

Outline for ASLA Annual Meeting Education Session in Minnesota - October 2006.

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Peer-Selected 90-minute Education Session, October 9, 2006

Defining Ecological Restoration Success: Principles, Project Case Studies, and Global Implications

Session Intentions & Speaker Introductions: Lee Skabelund

The purpose of this educational session was to help planners, designers, and landscape architects become more adept at ecological restoration practice. Collectively, the presentations examined what planners and designers need to know and do to successfully incorporate ecological restoration into their project work and to effectively contribute to interdisciplinary ecological restoration project teams. Principles and guidelines for ecological restoration – including ways to help combat invasive species – were presented.

Defining Success in Ecological Restoration.

[Lee R. Skabelund \(Assistant Professor at Kansas State University\)](#) summarized findings from work on a paper titled “Successful Ecological Restoration: A Framework for Planning/Design Professionals”. The importance of developing meaningful ecological restoration goals, objectives, and performance criteria was discussed and a number of case studies were presented.

As one example, Andropogon’s Avalon Park and Preserve project in Long Island, NY was used to discuss the following “indicators of success”: employs aesthetics to create pleasing human experiences; is acceptable to the client, stakeholders, and the public; and, is properly designed, implemented, managed, and monitored (uses appropriate references, specifies appropriate materials, employs appropriate tools and techniques, and is enjoyed and cared for over the long term).

Project Examples & Case Studies within the Lower Mississippi River Watershed

[Kenneth Bahlinger \(Louisiana Department of Natural Resources\)](#) is a [Landscape Architect](#) currently [coordinating ecological restoration projects along the Gulf Coast](#). Kenneth discussed implemented and anticipated ecological restoration efforts along the Gulf Coast of Louisiana following a series of powerful hurricanes that have hit the Gulf Coast in recent years, including Katrina and Rita.

The discussion of restoration/reclamation along the Gulf Coast reveals a sophisticated effort to create functional ecosystems along the Mississippi River as part of an ambitious, scientifically-based ecological restoration program.

Global Implications of Ecological Restoration & Land Reclamation Activities.

[Keith Bowers \(President of Biohabitats; Chair of the Board of Directors for the Society for Ecological Restoration International\)](#) discussed pressing ecological restoration needs and opportunities around the world, sharing what he has learned during his tenure as President of the Society for Ecological Restoration International.

The vital role of traditional cultures and local communities in ecological restoration was a primary focus of this presentation.

Questions and Open Discussion: Speakers and the audience briefly discussed issues related to ecological restoration planning, design and implementation (including the use and definition of key terms); research needs related to the practice of ecological restoration; and opportunities for integrating landscape architectural design with the restoration of functional ecosystems in landscape contexts large and small.