



## Sustainable Operations

### In the News

#### **USDA Hosts Sustainable Landscape Conference**

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2007 -- The USDA Sustainable Landscape Partnership hosted a conference today aimed at designing a sustainable landscape for Jamie L. Whitten building on the National Mall. The conference was facilitated by Departmental Administration's Office of Operations.

The highlight of the conference was a design charrette. The goal of the charrette is to develop sustainable alternatives to the current plantings and land use at the site. Currently the bedding material at this site is rotated three times a year featuring spring bulbs, annuals, and cold weather bloomers. The landscaping costs at the Whitten Building exceed \$240,000 annually. Additionally the existing landscape material requires irrigation.

The design charrette attracted over 75 participants including representatives from the National Park Service, EPA, Bureau of Land Management, US Botanical Garden, National Arboretum, DC Government, NCPC, numerous partner groups (ASLA, National Arbor Day Foundation, Nature Conservancy, Casey Trees, Low Impact Development Center, Alliance for Community Trees, National Mall Trust, Natural Resources Design), and professors and students from Morgan State, University of Maryland, Catholic University, Prescott University, Virginia Tech, and George Washington University.



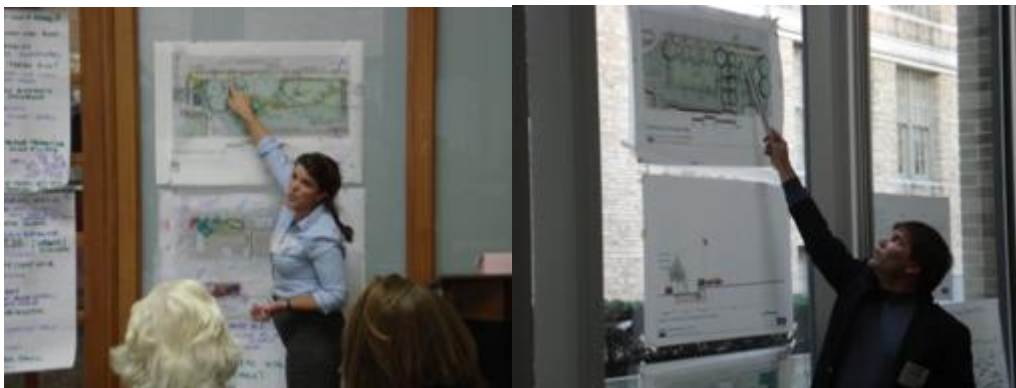
The participants were divided into seven "zones" around the building.

The teams developed concepts that reflected the themes and goals presented at the beginning of the design charrette. The themes and goals included:

- Reduce stormwater runoff with raingardens, greenroofs and bioretention practices.
- Create new habitat with pollinator gardens.
- Educate public with interpretive signage and interactive features.
- Reduce maintenance costs with high performing native plants.
- Feature USDA agencies with thematic elements and plants.
- Improve the visual quality of the headquarters landscape.
- Provide learning opportunities for children.
- Organize and provide for a living memorial on site.
- Enhance Farmers Market operations and site integration.



Once the concept plans were completed, each team presented their concepts and vision to the entire group.



Next steps include compiling and digitizing the drawings and notes from the workshop, to set up a publicly accessible website for photos, resources and contact information, and to develop and publish a summary that will influence concept designs for the Jamie L. Whitten Building site.

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Last Modified: 12/13/2007