Plants are enhanced, pathways are restored, cycles of use are continued in an expanded and activated landscape. Courtesy James Corner Field Operations.

Hood Design Studio identifies its proposal as a "novella in four parts."

Bird's-eye view looking northeast. The proposed design radically reimagines the land of the Tidal Basin area in form and function, as a phased response to the very immediate concerns of the area, while establishing a more sensitive, symbiotic and adaptive relationship with the Tidal Basin. Courtesy DLAND Studio.

Proposed Redesigns For Washington DC's Tidal Basin

WASHINGTON, DC — Tidal Basin Ideas Lab has unveiled proposals from five leading landscape architects that reimagine the future of Washington, DC's iconic Tidal Basin and National Mall. The area is home to monuments such as the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial and 3,000 cherry trees that serve as the backdrop for the National Cherry Blossom Festival. The proposals — from DLANDstudio, GGN, Hood Design Studio, James Corner Field Operations and Reed Hilderbrand — are also presented in a museum-quality online exhibition, co-curated by Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mellina, timed to coincide with the Tidal Basin Ideas Lab's 2019 event "In the Field."

As part of America’s front yard, the Tidal Basin is home to some of the most iconic landmarks and traditions in the nation’s capital,” said Catherine Malone-Francis, chief preservation officer of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “This most momentous of local parks is not just a foothill to a landscape of such significance. With the new digital exhibition, we are excited to share our ideas to engage the public with creative thinking from five of the world’s leading landscape architecture firms in the world. These ideas explore ways to sustain this cultural landscape and its richly layered meanings for generations to come. This isn’t preservation as usual; this is preservation as innovation.”

"The caliber of the thinking and quality of the ideas presented is a testament to the creativity and commitment of these world-class firms" said Keith O’Connor, director of Urban Design and Planning at SOM. "As a collective body of work, these provocations provide the National Park Service with an extraordinary resource upon which to mount an effective campaign to not only save the Tidal Basin, but to reshape a bright and hopeful future for this irreplaceable cultural landscape."

The online exhibition is designed to add a narrative perspective to the proposals, bringing to life the various histories of the Tidal Basin and the National Mall since its completion in 1887. Albrecht and Mellina explore how this Nineteenth Century hydrological achievement has been, and continues to be, more than a place of memorialization and recreation through research and exhibition, discussing the ways people have engaged with the material and narrative of the past by linking to the history that informed the ideas within.

"The Tidal Basin Ideas Lab exhibition includes films and digital animations, comic audiovisual presentations of each landscape architect's proposal, a digital conversation with the architects, and digital opportunities for the general public to get involved, as well as photographs from the National Archive documenting the Tidal Basin's histories."

The exhibition, which is presented by American Express, can be viewed at www.tidalbasinideaslab.org. The public is being invited to show their support for a renewed Tidal Basin by signing a pledge at savingsplaces.org/TidalBasin.