SAGE SPARK

user journey

1: IN THE LABYRINTH

The path towards sustainable, then regenerative habitation is neither easy nor straightforward. Miscanthus giganteus is planted to form a labyrinth in a structural nod to this reality. As a landmark, it serves to attract and promote engagement with the process. A literal regenerative structure, its annual destruction and regrowth afford a dynamic space for visitors to use and explore.

2: FUEL PRODUCTION SITE

The farm, commons, and Black Rock City define the axes of the press site. Approaching it, visitors are met with an unfamiliar feature: elevation change, affording a unique perspective of the local landscape. It is a place of shifting viewpoints and materiality. Metal and pressed earth stand in contrast on a hill spotted with native flora.

HABITATION SYMBOL

The sage grouse is central to a Northern Paiute creation story. It started and tended a fire to dry a massive flood, eventually enabling habitation. Living at Fly Ranch today means tending to the regenerative ideal set forth at the project's onset. Visitors congregating in the shadow of S.A.G.E will awake the next morning ready to help realize it.

S.A.G.E. serves to spark discussion and inspire action. A conversation about SAGE starts with the press site. In a tandem with the farm and commons, the press site is a beacon and interactive art installation. It broadcasts progress towards sustainable habitation at Fly Ranch and sets a visible standard for participation; its flames are both sculpture and data visualization, representing both visiting artists' intent and the community's commitment to radical accountability and transparency.

The number of miscanthus briquettes available to power S.A.G.E scales on simple metric: the mass of imported consumables at Fly Ranch. Capacity for expression expands in step with progress.

3: S.A.G.E.

S.A.G.E is a beacon and interactive art installation. It broadcasts progress towards sustainable habitation at Fly Ranch and sets a visible standard for participation; its flames are both sculpture and data visualization, representing both visiting artists' intent and the community's commitment to radical accountability and transparency.

NIGHTTIME CELEBRATIONS AT THE COMMONS

The number of miscanthus briquettes available to power S.A.G.E scales on simple metric: the mass of imported consumables at Fly Ranch. Capacity for expression expands in step with progress.

SITE DYNAMICS

Just as the labyrinth rises and falls with time, so does the press site. As the users dance, the shredded plant material is not alone in undergoing a transformation. So too does the miscanthus shading the dancers, though on a different timescale. The biomass fuel press is operated by at least two people performing a synchronized, adaptive choreography. The dancers are separated by both a difference in elevation and a wall of miscanthus yet must coordinate their movements to direct power to the press mechanism.

BIOMASS BRICK MAKING PROCESS

Brick-making starts with the shredding and wetting of miscanthus. Water from the cistern is pumped to a steam-rises a tower, the wind (or an old clap, is a paddle) aids the flow. After the cistern is a wind organ, its volume and frequency modulated by the unseen water's level. Next, the user loads material into the press. Then, the dance can begin.

Linear actuators comprising the dance floors mechanically power the press. Tones unique to each actuator pair sound as they are stepped upon and supplement the dancer's sightless communication. Brickmaking progress is communicated to the dancers through the side bell.