

Lianjiang Park

Project Location: Changsha, Hunan Province, China

Sub-Category: Planning & Analysis

Purpose of Project

Located between a mountain and river in a rapidly growing area of Changsha, the 20 hectare Lianjiang Park commands a critical juncture between city, nature, and a changing way of life. While life in the Lianjiang region has been intimately linked to the water, recent urban development has resulted in a significant loss of wetlands, habitats, and the culture they give rise to.

In response to a government-proposed 3 square kilometer new development zone with a 12 ha reservoir for urban flood control, the design team envisioned a comprehensive water system as the armature of the development, with the reservoir becoming a multifunctional open space in the city.

Incorporating a 20 meter grade change, lake, wetlands, creeks, hills, terraces and islands are sculpted from existing topography, serving to store and filter drainage from surrounding urban areas before it flows into the river. By expanding the perimeter of the water body through an undulating shoreline with a series of bays and inlets, both the ecological functions and experiential features of the reservoir are maximized along the edge. The park's meandering design vocabulary derives from the sinuous landscape of rice paddy and tea plantations common amongst the local traditional agriculture. By introducing water treatment infrastructure to address water pollution, increasing flood capacity, and creating a variety of habitats, water-based ecologies and cultural habits are simultaneously restored.

Along the lengthened shoreline a wide variety of recreational amenities are planned by creek and lake, including waterfront promenades and plazas, wetland gardens, education center and sports fields. Three trails traverse varying levels of the park, connecting a variety of programmed spaces and distinct landscapes. The plant selection reinforces a unique sense of place with wetland grasses, tea terraces, bamboo forest, metasequoia islands, and lotus ponds recall the traditional Lianjiang landscape.

Role of Landscape Architect

The landscape architect served as the project lead, and collaborated with affiliated consultants - including water quality engineer, wetland biologist, hydrologic engineers and architects – to conduct a comprehensive analysis and develop the conceptual approach as well as detailed plans and designs for Lianjiang Park.

Significance

Through the synthesis of topography, hydrology and vegetation, Lianjiang Park becomes a 20 hectare living green machine, integrating human activities and serving as valuable model for sustainable urban expansion. Taking on the challenge of managing polluted runoff, the project creates a sustainable landscape where people and wildlife can find refuge and rejuvenation – under the surface as well as above.

Special Factors

10x lake water: An extensive drainage system will lead treated storm water runoff to the lake, and help replace the water ten times annually to ensure maintained water quality.

6x The Edge: The project's treatment of the water's edge is drastic – expanding the shoreline to six times its current circumference. It's a key move inspired by ecological principles that seek to increase edge conditions and thereby environmental exchange capacity, increasing the number and diversity of habitats supporting balanced ecosystems.

3x Walks: The City walk, the Forest walk, and the Waterfront walk connect landscape and urban destinations throughout the site, bringing people through a multitude of different programs and landscape experiences.