The greater-Houston region is experiencing another wave of explosive population growth and land development. Innovative solutions are needed to ensure that the future metropolex holds a stable, livable, environment for its citizenry.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification, a highly sought-after accreditation for construction projects, offers a guide for long-term energy and resource-efficient building techniques. Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) was developed to support and augment LEED certification by offering innovative low-impact landscape development schemes.

When combined, LEED and SITES are effective tools for resolving the challenges posed by growth and its potential impact on the environment. This conference will introduce and outline the current principles of SITES, and highlight examples of local projects successfully guided by utilizing it.
The newly-renovated facility serves as headquarters for Harris County Precinct 4 Parks Department staff and features programming through Precinct 4’s Community Center/Senior Adult Program.

**Big Stone Lodge**  
*at Dennis Johnston Park*  
709 Riley Fuzzel Road  
Spring, Texas 77386

**Directions**

**From Downtown Houston:**
Travel north on the Hardy Toll Road and exit Riley Fuzzel Road  
Turn right onto Riley Fuzzel Road  
Travel approximately 1/4 mile and turn left into Dennis Johnston Park  
From the entrance, follow the road to Big Stone Lodge at the rear of the park.

**Traveling North on I-45:**
Exit FM 2920 and turn right onto Spring Cypress  
Continue on Spring Cypress through Old Town Spring  
At the end of Spring Cypress, turn left onto Hardy Road followed by a right onto East Noble Street to reach Aldine Westfield  
Turn left onto Aldine Westfield and then turn right at the traffic light onto Riley Fuzzel Road  
Pass under the Hardy Toll Road and look for the entrance into Dennis Johnston Park on the left  
From the entrance, follow the road to Big Stone Lodge at the rear of the park.

**Traveling South on I-45:**
Take the Spring Stuebner East exit and keep to the right of the feeder road to follow the curve underneath I-45 to Spring Stuebner East  
Stay straight on Spring Stuebner until the dead-end and curve at Hardy Road; follow the curve across the railroad tracks onto Riley Fuzzel Road  
Pass under the Hardy Toll Road and look for the entrance into Dennis Johnston Park on the left  
From the entrance, follow the road to Big Stone Lodge at the rear of the park.
Presentations

**SITES™ Rating System: Encouraging and Rewarding Leadership in Site Sustainability**  
Jonathan Garner, SITES Coordinator, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Constructed landscapes have the capacity to enhance and regenerate our collective natural resources, often termed “natural capital” or “ecosystem services”. Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™) has identified guidelines and metrics, grounded in rigorous science, which can be applied on a nationwide site-by-site basis framed around the concept of ecosystem services. This presentation will provide an overview of SITES and the lessons learned from a two-year pilot program, as well as review the new v2 Rating System that will allow any project - from private to public and large to small - to apply sustainable site practices and pursue SITES certification.

**Lower Resources, Higher Performance: Native Grasses for Turf, Roadsides, Green Roofs, Golf Courses and Parks for the Urban Landscape**  
Mark Simmons, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Sustainable landscapes imply a stable, low resource alternative to the conventional urban green infrastructure. But there are increasing demands for high performing eco-engineered landscapes that restore essential ecosystem services – cooler cities, cleaner air and water, reduced flooding, and provision of habitat. This can be achieved by exploiting the plants and mechanics of our regional ecosystems. We can show that taking the best of our native systems can be ecologically-designed to improve the health of the city and its citizens.

**Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center: A Commitment to Environmentally Responsible Practices**  
Rick Lewandowski, Director, Shangri La

Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center is part of a new wave of public institutions dedicated to showcasing environmentally-responsible practices that inspire the public to both respect and preserve our precious natural resources. With platinum LEED certified facilities, a deep commitment to organic practices, and stellar environmental education programs, Shangri La is positioned to educate southeast Texas communities about the value and importance of sustainable practices.
Keynote Speakers

Commissioner R. Jack Cagle, Harris County Precinct 4
Turning Scarce Resources into a Bountiful Harvest (Financial & Natural)

Harris County, Texas holds one of the fastest-growing business and residential communities in the United States, currently estimated at 4,253,000, and growing by 200 new residents per day. Harris County Precinct 4 alone has more than one million residents, making its population equivalent to the 43rd largest state! Commissioner Cagle will talk about the importance of preserving, growing and maintaining our environmental assets within the realities of today’s funding and government structures, while offering practical solutions that will help to absorb the impact of projected future growth.

Merrie Talley, RLA, ASLA, LEED
Mandolin Gardens – Converting a Traditional Detention Basin into an Award-Winning Park Amenity

How do you turn weed-infested, eyesore detention basins into an award-winning park project that features wonderful amenities for residents and enhances property values – all without raising taxes? Learn about the creation of Mandolin Gardens Park, an 11-acre oasis that rejuvenated two inter-connected detention basins and includes two miles of accessible trails set with plazas, bridges, scenic overlooks, and attractive landscaping in a chemical-free, sustainable eco-system that allows water reclamation for irrigation and basin level stability. Dramatic before-and-after visuals, combined with a comprehensive overview of the park creation process, will showcase an economically viable and enduring eco-friendly setting that enhances the quality of life for its neighbors and visitors.

~ Merrie Talley will conduct a site tour of Mandolin Gardens at the conclusion of the Conference.

GUIDED TOUR OF MANDOLIN GARDENS PARK

The Conference will conclude with a site visit to Mandolin Gardens Park, Mandolin Village (near Cypresswood and SH 249), 10000 Block of Summit Bridge Lane, Houston, TX from 3-4:15 p.m. Please see keynote lecture description for details. Attending participants will receive 1.25 additional CEU’s.
Speaker Profiles

**Jonathan Garner** is a Project Coordinator for the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™) at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas, which is a program created to promote land development and management practices focused on regenerative design. He was formerly a Project Coordinator for Community and International Training and Development on the University of Oklahoma Outreach Program. Jonathan holds a Master’s degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Oklahoma and a BA from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

**Mark Simmons Ph.D.** is Director of Research and Environmental Consulting for the Ecosystem Design Group at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas. His research and environmental design projects focus on creating and rebuilding landscapes and urban green infrastructure to improve ecosystem services. Scientific research projects include: green roofs, green walls, native turfgrass, urban prairies, storm-water management, and prescribed fire. Mark teaches university and professional courses on ecological landscape design and sits on several technical committees including the Landscape Architecture Foundation and the Sustainable Sites Initiative.

**Rick Lewandowski** is the newly-appointed Director of Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center in Orange, Texas. Previously Director of Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware, he guided development of the premier native plant garden for 13 years. Rick is an environmental horticulturist, plant explorer, lecturer, and writer with over 30 years of professional experience. He is passionate about integrating environmentally-responsible practices into built landscapes. Rick received his bachelor’s degree from Kansas State University and his master’s degree from the University of Maryland.
Commissioner R. Jack Cagle, Harris County Precinct 4 was sworn in to serve as County Commissioner for Harris County Precinct 4 on October 3, 2011. He has spent more than 20 years working with and serving the citizens of Harris County Precinct 4 as an attorney, an elected judge and now, County Commissioner. Until his appointment to Commissioners Court, he served 11 years as judge of Harris County Civil Court-at Law No. 1. Harris County voters elected him to the bench countywide in 2000 and re-elected in 2002, 2006 and 2010. Commissioner Cagle is a graduate of Rice University with triple majors in economics, history, and managerial studies, as well as a graduate of Baylor Law School.

Merrie Talley, RLA, ASLA, LEED is Principal/Owner of Merrie Talley Architects, Inc (TLA), a firm committed to the process of planning and design while preserving environmental sensitivity. TLA is noteworthy for producing creative design solutions that are practical to maintain and operate. With over 36 years of experience in landscape architecture and planning, she works as an advocate for green space preservation and water quality issues with Parks and Recreation, the Planning and Transportation Department and elected officials at county, regional and state levels. Merrie serves as a Watershed Board Member of the Bayou Preservation Association and is also a member of The Mercer Society Advisory Council. She holds a B.S. Landscape Architecture from Texas A&M University.

Darrin Duling, is the Director of Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens in Humble, Texas. His education and career as a botanical horticulturist, environmentalist and landscape designer has taken him to Borneo, Brazil, Crete, Peru, Oman, Singapore, Thailand and The United Kingdom. He holds The Royal Horticultural Society Certificate of Gardener Training, The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew Diploma of Horticulture, and a MSc Plant Taxonomy from the University of Reading, Whiteknights, England.
Conference Schedule

8 a.m.  Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30 a.m.  Welcome
Darrin Duling, Director, Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

9 – 9:50 a.m.  
*SITES Rating System: Encouraging and Rewarding Leadership in Site Sustainability*
Jonathan Garner ................................................................. 1.00

9:50 – 10:05 a.m.  Q & A ................................................................. .25

10:05 – 10:20 a.m.  Morning Break

10:20 – 11:10 a.m.  
*Lower Resources, Higher Performance: Native Grasses for Turf Roadsides, Green Roofs, Golf Courses and Parks for Urban Landscapes*
Mark Simmons ........................................................................ 1.00

11:10 – 11:25 a.m.  Q & A ................................................................. .25

11:25 – Noon  Lunch

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.  Keynote Speakers
Commissioner R. Jack Cagle, Harris County Precinct 4 ......................... .50
Merrie Talley, ASLA ................................................................  .50

1–1:50 p.m.  
*Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center: A Commitment to Environmentally Responsible Practices*
Rick Lewandowski .................................................................. 1.00

1:50 – 2:05 p.m.  Q & A ................................................................. .25

2:05 – 2:15 p.m.  Closing Remarks and Adjourn to site visit

3:00 – 4:15 p.m.  Site Visit to Mandolin Gardens ................................. 1.25

Maximum available LA CES™CEU Credits ......................... 6.00

The 2nd Annual Mercer Sustainable Landscape Conference is generously sponsored by EHRA, OHBA, and members of The Greater Houston Partnership Parks and Greenspace Committee.
MA&BG 2013 Sustainable Landscape Conference Registration
Continental Breakfast and Lunch included in price

| Professional Conference Fee | 
|------------------------------|----------------|
| ( ) $135.00………… ( ) $150.00……………… $| 
| General Conference Fee | 
| ( ) $112.00………… ( ) $125.00……………… $| 
| Exclusive Book Offer (see next page) | 
| ( ) $65.00 ea. ……. $| 

“The Sustainable Sites Handbook”

Optional TMS memberships available. (Memberships expire 12/31/2013)

| 2013 TMS Membership – Individual | 
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| ( ) $35.00……………… $| 
| 2013 TMS Membership – Family | 
| ( ) $50.00……………… $| 
| 2013 TMS Membership – Supporting | 
| ( ) $100.00……………… $| 

Additional membership levels available. Memberships and donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. TMS is a 501(c)(3) organization benefiting and supporting Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens.

Payment: Check ( ) Credit Card ( ) Total $______________

We are unable to process payments online or accept PO’s at this time.

Please make checks payable to The Mercer Society or TMS.

If paying by credit card please complete the following

Name on card __________________________ Address on card __________________________

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*** Completed Registration forms must be received by Thursday, October 10, 2013 ***

Mail, fax, or email completed payment form above with payment and registration for each participant (next page) to The Mercer Society, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble, TX 77337-1071

281-443-8731 281-443-6078 fax
msociety@hcp4.net
www.themercersociety.org

Return information via email or mail to:
The Mercer Society, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, TX 77338

TMS must be notified of cancellation no later than one week prior to the Conference date in order to generate a refund. Requests received after this date will not be processed. Requests for refunds must be directed to the TMS office (msociety@hcp4.net).
Exclusive Book Offer for Conference Attendees

by Meg Calkin

This newly-released book is an optional purchase offered to participants with registration for Mercer’s Sustainable Landscape Conference. Currently listed price at $87, the discounted conference price is $65.

Copies ordered during registration will be available for pick up at the Conference registration table.

The Sustainable Sites Handbook offers in-depth coverage of design, construction, and management for systems of hydrology, vegetation, soils, materials, and human health and well-being. Focusing primarily on environmental site design and ecosystem services, this wide-ranging guide also covers issues of social equity, economic feasibility, and stewardship, which are crucial to the success of any sustainable site. Equally useful as a handbook for obtaining SITES credits or for the independent development of sustainable sites, this is an indispensable resource for practicing professionals in landscape architecture, landscape design, architecture, civil engineering, land planning, horticulture, ecology, environmental engineering, landscape contracting, and parks and recreation management.