

## Reflection #2

Upon first arrival to the site, I expect to see an overgrown space that may be difficult to traverse. Due to the amount of undergrowth, such as bushes and shrubs, I will be wearing boots in order to protect my feet and ankles. What we know about the site is that the space has been dedicated as a development site for Jackie Joyner Kersee, so some of the site may be cleared. With my research being primarily focused on plants, I will be taking notes on the plants present at the site. I will record the number of plants, their health, and trends in where they grow throughout the forested area. Unfortunately, we must take precautions before physically entering the site as the surrounding area is a post-industrial site and may contain contaminated materials like lead. I will be taking plant samples to record their quality, composing a photobook made up of these samples. The site is not currently set up for human interaction, therefore we must take care when traversing the landscapes. I expect the area to be overgrown with invasive species, such as honeysuckle, kudzu vine, and buckthorn. These species should be noted and removed from the landscape, replacing them with native species.

When discussing our plans with our community partners, I will keep an open mind to their plans and am willing to alter my goals and priorities accordingly. I expect my research partners to do their best to do the same. Our intergroup dynamics are healthy; having clear channels of communication through multiple means. We have each others phone numbers and social media accounts, allowing us to communicate ideas and changes effectively. I hope to establish a similar communication channel with our partners at Jackie Joyner Kersee, as this will enable us to work more effectively with what we have available.

In addition to the environmental hazards previously mentioned, another barrier that may prevent us from conducting our work is the land disputes and our ability to develop the area as a recreational facility. With limited access to the local government and our constituents, we must be careful not to overstep when developing the site. It is imperative that we maintain a good relationship with both Jackie Joyner Kersee and the city of East Saint Louis, as well as those who are served by these institutions. With a focus on equity and respect, we can transform the area into a mutually beneficial system. It is our responsibility to serve the community without judgement, as we are visitors and outsiders to the community.

Overall, I believe the site visit will provide much needed context to our research, as we can begin to truly understand the depth of our research and how to best allocate resources. Our time is limited, and we must use our time efficiently. By doing so, we will transform the area; producing tangible results in our research and displaying the benefits of the CODES organization to both the school and the greater community.