

**Pathfinding:  
A Study of Place Along The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail**

by

Shawn Duval

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates how the Franco-Ontarian concept of “*Retrouvailles*” can be used to inform the architecture of a sixth pavilion on the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail. Recreational trails are often created from the travel paths of the defunct industries of an area. The adaptive-reuse of sites of the rail industry makes it possible for paths like this one to exist. Such trails create great community amenities, however, considering their vast coverage of mostly rural lands, a lack of community engagement can be problematic. The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail will serve as a vehicle for the geological, geographical, and historical studies of the region. The project will use the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles* to explore and question the architectural implications of site, place, memory, history, materiality, craft and appropriateness.

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Architectural documentation of the towns by car

1. Hammond
2. Bourget
3. Plantagenet
4. Vankleek Hill
5. St-Eugène

**Pathfinding:  
A Study of Place Along The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail**



*Figure 1: A study of place along the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.*

## Prelude

*Between the earth and the sky there is a space inhabited and forever evolving with and around the life it shelters. The coexistence of the vegetation and the waterways, of the animals and of the people is certainly not one of peaceful gestures, but of relationships of endurance. And below it all, as a sort of podium, there is the land.*

*The land is experienced through all the senses and offers, by its very nature, the necessary elements that defines it from itself. Notably, in its simplest form, the land is a place for people to identify with. Through ground cover and topography, people establish bonds between themselves and these defining elements.*

*Appropriately, the next augmentation of the land is through architecture. The land provides to architecture the immediacy and accessibility, where from readily available resources, spaces are created.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> L. Rochon, *Up North*, (Toronto, Key Porter Books Limited, 2005), 29.

## Introduction

Across the world recreational trails are often created from abandoned, or residual spaces that once belonged to important industries of the area. These trails can often extend existing urban park or green areas within the city by connecting to abandoned rural long-distance travel paths and the industrial infrastructure which once lined its edges. Projects like the *Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria* create new ways of connecting people to the lost legacies of the past particular to a place.

The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail is a seventy-two-kilometre-long walking, cycling, and snowmobile path that runs entirely through rural and agricultural land. It is located entirely within the Prescott-Russell United Counties and stretches from east to west. Geographically the region represents the most eastern part of Ontario, and borders Quebec at the Ottawa River. Similar to many recreational trails created in recent history, the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail operates on a retired rail line, still owned and

leased from Canadian Pacific. Since 2006, the trail has allowed users to discover the raw territory of the railway.

Today, thirteen short years since its inauguration, the existence of the trail is threatened primarily by the lack of financial support from the United Counties and by a lack of vision for the trail. In order to respond to these unfortunate circumstances, this thesis argues that the trail could be enhanced by more carefully drawing out and framing subtle local artifacts, spaces, and events through the Franco-Ontarian concept of "*Retrouvailles*." Bridging memory and emotion, *Retrouvailles* is a unique way of understanding "place" and will guide the theoretical position of the thesis and inform the architecture of a sixth pavilion on the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.



Figure 2: Chapter 1 Frontispiece - Place – Lost in Translation.

## Chapter 1. Place – Lost in Translation

What is place? Dolores Hayden, author of the book *Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, writes about the many definitions of the word place, and the many uses it has in various fields. Hayden writes: “It carries the resonance of homestead,

location, and open space in the city as well as the position in a social hierarchy.”<sup>2</sup> It is also both a noun and a verb, describing the action of putting something somewhere, both used independently and conjointly, where you must use the noun to describe the action; place in the place.

Growing up in the French-speaking area of the Prescott-Russell United Counties of Ontario, the word place had a similar meaning. In the French language, place could also be defined as a noun, and a verb. However, when I personally think of the word place, I reflect on communities and people connected to and by one-another. Coming from a Franco-Ontarian region, as a minority in the majority English rest of Ontario, place meant that I was clearly from a defined region, with no clear boundary, but a certainly pixelated outer-skirt. The last names of people are so familiar and associated to certain areas, to streets and to towns that they become sort of engraved and so deeply-rooted to the places they lie in.

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<sup>2</sup> D. Hayden, *The Power of Place*, (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1997), 15.

## 1.1 Place in architecture

The concept of place is integral to the field of architecture in many ways including, but not limited to, place as foothold, place as site, and place as materiality. Place embodies a sense of belonging; belonging to a place, or group of people, are often used interchangeably. Architecture of a place describes a relationship between the people and the landscapes; a discourse about “the deliberate act of creating a foothold.”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, place as foothold talks of our desire for being remembered; leaving a mark on the world, which goes hand in hand with the desire for community. Community is essential to the survival of a place. To remember a place is not the same as belonging to one. The lack of foothold expresses the antithesis that is placeless-ness.<sup>4</sup> A person may belong to a place as a place may belong to a person.

Place is also understood as site. In her book *Up North: Where Canada's Architecture Meets the Land*, Lisa Rochon poetically describes the importance of the land to the beginnings of architecture in Canada. Rochon writes:

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<sup>3</sup> L. Rochon, *Up North*, (Toronto, Key Porter Books Limited, 2005), 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

*“From the earliest history in Canada, people have created shelter directly from the land. With the igloo, the pit house and the soddie, the site provided immediate and accessible architecture.”<sup>5</sup>*

The site brings to light obstacles and constraints imposed on the architecture, a sort of dance between two individuals. Site offers a backdrop and with it comes an atmosphere that is unique.

Working in hand with the site, there is the understanding of place also as materiality. A site provides local materials and combined with local craft and vernacular precedents create a unique “toolkit” for place-making. Place as materiality describes an “immediate and accessible architecture” that speaks to the human connections implied through the human scale and warmth of the materials.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, place as materiality is not constrained to “using the most available local material, or of copying simple form of construction that our ancestors used,”<sup>7</sup> it is about a deeper

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<sup>5</sup> L. Rochon, *Up North*, (Toronto, Key Porter Books Limited, 2005), 29.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> L. Lefavre, *Critical Regionalism*, (Munich, Prestel, 2003), 36.

understanding and reasoning behind using any and all materials. It is about appropriateness.



Figure 3: Chapter 2 Frontispiece - *Retrouvailles* – Place Memory.

## **Chapter 2. *Retrouvailles* – Place Memory**

A great introduction to the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles* is the concept of *Place Memory*, a topic discussed by author Dolores Hayden in *The Power of Place*. *Place Memory* is understood as:

*“place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities.”<sup>8</sup>*

This understanding creates the idea of “place oriented” and “place supported” memories.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Hayden discusses the implications of “Place Memory” within the landscape; how people’s interactions with the natural environment could somehow be prescribed from prior memories.<sup>10</sup> These are all important elements of the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles*.

## **2.1 Place as “*Retrouvailles*” – Actions + Émotions + Réactions**

*Place* finds a new dimension in the French word of *retrouvailles*.

While in some ways *retrouvailles* is very similar to the word

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<sup>8</sup> D. Hayden, *The Power of Place*, (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1997), 46.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

*reunion*, arguably it does not have a direct translation into English. *Reunion* describes the act of people coming together after some time apart, but *retrouvailles* includes concepts beyond the act of finding again, including the actions, the emotions, and reactions of the parties involved.<sup>11</sup> These additional elements link people and material places together. After some time apart from a loved one there is thought of regret and sadness, but more importantly there is happiness, positivity, optimism, and nostalgia. Nostalgia catalyzes *retrouvailles* into an architectural framework. The conversations of the vivid memories of people coming together, and the explicit sounds and the smells associated to those, have foothold in specific localities. *Retrouvailles* originates deep from within a person and is expressed in the architecture of a place. This thesis uses *Retrouvailles* as the critical element that actively gives architecture its importance.

In the ruralness of the Prescott-Russell United Counties, landscape plays a big role in the everyday lives of the community members. More than 85,000 people are spread out over 2,002 square

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<sup>11</sup> TV5Monde, Les Intraduisibles, Accessed on March 30, 2019. <https://langue-francaise.tv5monde.com/decouvrir/voyager-en-francais/les-intraduisibles>

kilometres, at a density of approximately 44 people per square kilometre.<sup>12</sup> A stark contrast to the neighboring cities of Montreal at 4,517 people per square kilometre, and of Ottawa at 317 people per square kilometre.<sup>13</sup> Living in the Prescott-Russell United Counties means living in amongst the farm and the forest lands with occasional interruptions of small villages and towns. *Retrouvailles* is materialized in the remarkable presence of the land. The landscape and the communities inhabiting it, are important elements in place-making.



Figure 4: Landscape condition.

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<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, *2016 Census Prescott and Russell, United Counties*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=3502&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=Prescott%20and%20Russell&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3502&TABID=1>.

<sup>13</sup> World Population Review, *Montreal Population 2019*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/montreal-population/>

## 2.2 The Spirit of *Retrouvailles*

In titling this sub-chapter “Spirit of *Retrouvailles*” reference to the Genius Loci, or otherwise referred to as the “Spirit of Place” is made for the similarities they have with the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles*.

In her essay titled “Can ‘Spirit Of Place’ be A Guide to Ethical Building?,” Isis Brook discusses the many interpretations of Genius Loci amongst various fields of study. In her initial observations, Brook suggests the Genius Loci as something of a place having implications for human beings, and also potentially being of an intangible nature.<sup>14</sup> However, several other authors mentioned in the text suggests that the nature of the Genius Loci lies in the authenticity, narrative, local distinctiveness, essence, character, or ecosystem of a particular place. While none of the above understandings supersede one or the other, the “Spirit of Place” is understood as being defined by one perspective, or another, individually. However, *Retrouvailles* is understood as an overarching canopy that uses all these definitions at one time;

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<sup>14</sup> I. Brook, *Can ‘Spirit of Place’ be a guide to ethical building*, (London, Routledge, 2000), 140.

being all of them at once, and more. Brook's understanding of the various definitions helps in the continuation of defining the place-making strategy that is *Retrouvailles*.

*Retrouvailles* is about authenticity. The understanding of authenticity stems from an "unconscious process," where something is authentic simply by being truthful to itself.<sup>15</sup> In terms of defining a place, "authenticity applauds the undesigned and seemingly chance development of places."<sup>16</sup> It emphasizes the evolution of a place, demonstrating an awareness of the its multiple time periods, from past, present, and future conditions. Using Brook's definitions, we can frame an architectural authenticity as a conditioning and construing of a place through materials and techniques appropriate to their location.

*Retrouvailles* is about the narrative. Elements which elaborate on the history of a place, but also emphasizes its role in the present day, and into the future, can be used to construct a narrative.<sup>17</sup> In terms of conditioning and designing a place of *Retrouvailles*, the

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<sup>15</sup> I. Brook, *Can 'Spirit of Place' be a guide to ethical building*, (London, Routledge, 2000), 142.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

narrative helps make sense of “what is here now,” and informs the act of design as an adaptive-reuse of an architecture narrative.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the narrative is strengthened by the usage of locally sourced materials and techniques, and their role in informing a durable architecture that is environmentally responsible that will last well into the future. Narrative is also about creating spaces that engage our imagination, and then having them project their own understanding onto the space.

*Retrouvailles* is about the local. Brook appropriately defines this as what about a place is distinctive, “not in terms of important events or revered buildings, but the style of the ordinary in this specific place.”<sup>19</sup> In *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes*, authors Thomas Carter and Elizabeth C. Cromley, discuss the importance of ordinary buildings in the study of vernacular architecture. They state that;

*“Buildings and assemblages of buildings make excellent sources of information about everyday people in*

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<sup>18</sup> I. Brook, *Can ‘Spirit of Place’ be a guide to ethical building*, (London, Routledge, 2000), 142.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 143.

*everyday life because they exist in great numbers and are complex enough to shed light on many aspects of human behavior, from attitudes towards the use of space to aesthetic traditions and technological know-how.”<sup>20</sup>*

In terms of defining a place, the study of the ordinary should be considered as the main contributor to local distinctiveness. In terms of conditioning and designing a place of *Retrouvailles*, local distinctiveness is generated from the existing built fabric of an area, the use of historical materials and techniques. Local distinctiveness does not, however, mandate the exclusive use of local, or historical, materials and techniques, but instead acknowledges the use of both old and new, used appropriately in accordance to the particular situation.

*Retrouvailles* is also about essence. Brook defines essence as “a way of expressing something about the nature of the physical substance and the coming together of physical substances in

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<sup>20</sup> T. Carter and E. Collins Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2005), xx.

characteristic ways.”<sup>21</sup> In terms of defining a place, this talks of the intangible qualities of spaces, and the sort of aura or sensation they enact on the users of the space. In terms of conditioning and designing a place of *Retrouvailles*, essence is important to occupiable spaces as a way of engaging the senses and captivating a state of nostalgia in the users. In the French language, the word essence also means gasoline, which is fitting in the sense of using essence as a powerful source for informing the architecture.

*Retrouvailles* is about character. Brook explains that “Just as a person’s character is distinguished by traits, so a place is distinguished not as a static tableau but by what it is, through what it does.”<sup>22</sup> In some ways character helps to personify the place, which in turn changes our relationship to it. In terms of defining a place, this possibly helps to pinpoint the characterizable elements of a place, and the personal connections the users of that place has to them. In terms of conditioning and designing a place of *Retrouvailles*, it becomes a little more abstract. The character of a place is arguably an extremely important element that simply can

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<sup>21</sup> I. Brook, *Can ‘Spirit of Place’ be a guide to ethical building*, (London, Routledge, 2000), 144.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 145.

not be implied or forced-upon a space. In some cases, character may lie in the choice of materials, in the colours used, or in the size of a space. But more often than none, character lies within the jurisdiction of what character is to the users of the space, making their own conclusions to inform their personal understanding of the space.

*Retrouvailles* is about the ecosystem as well. Like many of the previously defined topic words, ecosystem signifies a whole. In terms of defining a place, this talks of the essential coming together of multiple parts in the creation of a place. In terms of conditioning and designing a place of *Retrouvailles*, ecosystem implies an underlying respect for the environment, but also implies the importance of the role of the human in acting within the environment. It is about understanding and embracing the fact that the unbuilt plays a part in a built-up architecture.

The place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles* allows for the coming together of the various interpretations of the “Spirit of Place” from various fields of study and authors. In defining the “Spirit of Place” as authenticity, as narrative, as local distinctiveness, as essence, as

character, and as ecosystem, it becomes evident that in an architectural framework, an architectural proposition will rely on the various definitions of the “Spirit of Place” coming together, building on each other, and not being understood separately. In contrast to the “Spirit of Place” *Retrouvailles* requires us to look beyond the individual understandings and implement them together in the creation of a well-rounded architecture.



Figure 5: Chapter 3 Frontispiece - The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail+Region.

### **Chapter 3. The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail+Region**

To demonstrate the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles*, the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail will serve as the site for an architectural intervention. The trail currently has five pavilions

along its length, and this thesis will propose a unique sixth construction to the trail.



*Figure 6: Map of Prescott-Russell and trail (dark black line) with existing pavilions (black circles) and new (blue) pavilions. Also showing the Ottawa River.*

The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail weaves its way through the landscape unifying the land in all of its similarities and differences. Formally, it occurs as a singular site, but on the landscape the trail is formed from the thousands of sites abutting it. In the same way as Broadway Boulevard in New York City, the trail is laid out on top of a grid and journeys from the very east of Ontario, to the west, outside of Ottawa, traversing the land as required by a train, always where it is seemingly the easiest. Still owned and leased from

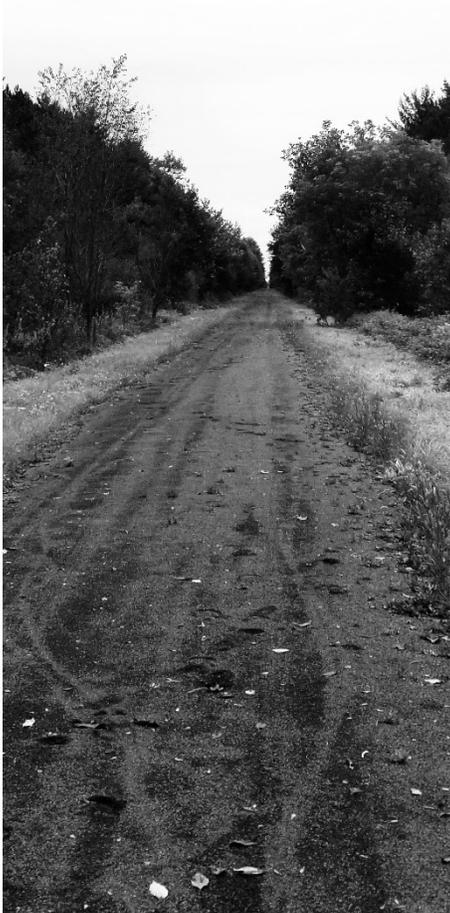


Figure 7: Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.

Canadian Pacific, The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail operates on a retired rail line that used to link Ottawa and Montreal.<sup>23</sup> While the train no longer runs, the two cities are still connected today through an underground high-speed internet optic-fibre cable buried alongside the path.<sup>24</sup> Since 2006, the trail allows users to discover the region by travelling in the backyards of communities, surrounded by natural features such as wetlands, woodlands, and agricultural fields. The seventy-two-kilometre-long path is experienced differently as the seasons progress; for instance, by foot year-round, by bicycle in the warmer months, and by snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in the snow-ridden winter months.

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<sup>23</sup> R. Brown, *In Search of the Grand Trunk: Ghost Rail Lines in Ontario*, (Toronto, Dundurn, 2011), 221.

<sup>24</sup> Fibre Noire, *Internet*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://www.fibre noire.ca/en/internet>.

The trail travels in and near five different communities, for which trail pavilions were erected in 2006. The five rest areas are used primarily in the summer months, and are comprised of a pavilion, an information bulletin board, and a small structure sheltering a portable restroom, which is exclusive to the summer season. The Prescott-Russell United Counties set up the trail by laying compacted stone dust on the existing rock-bed of the rail line. Since then, the trail has been under the authority of a non-profit group of the same name, composed of local community members. It is important to point-out the importance of the community involvement in the management and the undertaking of projects like this one. In the annual end-of-season general assembly meeting of last year, it was mentioned how, for example, the portable restrooms were leased at no cost to the trail, from a local company.

In continuation with the information mentioned in the previous paragraphs, this section will focus on the realities of the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail, and the importance of the land, the site and the concept of place.

### **3.1 The Horizontal Plane**

The rural landscapes of the Prescott-Russell United Counties are filled with life, beginning with the swaths of nature's colours, everchanging as the seasons progress. From the whites of the snow, the greens of the out-of-control grasses growing along all sideroads, to the reds and oranges of the leaves in the fall, and the yellows of the corn stalks left to dry in the fields. Within these colours, in camouflage or in contrast, the animals and insects find refuge. And in willingness, communities of people exist amongst it all. The landscape naturally levels itself, with very little topographic distinction, over time, waterways create deep ridges below the horizontal plane. Subjected to slanted overlaid grids of roads and agriculture, the land is heavily manicured. And although there are roads, homes and businesses, in the summer the land appears as green as can be.

### **3.2 The Prescott-Russell Region**

Founded in 1850, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell are an upper-tier municipal government entity for the municipalities of East Hawkesbury, Hawkesbury, Champlain, Alfred and Plantagenet,

The Nation, Casselman, Russell, and Clarence-Rockland.<sup>25</sup> The region represents an important French-speaking region of Ontario, where more than two-thirds of the residents are native French-speakers.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.3 The House and the Land

According to the most recent federal census, more than 85,000 people call the United Counties of Prescott and Russell home.<sup>27</sup> It is also important to specify that a large portion of the housing stock within the region was constructed prior to the 1960's, and simply from my observations, a large sum of it could be dated back to the early 1900's. Although this is the norm across Ontario, this information is critical to understanding the region for the reason that other regions have urbanized, adding to the existing fabric, intermingling the old and the new, while the United Counties of Prescott and Russell have for a big part, stayed old. It is my

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<sup>25</sup> Prescott Russell, *Discover Prescott-Russell*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. [http://en.prescott-russell.on.ca/visitors\\_and\\_leisure/discover\\_prescott\\_russell](http://en.prescott-russell.on.ca/visitors_and_leisure/discover_prescott_russell).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Statistics Canada, *2016 Census Prescott and Russell United counties*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=3502&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=Prescott%20and%20Russell&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3502&TABID=1>.

impression that while this statistic is decreasing in other areas of Ontario, it has remained mostly static in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. While others are demolishing the old, the historic is preserved through retrofit and the lived-in. In the introduction to Brian MacKay-Lyons' selected works, Brian Carter explains the importance of the historic architecture;

*“With an economy historically founded on shipbuilding and the seasonal fortunes of fishing and farming the austerity of life in the Maritimes is conspicuous. It translates into buildings which embody a distinct sense of order that can be readily identified in the vernacular of the cottage, shed and barn. The organization of these buildings reflects basic needs and their construction and economy which is both essential and obvious.”<sup>28</sup>*

Although the United Counties of Prescott and Russell are not located in the Maritimes, this quote speaks to the conditions of life in rural and agriculture-focused regions. Still today, the main

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<sup>28</sup> B. MacKay-Lyons, *Brian MacKay-Lyons: Selected Projects 1986-1997*, (Halifax, TUNS Press, 2000), 7.

industry within the region is agriculture, which makes sense since it beholds the most fertile lands in Canada.<sup>29</sup> However, this also brings to light the lack of urbanity and development in the region and highlights the rural connection to the land of the local population. The historic architecture of the area has an impact on the way of life. In studying the material culture of the place, it is important “to remember that the everyday objects we see all around us are indicators of our cultural values.”<sup>30</sup> Hence, the cultural values of these citizens are more engaged in landscapes versus on the hardscapes and the technologies available in the urban. The grouping of buildings, the materials, the construction techniques, and the architectural elements, such as wood decorations, of these historic buildings were usually of great importance and created from local sources. Borrowing the cuisine concept of farm-to-table for use by architecture will resonate with the people of this region.

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<sup>29</sup> Prescott Russell, *Growing Opportunities*, Accessed on March 29, 2019.

[http://www.en.prescottrussell.on.ca/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_2375121/File/Business/Economic%20Development/Growing%20Opportunities%20%20November%202016.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2udNa2PX6Dz\\_eRhirlwlc6Cp7Ko-xjc2J4YWWb053qNIRNJ8c8IZwt8](http://www.en.prescottrussell.on.ca/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2375121/File/Business/Economic%20Development/Growing%20Opportunities%20%20November%202016.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2udNa2PX6Dz_eRhirlwlc6Cp7Ko-xjc2J4YWWb053qNIRNJ8c8IZwt8). 7.

<sup>30</sup> T. Carter and E. Collins Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2005), XIII.

### 3.4 State of Affairs

Today, the existence of the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail is threatened by several factors, but primarily by the lack of vision and of financial support from the very creators of the trail, the Prescott-Russell United Counties. Although cycling is part of the strategic developmental plan of the region, the operational budget for the trail was cut in half in 2017 to \$208,400, from \$412,900 in 2016.<sup>31</sup> From assisting to the yearly general assembly meeting on September 25, 2018, it was clear how the attributed budget does not allow for an efficient operation of the trail. In reality, the budget barely allows for the general upkeep of the trail, and yet it is still being regularly reduced, lowered by an additional \$2,700 for the upcoming season.<sup>32</sup> The lack of financial support of such an important community-connecting amenity from the local government imposes tremendous tasks and stress upon the

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<sup>31</sup> The Review, *Round one of public consultation for future of Prescott-Russell trail*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://thereview.ca/2017/05/26/round-one-of-public-consultation-for-future-of-prescott-russell-trail/>.

<sup>32</sup> Prescott Russell, *2019 Final Budget*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. [http://en.prescott-russell.on.ca/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_2375121/File/2019/services/finances/budget-final-02-20-2019.pdf](http://en.prescott-russell.on.ca/UserFiles/Servers/Server_2375121/File/2019/services/finances/budget-final-02-20-2019.pdf). 5.

volunteers of the trail. Additionally, the lease of the land is up for renewal with Via Rail in 2020.<sup>33</sup>

### **3.5 The Lay of the Land – Undocumented Landscapes**

The Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail spans the entirety of the Prescott-Russell United Counties, a length of seventy-two kilometres running through rural and agricultural land. Its location allows for an escape into an uncensored landscape varying from the fields, to the forest, and the waterways. Many would agree that the beauty and remoteness of the trail are attractive, but for the task of collecting information, that proved to be a challenge.

Firstly, to my knowledge the trail has never been thoroughly documented, which limits the amount of readily available information. The site is also, in many ways, irregular. The trail is obviously very long, and narrow, but what is particular is its creation from the thousands of privately-owned sites abutting it.

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<sup>33</sup> The Review, *Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail wants your support*, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://thereview.ca/2018/09/19/prescott-russell-recreation-trail-wants-your-support/?fbclid=IwAR1XT-3MJnkrjhtJ6gKmhrJY90wh9OZjhBE6cNGNxjZuSXPNoruQ38CCArg>.

This also makes it counterintuitive to only document the site, without documenting the neighbouring sites.

The documentation of the landscape through photography was of great importance to the thesis. The choice of photography over other methods was decided for the ease of use and output and also to capture the expanse juxtaposed by intense detail. For the purpose of truly understanding and appreciating the landscape, a first documentation was carried out on September 30, 2018, by bicycle (see Appendix B). The trip was executed in a period of seven hours, starting in Hammond, and ending in St-Eugène. Cycling the trail allowed me to determine unique points along the trail; the abundance of nature, the peacefulness, and the life around the trail. The low points included the long distances between pavilions and the lack of upkeep in certain areas. Most importantly, cycling allowed for a true understanding of the rail industry that used to operate the line. A train travels along a path without sharp changes in direction, hence the ground noticeably lowers and heightens beside you as you wheel down the path. The repurposed rail bridges were also prominent, as they are the only heavy metal structures one could see along the path.

A second documentation of the trail was carried out on February 10, 2019, by snowmobile (see Appendix B). The trip was executed in a period of one and a half hours, again starting in Hammond, and ending in St-Eugène. Riding the trail on a snowmobile brings to light the absence of inhabitation along the trail and the abundant use of the trail seen by tracks in the snow. At 50 km/h the landscape is flattened even more, and what relief speed does not take away, the snow does. The cold, the wind, and the sun are prominent. There are no heated formal resting areas in the winter. Snowmobiling on the trail allowed for a different perception of distance, where long and almost unachievable cycling distances are accomplished so effortlessly by snowmobile. This also reveals the augmented reach of the trail in the winter. Snowmobiling also brought to light the seasonality of the trail, and its different year-round uses for the communities.

Several other elements of the trail and of the region were documented during this thesis in support of the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles*. The documentation of the existing five pavilions served to understand the existing conditions of resting

areas all along the trail. All five pavilions, located in Hammond, Bourget, Plantagenet, Vankleek Hill, and St-Eugène, are visually identical. This is unfortunate in some ways, but in others it talks of clarity, continuity, and more importantly, functionality.



*Figure 8: Existing pavilion.*

The next form of documentation was that of the nearby towns, travelling by car from the pavilions, and onto the main streets, and back to the pavilions (see Appendix B). This allowed for the architectural documentation of the towns. Most of the towns are seemingly historical, which is demonstrated by a more localized architecture and material palette. Namely, the prominent use of the red-clay brick, and of wooden architectural features were common throughout the five towns. The documentation of the local buildings gives importance to the “common building”, not necessarily the most ornate, and also promotes the discussion of local distinctiveness.

Another series of documentation was that of derelict buildings along the trail. The three buildings were comprised of the old Bourget Train Station, and a small single room building just off the trail in Caledonia Springs, and an even smaller partially collapsed building a little further along, still in Caledonia Springs. Materials and sound clips were collected from these sites. The initial idea was to recycle these buildings into additional resting areas along the trail. Instead these buildings were recycled in an informal manner as inspiration of form, materials, character and essence. The

location of Caledonia Springs was also selected as the site of intervention resting in a location between two of the five existing pavilions.



*Figure 9: Abandoned building along the trail near Caledonia Springs.*



*Figure 10: Abandoned train station in Bourget.*

Lastly, and working from the previous exploration, a documentation of the abandoned Caledonia Springs Hotel site was carried out on snowshoe. The photographs document the site, and most prominently the ruins of a previous occupation. This currently publicly-inaccessible site was ultimately chosen as the location of a sixth pavilion for the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail. The rich history of the site supports Retrouvailles through the incorporation of a narrative.



*Figure 11: Site of the defunct Caledonia Springs Hotel.*



*Figure 12: Approaching the Water Bottling Facility ruins.*



*Figure 13: Materiality of the Water Bottling Facility ruins.*



Figure 14: Chapter 4 Frontispiece - *Retrouvailles* – What’s in a place?

## Chapter 4. *Retrouvailles* – What’s in a place?

The various architectural elements of *Retrouvailles* outlined in the previous chapters have both very physical and non-physical implications from the landscape. With the goal of answering the question of “what’s in a place?” a thorough study of the place itself

was executed. The information gathered from geography, geology, and of history, will serve as a toolkit for architecture using the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles*.

#### **4.1 Geographic Place**

The rural landscape exists through the growth, the constructed, the decay and the loss of all things man-made and those created from nature, co-existing, subjected to weather and time. The seventy-two-kilometre-long walking, cycling, and snowmobile path is experienced in time, through a variety of different speeds and perceptions. Historically the trail was experienced by train, on route to and from Ottawa and Montreal. Although it is no longer possible to experience the trail in this manner, today the use of a snowmobile allows a similar experience, in regards to speed.

##### **4.1.1 Experiential Scales + 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension**

Stretching from Hammond to St-Eugène, the trail is travelled in mainly three different ways; by walking, cycling, and snowmobiling.

At a speed of 5 km/h, walking allows for an up-close and intimate relationship with the place. It allows for breathing in of smells and hearing of sounds. It allows the user to experience a place where sometimes you can hear nothing but the birds singing. Walking permits an informal documentation of the landscape, where flowers, trees and soils are experienced so closely that it is possible to differentiate them in a sea of apparent sameness; colours are vivid, and flowers are distinct. In the winter, trees uncover themselves. The coniferous trees stand proud, green among the browns, whites and greys. In the winter the deciduous trunks appear, leaves fall, and the intricacies of branches are apparent. Walking brings the background into the foreground.

[7.2 kilometres in 86 minutes]

At a speed of 15.5 km/h, cycling allows for a greater view of the distant landscape. Through the height of the bicycle seat and the speed of rolling tires, bicycle, distances are shortened. Trees seem closer together, colours blur together. Sounds are further away; church bells sound for a few seconds only, echoing less and less. The bicycle allows for longer distances of travel. It allows for an

understanding of path, similar to the way water chooses to travel. Through cycling, the user feels the landscape, in a way that it is noticeable neither by foot nor by snowmobile; you feel the bumps and the crevices, there is a sense of urgency. The surrounding landscape falls to the middle ground, never quite close or far, but always above your shoulder.

[15.5 kilometres in 86 minutes]

At a speed of 50 km/h, the snowmobile allows for a travel speed similar to that of the historic train that used to travel the path everyday. All you can hear is the roar of the machine, yet everything is silent. The landscape is white and cold; trees are reduced to obstacles. Private becomes public, fences become grasses, waterways become bridges. The snowmobile distances the landscape from the trail. At this speed, there is no intimate connection, and how could there be when all there is, is the wind and the vast whiteness of the snow-covered fields. On a snowmobile, natural life seems to be hibernating.

[72 kilometres in 86 minutes]

At a speed of up to 10 Gb/s, information is being distributed along the trail, and globally. An optic-fibre cable, operated by FibreNoire, is buried along the path, connecting the areas of Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto with the world. While this service is not available to any local communities of the trail, these communities have no other option but to rely on the over-capacitated fixed-wireless and satellite internet providers within the region. The generally low internet speeds range from negligible, to 25mb/s, a fraction of what is available in the cities. Recently it was stated that “access to broadband Internet services was vital to Canada’s economic, social, democratic, and cultural fabric,” and political promises were made to provide better internet availability in rural regions in coming years; a welcomed site for the communities of Prescott-Russell. Light travels along the trail, pulsing information between the cities, oblivious to the context, hidden in the buried darkness.

#### **4.2 Geological Place**

The Prescott-Russell United Counties are said to harbour some of Canada’s most fertile lands, and for that reason alone, the study of

the grounds is merited. Roughly 10,000 years ago, the Champlain Sea covered the entire region. When glaciers receded, heavy deposits of clay accumulated in the area known today as the Prescott-Russell United Counties.<sup>34</sup> The “greasy, massive, stoneless, red-brown clays” have served as an abundant material of choice for the cladding and structure of homes throughout the region in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> The fast receding of the glaciers are also responsible for the uniformity of topography within the region. Furthermore, the bedrock contains little gravel, alongside deposits of Grenville Limestone and sandstone.<sup>36</sup>

A study of the available resources as potential building materials within the region as well as the land and forest cover was completed (see Appendix A). The maps are accompanied by an information page. Furthermore, other maps also demonstrate areas of more “urban” living, and the waterways that run through the counties. The main in-land river of the Prescott-Russell United Counties is the South Nation River, which intersects the trail near

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<sup>34</sup> G.R. Guillet, *Clay and Shale Deposits of Ontario*, (Ontario Ministry of National Resources, Toronto, 1977), 45.

<sup>35</sup> J. Fraser, *Mineral Resource Survey The United Counties of Prescott Russell Ontario*, (Kemptville, Ministry of National Resources, 1976), 51.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

Plantagenet. The South Nation River feeds into the larger Ottawa River, which also delineates the edge of the province of Ontario.

### **4.3 Historical – Off the Beaten Path**

The region is rich in history, but like so many other places some histories are often forgotten in time. The historical Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail operated as a rail line linking Ottawa and Montreal between the years of 1899 and 1986.<sup>37</sup> Since it travelled on the very flat landscape, when the tracks were lifted in 1986 little evidence of the existence of a rail was apparent. The abandoned train station in Bourget and the bridge crossing the South Nation River in Plantagenet are the two major elements that were left of the rail industry.<sup>38</sup> During the period of operation, the Prescott-Russell rail allowed for local places and gems to flourish even more, namely the Caledonia Springs Hotel.

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<sup>37</sup> R. Brown, *In Search of the Grand Trunk: Ghost Rail Lines in Ontario*, (Toronto, Dundurn, 2011), 221.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

### 4.3.1 The Caledonia Springs Hotel

Ideally located halfway between Ottawa and Montreal, Caledonia Springs hosted thousands of curists between 1835 and 1915.<sup>39</sup> Nicknamed the “city of water,” its guests sought out the four natural springs for the hydrotherapy treatments of various diseases.<sup>40</sup> In 1875, the Grand Hotel, later the Caledonia Springs Hotel, was inaugurated.<sup>41</sup> In the end the site was composed of a hotel, various pavilions, a water bottling facility, a farm, several



Figure 15: Caledonia Springs Hotel. M. Prévost, *Caledonia Springs*, (Hull, Éditions Asticou, 1986), 23.

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<sup>39</sup> M. Prévost, *Caledonia Springs*, (Hull, Éditions Asticou, 1986), 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 23.

chapels, and other buildings. In 1915 the hotel operations suddenly shuttered, the operations of the water bottling soon ceased in 1919. The buildings were then dismantled, and the lumber was sold.<sup>42</sup>

Interestingly, various buildings in the nearby town of Alfred, including the church tower and homes, were constructed from this lumber. The land was later sold to the neighbouring farmer who dismantled all but one of the remaining wooden buildings.<sup>43</sup> Today, more than 100 years since its shuttering, the site is fenced-off and not accessible to the public. Various ghost foundations and ruins are scattered throughout the site. Most prominent and visible of them all, are the ruins of the water bottling facility. The crumbling concrete is slowly given away to nature; trees are growing inside. Further into the site, hidden between trees and in a low-lying area a water pavilion still stands. The small wooden pavilion has a tiled marble floor and two baths. The sulphurous and saline springs still flow from taps here.

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<sup>42</sup> M. Prévost, *Caledonia Springs*, (Hull, Éditions Asticou, 1986), 36.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*



*Figure 16: Approaching the existing Water pavilion.*



*Figure 17: Interior of the Water pavilion, showing structure and baths.*



*Figure 18: Materiality of the Water pavilion.*



Figure 19: Chapter 5 Frontispiece - Case Studies - Integrating *Retrouvailles* (The Toolkit).

## Chapter 5. Case Studies - Integrating *Retrouvailles* (The Toolkit)

The research carried out in this thesis allowed for the application and analysing of the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles* in several case studies.

## 5.1 Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria

The *Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria* is a great example, and inspiration to the thesis. This project is also about the repurposing of a former railway line traveling in mostly rural areas. The thirty-five-kilometre-long trail is located in Sicily, Italy, and features adaptive-reuse instances of the former rail infrastructure.<sup>44</sup> Visibly, the place-making strategy of Retrouvailles is integrated in all elements of the new walking and cycling path. The project addresses place and narrative through the unveiling of



Figure 20: *Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria*. EUmiesaward 19, *Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria*, Accessed on March 30, 2019. <https://eumiesaward.com/work/1366>

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<sup>44</sup> L. Lefavre and A. Tzonis, *Critical Regionalism*, (Munich, Prestel, 2003), 128.

the landscape and the integration of the existing rural built fabric. In its materiality; the colours of the riding surfaces and the selection of flowers and bushes growing along the path. Careful consideration has been attributed to engaging the senses, as the colours and smells evolve with the seasons.<sup>45</sup> The project integrates ecosystem and authenticity by developing “the theme of landscape by continually entwining two plans: the material construction of the park and the creation of visions, etc.”<sup>46</sup>



*Figure 21: Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria. EUmiesaward 19, Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria, Accessed on March 30, 2019. <https://eumiesaward.com/work/1366>*

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<sup>45</sup> M. Navarra, *Inwalkaboutcity 2.0*, (Siracusa, LetteraVentidue Edizioni srl, 2013). 91.

<sup>46</sup> EUmiesaward 19, Strip Park between Caltagirone & San Michele di Ganzaria, Accessed on March 30, 2019. <https://eumiesaward.com/work/1366>.

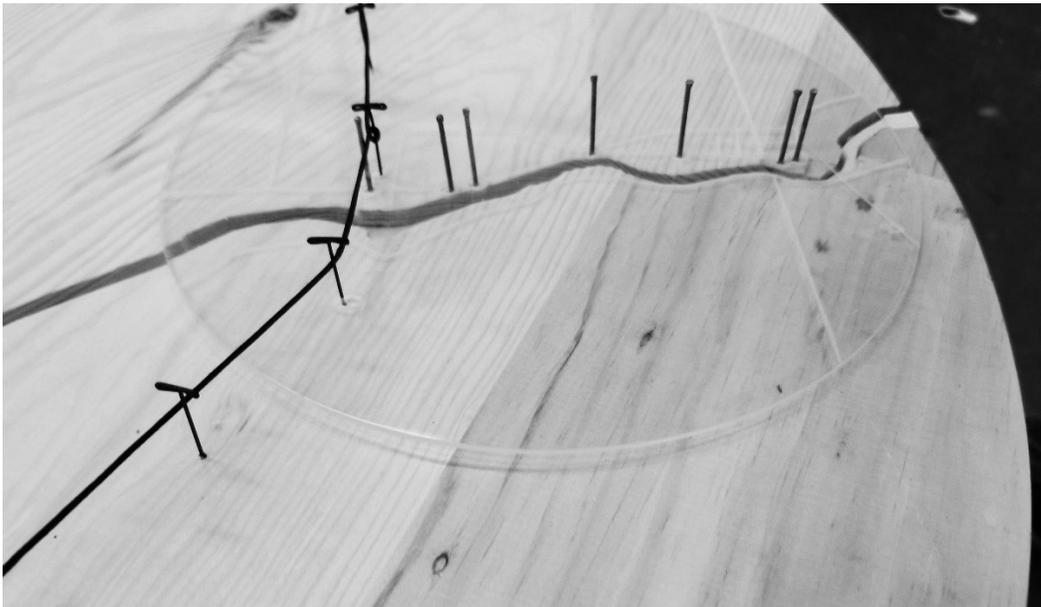
## 5.2 The Path Table

In designing the Path Table, a 1:20 000 scaled site model of the seventy-two-kilometre-long Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail, careful consideration has been attributed to the integration of principles of the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles*.

The model is simply constructed using local repurposed pine boards, “T” pins, string, wood dowels, six acrylic circles, and pin legs. To echo the narrative of the trail it was important to integrate repurposed materials into the design of model. The purpose of the model is to show the length and location of the path on the flat landscape. “T” pins are used as markers of every kilometre along the path. A wooden dowel is located at the location of each pavilion, where a clear acrylic circle draws out the nearby towns. A white string indicates the path of travel of the architectural documentation of each of the towns. A black string weaves its way through the seventy-two markers showing the path of trail, but also demonstrating the act of stitching the communities together.

The model was cut on a computer numerical control (CNC) router, and the acrylic on a laser cutter. For the use of such materials and

modeling techniques it is important to reiterate that *Retrouvailles* does not mandate the exclusive use of local, or historical, materials and techniques, but instead acknowledges the use of both old and new, used appropriately in accordance to the situation. The natural wood and simple material and colour palette work in unison.



*Figure 22: Path table, clear acrylic circle draws out the nearby towns.*



Figure 23: Path table, dowels showing location of pavilions.

### 5.3 Chapter Frontispieces

For the design of chapter frontispieces, the principles of the place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles* were integrated into a contemporary adaptation of artform of marquetry. Marquetry is the historic craft of using various wood species inlaid into stunning images. The different wood colours, grains and textures create contrast, which allows for great image clarity.

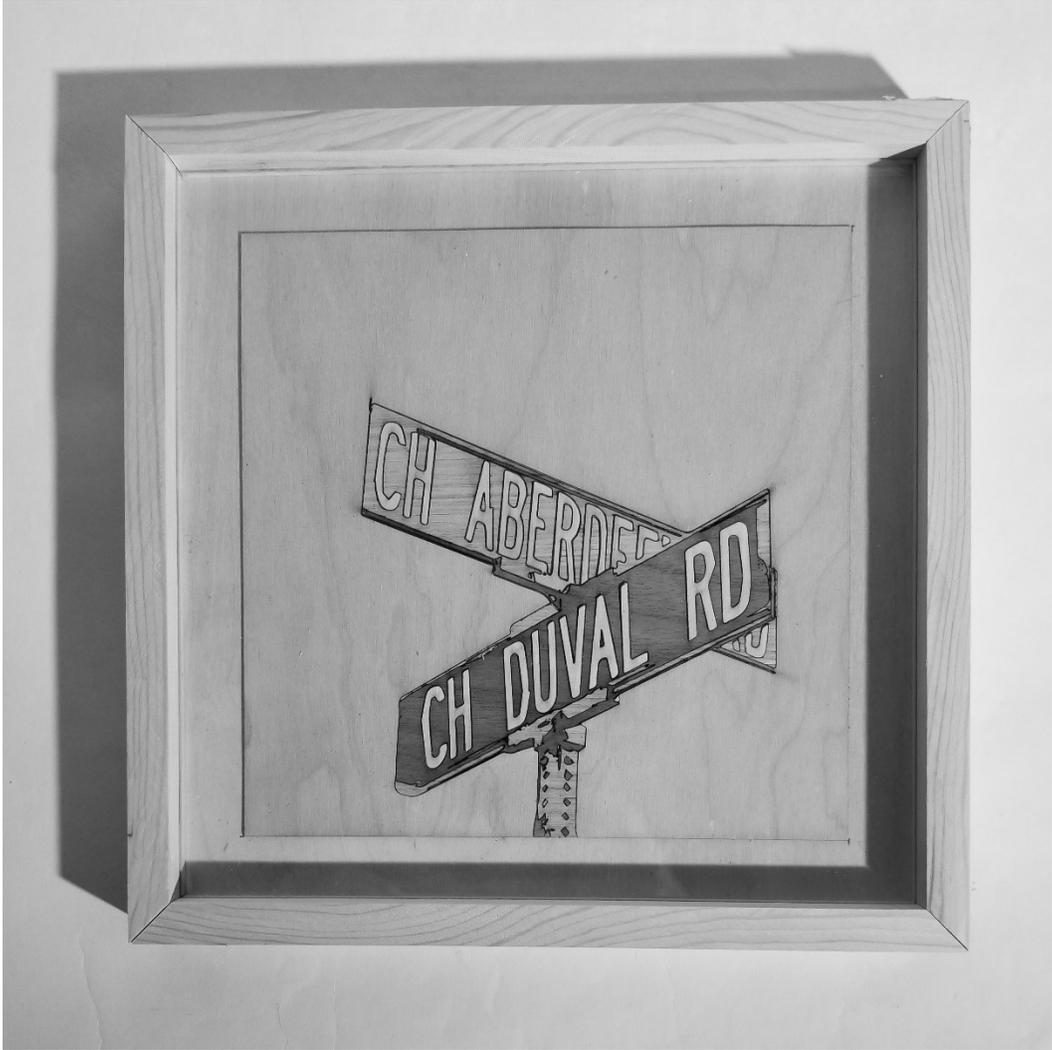
The ideas of nature, craft, and nostalgia were crucial to the development of the frontispieces. Four types of wood veneer sheets were cut using the laser cutter. The choices of materials talked of the local and the authentic, the species of wood; maple, oak, birch, and walnut, are all local to the Prescott-Russell region.

The use of the laser cutter brings forth the topics of craft and nostalgia, where a historic craft is achieved using contemporary technologies.

This artform also allowed for the creation of images appropriate to the chapter, but also appropriate to the region the thesis is documenting. A total of six frontispieces were created.



*Figure 24: Chapter 3 Frontispiece Marquetrie.*



*Figure 25: Chapter 2 Frontispiece Marquetry.*



*Figure 26: Chapter 6 Frontispiece - Design Proposal: The Caledonia Springs' Pavilion.*

## **Chapter 6. Design Proposal: *The Caledonia Springs' Pavilion***

### **6.1 The Site**

The site for the new pavilion is located in Caledonia Springs, a small community that owes its existence to the once-famous Caledonia

Springs Hotel, and the natural springs that occur in this area. Adjacent to the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail, the 25-acre partially wooded site is located at the intersection of several roads, and natural features. The topography of the site includes natural crevices in the land that were carved by the waterways over time, bordered by agricultural fields and several wooded private properties. The site acts as a natural oasis of nature and history. Several remnants of the previous occupation of the Caledonia Springs Hotel are found throughout the site, most prominent are the ruins of the water bottling facility, and a small water pavilion with active sulfurous and saline water springs running from it. Several other features include pathways and numerous building foundations that are scattered throughout the site. Since approximately 1915, when Canadian Pacific ceased their operations at Caledonia Springs, the wildlife and vegetation have been re-appropriating the site. The luxury spa hotel on the site was demolished after its closing in 1915.

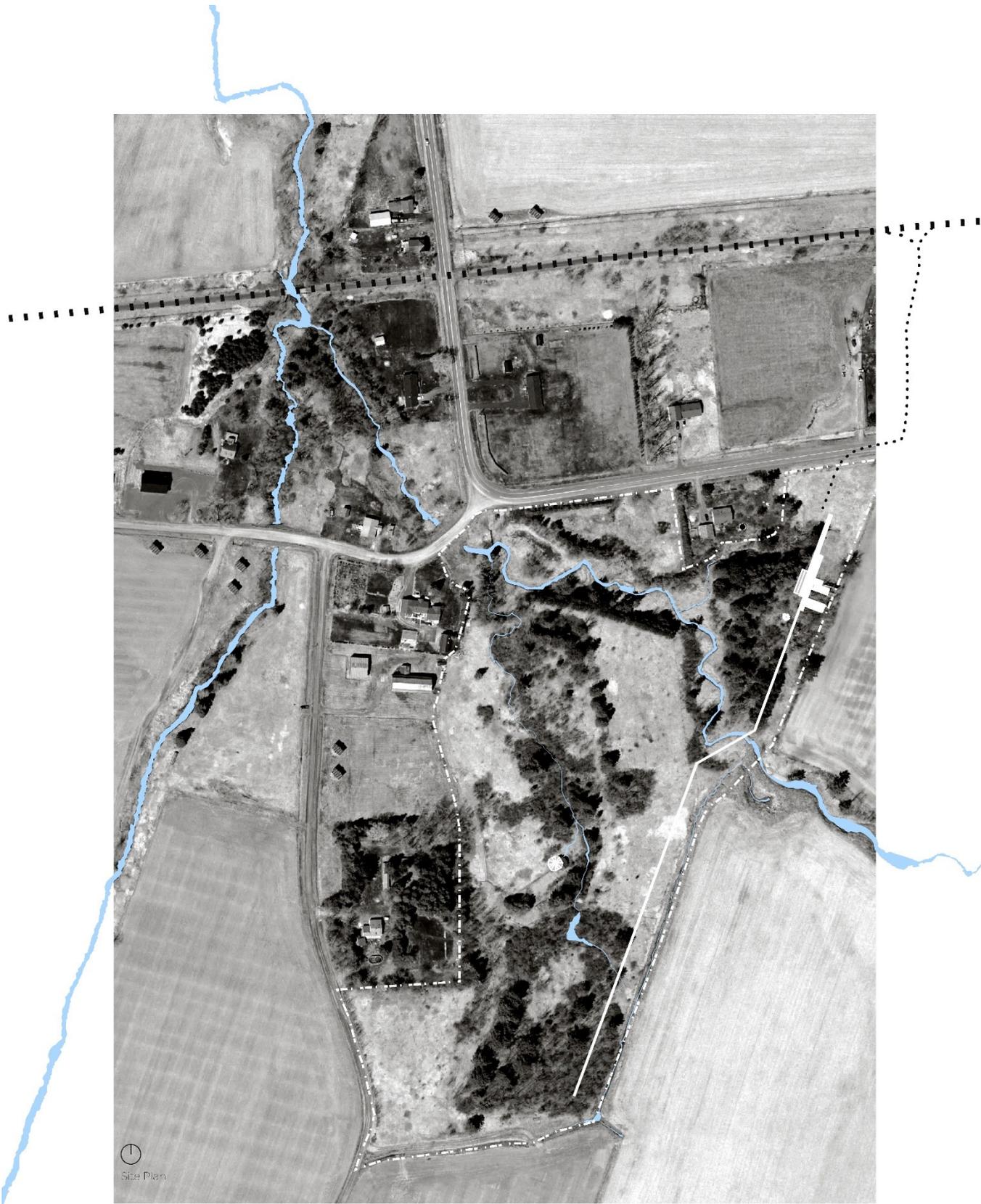


Figure 27: Site plan, showing trail (black line), site (white line), and pavilion (white buildings and boardwalk).

## 6.2 The Caledonia Springs' Pavilion

The idea of *Retrouvailles*, which has been discussed throughout this thesis will serve as a place making strategy for the construction of a sixth pavilion along the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail. This new pavilion does not discredit the existing five pavilions, but instead serves as an additional facility of the trail, situated perfectly to also even out the distances between rest areas. The Caledonia Springs' Pavilion is also a demonstration of architecture resulting from a thorough investigation of the region served by the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail. This new pavilion uses the trail as a vehicle to study the topics of site, place memory, history, material and craft. Like the existing pavilions, the new pavilion will also act as a resting spot for the users of the trail; offering seating and shelter. It also serves as a gathering space for the community, offering utilities year-round. Finding its essence from the former water bottling facility, and playing off of political promises, the new pavilion taps into the high-speed optic-fibre internet buried alongside the trail, to offer the community the fastest available internet in the entire region. In all, the Caledonia Springs' Pavilion is a permanent community building, located off leased land, that

serves to preserve and enhance nature, and our memorable relationship to it.



*Figure 28: A derelict railway service building serves as marker for the new pavilion.*



*Figure 29: Approaching the new pavilion, showing overall organisation.*

### **6.3 The Site Strategy**

The site is accessed by users of the trail through a short meandering path, at the border of two abutting properties. A derelict railway service building immediately adjacent to the trail serves as its marker and directs the users to the new pavilion. The site provides several vehicle parking spaces, as well as ramps for the off-loading

of snowmobiles from trailers and truck boxes in the winter. The intention of the new pavilion is for it to be used by all members of the community, at any moment in time, as a departure and arrival point, as well as a destination in itself. When approaching the pavilion on Concession Road 1, the public is invited into the site, off their bicycle or snowmobile and onto a wooden boardwalk. At the entrance, the boardwalk is constructed one foot off the ground as a way of encouraging dismount of snowmobile and bicycle. The boardwalk is constructed from locally abundant and locally sawn Eastern White Cedar boards. The purpose of the boardwalk is to provide an experiential framework for the site. From the careful raising and lowering of the boardwalk at specific points, the attention is directed to certain important local artifacts, spaces, and events. Past the buildings, the narrow three-foot-wide boardwalk gently lowers to the ground, emphasizing the landscape condition. The thirty-minute-long migration gently and respectfully travels through meadows, forests, creeks and wetlands, weaving its way in and around nature. The boardwalk prescribes a close and intimate experience with the place, allowing for touching of the tall grasses on both sides at once. Allowing for feeling the ground slowly raising or lowering. Allowing for squirrel footprints on the

thin snow-covered surfaces. The boardwalk slows down the user, it brings the background of the trail into the foreground. The boardwalk allows for various degrees of interaction with nature year-round, where off-the-boardwalk strolls are also welcomed. The site also changes throughout the seasons, most remarkably are the colours of the vegetation, and the echoing sounds of new life from the birds in the spring, the buzzing of the insects in the summer, and echoing gobbles of the wild turkeys in the winter. In the spring, high levels of water in the creek signify the awakening of the dormant winter life. The boardwalk sets-up a visual north-south axis that serves as a threshold to the “natural” landscape; the site of the pavilion, and the “manicured;” the agricultural fields abutting the site, which is a natural relationship that exists throughout the region. The new intervention will have three main components; path, shelter, and seating.

The Caledonia Springs’ Pavilion is organized as a series of buildings. Brian MacKay-Lyons described “the idea of the house as a group of buildings, (...) speaks of the need for self-sufficiency in isolated rural

settings."<sup>47</sup> In applying this organizing principle to this pavilion, it speaks to the realities of a rural setting, and sets out the idea of self-sufficiency for the pavilion as a place in itself, but also in the context of sustainability.

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<sup>47</sup> B. MacKay-Lyons, Brian MacKay-Lyons: Selected Projects 1986-1997, (Halifax, TUNS Press, 2000), 9.



*Figure 30: Arrival to the site, showing various buildings.*

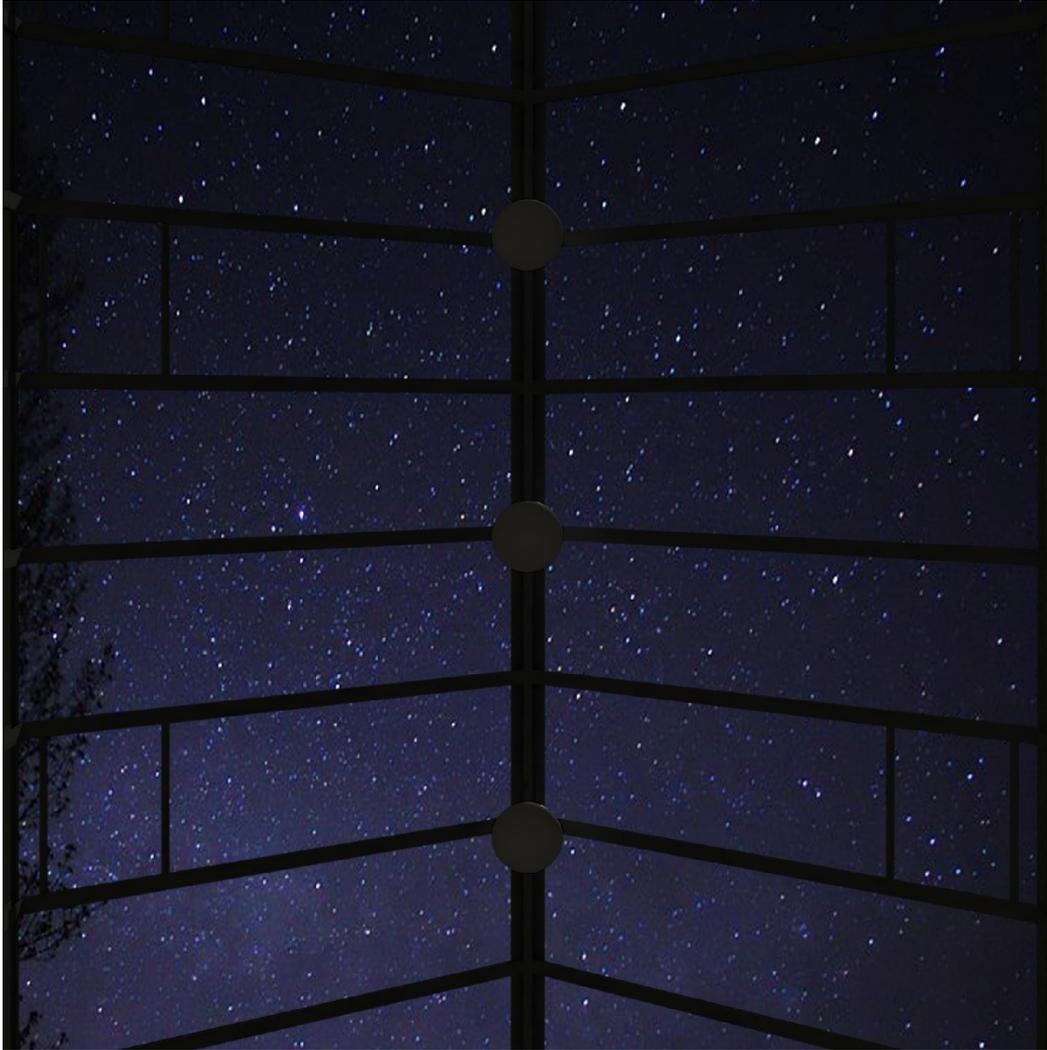
Upon arrival to the site, the most obvious intervention is the adaptive-reuse intervention on the water bottling facility ruins. The existing concrete structure is now outfitted with obvious and aesthetically contemporary clear roof and walls, constructed from an off-the-shelf aluminum and polycarbonate greenhouse. In the idea of water carving out the topography of this site, the greenhouse structure is inserted into the existing ruins. The



*Figure 31: Interior perspective of the Water Bottling Facility, looking towards the snowmobile and bicycle shelter.*

tension of old and new materials, also found in many other places throughout the project, encourages conversations of nostalgia and the contemporary, as well as craft.

Although made of clear polycarbonate, the pitched structure is suggestive of an existing housing type found throughout the region.

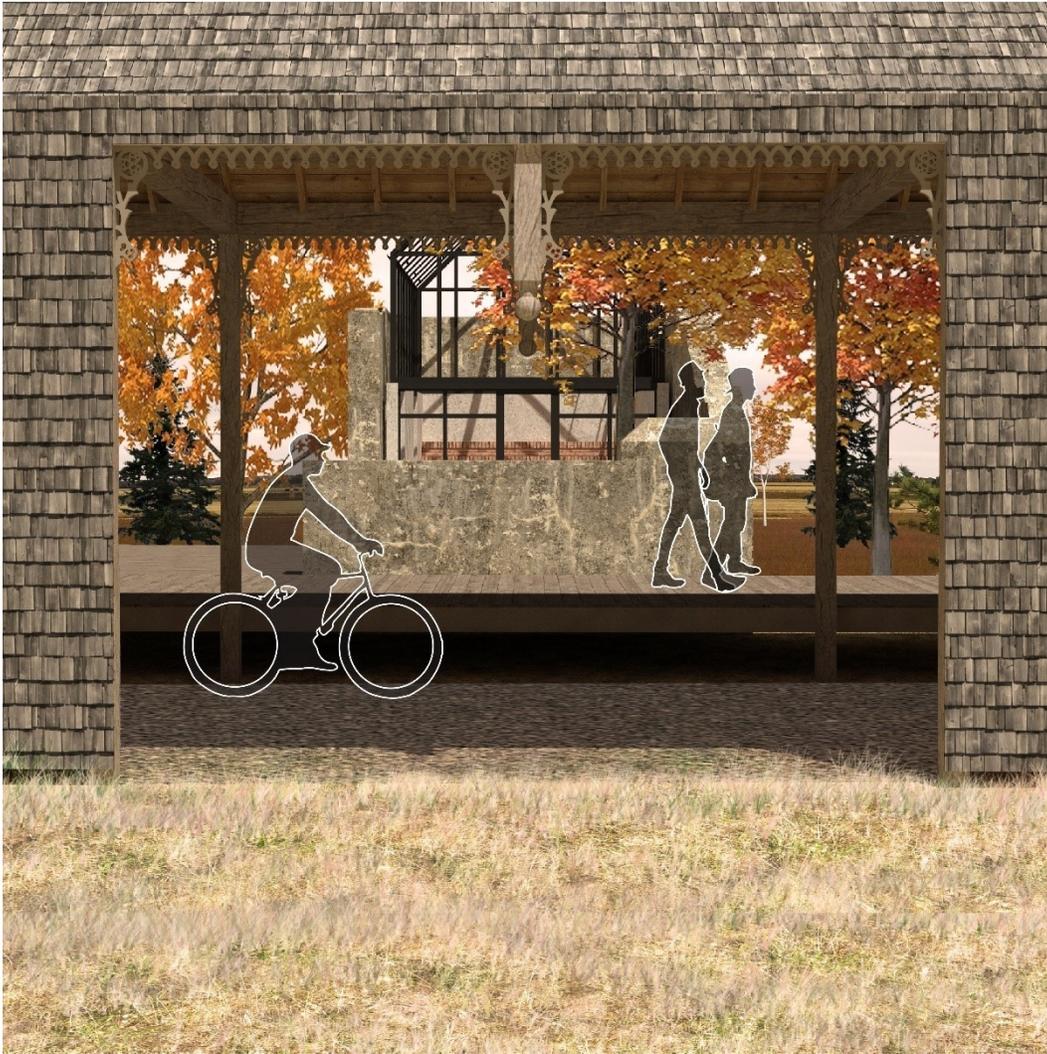


*Figure 32: Night perspective, looking up through the roof of the Water Bottling Facility.*

The new water bottling facility's purpose is mainly for housing seating. The L-shaped stepped-seating arrangement is constructed from red-clay brick. The clay bricks serve as a thermal mass, holding and redistributing the heat from an embedded solar-thermal heating system. The solar-thermal system emphasises the pavilion's commitment to minimal impact and sustainability. The use of the heated red-clay brick is a play on the idea of the hearth

and place memory where textures such as these, as well as the old concrete walls, bring to mind memories of your childhood home, or your neighbours' down the road. The red-clay brick seating visually extends from interior to exterior, emphasizing the relationship with our surroundings. The stepped-seating is a great gathering spot year-round, but especially for the winter months, where snowmobilers and snowshoers can warm themselves up. The clear roof also acts as a lantern year-round, with great importance in the dark winter months. In an otherwise dark and flat landscape, a light in the distance is a welcomed sight. The boardwalk steps up prior to entering the ruined-building and is cut away to let the existing trees continue to grow. In the summer, the interior portion is naturally ventilated by opening a few of the windows. The old walls are suggestive of a rich history, where the possibilities of storytelling are endless. The whole area is serviced by the high-speed internet, but the sheltered nature of this building is the chosen spot for gathering of new friends, locals, and the occasional professionals.

Directly across the boardwalk is the snowmobile and bicycle shelter. The seven-bay timber-frame building is open on three



*Figure 33: West elevation of the snowmobile and bicycle shelter, looking through to the boardwalk and the Water Bottling Facility.*

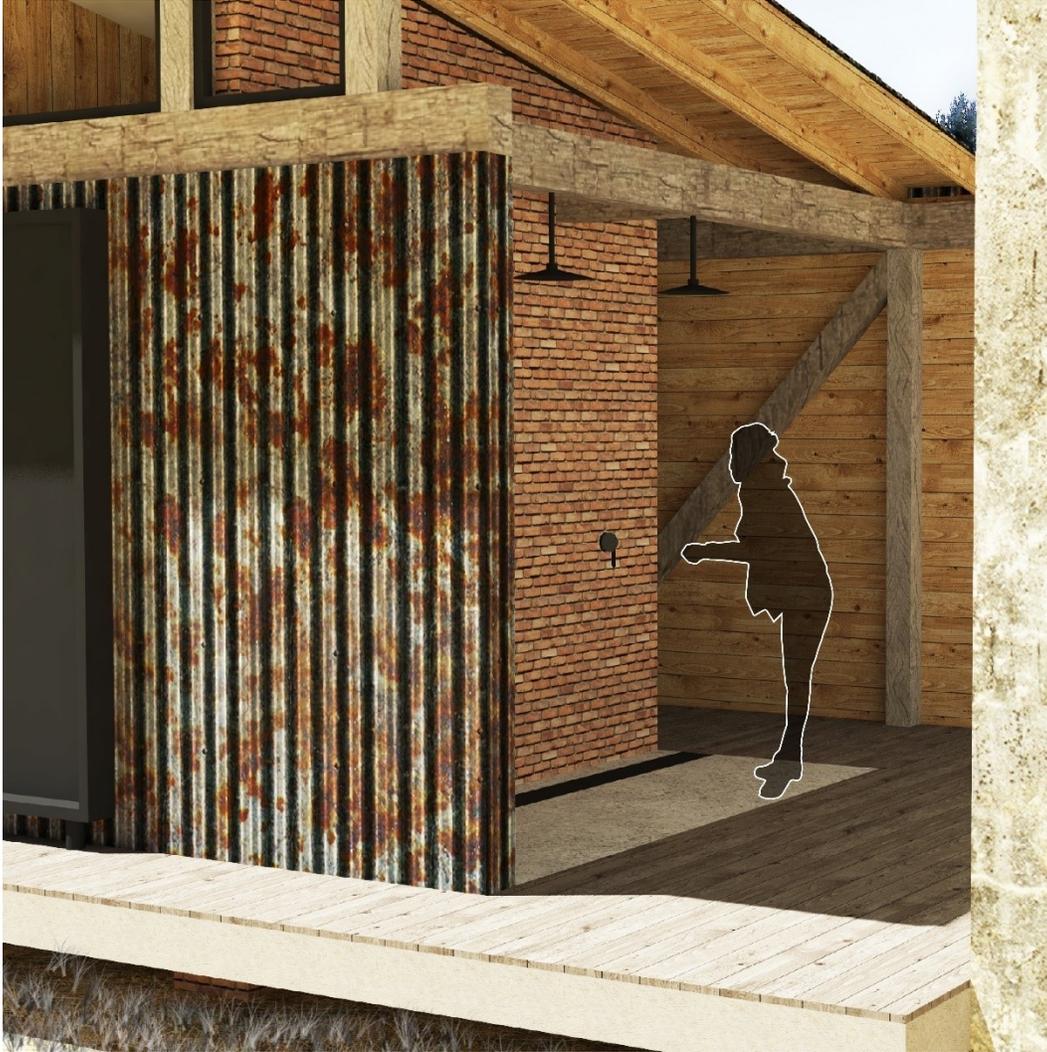
sides, functioning as a thru building. This simple barn-like structure is constructed from reclaimed local materials, sourced from barn teardowns unfortunately feeding the “barnwood” movement. Its shape is similar to the previous building, featuring high and steep gables. This shelter is located on the ground, abutting the boardwalk, which serves as additional seating in this

case. In the summer this building shelter's its users from the rain and the sun, while in the winter, it shelters the users from the snow and the winds. The wall and roof cladding systems offer a familiar site for locals, where cedar shakes carefully wrap all three surfaces. The building can comfortably house over ten snowmobiles at any one time. A cut-out section of the west side wall allows for easy exiting when capacity is at its highest. It also creates visual axis to the seating area, and a connection from built, to unbuilt. The exposed structure of this building welcome's talks of craft and material. Each heavy member is necessary for the structure and integrity of the assembly. The opened facades of this simple building are ordained with millwork as a nod to the Victorian era, once prevalent in the region and especially in the architectural style of the Caledonia Springs Hotel, and the craftsmanship associated to it. The ground cover is simply of crushed stone, similar to that found on the trail, which supports an easy continuation and connection to the trail.



Figure 34: Under the roof of the Salle d'Eau building, showing doors to the washrooms.

The next pavilion that you encounter along the boardwalk is the *Salle d'Eau* pavilion. Sited to the south of the water bottling facility, the small three-room building is clad using repurposed metal roofing materials, like the ones used on the roofs of barns and various agricultural buildings. The timber framed building houses two year-round washrooms, a utility and mechanical room, a water



*Figure 35: Perspective showing the exterior showers, and solar thermal panels of the Salle d'Eau.*

fountain, and an exterior covered seating and picnic-table area, under a simple low-slope roof sloping to the north. The large overhangs of the simple shed-like building shelter the walkways leading to the washrooms from the snow in the winter. In the summer they provide shade. On the east wall of the building, located between the brick wall and part of a wall remnant of

another ruin, exterior showers are provided to accommodate long-distance cyclists, and to accommodate those that would simply want to wash-off after exploring the site. The metal roof captures and stores the water run-off in an underground cistern, to use within a grey-water system for the washrooms. A drilled well taps into the ground to supply the drinking water. The interior spaces of this building are simply clad with Eastern White Cedar boards, the same material used for the construction of the boardwalk. This idea of continuity within the materiality is derived from the existing five pavilions on the path where the focus is on functionality and minimal materials. Additionally, the simple material palette of the *Salle d'Eau* creates a contrasting dialogue of old and new with the only surviving building, the water pavilion.



*Figure 36: Perspective showing the firepit and seating arrangements.*

A little further down the boardwalk, a firepit is located in a natural clearing of the land. The firepit allows for impromptu gatherings amongst friends and strangers, in the summer like in the winter. The seating is constructed from boulders found on the property. The snowmobiles provide additional informal seating arrangements when needed.



Figure 37: Perspective of the boardwalk.

By walking five more minutes past the firepit, a turn to the right off of the boardwalk will lead you to the water pavilion, the only functional building of the Caledonia Springs Hotel era. The square building houses two baths, one of a sulfurous spring, and the other of a saline spring. In contrast with the *Salle d'Eau*, this building is ornate, and tiled with marble. Although constructed using the stick-



*Figure 38: Perspective showing the existing Water pavilion.*

built method, the roof of the building is remarkably constructed in a way to allow for gables on all four sides. The dissimilarity of the two water-based pavilions create an interesting tension of Retrouvailles, where non-local materials were used historically, and local materials are used for the contemporary building, but both somehow being appropriate to the place.

In all, the Caledonia Springs' Pavilion strives to encompass and achieve the idea of Retrouvailles, through the simplicity of the program and of forms, by informing and working with the history of the site in a contemporary framework, by informing the architecture of the built fabric found throughout the region, through the creation of memorable and enjoyable gathering spaces, and through a respectful intervention on the landscape.

## 6.4 Additional Drawings

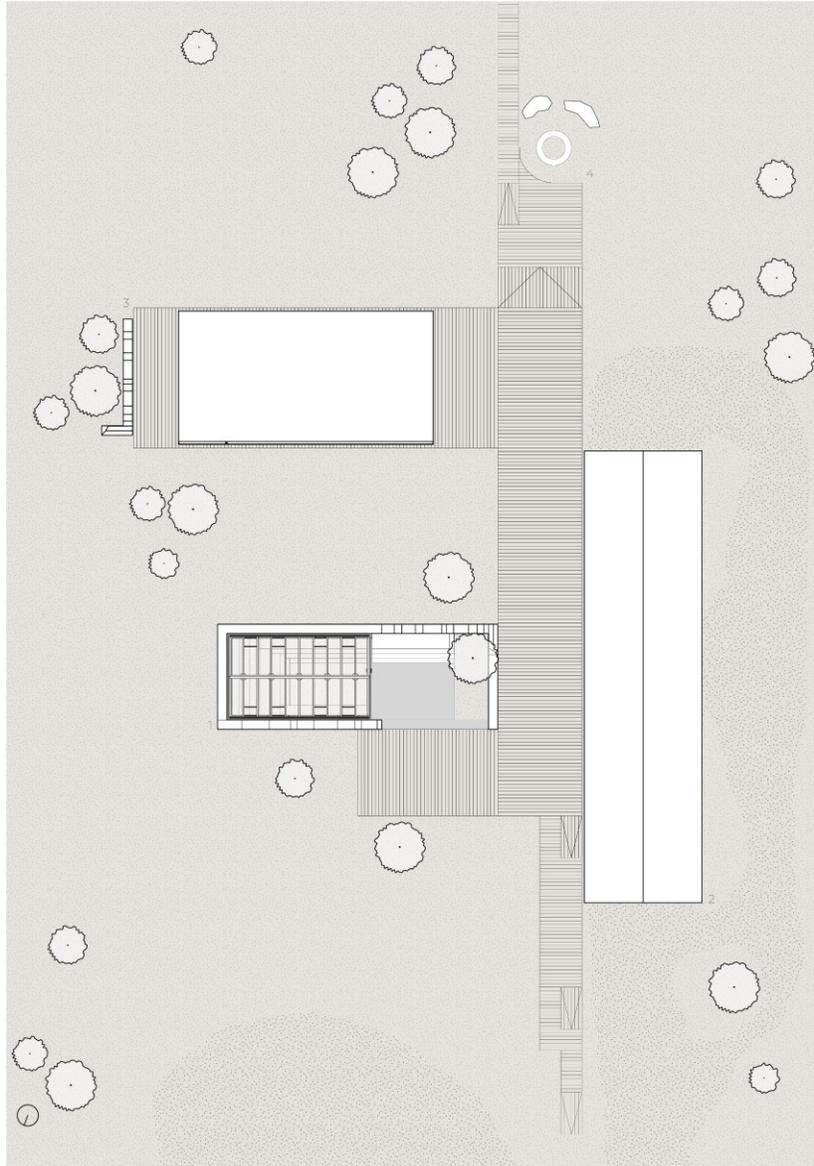


Figure 39: Roof plan.

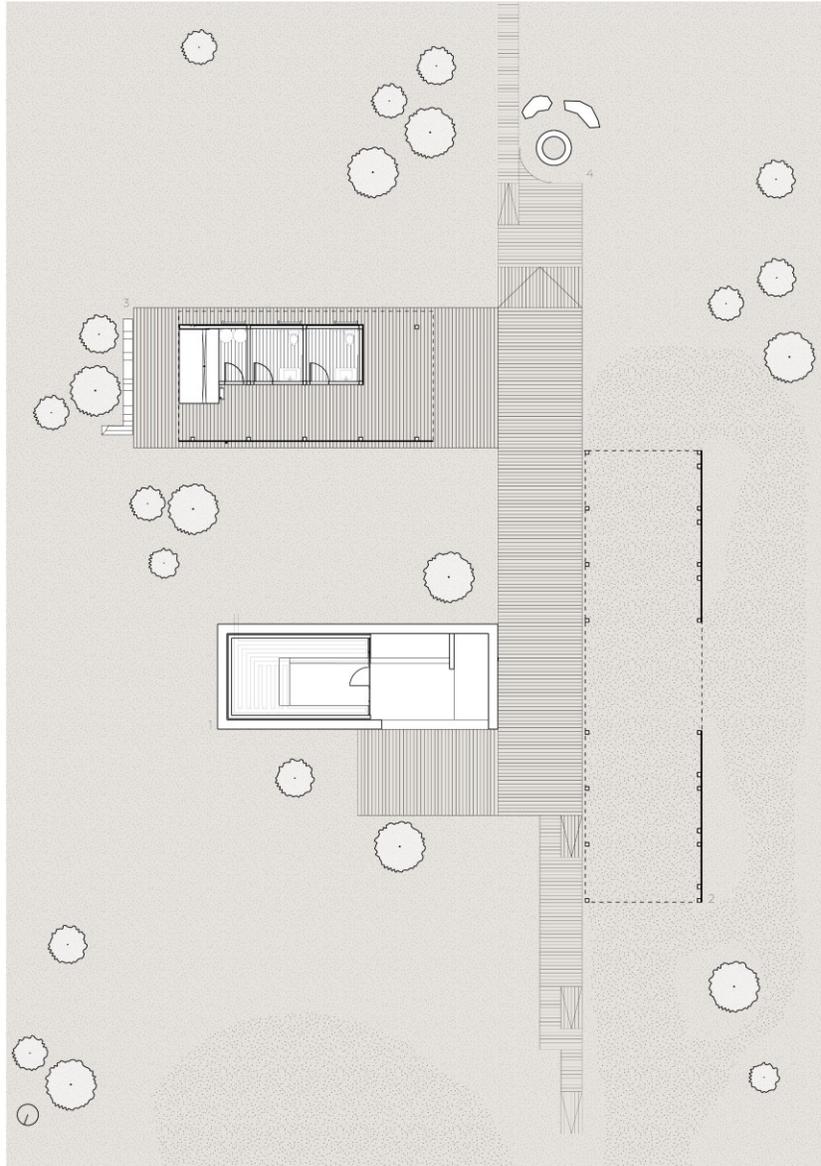


Figure 40: Plan.

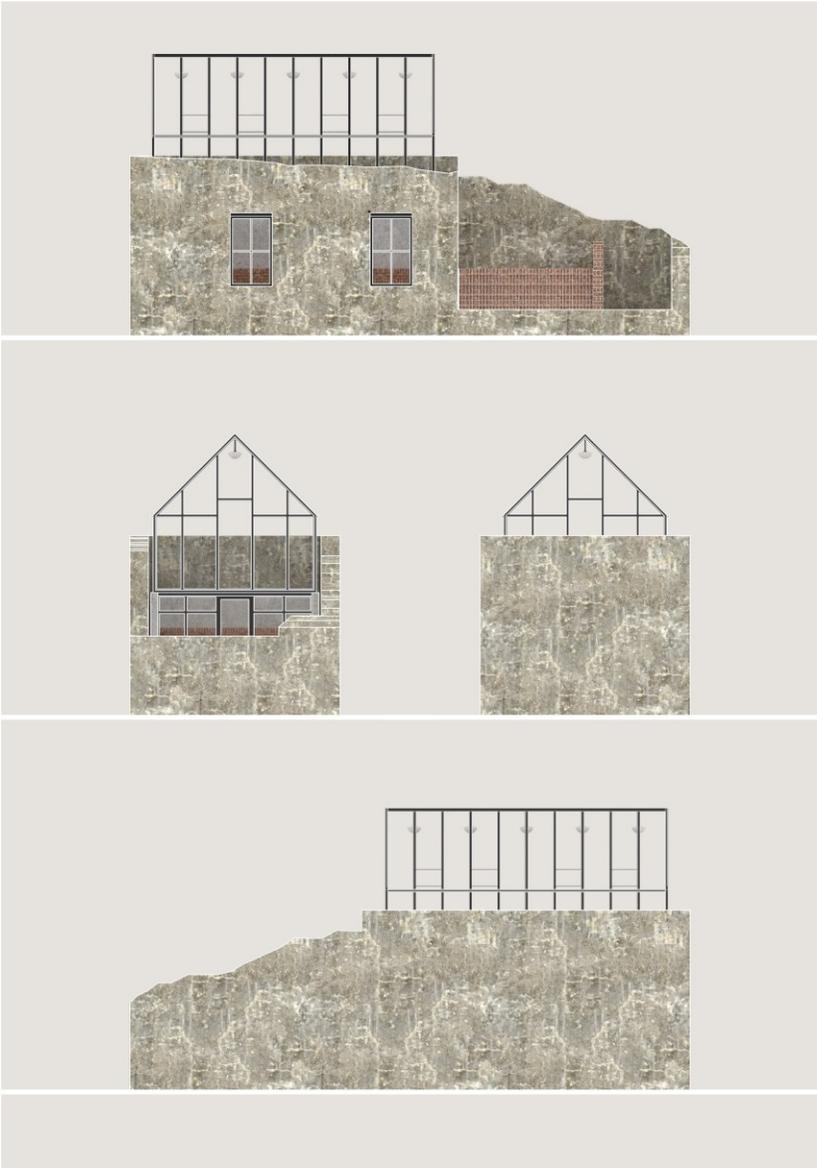


Figure 41: Water Bottling Facility Elevations (N,W,E,S).

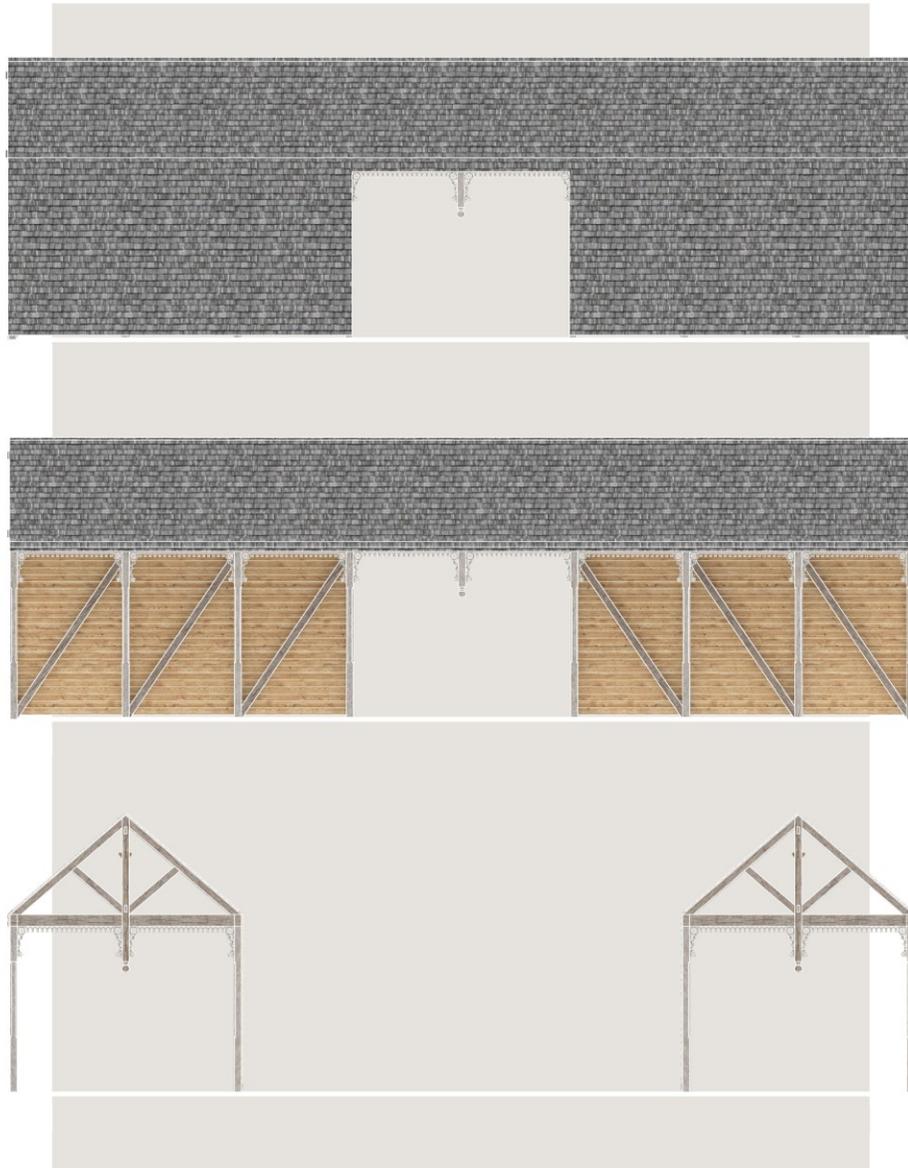


Figure 42: Snowmobile and Bicycle Shelter Elevations (W,E,N,S).

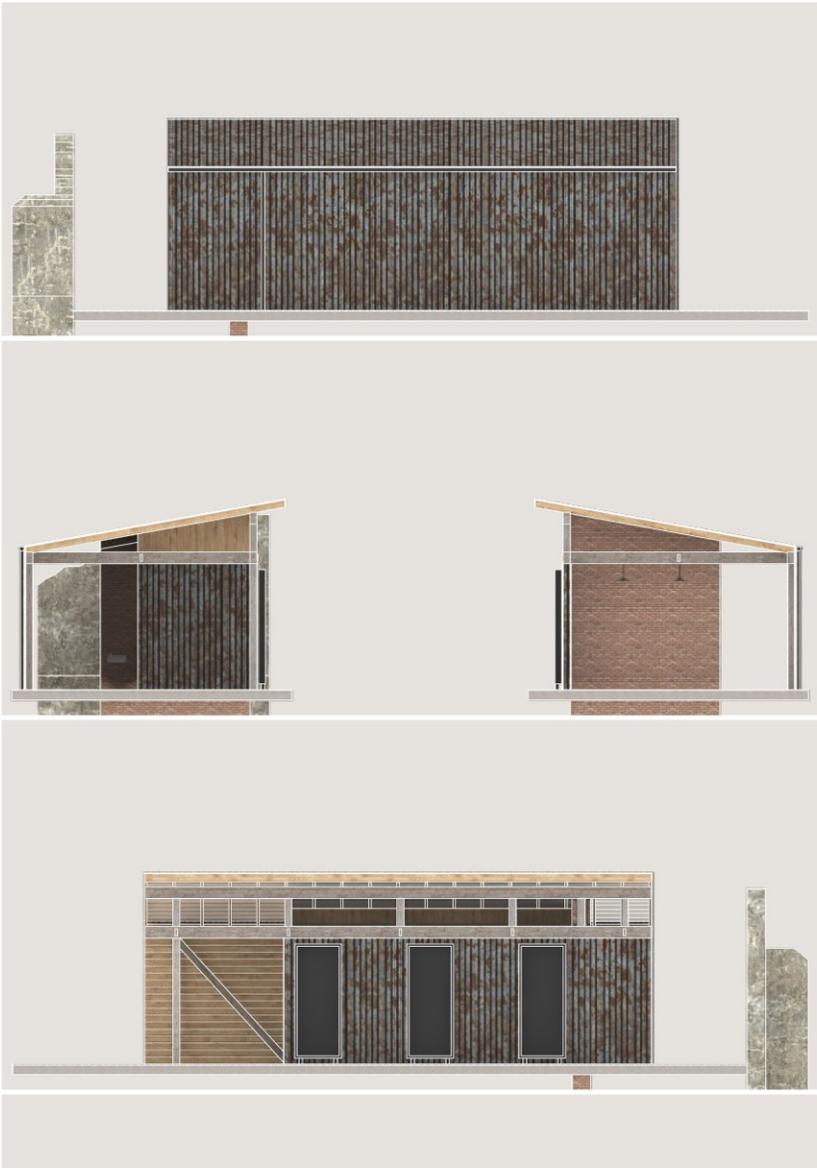


Figure 43: Salle d'Eau Elevations (N,W,E,S).

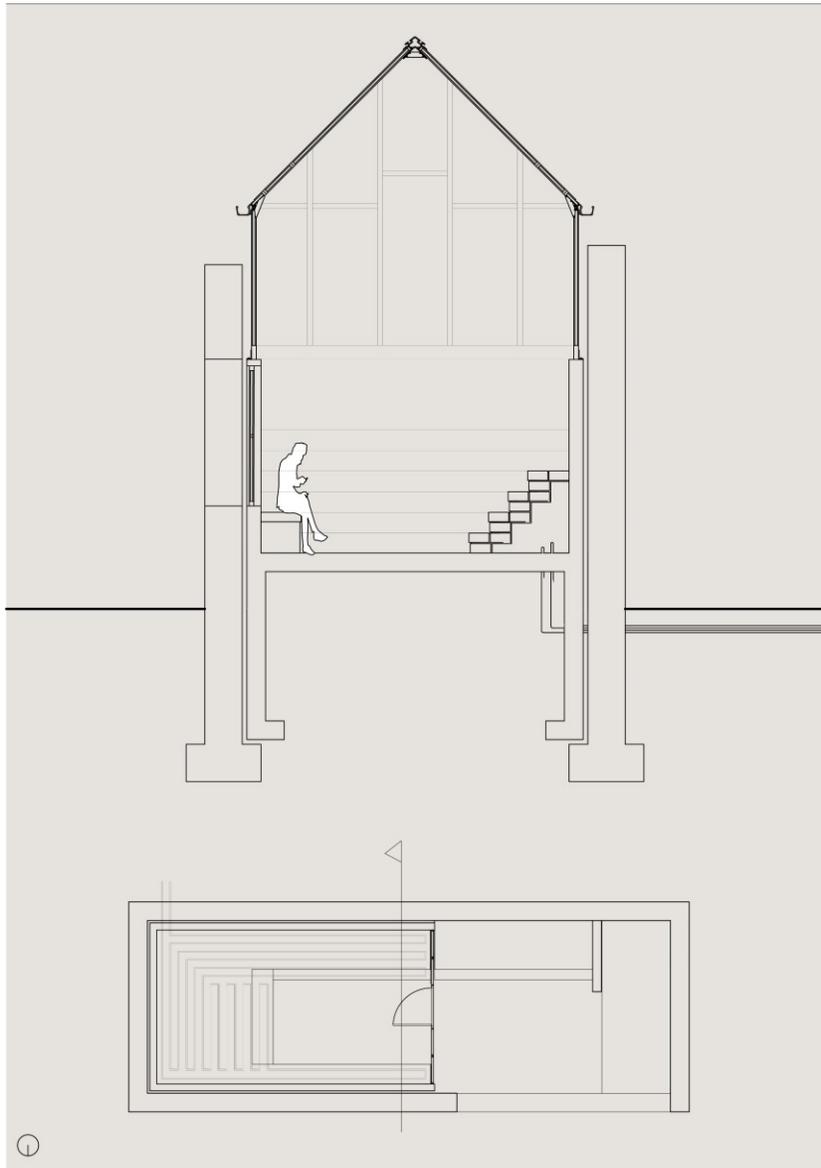


Figure 44: Water Bottling Facility Section (2:1) and Plan.

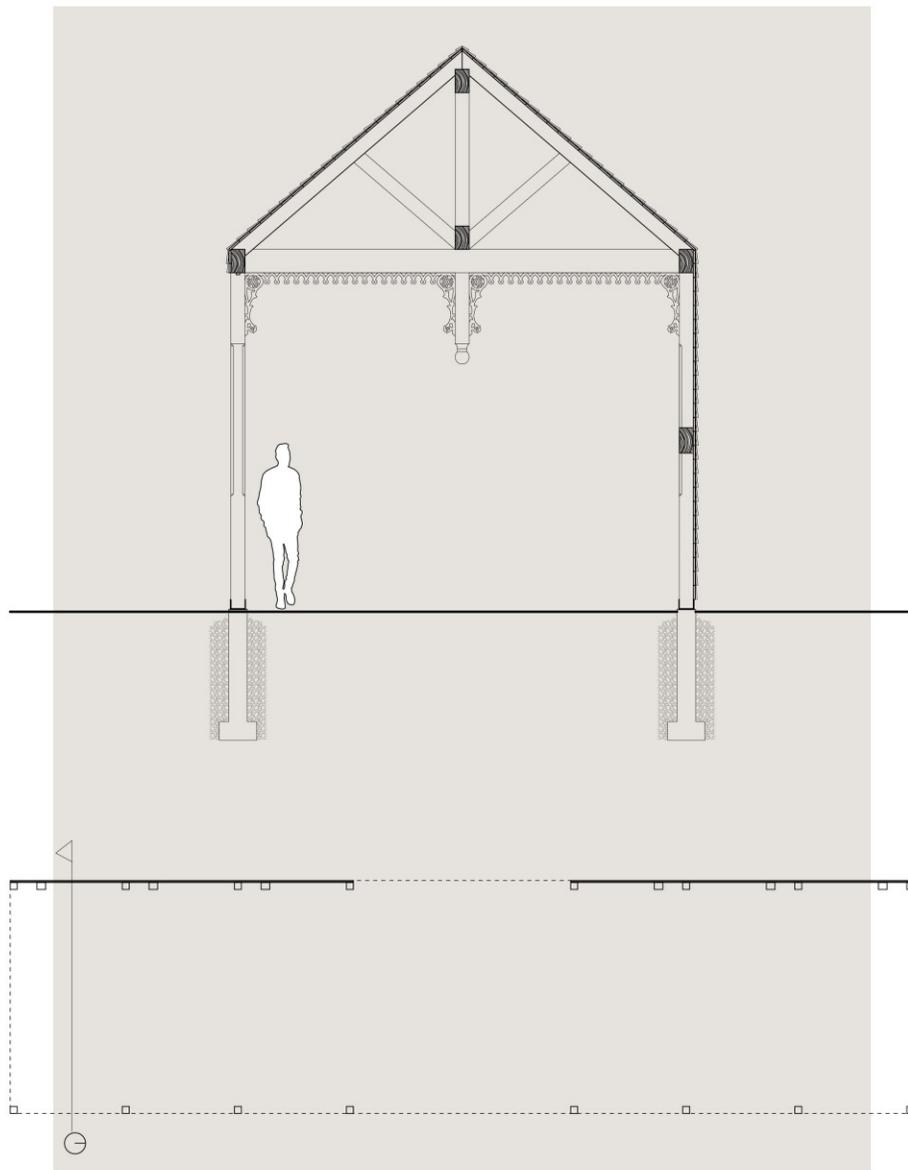


Figure 45: Snowmobile and Bicycle Shelter Section (2:1) and Plan.

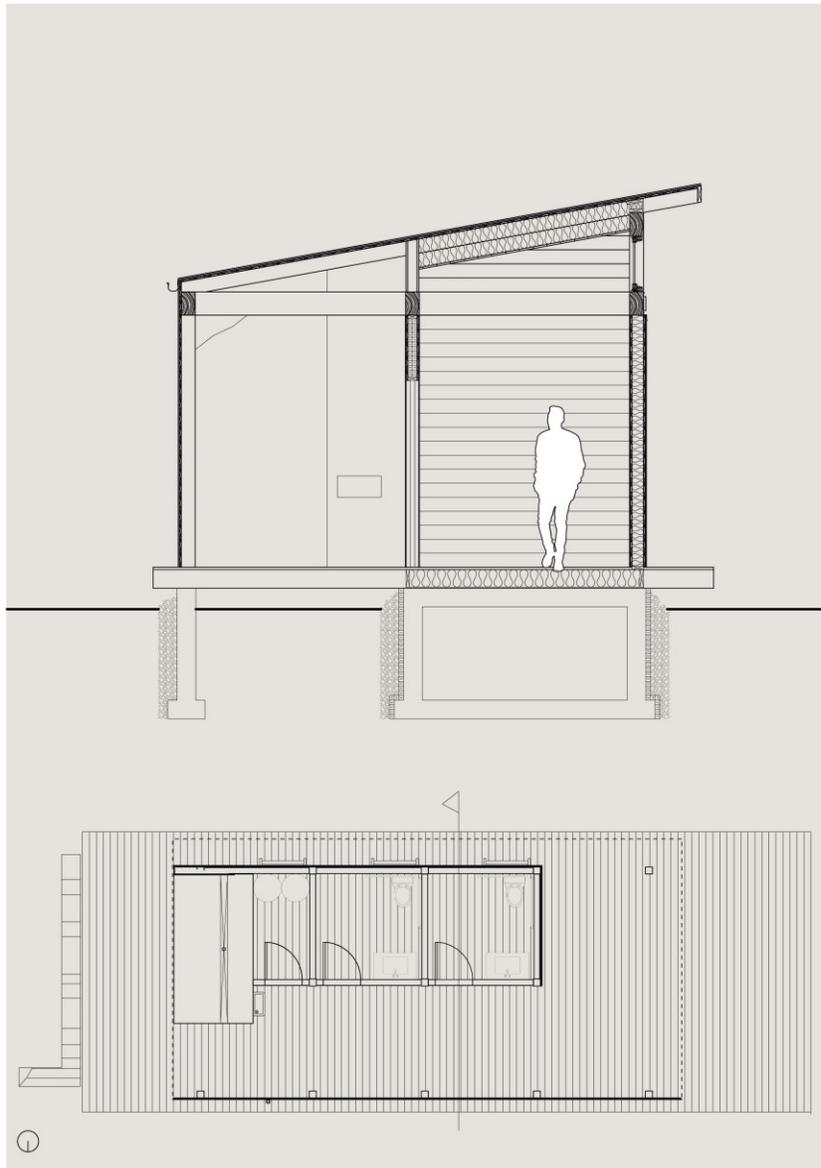


Figure 46: Salle d'Eau Section (2 :1) and Plan.

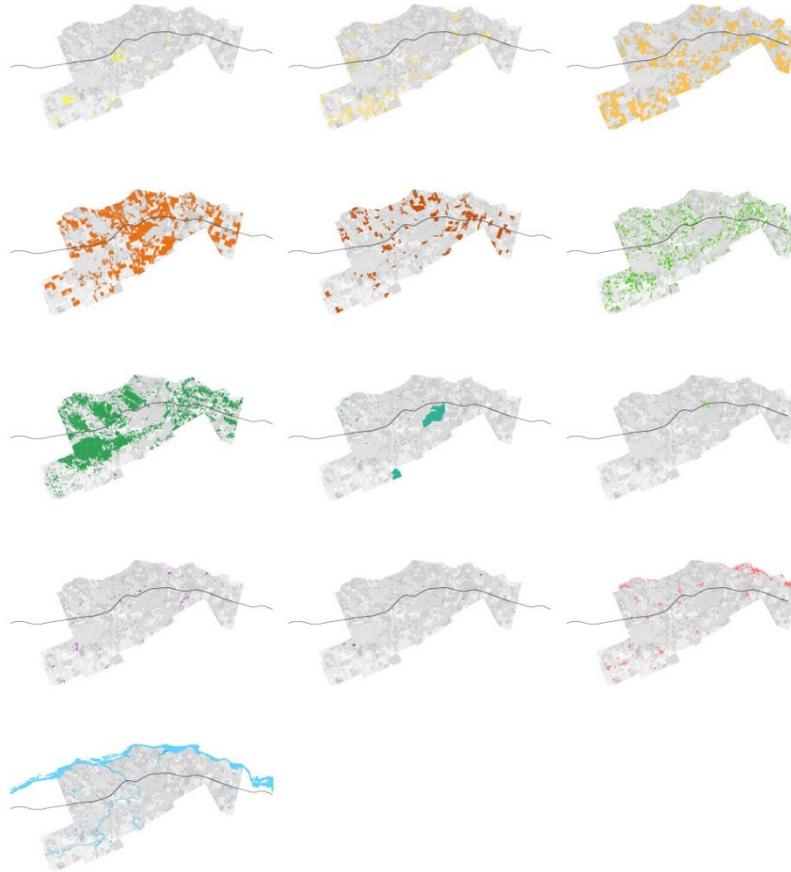
## Conclusion

This thesis served as good reflection about what it is to build appropriate architecture. The place-making strategy of *Retrouvailles* detailed in the thesis helped create an architectural framework where careful considerations of place were carried out. The themes of authenticity, narrative, local distinctiveness, essence, character, and ecosystem were explored and implemented into the design of a sixth pavilion for the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail. Furthermore, through the geographical, geological, and historical studies of the place, importance was attributed to site, materiality, craft, and memory.

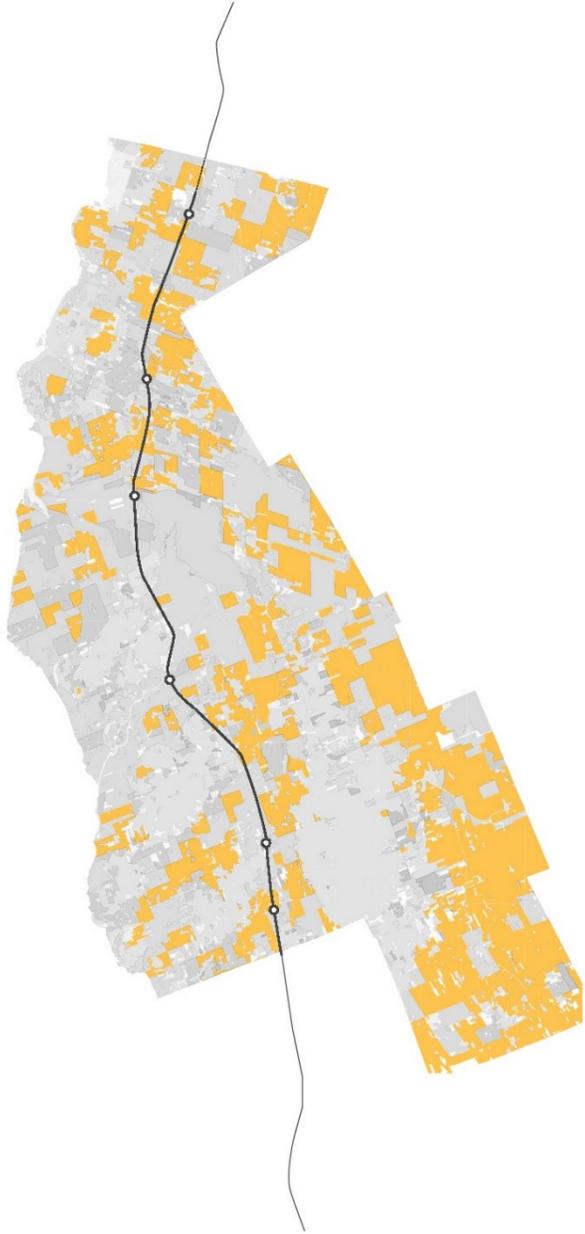
Implementing the Franco-Ontarian understanding of *Retrouvailles* as a framework under which to build meaningful and appropriate architecture, like the one demonstrated at the Caledonia Springs' Pavilion, is essential to the survival of places like the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail. The rich history of the region, the availability of materials, and the excess of vernacular precedents makes for an incredible toolkit to work with. The hope is that the trail can continue to unify the region beyond 2020, and that careful investments could be made to draw out and frame the local

artifacts, spaces, and events that already exists throughout the region.

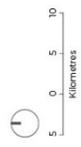
## Appendix A – Land Distribution In The Prescott Russell United Counties



### **LAND-USE DISTRIBUTION IN THE** PRESCOTT-RUSSELL UNITED COUNTIES



**ROW CROP LAND**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail



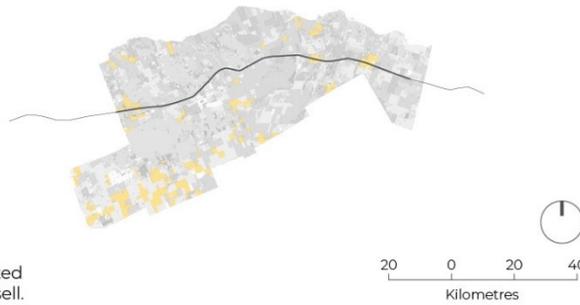
## ROW CROP LAND



**81%**  
**OF CROP-**  
**LAND USED**  
**FOR ROW-**  
**CROPS**

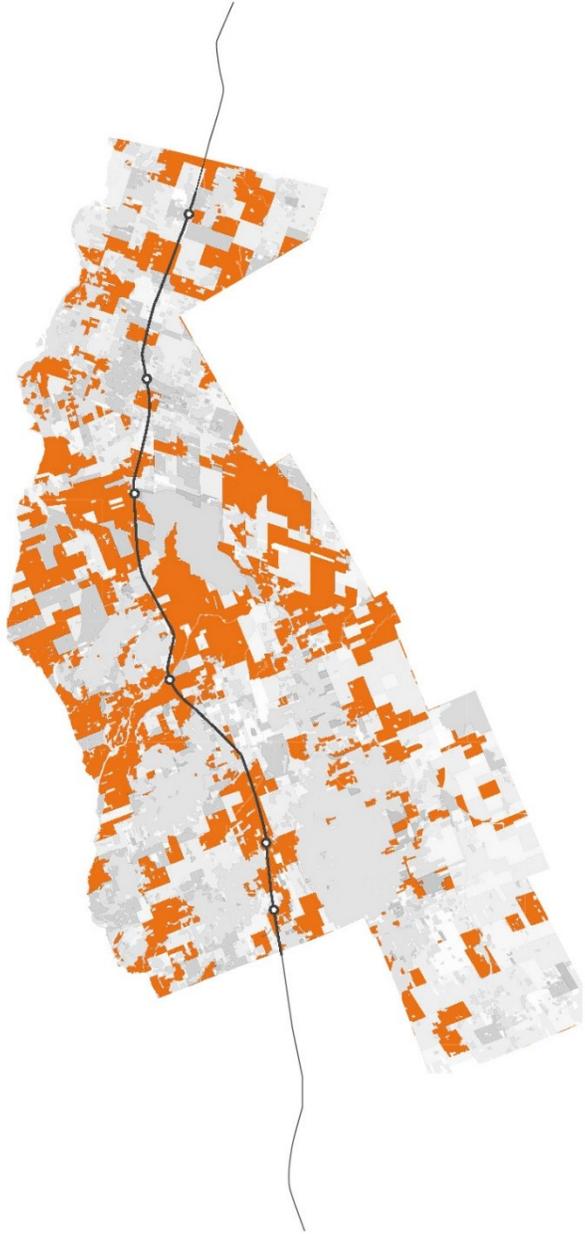


Row crops typically consists of corn and soybean.



Corn coverage in the United Counties of Prescott-Russell.

C. Lynch, Farmer Forum: What crop rotation Prescott-Russell plants more soybeans-on-soybeans every year, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://farmerforum.com/what-crop-rotation-prescott-russell-plants-more-soybeans-on-soybeans-every-year/>



**HAY**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail

# HAY



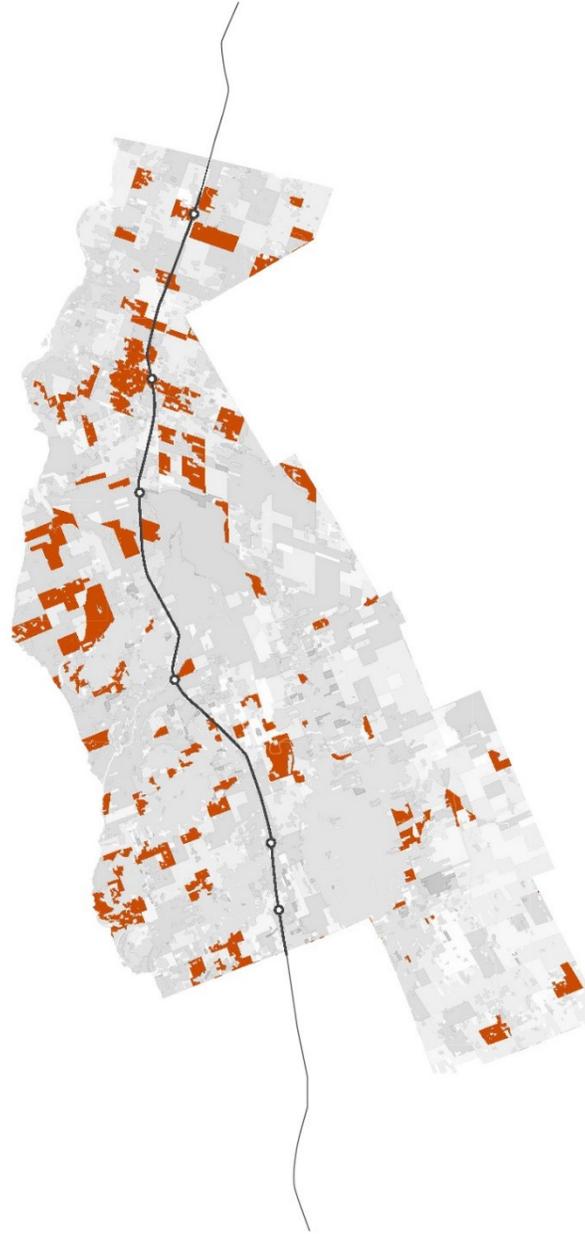
Hay is grown to be used as animal feed. Pasture land is an affordable method of growing hay, generally comprised of timothy, rye, alfalfa, or other grasses.

Hay is compacted into large round or square bales, as well as small square bales.



Large square bales, wrapped in plastic along the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.





**PASTURE & GRAZING**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail





"The Kentucky bluegrass, Canada bluegrass and redtop are the three dominant grass species found in unimproved areas."

Are indicative of soil conditions;

"Kentucky bluegrass grows on the better, well-drained clay loam soils,

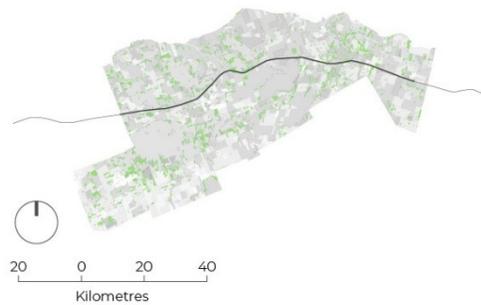
Canada bluegrass is dominant on heavy clay soils, sandy soils and shallow soils,

Redtop is the dominant grass found on poorly drained acid soils or areas with very low fertility."

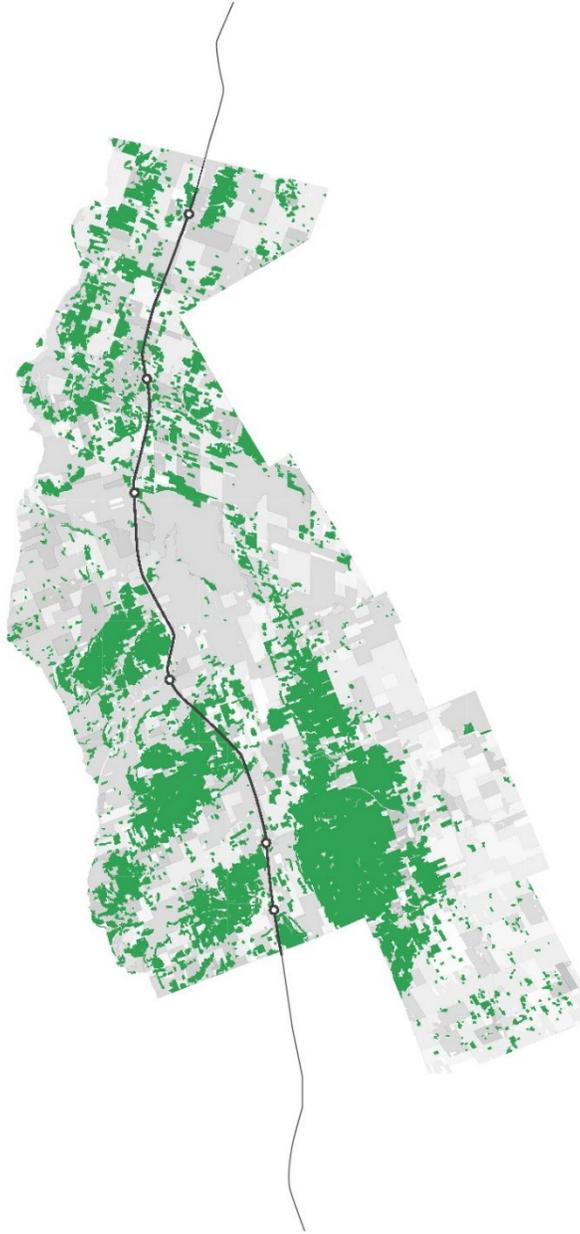
In improved pastures the land is reseeded, fertilized or fenced to improve productivity and utilization.

Oats and clovers are among the plants favored for improved pastures.

## OTHER AGRICULTURAL LAND



Growing grapes along the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.



**WOODLAND**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail



# WOODLAND



## 45 SPECIES OF TREES

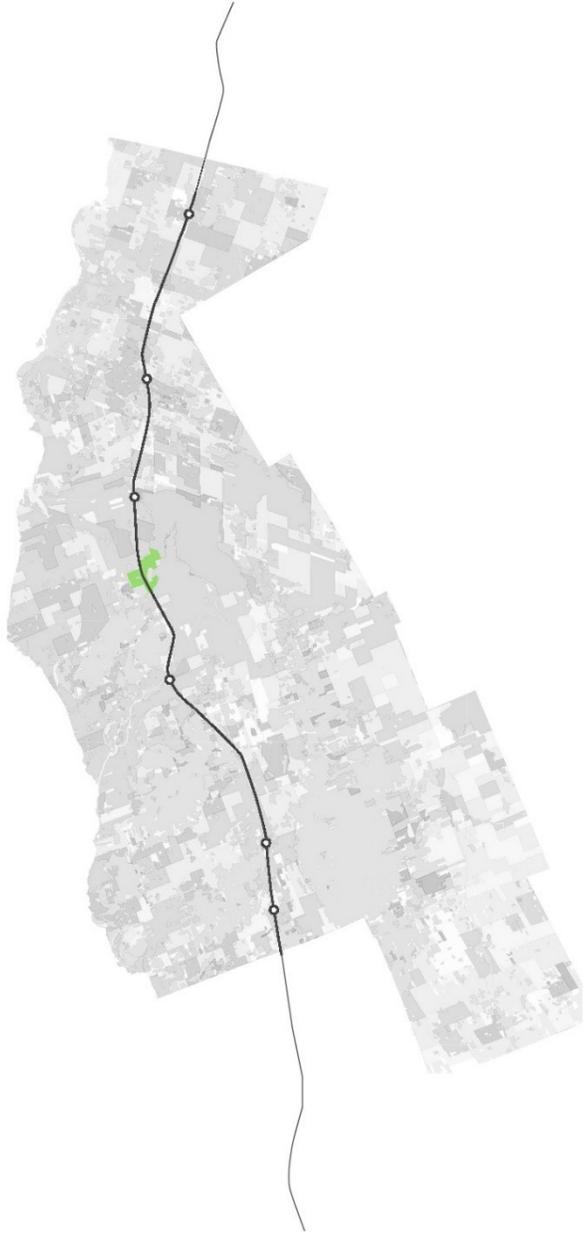


- |                        |                     |                    |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Alternate-Leaf Dogwood | Butternut           | Red Pine           |
| American Beech         | Chokecherry         | Serviceberries     |
| American Elm           | Eastern Hemlock     | Shagbark Hickory   |
| American Mountain-Ash  | Eastern White Cedar | Showy Mountain-Ash |
| Balsam Fir             | Eastern White Pine  | Silver Maple       |
| Balsam Poplar          | Gray Birch          | Striped Maple      |
| Basswood               | Green/Red Ash       | Sugar Maple        |
| Bitternut Hickory      | Hawthorns           | Swamp White Oak    |
| Black Ash              | Ironwood            | Tamarack           |
| Black Cherry           | Largetooth Aspen    | Trembling aspen    |
| Black Spruce           | Northern Hackberry  | White Ash          |
| Black Willow           | Peachleaf Willow    | White Birch        |
| Blue-Beech             | Pin Cherry          | White Oak          |
| Bur Oak                | Pin Oak             | White Spruce       |
|                        | Red Maple           | Yellow Birch       |
|                        | Red Oak             |                    |

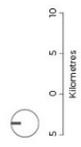


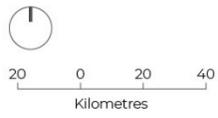
Wood buildings in Bourget, Ontario.

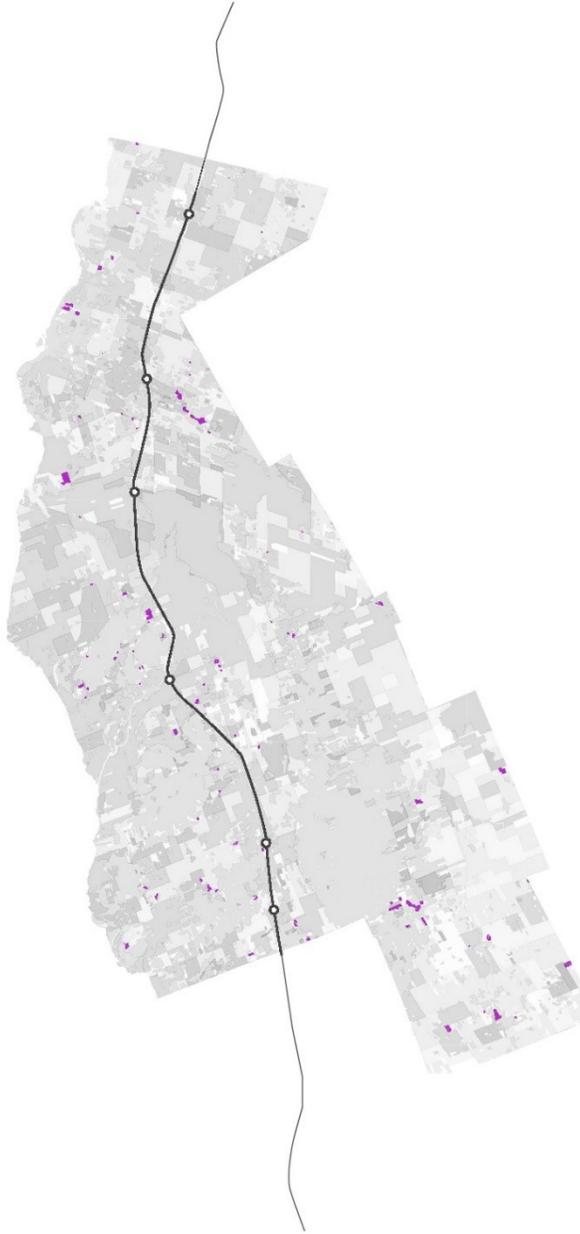
Ontario, The Tree Atlas: Southeast region, Accessed on March 29, 2019. <https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/tree-atlas/ontario-southeast/>.



**SOD FARM**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail







**PITS & QUARRIES**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail

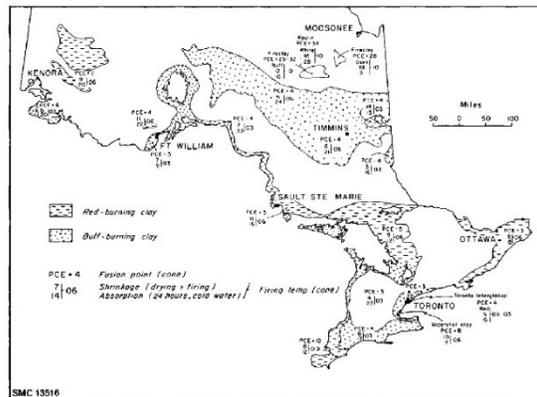


## PITS & QUARRIES



## CLAY IS DISTINCTIVE AND WIDE-SPREAD

Stoneless red-burning clay was deposited in the Ottawa-St. Lawrence Lowlands.

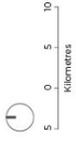
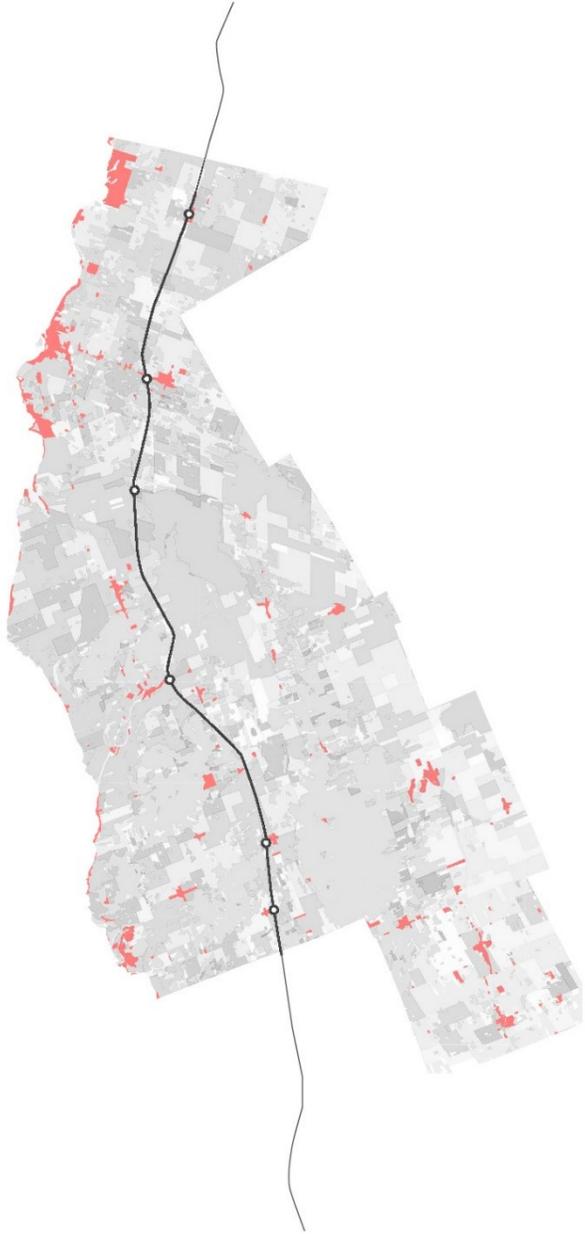


## LIME-STONE OCCUPIES MOST OF THE BED-ROCK.

Red-clay brick house in St-Eugène.



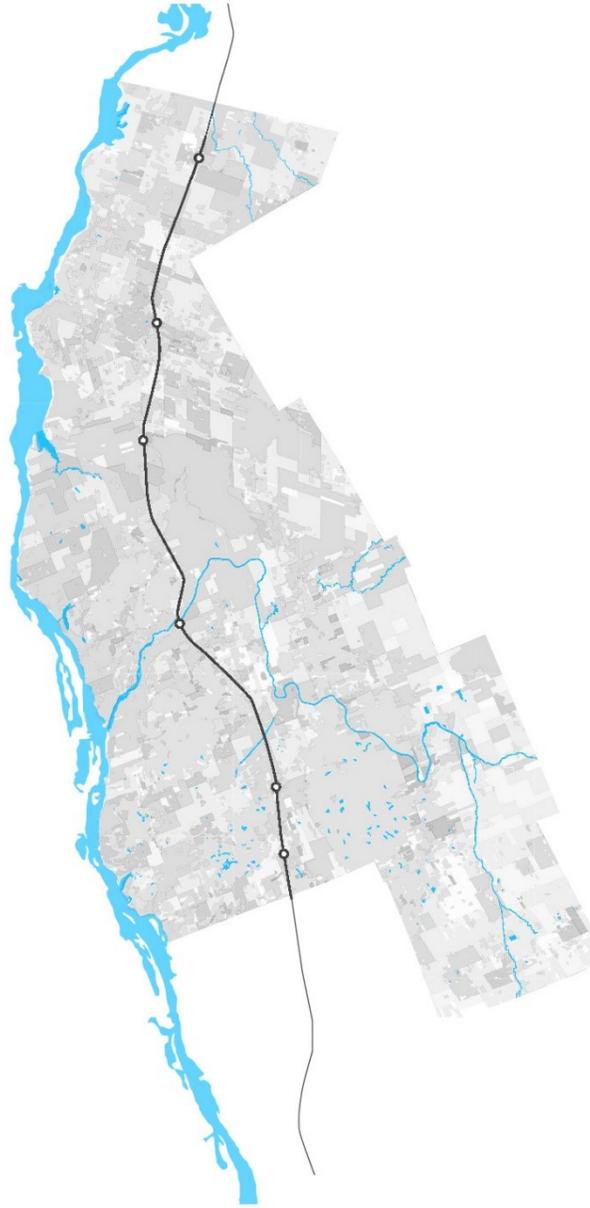
Guillet, G.R. n.d. Clay and Shale Deposits of Ontario. Geological Survey, Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Division Mines.



**COMMUNITIES**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail



Building stock of Towns with a pavilion on the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.



**WATERWAYS**  
Land Use Distribution in the Prescott-Russell United Counties  
Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail

## WATERWAYS



The United Counties of Prescott-Russell are located alongside the Ottawa River in eastern Ontario.

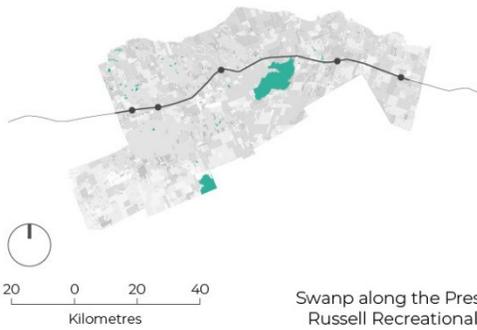
The South Nation River is a significant body of water within the counties.

The St. Lawrence River is less than 50Km to the South.



Bridge over ravine on the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.

## SWAMP, MARSH & BOG



Swamp along the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail.

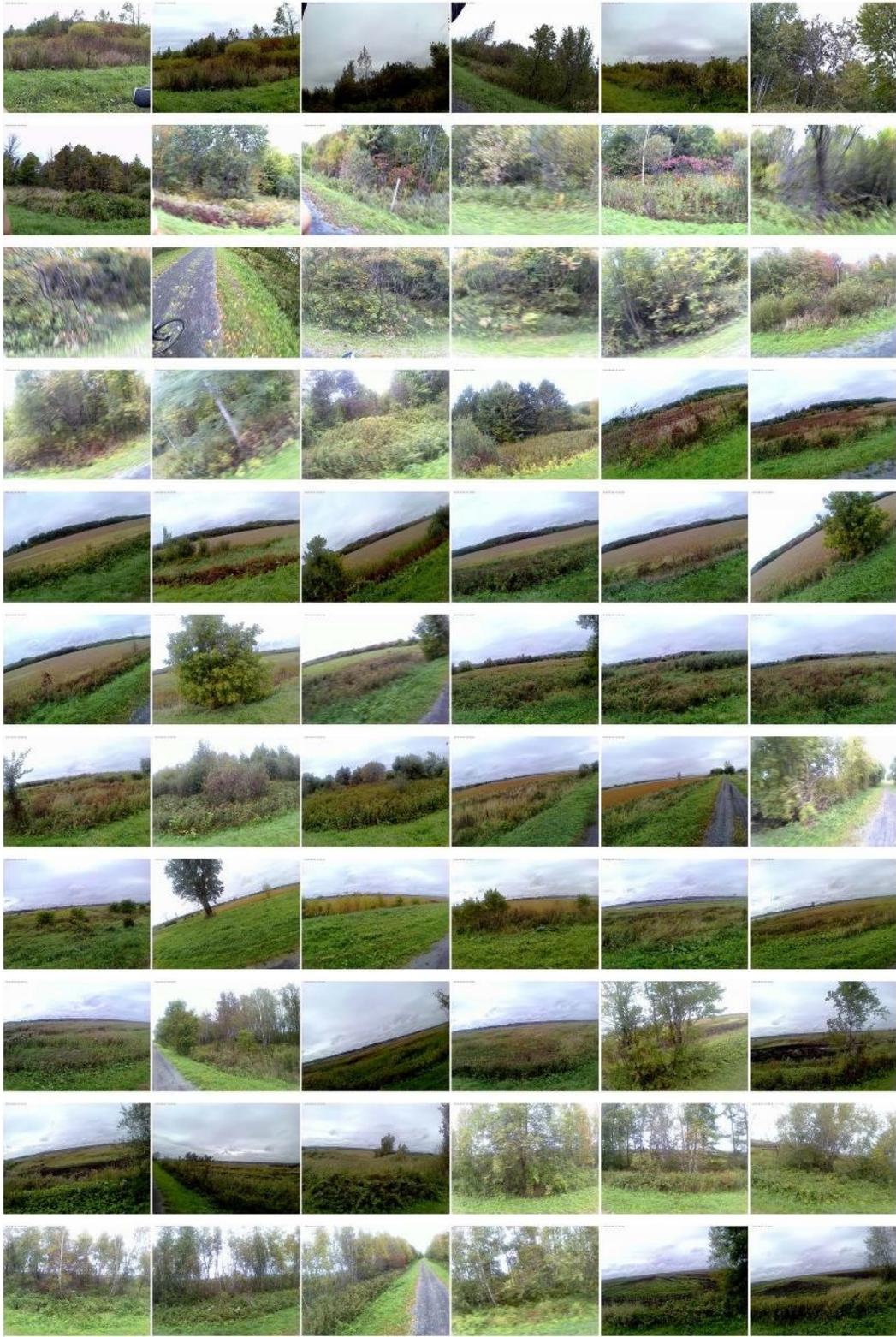


**Appendix B – Photo Documentation**  
**Documentation of the trail by bicycle: north**





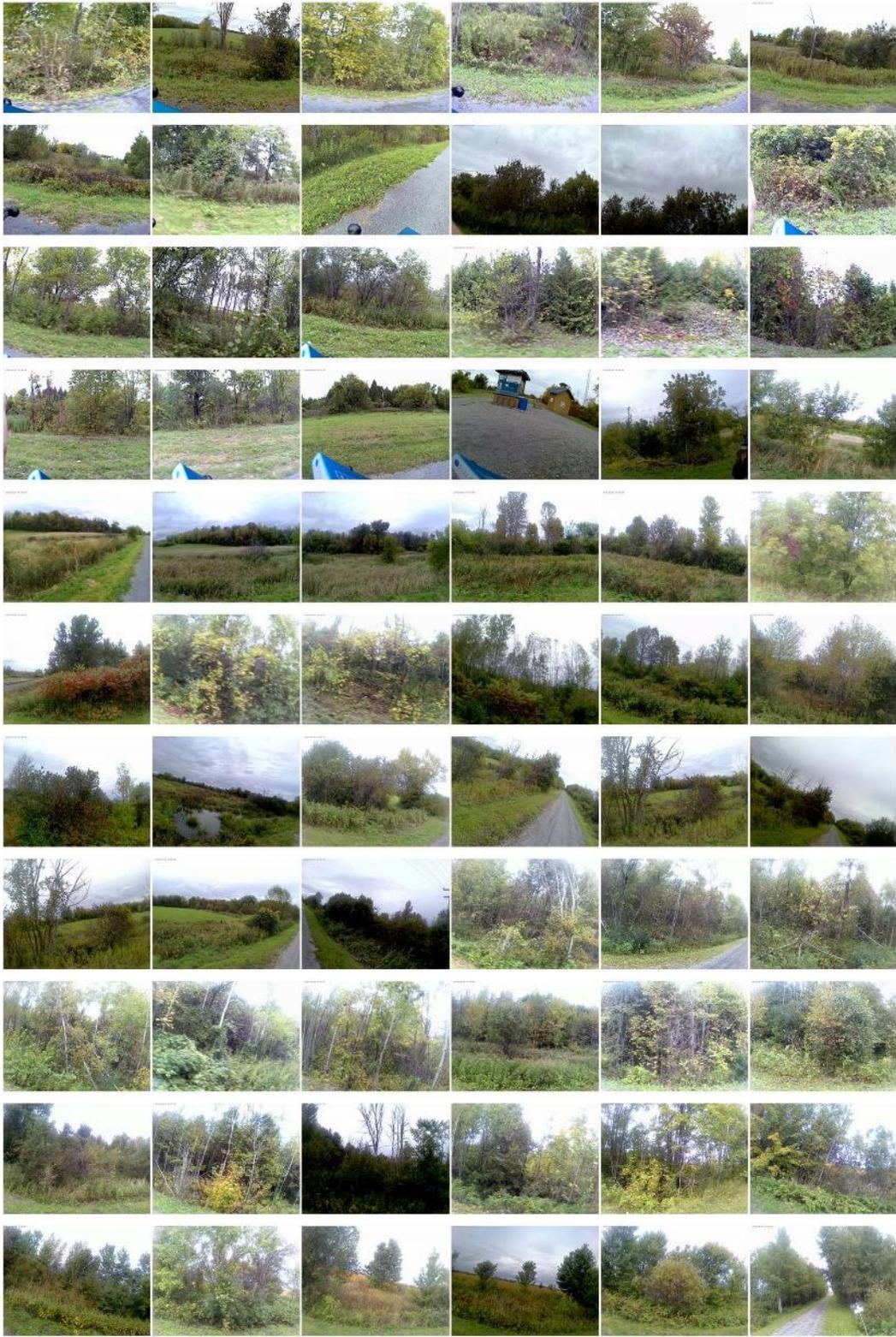








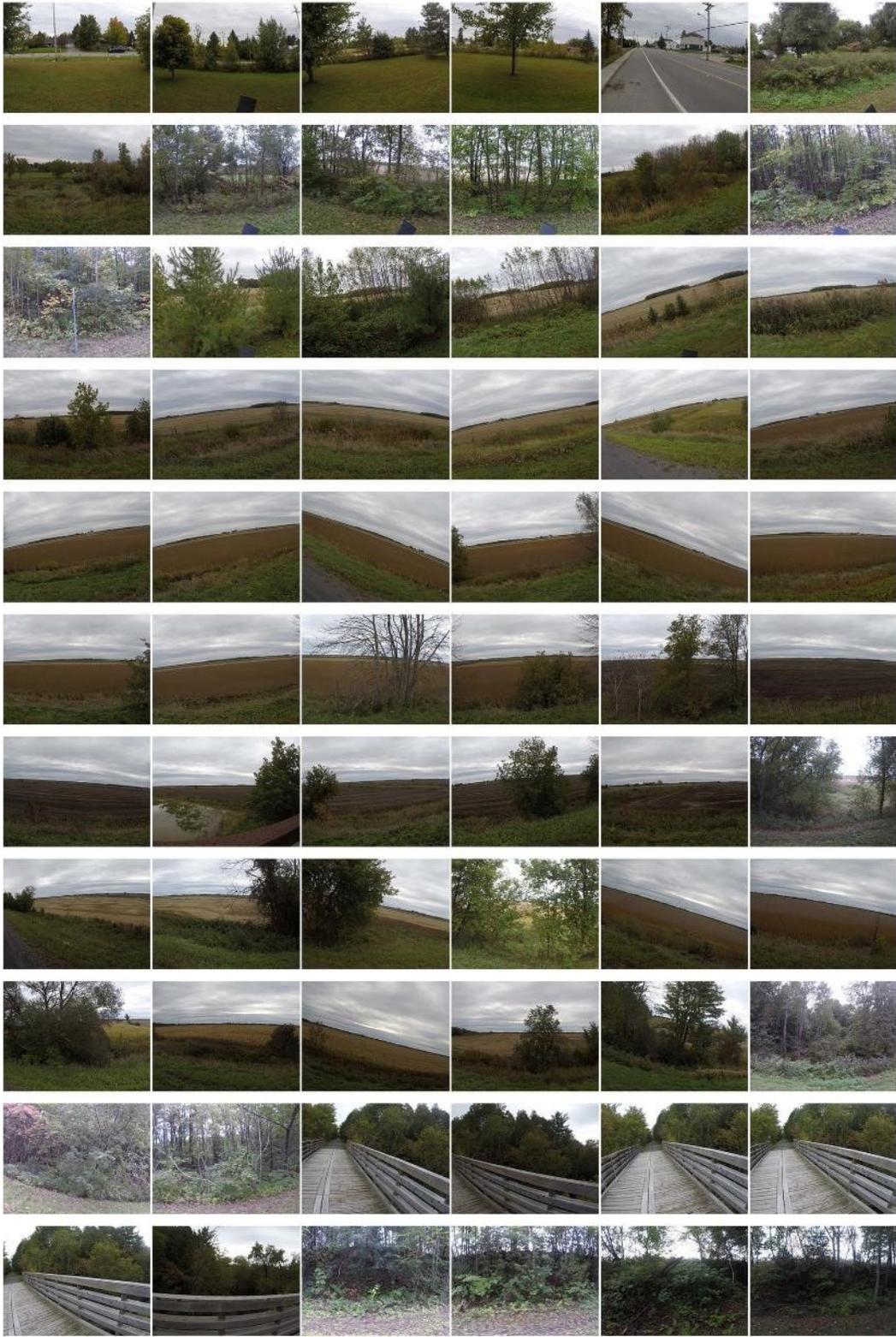


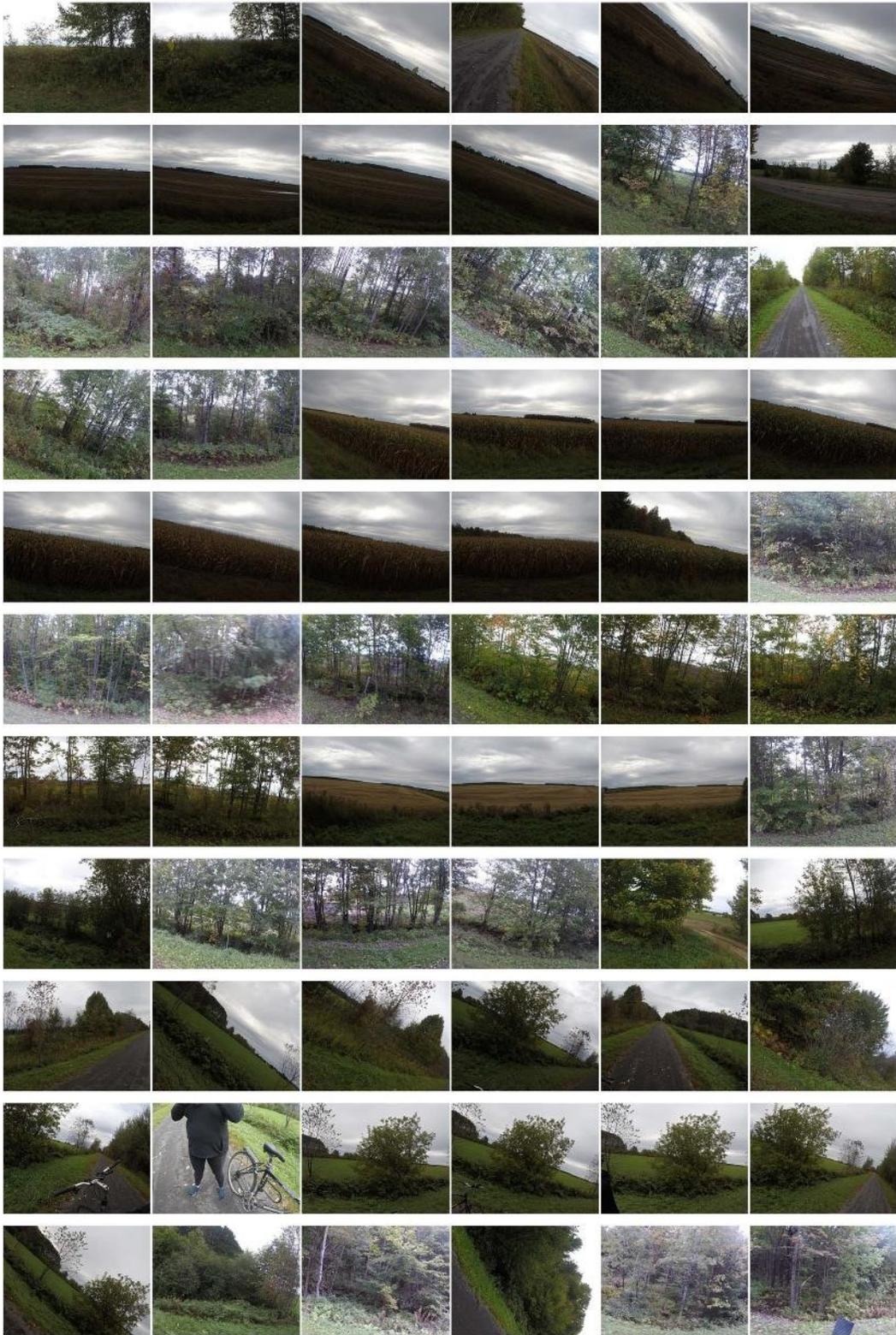


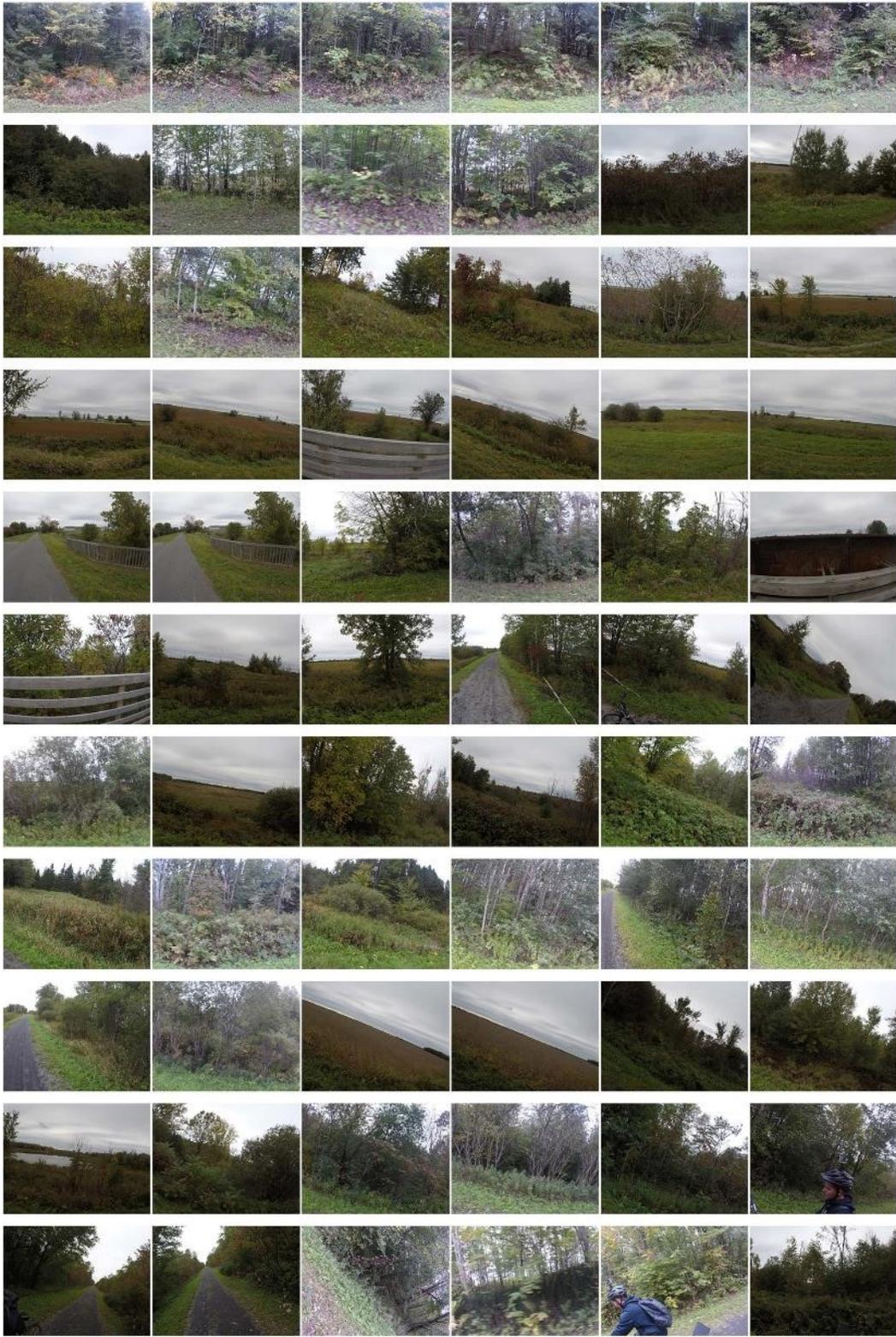


**Documentation of the trail by bicycle: south**

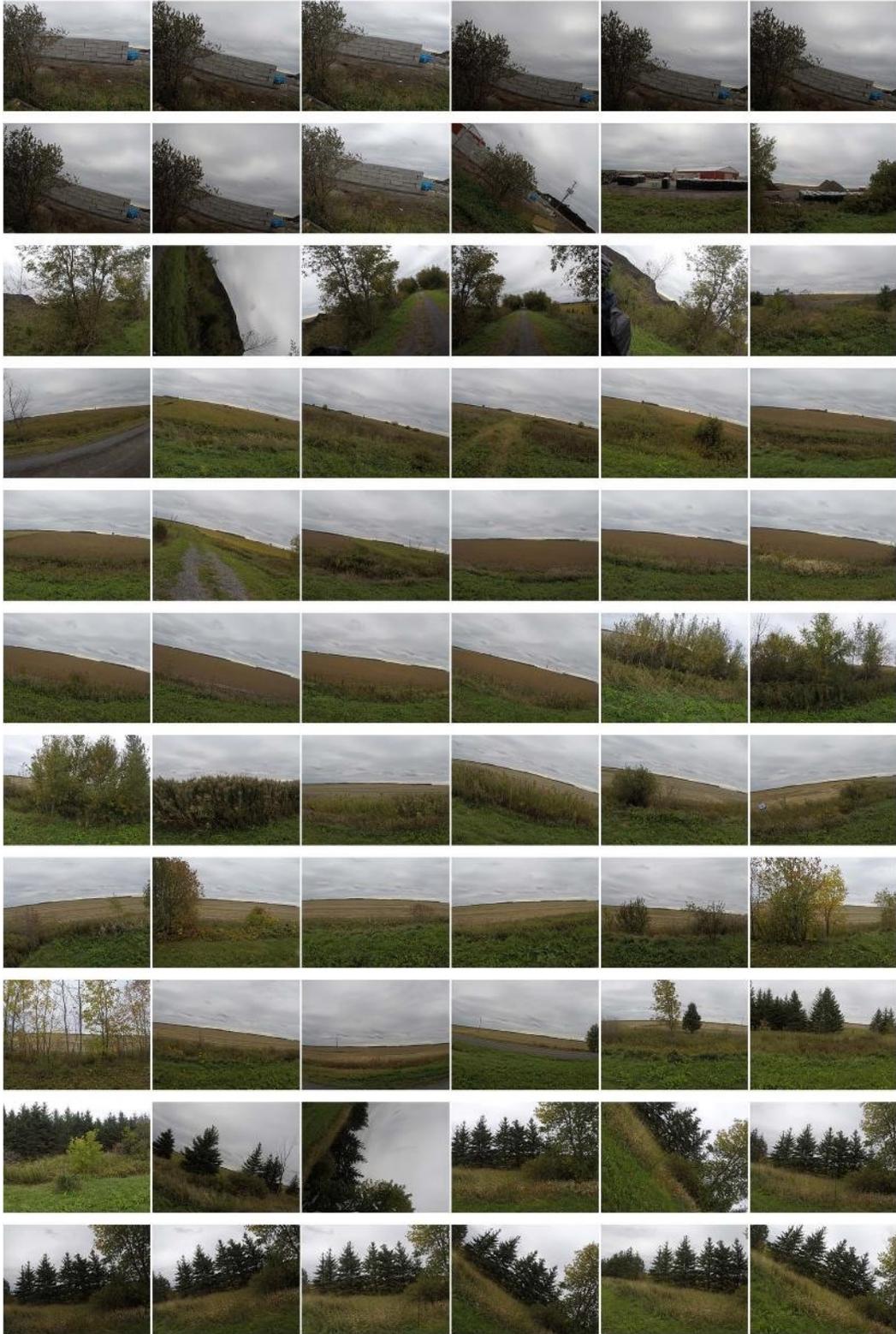


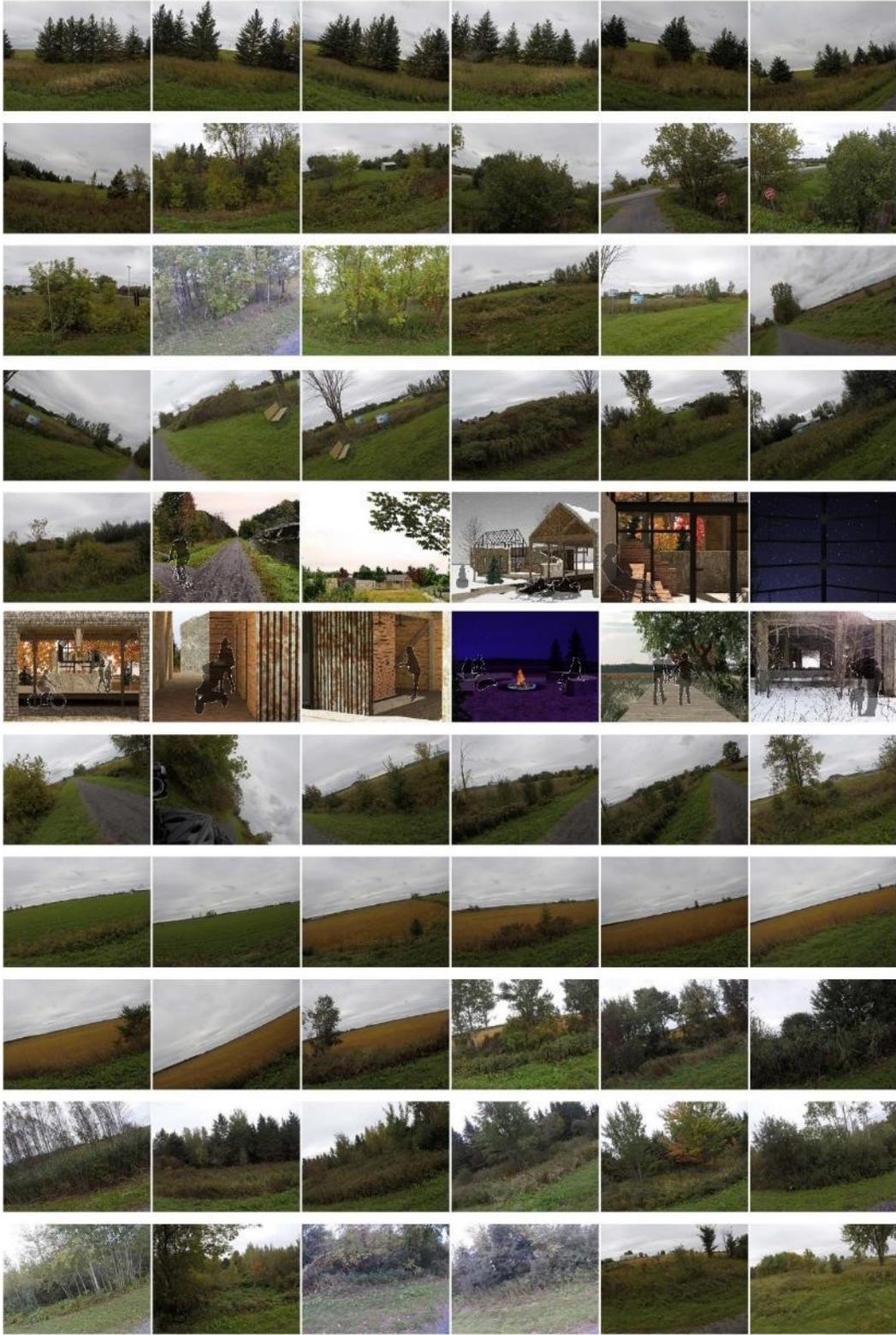


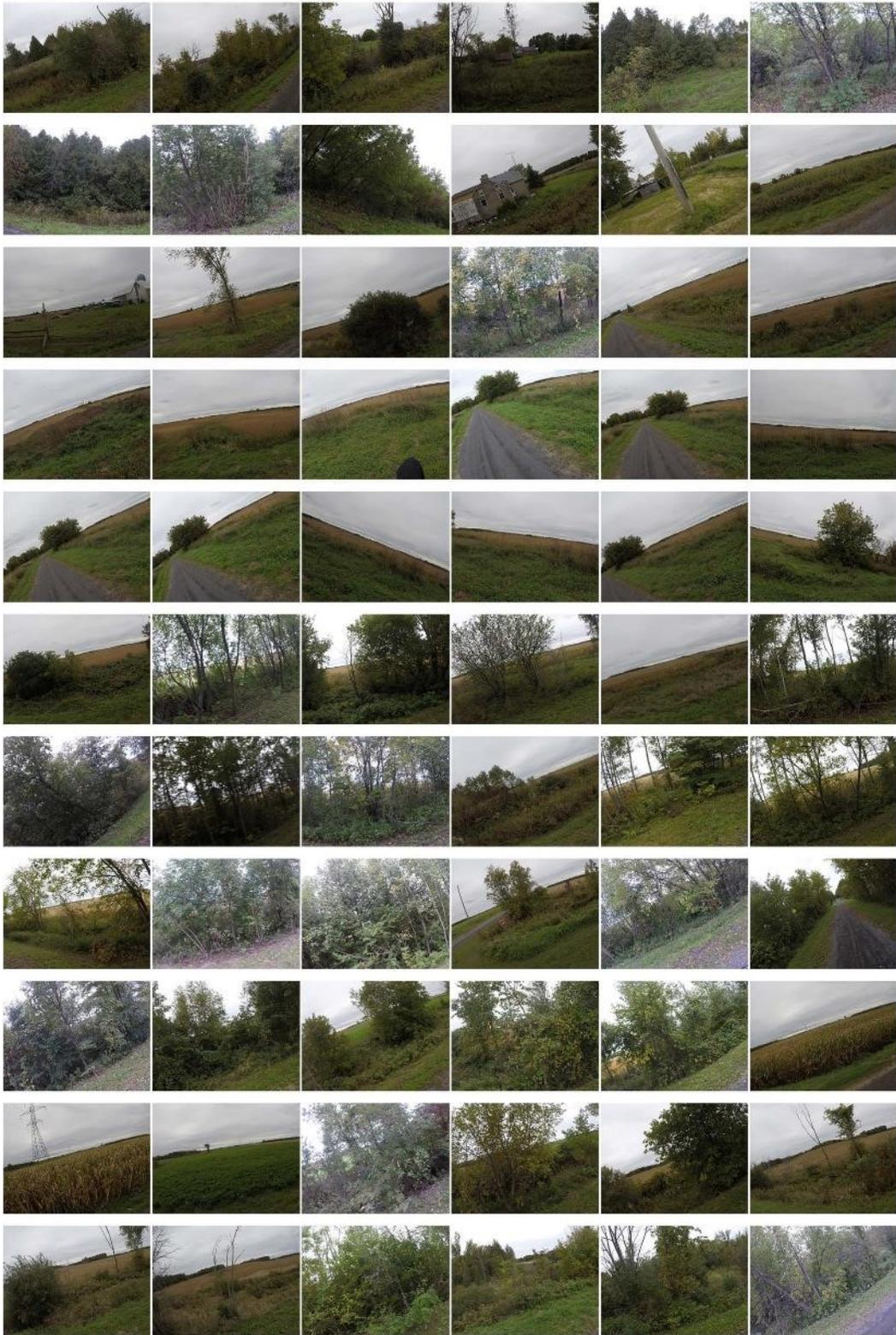


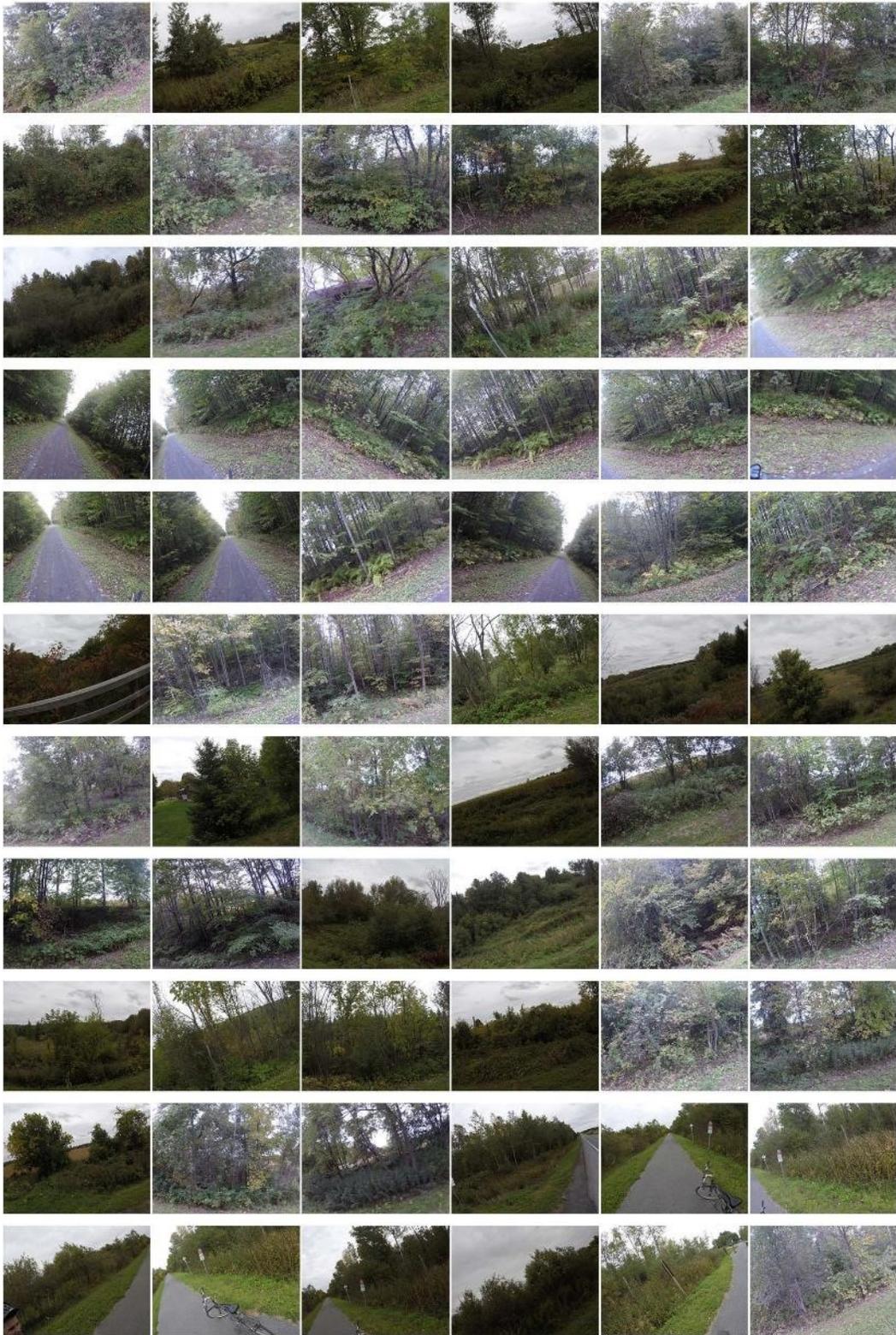


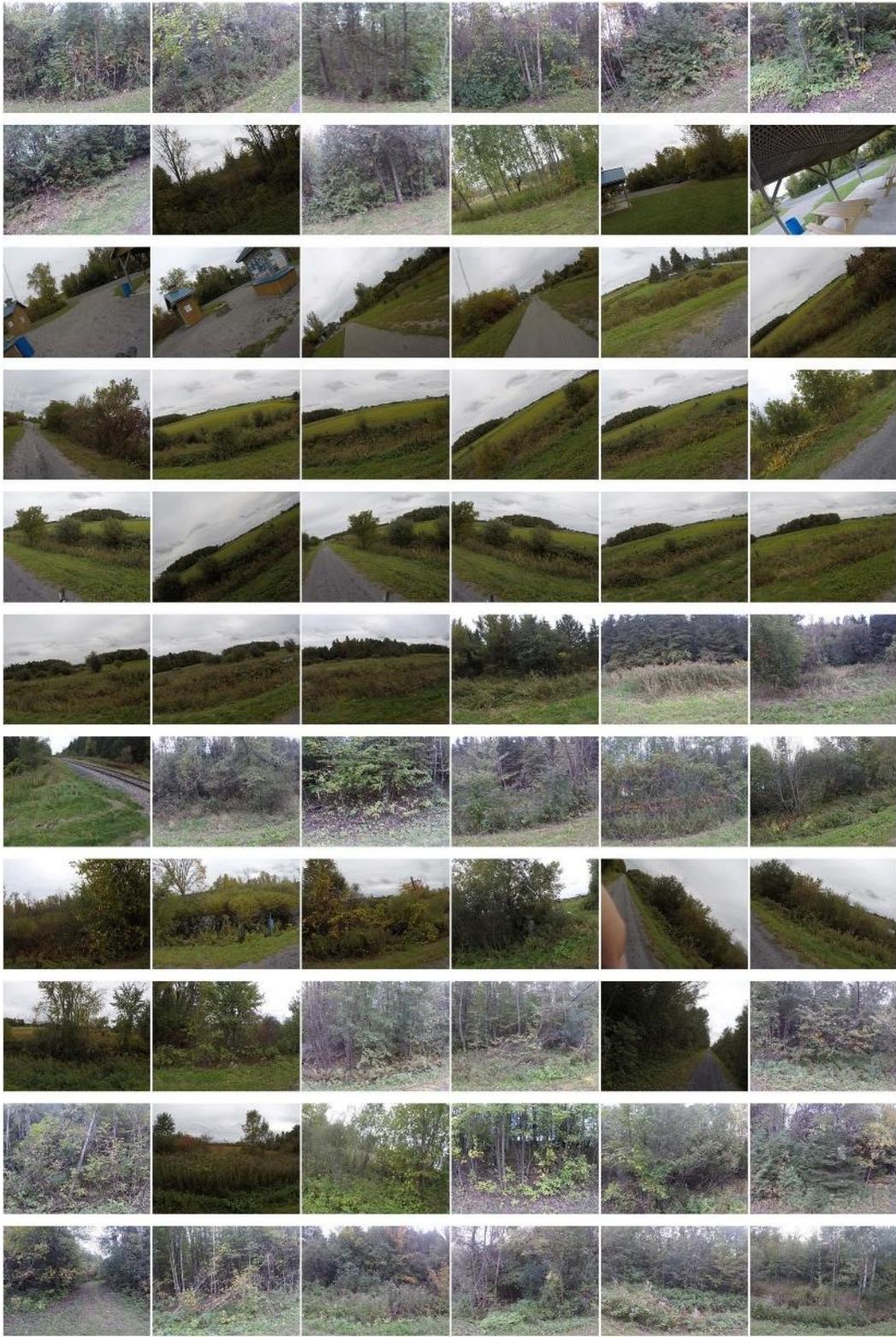








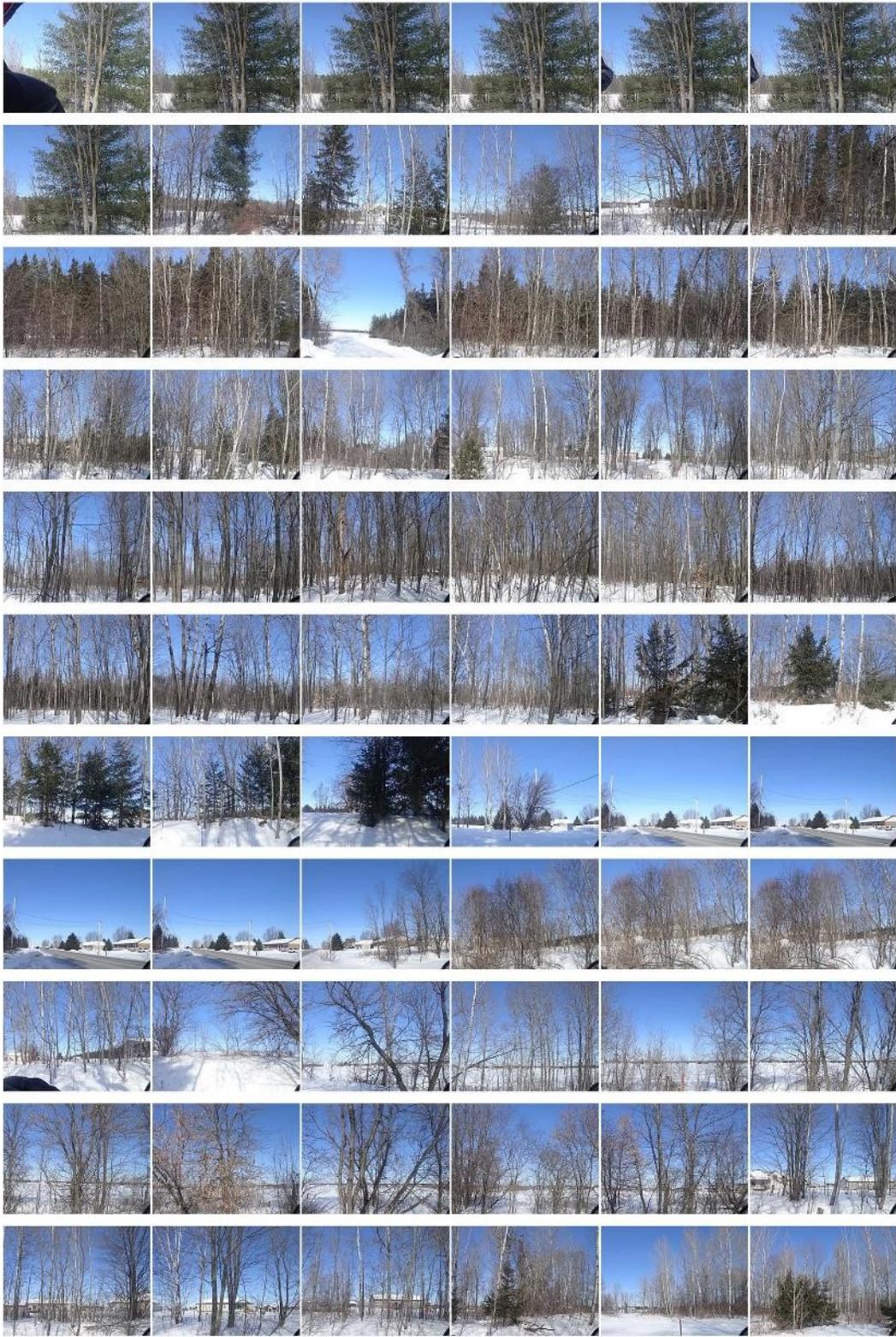








## Documentation of the trail by snowmobile: north

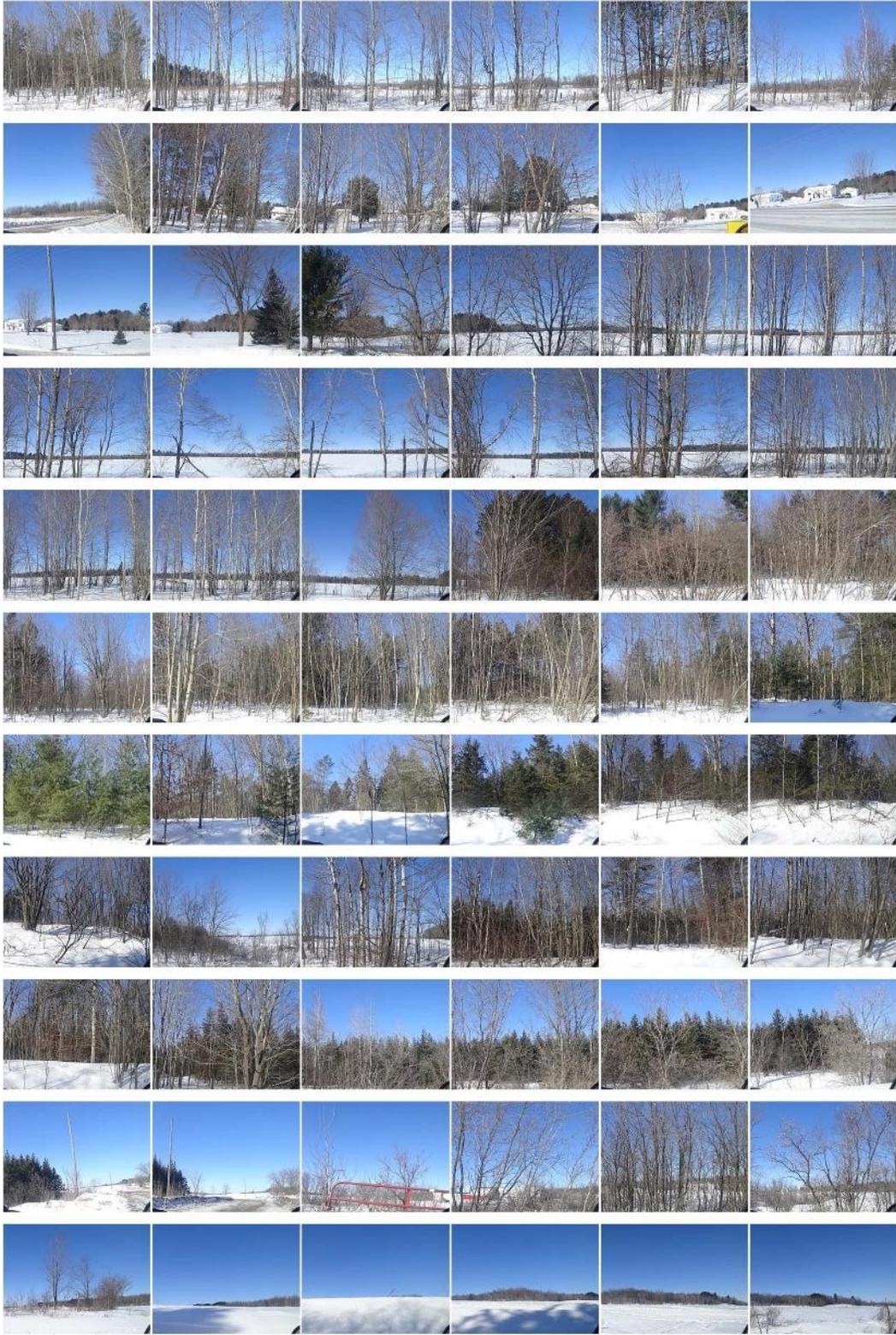




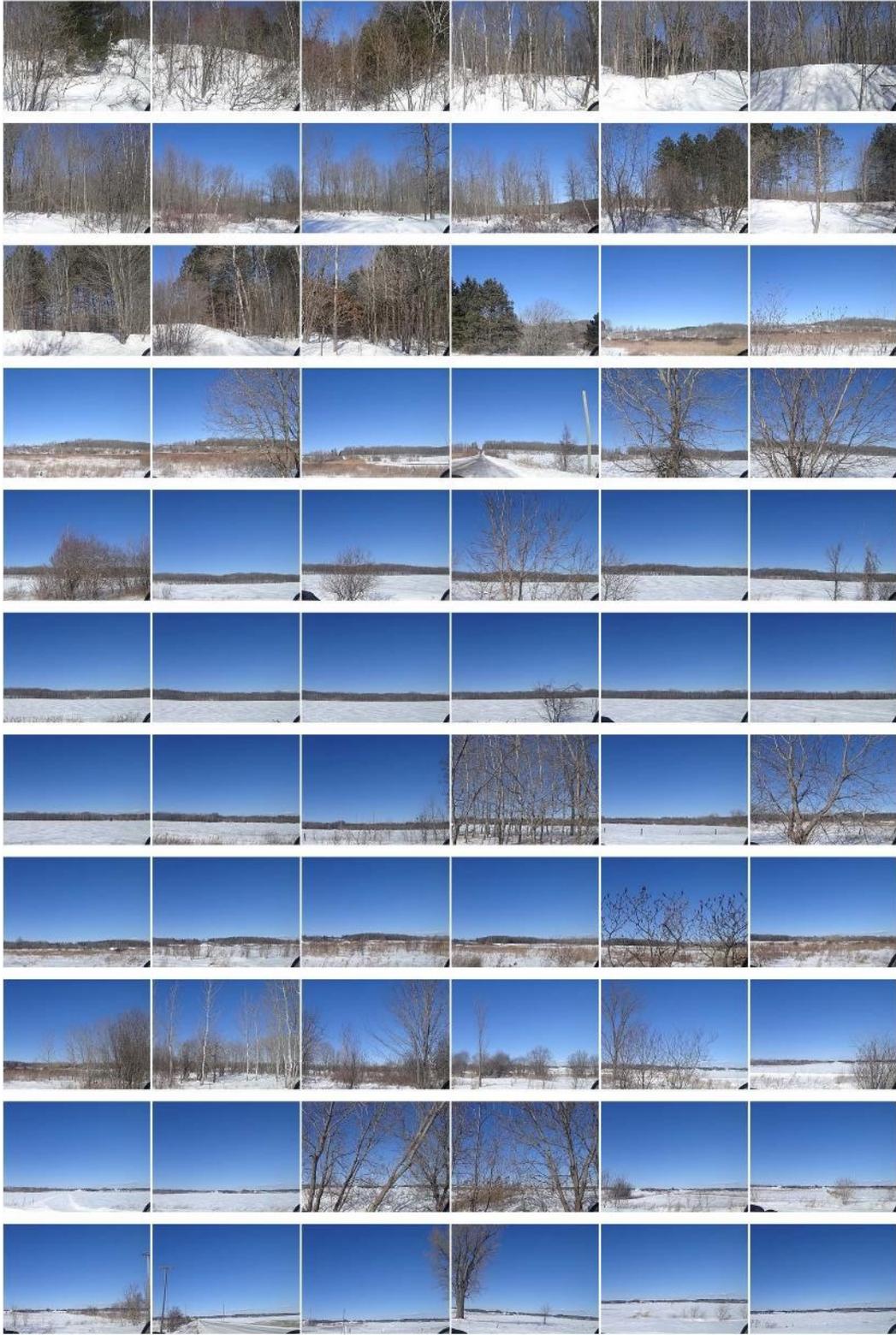




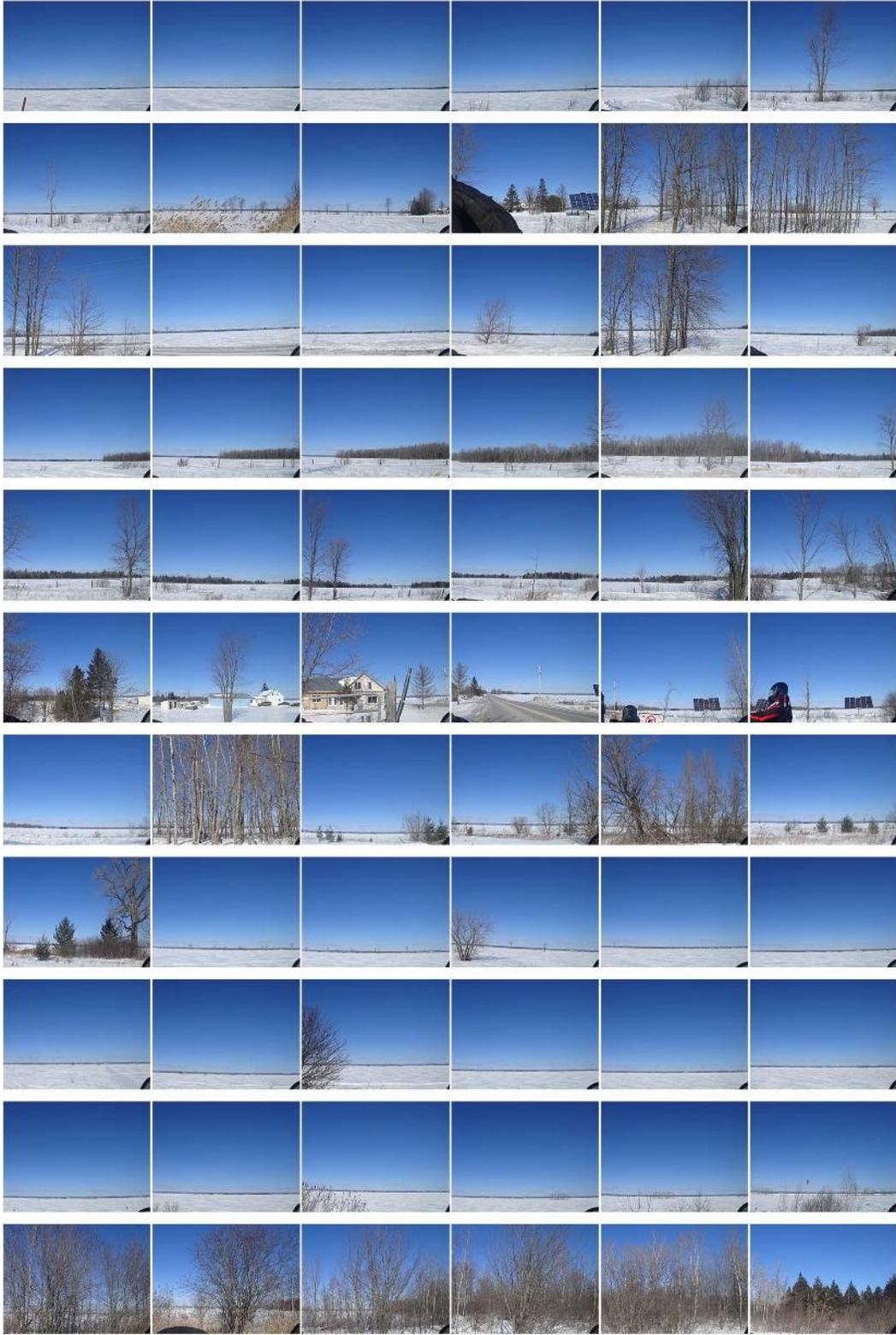


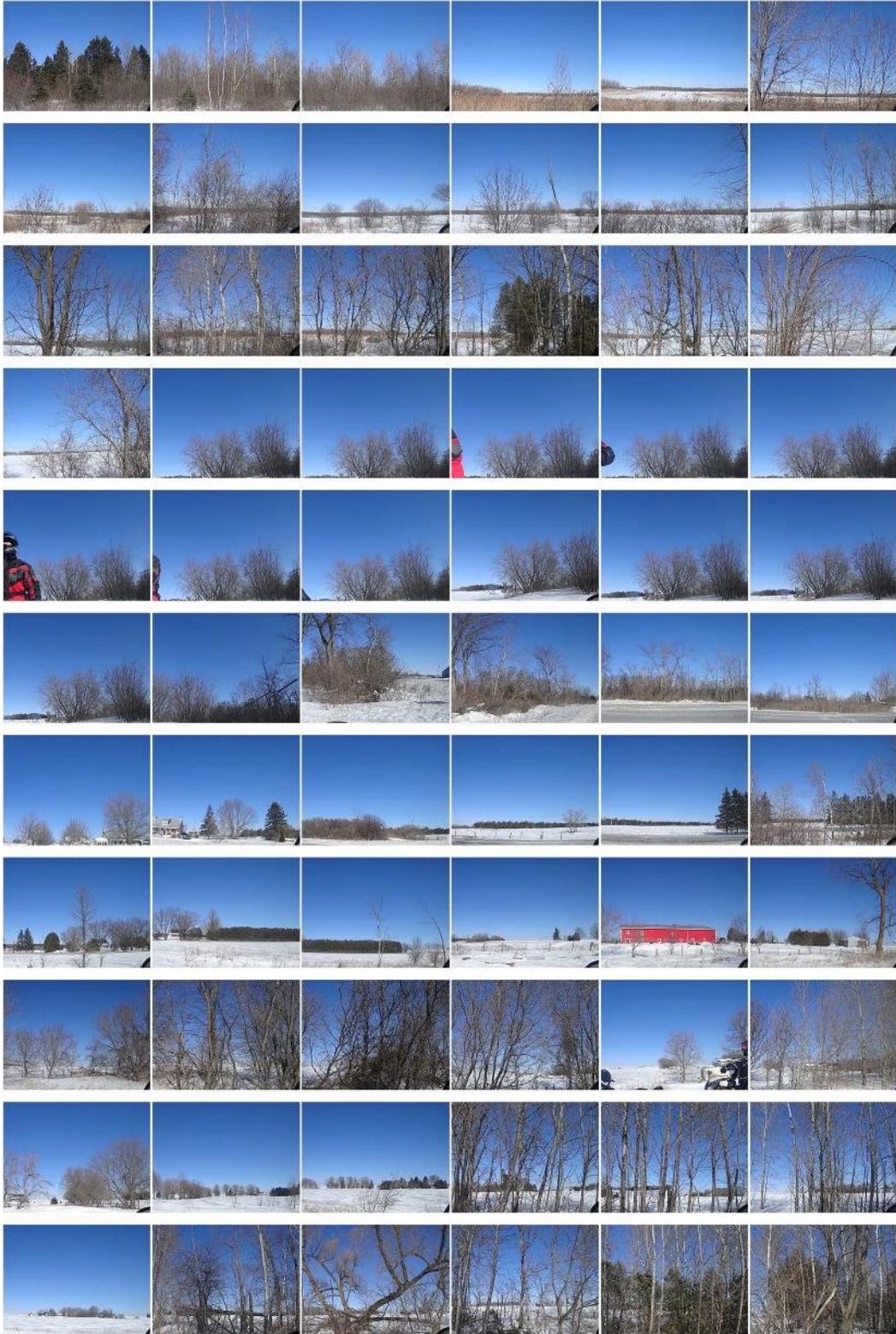














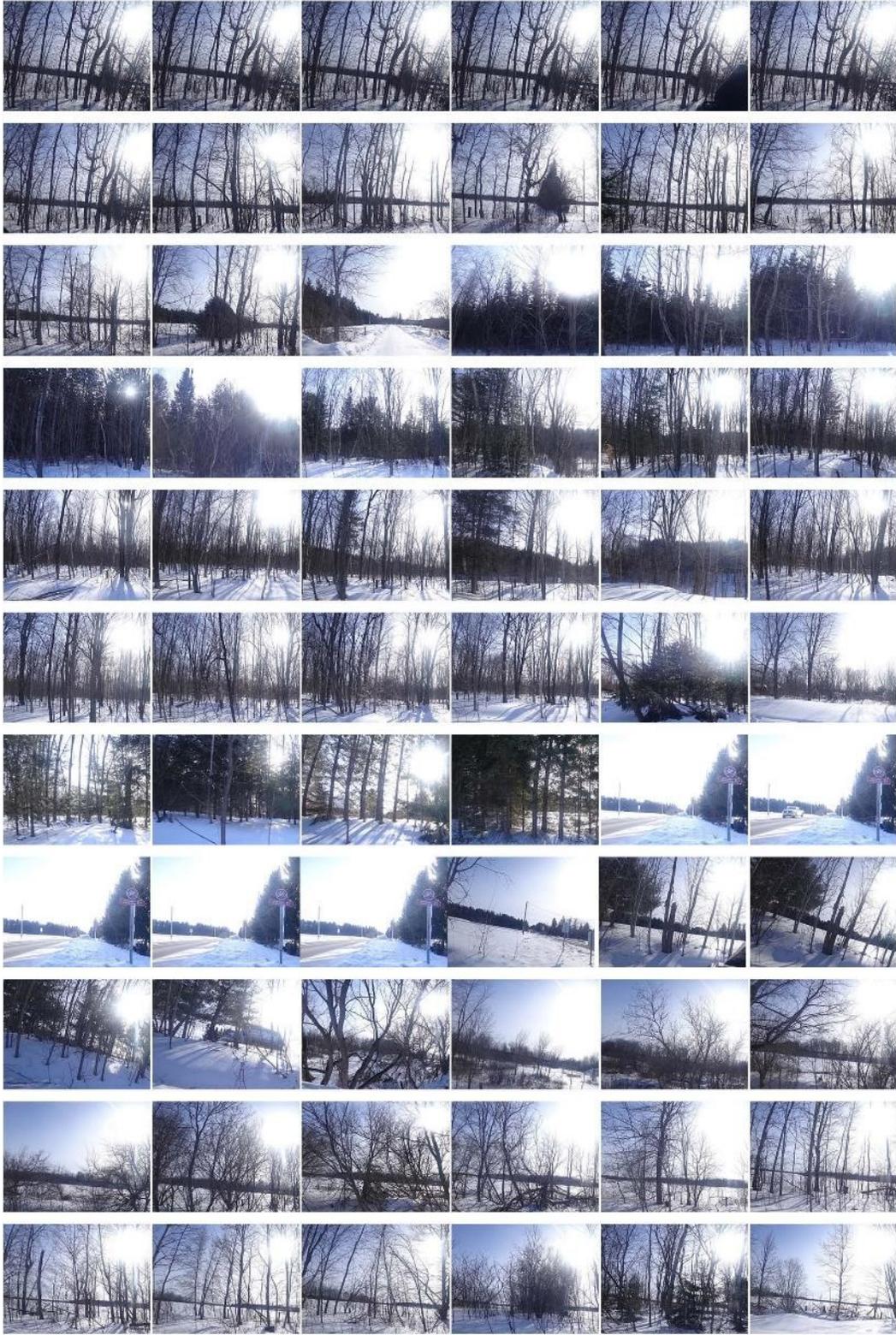








**Documentation of the trail by snowmobile: south**

































## **Architectural documentation of the towns by car**

1. Hammond
2. Bourget
3. Plantagenet
4. Vankleek Hill
5. St-Eugène















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