



# State College Area School District Playground Master Planning Services Outdoor Play and Learning Spaces



Franklin Regional Area School District Primary Schools Master Plan



Cranberry Township Uniting Playground

## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Cover Letter   |    |
| Understanding of the Project                             | 1  |
| Outdoor Environments for Children, Our Design Philosophy | 2  |
| Scope of Work  | 4  |
| Proposed Fee   | 6  |
| Project Schedule   | 7  |
| Firm Profile   | 8  |
| Key Personnel  | 9  |
| Relevant Project Experience                              | 13 |



Cranberry Township Uniting Playground



Cranberry Township Uniting Playground



August 3, 2018

Mr. Ed Poprik, PRSBO  
Director of Physical Plant  
State College Area School District  
131 West Nittany Avenue  
State College PA 16801

**RE: State College Area School District Playground Master Planning Services**

Dear Ed,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal for landscape architecture services to prepare master plans for outdoor environments for children, at the State College Area School District's elementary and middle schools.

Pashek + MTR's previous experience with design of outdoor spaces for children include the Hort Woods Child Care Center at Penn State, renovations to the Children's Garden at the Western PA School for Blind Children, and nature play spaces and playgrounds at public schools and municipal parks throughout Pennsylvania.

The District seeks to support nature- and curriculum-based play and learning in a varied and sensory-rich outdoor environment. This approach resonates with our firm's core value of connecting people with nature.

Our team of landscape architects, recreation practitioners and certified playground safety inspectors have the knowledge and experience to evaluate your current facilities and make recommendations for future capital investments to holistically address the District's play space needs.

Kara Roggenkamp will be the primary designer and main point of contact for the State College Area School District, and I would be the Partner-in-Charge. Heather Cuyler, our recreation practitioner and Certified Playground Safety Inspector, will provide recommendations for the proposed outdoor play and learning spaces for children. Further she will participate in the master planning to incorporate recommendations for compliance with current playground safety standards and practices and current accessibility requirements.

If you have any questions about our proposal, please do not hesitate to contact Kara at [kroggenkamp@pashekmtr.com](mailto:kroggenkamp@pashekmtr.com) or me at [jbuerkle@pashekmtr.com](mailto:jbuerkle@pashekmtr.com) or 412-321-6362. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you on this important project!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John O. Buerkle, Jr." in a cursive style.

John O. Buerkle, Jr., RLA, AICP



Hort Woods Child Care Center



## Design Principles for Outdoor Play and Learning Spaces

- Spontaneity
- Socialization
- Gathering
- Activating
- Challenging
- Risk Taking
- Nature Play
- Learning Places

- Hands On
- Close-up
- Spontaneous Action
- Universal Accessibility
- Sensory Stimulation Experiences
- Learning Opportunities
- Holistic Well-Being

# UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROJECT

The State College Area School District desires to comprehensively plan for the future of outdoor play and learning spaces throughout the district in a holistic and comprehensive manner. By undertaking this project, existing play spaces will be evaluated, and current and future play space needs and requirements will be determined, to develop play space master plans and corresponding construction estimates, and graphics to convey the proposed master plans for each site. The result will incorporate play space renovations into the District's capital improvements budget in a fiscally responsible way and allow for phased implementation. Play space master plans will be developed to address nature- and curriculum-based play and learning opportunities in a universally accessible manner, beyond the minimum requirements of the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. Where appropriate, existing and traditional play equipment will be integrated into the outdoor environments for children.

Outdoor Play and Learning Spaces to be Master Planned:

- Corl Street Elementary School
- Easterly Parkway Elementary School
- Ferguson Township Elementary School
- Grays Wood Elementary School
- Mount Nittany Elementary School
- Park Forest Elementary School
- Radio Park Elementary School
- Spring Creek Elementary School
- Mount Nittany Middle School
- Park Forest Middle School



Dutch Ridge Elementary School Learning Trail

# OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN: OUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Pashek + MTR has designed many different kinds of landscapes for children, from children's gardens, to playgrounds, to public and private family landscapes. We believe that environment is curriculum and that contact with nature is essential to children's well being and development.

## PLAY ENVIRONMENTS, NOT JUST PLAY EQUIPMENT

We seek to create outdoor environments that have a wide range of places to play, learn, and discover, with connections to the natural world. This means going beyond play equipment and incorporating plants and natural materials as well as loose parts and settings for dramatic play, STEM activities and creative projects. As an example, our design for a child care center at Penn State has little manufactured play equipment, but does have features such as climbing rocks, a vine covered arbor and maker spaces. Children relate to animals and are interested in living creatures, so we often include elements such as bird houses and habitat gardens.

## MANY KINDS OF PLAY AND LEARNING

Children learn through play and discovery, and their play takes many different forms. Our designs often provide places for teaching, storytelling and projects, age- and developmentally-appropriate gross and motor activity including crawling, climbing, balancing, jumping, running, and activities such as dramatic play, building, gardening, digging, and art; areas with natural materials or building; places for sensory discovery including outdoor musical instruments; and areas left relatively "undeveloped" for unstructured play and curriculum-based learning.







## CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Research has shown that contact with nature improves children's well-being, improving their ability to learn, restoring attention and relieving stress. Spending time outdoors engages our senses and encourages exploration and hands on discovery. It is important, especially for schools in northern climates, to provide landscapes that can be used in all seasons. Simple shelters for protection from the rain and sun, indoor/outdoor spaces, and plants with spring, fall, and winter interest are important for ensuring that connections to the outdoors are sustained throughout the year.

## MEETING CODES AND STANDARDS

Designing children's landscapes requires a familiarity with codes and standards for playground safety, and accessibility, and curriculum-based learning when applicable. Our work with schools and early childhood centers has given us experience addressing safety and liability concerns while keeping the landscape varied and interesting.

## INCLUSIVE PLAY

We believe in inclusive design for people with all abilities. Over a decade ago our design for the Enabling Garden at Chicago won the AAM Accessibility Award. We have designed several accessible playgrounds and have developed sensory gardens for two Pittsburgh schools for children with profound disabilities.

## ENGAGING ADULTS TOO

Whether designing a playground or a children's garden, we have found that it is important for children's landscapes to engage and involve adults too. Parents and teachers appreciate an environment that is well-maintained, with places to comfortably interact with children.

## PLACES TO COME TOGETHER

We strive to create landscapes that naturally encourage interaction and teaching moments among children and adults. Open spaces of varying sizes that can be used flexibly to allow the outdoor environment to be used by different kinds of groups and to adapt with changing activities through the years.

# SCOPE OF WORK

Given our experience in completing similar projects, we propose the following scope of work:

1. Assemble and prepare base maps for each site utilizing mapping provided by the SCASD and as obtained from PA Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access.
2. With base maps in hand, we will visit each site to inventory and evaluate existing play equipment and to document the opportunities and constraints of the surrounding play space sites. This task will be completed with an intensive four day on-site review.
3. To gain an understanding of the needs and desires of SCASD staff and stakeholders, as related to future play spaces and play space needs, we propose to prepare and host a web-based questionnaire to gather input. Separate surveys would be prepared for District staff and stakeholders.
4. Upon completion of the web-based questionnaires, the results will be tabulated and analyzed. A summary report of the survey results will be prepared and distributed to SCASD administration and staff. Results will be utilized, as appropriate, to guide the development of play area master plans.
5. Attend meetings with the SCASD Board, Staff and Playground Task Force – Round 1: Over a two-day period we will meet with District Board, Staff and Playground Task Force members to review and receive feedback on our findings to date, and to discuss programming requirements of future play spaces.

This will include discussing and determining the interest and desire for nature-based, curriculum-based play and STEAM opportunities into the proposed play spaces.

Further, we will discuss with Board Members, administrative staff and facility maintenance staff the various the levels of maintenance required for play spaces and various materials. This discussion will lead to establishing acceptable/agreed upon maintenance requirements/staffing levels for future play spaces.

6. Based on the inventory, analysis and input gathered to date, preliminary concept plans for future play spaces will be prepared. Concepts will be represented graphically and with character image boards that convey the design intent, play value, and aesthetics of each proposed play space.
7. At this point in the process, the first at-large community meeting will be held to present the preliminary concepts and receive feedback on the proposed play space concepts for all ten school sites.
8. Utilizing the feedback received from the first at-large community meeting, we will prepare draft master plans, character image boards.
9. Prepare graphic renderings.
10. Prepare estimates of probable construction costs and projected maintenance requirements/costs for each site.
11. A summary document will be prepared to present the resulting plans and corresponding phased capital improvements plan.
12. SCASD Board, Staff and Playground Task Force Meetings – Round 2: Over a two-day period we will meet with District Board, Staff and Playground Task Force members to review our findings and proposed master plan recommendations
13. A second at-large community meeting will be held to present and receive feedback on the draft master plans, cost estimates, phasing plans.
14. We will finalize plans and corresponding estimates, maintenance projections and narrative document to respond to feedback provided by SCASD Board, Staff and Playground Task Force members and the public at-large.

15. We will conduct up to six web conference meetings with administration/staff/stakeholders throughout the process as needed.

Deliverables will include:

- Narrative Report
- Site Master Plans
- Graphic Renderings of Proposed Projects
- Estimates of Probable Construction Costs
- Maintenance Recommendations and Projections
- Proposed Phased Implementation Plan

**ASSUMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS**

1. One point of contact will be assigned to represent SCASD with Pashek + MTR. This point of contact will be responsible to scheduling meetings as required by the consultant with appropriate district personnel and stakeholders.
2. Play spaces are defined as the existing playgrounds and surrounding areas at each school site. They do not include elements such as tennis/basketball courts, baseball/softball, soccer, football and/or lacrosse fields.
3. Should green infrastructure/water features be proposed in future play spaces, for purposes of master planning it will be assumed sufficient stormwater runoff can be collected to facilitate the intended feature. No stormwater calculations will be made during this master planning process.
4. Pashek + MTR will rely on subsurface geotechnical information provided by the SCASD. Should none be available, proposed recommendations will assume the corresponding site(s) are geotechnically stable to support the proposed improvements. No geotechnical investigation will be performed during this master planning process.
5. The following tasks are excluded from the professionals scope of services. Certain tasks may be provided as an Additional Service, for an additional fee, as requested in writing by the Owner:
  - a. Municipal land development review and/or approvals.
  - b. Playground safety assessment.
  - c. Preparation of permits applications and payment of permit fees.
  - d. Site electrical design and lighting.
  - e. Site plumbing and sanitary water design.
  - f. Architectural or structural design for accessory buildings such as shelters, sheds, etc.
  - g. Hazardous materials.
  - h. Irrigation design.
  - i. Construction documents.
  - j. Construction administration.
  - k. Meetings in excess of the number provided in the scope of work description.

**PROPOSED FEE**

Based on our experiences in completing similar projects, we propose to complete this project for a fixed fee of \$123,595, including reimbursable expenses. This fee is based on the estimate of hours to complete each task located on the next page.

As requested, we are also providing the following costs for additional meetings, if necessary. Costs include meeting preparation, meeting attendance, and preparation and distribution of meeting minutes:

- Web Conference (Go-To-Meeting)..... \$115.00 per hour
- On-Site Administration/Staff/Stakeholders ..... \$920.00 per meeting  
Meeting, held between 8 am and 4 pm
- On-Site Evening Meeting .....\$1,500.00 per meeting  
requires overnight stay

We have found that many of our clients prefer the efficiencies associated with the web conferences, as it reduces the time we spend traveling to meetings, and therefore allows more of the design budget to be spent developing solutions.

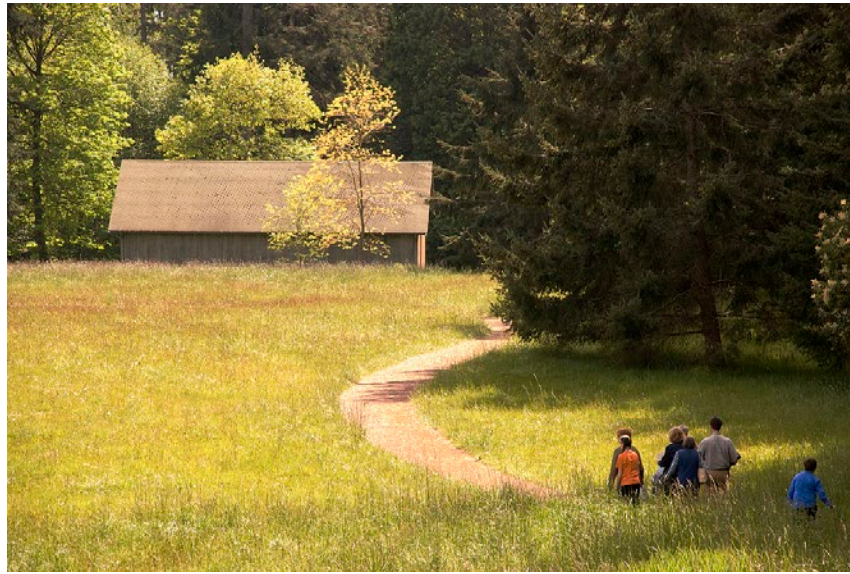
**PROPOSED FEE**



| Task              | Description  | Pashek + MTR |                 |                |             |                    | Reimbursable Expenses |
|-------------------|--|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
|                   |  | John Buerkle | Kara Roggenkamp | Heather Cuyler | Jess Fegley | CADD/GIS/ Graphics |                       |
| 1.                | Assemble and prepare base maps for each site.  |              | 8               |                |             | 40                 |                       |
| 2.                | Conduct site visits and first stakeholder group meetings.  | 8            | 40              |                | 40          |                    | \$1,600               |
| 3.                | Develop web-based staff and stakeholder nature- and curriculum-based play questionnaires.                  | 2            |                 | 12             |             |                    |                       |
| 4.                | Analyze web-based staff and stakeholder nature- and curriculum-based play questionnaires results.          | 4            |                 | 24             |             |                    |                       |
| 5.                | SCASD Board, Staff and playground task force meetings round 1.   |              | 20              |                |             |                    | \$400                 |
| 6.                | Develop preliminary master plan concepts & character image boards.   |              | 50              |                | 100         |                    |                       |
| 7.                | Conduct first at-large community public meeting.   |              | 12              |                | 20          |                    | \$400                 |
| 8.                | Develop draft master plans and character image boards.   | 16           | 120             |                | 200         |                    |                       |
| 9.                | Prepare graphic renderings.  |              | 20              |                | 80          | 80                 | \$500                 |
| 10.               | Prepare estimates of probable construction costs.  | 3            | 20              |                | 60          |                    |                       |
| 11.               | Prepare draft narrative summary document.  | 8            | 20              | 20             | 40          |                    |                       |
| 12.               | SCASD Board, Staff and playground task force meetings - round 2.   |              | 12              | 12             | 12          |                    | \$400                 |
| 13.               | Conduct second at-large community public meeting.  |              | 20              |                | 20          |                    | \$400                 |
| 14.               | Finalize master plans, estimates and narrative document.   |              | 20              |                | 40          |                    | \$1,250               |
| 15.               | Up to six web conferences meetings with administration/staff as needed throughout master planning process. | 8            | 24              |                |             |                    |                       |
| Hours per Column  |  | 49           | 386             | 68             | 612         | 120                |                       |
| Hourly Rate       |  | \$135        | \$115           | \$115          | \$85        | \$65               |                       |
| Cost per Column   |  | \$6,615      | \$44,390        | \$7,820        | \$52,020    | \$7,800            | \$4,950               |
| <b>Total Cost</b> |  |              |                 |                |             |                    | <b>\$123,595</b>      |



Creating exceptional places that connect people with the natural world and with each other.



Pashek + MTR listens attentively and follow through conscientiously in order to create exceptional places. We value listening to our clients and being responsive to their needs. Underlying that responsiveness is respect – for the communities where we work, for the natural and built environment, and for the people who use the spaces we plan and design. Our process helps connect visionary ideas to implementable solutions, rooted in improving quality of life for all.

As an award-winning landscape architecture and community planning firm we are committed to improving our environment. Pashek + MTR presents our clients with an expansive skill set that includes play spaces, parks and recreation, community planning, sustainable site design, and public and private gardens. We are committed to design excellence, an interactive and collaborative design process, and to building a diverse public and private client base.

The foundation of our work is sustainability. Our planning process helps stakeholders understand the value of the natural environment and how to conserve and enhance it, while meeting the needs of stakeholders and the community.

We deliver experience, creativity and skill in communicating with our clients and communities. Our deep commitment to improving the world around us enables us to create exceptional places that connect people with the natural world and with each other. With strategic thinking and a team of talented professionals, Pashek + MTR provides our clients with the tools needed to achieve their vision.

## OUR STUDIO

Our main office is located in the Deutschtown National Historic District, on the City of Pittsburgh's North Side.

Number of staff: 14

Licensed landscape architects: 7

Certified planners: 1

Staff with LEED accreditation: 7

## OUR PEOPLE

Landscape Architects

Community Planners

Recreation Practitioners

Certified Park and Recreation Professionals

Meeting Facilitators

GIS Specialists

Graphics Specialists

CADD Technicians

## OUR PRACTICE AREAS

Play Spaces

Parks and Recreation Planning and Design

Education, Therapeutic & Sensory Gardens

Sustainable Site Design

Public Gardens

Implementable Community Planning

Private Gardens

Cemetery Design

Urban Spaces

## AWARDS + RECOGNITION

**The Child Care Center at Hort Woods** | PA/DE ASLA 2017 Merit Award

**Deadman's Hollow Conservation Area** | Management Plan 2016 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence

**The Orchid Conservatory at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden** | PA/DE ASLA 2014 Honor Award

**David Lawrence Convention Center Green Roof** | PA/DE ASLA 2014 Honor Award

**Mario Lemieux Center for Blood Cancers 4th Floor Terrace Garden** | Center for Health Design and The Society for the Advancement of Gerontological Environments 2013 Landscape Architecture Awards for Healthcare Environments, Silver Winner – Acute Care

**Chautauqua County Greenway Plan** | Upstate New York APA 2013 Award for Planning Excellence in Comprehensive Planning

**Chautauqua County Greenway Plan** | Western New York Section APA 2013 Outstanding Planning Award

**The Dam Park at Austin: Master Plan and Economic Development Strategies** | Pennsylvania Chapter APA 2012 Planning Excellence Best Practice Award

**Carmalt, Weil, Roosevelt School Gardens** | Philadelphia Horticultural Society 2012 Community Greening Award

**Pioneer Education Center Sensory Garden, West Liberty Elementary School Garden** | Philadelphia Horticultural Society 2011 Community Greening Award

**H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens in the Arboretum at Penn State** | PA/DE ASLA 2011 Honor Award

**Missouri Botanical Garden** | PA/DE ASLA 2010 Presidential Award

**National Cemetery of the Alleghenies** | International Masonry Institute 2009 Western Pennsylvania Golden Trowel Award

**Sinquefield Lake** | PA/DE ASLA 2009 Honor Award, Residential Design

**Expanding the Cultural District: An Interactive, Intergenerational, Cultural Arts Park** | Cleveland Competition 2008 Notable Award

**Phipps Conservatory Welcome Center** | City of Pittsburgh 2006 Historic Preservation Award, with IKM Architects

**A Plan for Our Community: City of Greensburg, Hempfield Township, South Greensburg Borough, and Southwest Greensburg Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan** | 2006 Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence for Innovative Planning and Sound Land Use Practices

**Backyard Playspace at Osborne Elementary** | PA/DE ASLA 2005 Award of Merit

**A Peaceful Earth Master Plan for Quay Square** | PA/DE ASLA 2005 People's Choice Award

**Ford City Riverfront Park and Trail Master Plan** | Pennsylvania APA 2005 Outstanding Planning Award

**The Barn at Fallingwater** | AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards 2005 Silver Medal and Green Design Citation, with Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

**Pittsburgh Botanic Garden** | AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards, Landscape Architecture Open Plan 2004 Certificate of Merit

**Washington State Residence** | AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards, Landscape Architectural Category 2004 Honor Award

**Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden** | Brick Industry Association 2004 Brick Paving Design Award

**Ewing and Muriel Kauffman Memorial Garden** | PA/DE ASLA 2003 Merit Award

**Flags Across America, Beaver County Flag Plaza** | PA/DE ASLA 2002 Merit Award for Outstanding Professional Design

**Beaver Borough Riverfront Park, Master Site Development Plan** | PA/DE ASLA 2001 Merit Award for Design Excellence

**Chicago Botanic Garden Master Plan** | AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards 2001 Landscape Architecture Timeless Award, Certificate of Merit

**The Buehler Enabling Garden, Chicago Botanic Garden** | AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards 2001 Landscape Architecture Award, Certificate of Merit | American Association of Museums 2000 Accessibility Award

**Frick Park Environmental Playground** | PA/DE ASLA 2000 People's Choice Award

**Riverview Park Playground** | PA/DE ASLA 2000 Design/Built Award

**Hermitage Grade School/Middle School Master Plan** | Three Rivers Environmental Council Award 2000 Finalist

# John O. Buerkle, Jr., RLA, AICP

President

[jbuerkle@pashektr.com](mailto:jbuerkle@pashektr.com) | 412.321.6362 x102

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Over the past 28 years, John's work has established Pashek + MTR as a leader in the planning and design of parks, greenways, trails, open space, active transportation improvements, and walkable communities. He has managed over \$25 million dollars of construction improvements in the tri-state area. Further, John has successfully assisted many of our clients in securing grants to fund their projects. John's consensus building approach meets our clients' needs while incorporating sustainable design principles and identifying opportunities to maximize economic development impact within communities.

John is experienced in all aspects of recreation, park, greenway, open space and trail planning, design and construction. Further this experience ranges from large scale multi-county planning projects to detailed site design for recreation and park improvements.

John holds a FAA certification as a small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Remote Pilot which he utilizes to document projects for clients.

## CLIENTS

- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureaus of Conservation and Recreation, State Parks, and Forestry
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- U.S. Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest
- PA County Government Agencies
- NY County Government Agencies
- MD County Government Agencies
- PA Municipalities
- Primary and Secondary Education Entities (public & private)
- Allegheny County Parks Department
- Allegheny County Department of Public Works
- City of Pittsburgh, Department of Public Works
- Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration
- NY Municipalities
- Not-for-Profit Organizations

## SELECTION OF PROJECTS

- Cook Forest State Park Visitor Center, PA DCNR
- Laurel Mountain State Park Ski Area Improvements, PA DCNR
- Wightman Park Improvements, City of Pittsburgh
- Townsend Park Improvements, City of Pittsburgh
- Paulson Spray Park, City of Pittsburgh
- Arlington Spray Park, City of Pittsburgh
- Bloomfield Park Roller Hockey, Bocci and Playground Improvements
- Allegheny County Parks Bike, Blade and Board Parks, Boyce and South Park
- Allegheny County Parks Ski Area Improvements and Snow Tubing Park, Boyce Park
- New Wilmington Borough Community Park Improvements
- Allegheny National Forest Equestrian Trails, U.S. Forest Service



## EDUCATION

- 1989 Bachelor of Landscape Architecture: Pennsylvania State University College of Arts and Architecture
- 2010 International Mountain Biking Association Trail Care Crew Training, IMBA Sustainable Trail Design
- 2013 Certificate of Academic Achievement, Urban Power to Prosper Class of 2013, University of Pittsburgh Joseph M. Katz School of Business
- 2016 Public Interest Design Institute Social Economic Environmental Design (SEED) Training

## LICENSURE & CERTIFICATIONS

Pennsylvania Registered Landscape Architect LA-001240-E, American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Social Economic Environmental Design (SEED) Certification FAA Small Unmanned Aircraft Remote Pilot Certification No. 4024867

## AWARDS

Dead Mans Hollow Conservation Plan - Governors Award of Environmental Excellence

Chautauqua County Greenway Plan - Upstate New York APA Award for Planning Excellence in Comprehensive Planning

The Dam Park at Austin: Master Plan and Economic Development Strategies Pennsylvania Chapter APA Planning Excellence Best Practice Award

## PUBLICATIONS

Pennsylvania Trail Design & Development Principles: Guidelines for Sustainable Non-Motorized Trail Design

# Kara Roggenkamp, RLA, LEED Green Associate

Principal

kroggenkamp@pashektr.com | 412.321.6362 x118



## LICENSURE & EDUCATION

PA Registered Landscape Architect  
(# LA002705)

LEED Green Associate (#10182460)

2003 Master of Landscape  
Architecture, University of Michigan  
School of Natural Resources

1999 Bachelor of Arts, Williams College

## AWARDS

PA/DE Chapter ASLA, Honor Award, The  
Orchid Conservatory at Daniel Stowe  
Botanical Garden, 2014.

Philadelphia Horticultural Society, Community  
Greening Award, Carmalt School, Weil School,  
Roosevelt School, 2012.

Philadelphia Horticultural Society, Community  
Greening Award, Pioneer Education Center  
Sensory Garden, West Liberty Elementary  
School Garden, 2011.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Kara designs landscapes that connect people with nature in their every day lives, with particular expertise in landscapes for children and sustainable site design. Her fourteen year professional design career includes work with public landscapes throughout the U.S., including botanical gardens, schools, national cemeteries, and public parks.

A love of gardening and the outdoors led Kara to pursue a career creating places for people to connect with nature. She has been the lead designer for several nature-based play spaces, including the Hort Woods Child Care Center at Penn State. She has also designed outdoor environments for children with special needs. These projects have given Kara an understanding of the many types of play and learning that a well-designed space can support, as well as the many codes and standards that apply to children's spaces. Kara often leads multidisciplinary project teams, serving as the main contact for clients and consulting team members. She is active with the Pittsburgh Green Infrastructure Network and the Green Building Alliance. Her work has included designing bioretention areas and porous pavement systems for clients such as the Missouri Botanical Garden, Fallingwater, and the City of Pittsburgh.

## PROJECTS

Hort Woods Child Care Center, University Park, PA  
Pioneer Education Center Sensory Garden, Pittsburgh, PA  
Western PA School for Blind Children, Pittsburgh, PA  
School Grounds Greening, Pittsburgh Public Schools  
Eco-Parking Lot, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, MO  
Fallingwater Parking Lot Renovations, Mill Run, PA  
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, Edinboro, PA  
National Cemetery of the Alleghenies, Pittsburgh, PA  
Orchid House, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Belmont, NC  
Pace School Sensory Courtyard, Pittsburgh, PA  
Westinghouse Memorial Landscape Rehabilitation, Pittsburgh, PA  
Beechwood Farms Parking and Trails, Fox Chapel, PA

## PUBLICATIONS & TALKS

"The Beauty of Green Infrastructure," Green Building Alliance Lunch & Learn, July 2014  
"Creating Welcoming Garden Environments for Children with Disabilities," American Public Gardens Association's annual conference, 2013  
"66 Schools in 4 Years: Greening Pittsburgh Public School Grounds," American Horticultural Society's Youth Gardening Symposium, 2011  
"Unpaving Paradise: Retrofitting Your Existing Parking Lot to Improve Sustainability," American Public Gardens Association's annual conference, 2011  
Roggenkamp, Kara and Scott Woodbury. "Native Plant Gardens at Shaw Nature Reserve," Public Garden, 24.4 (2009) pp. 12-14.



# Heather Cuyler

Recreation Planner & Certified Playground Safety Inspector  
hcuyler@pashektr.com | 412.321.6362 x116

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Heather directs the firm's recreation planning activities including feasibility studies, comprehensive recreation, park and open space plans, and specialty plans. Heather specializes in park and recreation management, maintenance planning, intergovernmental cooperation, public private partnerships and business planning. Heather also writes grants, conducts needs assessments, leads public participation processes and assists with park master planning.

Heather served as Parks and Recreation Director in Marshall Township, Allegheny County for 17 years. Her strong municipal background adds breadth, vitality and real world experience to Pashek + MTR's ongoing commitment to our parks and recreation clients.

Heather has successfully secured grants through many sources including DCNR, DEP, DCED, PennDOT, The Port of Pittsburgh, and regional foundations. Clients quickly recognize and immediately benefit from her exceptional abilities to create and implement recreational programs, manage budgets, and develop recommendations for recreation operations, parks and maintenance.

## SELECTED PROJECTS

### As a Consultant and Recreation Planner for Pashek + MTR

Cranberry Township Allegheny Alley Playground  
Playground Safety Inspections, Various Sites  
Adams Township Community Park Master Plan  
Belmont Pool Feasibility Study  
Marshall Township Community Center Feasibility Study  
Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance Strategic Plan  
Beaver County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan  
Churchill, Monroeville, Wilkins Comprehensive Plan  
Steel Valley Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan  
JM Hall Jr. Park Master Plan  
Marshall Township Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan  
Venango Trail, Allegheny Land Trust  
Brush Creek Trail Cranberry Connector Project



## EDUCATION

- 2007 National Recreation and Park Association Directors School
- 1994 Bachelor of Science, Wildlife and Fisheries: The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

## CERTIFICATIONS & AFFILIATIONS

Certified Playground Safety Inspector,  
National Recreation and Park Association

Member, National Recreation and  
Park Association

Member, Pennsylvania Recreation and  
Park Society

Governmental Affairs and Membership  
Committees, Pennsylvania Recreation and  
Park Society

District 1, President Elect, Pennsylvania  
Recreation and Park Society

Secretary, Moraine Preservation Fund

2010 Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks  
Society Leadership Summit Member

*"Heather Cuyler is highly competent professional, whose deliverables are creative, top-quality -and on time! She's delightful to work with and I'm proud to recommend her."  
Tim Herd, CEO, Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society*

# Jess Fegley

Designer/Planner

[jfegley@pashek+mtr.com](mailto:jfegley@pashek+mtr.com) | 412.321.6362 x107

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Pashek + MTR, LTD.

Jess works on Park and Recreation Development, Community Planning, and Urban Design projects.

Her academic background in horticulture provides knowledge regarding both the aesthetic qualities and growing requirements for a wide range of flora. Her background in geography gives her a familiarity with mapping programs such as GIS, which provides invaluable information on a local or regional scale.

Her established skills include traditional media rendering, graphic design using the Adobe Suite, three-dimensional modeling through SketchUp, and drafting with AutoCAD.

## PROJECTS

### Parks, Recreation and Planning Studies

- Export Borough JM Hall Park Master Plan
- Wilkins Township Active Transportation Plan
- Northside Bicycle Connector Study (Pittsburgh)
- City of New Castle Parks of the Big Run Recreation Area Master Plan
- Union Township Scotland Meadows Park Master Plan
- Brady's Run Park Environmental Center Master Plan
- Deer Lakes Park Sign Improvement Plan
- Green Valley Park Master Plan
- DCNR State-wide ATV Study
- Penn State Beaver Athletic Field Study

### Site Design, Site Development and Planting Design

- Allegheny County Parks Wayfinding Signage Design & Implementation Plan
- Community College of Beaver County Campus Improvements
- University of Pittsburgh Lothrop Hall Green Roof
- Allegheny Commons Park Pedestrian Bridge Improvements
- Beechwood Farms Accessible Trails, Parking, and Support Services Building
- Bottleworks Site Design
- Paulson Spray Park Site Development
- Young Scholars of Western PA Charter School Planting Plan

### Community Planning

- Allegheny West Neighborhood Revitalization
- Jeannette Implementable Comprehensive Plan



## EDUCATION

2015 Bachelor of Landscape Architecture:  
Pennsylvania State University,  
University Park, PA  
Minors: Horticulture, Geography,  
Environmental Inquiry

## AWARDS

ASLA Student Awards of Honor and Merit  
Nominee, 2015  
Excellence in the Study of Landscape  
Architecture, 2011-2013, Pennsylvania State  
University, University Park, Pa.  
Student Ecologist Award, 2010, Lehigh Gap  
Nature Center, Slatington, Pa



**CLIENT**

The Pennsylvania State University

**OVERVIEW**

Early childhood center with nature based play

**PROGRAM**

Sensory garden, sand play, natural materials, bubbling rock, pull up rails, sensory wall, stepping stones, sensory walk, natural boulders for climbing, trike loop, water table, playhouse, loose parts play, project area, rain barrel, dry stream

**SUSTAINABILITY**

LEED Platinum certified, sustainable materials (local, renewable, recycled, salvaged), green infrastructure, artful rainwater design, porous paving, native plants, tree preservation, passive solar design, natural ventilation.

**SERVICES**

Playground design, nature play design, concept design, schematic design, design development, construction documents, construction administration, LEED templates.

**REFERENCE**

Linda Duerr, Coordinator of Children’s Educational Programs  
 The Arboretum at Penn State  
 212 Forest Resources Building  
 University Park PA 16802-3604  
 (814) 867-4813  
 lmd9@psu.edu

**Hort Woods Child Care Center**

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

The design of the outdoor learning environment for the Hort Woods Child Care Center reflects the University’s understanding that contact with nature is central to children’s well-being and that “environment is curriculum.” The sensory-rich design provides a variety of settings and elements that immerse children in a daily experience of nature. Children make lasting connections with the natural world as they play, learn, and build in the shade of mature oak trees preserved throughout the playground.

Children ranging in age from 6 weeks to 5 years enjoy a half acre of nature play and garden areas designed to engage young children’s senses and foster active, creative, imaginative and social play. The design of the playground was informed by findings of the Natural Learning Initiative.

On the south side of the building, the infant/toddler sensory garden includes a rock-edged sand play area with bubbling rock water feature; wood pull up rails, open areas and paths for push toys; a butterfly-themed sensory wall, stepping stones and lawn areas for more challenging walking surfaces, and ample seating for caregivers. A second infant/toddler play area on the woods side of the building includes a custom “leaf” climber, a turtle drum, and a textured walkway using salvaged stone.



**CLIENT**

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

**OVERVIEW**

School greening and nature based play

**PROGRAM**

Stepping stones, log benches, bird habitat planting, bird mosaic, "nest"

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Habitat garden, native plants, pavement removal

**SERVICES**

Concept design, garden design, play space design, construction documents, and construction observation

**AWARDS**

Philadelphia Horticultural Society, Community Greening Award, Carmalt School, Weil School, Roosevelt School, 2012.

**BUDGET**

Varied, \$20,000 to \$100,000

**REFERENCE**

Art DeMeo, Director of Community Greenspace  
 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 800 Waterfront Drive  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
 (412) 586-2346  
 ademeo@paconserve.org

**Outdoor Learning Environments**

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PITTSBURGH, PA

Pashek + MTR has designed nature play areas for fourteen Pittsburgh Public Schools as part of the School Grounds Greening Initiative implemented by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. With small budgets, these projects demanded creativity and attention to future maintenance requirements.

At Weil School we replaced a bare asphalt play yard with a green space that includes a play hill, "fallen log", giant stepping stones, and planting for bird habitat and shade.

At Peabody Early Childhood Center, we installed a stepping stone maze, built rolling play hills, put in a stump table and log benches, and planted many new trees and shrubs.

The new nature play area at Crescent Early Childhood Center took an unused patch of lawn and transformed it into a bird-themed garden where young children can connect with nature. Preschoolers and volunteers from PNC bank helped create a child sized nest woven from vines where kids can pretend to be birds. The nest is set in a mini-forest of small flowering trees. With the help of volunteers, a local mosaic artist livened up an existing concrete wall with colorful portraits of native birds. Stump seats and tables created by a local woodworker invite children to engage in pretend play in the garden.





**CLIENT**

New Wilmington Borough

**OVERVIEW**

Community park master plan & implementation

**PROGRAM**

Facility and activity area improvements, accessibility improvements

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Establishment of riparian buffer, rain gardens, pervious pavements

**SERVICES**

Public involvement process, master planning, cost estimating, phasing, grant writing, design, construction documentation, cost estimating, permitting & construction observation

**BUDGET**

\$150,000

**REFERENCE**

Sharonn Edmiston, Council Administrator/  
Treasurer  
New Wilmington Borough  
134 High Street  
New Wilmington, PA 16142  
(724) 946-8167  
sharonn@zoominternet.net

## New Wilmington Borough Community Park

New Wilmington Borough, Lawrence County, PA

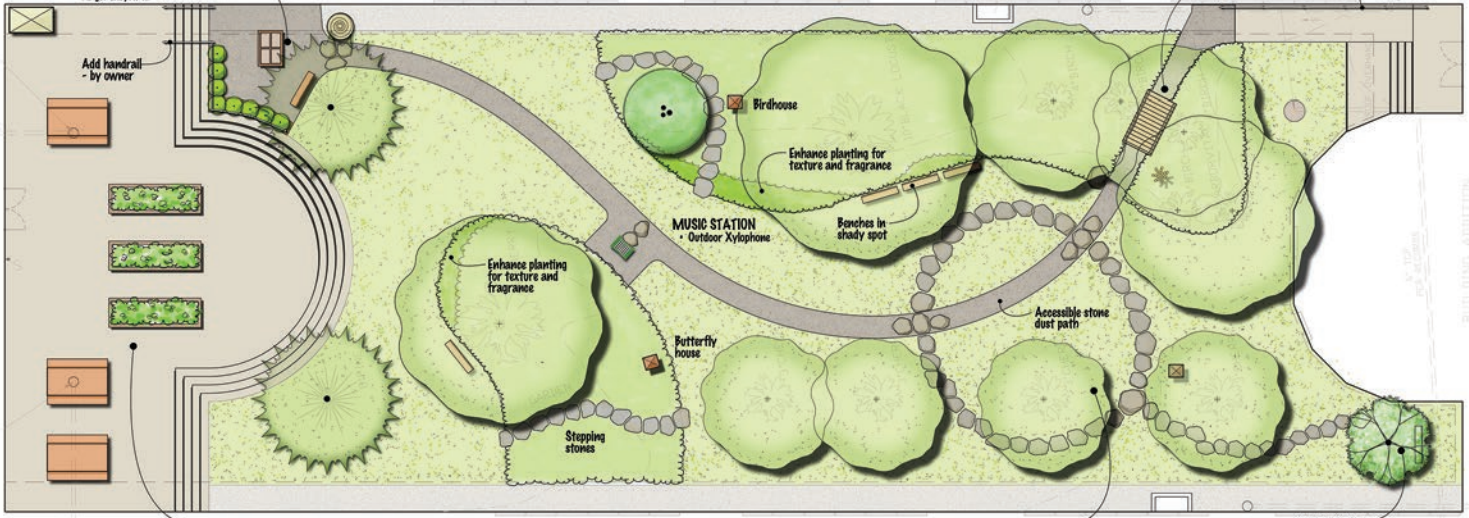
After conducting a master planning process for the existing New Wilmington Borough Community Park we assisted the Borough in successfully applying for several grants for implementation of recommendations developed during the planning process. The planning process included an extensive public input process with invigorating public input sessions, spirited council meetings, and consensus building steering committee meetings. The planning process resulted in the development of a road map for achieving following goals for the park:

- Multi-generational with activities for all ages
- Accessible to all
- Include good pedestrian connectivity within the Park and with surrounding land uses
- More environmentally sustainable
- Incorporate both active and passive play areas
- Meet the needs of New Wilmington Borough residents
- Have a unified aesthetic, Craftsman Style, consistent across the buildings, shelters, signs, light fixtures, and other park features
- Include high quality improvements that will be durable, easy to maintain, and aesthetically pleasing



**TEXTURE STATION**

- Nature table for water, sand or science observation
- Seeds
- Rail / hedge barrier at top of steps
- Finger labyrinth



- HERB GARDEN & PROJECT AREA**
- Raised beds with perennial herbs
  - Picnic tables
  - Storage shed

- STEPPING STONE CIRCLE**
- Birdhouse
  - Giant stepping stones

- COZY NOOK**
- Weeping tree
  - Bench
- Sunnyside Sensory Garden**

**Sunnyside Elementary School Outdoor Learning Environment**