

## **Agriculture (2014, R2017)**



### **Policy Statement**

The American Society of Landscape Architects places a high value on farms at all scales and their important role in providing us with food, fiber, fuel, and plant-based products. ASLA believes that our nation's farms and ranches are a national resource, and we support sustainable practices that: protect air and water quality, promote biodiversity, and balance the conservation of soil, native habitats, and wetlands with the provision of fresh, healthy food and other agricultural products. ASLA supports policies that promote sustainable agricultural practices, support agrarian communities and economies, and protect agricultural areas from incompatible or encroaching development. Landscape architects also recognize the value of conserving farmland for future generations and support efforts towards that end.

### **Rationale**

Landscape architects are “stewards of the land” and the profession prides itself on its work with nature. With extreme weather events becoming more frequent, the scale of design is changing. Landscape architects are uniquely qualified to make impactful large-scale decisions affecting watersheds, streams, rivers, wetlands, and millions of acres of farmland, all of which affect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Landscape architects play a role in agriculture through the application of planning, conservation, and design of urban and rural environments. Landscape architects support conservation practices including the return of some cultivated lands to a natural state, reestablishment of buffer strips along waterways, and the mitigation and preservation of wetlands and floodplains. Landscape architects strive to conserve the most productive farmland for future generations by protecting farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide or local importance. Large-scale agricultural production provides food and fiber for our nation and beyond. Landscape architects work with farmers and ranchers to mitigate stormwater runoff from cultivated lands. These efforts minimize nitrate infiltration to our waterways and help purify our nation’s water. Landscape architects also assist ranchers with grazing management and animal enclosure design to minimize nitrate infiltration.

Landscape architects support the efforts to connect people closer to their food source through more local and “farm to market” growers. These efforts include writing zoning and land use regulations to allow for production farming, urban agriculture, silviculture, local-markets, design of community gardens, and the application of expertise in soil science and horticulture best practices.

The opportunity for landscape architecture is limitless. Landscape architects apply knowledge and skills to make a difference on a global scale, one watershed at a time.