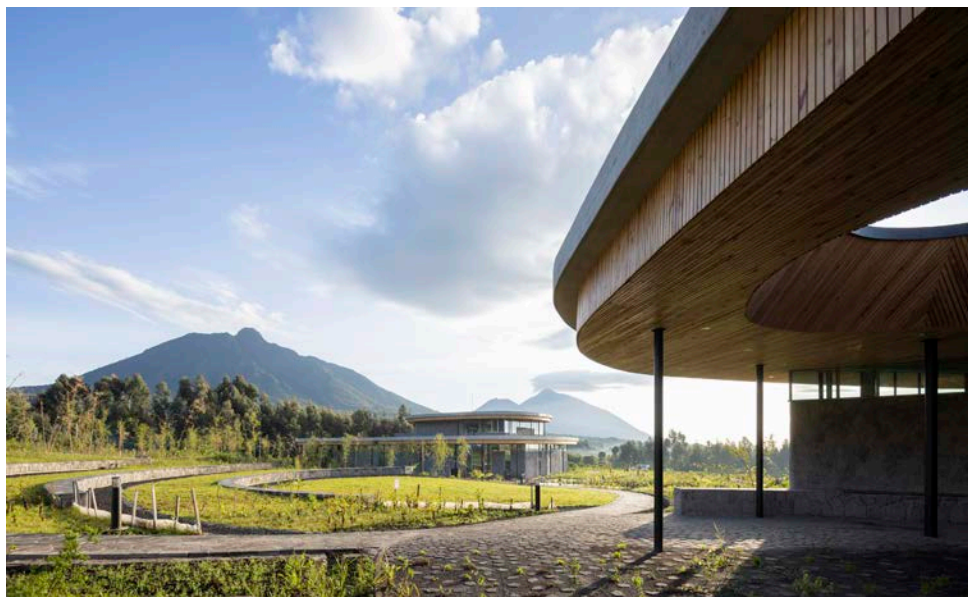


2024 COTE Top Ten Award

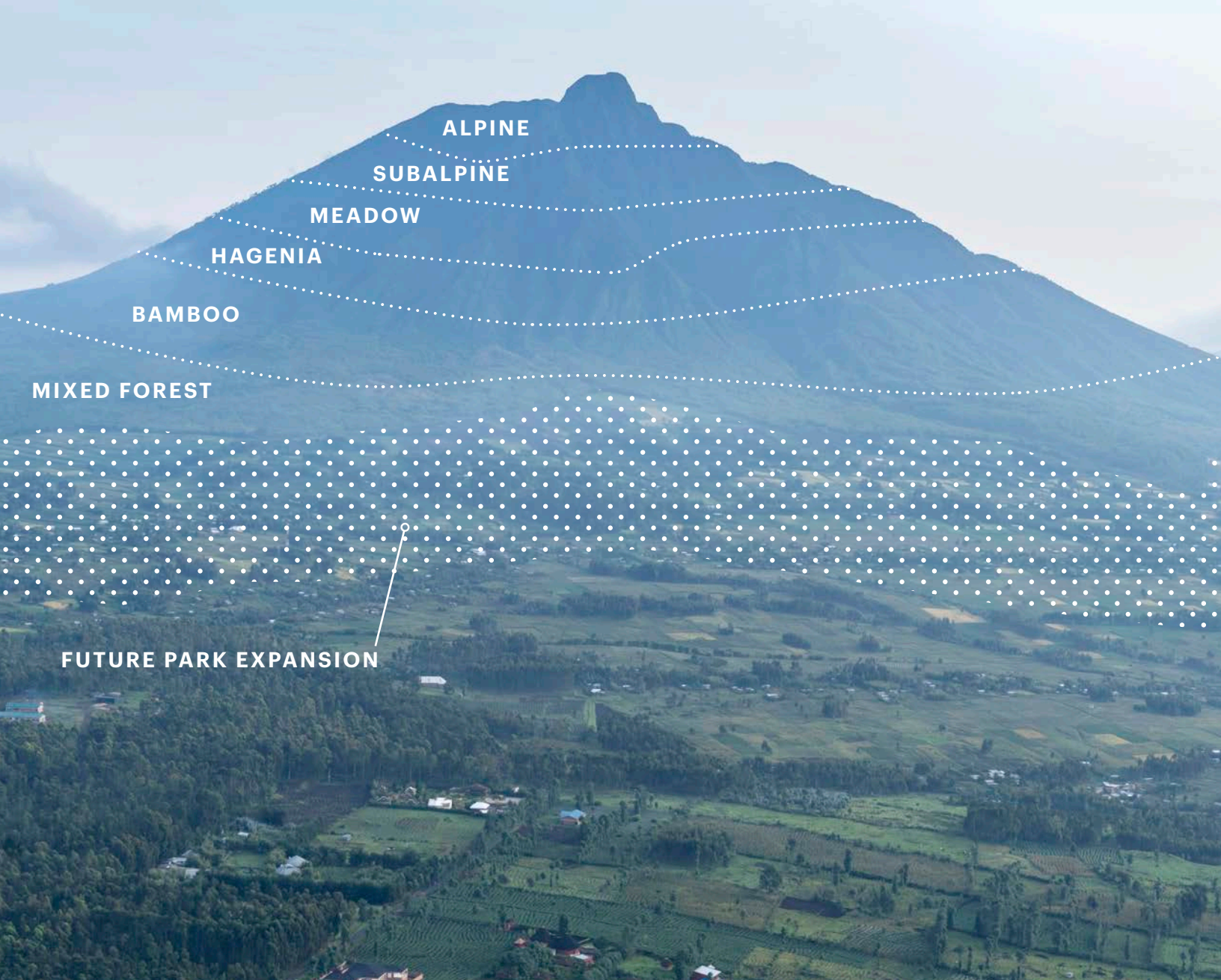
**The Ellen DeGeneres Campus
of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund**
October 2023





Founded by the legendary Dian Fossey, the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund is the world's largest and longest-running organization dedicated to gorilla conservation.

Their work combines daily protection and study of individual gorillas with people-centered programs aimed at training the next generation of African conservationists.



In Rwanda, increasing pressure on the land for agriculture and human settlement has resulted in periodic conflict with the protection of the country's efforts for conservation and protection of the endangered mountain gorillas and their habitats.

ALPINE

Above 3600m. Herbaceous and wood plants with low grasses and mosses.

SUBALPINES

3300-3600m. High altitude vegetation is found here, up to 5m high: *Senecio johnstonii*, *Labelia shahlmanni*, *Hypericum revolutum*, *Rubus kurungensis*.

MEADOW

2200-3700m. Opens to grassy and marshy areas that contain little food for gorillas.

HAGENIA, HERBACEOUS

2800-3300m. Equivalent to the Saddle, a canopy woodland dominated by *Hagenia abyssinica* and *Hypericum revolutum*. *Revolutum* trees, reaching up to 20m high and have a dense herbaceous or grassy understory.

BAMBOO

2550-2950m. Dominated primarily by monospecies of bamboo.

MIXED FOREST

2000-2550m. Contains mixed species montane forest with abundant *Neobotania macrocolyx* and *Dombeya goetzenii*. Its understory consists of herbaceous vegetation with dense patches of *Mimulopsis arborescents*.



The 5 acre campus is located near the Volcanoes National Park, transforming a formerly degraded agricultural plot of land into a reforested landscape that supports key native ecologies and related plant communities found in the park.



The campus provides the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund with a new, permanent home to closely engage local communities, both human and non-human, in their conservation mission of helping people and saving gorillas.



"one of them"

Acting like a gorilla



"one of them"

Experiencing like a gorilla

The vision for the campus centers a future where human, animal and ecological health prosper and benefit mutually from each other; the study of gorillas and their habitat are an **entry point for a lifetime of conservation activism.**



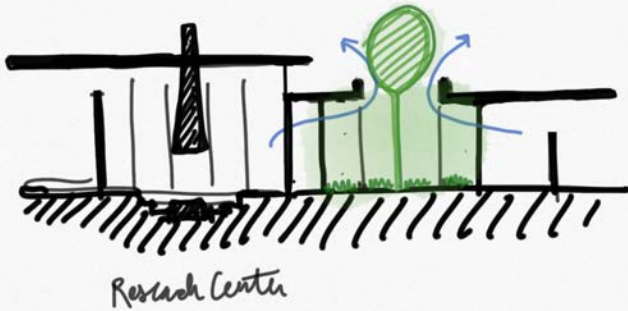
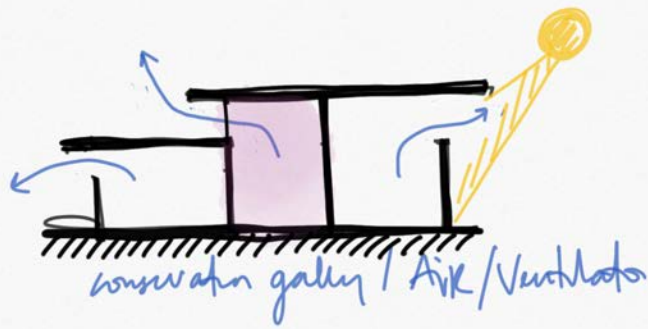
The conceptual design approach sought to create a new home, immersed in the forest, inspired by Dian's original tent and the Karisoke Research Center.



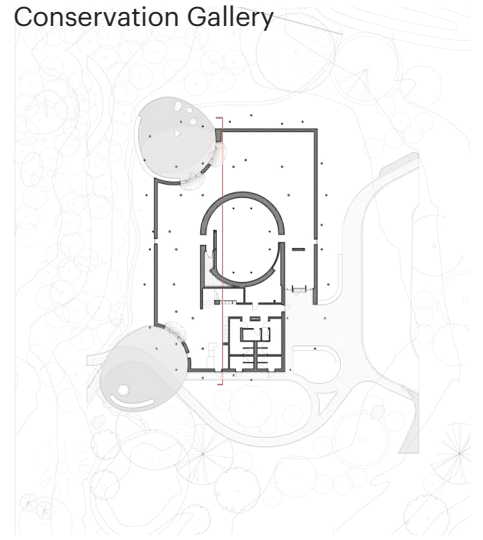
- 1. CAMPUS ENTRY
- 2. CONSERVATION GALLERY
- 3. WASTEWATER TREATMENT WETLANDS
- 4. REFORESTATION TEST PLOTS
- 5. RESEARCH CENTER
- 6. CENTRAL ASSEMBLY
- 7. GORILLA GARDEN
- 8. EDUCATION CENTER
- 9. BIODIVERSITY TRAIL
- 10. STUDENT HOUSING
- 11. STUDENT HOUSING (FUTURE DEVELOPMENT)



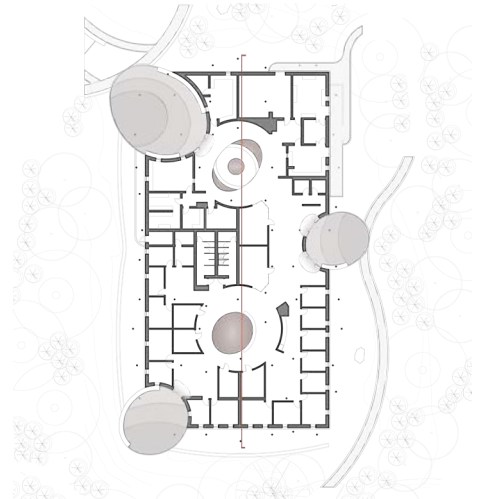
From above, the building's green roofs blend into the surrounding landscape context. The building footprints integrated seamlessly into the landscape topography, encouraging a natural flow from interior spaces to the exterior through a series of covered patios and connected path networks, all taking advantage of the surrounding volcanoes.



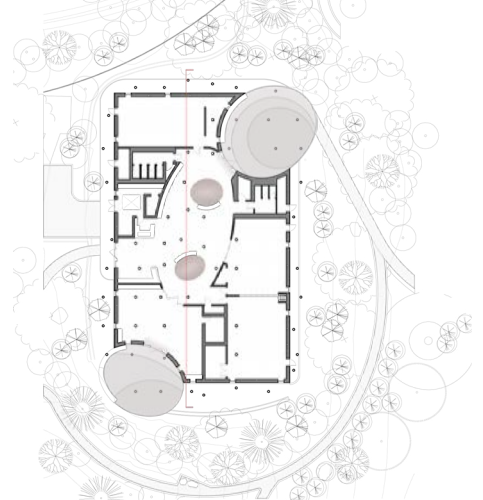
Conservation Gallery



Research Center



Education Center



The main campus buildings contain diverse scales of interior and exterior gathering spaces, designed in response to the diversity of programs and inspired by the campfire gatherings at the original Karisoke Research Center. The Gathering spaces, designed to encourage interaction between visitors, staff, and researchers, provide a connection to the landscape, and natural ventilation and daylight into the building footprints.



Gorilla-inspired tourism plays a critical role in providing revenue for the park as well as supporting local communities through employment and revenue sharing. Visitors to the campus can immerse themselves in an interactive, educational exhibit located in the Cindy Broder Conservation Gallery.



Designed by MASS, this multimodal exhibition, translated into English and Kinyarwanda, tells the story of mountain gorilla research and conservation from Fossey's time to today through hands-on activities, content-rich didactics, and interactives. It includes original, never before seen artifacts from Fossey's almost two decades of work living amongst the gorillas, visual effects through a 360-degree immersive experience, as well as augmented and virtual reality educational opportunities to learn more about the conservation success of mountain gorillas.





Both the Rob and Melani Walton Education Center and Sandy and Harold Price Research Center are located near the conservation gallery, providing the Fossey Fund with increased opportunities for training students, staff, and the community alike - and space to enhance their cutting-edge research on gorillas and their habitats.



The campus also includes housing to provide 30 students and guests with greater access to the park.



MASS partnered with Transsolar on environmental engineering solutions throughout the project, which prioritizes access to natural daylight and ventilation, together with building comfort and performance. Green roof canopies hover above thick volcanic stone exterior walls, separated by a continuous glass clerestory that brings natural daylight into the interior spaces.



The campus utilized locally sourced materials to embody the Fossey Fund's mission to conserve and limit its impact on the environment, as well as to enable it to blend seamlessly into its natural surroundings.

The volcanic stones found on-site during excavation were crushed and used in the grout for the stone walls, and as gravel for the interpretive trails across the campus. Volcanic stone was also used in the exterior building cladding. Regionally-sourced pinewood added warmth and texture to the exterior soffit and interior ceilings of the buildings.





Native plant species are used on the main campus green roofs to enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon. The green roofs also provided research opportunities to study key ecological processes like pollination or reforestation.



As part of MASS and the Fossey Fund's commitment to the regeneration of the land, more than 250,000 native plants were propagated and planted throughout the campus as a reforestation research site that might inform future park expansion.





Water conservation was prioritized by harvesting rainwater from building roofs for reuse including to flush toilets. Effluent wastewater is treated naturally in a constructed wetland, featuring a series of ponds below the conservation gallery that filter and clean the water before it soaks back into the ground. The system is the first and only of its kind in Rwanda, and is gravity fed, reducing overall energy use.



The landscape, water systems, and sustainability methods serve as an educational opportunity for students and visitors motivated by conservation, and as a research demonstration for reforestation efforts the Fossey Fund is undertaking in the region.



Across the campus, a series of interpretive trails encourage visitors to explore and understand firsthand the work of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund.

A “Gorilla Garden Trail” leads visitors through a day in the life of a mountain gorilla, a “Biodiversity Trail” provides research opportunities to monitor the evolution of different plants and the potential effects of climate change, and a final trail near the naturalized wastewater treatment wetlands educates visitors about the system.



The building's seismic forces are managed through engineered ductile reinforced concrete cores which allow program flexibility. The ground below the buildings was formed through volcanic activity and contains large volcanic stones, which were a challenge to excavate. The volcanic stones, often considered a waste product, are used as material within the campus, reducing waste and the need for new quarried material.

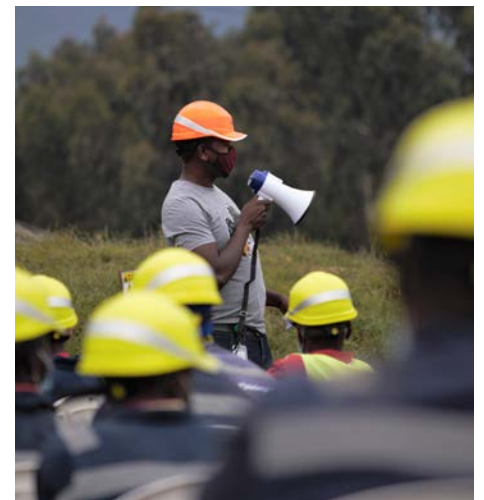


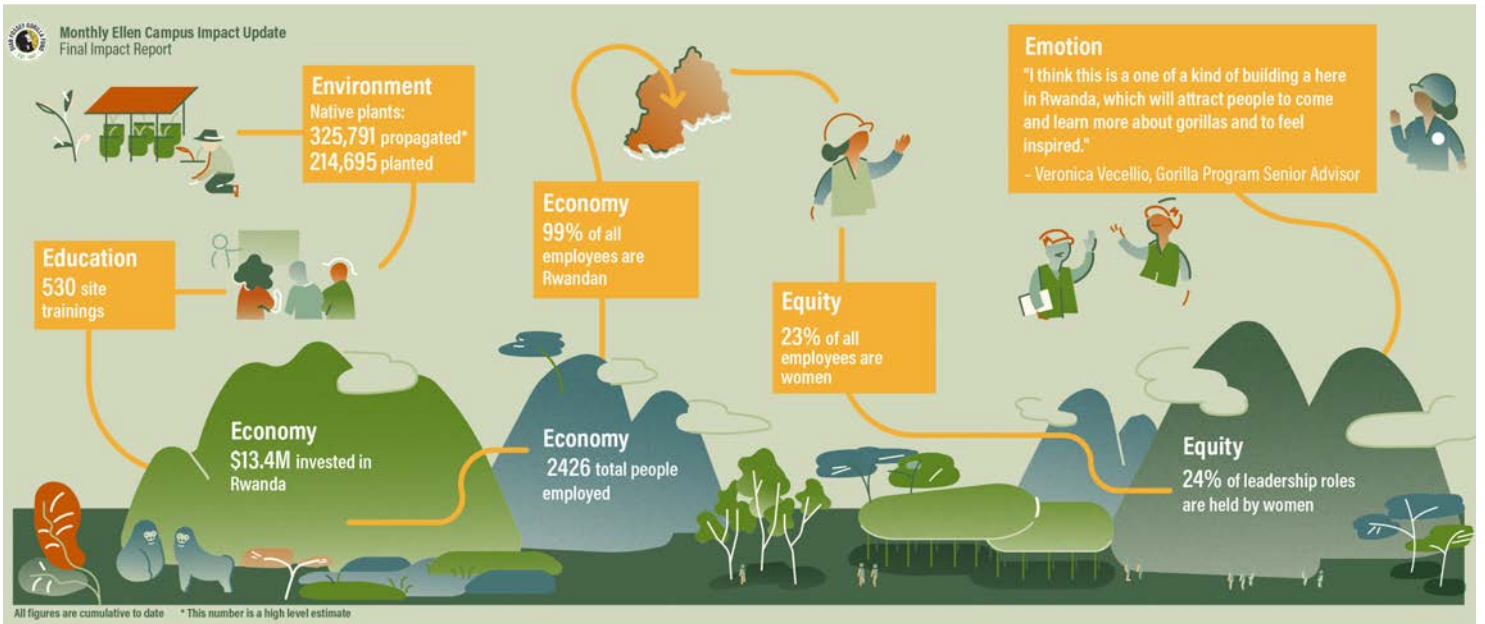


The Fossey campus marked MASS's first project with MASS.Build as general contractor, giving MASS agency over how resources are deployed, and improving our ability to promote social, environmental, and economic impact through the construction process.



In partnership with the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Integrated Polytechnic Regional College (IPRC) Musanze, MASS.Build implemented a construction training program for Rwandans in the fields of masonry; carpentry; steel-fixing; health, safety, and environment; electrical; green roof installation; and plumbing. Uniquely, 30 percent of the construction workforce were women.





MASS and the Fossey Fund worked in partnership to develop all aspects of the project—from visioning, architectural and landscape design, engineering, construction, furniture fabrication, exhibition design, and media—to both leverage its impact on the surrounding community and advance the Fossey Fund’s mission. MASS employed more than 2,200 Rwandans in the project’s design and construction, accounting for 99 percent of the total labor.



All of the campus furniture was designed by MASS. Made and made in Rwanda by artisans and design cooperatives. Over 1,600 items were produced, from tables, desks, chairs, stools, benches, shelves, credenzas, and beds, to accessories including pendant lights, rugs, pillows, handles, and hooks.





The furniture upholds the same values as the buildings: to maximize high-quality local production that celebrates craft, leverages regional materials, reduces carbon footprint, and contributes to the local economy.



MASS.Made also found the opportunity to embed design details that drew inspiration from the history and work of the Fossey Fund, including batik throw pillows that feature nose print patterns of seven gorillas featured in the exhibition.



MASS.

Thank you.



The Ellen DeGeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund

MASS Design Group

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, Kinigi, Musanze, Rwanda

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