

**Agenda**

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| 1. Public Policy Amendments—Post Midyear Revisions (Dye/Lent) | Discussion  |
| 2. Public Policy Amendments—Newly Revised (Dye/Lent)          | Discussion  |
| 3. Annual Meeting Update (Garcia/Brown)                       | Information |

**Agenda Item #1: Public Policy Amendments—Post-Midyear Revisions**

**Discussion**

**Purpose:** To report back to the board on comments received and additional proposed amendments to the policies approved at midyear.

**History and Background:** At the 2005 annual Board of Trustees meeting, Janet Ranganthan, director of the Biological Resources Program at the World Resources Institute, briefed the board on the conclusions of the **Millennium Ecosystem Assessment** (MA). As one response to this compelling report, the board asked the Policy Committee to undertake a review of ASLA Public Policies and determine changes necessary to ensure that ASLA is properly positioned to be involved in these issues.

At the April 2007 Board of Trustees meeting, the board was presented with the following policies: Environmental Sustainability, Coastal Zones, Water Quality and Conservation, Open Space, State, Local, and Regional Parks, National Parks, Wildlife and Wildlife Habitats, Wetlands, Waterways, and Environmental Education. Upon the consideration of these policy amendments, the following motion was approved:

*IT WAS MOVED BY MS. RYAN AND SECONDED BY MS. BRITTENUM THAT THE AMENDED POLICIES BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED; THAT ANY ADDITIONAL REFINEMENTS IN WORDING BE FORWARDED TO THE STAFF FOR REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION BY THE POLICY COMMITTEE; AND THAT THE POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD ON ALL COMMENTS RECEIVED AND ANY RESULTING AMENDMENTS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL. MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE (1) OPPOSED (MR. DANCE).*

Following this meeting, there was a two-week comment period for the Board to offer suggested changes to the Policy Committee. On May 24, the Committee deliberated on these suggestions and formulated new changes for Board consideration. Eight comments were received pertaining to the following policy statements:

- Environmental Sustainability (2 comments)
- Water Quality and Conservation (2 comments)
- Open Space (3 comments)
- National Parks (1 comment)
- Comments were also received for the Rationale sections for Environmental Sustainability and Open Space.
- The Coastal Zones, Wildlife and Wildlife Habitats, Wetlands, Waterways, and Environmental Education policies did not receive any Board comments.

The attached document outlines: the current version of the policy; each suggestion received; the Policy Committee commentary on the suggestion; and the suggested revisions to the policy statement.

**Governing Rules/Procedures:** ASLA Bylaws, Section 802: Adoption, amendment, or repeal of public

policies on matters of professional interest or concern shall require an affirmative vote by two-thirds (2/3) of the entire voting membership of the Board of Trustees...

**Action Requested:** Review of the additional policy amendments in preparation for board consideration and action in San Francisco.

**Staff Contact:** Julia Lent

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## (B205, 206, R2001, R2007)

### Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that both human civilizations and the natural ecosystems represent integral parts of our environment, and therefore must be restored, preserved and perpetuated.

In order to provide a healthy, productive, and socially enriching life for all, the Society urges public and private decision makers to employ sustainable design practices, minimize environmental degradation, avoid excessive consumption, and respect the needs of future generations.

### Rationale

Sustainability is the capability of natural and cultural systems to maintain themselves over time. It is impacted by: (a) individual and collective actions; (b) the amount and the rate of consumption; and (c) the intrinsic properties and carrying capacity of each system. Ideally, sustainable development should incorporate three diverse viewpoints:

- Ecology: preserving the integrity of ecological subsystems, respecting the global interdependence, and pursuing environmental stewardship.
- Economics: maximization of human welfare within the constraints of existing capital stock, budget realities, cost-saving considerations, fiscal requirements, and available technologies.
- Sociology: key actors are humans whose patterns of social organization are crucial for devising viable solutions for a better future on local, regional, national, and global levels. Their concerns include: cohesion of community, equity, social justice, cultural identity, diversity, solidarity, civility, tolerance, pluralism, law, and discipline.

Sustainability should be a guiding principle of the landscape planning, design, and management processes and decision making. The goals associated with creating a sustainable environment include:

- Reducing pollution and avoiding waste;
- Avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating human impacts on the environment;
- Protecting and conserving all natural ecosystems;
- Improving production and consumption cycles, including replacement/reduction of non-renewable resources;
- Improving waste collection, recycling and recovery;
- Promoting more efficient energy use and production; and
- Preserving visual and cultural resources for present and future generations.

Communities should accept responsibility for the consequences of planning, design and operational decisions upon human well being, the viability of natural systems and their right to co-exist. Designs should consider long-term value. All products and processes should be evaluated and optimized for the full life cycle to determine the undistorted cost-benefit account of waste and consumption.

Landscape architects, as planners, designers and managers, should share knowledge and encourage communication between colleagues, professionals from other disciplines and fields, public officials and community leaders, clients, developers, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers to:

- Enhance the understanding of and strengthen the integral relationship between natural processes and human activity and how the concept of sustainable design fits into everyday life.
- Improve practices, processes, procedures, products, and services that link long-term sustainable considerations and development.
- Examine policies, regulations, and standards in industry and government to identify barriers to the implementation of the principles of sustainable development.
- Encourage community and business leaders to bring the existing built and natural environments up to sustainable development standards and to reflect the philosophy of sustainability in the design, planning, and management of their communities.

**Comment 1:** Faye Harwell, ASLA (Potomac)

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that both human civilizations and ~~the~~ natural ecosystems represent integral parts of our environment, and therefore must be protected, restored, preserved and perpetuated.

In order to provide a healthy, productive, and socially enriching life for all, the Society urges public and private decision makers to employ sustainable design practices, minimize environmental degradation, avoid excessive consumption, protect ecological and cultural resources, and respect the needs of future generations.

**Policy Committee response:** The Committee agreed with the need to incorporate protection into this policy statement, deciding to amend the first paragraph of the policy statement. It did not agree that with the proposed addition to the second paragraph after the addition of “protected” in the first paragraph. The Committee also eliminated “preserved,” feeling that “perpetuated” was sufficient for this concept.

**Comment 2:** Stephanie Landregan, ASLA (Southern California)

In order to provide a healthy, productive, and socially enriching life for all, the Society urges public and private decision makers to enact sustainable policies, employ sustainable design practices, minimize environmental degradation, avoid excessive consumption, and respect the needs of future generations.

**Policy Committee response:** The Committee agreed with the need to refer to policies and decided instead to incorporate the term into the existing text rather than add another phrase.

**The Committee recommends the following revised Policy Statement:**

*The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that both human civilizations and the natural ecosystems represent integral parts of our environment, and therefore must be protected, restored, preserved, and perpetuated.*

*In order to provide a healthy, productive, and socially enriching life for all, the Society urges public and private decision makers to employ sustainable design policies and practices, minimize environmental degradation, avoid excessive consumption, and respect the needs of future generations.*

**Comment 3:** Stephanie Landregan, ASLA (Southern California)

Amend the Rationale as follows:

Sustainability should be a guiding principle of the landscape planning, design, and management processes and decision making. The goals associated with creating a sustainable environment include:

- Reducing pollution and avoiding waste;
- Avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating human impacts on the environment;
- Protecting and conserving all natural ecosystems;
- Improving production and consumption cycles, including replacement/reduction of non-renewable resources;
- Improving waste collection, recycling and recovery;
- Promoting more efficient energy use and production; and
- Preserving visual and cultural resources for present and future generations.
- Conserve and preserve top soil

**Policy Committee response:** The Committee decided that this addition would add a very specific goal alongside more general categories. Therefore, it does not recommend this change.

**Comment 4:** Stephanie Landregan, ASLA (Southern California)

Amend the Rationale as follows:

Landscape architects, as planners, designers and managers, should share knowledge and encourage communication between colleagues, professionals from other disciplines and fields, public officials and community leaders, clients, developers, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers to:

- Enhance the understanding of and strengthen the integral relationship between natural processes and human activity and how the concept of sustainable design fits into everyday life.
- Improve practices, processes, procedures, products, and services that link long-term sustainable considerations and development.
- Examine and propose policies, regulations, and standards in industry and government to identify barriers to the implementation of the principles of sustainable development.
- Encourage community and business leaders to bring the existing built and natural environments up to sustainable development standards and to reflect the philosophy of sustainability in the design, planning, and management of their communities.

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee agreed with the intent of this change, but decided that there would be greater clarity from switching the second and third bullet points. Therefore, the examination of policies, regulations, etc would occur before action taken by improving practices, processes, etc. The term “policies” will be added to the action bullet as follows:

*Landscape architects, as planners, designers and managers, should share knowledge and encourage communication between colleagues, professionals from other disciplines and fields, public officials and community leaders, clients, developers, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers to:*

- *Enhance the understanding of and strengthen the integral relationship between natural processes and human activity and how the concept of sustainable design fits into everyday life.*
- *Examine policies, regulations, and standards in industry and government to identify barriers to the implementation of the principles of sustainable development.*
- *Improve policies, practices, processes, procedures, products, and services that link long-term sustainable considerations and development.*
- *Encourage community and business leaders to bring the existing built and natural environments up to sustainable development standards and to reflect the philosophy of sustainability in the design, planning, and management of their communities.*

## **WATER QUALITY AND CONSERVATION**

**(1984, R1992, R2000, R2001, R2007)**

### **Policy Statement**

The American Society of Landscape Architects urges efficient use of available water supplies, equitable allocation of water resources, provision of safe drinking water, elimination of all forms of water pollution and land use that conserves and protects water resources and related ecosystems. The Society urges multi-functional integration of water resource facilities with natural ecosystems and human communities.

### **Rationale**

The nation depends on ample, clean water supplies to preserve health, to sustain a high standard of living and to maintain the quality of ecosystems. Water is a finite and valuable resource that is shared among human beings, and between human beings and ecosystems. The natural circulation of water transcends political and property boundaries. Our nation's water quality is being degraded: waterways have become dumping grounds for wastes; fossil water reserves are drawn down; wetlands are being drained and filled; rivers are channelized; building over streams and in floodplains has increased downstream flooding; obsolete infrastructure has generated "non-point" pollution; and water has been wasted by the unnecessary use of highly water-demanding plants and unfit irrigation technology. Impervious surfaces caused by sprawling urban development increase volumes and rates of storm flows, carry pollutants into streams, prevent groundwater recharge, and reduced stream base flows. The channels, dams, and reservoirs built to mitigate these effects have further disrupted ecosystems and human communities.

Maintenance of the nation's economy and lifestyle will depend partly upon our ability to conserve water, avoid water-borne diseases, reduce pollution, and use land appropriately. Healthy habitats can be preserved and maintained. It is possible to rehabilitate degraded aquatic and riparian habitats: planting can be done with locally adapted plants and in self-regenerating ecological communities; runoff and effluents can be reclaimed to reduce the need for imported fresh water; reservoirs of all kinds can be adapted to integrate with multi-functional natural ecosystems and human communities; and new development can be arranged and constructed to minimize impervious cover. Excess urban runoff can be directed through soil and vegetation to recharge ground water, filter through natural cleansing systems, and maintain the base flows of streams.

### **Comment 1:** Stephanie Landregan, ASLA (Southern California)

The American Society of Landscape Architects urges efficient use of available water supplies, equitable allocation of water resources, protection of, and the provision of safe drinking water, elimination of all forms of water pollution and supports and encourages land use that conserves and protects water resources and related ecosystems. The Society urges multi-functional integration of water resource facilities with natural ecosystems and human communities.

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee did not include the "protection of" safe drinking water, but did feel that the issue deserved some further inquiry. There was concern that protection of safe drinking water indicated a security issue rather than a natural resources issue. Plus, protection is already included within the policy statement within the fourth clause (...conserves and protects water resources...). Upon review of the second sentence, the Committee decided to recommend splitting the sentence into two



parts. The word “encourages” from the suggestion was incorporated within the rephrased statement. The phrase “eliminating water pollution” was moved to the last sentence to show a greater connection with land use practices rather than necessarily all sources and impacts on water pollution.

**The Committee recommends the following revised Policy Statement:**

*The American Society of Landscape Architects urges efficient use of available water supplies, equitable allocation of water resources, and the provision of safe drinking water. ~~elimination of all forms of water pollution and~~ ASLA encourages land use practices that ~~conserves and protects~~ conserve and protect water resources and related ecosystems, and eliminate all forms of water pollution. The Society urges multi-functional integration of water resource facilities with natural ecosystems and human communities.*

**Comment 2:** Hunter Beckham, ASLA (St. Louis)

Rationale’s first paragraph:

The nation depends on ample, clean water supplies to preserve health, to sustain a high standard of living and to maintain the quality of ecosystems. Water is a finite and valuable resource that is shared among human beings, and between human beings and ecosystems. The natural circulation of water transcends political and property boundaries. Our nation’s water quality is being degraded: waterways have become dumping grounds for wastes; fossil water reserves are drawn down; wetlands are being drained and filled; rivers are channelized; building over streams and in floodplains has increased downstream flooding; obsolete infrastructure has generated "non-point" pollution; and water has been wasted by the unnecessary use of highly water-demanding plants and unfit irrigation technology. Impervious surfaces caused by sprawling urban development increase volumes and rates of storm flows, carry pollutants into streams, prevent groundwater recharge, and reduced stream base flows, while increasing water temperatures which affect the natural habitat. The channels, dams, and reservoirs built to mitigate these effects have further disrupted ecosystems and human communities.

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee agreed with the comment, only modifying it to be more concise. To make the change more general, they used the word “impacting” instead of “increasing.”

## **OPEN SPACE** **(1962, R1992, R2000, R2001, R2007)**

### **Policy Statement**

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that the current growth and development, whether in urban, suburban, or rural landscapes, create increased pressures on remaining open space. It is imperative that the leadership at the federal, state, and local level develop appropriate strategies and criteria for the preservation and protection of land and water for use as open space. Dedicated open space should be required as a component of all public and private development from small site-specific projects to regional land use plans. Each community should contain ample and ecologically diverse open spaces to meet the range of human and environmental needs and to sustain interconnected natural systems in perpetuity.

### **Rationale**

Open space preservation is a very important component of any responsible development or land use strategy. Depending on scale, open space provides multiple benefits which may include enhanced water and air quality, improved habitat, decreased stormwater run-off and the desirable aesthetics of natural surroundings. Open space preservation within private developments provides additional opportunities for resource protection and active or passive recreation, complementing local governments' actions to acquire and maintain parks and natural areas.

Public open spaces may include view corridors; linear greenways along waterways and railroad rights of way; privately owned lands covered by scenic easements; the preservation of rural landscapes that are threatened by development; wetlands; and the preservation of areas of ecological importance. These areas may contain resources that benefit the public health, safety, and welfare, as well as provide increased biological diversity and other natural functions and values. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, soils, hydrology, and vegetation of an area should be preserved with the open spaces creating a rich network of interconnected parks and natural areas.

Open spaces fulfill multiple functions including opportunities for recreation, environmental education, and natural resource protection. Some natural areas should be set aside as open space without physical access, particularly in sensitive areas such as coastal areas, riparian corridors, steep slopes, canyons and less common and/or intact natural areas.

Open spaces can also be reclaimed from development or from previous extensive modification, such as mining areas, channelized waterways or drained wetlands. Returning an area to a natural condition, even on a small scale, provide benefits to all life.

### **Comment 1: Dave Walters, ASLA (Oregon)**

Last sentence of Policy Statement

I do not agree that each community can provide ample and **ecologically diverse** open space (maybe I do not understand this). Many communities may only have one type of ecological habitat so how can they be diverse (i.e. desert communities). Perhaps the statement should state they shall have

"ecologically diverse open space to match the preexisting ecological open spaces of the community" or "ecologically diverse as appropriate open space."

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee did not agree with this suggestion and decided that as almost all ecosystems exhibit some ecological diversity, the statement should be retained. Natural habitats contain various species of plant and animal life, including ecosystems in desert, prairie, and arctic climates. The Committee also believed that the intent of this policy was not to impose diversity where it was not realistic.

**Comment 2:** Stephanie Landregan, ASLA (Southern California)

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that the current growth and development, whether in urban, suburban, or rural landscapes, create increased pressures on remaining open space. It is imperative that the leadership at the federal, state, and local level develop appropriate policy, strategies, and criteria for the preservation and protection of land and water for use as open space. Dedicated open space should be required as a component of all public and private development from small site-specific projects to regional land use plans. Each community should contain ample and ecologically diverse open spaces to meet the range of human and environmental needs and to sustain interconnected natural systems in perpetuity.

Note: Comment also included grammatical change to rationale that has been implemented.

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee agreed with the suggestion. The Committee also replaced the word "federal" in the second sentence to "national," to reach a wider range of public and private sector leadership.

**Comment 3:** Hunter Beckham, ASLA (St. Louis)

I think it is important to say something to address the 'human mental and physical health benefits related to open space'

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee decided that mental and physical benefits were appropriately addressed by mentioning "human and environmental needs" in the final sentence of the policy statement. The Committee suggests that the Rationale is a more appropriate place for a discussion of specific benefits of open space and welcomes language to elaborate on this topic.

**The Committee recommends the following revised Policy Statement:**

*The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that the current growth and development, whether in urban, suburban, or rural landscapes, create increased pressures on remaining open space. It is imperative that the leadership at the ~~federal~~, national, state, and local level develop appropriate policy, strategies, and criteria for the preservation and protection of land and water for use as open space. Dedicated open space should be required as a component of all public and private development from small site-specific projects to regional land use plans. Each community should contain ample and ecologically diverse open spaces to meet the range of human and environmental needs and to sustain interconnected natural systems in perpetuity.*

## **NATIONAL PARKS**

**(1981, R1991, R2000, R2001, R2007)**

### **Policy Statement**

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that National Parks are critical ecological reserves of biological diversity. As scenic landscape, National Parks provide for restoration of mind and body, serve as models of environmental quality, and preserve a significant natural and cultural heritage. These sites help educate an educationally literate population and serve as environmental barometers and laboratories for scientific inquiry. National Parks are a source of national pride and identity so expansion and professional management of a National Park System is critical to the well being of the nation.

### **Rationale**

National parks had their origin when Yellowstone National Park was authorized by the Congress in 1872. By this action, the people of the United States established the idea of setting aside national and cultural areas of national significance for the benefit of future generations. The concept grew into a national park system including significant sites important to our cultural heritage.

Population pressures are increasing and threatening a wide range of park resources. Air and water pollutants originating outside national parks are fouling park environments and invasions of exotic plants threaten native plant communities. The greatest threats to national parks are external, requiring that park authorities adopt more aggressive external public relations, conservation education, and regional planning programs. Merely setting aside large areas as national parks is not sufficient to protect these resources and efforts should be made to buffer our park areas from this degradation. Where feasible, national parks should encompass viable ecosystems, complete watersheds, and areas that fully protect resource values.

The National Park System should be managed so as to protect their resources in perpetuity. Management should be based on the best scientific data, resource inventories, monitoring systems and research on these natural and cultural resources.

As land values spiral and competition for land stiffens, it becomes more difficult to acquire parklands. While acquisition of park lands in fee title may be the most desirable option, less-than-fee options which protect inherent values should be utilized to reduce expenditures and social disruption. Sometimes a particular value, such as pastoral scenery, can best be protected through less-than-fee means or through partnership arrangements with local governments and private institutions. National parks should be comprehensively planned using multi-disciplinary teams, an ecosystems and sustainable approach, user involvement and assessment of resource suitabilities and limitations. Visitor and management facilities should be subordinate to resource values and in character with the landscape and regional setting, and should be of the highest quality design, construction, and maintenance standards. Carrying capacities should be established, with restrictions on visitation where needed, in order to preserve resources and provide for quality visitor experiences. Alternative transportation systems, which replace private vehicles in the parks and lessen the resource damage caused by excessive traffic and facilities to accommodate that traffic, should be implemented.

**Comment 1:** Stephanie Landregan, ASLA (Southern California)

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that National Parks are critical ecological reserves of biological diversity. As scenic landscape, National Parks provide for restoration of mind and body, serve as models of environmental quality, and preserve a significant natural and cultural heritage. These sites help ~~educate an educationally~~ create an environmentally literate population and serve as environmental barometers and laboratories for scientific inquiry. National Parks are a source of national pride and identity so much so that expansion and professional management of a National Park System is critical to the well being of the nation.

**Policy Committee Response:** The Committee agreed that the existing language regarding an environmentally literate population was awkward. The Committee has reworked that sentence to better address this issue and to reflect that national parks contribute to environmental knowledge, as opposed to “create” it. The grammatical suggestion for the final sentence was modified to replace “so much so that,” with “therefore” for more formal usage for the policy.

**The Policy Committee’s recommendation:**

*The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that national parks are critical ecological reserves of biological diversity. As scenic landscape, national parks provide for restoration of mind and body, serve as models of environmental quality, and preserve a significant natural and cultural heritage. These sites ~~help educate an educationally literate population and serve as environmental barometers and laboratories for scientific inquiry,~~ which provide educational experiences contributing to an environmentally literate population. National parks are a source of national pride and identity ~~so therefore~~ expansion and professional management of a the National Park System is critical to the well being of the nation.*

**Agenda Item #2: Public Policy Amendments—Newly Revised**

**Discussion**

**Purpose:** To present three newly revised policies reviewed by the Policy Committee in light of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

**History and Background:** At the 2005 annual Board of Trustees meeting, Janet Ranganthan, director of the Biological Resources Program at the World Resources Institute, briefed the board on the conclusions of the **Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)**. As one response to this compelling report, the board asked the Policy Committee to undertake a review of ASLA Public Policies and determine changes necessary to ensure that ASLA is properly positioned to be involved in these issues.

The Policy Committee has finished revising three ASLA Public Policies for the consideration of the Board:

- **Rural Landscapes:** While this is a major re-write, it aims to retain the principles in the original, but with a stronger language that helps to describe rural landscapes more fully.
- **Vegetation in the Built Environment:** This policy has been expanded to better highlight the many positive impacts of vegetation in the built environment, such as filtering and absorbing stormwater. In many policies there is a laundry list of professions, creating a danger of leaving an important stakeholder out and diluting the role that landscape architects have with each issue. When this situation arises, the Policy Committee is recommending more generic language that focuses on the need for collaboration.
- **Visual Resources:** The amendments to this policy are intended to emphasize the many benefits of visual resources.

The attached document indicates the amendments recommended by the Policy Committee. Board action is required for changes to the policy statement. Each rationale is considered supporting documentation.

**Governing Rules/Procedures:** ASLA Bylaws, Section 802: Adoption, amendment, or repeal of public policies on matters of professional interest or concern shall require an affirmative vote by two-thirds (2/3) of the entire voting membership of the Board of Trustees...

**Action Requested:** Review of the new policy amendments in preparation for board consideration and action in San Francisco.

**Staff Contact:** Julia Lent

# RURAL LANDSCAPES

(1985, R1990, R2001)

## Policy Statement

~~The American Society of Landscape Architects recognizes the need of a strong public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of America's rural landscape. The rural landscape consists of ecological, economic, and cultural qualities. The protection, preservation, and conservation of this limited resource is vital to the well being of the nation. The Society considers the continued loss and misuse of the rural landscape unwise.~~

~~The Society believes that the conservation of the essential qualities of the rural landscape should be achieved even as the competing needs of a growing population are met. This conservation, for the benefit of future generations, can only be assured through the application of the sound principles and practice of wise land use planning, design and management.~~

The American Society of Landscape Architects urges that the unique qualities of rural landscapes and communities be protected even as competing needs of a growing population and vibrant economies are met. The rural landscape, whether forest, field, farm, or village contains vital ecological, economic and cultural qualities that are a finite and dwindling resource. Their protection, conservation, and preservation are important to the well-being of the nation. Saving these assets for the benefit of future generations can only be achieved through the application of sound policies, principles, and practices including wise land use planning, design, and management.

## Rationale

The term "rural landscape" describes the diverse portion of the nation's land area not densely populated or intensively developed, and not set aside for preservation in a natural state. The rural landscape includes a variety of geological and geographic features such as cropland, forests, deserts, swamps, grasslands, pastures, rivers, and lakes.

The rural landscape provides natural resources, food and fiber, wildlife habitat and inspiration. It supports the diversity of organisms that make human life possible in the nation's complex ecology. The rural landscape needs to continue to accommodate human uses, which are a significant contributor to global socio-economic systems. However, the rural landscape is also the domain of other forms of life, and human uses also need to accommodate biodiversity.

As population expands, greater pressures are placed on the rural landscape to meet a variety of demands. Uses imposed upon the natural landscape without consideration of aesthetic values, natural processes and historic heritage can pose severe and irreversible harm. ~~Urbanization~~ Sprawl, resource exploitation, unwise agricultural practices, ~~expansion of public works and utility infrastructure,~~ and industrial land uses ~~can all~~ may contribute to the degradation or loss of the special qualities of the rural landscape.

Wise stewardship and land use planning of both urban and rural areas can reduce the pressures on the rural landscape, preserving its essential characteristics and supporting its diverse natural and managed functions.

# VEGETATION IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (R2001<sup>\*</sup>)

## Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that the appropriate use of vegetation in the built environment is a major influence on the quality of human life and in creating a healthy environment. Trees, shrubs, herbaceous, and aquatic plants ~~material~~ filter pollutants in the air and water, mitigate wind and reduce solar heat gain, and stabilize soil to prevent or reduce erosion. These plants also create animal habitat, help filter and absorb stormwater runoff, and may help mitigate carbon emissions. Efficient use of plants can reduce energy needs. Plants provide an effective counterpoint to the built environment and create places of beauty. ~~and provide an aesthetic counterpoint to the built environment.~~ The cumulative effects of these attributes are essential to balancing the effects of humans on the land. Furthermore, the native plant communities of a region provide some of the strongest cues to the unique identity of a place and generally require less maintenance and irrigation. The collaboration of design and science is critical to the creation of a healthy growing environment. ~~In turn the creation of a healthy growing environment for the plants requires the collaboration of arborists, horticulturalists, landscape architects, and native plant biologists.~~

## Rationale

Our sense of place is influenced by many factors. As population increases and suburban and urban areas expand, ~~whether recreating indigenous native communities or representative communities,~~ vegetation should be integrated into the built environment, with attention given to appropriate species selection and to creating areas planting spaces that are suitable to optimal plant growth and health.

The Society endorses the following:

1. Development of appropriate federal, and state, and local policies regarding ~~for the use of native, indigenous, species in projects while avoiding the use of known~~ noxious and invasive species.
2. Emphasis on the importance of vegetation in the built environment and the beneficial effects of plants on the environment.
3. The development of systems and tools to ensure that all plant professionals are fully educated in the proper methods of plant selection, planting practices, and post construction maintenance.
4. Collaboration and information exchange between the various plant professionals, professional groups and the public to facilitate sound plant selection and planting practices.
5. Continued research on the ability of plants to help mitigate impacts of global climate change and reducing atmospheric concentrations of carbon emissions.

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<sup>\*</sup> Replaces Urban Forestry Policy (1991, R2001) and Atmospheric Pollution Policy (R2000, R2001)



## **VISUAL RESOURCES** **(1965, R1991, R2001)**

### **Policy Statement**

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that the ~~character and condition~~ quality of the nation's visual environment is as important a resource as that of the nation's natural, historic, and cultural resources. The visual landscape, ~~both be it on public and or private lands in rural and or urban areas,~~ reflects our national attitudes and actions toward caring for the Earth. It is a record visible to all, written on the face of the land, revealing our successes and failures in meeting our stewardship responsibilities. The visual landscape's significance is its contribution to our cognitive development, aesthetic experience, spiritual enrichment, and psychological renewal. Effective protection, enhancement and management of the visual environment is best realized through the combined efforts of landscape architects and other environmental design professionals, an enlightened public, and committed government agencies. ~~Every city, region, and rural area in the nation should have a visual environment that shows respect for the landscape. Proper management of the visual environment can only be realized if there is an enlightened public and willing and committed government agencies.~~

### **Rationale**

The visual environment is derived from the view of natural and man-made elements. The characteristics of the landscape are distinct and offer a pleasing and/or memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape—landform, water, vegetation and human development—contribute to or detract from the quality of the visual environment.

Humans have an unprecedented ability to make large-scale and irreversible modifications to the land. The loss and degradation of important visual resources across the nation are often unnecessary or result from lack of understanding. The lack of public awareness about the visual impacts of our actions on the landscape coupled with a lack of understanding of the tools and techniques through which visual integrity can be maintained can lead to degradation of the visual environment. The means exist to undertake place-based design that evaluates the existing resources and the cultural uses of these resources, ultimately respecting the community's needs and uses of place.

The Society believes that the following actions are necessary to ensure the quality of the visual environment:

1. The evaluation, maintenance, and enhancement of the ~~existing~~ visual quality of public and private lands, and the safeguarding of them from actions that would degrade or destroy our nation's scenic resources.
2. Creation of a heightened public awareness of our natural and cultural landscapes as a national resource, so that their scenic values are routinely and effectively incorporated into decision-making at all levels of private and governmental practice.
3. Promotion of the widespread understanding and application of available technology for landscape management.
4. Advocacy of the vigorous application of existing statutes, policies, ordinances, and guidelines which encourage or mandate protection, enhancement, or restoration of the visual environment.

5. Advocacy of the adoption of new or additional legislation, policies, and guidelines that encourage or mandate the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the visual environment in the project review and approval process.