



City in Nature
Sarah Newton
09.05.2016
Second Creek Greenway

The city can be defined as any human construction or impact. On the Second Creek Greenway in Knoxville, Tennessee, the city exists in the form of a boardwalk and railing that guides people under the road to safely maintain continuous access along this bicycle and pedestrian-friendly route. This construct is specifically intended to be within nature, to provide a mode of access to natural habitats within Knoxville while traveling through the city safely. Public interest in Knoxville fuels this type of intervention and is comparable to that which Jane Amidon discusses in *Big Nature*, that it is "increasingly geared toward a fusion of economic/ social/ environmental vitalization." Emblematic of this integration of culture and nature, the tree growing over the metal rail is evidence of stasis of these systems over time.



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Suttree Landing Park Site

Nature is the birds chirping in the meadow, the leaves of trees rustling in the forest, and the crisp air of the mountains, but it is also the novel ecosystems such as this example at the future Suttree Landing Park in South Knoxville. Given the proper conditions of light, water, and nutrients, grasses like those shown in the image above can thrive and serve as pioneers for a future ecosystem should it go uninhibited. Similarly, nonnative species of plants and animals can thrive where they have no predators. While they may not have the most important ecological functions or provide a desirable aesthetic, they are nature nonetheless. These instances of spontaneous nature are suggestive of a fifth nature proposed by Jane Amidon: a post-industrial landscape of reclamation. However, in these examples, reclamation is not occurring by human influence, but by nature itself.



City as Nature
Sarah Newton
09.03.2016
Island Home Park

Nature provides certain functions that humans often cannot replicate due to scale, cost, or other impracticalities. Sometimes referred to as ecosystem services, these are increasingly valued for the infrastructural support they provide within urban, suburban, and rural contexts. In this image a 3D mat of plastic mesh serves as a bank revetment on the Tennessee River. Made of very thin threads of plastic, interwoven to create a waffle-like structure, this mat still allows water to reach the soil and prevents seed or burgeoning plant material from washing away, providing structural support for root establishment. This then allows the eventual revegetation of a bank. It is an example of the city, or humans, identifying and mimicking the function of root stabilization in the soil of natural river bank systems to reduce soil erosion for healthier aquatic habitats. As Charles Waldheim describes landscape urbanism, it is "landscape as a remediating practice" and an "integration...between (natural) environmental and (engineered) infrastructural systems."