



MOISTURE TWO

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ON THE MOISTURE MOJAVE SITE

(PHASE 2)

In November of 2003, soon after escrow closed on property purchased exclusively for MOISTURE (Phase 2), we initiated a multi-pronged **water-retention & garden project**. The group, headed by Claude Willey, Bernard Perroud, and Deena Capparelli, with additional support from Mark Tsang and Adam Belt, rapidly developed plans to work on the 15-acre portion of uninhabited land, just Northwest of Hinkley, CA. After a series of meetings, the group drafted designs for the positioning of a funnel, in the site's main wash, to be used in the collection and diversion of water to a series of circular gardens. Our main goal: to create a subtle micro-climatic shift on the property along with a dedicated multi-year plan for the site's maintenance. Simply put, we wished to physically change a small portion of the desert environment, but with a very light hand.

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A working structure was quickly devised. Bernard took care of the water diversion system's design, Deena became the garden pattern-designer and plant specialist, and Claude accepted the role as the remote sensing technologist in addition to being the group's liaison and business manager. Mark Tsang became our main photo documentarian, but would go on to provide sustained physical support at the site, as would Adam Belt. A revolving entourage of visiting guests would also prove invaluable to the construction phase of the project.

Taking the advice of hydrologist Paul Measeles, we agreed to build a V-Shaped gabion within one of our site's main washes along with a French Drain placed directly (downstream) behind it. To avoid the need for a pump, Perroud designed the diversion system to rely on gravity alone. The drain, once placed into the ground, was connected to a 1.1/2" pipe feeding Garden #1 directly. Another pipe was connected to Garden #2 through a silt trap and subsurface cistern.

An unfruitful search for a suitable water tank prompted Bernard to design and construct one that would meet our needs. Settling on marine-grade plywood (8'x4'x16"), plans were made to construct a cistern that would hold up to 200 gallons. Bernard lined the structure with two layers of thick plastic sheeting to minimize leakage. The positioning of the tank became a difficult task since it had to be appropriately placed within the diversion system's layout. A large rectangular hole had to be excavated and two labor-intensive sessions, requiring five people, were needed to complete the painstaking work. ([continued](#))

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