



## **Florida Chapter ASLA Past President Report to Membership**

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### National Advocacy

To All Florida Landscape Architects:

At the end of April five Florida members met with 200 other landscape architects from around the country to participate in ASLA Advocacy Day in Washington DC. Other than me, we had Trustee Dana Worthington, President Elect Jeff Brophy, Chapter Presidents Council Chair Elect Kenn Bates, Vice-President of Education Elect Kay Williams and yours truly. All members are invited to attend this event. Trustees and the president/president elect are expected to attend as part of Mid Year Meeting (see separate article). In the past we have had students from Florida universities included and last year we had the National Student Representative as FIU student Jose Manuel Alvarez.

ASLA prepares the attendees by providing material history and talking points on the items which are being followed in the legislature. In addition, we have webinars to attend. When you sign up ASLA staff proceeds to set up meetings with your legislators. We kick off Wednesday afternoon in preparations for meetings all day on the Hill on Thursday.

The four points we were charged to convey to our legislators for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress are:

1. Landscape architecture businesses are 97% small businesses and we appreciate the work that has been done to enhance small businesses. We asked them to keep landscape architects in mind with any future small business issues.
2. We discussed green infrastructure and asked them to co-sponsor the Innovative Stormwater Solutions Act when it is re-introduced. The Florida contingent brought along specific Florida examples to show the legislators/aides. Kay Williams discussed the first place NATIONAL award given to a UF Team (headed by Glenn Acomb) for the EPA University Rainwater Challenge.
3. This year again legislation is being brought forward for federal Complete Streets legislation which would provide technical support for states and municipalities. Last year this issue had been dropped out of the MAP21 transportation legislation that was finally passed. We asked our legislators to join in sponsoring this bi-partisan effort.
4. Lastly, we asked our legislators to support the Community Parks Revitalization Act: redeveloping communities by re-investing in parks, recreation facilities and infrastructure that stimulates local economic development. We showed local examples of parks which, once redeveloped, created a positive economic change and are a strong community centers.

All five of us attended our two senator's meetings. We met with aides of Sen. Nelson and Sen. Rubio. They were great meetings and I believe we got our points across. Jeff and I, being from the same House District, both attended our meeting with Rep. Murphy. We had an attentive aide and at the end of our 15 minute meeting we were able to meet the Congressman, give a quick elevator synopsis of our points and then take a picture. In the three years I have been doing Advocacy Day, this was the first time I actually met a legislator face to face! It was a neat experience.

ASLA's web site carries all this information under advocacy. If these issues directly affect you, let your legislators know! Cite specific projects. You can do this easily through ASLA's Advocacy Network. Give it a try and you will find it is really easy. Let your voice be heard. Create relationships. I am finding myself really intrigued by the whole political process and advocacy.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at [pastpresident@flasla.org](mailto:pastpresident@flasla.org).