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## Letter from the President

*Aaron Zahm, ASLA*

Change is fun! While I wasn't expecting such a quick jump into the role of Chapter President, there's no time like the present and I'm excited for the opportunity to serve NMASLA during a time of such tremendous energy, strength, and relevancy.

Rob Loftis and I recently had the chance to speak to MLA students at UNM about the transition from academic life to a career in landscape architecture. While the students were in various stages of their academic career, I couldn't help but focus on those whose immediate priorities are defending a thesis project and securing a job within the next couple of months. While Rob and I seemed like appropriate messengers (we both graduated within the last ten years), we were fortunate to enter the career market in a very different time. The demand for landscape architects was at an all-time high, entry-level positions were plentiful, and the U.S. economy was strong. My concern wasn't

IF I'd find a job, but rather WHICH job would offer the best launching point for my career. This was obviously a nice concern to have. Today's students face steeper challenges as they jockey for position in a narrow job market: how to stand out in the crowd, how to stay knowledgeable of current trends in the profession, how to be innovative in a field so full of creative innovators. What better time to make them aware of the benefits of an ASLA membership. (Yes, we were there for a sales pitch, too!) We reminded them of their access to a FREE year of full-membership during their first year after graduation, their immediate opportunity to volunteer and get involved with the local chapter, their chance for a one-on-one connection to professionals who have jobs to offer, their ability to receive free continuing education on important topics...you get the idea. Add all of that to the fact they're receiving one of the best landscape architecture educations in the country, and the promise of employment becomes brighter.

Fortunately for upcoming graduates, and those of us currently practicing, the

**NMASLA 2009-2010  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
DIRECTORY**

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definitions of landscape architecture are expanding and landscape architects serve an ever more important role in the discourse of the built environment. (Are you following the proposed EPA stormwater rulemaking, green infrastructure, the Sustainable Sites Initiative, Complete Streets, climate change, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, etc.?) An improving economy and increased awareness of the role of landscape architecture should help put all of us to work. Cheers to that!

The push towards an increased awareness takes center-stage this month as we celebrate National Landscape Architecture Month. NMASLA will celebrate NLAM and Earth Day at an important cultural landscape- Quarai Mission, one of three pueblos included in the Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument near Mountainair. I hope you can join us for this tour and discussion of Cultural Landscapes, led by Baker H. Morrow, FASLA, and Jill Cowley, PhD, ASLA. We'll also have a chance to participate in a charette on site for the design of an interpretive garden within the monument grounds. With so many talented landscape architects involved, I can only assume the results will be outstanding. The event is pre-approved for 4 Professional Development Hours through the Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System. Thanks so much to Envall Associates, representatives

of Landscape Forms, for their generous support of the event.

Lastly, as many of you are reading this, seven other lucky NMASLA members and I will be celebrating the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C., thanks to our generous friends at Victor Stanley. In addition to sightseeing, we'll meet with other landscape architects from the D.C. area, and tour two of Victor Stanley's factories in Denton and Dunkirk. I'm sure we'll be on our best behavior!

Happy Spring!

To comment on the President's message, please email responses to Aaron:  
*azahm@mrwnm.com*

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NMASLA's  
1st-Quarter Mtg.

# Spanish Courtyards & Tiwa Berry Gardens: The Quarai Mission

Celebrate **Earth Day** and **National Landscape Architecture Month**  
with NMASLA and the National Park Service

## @ Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument

sponsored by:

### schedule of events

friday APRIL 22, 2011

8:00: Vans leave downtown ABQ  
(free parking @ Sites Southwest, 121  
Tijeras Ave. NE)

9:30-12:00: Tour of Quarai Mission and  
Discussion of Cultural Landscapes

12:00-1:00: Sponsored Box Lunch

1:00-3:30: Design Charette - Quarai Visitors  
Center Interpretive Garden

3:30-5:00: Vans return to ABQ



## rsvp

by april 18, 2011

Email or fax this form to Will Moses:  
wmoses@mrwnm.com  
505.265.9637

Lunch and Education sessions are free to  
**NMASLA members**, but friends, family and  
colleagues are encouraged to attend for \$25  
Lunch, tour, and admission to the monument  
are included .

Payment is due at the event.  
Make checks payable to **NMASLA**.

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## Mixing It Up in a Challenging Economy

Mimi Burns,

ASLA, LEED AP BD+C

Principal, Dekker/Perich/Sabatini

The past 24 months have been tough for design firms nationwide, and the Southwest in particular. What is allowing some design firms to stay in business and others to fold? Is it the ability to juggle small projects and provide excellent customer service, while meeting modest financial goals? Is it about having diversified skills, services and project expertise? I don't have an answer, but I do know that our landscape architects are working on a wide variety of projects types, and this has been a very good thing – both intellectually and financially. The following three projects from the past 24 months illustrate the diversity of work being lead by Dekker/Perich/Sabatini

landscape architects in this economy.

### Madrid Mining Landscape, Madrid NM

NMEMNRD, Mining and Minerals Division, Abandoned Mine Land Program

Landscape Architects: Ken Romig, Renee Euler, Mimi Burns

The Abandoned Mines Land Program (AML) is a federally funded state agency that addresses the reclamation of abandoned mines. The goal for AML on this project was to address the mineral mining issues in Madrid in a holistic fashion through a community-wide plan that addresses the effects of past mineral mining and processing practices. Madrid's identity as a historic mining town with a vibrant art community makes it unique. Residents are creative, entrepreneurial and independent. In the absence of any town governing body, DPS engaged with the

community through a series of well attended community meetings, an interactive website and many personal interviews.

The planning effort helped to identify two significant projects that could improve the quality of life for Madrid residents. The East Slope Catchment will stabilize slopes, protect property from flooding and sedimentation and convey water to the arroyo. The second project will restore the hydrologic function of Madrid gulch-increasing channel length and sinuosity and providing water for community food source development. DPS is leading the team that is developing appropriate remediation techniques for these projects including geomorphic reclamation, low impact development such as depressed landscape areas and stabilization with native materials, and traditional civil engineering solutions such as

Madrid Mining Landscape (left: Cato Road, right: Cave Road)





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*"...landscape architects are working on a wide variety of projects types, and this has been a very good thing."*

drop inlets and conveyance piping. Engineering of these solutions is already in progress, and construction will begin shortly following the completion of the community-based plan.

#### **Site Enhancements, Albuquerque NM**

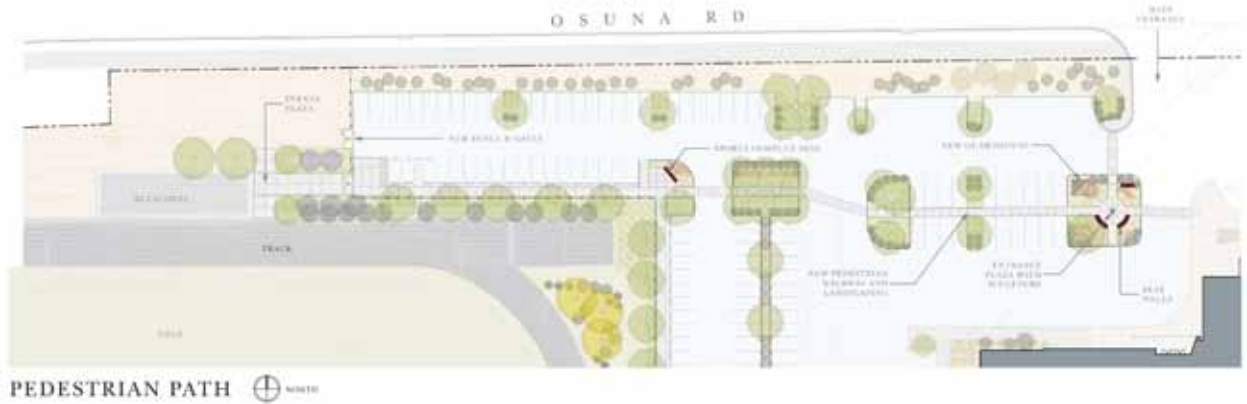
Sandia Preparatory School  
Landscape Architects: Mimi Burns,  
Katie Paquette

Integrating green infrastructure solutions into water conservation and campus beautification projects is work tailor- made for landscape architects. This campus site renovation was designed to reduce water use, improve the appearance of the campus and create fun, functional space associated

with the school's main athletics field. Additionally, a visit to the school by Brad Lancaster triggered interest in integrating green infrastructure elements into the solution. DPS worked with school leadership and facilities staff to develop designs that could be implemented as funding became available, and could be built by school crews.

Design work included generating multiple solutions for phased implementation of site and circulation improvements, and working with staff to identify the best solutions for the school. Improvements included

new landscaping, entrance and field monuments, and a network of new paths, crosswalks and landscaped islands to create a more comfortable, attractive parking lot and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Green infrastructure improvements included water harvesting in the existing parking lot with flow-through planters, and modifications to a concrete storm water channel that used to flow directly to a retention basin. Now, in heavy rains, some of the channelized water flows into a field-side landscape area filled with cottonwoods, grasses and stone benches.



SOUTH ENTRANCE



SPORTS COMPLEX SIGN

#### Site Enhancements

Other parts of the channel were modified to slow flows and allow water to percolate into the soil where it could supplement irrigation of new trees, shrubs and grasses.

#### South Campus Placemaking Plan, Albuquerque NM

University of New Mexico  
Landscape Architects: Mimi Burns, Sara Zahm

UNM's South Campus is a center of intellectual and athletic accomplishment, but it lacks a campus aesthetic or identity that reflects these achievements. UNM hired DPS to create a development framework that capitalizes on existing assets – the Science and Technology

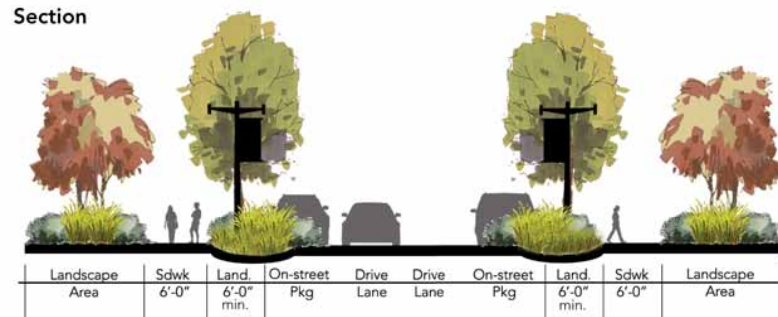
Park, athletic venues, and new student housing, in order to create a diverse, dynamic university campus. The Placemaking Plan is aligned with UNM's recent Master Plan Update and includes recommendations related to mission, land use, connectivity, sustainability, design and decision-making that will provide a reliable structure for public and private investment and provide new opportunities for students, faculty, staff and the general public.

The Placemaking Plan is a new kind of document for the University, and this presents a challenge. The Placemaking Plan is more

detailed than a master plan but less prescriptive than design standards. The Environmental Design section of the document addresses combinations of land uses, circulation and open space networks; and other elements that create the framework for more detailed design – like location and design of focal elements, landmarks and open spaces, as well as wayfinding and signage. The heart of the Placemaking Plan is the design standards, which communicate UNM's commitment to creating a new kind of campus environment. Sustainable design is an integral part of the design standards – including sustainable sites

and green infrastructure solutions to create a healthy campus environment and protect water resources. A Kit of Parts structure is used to address the placement of structures and the design of roads, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, furnishings, walls and fences, and environmental graphics. Although not yet officially approved, UNM is using this document as a guide for new development on the South Campus.

Please direct any questions or comments to Mimi Burns.  
[mimib@dpsdesign.org](mailto:mimib@dpsdesign.org)



*South Campus Placemaking*

## Learning from the Vernacular

### Bringing water process back into the daily life

*Dominique Dupont,*  
*Associate ASLA*

The Southwest has a rich history of civilization in spite of its harsh, arid climate: one of the most significant characteristics of this place. By studying the water infrastructure of the past, perhaps there is an opportunity to discover lessons in sustainability that can be useful for the development of water infrastructure in the future. For this thesis project, the research question asked was: What lessons in sustainable water management can be learned

from New Mexico's vernacular landscapes? Two eras of New Mexico's history were studied: Early Puebloan and Spanish Colonial. Five lessons for design were found: make productive landscapes; embrace community involvement; utilize natural processes; build multi-use systems; and, create ritualistic infrastructure. These five lessons were applied in a design project for a community park at the Las Ventanas Detention Dam.

Las Ventanas Detention Dam is located on the west side of Albuquerque at the crossroads of Paradise Blvd. and Universe Blvd. In the mid-1990s, Las Ventanas Detention Dam was built concurrently with the Ventana Ranch subdivision. Owned

by AMAFCA (Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority), the dam is on a 55-acre site. At the time of its development, the City of Albuquerque purchased an additional 17-acre tract located within the dam pool with the intention of developing it as a community park. In 2005, the City began the process of design and development of the site. Consensus Planning, Inc. was hired to design the community park. Phase 1 was completed in June 2010, and Phase 2 is currently under construction. This thesis project proposes a design for a community park located throughout the entirety of the dam. This project differs from and does not incorporate Consensus Planning, Inc.'s design.

The project site is 72 acres and contains the entire basin of the detention dam. There are four inlets that bring storm water into the site and one outlet structure (ported riser) that conveys the storm water north to the Calabacillas Arroyo via an underground pipe. The dam has a constructed, earthen spillway located on each side and has a maximum storage capacity of 330 acre-feet of water. Four concepts were established as strategies for arranging the site: link, center, distribute, and crease. The design goals were: to apply the five lessons learned through research; redirect and use the water entering the site to the benefit of the park; and, create a unique space accessible to and used by the neighboring community. Due to its scale and complexity, the design is best understood by dividing it into five layers : water channels, vegetation, movement, recreation, and buildings/roads/parking. This article will focus on the two

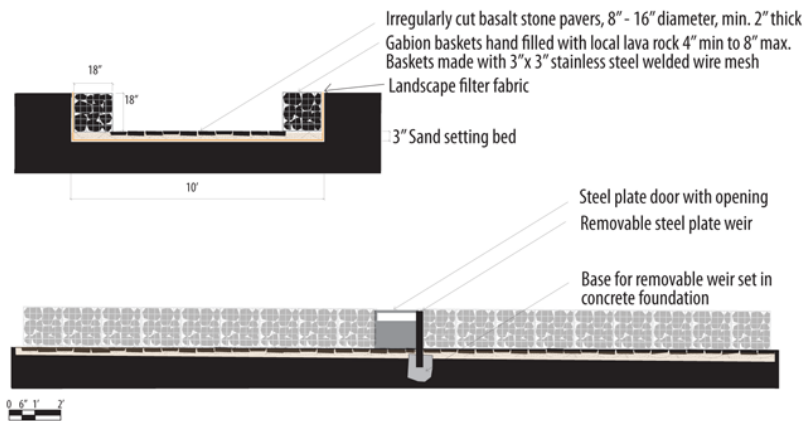


Site Location: Albuquerque, NM

main components: the water channel and the vegetation layers.

The water channel system formally distributes and conveys storm water entering the site from the four existing points of entry. Built with local basalt rock, a prominent by-product from the construction phase of the park, the channels are a reminder of the natural geology unique to the west side of Albuquerque. Just as water naturally collects and flows

in a branching pattern, the system of water distribution extends throughout the entire site, creating a dialogue of awareness between the water, the dam, and the park users. The channels also serve the purpose of slowing and distributing the storm water, so that it can be beneficial to the vegetation on-site while creating a park whose identity is based on the water infrastructure itself. As one of the most valued resources, especially in the Southwest, the precious water that accrues within the dam is not hidden, ignored or left untouched. Rather, the water is visible and plays an integral role in the design of the site. There are four types of channels - main, distributor, drain, and collection - whose functions vary from one to another depending on services performed.



Channel details

A main component in almost every park design, the

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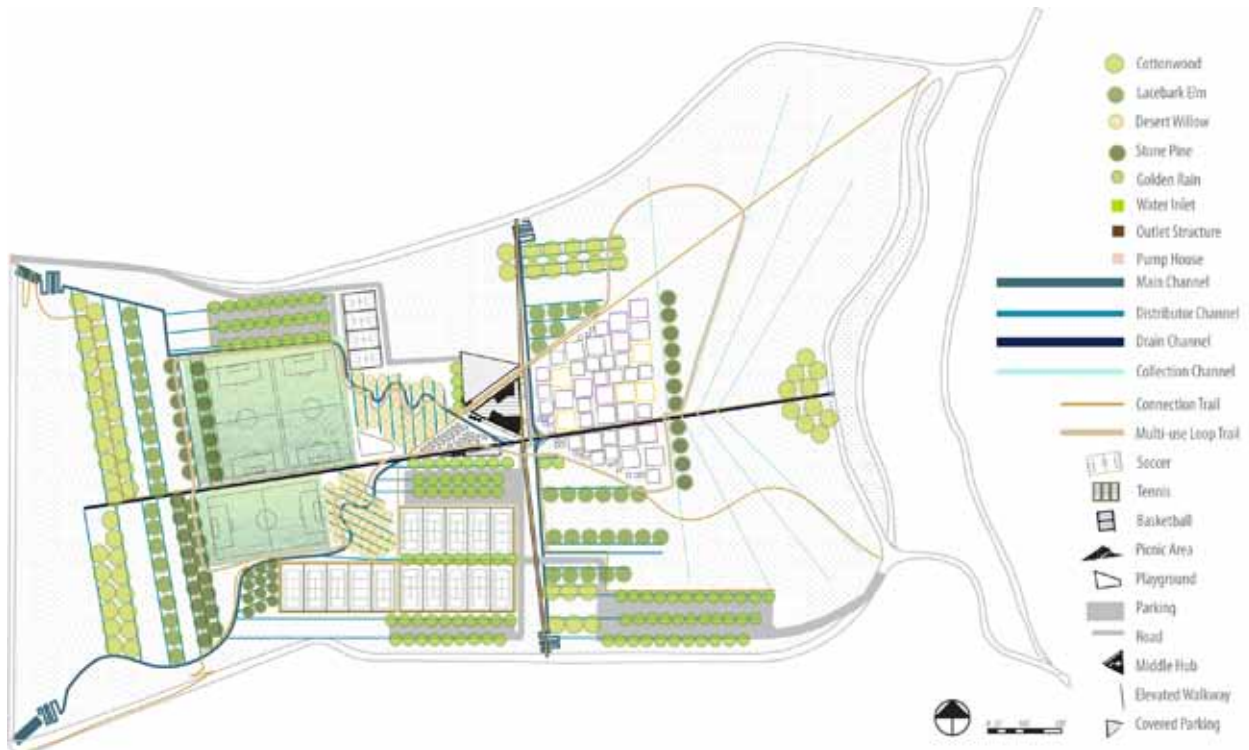
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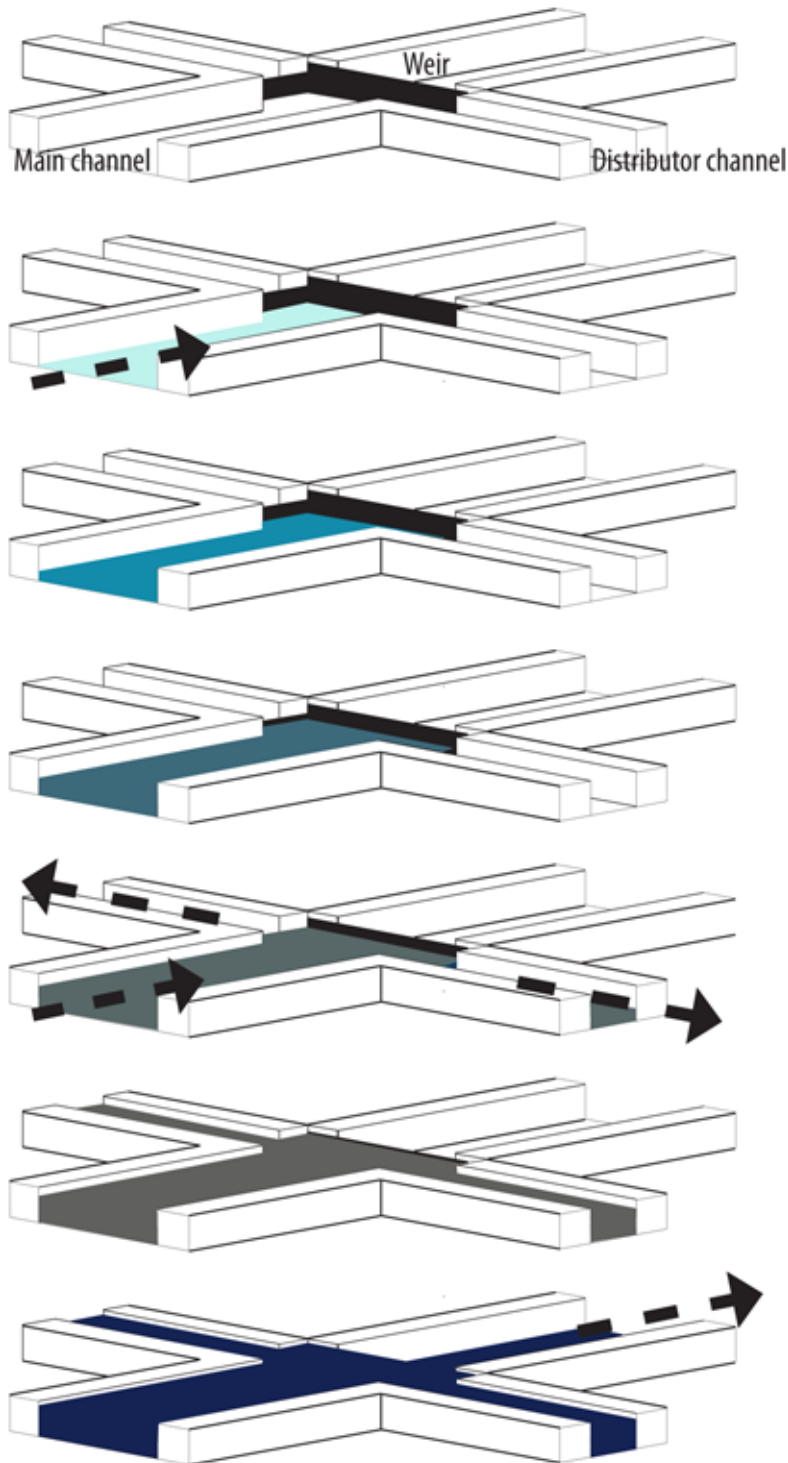
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*"Just as water naturally collects and flows in a branching pattern, the system of water distribution extends throughout the entire site, creating a dialogue of awareness between the water, the dam, and the park users."*



Channel flow diagram

vegetation plays an important role in the Las Ventanas Community Park. The design has four vegetated areas: distributor channels, waffle gardens, fields, and the natural landscape. In its current condition, both the detention dam and the constructed spillways have a dense and diverse vegetation cover. The design proposes leaving large areas of this natural landscape intact so as not to disturb the existing aesthetic and habitat functions of the site. Located along the distributor channels, linear sweeps of trees act as windbreaks, shade cars and people, and filter water in its early stages of flow within the site. As the channels distribute harvested storm water throughout the site, the water is infiltrated and accessed by the surrounding trees. There are two different field types found on-site: waffle garden fields and turf recreation fields. The waffle garden fields are a large-scale water harvesting demonstration – paying homage to New Mexico’s historic water harvesting traditions. A contrast to the heavily-watered turf fields located across from them, the waffle garden fields are sustained on precipitation alone. The edges between the cells are informal pathways where park goers can explore and meander upon their whim. A green oasis in the desert, the multi-purpose turf grass fields are designed to host three



Section: Waffle Garden Fields

full-sized soccer fields, but can be used throughout the year for many different activities or events.

This design project strived to incorporate the complex, beautiful, and powerful water processes that exist within the site. The water is not perceived as a nuisance to be hidden or ignored. It is the reason the site exists and this identity

informs the design on many levels. The water flowing into the site forms the Las Ventanas Community Park's identity and is a reason for celebration.

Please direct any questions or comments to Dominique Dupont.

*dominique.a.dupont@gmail.com*

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## Chapter Events

### Q1

**Date:** Friday April 22, 2011

**Location:** Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument

Vans leaving from Downtown ABQ

**Note:** See Attached Flyer

### Xeriscape Contest

**Date:** March-Oct 31, 2011

**Location:** Albuquerque, NM

**Note:** For more information go to [nmasla.org](http://nmasla.org)

## Membership & Address Changes

Please email Amy Bell:  
[abell@mrwnm.com](mailto:abell@mrwnm.com)

## Newsletter

The NMASLA newsletter is produced by students in the MLA program at the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning.

Please submit articles, news, photos, corrections, etc., to the editor:

Alex Leider

[aleider@unm.edu](mailto:aleider@unm.edu)



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## Website

### Have you visited the NMASLA Website?

Please check it out:

<http://www.nmasla.org/>

Want to show off your projects???

We are requesting project images or landscape images that anyone would like to have posted on the website. Please include a note with a brief description (name of project/landscape, location... anything else to explain the image).

Please send projects to Sara Zahm:  
[saraz@dpsdesign.org](mailto:saraz@dpsdesign.org)

### Call for Articles!

We want to showcase YOUR projects in our newsletter! Please send us your case study of a project completed in the last year and a half for inclusion in the next or future newsletters. Additionally, if you have ideas for a different type of article, please send us your suggestions. Help us keep our newsletters relevant and interesting for the NM Landscape Architecture community.

Please send your questions, case studies and/or articles to Alex Leider:  
[aleider@unm.edu](mailto:aleider@unm.edu)



High Desert Water Harvesting Garden, Sites Southwest  
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## 2011 NMASLA DESIGN AWARDS



Promoting our profession and recognizing the achievements of **NMASLA MEMBERS** in the following categories:

- Constructed Projects
- Planning & Analysis
- Communication
- Classic (built-projects completed at least 15 years ago)
- Student

Only NMASLA members are eligible to enter.

**More details coming soon!**

Questions? Aaron Zahm,  
[azahm@mrwnm.com](mailto:azahm@mrwnm.com)

### SCHEDULE

CALL FOR ENTRIES :  
**JULY 2011**

ENTRY SUBMISSIONS DUE:  
**OCTOBER 2011**

GALA AWARDS CELEBRATION:  
**DECEMBER 2011**

The 2011 Design Awards Committee is seeking **volunteers** to coordinate this big event. If you're interested in helping, please contact Aaron Zahm,  
[azahm@mrwnm.com](mailto:azahm@mrwnm.com)

Note: Participation in the awards committee does not preclude you from submitting!