



Turning a New Leaf Conference
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
November 16, 2013

Track A - Marketing Nature: How to Sell Conservation Landscaping

Session A.1 – An Overview of the Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SITES)™

Presenters:

Susan Hall is a Landscape Designer with a degree in Landscape Design and Turfgrass Management and a minor in Urban Agriculture. She was employed by ToledoGrows, a nonprofit promoter of Urban Agriculture and manager of over 100 neighborhood community gardens. Susan is a WV Master Gardener and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's in Environmental Science at Shepherd University.

Tom Hall, ASLA, AICP, is a licensed Landscape Architect and member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. He served as the West Virginia Trustee to the American Society of Landscape Architects Board of Trustees and is currently finishing his third year as President of the West Virginia Chapter. He received his BSLA from WVU and spent 12 years developing projects in central West Virginia, most notably the 2,000 acre master-planned community of Charles Pointe in Bridgeport, WV.

**Note: Susan and Tom Hall graciously agreed to serve as alternative presenters for this session when the primary presenters were obliged to attend the annual ASLA meeting.*

Abstract:

The Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SITES™) program is an interdisciplinary effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin and the United States Botanic Garden in conjunction with a diverse group of stakeholder organizations to transform land development and management practices with the first national rating system for sustainable landscapes. These guidelines apply to any type of designed landscape, with or without buildings, ranging from shopping malls, streetscapes, subdivisions, corporate and academic campuses, transportation corridors, parks and recreation areas, all the way to single family homes. The SITES Initiative is predicated on a desire to have some metric for sustainability in landscape context; and also to provide another tool to demonstrate professional qualification and project quality.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), a stakeholder in the Initiative, the SITES Rating System builds upon site-related content in the LEED® Green Building Rating System™. Modeled after LEED®, the SITES benchmarks and Rating System were published in the *Sustainable Sites Initiative Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks 2009*. Since then, the Rating System has been tested by over 150 pilot projects. The prerequisites and credits in the 2009 report are currently being updated based on experience gained through the two-year pilot program. As revised, the benchmarks include 18 prerequisites and 49 potential credits. Prerequisites and credits cover areas such as the use of greenfields, brownfields or grayfields; materials; soils and vegetation; and construction and maintenance. When finalized in 2014, the *SITES v2 Rating System and Reference Guide* will be prepared for open enrollment. The guidelines and performance benchmarks, as well as the rating system, can be used by anyone in the design, construction, and maintenance fields, as well as homeowners, governments, and those who maintain existing green building standards.

There is extensive information about the Sustainable SITES Initiative™, including guidelines and performance benchmarks and profiles of many pilot projects, at www.sustainablesites.org/