

University of Pennsylvania Ecological Landscape Stewardship Plan

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



The University of Pennsylvania builds upon and formalizes its novel approach to urban campus landscape management through the lens of ecological function and resilience.



The University of Pennsylvania is located in the heart of the nation's 5th largest city, yet it has firmly established itself at the forefront of sustainable campus management by employing innovative practices such as permeable paving, integrated stormwater management, compost tea and natural soil amendments, and de-icing techniques that are less corrosive and more environmentally friendly.

With the desire to expand and formalize these practices into a wider system for high-performance, long-term,

sustainable landscape management, the University turned to a multidisciplinary team led by Philadelphia-based Jonathan Alderson Landscape Architects. Biohabitats led the examination of site ecology, landscape function, and management, key factors in the development of the University's Ecological Landscape Stewardship Plan.

Biohabitats examined soils, plant materials, and current management practices, and identified opportunities for system-wide improvements in landscape function and ecosystem services. A variety of complex urban campus landscapes were assessed, including a public green, an iconic and historic tree-lined campus walkway, an informal playing field and event space, and a pocket park. Biohabitats also examined site conditions,

existing drainage issues and stormwater management practices, biodiversity, labor practices and schedules, materials and equipment for each landscape typology. In addition to field investigations, Biohabitats reviewed existing data and participated in meetings to engage a variety of campus stakeholders.

The plan includes short and long-term benchmarks for improved sustainable management practices and recommendations for construction, operations and maintenance. This plan also includes a research and educational initiative that supports sustainable management through curricular connections.

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