

Annual Conference of Landscape Architecture

Grand Rapids, Michigan

September 10-12, 2025

River for All: Shared Experience from the Grand	Multi Sensory Journey: A Multi-Modal Conversation	The Secret Garden: An Invasive Legacy	Turning the Page: MiASLA Strategically Planning Charrette
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Stories From the Soil

Rooted in History
Growing through Collaboration
Branching into the Future

CONFERENCE LOCATION & PARKING
New Vintage Place
889 Broadway Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, 49504

ACCOMMODATIONS
Embassy Suites Grand Rapids Downtown
710 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids, 49503



Photos by Wirestock

Bob Scarfo
Landscape Architecture As Storytelling
Read on **Page 4-5**



Photos by Bob Scarfo

Thank you to our generous **Supporters**



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FIELD SESSIONS

Wednesday September 10th

12:00 - 3:00 PM **Sketch Walk***  

Before the conference sessions begin, step into the story of landscape architecture through the language of sketching at the 8th Annual Sketch Walk, held at the **Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park**—named the **Best Sculpture Park in the United States** in both 2023 and 2024 by USA Today readers—on Wednesday, September 10th from 12 to 3PM. Led by the ever-inspiring **Jack Goodnoe**, this beloved field session invites students and seasoned professionals alike to slow down, observe, and capture the essence of place with pen and paper. In a world of digital tools and fast-paced deadlines, sketching remains one of the most powerful ways to think, communicate, and connect—a landscape architect’s first and truest language. Let your hand translate what words can’t, with a complimentary sketchbook sponsored by **Landscape Forms**. You’ll leave with more than just drawings—you’ll leave with your story. Don’t miss this chance to ground yourself in creativity and begin the conference with clarity, connection, and inspiration.

3:45 - 5:00 PM **Rapids Tour***  

Join us for a dynamic walking tour through downtown Grand Rapids. This engaging field event will tell the story of how local planning and design initiatives are rewriting the community’s relationship with the Grand River, highlighting historic restoration, downtown activation, and tactical urbanism projects. Each stop will reveal a chapter of innovation and cultural significance, as told through the lens of local design professionals. Step into the story of downtown Grand Rapids and see firsthand the transformation of successful placemaking in one of the fastest growing Midwest cities.

- Learning Objectives:
- Analyze riverfront activation and implementation projects
 - Learn about tactical urbanism strategies in public spaces
 - Experience active multi-modal and multi-functional streets, alleys, plazas, and trails
 - Learn about the renovation of historic and cultural landscapes

6:00 - 8:30 PM **Awards Celebration**
Kick off the conference with an unforgettable evening at our **Awards Celebration**, where storytelling takes center stage and the year’s most inspiring landscape architecture projects come to life. Join us—plus ones, colleagues, students, and clients welcome—for a night of connection, celebration, and recognition as we honor award-winning projects and present the prestigious **President Awards**. With an **open bar**, vibrant energy, and a room full of passionate peers, this isn’t just a replacement for our usual happy hour—it’s the beginning of a new tradition. Plus, enjoy the excitement of a **silent auction**, win great prizes, and take a chance in our **50/50 raffle**—all supporting the universities. Come raise a glass to the people and projects shaping our world!

Friday September 12th

12:00 - 5:00 PM **LA Ride 10th Anniversary**

GATHERING POINT: Sixth Street Park & Dam Site – East side of the Grand River, just north of Down-town GR.
PACE: Slow to medium roll, loop 15-18 miles, easy, some traffic, minor hills.
REQUIRED: Please make sure that your bicycle is in good condition, tires pumped up, helmets are required,
TRAIL: Combination of GR and Kent trails, fully paved, some trail spurs with opportunities for MTB and Fat bikes.
PARKING: Cyclists can park their vehicles in lots close to Sixth Street Park (spaces there). Updates

* All CES Sessions Are Currently Pending

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

Thursday September 11th

8:30 - 9:00 PM **The Preface**
Registration, light breakfast & EXPO

9:00 - 9:10 PM **The Prologue: Setting the Stage**
Welcome & Introduction
Dana Hernalsteen, Michigan Chapter President-Elect

9:10 - 10:25 PM **Chapter One: Landscape Architecture As Storytelling***
Bob Scarfo, PLA, BLA, MLA, PHD

10:25 - 11:10 PM **EXPOsure: Vendor Showcase**
The Narrative of Networking Pt.1

11:10 - 12:10 PM **Chapter Two: River for All: Shared Experiences from the Grand***
Trevor Bosworth, PLA, ASLA

12:10 - 1:25 PM **The Footnotes: State of the Chapter & A Year in Review**
Vanessa Warren, Michigan Chapter, President
Ben Baker, PLA, ASLA

1:25 - 2:40 PM **Chapter Three: Telling Stories by Design***
A Multi-Modal Conversation
Speakers: Chip Sullivan, FASLA, FAAR, FOELA
Robert Chipman, ASLA
Brian Moore, AIA, LEED, GA
Samantha Brown, CPSM
Stacey Bare, CPSM

2:40 - 3:15 PM **EXPOsure: Vendor Showcase**
The Narrative of Networking Pt.2

3:15 - 4:15 PM **Chapter Four: The Secret Garden***
An Invasive Legacy
Katie Grzesiak
Susie Lott

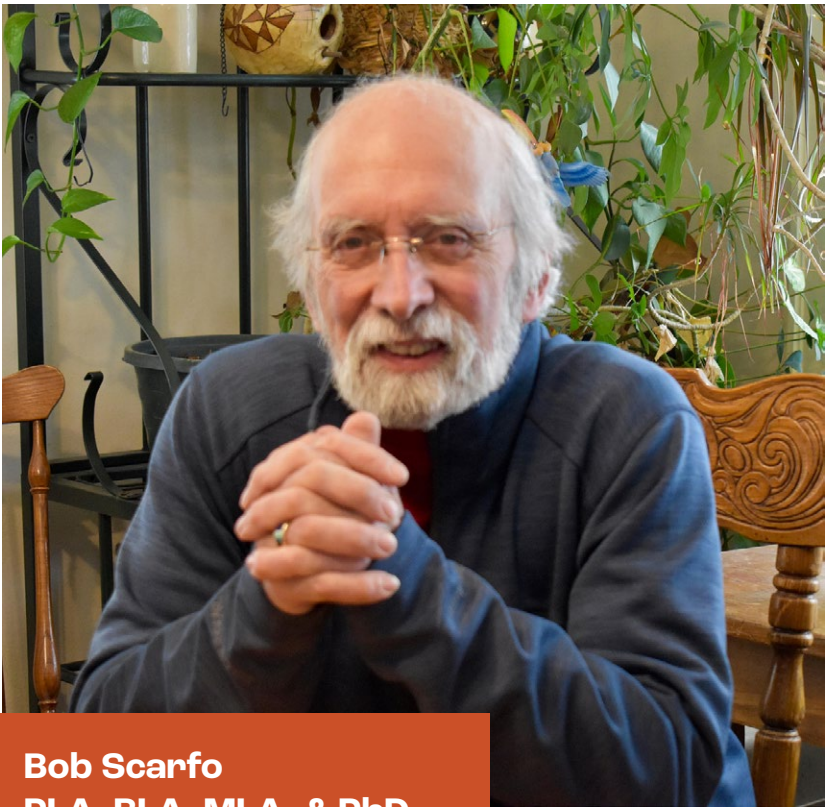
4:15 - 5:30 PM **Turning the Page:**
MiASLA Strategical Planning Charrette
Vanessa Warren, Michigan Chapter President



Photos by Davel5957

Landscape Architecture As Storytelling

Keynote Speaker: Bob Scarfo



Bob Scarfo
PLA, BLA, MLA, & PhD.

Bob Scarfo, BLA, MLA, & PhD. is an Emeritus professor with Washington State University; taught landscape architecture for 40 years in Canada and the US; is a registered landscape architect in Washington and Massachusetts; and practices under Land and Life® LLC. His book Landscape Architecture through Storytelling is a 35-year dream come true.

He is currently working with gerontologists and a horticultural therapist to apply his narrative approach to the design of a memory garden for people with dementia and their caregivers.

Landscape Architectural Design is a personal, person-centered service; no place for jargon when discussing clients' and end-users' needs. This presentation shares a three-step approach to jargon-free landscape design that expresses the benefits of an experiential approach through storytelling. Two design case studies, a hospital's healing garden and a public memory garden for people living with dementia and their caregivers, will help session participants see how to write a narrative of landscape users' expectations, turn it into a storyboard, and then turn the storyboard into a final design.

Storytelling is as old as humanity. We've all grown up with it and because of it. Cathedrals' statuary profess religious ideals. Dinner party conversations are a shared means of personal expression open to everyone. In omitting specialized jargon we share aspects of who we are, were, and want to be. As a basis of landscape design, storytelling enables us to focus on the personal essence of a design, what is wanted and anticipated by our clients and the built designs' end users.

In the next 50 minutes, participants will be introduced to John Simonds' epiphany, that we design experiences and not places, spaces, and things, as a three-step approach to landscape architectural (and interior and architectural) design. That approach will provide a deeper understanding of our profession, an empathetic open mind, and an ability to narrate people-centered stories of those most likely to participate in our designed spaces.



Photos by Bob Scarfo

Notes

River for All: Shared Experience from the Grand



Trevor Bowsworth
PLA, ASLA

Trevor is a principal of VIRIDIS Design Group and manages the Grand Rapids office. He is known for his collaborative skills, strategic thinking, and design excellence. As a skilled and seasoned practitioner, Trevor is committed to creating powerful experiences that resonate over time. His sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the natural and the built environment and understanding of clients' needs has led to numerous award-winning projects.



Photos by Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc

Notes



TELLING STORIES by DESIGN— a Multimodal Conversation
2025 Michigan Chapter ASLA Conference, 10 September
Sketch by Chip Sullivan & Bob Chipman

See Page 8

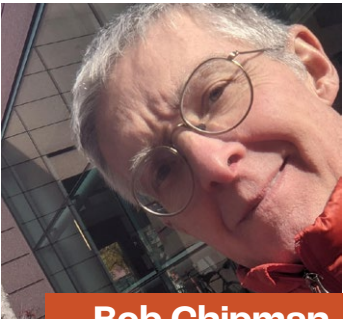
Multi Sensory Journey: A Multi Modal Conversation



Chip Sullivan
FASLA, FCELA, FAAR

Chip Sullivan, FASLA, FCELA, FAAR, is Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley. He is an artist, landscape architect and spiritual alchemist who maintains a lifelong commitment to exploring the potential of the garden to transform and elevate one’s consciousness. He is author and co-author of many popular titles in the discipline. The Wisdom of Place, A Guide to Recovering the Sacred Origins of Landscape, co-authored with Elizabeth Boults, aims to help readers rediscover the sacredness of the everyday landscapes around them in order to shed light on the ecological imperatives of our time. The American Society of Landscape Architect’s the Dirt named the Wisdom of Place one of the 10 best books of 2023 and his recent Field Sketching for Environmental Designers, was also named one of the top 10 books of 2024 by ASLA’s The Dirt.

Robert Chipman, ASLA promotes the value of sketching and hand drawing for the creative thought process and tries to get everyone to draw. He has worked as a landscape architect and product designer since the early 1980s and has designed many outdoor site furnishing products for Landscape Forms in creative collaborations where hand drawing blends with technology to solve complex engineering problems. Based in Austin, Texas, he is often found drawing on the backs of used envelopes or napkins to tell a story.



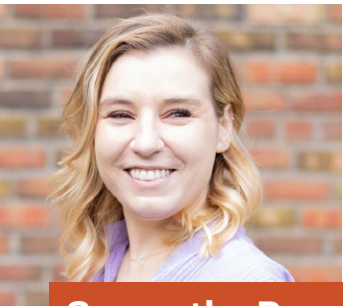
Bob Chipman
PLA, ASLA



Brian Moore
AIA, LEED GA

Brian Moore, AIA is a senior architect at ROSSETTI, the founder of Curios Design, and a committee leader for building tours with AIA Detroit. Samantha Brown is a CPSM-certified AEC marketer at Quinn Evans and serves on the board of directors for the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. Together, they are the creators and producers of Forming Function, a narrative story telling podcast that reveals the role of design in everyday life. Each episode digs into the stories behind familiar places and objects with approachable, educational, and entertaining storytelling.

Samantha Malott Brown, CPSM, is the Marketing Manager at Quinn Evans’ Detroit office and a Certified Professional Services Marketer with a strong background in historic preservation and storytelling. She holds a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from Oakland University. Samantha co-hosts the Detroit-based podcast Forming Function, which explores the design stories behind everyday objects and places, supported by the Michigan Architectural Foundation. As a board member of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, she brings a unique blend of cultural insight, design communication, and public engagement to her work—making her a compelling and credible voice for this year’s conference.



Samantha Brown
CPSM



Stacey Bare
CPSM

Stacy Bare is the Executive Director of Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, an organization dedicated to enhancing urban greenspaces and fostering community engagement. A U.S. Army veteran with service in Iraq and Bosnia, Stacy co-founded the Great Outdoors Lab in 2014 to explore the therapeutic benefits of outdoor experiences. He is also a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year and the 2015 SHIFT Conservation Athlete of the Year. Stacy’s work blends environmental stewardship with storytelling, as seen in his award-winning film Adventure Not War, which chronicles a veteran-led expedition in Iraq. His leadership at Friends of Grand Rapids Parks focuses on increasing equitable access to nature and empowering communities to cultivate vibrant parks, trees, and trails throughout the city.

The Secret Garden: An Invasive Legacy



Katie Grzesiak

Grzesiak is the Terrestrial Invasive Species Coordinator for the Michigan DNR and has been tackling collaborative invasive species management professionally since 2008. Invasive plants can move from our gardens to our natural areas—but collaboration between businesses, non-profits, and government can work proactively to educate the public and protect our valuable natural resources. This story’s roots are in a tiny seed from a wedding bouquet that promises to bloom in unexpected ways by the final chapter.



Susie Lott

Susie Lott is an Invasive Species Specialist for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and has been in this role since 2019. Susie started her career in invasive species in 2006 in Hawaii doing invasive species field work and coordination for the Oahu Invasive Species Committee and the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. Susie now works primarily with invasive insects, terrestrial and aquatic invasive plants, plant diseases response and regulation.



Photos by Katie Grzesiak

Notes

Turning the Page: MiASLA Strategical Planning Charrette



Vanessa Warren
PLA, ASLA

Vanessa's involvement with ASLA began in 1998 when she served as the Student Representative at the Landscape Architecture Foundation. Since then, she has been dedicated to advancing the Association and its members, working tirelessly to advocate for and promote the profession. As a member of the Michigan Chapter, she joined the Executive Committee in 2000 and is currently in her second term as Chapter President.

At the state chapter level, Vanessa chaired the Licensure Committee that campaigned successfully for a licensure upgrade. She has also engaged in professional outreach to grade schools throughout her region, served on numerous professional award juries, developed new programs for the Chapter, and participated in sixteen Advocacy Days in Washington, DC. Her efforts over the years

have contributed to increased professional recognition, State Congressional site visits, and various Chapter conferences and programs.

Nationally, Vanessa currently serves as the Finance Investment Committee Chair and has served the Association by being:

- A. Member of the Finance and Investment Committee for the past seven years
- B. Member of the Audit Committee
- C. VP of Membership for the National ASLA Executive Committee
- D. Trustee for the State of Michigan for 2 ½ terms
- E. Chair of the Chapters Presidents Council
- F. Member of each of the Membership Committees

Vanessa is employed with a Midwest-based multidisciplinary firm OHM Advisors where she is responsible for project planning, design, budget control, project scheduling, contract administration, and the development of junior colleagues. Her experience is environmentally based in planning and design, and she collaborates with all engineering disciplines, planners, ecologists, and architects.

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