

# WASLA Newsletter

Washington Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects

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MAY 2009

## Messages

### SB 5273 - PRACTICE ACT LICENSURE BILL SIGNED INTO LAW!

**Greg Murphy, ASLA**  
**WASLA Government Affairs Committee**

On Wednesday May 6th, in a ceremony attended by members of the WASLA Government Affairs Committee, Governor Gregoire signed SB 5273 into law, upgrading Washington's landscape architecture title law into a practice act. Passing this bill completes a five-year effort and makes Washington the 45th state to upgrade to practice act licensure.

SB 5273 had a rough ride through the legislature, but due to persistence by our Senate sponsors, our lobbyist Terri Hotvedt, and an outpouring of effort by Washington's Landscape Architects, the bill passed both the House and Senate. To learn how your legislators voted on the bill, follow this link <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>, enter the bill number and then click on the "view roll call" link. Please send a note of thanks to representatives who voted yes, or introduce yourself to the "no" votes and explain the valuable and specialized services landscape architects provide.

Washington's new Practice Act will take effect in July of 2010 when the State will require that anyone who practices landscape architecture obtain a license to do so. This is a change from the current law, which regulates use of the title "landscape architect" but allows anyone to perform landscape architectural services under a different title. In preparation for the new law, WASLA will work with the Board of Registration for Landscape Architects to assist in the rule making and implementation of the new law. Detailed discussion of the

## Events Calendar

**May 15**  
[Emerging Professionals Happy Hour Series](#)

**May 20**  
[BC Land Summit](#)

**May 27**  
[Living with Flooding: Floodplain Management in the 21st Century](#)

**June 3**  
[Mukilteo's Green City Hall](#)

**June 10**  
[Developing a Critical Areas Training Program](#)

**June 19**  
[Emerging Professionals Happy Hour Series](#)

**August 21**  
[Emerging Professionals Happy Hour Series](#)

**September 18**  
[Emerging Professionals Happy Hour Series](#)

**October 16**  
[Emerging Professionals Happy Hour Series](#)

## Our Sponsors



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[www.cgcompost.com](http://www.cgcompost.com)



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changes will follow in upcoming newsletter articles.

The closing days of the legislative session showed our ASLA chapter and the dedication of our State's practitioners at their finest. The democratic process represents those who show up, and this year, the landscape architects of Washington State showed up. Let the success of this effort be only the beginning of WASLA's assistance to the State Government in shaping the laws, programs, budgets and policies that affect the development and use of Washington's unique landscape.

## REPORT FROM TRUSTEES' MID-YEAR MEETING

### Don Benson, ASLA, AICP, WASLA Trustee

Sally Reynolds, the WASLA Chapter Nominee for an Honorary ASLA Membership, was selected for that honor. I was hopeful this would occur, despite the fact that she didn't have a "Nationally-known" presence, and it occurred. Congratulations Sally!

The second piece of good news is that Liz Birkholz of NBBJ, and an active member of WASLA, was elected ASLA Vice-President of Communications. This is a high honor for WASLA and I don't recall that any Chapter member (at least in the last 20 years or so) has ever been elected to an ASLA National Office. Way to go Liz!

As your Trustee, I will be attending the ASLA Mid-Year Meeting and Lobby Day later this month. If you have any issues you would like me to raise or relay at the meeting, please contact me (Don Benson, 206-438-2027 or [don\\_benson@urscorp.com](mailto:don_benson@urscorp.com)).

## EDITOR'S NOTE

If you would like to contribute to the WASLA Monthly Newsletter please send inquiries to Jocelyn Freiling at [jocelynlf@mac.com](mailto:jocelynlf@mac.com).

## Announcements

## EMERGING PROFESSIONALS HAPPY HOUR SERIES

**Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd, Seattle, WA**

**May 15, 2009**

**5:30-7:00 pm**

Join us May 15th at Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd for the 2009 AIA/WASLA Emerging Professionals Happy Hour Series.

The AIA/WASLA Happy Hour Series has been a great success since its launch last year. Students, young professionals, interns, senior staff, management and principals have enjoyed a great evening of food and drink as design offices in the Seattle area have showcased their firm as well as award winning projects. Be there at 5:30 on May 15th as GGN continues the series.

Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd  
Pier 55, Floor 3  
1101 Alaskan Way  
Seattle, WA 98101  
[www.ggnltd.com](http://www.ggnltd.com)

#### **AIA+2030 PROFESSIONAL SERIES**

<http://www.aiaseattle.org/aia2030>

Prepare your firm and your career for the new energy frontier.

The AIA+2030 Professional Series helps design professionals create buildings that meet the ambitious energy efficiency goals of the 2030 Challenge. Ten four-hour sessions offer strategies to reach 50% reduction in fossil fuel greenhouse gas emissions, giving design professionals the knowledge and leverage to create next-generation, super-efficient buildings- and provide firms with the skills that will set them apart in the marketplace.

Sessions assume participants have an intermediate understanding of the suite of energy efficiency strategies and technologies available to a design professional. Session information is cumulative and aims to provide an overall understanding of specific design strategies and how they can be integrated to provide optimal results. Cascadia region case studies will illustrate concepts and lessons learned. Experts from both academia and active practice will lead the sessions. Participants will be provided tools to take back to their firms to help share and implement the knowledge and skills gained.

In order to maximize group learning and information transfer, session attendance will be limited to 60 seats. While it is highly recommended that individuals experience the series in its entirety, individual class seats will be released if space permits.

**ALL SESSIONS:** 8:30am-12:30pm  
4LU/4HSW/4SD (Sustainable Design) credits per session  
|Pricing\*| 10-SESSION PACKAGE:  
\$800 members, \$1,200 nonmembers \$400 associates  
\*Note: Payment plans available.

**May 15** The 2030 Challenge: setting + achieving energy goals with integrated design

**June 19** Getting to 50: the power of targets + load reduction

**July 17** Accentuate the positive: climate responsive design

**Sept 18** Skins: the importance of the thermal envelope

**Oct 16** Passively aggressive: employing passive systems for load reduction

**Nov 13** Illuminating savings: daylighting and integrated lighting strategies

**Dec 11**  
Right-sized: equipment and controls for super-efficient building systems

**Jan 15, 2010**  
Site power: renewable energy opportunities

**Feb 19** The hand-off + staying in shape: operations, maintenance + education

**March 19** Putting it all together: achieving 2030 goals on the project and at the office

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Thursday, August 27, 2009**  
**Third Annual WRPA and WASLA Golf Tournament**

**The Golf Club at Redmond Ridge**

11825 Trilogy Parkway NE  
Redmond, WA 98053

<http://www.redmondridgegolf.com>

Shotgun Start: 8:00 a.m.



Washington Recreation and Park Association and Washington Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects will again join together for prizes, fun, good food, and a winning round of golf.

This 2009 Event includes:

- Summer Schedule
- Shotgun Start
- Hole-in-One CASH prize
- Longest Drive / Closest to the Pin
- and much...much...more

Tournament entry fee, sponsorship information, online registration, and further details coming soon. Please contact Keith Bates, [keith.bates@otak.com](mailto:keith.bates@otak.com), if you have questions.

## HOW TO USE RECOVERY ACT FUNDS FOR YOUR GREEN PROJECT

### [More Information](#)

Attend a webcast on MAY 14, 2009, 2-4 PM EST to learn how to access State Revolving Fund Recovery Act funding for green and innovative projects.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) programs would like to invite you to a webcast introducing and explaining the Green Project Reserve for CWSRF Recovery Act funding.

To learn more about this webcast, or to register and attend, please visit the following website:

[https://www.eventbuilder.com/event\\_desc.asp?p\\_event=e7f4g7n2](https://www.eventbuilder.com/event_desc.asp?p_event=e7f4g7n2)

Connections are limited, so if multiple individuals at your organization are interested in participating, please consider accessing the webcast from the same computer.

About the CWSRF: The Clean Water State Revolving Fund programs have been active in every state and Puerto Rico for over twenty years. In 2008, the CWSRF programs made over

\$5.8 billion in loans for wastewater, nonpoint source, and estuary projects. SRF borrowers have saved an average of 20% compared to conventional financing.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund programs received \$4 billion dollars in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, and will help create jobs by funding projects to improve and maintain water quality in communities across the country. Twenty percent of ARRA money has been placed in a Green Project Reserve, and is specifically targeted towards green and alternative projects.

For information, see EPA's Recovery Act website, [www.epa.gov/recovery/](http://www.epa.gov/recovery/).

Please contact Katherine Hess at EPA with questions, [hess.katherine@epa.gov](mailto:hess.katherine@epa.gov).

## USING COMPOST TO CREATE HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE SOILS

### Ron Alexander

Landscape architects are often plagued with having to design sustainable landscape projects on sites that are void of true topsoil (only subsoil left). In many other cases, the soil that does exist is simply substandard. General and landscape contractors on a typical construction site project often move around and remove vast quantities of soil. These contractors must then return later and replace the original soil with a different purchased soil. In reality, it is often difficult to know what the quality of the soils brought onto a project site is, because the topsoil industry is unregulated and not enough soil testing is completed. With this said, it is understood that most landscapes fail because of poor soil conditions, or poor maintenance practices (including watering). Often, the landscape architect is concerned about soil quality, but the project's budget will not allow them to address it. Well, there is a solution to this dilemma. That solution is **compost**.

For many years topsoil suppliers have been providing blended soils enhanced with compost to the landscaping industry. Many composters also produce and supply high quality blended topsoils. Often these blended topsoils contain 25% to 33% compost, thereby possessing a minimum of 5 to 10% organic matter, which are excellent values for landscape soils.

There is also another option - creating topsoil right on the actual jobsite. "On-site" topsoil manufacturing is often less expensive than purchasing a pre-blended soil and can be used to make productive topsoil from various depleted soils, sands and subsoil. One can use this technique on sites to establish both landscape planting beds and/or turf. In these applications, a 2 to 3 inch application rate of compost is

typically applied, and then uniformly incorporated to a depth of 8 to 12 inches. This technique is so effective that it has not only been widely used in landscaping throughout the US, but also in reclaiming brownfield, contaminated, and other difficult to vegetate sites. Further, this on-site soil amendment technique provides other economic and environmental benefits. Not only does a contractor remove less soil from the project jobsite (reducing hauling and disposal costs), but in this process they also import much less material (often 1/3 the volume of bringing in commercial topsoil). Further, the soil will typically possess 5% organic matter content or more, providing an excellent ability to absorb rainwater and nutrients. The proper compost inclusion rate should be based on soil test results (or the default figures can be used from *BMP T5.13 Post-Construction Soil Quality and Depth* - see below). Compost producers and agronomists may also provide input as far as application rates.

New soil Best Management Practices (BMPs) have already taken effect, or soon will, in the counties surrounding the Puget Sound. The new BMP protects and improves soil quality because of its important link to reducing surface water contamination. Organically rich permeable soils have the ability absorb water, and thus contaminants (e.g., excess nutrients, heavy metals, PAH's, etc.), as well as to reduce erosion (sedimentation). Washington State DOE's stormwater *BMP T5.13 Post Construction Soil Quality and Depth* requires that every construction site leaves at least 12 inches of un-compacted soil, and that the upper 8 inches have sufficient organic content to support a healthy landscape and soak up most rainfall. Soils used for turf establishment must have a minimum organic matter content of 5%, while planting beds require a 10% organic matter content. The State BMP (available with a how-to *Building Soil* manual at [www.BuildingSoil.org](http://www.BuildingSoil.org), or with more information for design professionals at [www.SoilsforSalmon.org](http://www.SoilsforSalmon.org)) lays out four options for soil management on different areas of sites.

Aside from obeying ordinances and the documented environmental benefits, the use of compost in this manner has been tried and tested for almost 25 years in other parts of the country. Further, compost's ability to improve soils physically, chemically and biologically supports long-term success in the landscape. There are short-term options which may be used, but manufacturing topsoil with compost can keep your soil and your landscape fit for a decade!

For additional information on compost and compost use, go to the following web links:

- Washington Organic Recycling Council (WORC) - [www.compostwashington.org](http://www.compostwashington.org) - tools and resources for compost specification and use on a variety of projects
- Building Soils - [www.BuildingSoil.org](http://www.BuildingSoil.org) - basic soil BMP

information for builders

- Soils for Salmon - [www.SoilsforSalmon.org](http://www.SoilsforSalmon.org) - more background and design specifications on the soil BMP, including a compost, mulch, and soil calculator spreadsheet
- Sustainable Sites - [www.SustainableSites.org](http://www.SustainableSites.org) - national landscape design guidelines
- US Composting Council - [www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org) - compost quality and use standards

*Author: Ron Alexander is a horticulturist with over 25 years of experience working with compost and other organic recycled products. He has also authored the Field Guide to Compost Use, and Landscape Architecture Specifications for Compost Utilization, and AASHTO Compost Use in Erosion Control Specifications, as well as over 200 other related publications. Mr. Alexander is also the technical manager of a Department of Ecology and WORC grant project for educating about the use of compost in soil manufacturing and erosion control, as a means to improve surface water quality. [www.alexassoc.net](http://www.alexassoc.net).*

*This document was developed by the Washington Organic Recycling Council, and partially funded by a grant from the Washington Department of Ecology. While these materials were reviewed for grant consistency, this does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the Department of Ecology.*

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