

**MAKKEWEKS**

## MAKKEWEKS

Lake Merritt formed naturally as a tidal lagoon with a 600' inlet to the bay, surrounded by thousands of acres of wetland. Since the Ohlone inhabited its shores, the lagoon has been home to a huge variety of sea creatures, including seals and sea lions, otters, leopard sharks and bat rays. Not surprisingly, sightings of these charismatic mega-fauna gave rise to stories of sea monsters and mermaids, originating with the Ohlone and persisting into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when the lagoon became too polluted with sewage to support much life. 'Makkeweks' is the Ohlone/Rumsen word for 'sea monster'.

The idea of 'sea monster' is common to all coastal cultures throughout history, persisting to contemporary times. Whether or not sightings have basis in fact, a sea monster is best understood as a kind of personification of the *unknown*, a poetic conjecture about the perennial mysteries of the Deep. Most often depicted as giant serpents, sea monsters are usually composite creatures of the imagination, borrowing traits from whatever species actually inhabit a particular body of water. In many ways, the persistence of sea monster sightings is an indication of a healthy marine environment, a folkloric interpretation of scientific evidence.

As Lake Merritt is restored to its natural origins as a tidal, salt water lagoon, connecting to the Bay and to the sea beyond, one can anticipate a return of native marine wildlife. Our Makkeweks sculpture is an homage to Lake Merritt's restoration and a harkening of the return of native fauna. Borrowing traits from the bat ray, leopard shark, pipe fish and goby, Makkeweks is a sea monster, perhaps as imagined by the Ohlone or by early European settlers, or by future generations upon glimpsing a mysterious fin or hump rising from the estuary.

Sited in the Rain Garden of Snow Park, the sculpture will be cast in durable bronze with a sturdy interior stainless steel armature, measuring approximately 12' long, 7' wide and 4' high. As the Rain Garden's centerpiece, Makkeweks will be an unexpected discovery to pedestrians, attracting viewers from all directions on paths connecting to the Lake, the Promenade and the lower part of Snow Park. The sculpture also makes subtle reference to the history of Snow Park as the site of the original Oakland Zoo, where naturalist Henry Snow displayed the exotic trophies from his hunting expeditions in the 1920s. Snow Park has a robust history as a popular downtown destination; Makkeweks will help to revive this latent tradition, becoming a beloved icon by the shores of Lake Merritt.

To help contextualize Makkeweks, the sculpture will be complemented by a series of photo-etched granite plates depicting marine life supported by tidal estuaries like Lake Merritt, both now and in the past. Mounted on various concrete seating elements within close proximity to the sculpture, as well as along the seating walls ringing the plaza by the lake, the 10" – 12" diameter granite plates will be surrounded by flush-mounted stainless steel rings with laser-etched text stating the creature's common and Latin names, actual size, native or invasive/introduced and whether it currently lives in the lake or not.

Our goal is for the Makkeweks sculpture to inspire the feelings of awe or wonder that accompany any encounter with the unknown. We believe these feelings are the foundation of all inquiry, and hope that by introducing people to the elements comprising a healthy marine ecosystem from multiple perspectives, we will redirect attention to the need for ongoing stewardship of Lake Merritt and its surroundings. Science works best in tandem with the imagination.

Wowhaus will collaborate with Richard Bailey, Director of the Lake Merritt Institute, City staff and other experts to identify key species that should be represented in the artwork; the number of granite plates is yet to be determined. Species that inhabited the lake in the past, some of which still live in the lake in the present include:

**HARBOR SEALS**

**STRIPED BASS**

**SMELT**

**TOP SMELT**

**LEOPARD SHARK**

**STICKLEBACK**

**GOBIES**

**SCULPINS**

**SURF PERCH**

**PIPE FISH**

**SALMON/STEELHEAD**

**SALMANOIDS**

**BAT RAYS/SKATES**

**HALIBUT**

**TUBEWORMS**

**MUSSELS**

**BARNACLES**

**SHRIMP**

**CLAMS**

**BRYOZOANS**

**SEA SQUIRTS**

**SEA ANEMONES**

**COMB JELLIES**

**SPONGES**

**SEA SLUGS**



### *Coyote, His Wife, and Makkeweks*

Neeyink ku wattin kawtak Maččan. Neeyink ku waş kaway xawwan: “Kuu ku me koypon.” Neeyinkmur Makkewekş ku waş koypon. Neeyink ku waş Maččan koypon. Neeyinkmur ku waş Makkewekş koypon maysantopin. Neeyinkmur ’innay şa lačyankw Maččan xawwan. Neeyinkmur lakkuy wa koyponin. Maččanink waş kaway: “tomminş me ’etten, xakkaw, ’imney me ’ettenakay ’išku kuu koypon;” kuumur waş monşemiki (monsemisim) Makkewekş waamur ’etten. Tanmur lakkuy, neeyku waş liiw Maččan, neeyku waş wattiş ’ewwey, xuyyamar kuu tonn waş şakkes ’ačtap Makkewekş şa lačyankw. Neeyink ku ’ummap Maččan, neeyinkmur naterimp xuya şot-tow, xuya şaanay xuya şottow ’išku mussen neeyikku mussey. Neeyink ku xaal Maččan wa ’oxşenin, neeyink ku čunnuy, neeyink ku čitt. Neeyink ku pussep(iki)<sup>9</sup> wa xawwan neeyink ku kappes ’ačtap xallu. Rotteymur wa čunn Maččan, tanmur čitt. (Harrington 1981:reel 690510-071, p. 40–42)

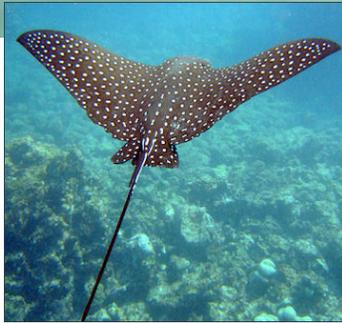
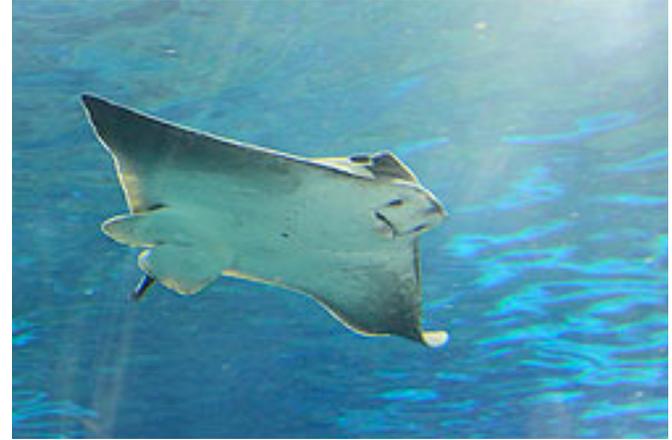
Then Coyote went to the beach. Then Coyote said to his wife: “Don’t be afraid.” Then Makkeweks scared her. Makkeweks scared her when he rose up from the water. Then the Coyote’s wife fell down and she died from fright. Coyote had told her: “The sea lion and the mussel are all your uncles, so don’t be afraid.” But he did not tell her that Makkeweks was her uncle. When she died, then Coyote put her on his back and carried her farther away, over there where the woman wouldn’t see Makkeweks again. Then Coyote lit a fire, and next he laid her down there by the fire, there close to the fire so she would get warm; and then she got warm. Then Coyote jumped while performing a shamanic ritual, then he sang, then he danced. His wife came back to life, then Coyote jumped three times, and he had his song when he was dancing.

## *IS THERE A MONSTER IN LAKE MERRITT? SCIENTIST SAYS YES!*

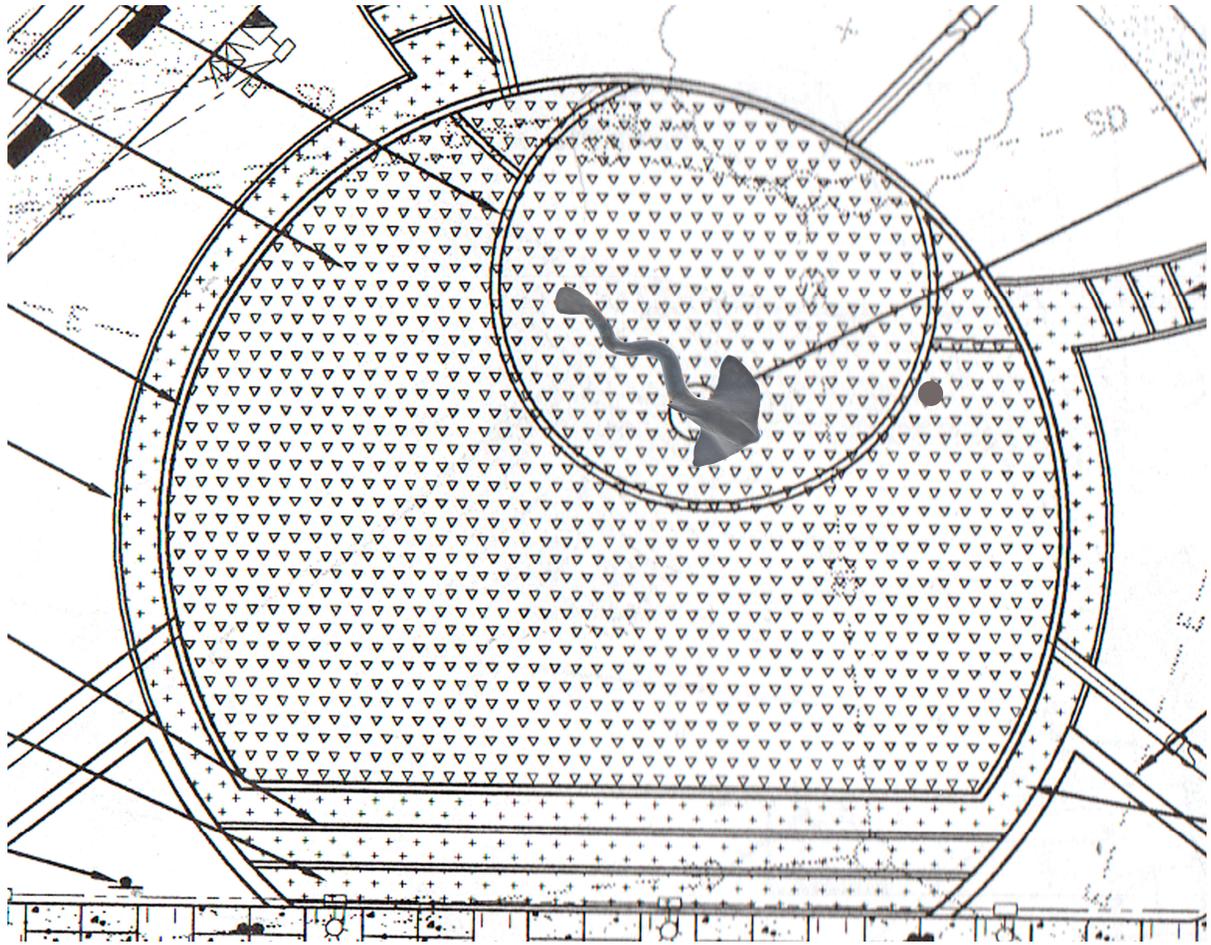
*“It’s black, it’s big, it has spikes on its head and its tongue sticks out,” says Dr. Richard Bailey, local expert on the rumored Lake Merritt monster and executive director of the Lake Merritt Institute, a non-profit dedicated to cleaning the lake. “It’s got typical round monster humps.”*

*According to Dr. Bailey, who has a masters degree in zoology and a doctorate in natural resources, sightings of this Lake Merritt monster, which he fondly refers to as the “Oak-ness monster,” have become more frequent in the past five years. Dr. Bailey believes the creature prefers clean lakes, so perhaps it is no coincidence that he says these appearances come with massive lake clean-ups that make it easier for lake-goers to spot monster-like objects in the water. “There were reports of him years ago,” he says. “The water quality got bad for awhile, and then it got better.”*

*Dr. Richard Bailey, quoted 6/22/11 in “Oakland North”*

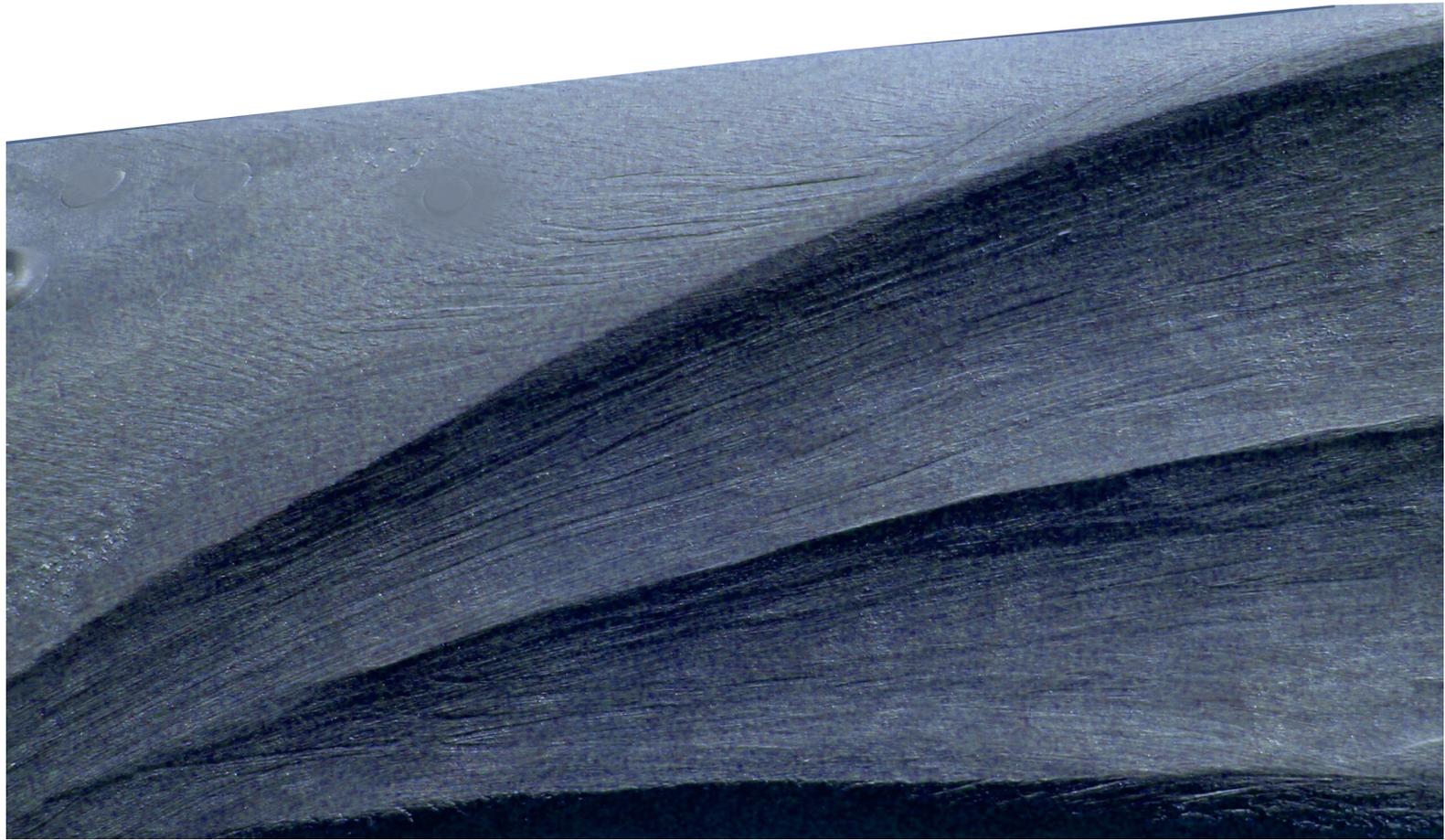










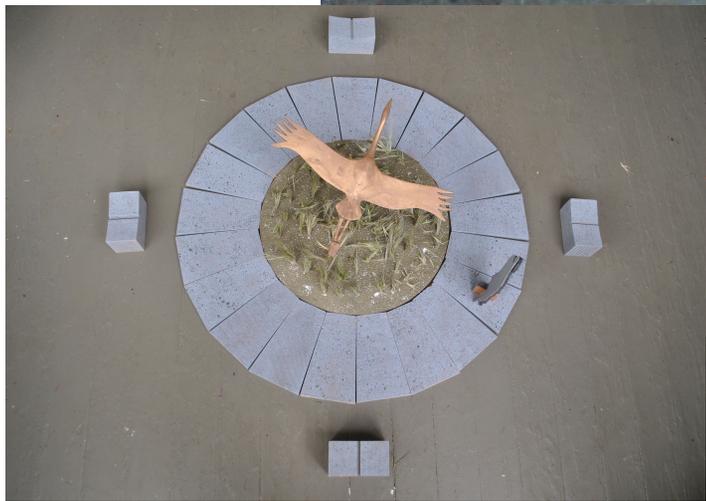




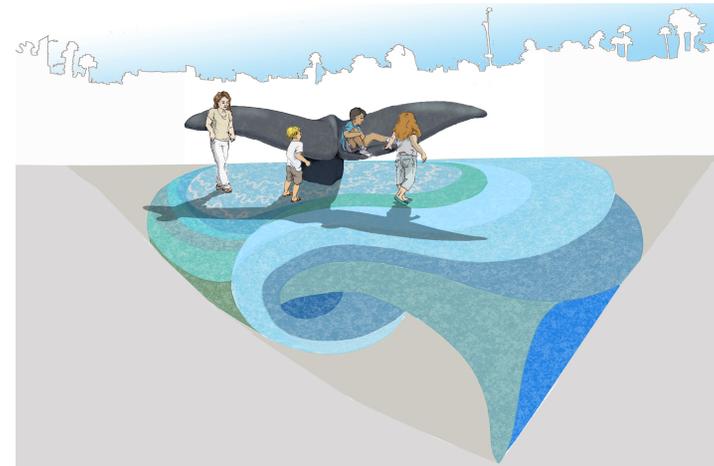














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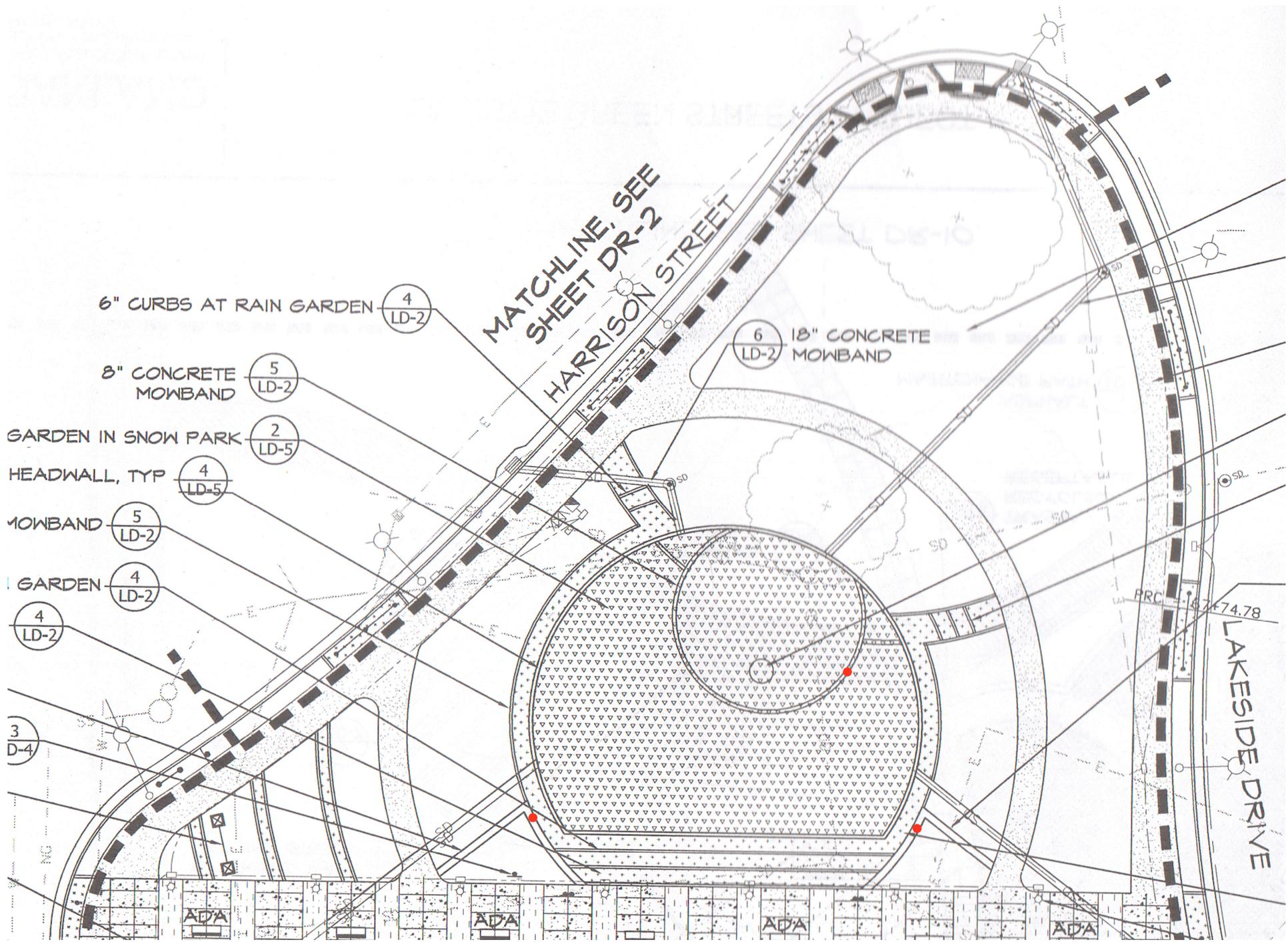




Size: 10" - 12" diameter  
Photo-etched granite panel &  
Etched stainless steel ring set flush with concrete







6" CURBS AT RAIN GARDEN (4/LD-2)

8" CONCRETE MOWBAND (5/LD-2)

GARDEN IN SNOW PARK (2/LD-5)

HEADWALL, TYP (4/LD-5)

MOWBAND (5/LD-2)

GARDEN (4/LD-2)

(4/LD-2)

(3/D-4)

MATCHLINE, SEE SHEET DR-2  
HARRISON STREET

(6/LD-2) 18" CONCRETE MOWBAND

PRC 167+74.78

LAKESIDE DRIVE

ADA

ADA

ADA

ADA

MAKKEWEKS



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