Environmental Sustainability (B205, 206, R2001, R2007, R2021)

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes environmental sustainability is the stable coexistence of natural and built ecosystems and human activity, and that environmental sustainability is a necessary component of the long-term viability of society's health, safety, and welfare. ASLA encourages design principles that support and enhance the prosperity of natural ecosystems. ASLA recommends that natural ecosystems and human activity be accounted for in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance phases of a project.

Therefore, ASLA encourages implementing sustainable design policies and practices that:
- Maximize quantifiable environmental benefits
- Maintain and enhance ecosystem processes
- Conserve resources

Justification

Landscape Architects are educated and trained in the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices, including responses to climate change. Landscape architecture skillsets are used to develop and improve policies, practices, and services that affect environmental sustainability and enhance the understanding of the integral relationship between natural and manmade systems.

Issue

The environment is at risk from many factors including development, water scarcity and surplus, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and pollution. Human health and well-being depends on stable natural resources and ecosystem services. Environmentally sustainable practices are necessary to conserve and sustain natural resources and ecosystems. Sustainable design strives to mitigate human impacts to the environment by protecting ecosystems, conserving energy use, reducing pollution, minimizing waste, and preserving visual and cultural resources for future generations.

Human activity and development often negatively impact the environment. Incorporating sustainable design principles and practices into landscape planning, design, construction, and management processes can mitigate these impacts in three general categories:

1. Environmental: preserving and enhancing the integrity of environmental systems and improving environmental stewardship.
2. Social: promoting patterns of human behavior that achieve net-zero and/or positive impacts to the environment, and increase equitable connections to the environment that improve human health and well-being
3. Economic: encourage businesses and organizations to balance fiscal profitability with efficient use of resources.

Climate change is increasing the risk to our environment and amplifying the need for environmental sustainability. Prioritizing sustainable and environmentally conscious
design practices are critical to addressing increasing impacts of climate change on our environment, society, and economy.

**Resources**

**Designing Our Future: Sustainable Landscapes**
What are Sustainable Landscapes?
[https://www.asla.org/sustainablelandscapes/about.html](https://www.asla.org/sustainablelandscapes/about.html)

**Environmental Models: Sustainable Landscapes**
[https://www.asla.org/ContentDetail.aspx?id=31830](https://www.asla.org/ContentDetail.aspx?id=31830)

What is environmental sustainability? Small business
[https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-sustainability-3157876](https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-sustainability-3157876)

**Building Design & Construction white paper, EPA**

**Sustainability, EPA**
[https://www.epa.gov/sustainability](https://www.epa.gov/sustainability)

**Planning for Environmental Sustainability, USGBC**
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299251812_Planning_for_Environmental_Sustainability_Learning_from_LEED_and_the_USGBC](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299251812_Planning_for_Environmental_Sustainability_Learning_from_LEED_and_the_USGBC)

**Interrelated Policies**

- Agriculture
- Air Quality
- Climate Change and Resilience
- Coastal Zones
- Environmental Education
- Environmental Justice
- Human Health and Well-Being
- Invasive Species
- Livable Communities
- National Parks
- Open Space
- Public Lands
- Rural Landscapes
- State, Regional, and Local Parks, and Trail Systems
- Transgenic Plants and the Environment
- Vegetation and the Built Environment
- Urban and Local Agriculture
- Urban Growth and Development
- Water Quality and Conservation
- Waterways
- Wetlands
- Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat