

CHAW Endangered Animals Project

Presentation to CFA, November 16, 2023



OVERVIEW

The Endangered Animals Art Project is a community-focused public art project that promotes livability, walkability, and delight, as well as awareness of the local effects of our changing environment. The project is an expansion of the successful Capitol Hill Alphabet Animal Art Project (which currently includes 20 sculptures), and will be installed in partnership with DDOT on the Connecticut Avenue Corridor between the Woodley Park and Cleveland Park metro stations. The project aims to marry an educational component with aesthetic excellence, as well as celebrating our local artists. By adding ten more sculptures, we hope to continue to create more vibrant communities through the arts in Washington, DC.

The selected animals are all “extirpated”--meaning that they could once be found in Rock Creek Park, but are no longer able to live there. This marriage of DC-based art and DC-based endangered animals sparks a conversation between the arts, climate, and how both contribute to a sense of place.

By incorporating partnerships with Cleveland Park Main Street (CPMS) and Woodley Park Main Street (WPMS), the Endangered Animals will encourage residents, business owners, artists, makers, and passersby to explore the inter-connectivity of community through the entry point of unexpected encounters with high-quality art in public spaces.

Artists are tasked with utilizing materials that are expected to last with no maintenance for 7-10 years. If, at that time, upkeep is required, artists may be asked to provide expertise in how to refurbish the pieces. With the past Alphabet Animals experience, we are able to see in real time the lasting impact and sustainability of the project—particularly the sculptures that were installed in 2014, which are now more than 9 years old. Part of our RFQ process includes a strong focus on materials, and this allows the Animals to both withstand and take on new character through weather and time.

A past work, “The Ladybug” is an excellent example of interaction with environmental factors: it is made of 100% recycled materials, including a plastic sled, laundry detergent bottles, and other colorful features. The colors have faded somewhat, but this was always part of the artist’s aesthetic choice and message in selecting these materials. We work closely with artists to ensure that the material choices are thoughtful, not only for today, but for a decade down the road. It does not mean the sculptures look the same—but their growth and evolution are also part of the neighborhood and community wayfinding.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & PLAN

Each of these sites was chosen to intentionally expand the reach of the current Alphabet Animals project and provide inroads and inter-connectivity into a new neighborhood—with a new theme that more closely connects with the community there. These sites see high foot and bicycle traffic from visitors, and are very much within the context of dynamic areas where people live and play, as well as being a major thoroughfare that some might ordinarily speed through to get where they are going. By including sites evenly spaced down Connecticut Ave., CHAW and CPMS/WPMS are developing a throughline to both the business community center and to their anchor organizations (CPMS on the north side and WPMS on the south side).

Each of these sites also presents the opportunity to add an element of education about local endangered species, which expands both creative imagination and possibility of how we can marry the arts and very tangible climate realities in a public art context. The excitement and ownership over their own Animals—especially because they are all regional endangered animals—provides a unique touchpoint for neighbors and residents, as well as a whimsical wayfinding tool that connects people to their own creativity and to each other through the shared experience of discovering the animals along such a major street.

MATERIALS OF ARTWORK

Materials may include, but are not limited to: cast resin, steel, dibond, weather-treated wood, high-fired red and/or brown clay, car paint. Metals will be welded or cut out; clay hand-thrown.

DDOT will install all sculptures using the “buckles” that are found on street signs, which will be attached with 2 thin pieces of flexible metal sheeting. If a sculpture is large, it may be attached with 3 bands.

ABOUT CHAW & OUR PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

As an organization, CHAW works to be an artist-led community workshop. Practically, this looks like getting beyond the walls of the CHAW building with our programming—whether via our Art Vans, community partnerships, or public art. CHAW is fundamentally committed to making great arts experiences more accessible to more people in more places in our city, and public art is a keyway we can accomplish this goal.

Through more than 50 years in the Eastern Market neighborhood, CHAW has developed a real understanding of how community needs change and how to adapt to those changing needs. We believe it is imperative to include community voices in the process of creating and implementing projects that are embedded within neighborhoods. That is why partnerships are a foundational part of our vision for Public Art in the District. Better art comes from bigger and more expansive conversations, and although partnerships take work, we believe they are worth it for the richer, more nuanced artistic output we can create together.

We also believe fully that more art in public spaces enhances all aspects of our lives. They serve as way finders, connections with artists, conversation-starters, and—not insignificantly—they spark creativity and wonder. CHAW has the depth of experience to back this up through the successful Capitol Hill Alphabet Animal Art Project, which had two iterations of ten sculptures each. The Endangered Animals lead artist was involved in both of those previous projects, and we have continued our relationship with DDOT to ensure that materials, sizing, and installation are safe, sustainable, and secure. The original project captured people’s imaginations, and this is an important element of providing further pathways and entry points into incorporating the arts and creativity more broadly across diverse constituencies. The variety of animals and the unexpected nature of them helped people pay closer attention to their surroundings and ask questions--especially questions about who the artists were and what the animals were for--animating these spaces and creating vibrant conversation in and among communities.

The letter of support from the DDOT Fabrication team for installation shows the depth of our partnerships. These are not partnerships of convenience, but rather intentional bridges connecting local government, arts, businesses, residents, and everyone in between. This relationship was built during the pilot project, and the enthusiasm and mutual respect from that project propelled our ability to build upon it with the second installation and now this expansion opportunity. Partnerships are at the core of CHAW’s community-building philosophy, and this cross-sector support for the arts in our communities shows how genuinely this ethos runs through the project and our vision for public art more broadly.

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



FIELD OPERATIONS BRANCH

July 6, 2023

Mr. Aaron Myers
Executive Director, DC Commission of the Arts and Humanities
200 Eye Street SE, Suite 1400
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Aaron Myers:

The District Department of Transportation, Field Operations Branch is glad to inform you that we would provide sign installation support services for the Endangered Animal Art Project (EAAP) to ensure a safe successful installation of the signs. Sign Installation support services include furnishing sign support system, tools, and equipment and labor necessary to install Endangered Animal Art signs on the District approved streetlight poles.

However, it is important to know that our support service is conditional until you receive an approval from our Streetlight Division to attach signs on the streetlight poles. For coordination and approval of streetlight poles for mounting Endangered Animal Art signs, please contact Ms. Robyn Jackson. Ms. Jackson can be reached at robyn.jackson@dc.gov. We are looking forward to working with Capitol Hill Arts Workshop (CHAW) again on this project.

If you have questions, please contact me at (202)-359-4966 or mohammad.aslam@dc.gov.

Sincerely,

Mohammad Aslam

Mohammad Aslam
Citywide Program Support Manager

cc: Robyn Jackson; Supervisory General Engineer, Streetlight
Division

PROJECT TIMELINE

- January 8 - January 22, 2024: Artists finalize designs for approval by CHAW/Lead Artist (must include necessary attachments for DDOT installation)
- January 22 - January 29, 2024: DCCAH final approval of designs
- January 29 - March 11, 2024: Artists fabricate their designs
- March 11 - March 15, 2024: Finished sculpture delivery window
- March 18 - 29, 2024: DDOT installation window
- April 1 - 30, 2024: Ribbon Cutting/Dedication and Spring Animal Tours, in partnership with Cleveland Park Main Street & Woodley Park Main Street
- April - September 2024: Events, Activations, and Tie-Ins with Endangered Animals (including Cherry Blossom, Art All Night, etc.)

PAST EXAMPLES & PROJECT ACCESSIBILITY

As a continuation of a previous--successful--project, the Endangered Animals will follow in the footsteps of their predecessors. The original Alphabet Animals pilot (2014) and follow-on project (2020) were highly instructive in providing the core elements of project specifications: including such logistics as safety, weight, materials, and installation. They also provided an excellent base for media attention and allowed neighbors to become acquainted with and provide feedback on the animals before seeking to add new sculptures.

We have received many requests for an expansion to other parts of the city, and this new focus on Endangered Animals feels both specific and appropriate for a stretch of the city that contains the Zoo—and reaches thousands of visitors daily.

CHAW is partnering with Cleveland Park and Woodley Park Main Streets. The original installation specialists at DDOT and CHAW project manager bring expertise in fabricating, installing, managing, and presenting the pieces.

It is of particular importance to the success of the Endangered Animals that they be accessible and available to anyone out on the street in their neighborhood. This is reflected in the broadening scope of location selections, as well as the mandate to artists that sculptures should be visible when viewed from below (they will be hung above 12ft). The ubiquitousness of light poles allows for an even field--the sculptures will all be displayed in the same way on each street, providing consistency and recognizability for all populations.

Each of these sites was chosen to intentionally expand the reach of the current Alphabet Animals “path” in a way that is highly relevant to this area and provide inroads and inter-connectivity into a new neighborhood. Both Rock Creek Park and the Zoo are in Ward 3, providing context and connection to the selected Animals. This application is evidence of how the project can easily expand to any ward: the call for this expansion of the project came directly from Ward 3 constituents who had visited the Alphabet Animals on the Hill and wanted to create a version that reflected their own community.

The Connecticut Ave. sites have high foot and bicycle traffic and are situated within dynamic mixed-use areas that include residential, business, nature, and the Zoo—places where people live, work, visit, and play. By including sites evenly spaced between the Cleveland Park and Woodley Park metros, including streets near the Zoo, CHAW and CPMS/WPMS are developing a throughline to both the business community center and to their anchor neighborhoods.

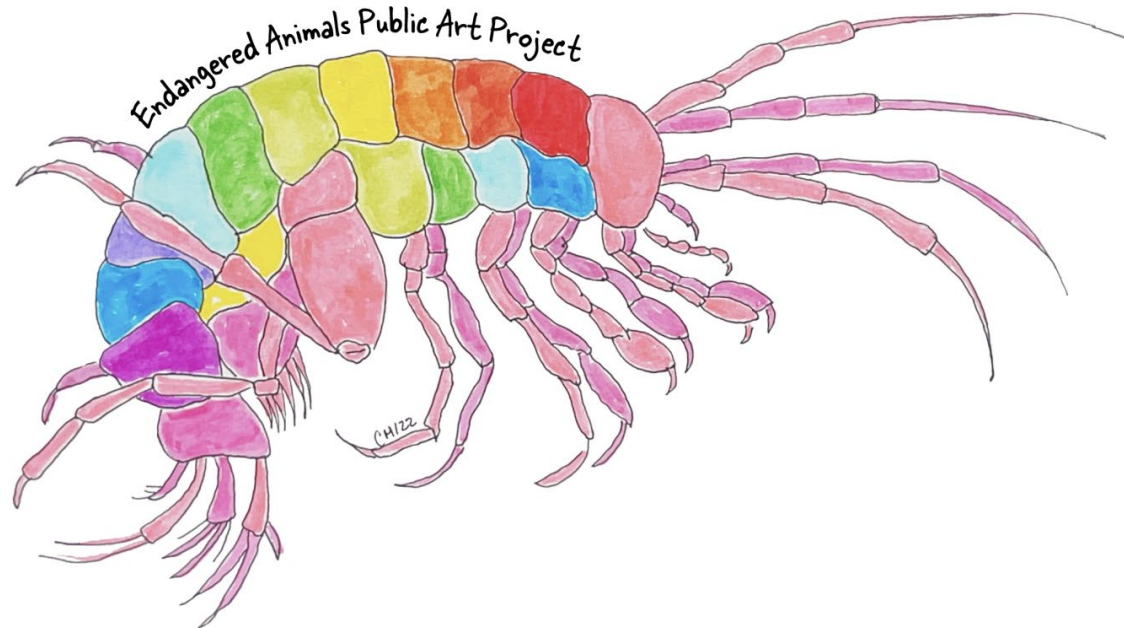
Each of these sites also presents the opportunity to add a new dynamic to the evolving Animals project, which expands the creative imagination and artistic reach. The excitement and ownership over their own Animals provides a unique touchpoint for neighbors and residents, as well as a whimsical wayfinding tool for residents and visitors alike that connects people to their own creativity and to each other through the shared experience of discovering the Animals in new locations and new contexts.

Images

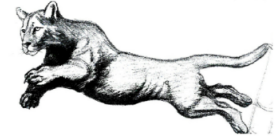
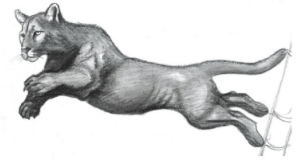
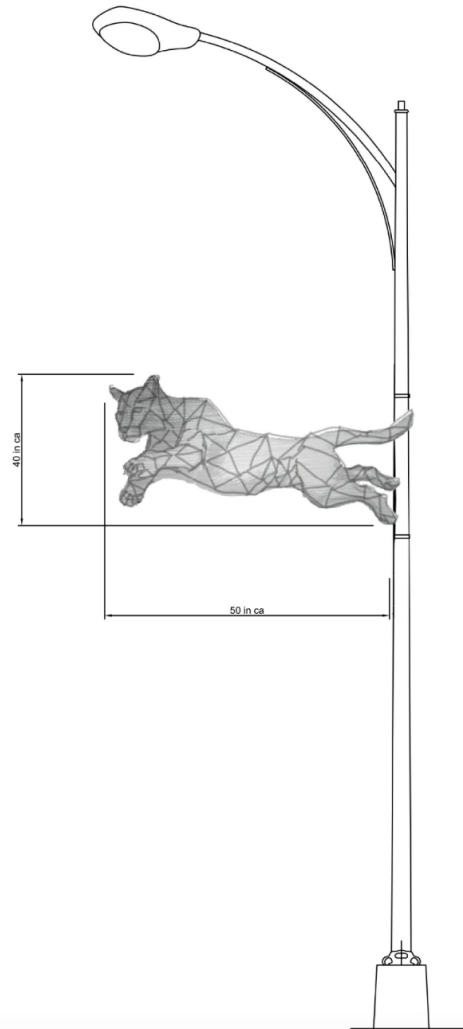
American Bison, by Carly Rounds



Hays Spring Amphipod, by Carolina Mayorga



Mountain Lion, by Davide Prete



Endangered Animals Public Art Project Concept for sculpture: Mountain Lion Artist: Davide Prete

The concept for the sculpture started from a pencil sketch of the animal jumping. The design was refined to simplify the form and make it available for metalsmithing.

The sculpture will be cut from $\frac{1}{8}$ aluminum sheet and hammered / embossed to give a three dimensional volume.

Both tail and legs will be connected with appropriated brackets to the pole.

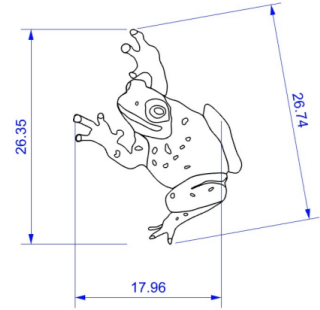
Weight will be minimal by using light aluminum with $\frac{1}{8}$ in thickness and internal cuttings to open the figure.

Dimensions and positions can be modified based on DDOT indications.

Grey Tree Frog, by Fanni Somogyi



Individual parts cut from 3/16" aluminum panel



Approximate estimated weight: 4.59 lbs
(2.641 lbs/square feet)

Approximate estimated area: 1.74 square feet



Image 1. Proposed sculpture

I'm proposing to build a relief sculpture using 3/16" thick plates of laser cut aluminum. These plates will be layered and plug welded together. Between certain layers additional spacing is added for dynamic view.

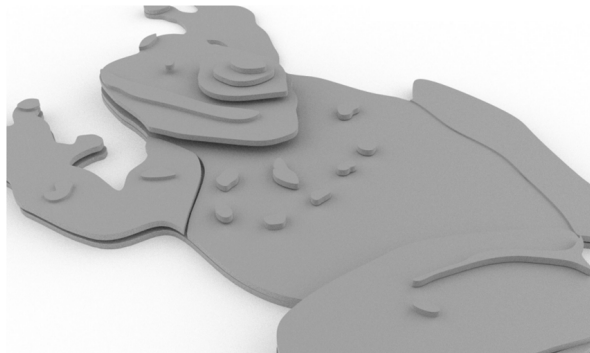


Image 2. Detail image of layered plates

These images do not portray desired painted finish only the structure. Currently I only have the "front" of the frog drawn and layered, but if this drawing of the frog is accepted then I will draw the "back". I'm hoping to make both sides equally dynamic and intriguing.

Current 3D model does not have holes in it yet.

Little Brown Bat, by Julie Maynard

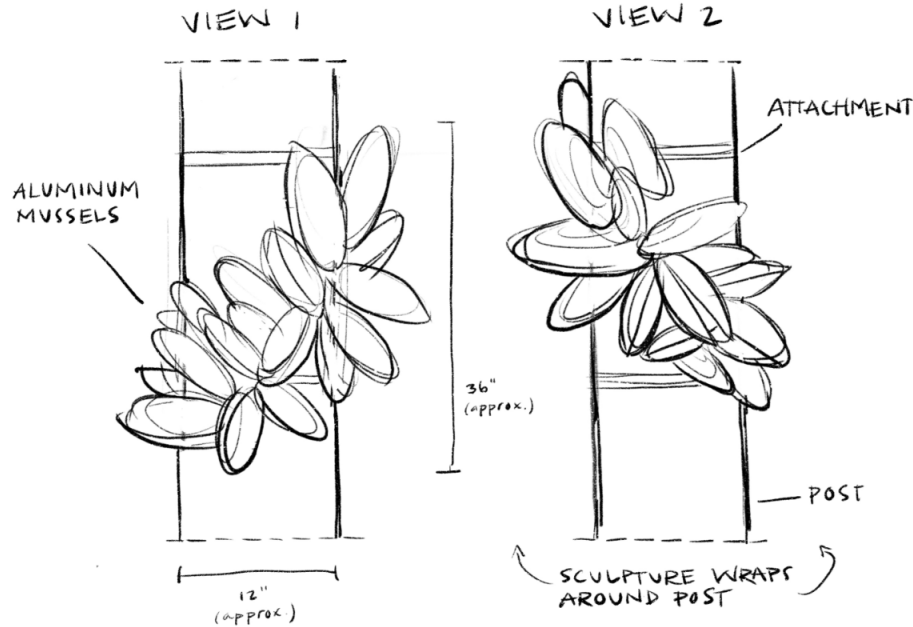


**A proposal for a cauldron of Little Brown Bats
attached by metal rods to a utility pole.**

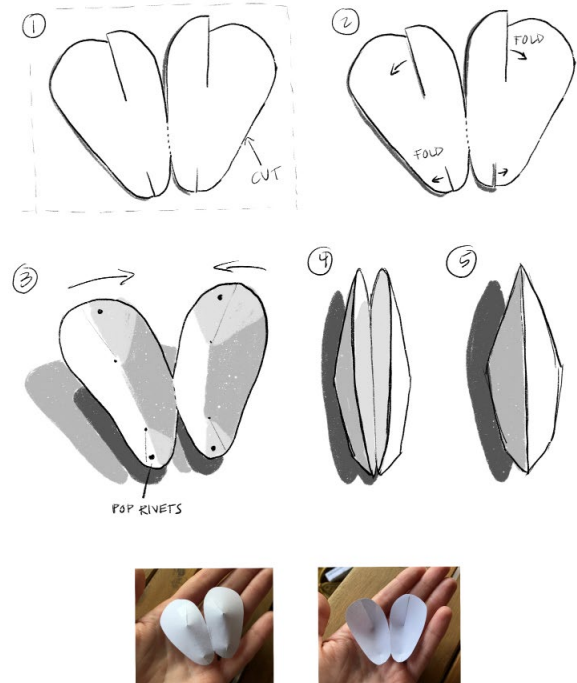
**I'm using simplified shapes here, but each finished bat
would be a unique and lifelike shape.**

Yellow Lance Mussel, by Kate Fleming

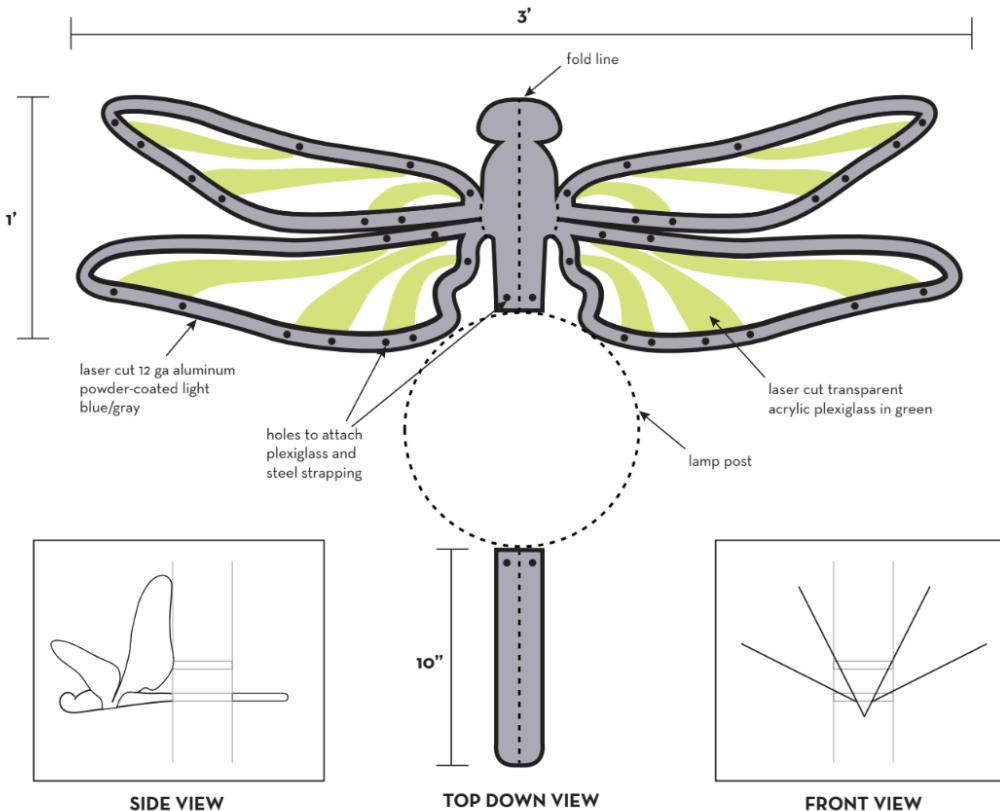
PRELIMINARY SKETCH OF SCULPTURE



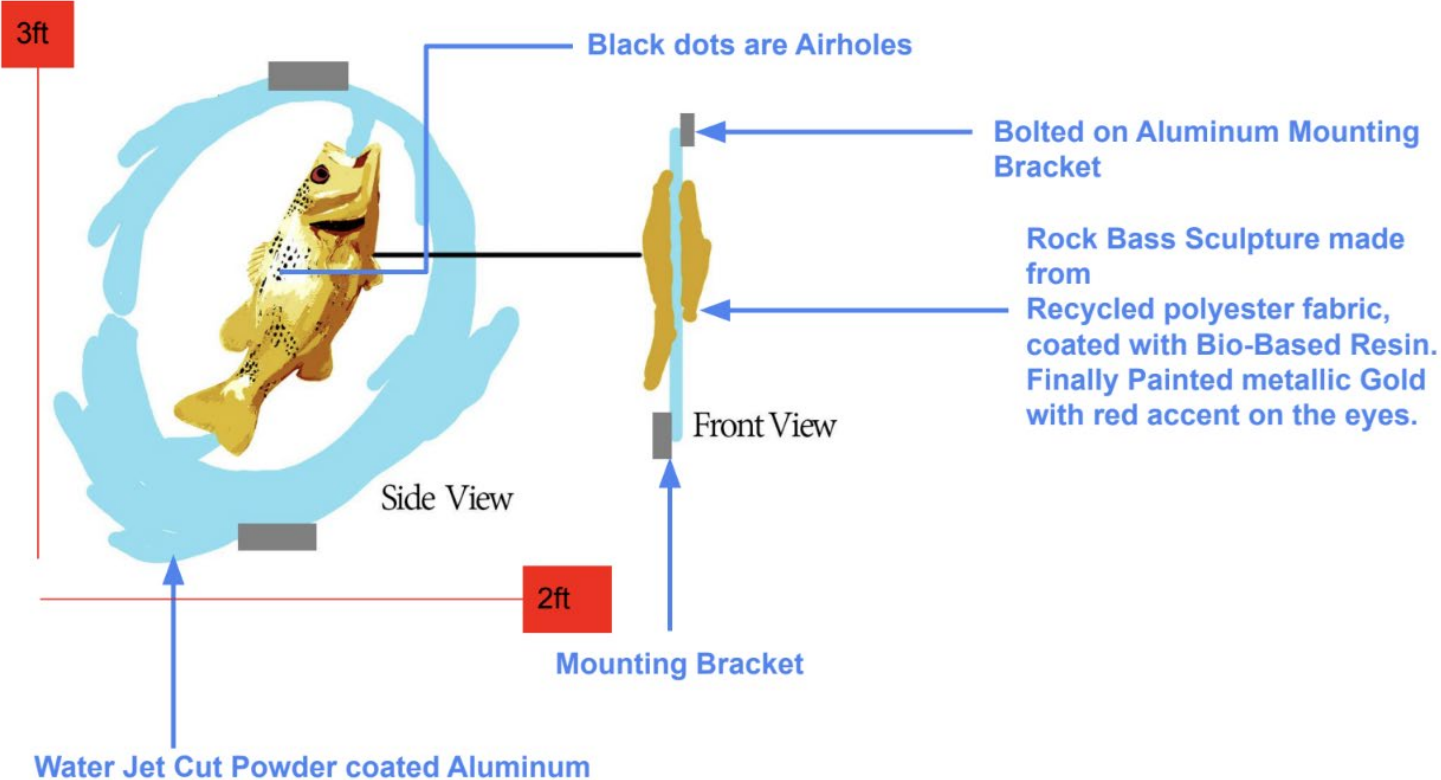
PROCESS FOR CREATING MUSSEL SHELLS FROM ALUMINUM SHEET METAL



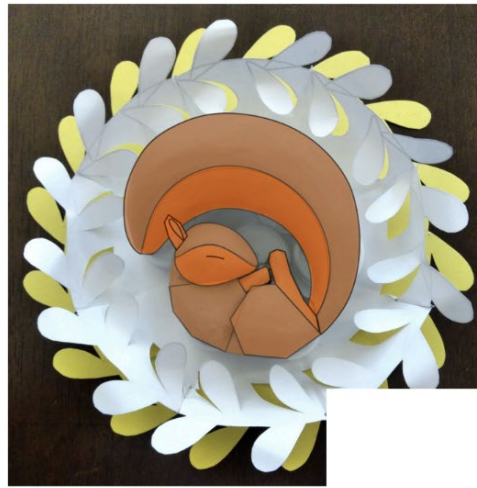
Gray Petaltail Dragonfly, by Kristen Orr



Rock Bass Fish, by Robert Stephenson



Eastern Fox Squirrel, by Tamao Nakayama



Here is my design model.

I plan to use aluminum sheets to create the artwork.

The artwork will be made up of three layers

A. Squirrel

B. White leaves

C. Yellow leaves.

The layers will be bolted together. Each layer will be painted with colors and protective coatings.

To prevent corrosion, I will use small rubber or neoprene buffers between the layers.



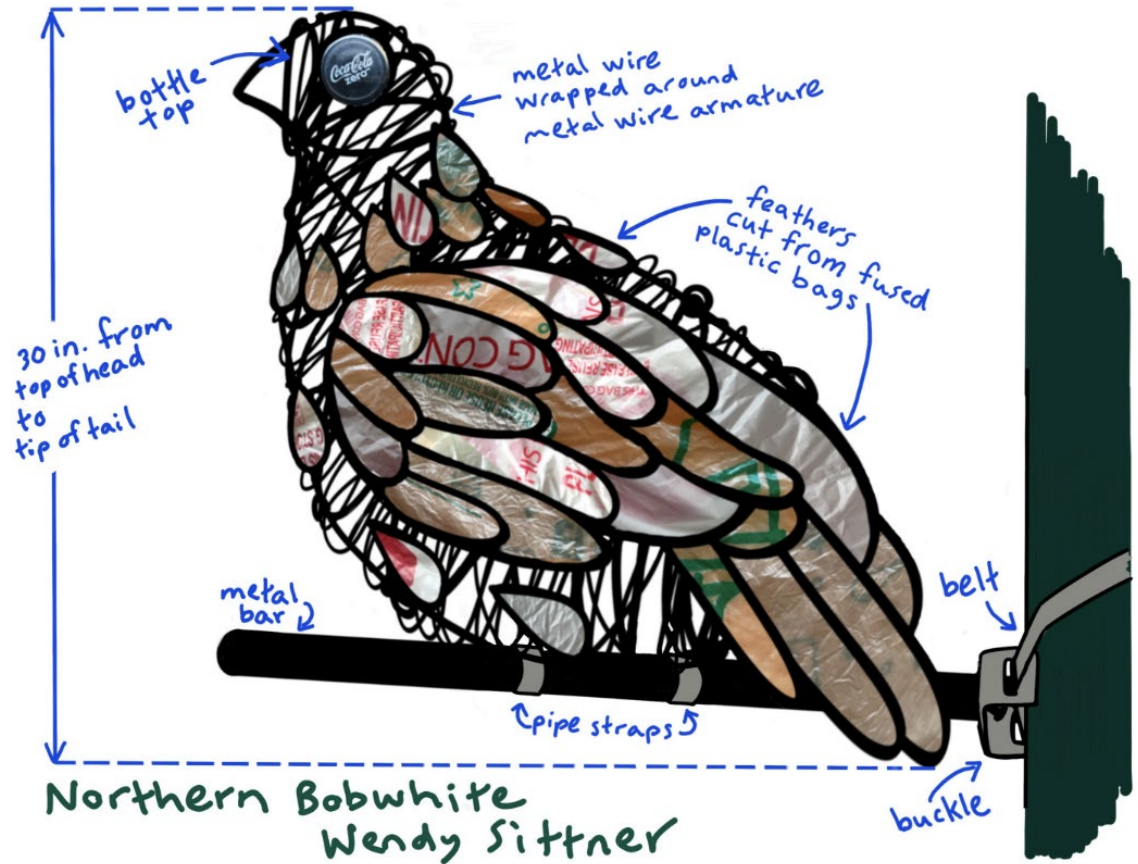
The layer A (squirrel) will be three-dimensional, similar to this example.



I intend to mount the sculpture flat on the pole. I

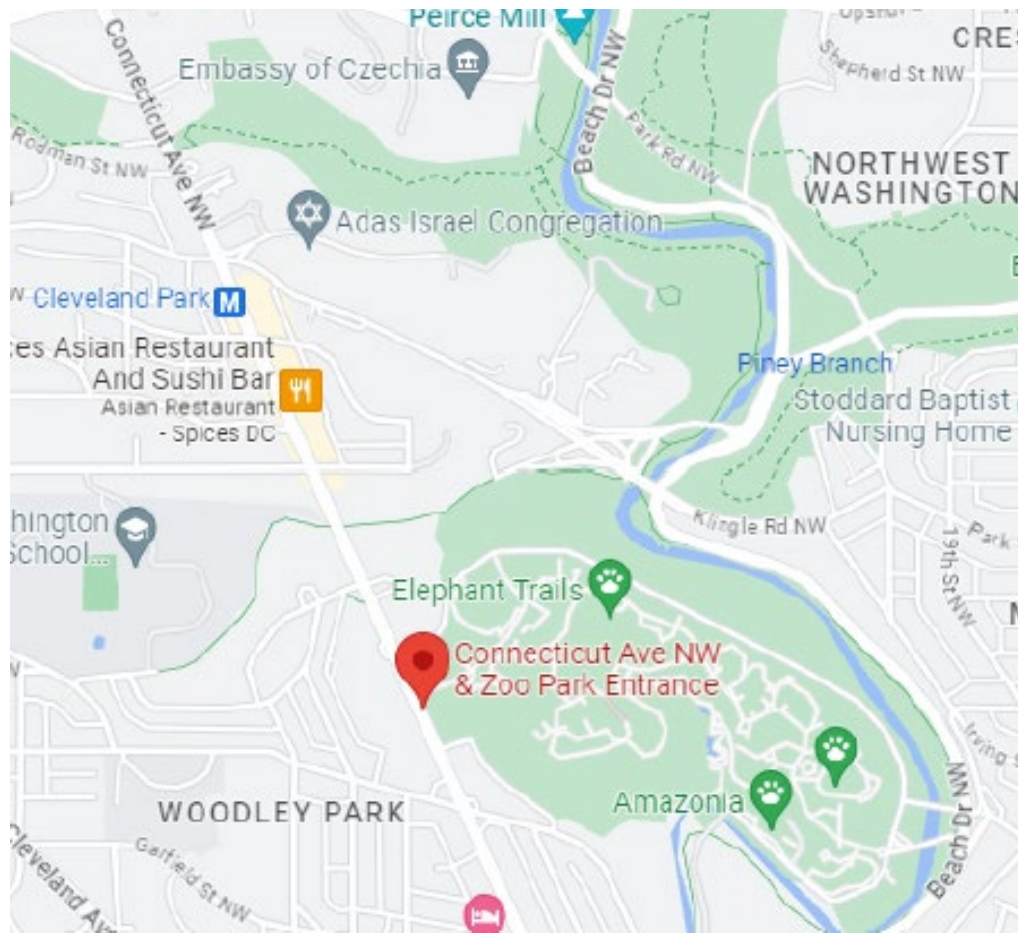
If the budget allows me to make more than one piece, I would like to make three sculptures of squirrels, with each squirrel in its own nest doing something different.

Northern Bobwhite Bird, by Wendy Sittner



Locations

Map of Connecticut Ave NW



All lamp posts have been confirmed, and permits acquired. Animals will be installed above street signs to ensure they do not interfere with visibility, and any banners seen in the below photos will be removed prior to installation. The lamp post sites pictured below are as follows, all in Ward 3;

1. 24th & Connecticut Ave (in front of 2645 Connecticut Ave)
2. Garfield & Connecticut Ave
3. Just before Cathedral & Connecticut (in front of 2829 Connecticut)
4. Connecticut & Hawthorne (just after Hawthorne)
5. Zoo parking entrance (SE corner of the parking entrance)
6. Devonshire & Connecticut (just before Devonshire - at Kennedy Warren)
7. Connecticut & Macomb (at Imaj- 3301 Connecticut)
8. Second post after Newark on Connecticut (outside the BofA)
9. Connecticut & Ordway (tall post on NE corner)
10. Just before Porter on Connecticut (outside Exxon)

1. 24th & Connecticut Ave
(in front of 2645 Connecticut
Ave)



2. Garfield & Connecticut Ave



3. Just before Cathedral & Connecticut (in front of 2829 Connecticut)



4. Connecticut & Hawthorne
(just after Hawthorne)



5. Zoo parking entrance (SE corner of the parking entrance)



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THANK YOU