



DECOMMISSION

- 01. REVEAL
- 02. DEBUNK
- 03. MONITOR

The perception of risk is confronted through research and material connections between humans, non-humans, and site.

01. REVEALING aspects of the landscape (both built and natural) through sitework can cultivate new ways of knowing.

02. Research and sitework can DEBUNK (and, for that matter, confirm) preconceived notions about an opaque landscape.

03. Transparent and ongoing site-specific MONITORING practices cultivates site knowledge that cuts through opacity.



Country / City ..... United States of America, Charlottesville, VA  
University / School ..... University of Virginia School of Architecture  
Academic year ..... 2019-2020  
Title of the project ..... Decommission as Design: Reconciling Opaque Landscapes  
Authors ..... Chloe Nagraj

## TECHNICAL DOSSIER

Title of the project	Decommission as Design: Reconciling Opaque Landscapes	
Authors	Chloe Nagraj	
Title of the course	Thesis	
Academic year	2019-2020	
Teaching Staff	Bradley Cantrell	
Department/Section/Program of belonging	Landscape Architecture	
University/School	University of Virginia School of Architecture	



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

*In the United States, colonial power is often perpetuated by limiting access to and information about particular sites. These opaque landscapes form a substantial network, which includes military, industrial, and waste geographies. Landscape architecture practice has largely focused on what opaque sites are to become through redevelopment. While designers are well positioned to translate what is obfuscated or forgotten in these landscapes, by focusing only on the designed outcome of decommission, this opportunity for decolonization and translation is overlooked. If decommission were to be treated as design, how might we better mitigate the social impact of entangled histories embedded in contested sites? Drawing from existing policy on site remediation and decommissioning, design discourse on military and waste landscapes, relational ontology, and visual discourse analysis, I propose an expanded methodological and representational approach that creates a new space for design within the decommission process motivated by a relational understanding of site history. This speculative process is explored through the case study of Plum Island, New York, operated by the Department of Homeland Security and home to Fort Terry and the Plum Island Animal Disease Research Laboratory, set to be decommissioned in 2022. More broadly, the methodological approach developed through this research is proposed as a landscape analysis method. This alternative method recognizes indeterminacy and "blank spots" as valid ways of knowing opaque sites, and proposes centering this unruliness to better reconcile complex site histories through research and practice.*

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# CLIMATE CHANGE AGAIN

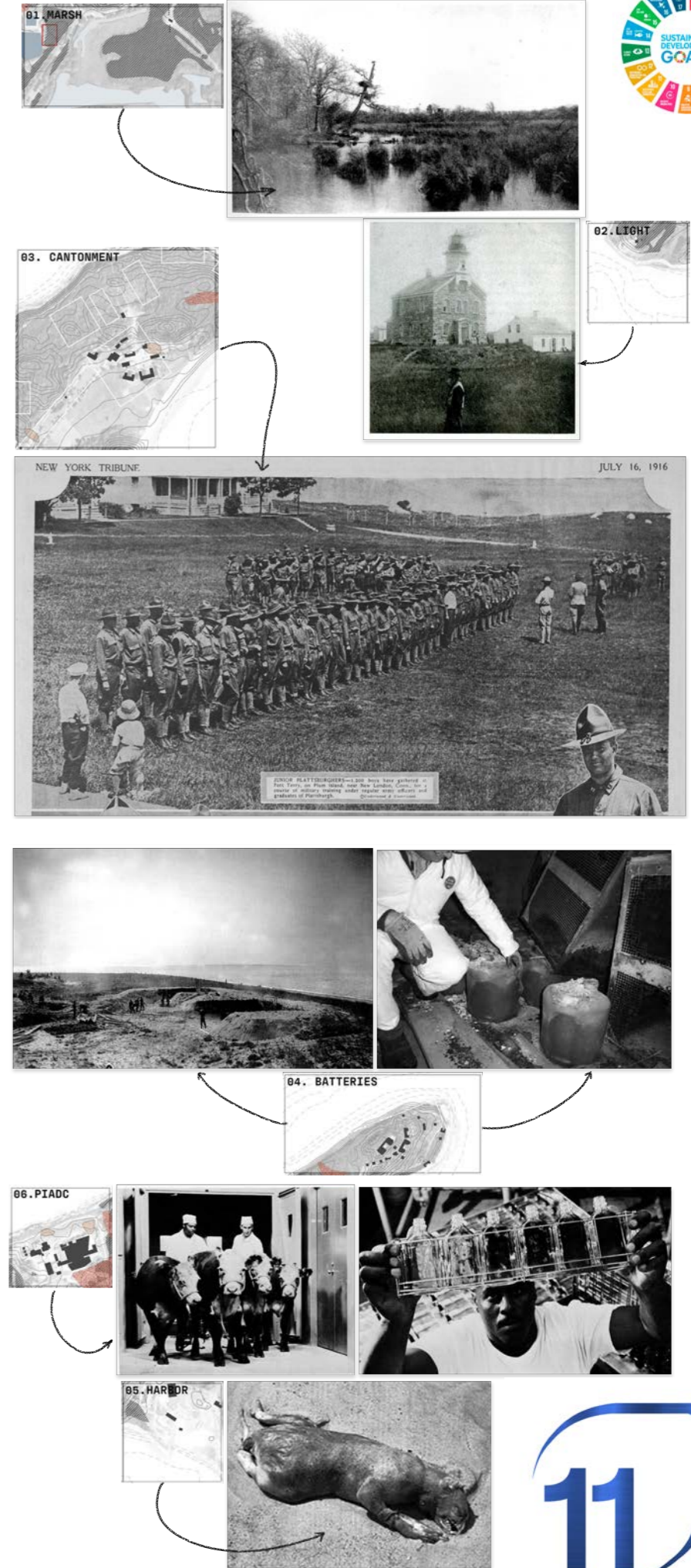
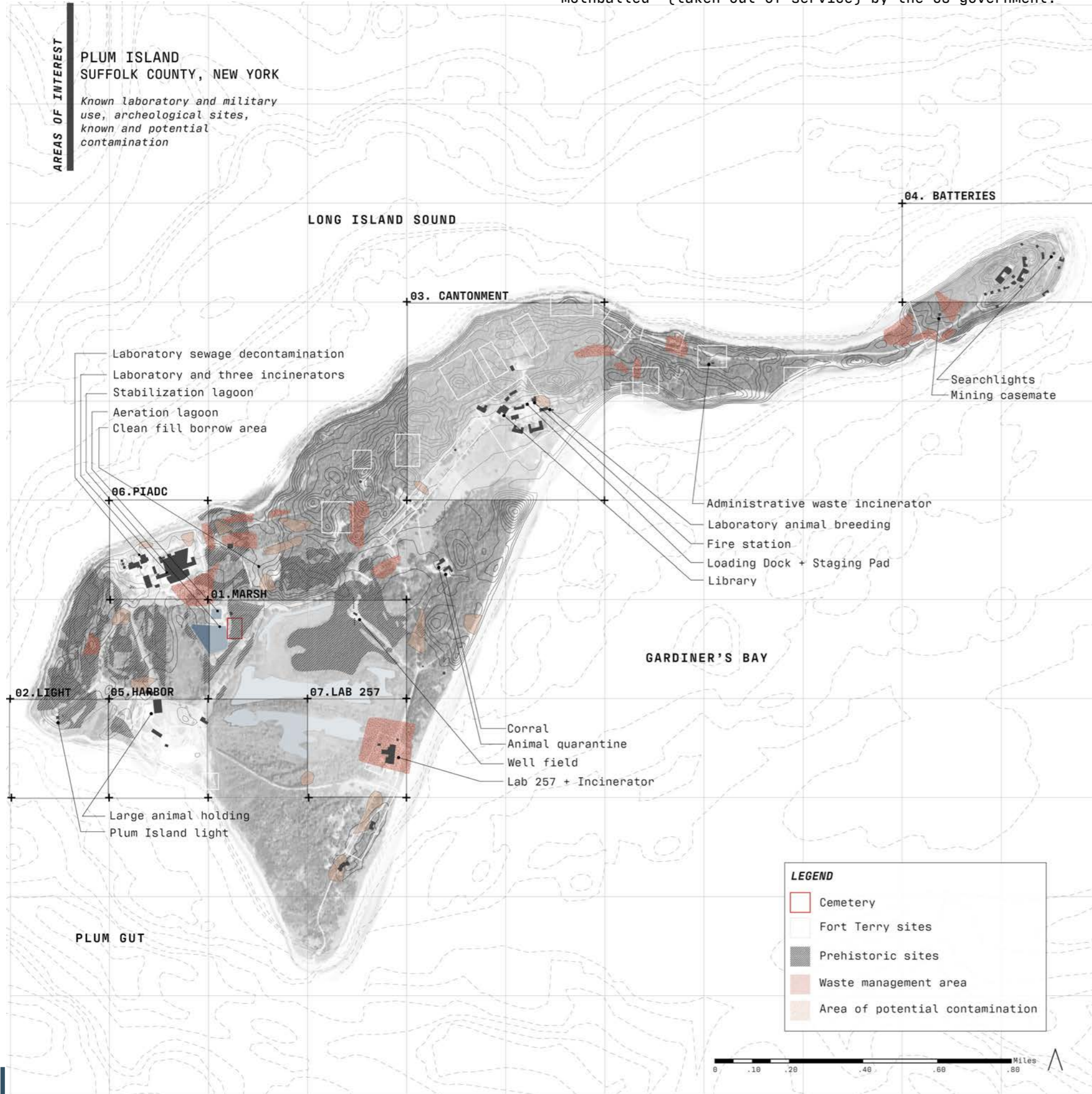
11th International Biennial Landscape Barcelona

Barcelona September 2020  
SCHOOL PRIZE



**SITE: Plum Island, New York**

The future of this FUDS site, home to Plum Island Animal Disease Research Laboratory, is uncertain. It is to be decommissioned in 2022 and will be auctioned to the highest bidder or "mothballed" (taken out of service) by the US government.



PROPOSAL: Plum Island Decommissioning, Lab 257



SITE 02.LAB 257

- 01. REFRAME
  - 02. REINTERPRET
  - 03. MONITOR
- YEAR 4



SITE 02.LAB 257

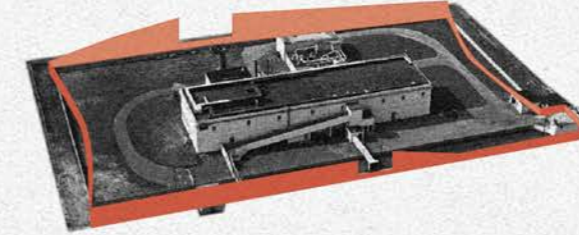
PALIMPSE

Reckoning with invisible contaminants

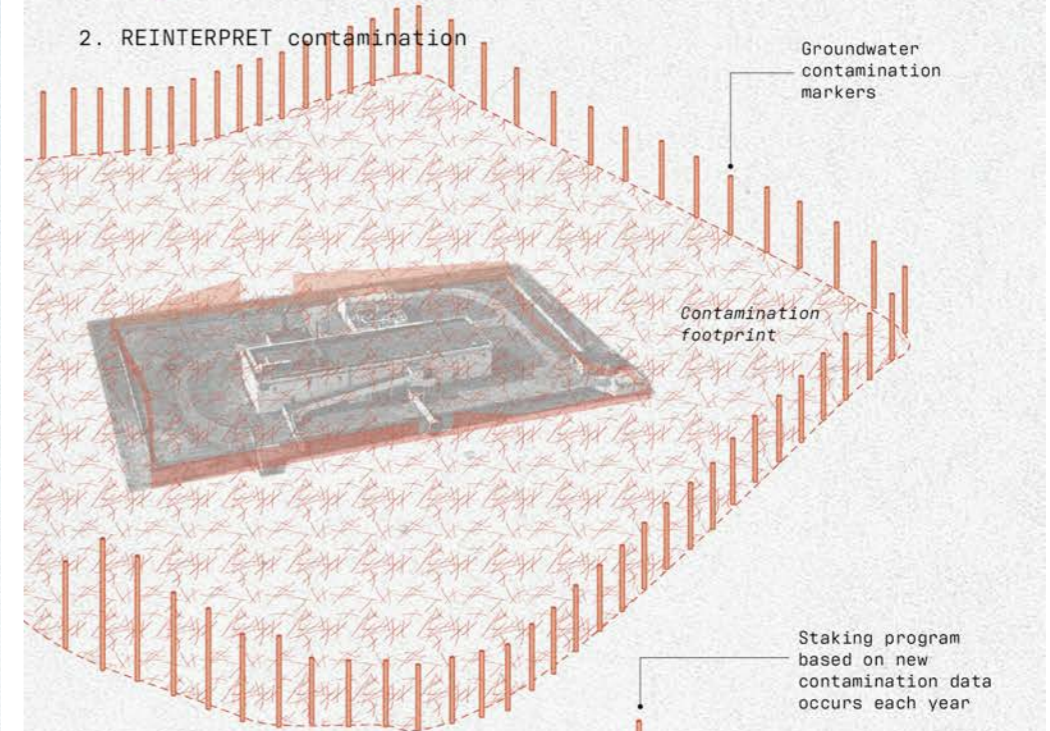
- Remediation Palette:
- Robinia pseudoacacia*
  - Black Locust
  - Persicaria punctata*
  - Dotted Smartweed
  - Festuca rubra*
  - Red Fescue
  - Panicum virgatum*
  - Switchgrass

- Bioindicator Palette:
- Tradescantia sp.*
  - Spiderwort
  - Vicia faba*
  - Broad Bean
  - Zea mays*
  - Corn

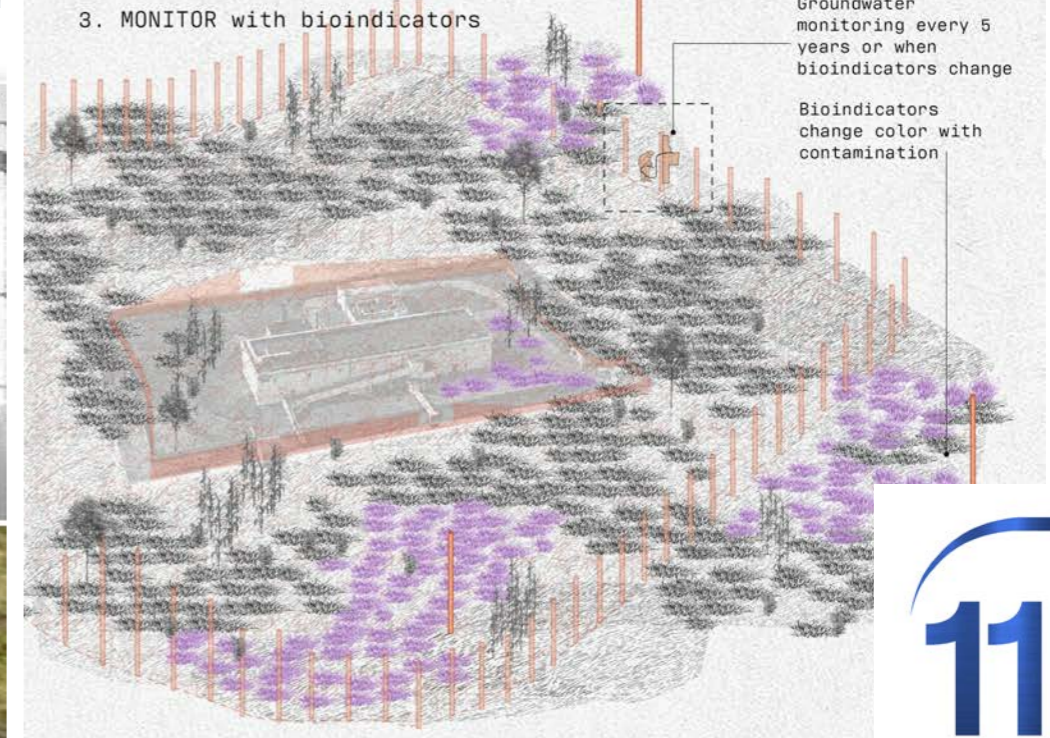
1. REFRAME Lab 257



2. REINTERPRET contamination



3. MONITOR with bioindicators



When decommissioning opaque sites, it becomes much easier to flatten complexity out of them, covering up the "material entanglements" between humans and contaminants that continue to exist. This proposal remediates groundwater contamination at a former munitions depot and laboratory using monitoring and bioremediation. As remediation occurs, the extents of groundwater contamination are marked above ground with tall stakes, a palimpsest of contaminants over time.

