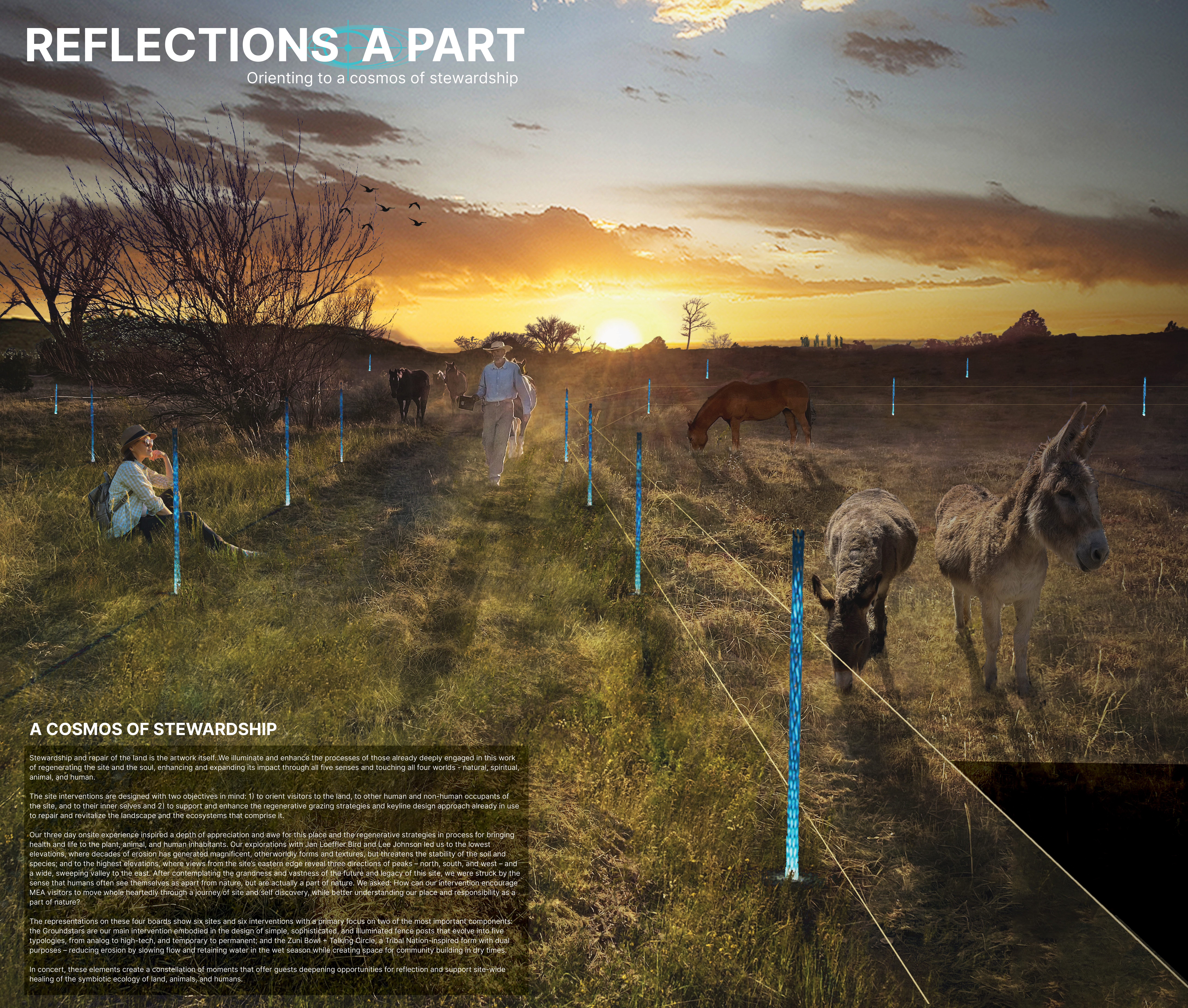
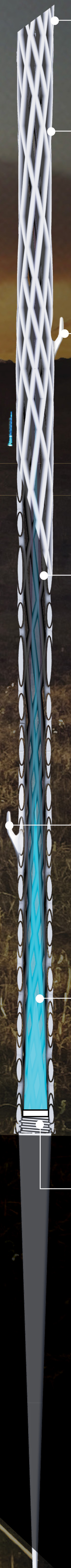
REFLECTIONS A PART

Orienting to a cosmos of stewardship





SLOPED TOP

Tapered tip points to the seventh cardinal direction, the cosmos. It also attracts critters and seeds, allows condensation to form and support life, and accommodates reflective additions enhancing the glow of the groundstar.

GROUNDSTAR SHELL

The shell form is an interpretation of the skeleton of the indigenous cholla cactus. The material transitions through five different typologies, from fleeting - 3D printed biodegradable wood pulp... to permanent - cast metal. The density of the shell increases at the ends and two locations along the spine to increase structural integrity where the fence and other peripherals attach.

FENCE POINT

The electric fence is a key component of the regenerative grazing strategy - and the fence posts are the ubiquitous measure of the land. The Groundstar replaces these posts, bringing a new aesthetic and functional intentionality. The integrated attachment point allows for seamless support and easy install of the existing electrified fence lines.

GROUNDSTAR CORE

In the more permanent typologies, light fills the hollow core of the shell, glowing up the spine and casting an aura on the regenerating landscape, rendering a cosmos of “ground stars”. The void also provides space for small animal habitats, plant growth, and seed deposits for future seasons.

POWER + ACCESSORY POINT

Similar to the “fence attachment point”, this second connection point serves additional infrastructure in two key ways: 1) by providing energy to the groundstar from the mobile solar and battery unit that powers the fence, and 2) as a receiver for instruments and accessories used to measure regenerative performance and environmental conditions.

INTERNAL LIGHT

As day turns to night, the Groundstars take on a new life through an LED light integrated into the base and shining up through the void. Charged by the energy from the solar fence battery connected at the “power and accessory point”, this light creates a constellation of auras across the site.

SCREW ATTACHMENT & BASE

In addition to being beautiful, the groundstar must be utilitarian. The shell is intended to screw onto the base for ease of installation in the field and replacement as necessary. The base, a durable spike, can be pounded into the ground with a mallet and reused repeatedly for groundstar relocation.

GROUNDSTAR

SECTION ELEVATION

A COSMOS OF STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship and repair of the land is the artwork itself. We illuminate and enhance the processes of those already deeply engaged in this work of regenerating the site and the soul, enhancing and expanding its impact through all five senses and touching all four worlds - natural, spiritual, animal, and human.

The site interventions are designed with two objectives in mind: 1) to orient visitors to the land, to other human and non-human occupants of the site, and to their inner selves and 2) to support and enhance the regenerative grazing strategies and keyline design approach already in use to repair and revitalize the landscape and the ecosystems that comprise it.

Our three day onsite experience inspired a depth of appreciation and awe for this place and the regenerative strategies in process for bringing health and life to the plant, animal, and human inhabitants. Our explorations with Jan Loeffler Bird and Lee Johnson led us to the lowest elevations, where decades of erosion has generated magnificent, otherworldly forms and textures, but threatens the stability of the soil and species; and to the highest elevations, where views from the site’s eastern edge reveal three directions of peaks – north, south, and west – and a wide, sweeping valley to the east. After contemplating the grandness and vastness of the future and legacy of this site, we were struck by the sense that humans often see themselves as apart from nature, but are actually a part of nature. We asked: How can our intervention encourage MEA visitors to move whole heartedly through a journey of site and self discovery, while better understanding our place and responsibility as a part of nature?

The representations on these four boards show six sites and six interventions with a primary focus on two of the most important components: the Groundstars are our main intervention embodied in the design of simple, sophisticated, and illuminated fence posts that evolve into five typologies, from analog to high-tech, and temporary to permanent; and the Zuni Bowl + Talking Circle, a Tribal Nation-inspired form with dual purposes – reducing erosion by slowing flow and retaining water in the wet season while creating space for community building in dry times.

In concert, these elements create a constellation of moments that offer guests deepening opportunities for reflection and support site-wide healing of the symbiotic ecology of land, animals, and humans.

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CHAMISA
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SANGRE DE CRISTO
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OFFERING BOWL
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DROGHEDA
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JEMEZ
PLAINS
REFLECTION PATH
E
OFFERING BOWL AT THRESHOLD OF BADLANDS GARDEN
A
REFLECTION PATH
C
REFLECTION PATH
B
SANDIA
D

SIX SITE CONSTELLATION

Visitors to MEA Saddleback Ranch arrive through the front gate with the vastness and beauty of the expansive site and the legacy of ecological millennia before them. A constellation of six interventions progressively orient the visitors to the site and its position within the cosmos, to the immediate beauty of the surrounding landforms and geology, to each other as part of a larger human and ecological community, and ultimately to their inner selves. This, collectively, is the cosmos of stewardship.

The first site (the 7 Point Center) orients the visitors to the points and peaks of the tribal worlds - north, south, east, west, mother earth, father sky, and self. The center is the largest of the three offering bowls, carved from natural stone and marking the spiritual and spatial nexus of the six sites. It is the easiest to access and demands the least depth of intention.

The second set of sites (the Groundstar Meadow, the Badlands Garden, and the Sonic Circle Aviary) orient the visitors to Saddleback's unique landforms and plant and animal ecologies. The Groundstar Meadow highlights the grazing location of the horses and burros and is the origin of the fence grid central to the regenerative grazing strategy. The Badlands Garden stabilizes the other-worldly nature of the existing landforms in that canyon by slowing the erosion process and reseeding the landscape. The Sonic Circle Aviary includes a sculptural bird habitat formed from branches scavenged from dead plant material in the riparian zones and capitalizes on the natural acoustics of the arroyo-formed cliff to amplify the sounds of humans and birds that will occupy this new aviary.

The fifth site (Zuni Bowl + Talking Circle) changes functions depending on the season – rainy or dry – and speaks both to long-term ecological repair and to building stronger onsite communities. Finally, the sixth site (Vision Peak), the most remote and elevated location, is where the visitor looks both outward and inward and is re-oriented to the role of the self as part of - and inseparable from - the worlds, the ecologies, and the community. This is the hardest site to access and requires a greater depth of intention.

Groundstars occupy each of the sites establishing a sense of scale and a light, magical glow that connects sky to human to ground.

GROUNDSTAR MEADOW

GRIDDED GROUNDSTARS CREATE A FENCED SPACE CONTAINING HORSES AND BURROS ENHANCINGTHE REGENERATIVE GRAZING STRATEGY.

SONIC CIRCLE AVIARY

NATURAL ACOUSTICS OF ARROYO CLIFF AMPLIFY SOUNDS OF PEOPLE & BIRDS IN AVIARY FORMED FROM DEAD TREE CLEARING WITHIN THE RIPARIAN ZONES

ZUNI BOWL + TALKING CIRCLE

ZUNI BOWL DETAINS WATER IN A RAIN EVENT, ALLOWING IT TO SLOWLY SEEP INTO THE LAND AND REGENERATE THE SOIL. IN DRY TIMES, THIS SITE SERVES AS A TALKING CIRCLE, REFERENCING TRIBAL COUNCIL & CREATING COMMUNITY

7 POINT CENTER

ORIENTATION TO 7 POINTS: NORTH, SOUTH, AND WEST PEAKS, EAST VALLEY. SKY, EARTH & SELF. FIRST OFFERING BOWL.

ZUNI BOWL + ONE ROCK DAM

SLOWS WATER, CONTROLS EROSION, REPLENISHES SOIL, ENCOURAGES REGENERATION

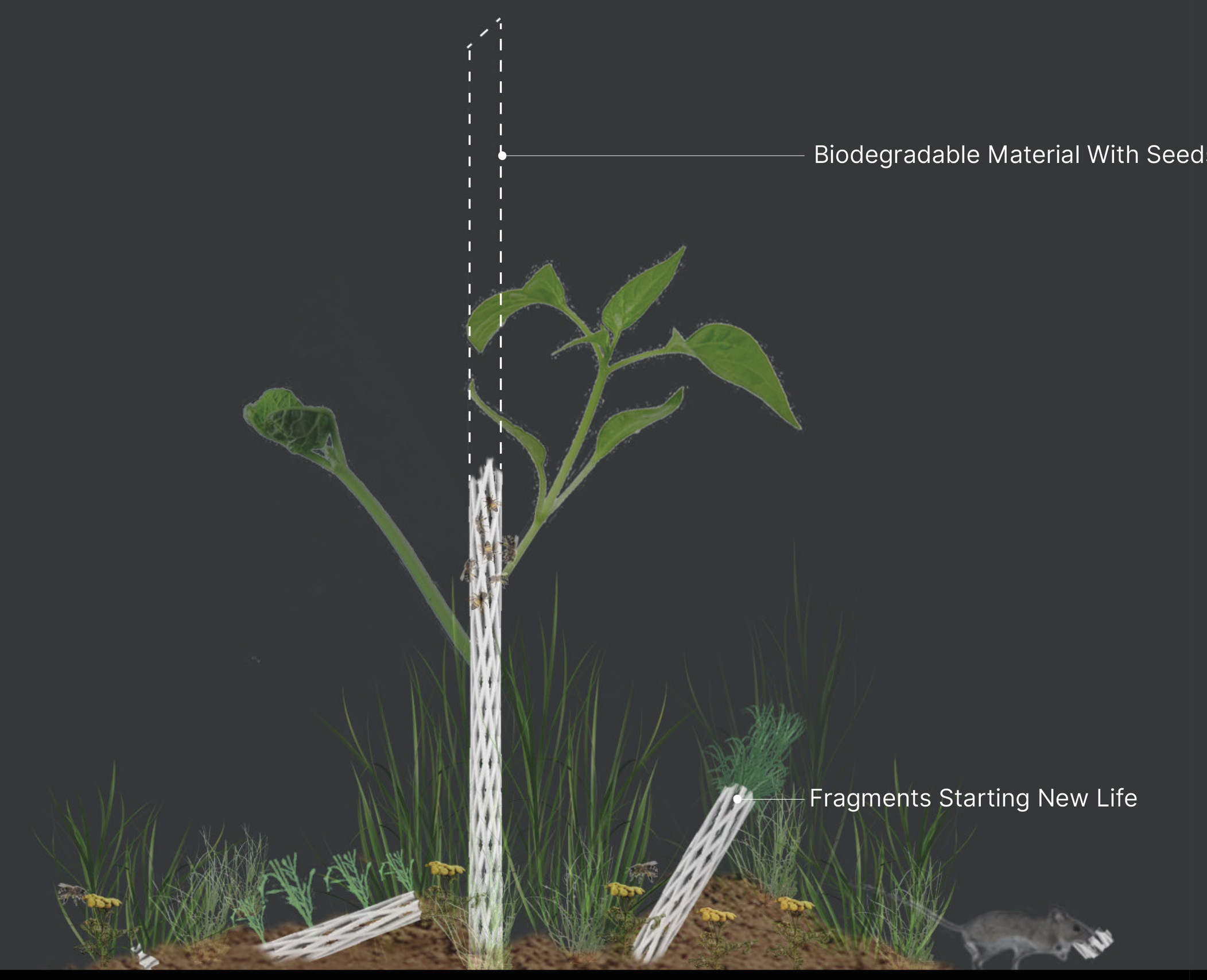
BADLANDS GARDEN

SLOWER WATER AND REPLENISHED SOIL CREATE LUSH PLANT LIFE SCATTERED WITH A CONSTELLATION OF GLOWING GROUNDSTARS

VISION PEAK

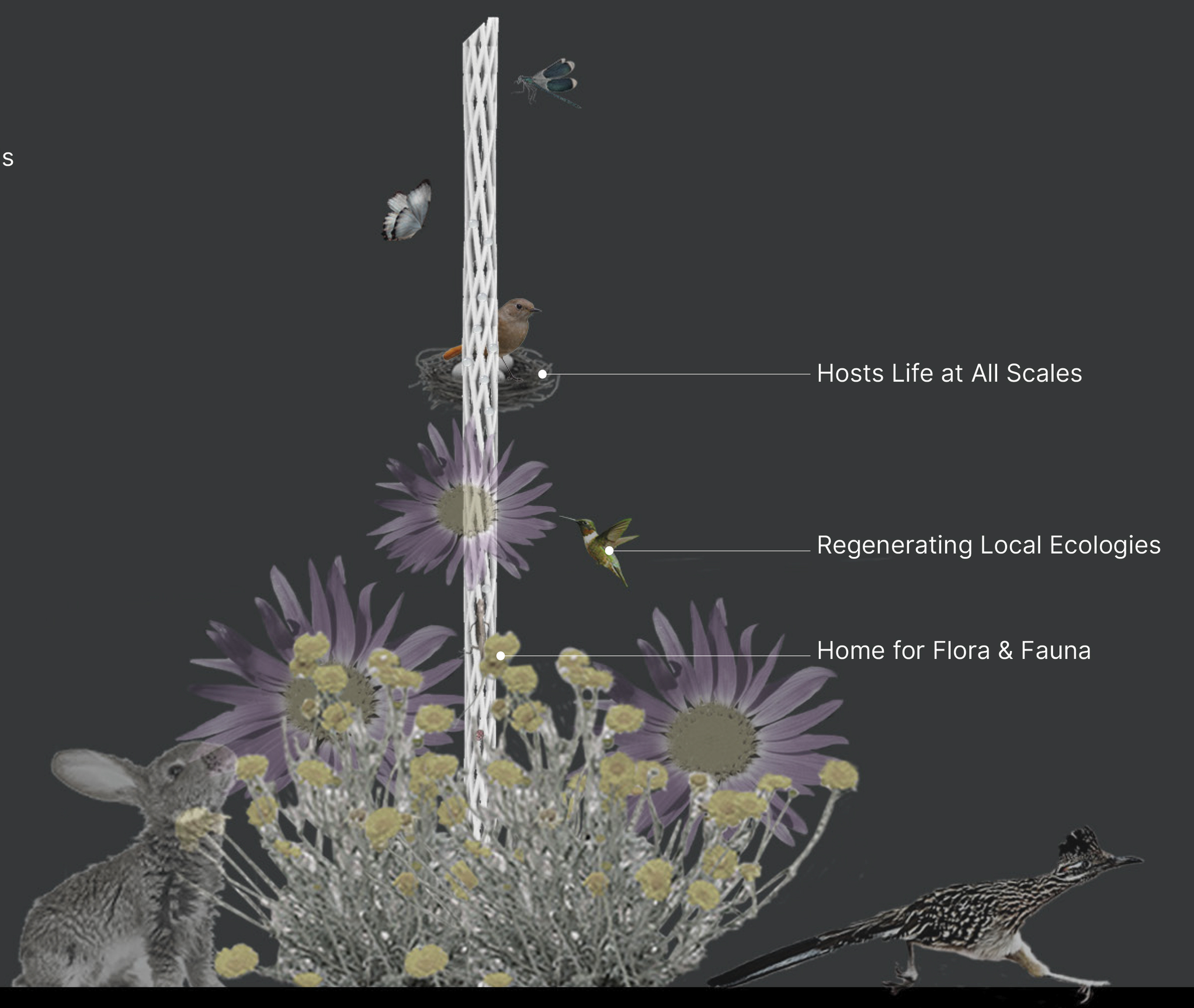
THE REFLECT GROUNDSTAR SHIMMERS IN THE DISTANCE, BECKONING GUESTS TO EXPLORE. AFTER JOURNEYING THROUGH REFLECTION PATH, GUESTS ASCEND TO THE RIDGE TO REST WITHIN A WIND BREAK MADE FROM STONES GATHERED FROM THE HILLSIDE - DISTANT VIEWS OPEN SPACE FOR MEDITATION, AND OBSERVATION OF THE REGENERATING LANDSCAPE.

GROUNDSTAR TYPOLOGIES


Biodegradable Material With Seeds
Fragments Starting New Life

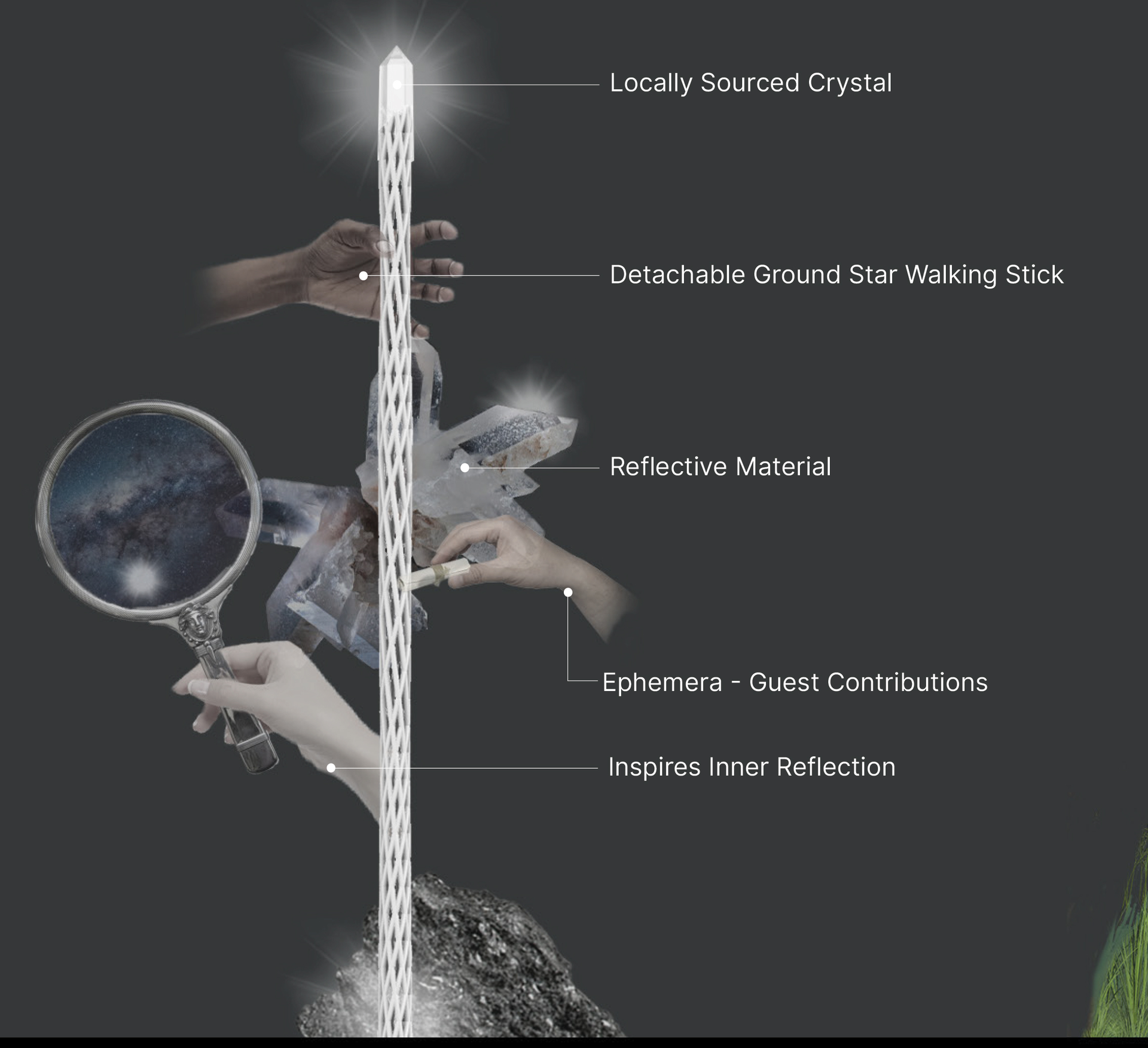
SEED GROUNDSTAR

Formed from 3D printed biodegradable material, this low-tech, impermanent Groundstar deteriorates over time, allowing seeds and nutrients embedded in its shell to pile at the base, sprouting mounds of indigenous planting. These Groundstars can catalyze growth in areas difficult for plants to get started by fertilizing the soil and encouraging water to pool at the base for seeds to root. SEED GROUNDSTAR is suited for areas with low human traffic and minimal but some water, such as the BADLANDS GARDEN.


Hosts Life at All Scales
Regenerating Local Ecologies
Home for Flora & Fauna

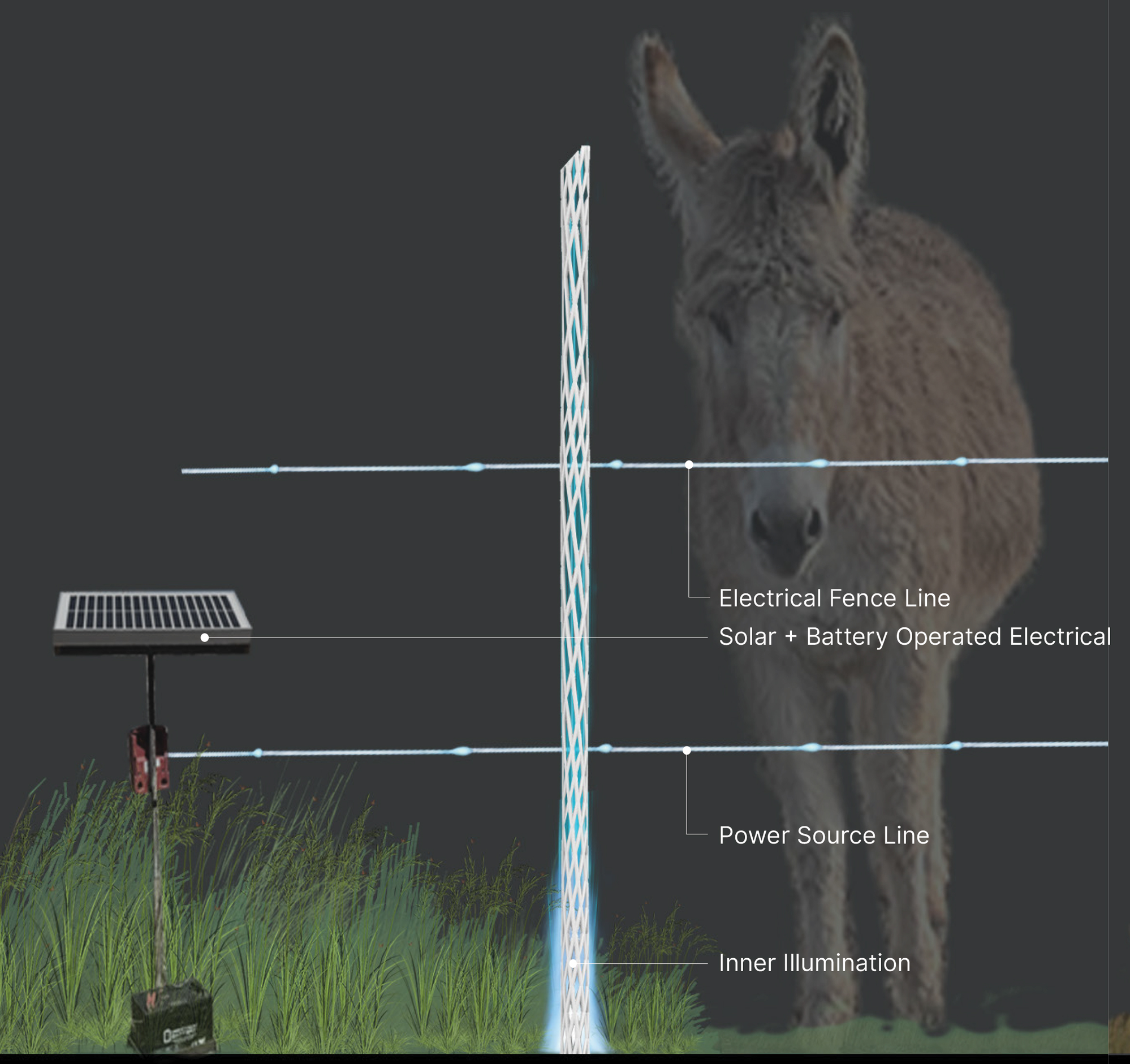
HABITAT GROUNDSTAR

Hosting life at multiple scales, this second groundstar typology is made of natural but not degradable materials and also hosts embedded seeds and nutrients that feed and support wildlife and encourage plant life to grow. Microorganisms, insects, butterflies, birds, and other small animals occupy the gaps in the groundstar shell and build on symbiotic materials that collect at the base; micro water collection strategies encourage rich plant life to grow at the base and along the surface of the HABITAT GROUNDSTAR.


Locally Sourced Crystal
Detachable Ground Star Walking Stick
Reflective Material
Ephemera - Guest Contributions
Inspires Inner Reflection

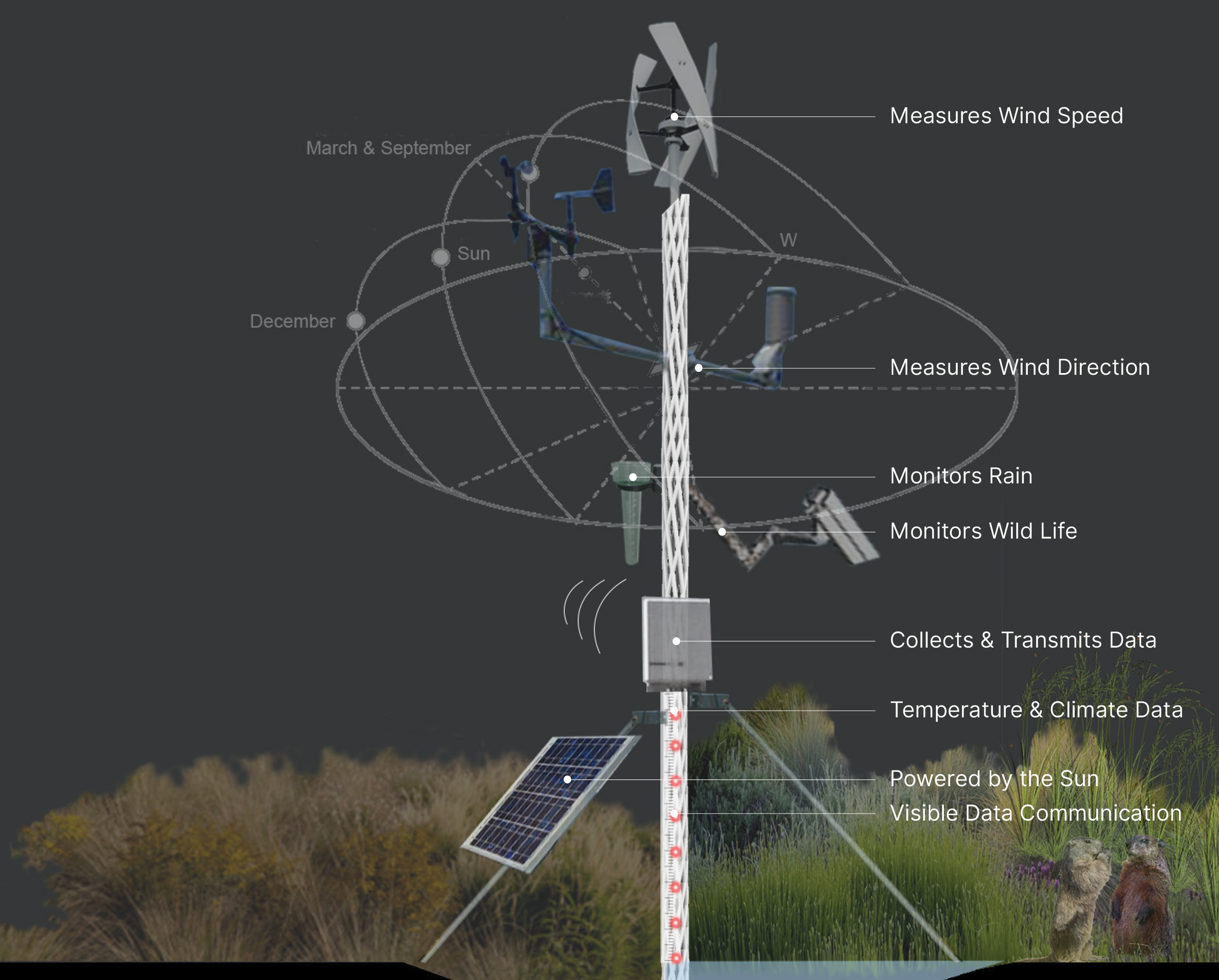
REFLECT GROUNDSTAR

Reflection of self, of land, of cosmos, and of community are all inspired by the REFLECT GROUNDSTAR. 3D printed with silica aggregate – a naturally occurring material on site that shimmers in sunlight and moonlight – and embedded with crystals, glass, mirror, and rock found on site, visitors see glimpses of the sky and constellations, of themselves and of their community, inspiring both literal and philosophical reflections while wandering. The REFLECT GROUNDSTAR can be portable, removed from its base and used as a glowing walking stick while guests navigate the interventions and land at night.


Electrical Fence Line
Solar + Battery Operated Electrical
Power Source Line
Inner Illumination

FENCE GROUNDSTAR

The original groundstar and key to the regenerative grazing strategy, the FENCE GROUNDSTAR is part of the horse and burro pen system (replacing the existing temporary posts) and supports the electric wires that keep the animals in one location for an extended period of time while the remainder of the site recovers. With a two part screw and shell base, they can be easily uprooted and moved as the animals need to relocate. FENCE GROUNDSTARS glow lightly from the inside, powered from the energy of the electric fence, creating a series of ground constellations and a visible yet subtle boundary for people and animals.


March & September
Sun
December
W
Measures Wind Speed
Measures Wind Direction
Monitors Rain
Monitors Wild Life
Collects & Transmits Data
Temperature & Climate Data
Powered by the Sun
Visible Data Communication

CLIMATE GROUNDSTAR

The most high-tech of the typologies, the CLIMATE GROUNDSTAR is independently powered by renewable energy and takes regular measurements of conditions such as temperature, humidity, air quality, CO2 levels, wind speed and direction, rainfall, soil moisture, wildlife monitoring, and grass height. Data is sent to a central location to monitor and track changes and plan for prevention, mitigation, and adaptation responses. LED lights on the groundstar make key changes visible on site. A CLIMATE GROUNDSTAR would occur in each different site biome.

ANALOG
IMPERMANENT

DIGITAL
PERMANENT

With multiple events happening on site, some visitors have Chamisa as their home base, and others Drogheda. Though REFLECTIONS A PART includes six sites of intervention, they are designed to work both as a collective cosmos of orientation and exploration, and as smaller microcosms of reflection with convenient components near each of the two houses.

MEA visitors start their workshop week at the 7 Point Center whe
and the vast, spectacular landscape. This large offering bowl rec
growth of an indigenous flora topiary at its edge, and informal pla
most accessible of the contemplation and orientation sites - ea

At the mouth of this magical canyon is an offering bowl where visitors can contribute drops of precious water, their face and the sky reflected back in the wet rock. Recurring droplets bring animal and plant life to these sacred locations. The Badlands Garden is now lush, as the Zuni Bowl and Media Lunas have helped reduce erosion and stabilize plant life. Groundstars fill the canyon, emitting a magical glow from within this rich landscape. Due to its precariousness, humans are allowed to view but not enter.

The Groundstar Meadow is where visitors are introduced to the regenerative landscape strategy. There are places to sit alone or in small groups around the horses and burros, with opportunities to connect with them and contemplate the place of humans and animals in the larger, shared ecosystem.

Because the Media Lunas slow down water flow, plant life naturally thrives on their high side. These spots will become cooler microclimates that encourage sitting and resting.

From Chamisa, the Sonic Circle Aviary is an easy walk. One of three offering stones marks the entry to the space where water donations encourage animal and plant life. Visitors can participate in the clearing of dead trees and their reuse in the new aviary. Groundstars are scattered here informally. The natural shape of the canyon edge amplifies sound creating a reverberant bird symphony.

ere they are oriented to the macro scale of the cosmos
ceives ceremonial water from each visitor, feeding the
nts along its cardinal directions. It is intended to be the
ach one after requiring more effort and time to attain.

"In two years there will be grasses, blowing and rippling like waves in the wind. In ten years there will be herds of elk, and antelope running through the plains. In fifty years, this will spread to the whole world - these ideas of regeneration...and we will heal the earth." - Jan Loeffler Bird

ZUNI BOWL + TALKING CIRCLE

Inspired by Native American water technology and spiritual geometries, the Zuni Bowl and Media Lunas work cooperatively by dispersing, slowing, and detaining water to reduce erosion and recharge the ground with life-giving moisture. The stepped design of the Zuni Bowl allows the base to fill first, then spill over once it reaches the top of the pool, slowing the flow of water down the hill and maximizing time for ground absorption. In dry times, this form, inspired by the Native American talking circles and convening councils, is a place for gathering and sharing ideas, emotions, and knowledge.

Utilizing rock gathered from the site, these forms could be built collaboratively with MEA visitors in hands-on workshops led by the design team, and local Tribal Nation leaders This kind of participation increases ownership and investment, as well as provides opportunities for personal growth and skill-building.

The concentric circle diagram is a reference to the expanding four levels of orientation, starting from the easiest-to-access 7 Point Circle and finally reaching the furthest and most difficult site, Vision Peak. Each step is a deeper level of investment: orientation to worlds, orientation to site, orientation to ecologies, and orientation to self. The circular form is sacred to Tribal communities, representing inclusivity of both the council and the community. Its continuity also symbolizes the passing of the seasons as the earth rotates around the sun, and the progress of life as we expand our wisdom with age.

ASCENT TO COMMUNITY

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