

# Mental Landscapes

## An Interpretive Overlay



Developed during the Fall 2023 In-Residence program at Allerton, the Mental Landscapes interpretive overlay is the result of three workshops comprised of park visitors and staff over the month of November. This map was curated through the use of Mental Landscapes, a working body of scholarship by resident and urban planner Kelsey Zlevor, which seeks to understand how experiences of depression can positively shape design in public spaces for healing and belonging.

Through her work, Zlevor has found that key elements for landscapes supportive of people experiencing depression and related symptoms are spaces that evoke ease, observation, affinity for nature, or awe. Engaging over 40 people during the course of her residency through hands-on workshops, Kelsey asked visitors and staff to identify where at Allerton they experience these elements:

- Ease: a sense of comfort or peace
- Observation: noticing surroundings attentively, either other people or the natural world
- Affinity: feeling a close relationship to nature
- Awe: feeling respect, wonder, or mystery

This map is the collection of community-identified sites that embody these qualities. Sites are noted with a brain icon, and the legend offers considerations to invite and support visitors in engaging with these spaces. While Mental Landscapes is about design, it is also about ascribing meaning to place: understanding perceptions of the landscape so we can share in the experiencing. Using this map, visitors are welcome to deepen their understanding of the Allerton grounds and experience these Mental Landscapes for themselves.

## MENTAL LANDSCAPES

### EASE

1. Farm Pond: located in Diversified Farm

Consider: What plants are located along the pond's edge that are different from what you find elsewhere at Allerton?

2. Yellow Trail: upland and bottomland forest along the Sangamon River

Consider: Can you sense where the river is along the trail before you see or hear it? Does the ground feel different based on whether or not it has rained?

3. Sangamon River Bridge: along Old Levee Road

Consider: Identified as the threshold to Allerton, how do you notice the landscape shift here? What are you looking forward to/what memories did you make during your visit?

### OBSERVATION

4. Lost Garden: remnants of a formal garden located along the Green Trail

Consider: Noted as feeling like a magical place out of a storybook, what fairy-tales can you imagine taking place here? What might have filled the garden?

### AFFINITY

5. Red Trail: the longest trail at Allerton with a demonstration prairie

Consider: When you remain completely still for several minutes on the trail, what can you hear that you didn't notice before? What can you smell or feel?

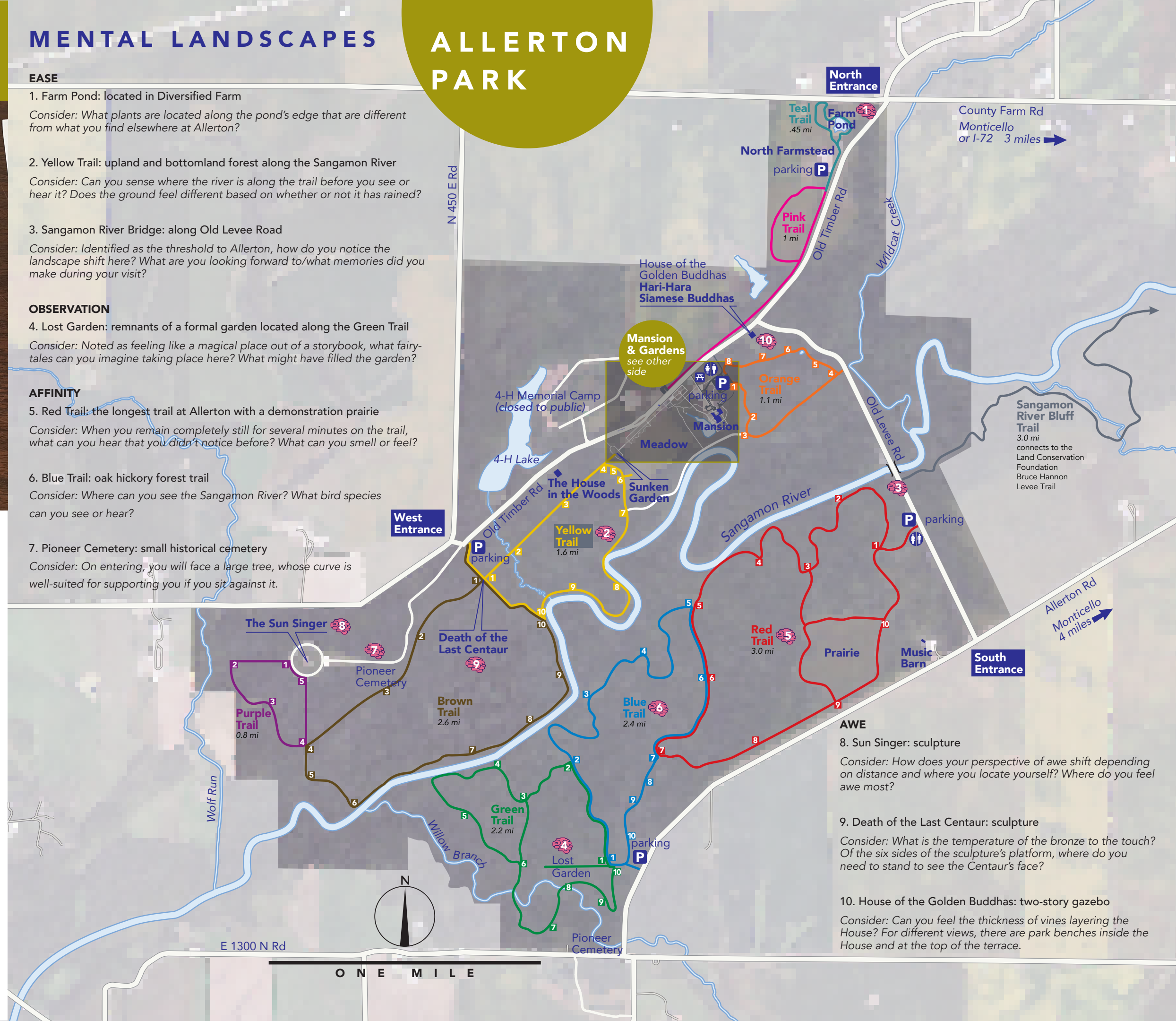
6. Blue Trail: oak hickory forest trail

Consider: Where can you see the Sangamon River? What bird species can you see or hear?

7. Pioneer Cemetery: small historical cemetery

Consider: On entering, you will face a large tree, whose curve is well-suited for supporting you if you sit against it.

## ALLERTON PARK



North Entrance

County Farm Rd  
Monticello  
or I-72 3 miles →

North Farmstead  
parking P

Teal Trail  
.45 mi

Pink Trail  
1 mi

House of the  
Golden Buddhas  
Hari-Hara  
Siamese Buddhas

Mansion  
& Gardens  
see other  
side

Orange Trail  
1.1 mi

4-H Memorial Camp  
(closed to public)

4-H Lake

West Entrance

The House  
in the Woods

Sunken Garden

Yellow Trail  
1.6 mi

Sangamon River

Sangamon River Bluff Trail  
3.0 mi  
connects to the  
Land Conservation  
Foundation  
Bruce Hannon  
Levee Trail

parking P

Allerton Rd  
Monticello  
4 miles →

South Entrance

Music Barn

Red Trail  
3.0 mi

### AWE

8. Sun Singer: sculpture

Consider: How does your perspective of awe shift depending on distance and where you locate yourself? Where do you feel awe most?

9. Death of the Last Centaur: sculpture

Consider: What is the temperature of the bronze to the touch? Of the six sides of the sculpture's platform, where do you need to stand to see the Centaur's face?

10. House of the Golden Buddhas: two-story gazebo

Consider: Can you feel the thickness of vines layering the House? For different views, there are park benches inside the House and at the top of the terrace.



ONE MILE



MENTAL LANDSCAPES

EASE

11. Avenue of the Formal Gardens: path between the Greenhouse Café and Mansion  
Consider: What and how many tree species can you notice based on their leaves? Which direction can you feel the wind blowing?

12. Reflecting Pond: pond located behind the Mansion terrace  
Consider: Where is the sun located? How does the color and quality of light appear on the water depending on season or time of day?

13. Avenue of the Musicians: figures leading to the Sunken Garden  
Consider: What instruments can you find? How does the gravel feel beneath you? For additional respite, go left or right at the entrance to find park benches on the other side of the hedges.

OBSERVATION

14. Former Pump House along Yellow Trail: concrete building accessed off-trail to the right  
Consider: Can you spot the Gnome? Can you spot the old well?

15. Meadow: open land in the center of the park  
Consider: What insects do you see? Can you notice a temperature shift between the forested area and when you move into the meadow? Can you find evidence of deer sleeping here?

16. Triangle Parterre Gardens: annual ornamental garden  
Consider: What colors and smells are present? Try sitting in the former tea house.

17. Sunken Garden: below-grade lawn space  
Consider: Steps on either side provide seating with perspective.

AFFINITY

18. Bulb Garden: perennial species of flowering plants  
Consider: What species can you find in season right now? What colors and smells are present? Being careful to touch leaves instead of flower petals, what textures can you feel?

AWE

19. Hedges: lining the walk to the Chinese Maze Garden  
Consider: How far can you spread your arms before you touch the hedges? Can you find any entrances that enable you to look further into the hedges? What birds can you hear inside?

20. Adam: sculpture  
Consider: Which way is Adam looking? Do you feel drawn to go straight, left, or right here?

21. Mansion Library: an original component of the Mansion  
Consider: Where else at Allerton can you find the figures on the second floor of the library? Can you spot the collection of backwards books that made up Robert Allerton's original collection?

