



SESSION GUIDE DIGGING DIRT: SOILS DESIGN AND DIAGNOSIS FROM THE MISSISSIPPI TO THE BAY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 3:45 PM – 5:00 PM PST

American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Conference on Landscape Architecture 2022, San Francisco, CA



Tom Lee Park (Credit: SCAPE)



China Basin Park (Credit: SCAPE)

SESSION OVERVIEW

Soils are foundational to landscape architecture, yet there's rarely a one-size-fits-all approach—meaningful collaborations with soils scientists are instrumental in delivering high-quality parks and public spaces. In this panel, hear from a landscape architect and two leading soils scientists on innovative approaches to soils design in Memphis and the Bay Area.





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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1. Develop an understanding of how site conditions suggest specific responses in soil design, through the lens of two case study projects.
- 2. Articulate how soils profile details and specifications are tailored to meet horticultural, drainage, and loading criteria for a given project.
- 3. Compare and contrast site soils strategies relative to bulk import of materials vs. amending existing soils in place, examining cost and quality control considerations.
- 4. Identify potential pitfalls in soils design and installation, providing an overview of common field tests Landscape Architects can perform, in situ site investigations, and what they tell us about the health of soils.

SESSION STRUCTURE

Introduction	15 minutes	 John Donnelly / SCAPE Brief introductions of the speakers Brief introduction to soils design considerations, challenges, and terminology Brief introduction of Tom Lee Park and China Basin Park contexts and constraints
Presentation 1	20 minutes	 Ted Hartsig / Olsson Engineering Tom Lee Park Soils Design The pros and cons of working with native soils in landscape design and construction Determining the right approach for the project: using native or engineered soils Turning challenges into advantages
Presentation 2	20 minutes	 John Swallow / Pine and Swallow China Basin Park Soils Design Existing conditions analysis How anticipated site uses and programming influence the creation of appropriate horticultural soils Construction QA/QC
Summary	5 minutes	 Moderated by John Donnelly Summary of the ways site specific constraints can influence soils design Summary of potential challenges and issues in soils design and installation
Q&A	15 minutes	Moderated by John Donnelly





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SPEAKERS



Theodore A. Hartsig, CPSS Senior Soil Scientist, Olsson Engineering

Ted is a certified professional soil scientist with extensive experience in soil design and construction for urban green spaces, stormwater management, and urban and rural ecosystem restoration. Several of his projects have involved soils design for green roofs, garages, and highway overpasses, among other features. He has contributed to the development of soil and plant design and management strategies in both urban and rural landscape projects. He has co-authored multiple documents, including "Bioretention Gardens: A Manual for Contractors," and "Sustainable Landscapes: Rain Gardens, Bioswales, and Xeric Gardens."

His experience includes working with the professional design teams for the design and construction of soils for the landscapes of the George W. Bush Library in Dallas, the Gateway Arch National Park in St. Louis, Tulsa's Gathering Place Park, Carpenter Park in Dallas, the Port Lands Flood Protection Park Space in Toronto, and many other parks and corporate campuses across North America.



John Swallow, Ph.D., LPS. PG Principal and Founder, Pine and Swallow Environmental

Dr. John Swallow is a Principal and founder of the firm. His professional practice spans four decades and has emphasized service in areas of soil science, analysis of environmental conditions for plant growth, and site rehabilitation. His projects range from initial site investigations to detailed design of soil-water-horticultural systems, construction specifications, and construction observation. He served on the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) Technical Core and Soils Committees for many years. His worldwide-built projects range from new embassies in war zones, to campus projects, farms on remote islands, mega parks on urban islands, and lots in between.

LEAD SPEAKER



John Donnelly, RLA Technical Principal, SCAPE Landscape Architecture DPC

John Donnelly, RLA, is Technical Principal at SCAPE. He leads the management, documentation and construction of the studio's major built work projects across the U.S. In more than 17 years of professional practice, John's work has included the design, documentation and construction of award-winning urban parks; cultural and educational campuses; mixed-use developments master plans; and recreational trails.

As the lead for SCAPE's Technical Team, he works across the practice to ensure design and technical excellence through an integrated and collaborative process of quality assurance, quality control and peer review. Ensuring all projects are delivered with a sound technical underpinning.





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REFERENCES

Source 1	The Tom Lee Park project page on the SCAPE website: https://www.scapestudio.com/projects/tom-lee-park/
Source 2	The China Basin Park project page on the SCAPE website: https://www.scapestudio.com/projects/china-basin-park/

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