When NDAL’s first symposium took place in 1990, native plants were largely an afterthought in the landscape professions. The changes since then have been astounding, and NDAL is proud to have played a part. While “ecology into design” has and will remain NDAL’s focus, we have increasingly understood that a “real world ecology” must always consider the influences of people past and present. Our 30th anniversary program will illustrate how an expanded definition of “ecological design”—including contributions from garden history, agroecology, anthropology, social justice, art, and of course the ecological sciences—can yield environmentally sound, yet culturally connected landscapes.
Registration and Continental Breakfast – 8:15 a.m.
Program begins at 9 a.m.

Reflecting on New Directions in the American Landscape (1½ hrs) – Larry Weiner
Drawing from his own design and restoration work, Larry Weiner will explore how disturbance events, agricultural traditions, historic practices, and social justice are informing his design vision and landscapes long term. His discussion sets the stage for considering new avenues for our field at the 30th annual New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL) conference.

Managed Ecological Succession as a Response to Major Disturbance Events (1 hr) – William Young
Whether from a storm or a bulldozer, large scale disturbance reverts ecological succession. Aligning natural regenerative processes with a planting and management plan offers a highly efficient way of restoring vegetation—or even improving it. Landscape architect and restoration ecologist William Young will illustrate through projects from his many years on the cutting edge of ecology-based design.

Day 1

Inspirational Vignettes from Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens (1 hr) – William Cullina
More than a collection of plants, the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens is a collection of gardens. Master horticulturist and Garden President and CEO William Cullina will show garden compositions based on native plant communities and artistic inspiration. Regardless of scale, these vignettes provide starting models for the marriage of ecology, horticulture, and design.

New Perspectives on Edible Landscapes: From Regenerative Agriculture to Foraged Flavors (1½ hrs) –
Part 1: Chad Adams
Exciting opportunities exist for landscape designers to impact the design and future of our food system while also restoring ecosystems and addressing climate change. Landscape architect Chad Adams will discuss strategies of regenerative agriculture and the role for design on projects ranging from 3 to 4,000 acres.

Part 2: Tama Matsuoka Wong
Professional forager and wild food purveyor Tama Matsuoka Wong will demonstrate how to appreciate the diversity of wild, uncultivated plants at the nation’s premiere restaurants could transform how designers conceive of edible landscapes. She will discuss ethical foraging, “wild farming,” delicious management of invasive exotics, and the untapped flavors of our native flora.

Imposition or Revelation? Design and the Nature of Contradiction (1½ hrs) – Rick Darke
What is the difference between revealed order and imposed order? It takes a good gardener to see order where none is apparent, and a prepared mind to see opportunity in the contradictory nature of living landscapes. Rick Darke will illustrate and explain dynamic design models informed by the art of observation and stewardship by strategic interventions.

Eveing reception: A 30th-anniversary party with music, book signings, and complimentary wine, beer, and hors d’oeuvres. Tastings of native plant delicacies by speaker Tama Matsuoka Wong and her four-star chef collaborators will also be featured.

Day 2

Registration and Continental Breakfast – 8:30 a.m.

Listening to Landscapes: Augmenting Environments with Media Overlays (50 min) – Teri Ruch
How might we listen to landscape in new ways? Artist Teri Ruch has asked this question for the past twenty years through her plant-based art practice that blends sound and environment using new mobile media. From the Back Bay Fens to the Berlin Tiergarten, her works have woken audio recordings into the landscape using custom interactive sound playback software that allows sounds to play in response to visitor’s movement through the environment.

Managing Change with Continuity (1 hr) – Charles Birnbaum
With urban growth occurring at a relentless pace, this lecture emphasizes the need for landscape designers to integrate site history into new designs without doing so nostalgically. Drawing on historic design examples of change with continuity, Charles Birnbaum will explore recent projects that demonstrate how historic preservation can blend with modern design and ecological enhancement.

Reality Check: Soil Science During Construction (50 min) John Swallow
Plants grow in real soil, not soil specifications. For that reason, how soil is handled and analyzed during construction can critically affect whether the design vision is achieved. One of the nation’s leading soil scientists will discuss best and worst practices of soil placement, on-site and laboratory testing, and when corrective measures are needed. He will also comment on new, often misunderstood soil products, including compost teas and biochar.

Landscape Design in Underserved Communities (1½ hrs)
Part 1 – Lecture: Mickey Fearn (PA only), Kofi Boone (CT only)
Landscape design can promote solutions to gripping challenges like environmental justice and social equity. This lecture will demonstrate how historic preservation can blend with modern design and ecological enhancement.

Part 2 – Lecture: Alexa Bosse, Alexa Bosse (PA only)
Landscape design can promote solutions to gripping challenges like environmental justice and social equity. This lecture will explore how historic preservation can blend with modern design and ecological enhancement.

Panelists will explore issues of social justice in design, including ways of engaging diverse communities and achieving equity in designed landscapes.

Advancing Science and Design: Exploring the Science of Ecology in Contemporary Landscape Architecture (50 min) Thomas Baker
Conservation biologist Thomas Baker will explore the evolving process of incorporating ecological science into landscape design and how collaboration between scientists and designers holds promise for creating high performing landscapes that support scientific discovery and advancement. The scope of work and opportunities presented will include urban areas, managed and productive landscapes, and sites in between.

Culture, Ecology, and Equity as Drivers of Contemporary Landscape Design (1 hr) – Thomas Wolz
Thomas Wolz will present projects from the Nelson Byrd Woltz (NBW) portfolio that embody the firm’s research-based approach. He will show projects across tropologies, from a botanic garden to a working farm to a large public park to a residential urban terrace. Each case study illustrates how deep research into ecological communities and cultures shaping the landscape can become legible in contemporary site-specific narratives.

Mail-in Registration Form

Please print clearly:

Name(s) ______________________ ______________________
Check one: __ Early Bird Regular Rate $345 __ Regular Rate $370
Company (if applicable) __ Early Bird Student Rate $195 __ Student Rate $220
__ Vegetarian lunch __ Vegan lunch __ Gluten-free lunch

AMOUNT PAID $ __________

For payment by credit card please call or use the secure online registration options.

Registration will be refunded only if notification is received no later than seven (7) working days prior to the less a $20 processing fee.

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A Note from the Conference Founder

Answering the question “Tell me something I don’t know” can be easy or hard depending on who’s asking. Given the level of expertise found in the typical NDAL audience, answering that question year after year can be downright intimidating—intimidating but motivating.

Assembling programs as coherent, in-depth curricula; including innovative presenters who are both recognized pioneers and ‘below the radar’ practitioners; delving into promising yet little explored approaches; and always striving to provide a path from theory back to practicality, has been our response. Your response has been to attend, in many cases repeatedly. To those who have not yet taken part, we invite you to join this ongoing endeavor.

So, on behalf of myself and my long-time collaborators, Jan McFarlan of Morris Arboretum, Glenn Dreyer of Connecticut College Arboretum, and Jenna Webster of Larry Weaner Landscape Associates, thanks for your participation—and thanks for the motivation.

Speakers

Chad Adams is the President of Ground Plan Studio. With a background as a planner, landscape architect, farmer, and ecologist, he brings whole systems problem solving and scientific rigor to his projects. Chad has worked at Bio-Logical Capital, Urban Villages, Andropogon Associates, EDM Environmental Design and Management, Wallace Roberts & Todd, and Scenic Hudson.

Thomas Baker is a conservation biologist with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architecture, where he leads ecological research and monitoring efforts. He previously worked as a research entomologist for Cornell University and Virginia Tech.

Charles Birnbaum is President and CEO of The Cultural Landscape Foundation. He was previously the coordinator of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative and spent a decade in private practice in New York City. He has authored and edited numerous publications and received ASLA’s President’s Medal in 2009 and The ASLA Medal in 2017.

Kofi Boone is Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at North Carolina State University focusing on environmental justice and tools for enhanced community engagement and design. Kofi previously served as studio leader at JJR (formerly Johnson, Johnson, and Roy) where he worked on interdisciplinary urban design and planning projects.

Alexa Bosse is an architect and landscape architect. Her firm, Hinge Collective, works with community organizations, city officials, local businesses, residents, and youth groups to build consensus around the realization of safe, quality public spaces. She previously served as Program Director for the Community Design Collaborative’s Play Space initiative and international design competition.

William Cullina is the president and CEO of the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens and formerly their Director of Horticulture. He served as the nursery director for the New England Wildflower Society, lectures widely, and is well-known for his books on North American native plants.

Rick Darke is a Pennsylvania-based consultant, author and photographer. His work is grounded in an observational ethic that blends ecology, horticulture, and cultural geography in the design and stewardship of living landscapes. He has authored numerous publications, most recently Gardens of the High Line: Elevating the Nature of Modern Landscapes (with Piet Oudolf).

Mickey Fearn has been a parks, recreation, and conservation professional for over 45 years. He is currently a Professor of Practice in the North Carolina State University’s School of Natural Resources. From 2008 until 2013, Mickey served as the National Park Service’s Deputy Director for Communications and Community Assistance. His responsibilities included outreach and communications to groups currently underrepresented in parks, recreation, and conservation.

Teri Rueb is a Professor in the Department of Critical Media Practices at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Her work resides at the intersection of sound, mobile media, and land-based practices. For the past 20 years she has created sound installations in which sounds play back in response to one’s movement in the landscape as sensed by GPS.

John Swallow, principal and founder of Pine & Swallow Environmental, has more than forty years of experience in soil science, environmental science, land reclamation, and horticulture. He is involved in design of soil-water-horticultural systems on a wide range of projects. He serves on the Technical Core and Soils Committee for the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES).


Thomas Woltz is the owner of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects. His numerous recognitions include being named Design Innovator of the Year by Wall Street Journal Magazine in 2013 and joining ASLA’s Council of Fellows in 2011. Thomas serves on the board of The Cultural Landscape Foundation and the University of Virginia School of Architecture Foundation.

Tama Matsuoka Wong is a wild food forager and purveyor for some of the nation’s top restaurants. She co-authored the books Foraged Flavor: Finding Fabulous Ingredients in Your Backyard or Farmer’s Market and Scraps, Wilt and Weeds: Turning Wasted Food into Plenty. In 2007 Tama was named Steward of the Year by the New Jersey Forest Service.

William Young works for the restoration firm Dawson Corporation and is the founder of Young Environmental, LLC, a design/build firm specializing in ecological restoration. He is a professional wetland scientist and Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner.

Comments from 2018 Conference Attendees:

“Excellent symposium—the material is inspiring and validates my experience in business.”

“I am struck by the uniqueness of the program. No one else is offering this valuable service. Thank you!”

“Recharges our enthusiasm each and every time.”