

## Sustainable Sites Initiative

In early November 2009, the American Society of Landscape Architects, along with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the United States Botanic Garden, released the “**Sustainable Sites Initiative**”. The core premise of this rating system is its eco-systems services focus.

Our current methods of site development and management can be harmful to our environment and to ourselves in both the short and long term. Our eco-systems support life in many ways, so at what cost are we willing to sacrifice our environment? From increased flooding, poor water quality and polluted air our current methods of development are continuing to take us down a dangerous path. The very nature of how we conduct our everyday maintenance has contributed losses to our healthy environments.

The **Sustainable Sites Initiative** recognizes that any landscape, urban or rural is capable of promoting the natural benefits that are essential to providing a better environment for all. Sustainable landscapes enhance the experience of users creating many healthy benefits. Through the uses and creation of sustainable site strategies we are creating environments that are assisting the healing.

The initiative covers areas of site development that include: Site Selection, Assessment and Planning, Water, Soils and Vegetation Materials, Human Health and Well-Being, Construction, Operations and maintenance, and Monitoring. Until now, there has not been a comprehensive site related evaluation and rating system for the built landscape and site development. Buildings have had a national standard (LEED) and now the site development has a comparable system. Planning Resources has been monitoring the development of this industry rating system and has been implementing many of the strategies in projects of different scale and type. For example, our recent design for Lisle’s Garfield Park includes many of the strategies that are contained in the **Sustainable Sites Initiative**. Garfield Park includes: environmentally responsible play equipment, native plantings, permeable paving, recycled material in site furnishings, green roof demonstration, and LED lighting.

For more information on how to incorporate Sustainable Sites Initiatives and to learn about the value and importance of sustainable strategies with regards to your bottom line, contact your PRI representative at 630.668.3788.