
Inside the LA Studio With: *Mahan Rykiel Associates*

SAT-C02

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Conference on
Landscape Architecture
November 15-18
San Diego



Session

Saturday November 16, 2019
3:30 PM - 4:45 PM / Location: 32AB
1.25 PDH, LA CES/non-HSW, AICP, FL

Synopsis - Founded in 1983, Mahan Rykiel Associates (MRA) is a Baltimore-based firm that works across scales to imagine and realize projects that enrich the human condition and support vibrant natural systems. Through its Collaborative Design Research (CDR) methodology, MRA frames questions of landscape through the lenses of economic development, ecological stewardship, and community identity to grow projects and partnerships that are dynamic, rewarding, and resilient.

Learning Objectives

1. Learn how a firm evolves to meet the needs of its clients and address contemporary landscape concerns.
2. Understand the importance of project diversity in cultivating a resilient business model, staff skills, and office culture.
3. Learn about the firm's Collaborative Design Research (CDR) method and how it's used to enrich project outcomes.
4. Consider what it means for a firm to be place-based and how values and business practices can align to support social equity and ecological stewardship.

The Panel

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Jingpeng Gu, ASLA
President



Jingpeng Gu joined Mahan Rykiel in 2003 and has set a new standard for design excellence in a broad range of project sectors including housing, hospitality, mixed use, parks, urban design and streetscape, and corporate landscape design. With a dual degree of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Peng brings a truly unique perspective to landscape architectural design with a greater understanding of the relationship between buildings and their surrounding spaces. Peng believes that landscape architecture is not only a way of resolving space but also a way of creating relationships between people and nature, and among ourselves. Her passion is to build spaces that are sustainable, functional, beautiful, and inspiring; landscapes that can live and breathe with people and be a part of their lives. With more than 15 years of experience, Peng has delivered numerous thoughtful, award-winning projects. These projects have become great assets to the community and continue to serve as places for people to celebrate their unique natural environment and rich cultural heritage.

Scott Rykiel, FASLA
Executive Vice President



Scott Rykiel has over 37 years of experience as a landscape architect with a wide variety of domestic and international projects including hospitality venues, embassies, mixed use developments, high end housing and private gardens. His large international practice gives him a keen sensitivity to a variety of cultural contexts. With a background in horticulture and deep knowledge of plant material his design work also has a special focus on detail. Scott is actively involved in the creative process of the firm and works closely with his clients to generate award winning work. He was elected to the Council of Fellows of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2006.

Isaac Hametz, ASLA
Principal, Research Director



Isaac Hametz is Principal and Research Director at Mahan Rykiel Associates. He collaborates with clients and strategic partners to study, imagine, and shape landscapes that enrich the human condition and support vibrant natural systems. His work emphasizes ecological integrity, economic uplift, and cultural identity. He leads the Design with Dredge program and manages the firm's design research portfolio including partnerships, projects, and publications. Prior to joining Mahan Rykiel Associates, Isaac founded and ran two non-profit organizations that utilized landscape as vehicle for civic engagement and design activism.

Barbara Deutsch, FASLA*CEO, Landscape Architecture Foundation*

Barbara Deutsch, FASLA is the CEO of the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) since 2009. She has a diverse background in both the private and not-for-profit sector, bringing ten years of award-winning marketing experience from IBM before making a career change to become a landscape architect. In between these careers she worked as the Field Director for a congressional campaign. These experiences have been influential in leading the Foundation and developing the Landscape Performance Series, LAF's long-term strategic research initiative and series of online tools and resources to show the value of sustainable landscape solutions to a wide variety of decision-makers.

Mahan Rykiel Associates

Baltimore, Maryland

Founded in 1983, Mahan Rykiel Associates (MRA) is a landscape architecture, urban design, and planning firm based in Baltimore Maryland. The firm works across scales to imagine and realize projects that enrich the human condition and support vibrant natural systems. Research and discovery guide project development that range from public parks, civic plazas, state infrastructure, downtown and neighborhood plans, academic institutions, corporate campuses, mixed-use housing, private residences, healthcare facilities, hotels, and commercial centers. The firm cultivates this diversity to deepen and broaden its creative capacity to shape the built environment. Active collaboration across disciplines and sectors ensures that technical knowledge and resources are leveraged in support of each project.

PHILOSOPHY

Mahan Rykiel Associates' philosophy centers on the core pursuit of design – to construct meaning and build relationships in the world. The firm seeks to realize this in every project as it articulates ideas in matter through design. This act is born and reborn at every site, with every client and every collaborator. Research, dialogue, and discovery enable the real to be shaped by imagination – giving form to the invisible and substance to the intangible.

PROCESS

The firm's process is guided by the Collaborative Design Research (CDR) method. This provides a structured framework for design and planning that is efficient, pragmatic, and purposeful. Throughout the CDR process, MRA works with its clients and stakeholders to align values, program requirements, performance metrics (ecological, economic, and cultural), and budgets to create inspired plans and landscape strategies that celebrate each project's unique identity. The flexibility of the CDR method makes it an essential tool for the firm; providing clients a vehicle to establish a basis for mutual expectations and project evaluation, regardless of scale or complexity.



Notes

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Resources

<https://www.mahanrykiel.com>