



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-15-31

February 24, 2015

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM

Mt. Umunhum Trail Guadalupe Creek Overlook – Viewing Platform

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review and confirm the proposed Guadalupe Creek Overlook Design Guidelines to guide the overlook design to ensure the protection of sensitive natural resources and visitor safety.
2. Review and confirm the draft preliminary conceptual design for the overlook that integrates the proposed guidelines.

SUMMARY

As part of a Measure AA Project (#23-5), the Mt Umunhum Guadalupe Creek Overlook will provide a vista point for visitors accessing the summit of Mt Umunhum. The Mount Umunhum Trail alignment passes in close proximity to a spectacular vista point overlooking the Guadalupe Creek watershed. Improvements to the vista point site are necessary to safely accommodate a high volume of trail users while protecting the natural environment. A series of design guidelines for the overlook are proposed, and a conceptual design based on these guidelines will be presented for Committee review and input.

DISCUSSION

Construction of the new four-mile Mt. Umunhum Trail, which will connect the Bald Mountain Parking Area to the summit of Mt. Umunhum, is well underway, with more than 2.5 miles of trail completed. At the approximate half-way point, a precipitous rock outcrop is situated approximately 30 feet from the main trail. The outcrop has steep drop-offs to the south and east, and due to this topographic position, affords stunning views of the Guadalupe Creek watershed and the Santa Clara Valley beyond (Attachment A).

Rock outcrops, such as the one forming the overlook, are considered sensitive habitats due to their relative rarity and unique plant communities they support. Although no rare or special-status plants occur on the Guadalupe Creek Overlook, the rock eriogonum (*Eriogonum saxatile*), is known locally only from the eastern slopes of Mt. Umunhum and Mt. Hamilton, and several other plant species are present that are not found in any other habitat type.

As a vista point that will be clearly visible from the new trail, visitors will find their way to the Guadalupe Creek Overlook. Use of the overlook can either be: 1) *informal*, such that the site is left in its natural state and visitors are allowed to hike off-trail to discover and use the overlook

on their own; 2) *restricted*, such that a fence and signage is installed warning the public to stay away from sensitive area(s); or 3) *featured*, with appropriate and safe access provided in a way that allows the public to enjoy this stunning natural resource without degrading it. Because of the anticipated popularity of the Mt. Umunhum Trail, the potential public safety issues and environmental damage resulting from *informal* use, and the low likelihood of compliance with a use *restriction*, the Guadalupe Creek Overlook will be *featured* as a trail destination, with appropriate and safe access provided in a way that allows the public to enjoy this stunning natural resource without impacting the area.

At this time, staff is seeking concurrence from the Planning and Natural Resources Committee on the proposed design guidelines that will further guide the design process for the overlook to create a destination along Mt. Umunhum Trail that protects sensitive natural resources and provides for visitor safety.

Proposed Guadalupe Creek Overlook Design Guidelines

- Preserve and protect native vegetation and natural landforms to the greatest extent possible;
- Create a safe destination point that is accessible to a trail users with a wide range of abilities;
- Integrate with and complement the natural setting, minimizing visibility from surrounding areas;
- Prioritize durability, longevity and sustainability in selection of materials and design of the site amenities;
- Incorporate a “timeless” design that instills appreciation for years to come.

A preliminary conceptual design for the overlook that incorporates the proposed design guidelines has been developed for Committee review and will be presented at the February 24 Committee meeting (Attachment C provides a sketch). If the Committee concurs with the proposed design guidelines and supports the preliminary conceptual design, staff will proceed with finalizing the design plans and preparing for construction.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Planning Department’s FY2014-15 Budget includes \$5,000 for design work through the end of March. The proposed FY2015-16 Budget includes \$150,000 to complete the overlook design and construction.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Construction of the Mt. Umunhum Trail, including the overlook, was included in the Mount Umunhum Environmental Restoration and Public Access Plan EIR, certified in 2012.

NEXT STEPS

If the Committee concurs with the proposed design guidelines and supports the preliminary conceptual design, staff will proceed with finalizing the design plans to prepare for construction. Construction is scheduled for summer 2015.

Attachments

- A. Mt. Umunhum Trail and Overlook Site Map
- B. Site Photographs
- C. Preliminary Conceptual Design Sketch

Responsible Department Head:
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Prepared by:
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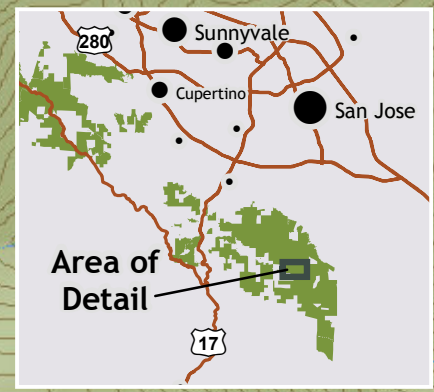
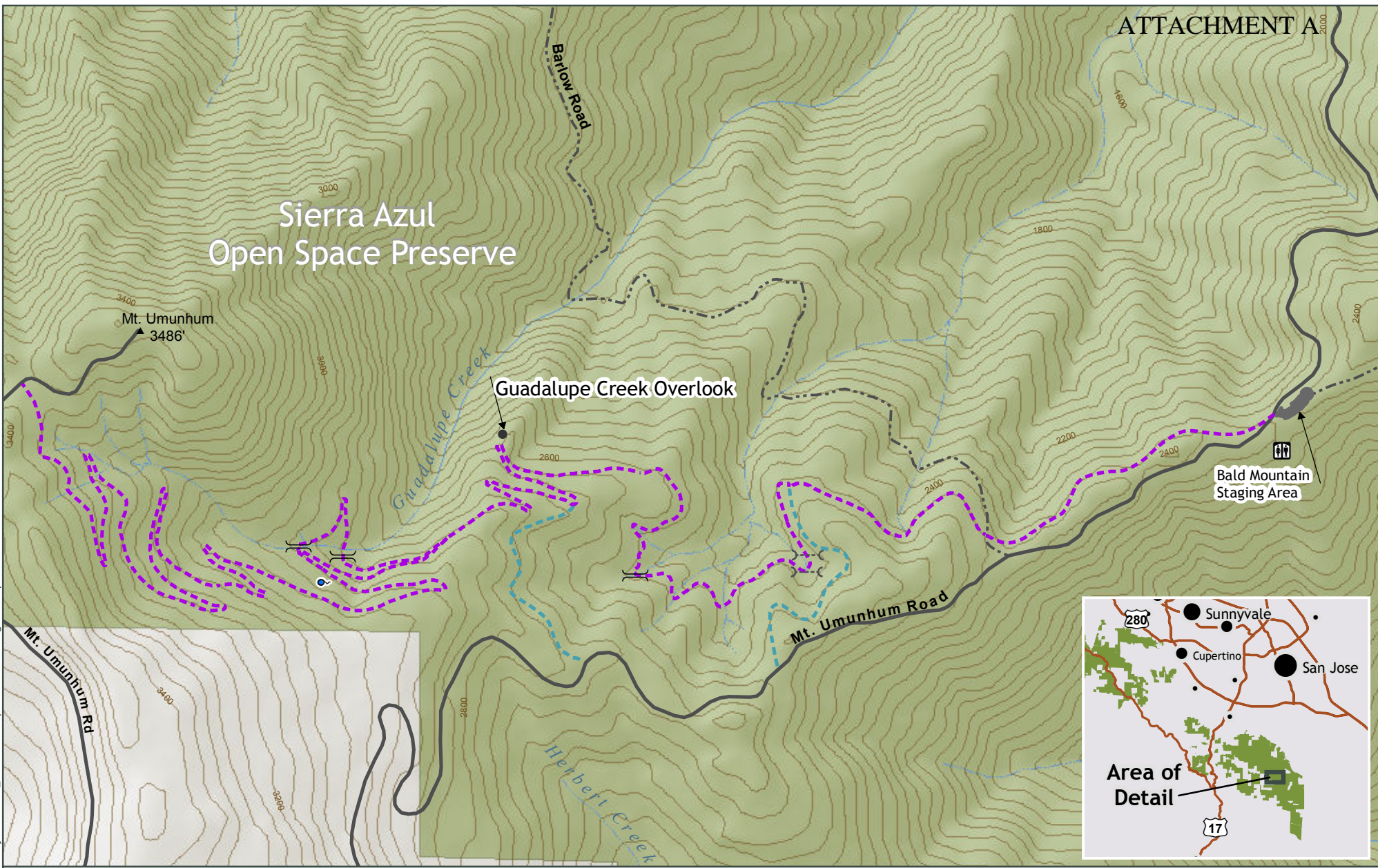
Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

Mt. Umunhum
3486'










Guadalupe Creek Overlook

Bald Mountain
Staging Area

Path: G:\Projects\Sierra_Azul\GuadalupeCkOverlook\RegionalMap.mxd
Created By: lbankosh



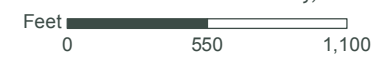
Mount Umunhum Summit Project- Guadalupe Creek Overlook

-  MROSD Preserve
-  Mt. Umunhum Trail
-  Public Trail
-  40 ft Contour Interval
-  Private Property
-  Connector
-  Paved Road
-  Vista Point
-  Bridge

Midpeninsula Regional
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(MROSD)



February, 2015



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, this data does not represent a legal survey and is merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.

Attachment B. Guadalupe Overlook Site Map and Photos

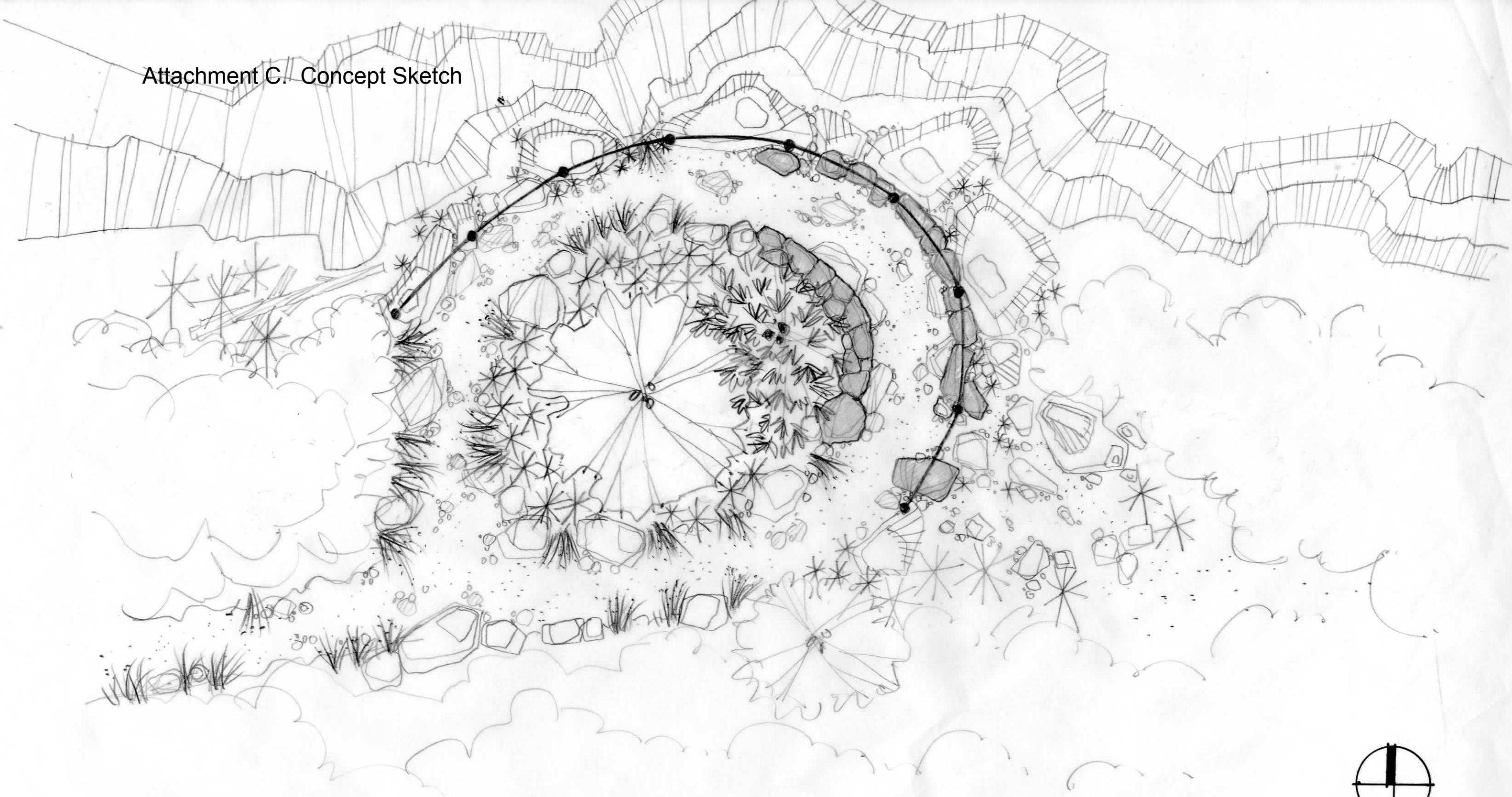


Figure 1. Southwesterly view of the overlook



Figure 2. View of the steep drop-off on the northern side of the overlook.

Attachment C. Concept Sketch



GUADALUPE CREEK OVERLOOK SKETCH PLAN

$\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0''$



R.D.G.

1.20.15