STOP 1: Cistern at the church of Panagia Episkopi

Proposed Action & Intent:

The church at the site of this cistern is currently a popular tourist destination for those interested in Byzantine history. This popularity makes the site a good place to begin a walking tour, as it may attract users who may not have otherwise been aware of the walking tour. The cistern itself is also architecturally appealing, making it a good way to attract the attention of those who are new to the concept of water resources and cisterns. Currently, visual access to the site is quite limited. Though a door on the edge of the cistern allows those with access to walk in and peer down, the path itself is very narrow, unstable, and dark. We suggest widening this pathway and paving it with more even stone. Currently, the only viewing point is a small hole in the wall of the cistern at the end of this path. We propose opening this wall up and replacing it with glass windows. The path itself may need to hang over the cistern slightly to be wide enough for public use. If this is the case, we suggest making the bottom of the path glass for full visual access to the cistern. These glass windows will allow more viewers to see the cistern at any given time, as well as prevent possible injury to those who may peer in through the current viewing hole and fall in. Scale markers within the cistern could allow viewers to understand the size of the cistern. Finally, along the pathway mentioned above, lights will need to be installed for safety and aesthetic purposes.

On the exterior of the cistern, we propose replacing the current door with one that is more historically appropriate and large enough to allow for pedestrian passage. Next to this door, appropriate signage should be placed to explain what users will be looking at once inside, as well as to outline the history of the cistern and its role in past sustainable water consumption. Additional signage may include historic photos, a map of the cistern and its entrances, as well as any other interesting facts about the cistern.
Next Steps:

The most important, and potentially difficult aspect of renovating this cistern will be approval from local archaeological groups. We propose that the water authority and/or other organizations work with these groups to draft physical plans to the site which are historically considerate. Once these plans are approved, the plans (as described above) will need to be acted on, and finally, the appropriate signage for the site must be created.
STOP 2: Kindergarten Cistern in Mesa Gonia

PROPOSED ACTION & INTENT:

The cistern at the Kindergarten in Mesa Gonia is one of the most modern cisterns we visited during our time in Santorini. We believe it is important to highlight that rainwater collection via cisterns was not only a thing of the distant past, but can also be considered today. Along with its place in time, the cistern’s location below a kindergarten will show those participating in the Water Walk that cisterns were a part of daily life for all people on the island, not just large-scale institutions or homes. Since this cistern is nearly impossible to access from above, we propose creating windows along the side of the cistern facing the road. This will keep Water Walk participants out of the play area of the school, while allowing them to stay on the walking path. To create this access point, permission from the school is necessary. From there we propose large windows on the road-facing portion of the cistern. Ideally, these windows will have a shaded overhang above, and benches below for those who are interested in resting at this location. Finally, signage depicting the history, use of the cistern, layout, and photos of the cistern would place the cistern in context for viewers who are unfamiliar with the site. If possible, rehabilitating the cistern for use in the school, as well as being a site of interest for Water Walk participants would be ideal. Using the cistern, and understanding its role in local people’s lives will be even more impactful than simply reading about it.
NEXT STEPS:

The first step in the renovation of this cistern is to receive construction permission from the owner of the kindergarten. From there, the construction, creation of signage, and placement of signage are necessary for the stop to be completed. It would be ideal to incorporate the school children into the process in some way. This could include simply teaching about the history of cisterns and water use on the island in the classroom, encouraging sustainable water use practices in school, or sending home information about cistern renovation to parents. Children are the future leaders of the island, and it is important to pass this type of knowledge onto them.
STOP 3A: Art Space, Exo Gonia

Proposed Action and Intent:

Art Space in Exo Gonia is a winery, art gallery, and museum located directly on the path of our proposed walking tour. The space meets the goal of expanding users' understanding of water in a historical context through its museum area, which describes former farming and tomato paste-making practices. Users will gain a better understanding of present day water use by learning about water's role in wine making. No physical changes need to be made to the space to incorporate it as a stop along Water Walk. Additional signage will be needed to create consistency across the tour. Permission from Art Space, as well a willingness from their staff to emphasize the role of water in all that they do, however, is necessary.

Next Steps:
The owners of Art Space will need to be contacted directly to discuss the possibility of partnering with Art Space to add the stop as part of the Water Walk. If they are willing to participate, it will be necessary to create a list of items they should emphasize when speaking with Water Walk participants. Signage will also need to be placed at the entrance of Art Space along the walk, so users know that it is a stop on their tour. Inclusion on the walk will also benefit Art Space.
STOP 3B: Cistern Across the Road from Art Space, Exo Gonia

Proposed Action & Intent:
Currently, the cistern located directly across the street from Art Space, Exo Gonia is in serious disrepair. For that reason, we are suggesting this as an alternative stop along the water walk. Acquiring the access rights to this cistern, and creating a safe viewing platform for the cistern would be ideal. Even if it is not possible to repair the cistern fully, a stop which highlights the level of disrepair that some cisterns have fallen into could be interesting for Water Walk participants. Signage at this stop could include information on the historic earthquake which took place in the region, as well as any additional reasons for the lack of use of cisterns in present day Santorini.

Next Steps:
To include this site on the Water Walk, permission to access the site will need to be granted. From there, safe access points and signage should be created.
STOP 4: A Bite To Eat in Pyrgos; bathroom break in Pyrgos W.C

Proposed Action & Intent:

By this point in the Water Walk, users will have walked up a very steep hill from Exo Gonia and are likely need a break. Pyrgos is home to a number of restaurants that can accommodate Water Walk participants. It also holds a very unique cistern located in the public bathrooms (W.C.). Currently the W.C. holds one stall with a toilet, and a second stall that looks just like the toilet stall but actually leads to a cistern entrance site. This location is perfect for a pop-up museum. The unique location allows users to believe they are entering a toilet stall, only to find themselves welcomed into the unique underground history of Santorini! To make this site accessible to the public, the current closet, which appears to be used for storage, will have to be cleared out and the current cistern access point closed off, with a glass viewing platform. Creating a platform that is all glass will allow users to feel as if they have entered the cistern, while still safely hovering above it. The closet around this cistern should be filled with signage depicting the layout, history, and photos of the cistern below, as well as describing the role that cisterns have played in the history of Santorini.
Next Steps:

Permission from the current administration of the Pyrgos W.C. will need to be secured in order to use the space for a pop-up museum. From there, the current entry-way will need to be cleared and the space for visitors prepared by building the viewing platform, installing lighting, creating signage, and placing the signage. To fund the project, a small entry fee is appropriate. Advertising this pop-up museum on photo-sharing platforms such as Instagram or Snapchat will help draw attention to the space in a cost-effective and modern way.

You will need to prepare building plans to create the viewing platform, which should include plans for the glass structure’s support, as well as lighting to make sure visitors can see inside the cistern once on the platform. Further, measurement marks made within the cistern will allow users to understand the full scale of the structure. Finally, if the water board is able, it would be truly impressive to rehabilitate the cistern for use within the Water Closet. This would be an excellent way for users to fully understand the purpose of cisterns, as well as see them in action!
STOP 5: Kindergarten Cistern Under Parking Lot, Pyrgos

Proposed Action & Intent:

The cistern located near the bakery in Pyrgos would be an excellent candidate for refurbishing and viewing. The current catchment basin and cistern are in need of repair, but the “bones” are still there. Keeping this in mind, restoring the cistern to full use in such a highly visited area would be excellent advertising for the Santorini Water Board and Water Sustainability issues. From there, a small window located at the street level would be enough to allow pedestrians strolling to nearby restaurants to view the structure. In addition, the cistern’s proximity to the school could allow for local school children to learn more about the water system of Santorini, and encourage sustainability throughout the local community.
Next Steps:

To act on this suggestion, the current parking lot above the cistern will need to be sealed off, repaired, and cease to be used as a parking lot. This means, the local government will need to find an alternative parking site for these vehicles. Internally, the cistern will also need to be repaired. A final step in the physical success of this stop will be to add a small window at the street level, along with signage explaining the cistern’s history, rehabilitation, and current use. Any way to incorporate the school children in this project should be encouraged.
Proposed Actions & Intent:

Unfortunately, the writer of this document did not get the chance to view any cisterns in Megalochori. The group was informed, however, that Megalochori was home to a number of very impressive cisterns. Incorporating one of these cisterns into the Water Walk is suggested. Incorporating one of these cisterns will allow participants of the walk to travel from Stop 5 in Pyrgos to Megalochori - a walk which includes a number of interesting water use points such as flood roads and agriculture. Further, encouraging participants to travel to Megalochori will bring more tourism to the village which is beautiful, impressive, and home to a number of shops and eateries that welcome tourists.