## Use Landscape Design for Natural Disaster Protection



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The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) has released a guide that gives designers, architects and builders a blueprint for protecting communities against the effects of natural disasters through better landscape design.

The guide includes case studies as examples of how to use landscaping elements to fight the fallout from extreme events like drought, heat, fire, floods and landslides. "As events become more frequent and intense due to climate change," ASLA says, "communities must adapt and redevelop to reduce risks and improve ecological and human health."

ASLA suggests using "green infrastructure" to help absorb, divert and even retain water for future use. In the other extreme - drought - conservation and re-use are key principles, so the guide suggests landscape architects use native plant design to help store and protect the water supply.

Well-thought-out landscape design can also help cool cities, many of which are experiencing more periods of extreme heat. Urban forests and green roofs are just a few of the tools that can minimize the "heat island" effect. Green roof buildings, for instance, can generate energy cost savings of 25 to 50 percent by cooling the building through plants.

Resilient landscaping, the association says, entails working with nature to achieve risk reduction, scalability and diversity, multiple co-benefits and regeneration. "Working with nature - instead of in opposition to it - helps communities become more resilient and come back stronger after disruptive natural events," ASLA says. "Long-term resilience is about continuously bouncing back and regenerating. It's about learning how to cope with the ever-changing 'new normal.'"

