



SHARON GAMSON DANKS, MLA - MCP
sharon@baytreedesign.com

Author, *Asphalt to Ecosystems*
www.asphalt2ecosystems.org

Principal, Bay Tree Design, inc., Berkeley, California
www.baytreedesign.com

Co-Founder, International School Grounds Alliance
www.greenschoolyards.org

ASPHALT TO ECOSYSTEMS

Outline of today's presentation, drawn from Sharon Danks's book

Introduction

- Welcome
- Schoolyard ecological design goals – demonstration scale vs. ecological impact
- Schoolyard context – children's shrinking domain in our cities
- Schoolyard transformation example
- Framework for thinking about school grounds – 6 themes that together shape vibrant school grounds – Learning, Ecology, Place, Play, Health, Community

Learning

- Model school example illustrating comprehensive outdoor curricula
- Other examples of hands-on curricula and outdoor classrooms

Ecology

- Wildlife habitats – variety shown, based on local environment
- Water systems
 - rainwater collection
 - site design for stormwater infiltration
 - greywater (cleaned onsite) used for play
 - blackwater treatment wetland
- Energy systems
 - renewable energy generation
 - interpretive displays
 - energy conservation using "green curtains"
- Local natural materials – wood, stone, earth
- Salvaged building materials – wood, "urbanite" (salvaged concrete), etc.

Place

- Natural context – watersheds, plant communities, special ecological features
- Cultural context – local traditional crafts
- Geographic context – maps
- Memorable places – place-making using artwork

Play

- Inclusive design – sports for all ages and abilities; rethinking “accessible” play
- Social play – for multiple children, involving negotiation
- Environments that invite active play – pathways, climbing, sliding
- Creative play – imaginative play, construction-oriented play, art play

Health

- Environmental health
 - shade and microclimate variety
 - organic management practices
 - non-toxic materials
- Nutrition
 - teaching gardens
 - nibbling gardens
 - animal husbandry
 - cooking outdoors
 - connections to community food systems
- Lifelong health
 - skill development and common sense
 - local plant knowledge
 - tool safety
 - water safety
 - fire safety
 - balance
- Beneficial risk – “You Learn to Fall by Falling” philosophy. Risk is the way we learn.

Community

- How do green schoolyards come about? Community participation.
- Typical urban starting point
- Community-wide brainstorming of ideas and goals
- Site walk to understand opportunities and constraints
- Design workshop with the community of adults and children
- Consensus building – master planning – prioritization
- Construction and implementation
- Community stewardship
- Celebration
- Overall goal – happiness and a sense of wellbeing for children

Closing

- Rules of thumb
- Transformation example
- Closing slide
 - For more information, please visit the websites above.
 - Upcoming International School Grounds Alliance conference in Toronto, September 23-25, 2013 – www.greenschoolyards.org