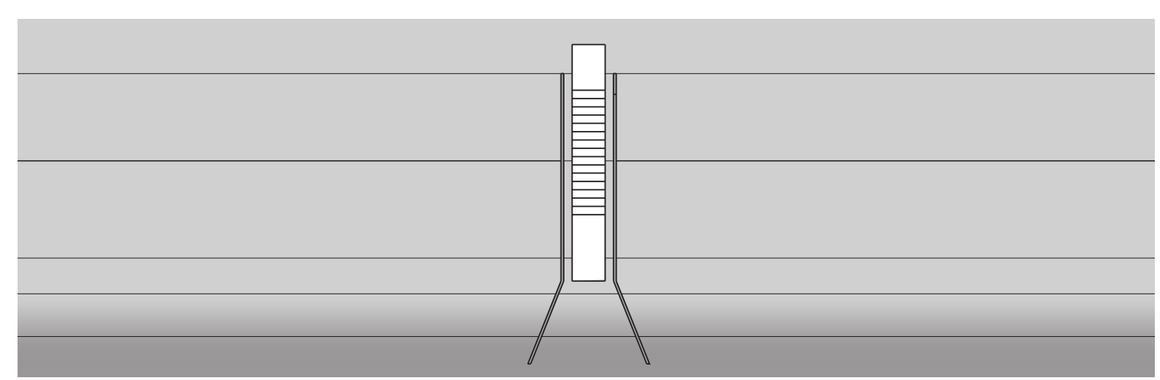
Conditioned Hub Floor Plan

Unconditioned Node Entrance Render

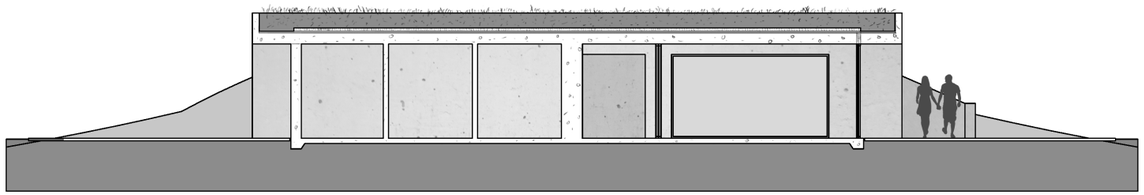
Conditioned Hub Entrance Render



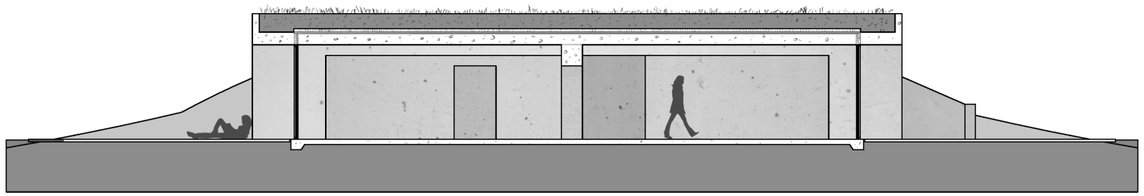
Unconditioned Node Elevation



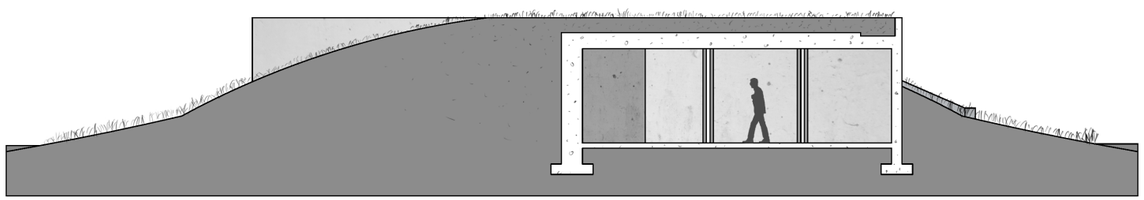
Unconditioned Node Floor Plan



Section D-D

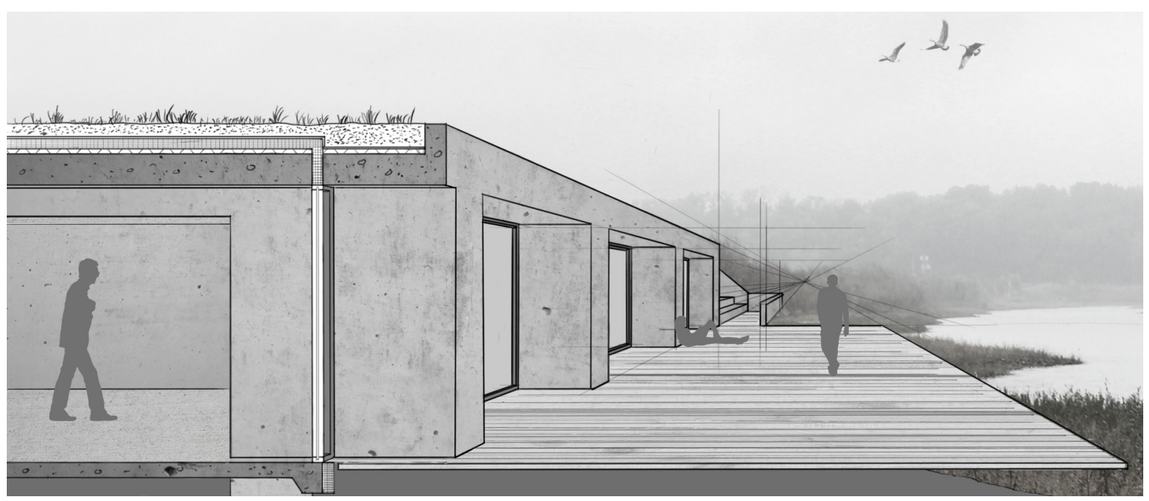


Section C-C



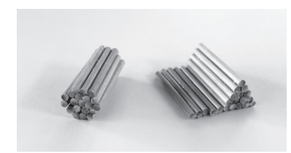
Section B-B

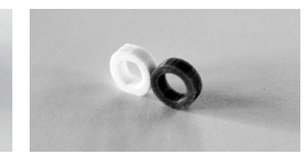
Section A-A

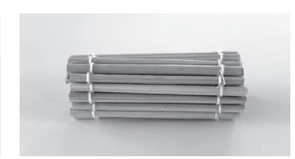


Conditioned Hub Wall Detail Render

The Object for Sitting is designed to aid visitors travelling around Chautauqua for extended periods, providing additional support in varied terrain. The object is designed to fit inside an average hiking backpack, weighing less than 5lbs. Visitors to the wildlife refuge become the connections within the network, accompanied by any local condition with the object for sitting, as well as kayak rentals at the information hubs. The object is carefully detailed to provide comfort, flexibility, and durability through the diverse landscape of Chautauqua.



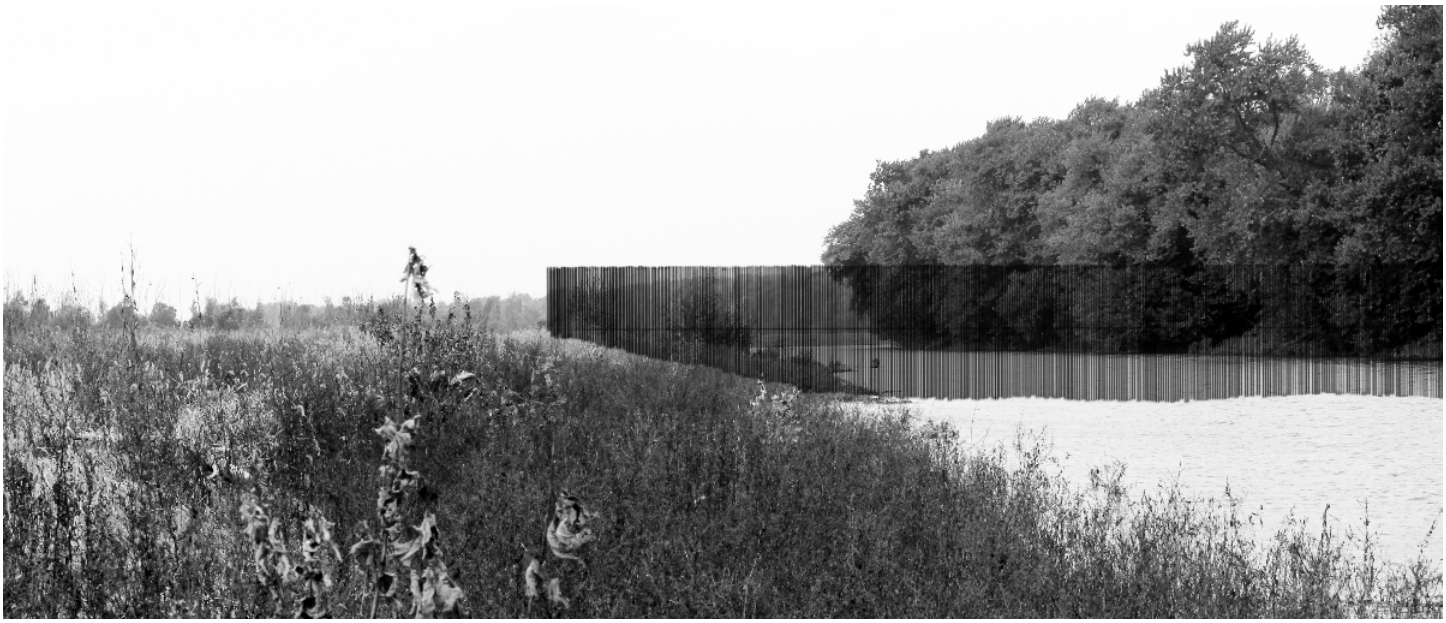




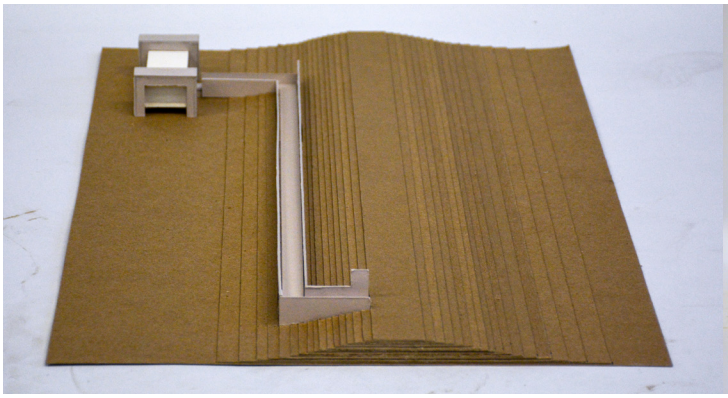
Review and critique of
Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge

The semester-wide investigation of the Chautauqua Wildlife Refuge was the first design project I completed during my graduate studies. It was an opportunity to investigate broader, conceptual concerns for a design intervention through a smaller lens of focus. The opportunity to create smaller works situated within a larger context provided the flexibility to experiment within a defined conceptual framework. These studies did not delve into greater detail beyond the fabrication of the object for sitting.

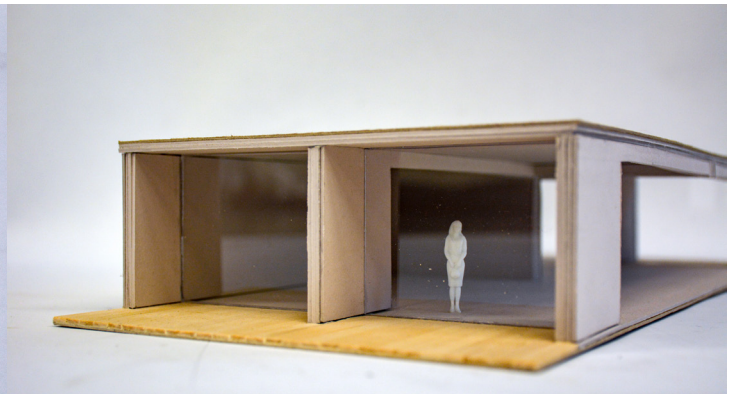
Many of the developed proposals were not finalized to the same degree as most other work explored in my academic endeavors. The nature of the studio created a condition for broader approaches to design while providing a scale for realistic application. I believe this mentality was critical to later approaches in my graduate studies that did require greater emphasis on constraint and feasibility. The ability to approach broad concepts developed across a massive site while continually recognizing the impact on the human-scale Indicated that similar investigations could take place with a stricter setting.



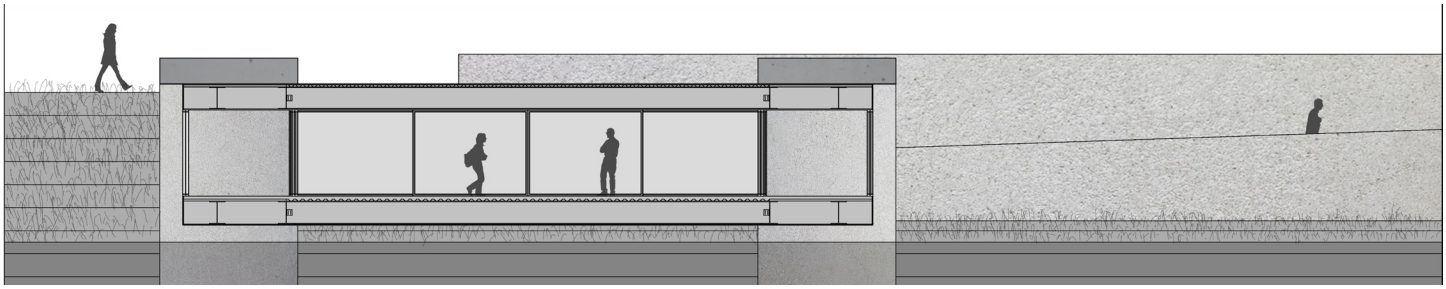
Unconditioned Node Concept Sketch



Unconditioned Node Model Photograph



Conditioned Hub Model Photograph



Unconditioned Node Section