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PKJ Design Group

Planting is Changing

Looking at Plant Communities to change the way we plant.

Adaptation in Crisis

Communities—plants and people

Time and Place

- **Time:** how long has this landscape been developing?
- **Place:** The spirit of a place, its atmosphere and quality of the environment as it relates to us

TRANSLATION

- Explore
- Observe
- Understand
- Translate

Why Change?

- Environmental
- Ecological
- Functional
- Aesthetics
- Emotional

WE ARE PREPARED

We Have

- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Purpose
- Desire
- Innovation
- Courage


"The front lines of the battle for nature are not in the Amazon rain forest or the Alaskan wilderness…
…the front lines are our backyards…"
Thomas Rainer and Claudia West
Planting in a Post Wild World

Plant Communities

NATURE

- Plant communities are made up of groups of overlapping populations that coexist and interact

DESIGN

- A designed plant community is an interpretation or translation of a wild plant community into a built landscape.

Principle #1

RELATED POPULATIONS. NOT ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS

Principle #2

STRESS AS AN ASSET

Krummholz

- This unique environment found in the region around the treeline is referred to as a Krummholz region. It is a “Zone of Struggle.”
- Krummholz means “Crooked Wood”

Principle #3

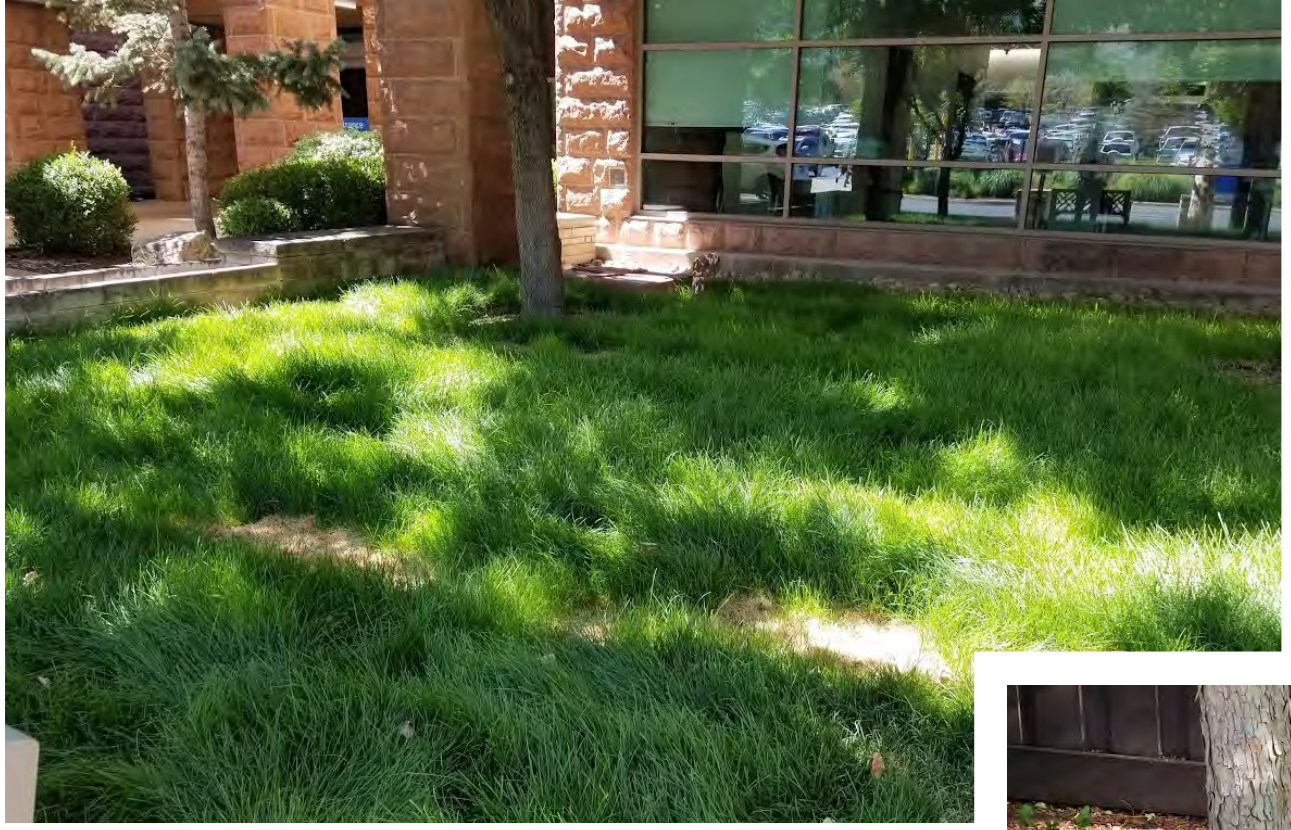
COVER THE GROUND DENSELY BY VERTICALLY LAYERING PLANTS

Principle #4

MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE AND LEGIBLE

Principle #5

MANAGEMENT, NOT MAINTENANCE




STERLING
URGENT CARE

Designing differently to meet the challenges we now face

Let Nature Inspire You

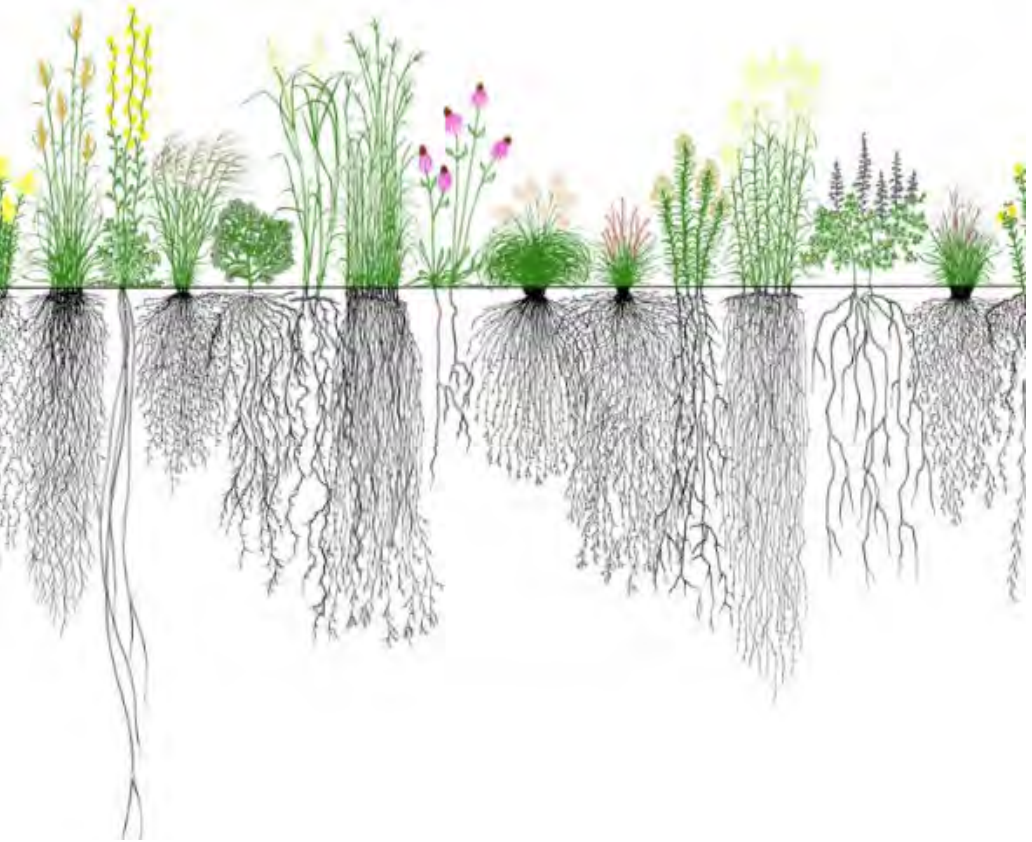
Archetypes

Essence of Place

GRASSLANDS

SHRUBLANDS


GRASSLANDS



Dry Grasslands

- Shorter grasses
- Blues and silver-greys
- Strong horizontal line
- Many layers above and below ground

LAYERS

STRUCTURAL

Tall forbs and grasses

Persist through much of year

Strong enough stems for winter interest

Create the backbone of the plant community

Amidst seasonal changes they keep the design visible and stable

FUNCTIONAL

Seasonal

- Perennials in large quantities

Ground Cover

- Hug ground, prevent erosion, suppress weeds

Dynamic Filler

- Opportunistic, fill fast, good for early stages of planting

Time

LAYERS

Designed plant communities are composed of “design layers” that provide the primary aesthetic interest, and “functional layers” that perform essential functions such as erosion control, soil building, and weed suppression.

WOODLANDS AND SHRUBLANDS

WOODLANDS AND SHRUBLANDS

- Dry summers, moist winters
- Plants with small leaves, gray leaves, waxy coatings
- Ability to go dormant in heat of summer
- Works well for suburban landscapes

LAYERS

STRUCTURAL

CLUSTERED CANOPY

Clusters or groupings of trees

Minimal number of species

- Juniper
- Gambel Oak
- Pinyon Pine

Ability to grow into its true form without the shade forests create

FUNCTIONAL

GROUND LAYER

Woody Layer

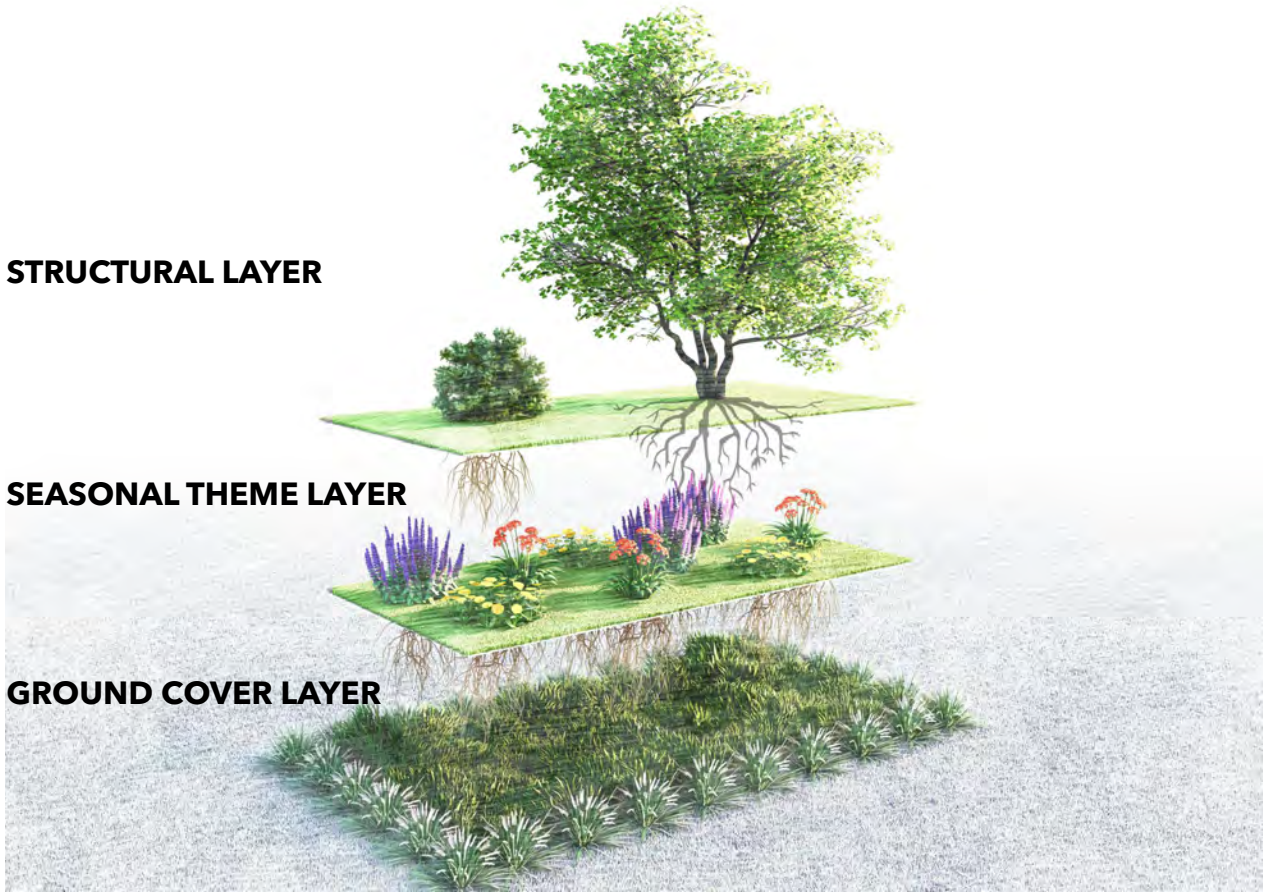
Function as herbaceous ground covers

Adapted to dry, infertile soils

Herbaceous Layer

Tolerates wide range of sunlight

Can add to lower vertical structure



LAYERS OF A DESIGNED PLANT COMMUNITY

Site Preparation

SHORTCUTS

- There Aren't Any

- Remove weeds at root
- Remove weeds before going to seed
- Pre-emergent/Roundup?
- Water
- Time

NATURALISTIC PLANTING

ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE	NATURALISTIC PLANTING	ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION
High aesthetic value	Moderate	low aesthetic value
Low ecological value		High ecological benefits
High maintenance		Low maintenance
Low biodiversity		High biodiversity

Relationships

- Plants to Place
- Plants to People
- Plants to Other Plants

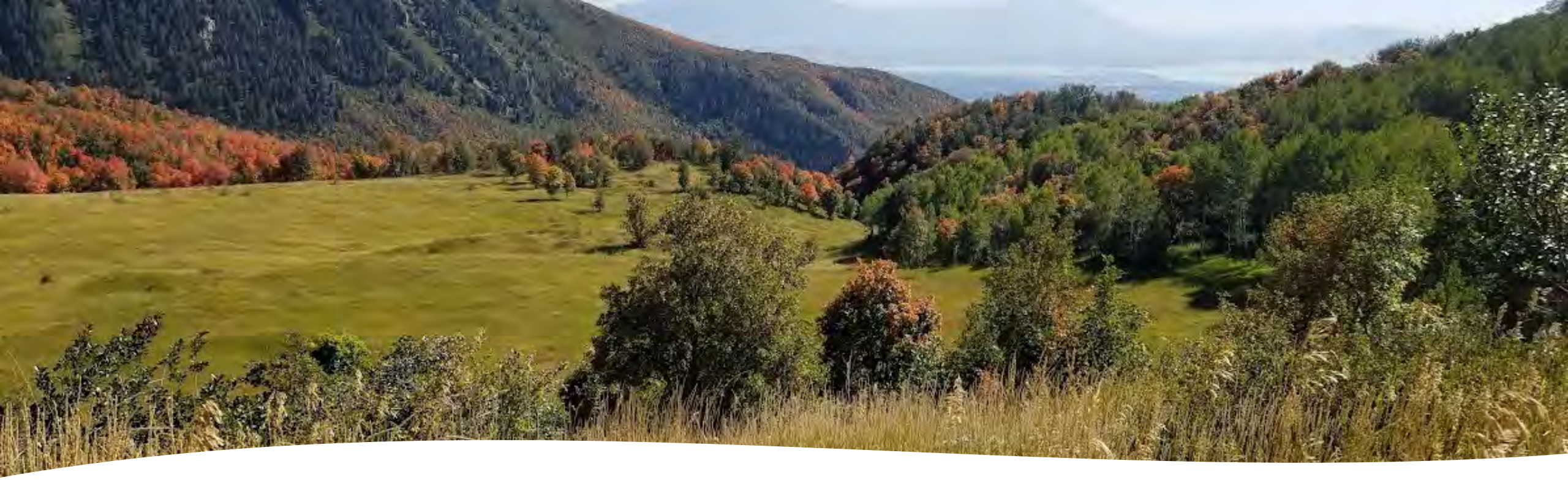
Where to Begin

OBSERVE

1. Expand plant knowledge of plants from our area. Why are they growing where they are?
2. Notice patterns in plant communities: waves, drifts, where trees grow, where are grasslands found.
3. Examine how the layers work and weave together.

APPLY

1. How would this translate into a built environment?
2. Remember our designed landscapes RESEMBLE something that occurs or exists in nature
3. Learn more/practice



Acts of Restorative Kindness to the Earth

“People travel the world over to visit untouched places of natural beauty, yet modern gardens pay little heed to the simplicity and beauty of these environments….

Those special places we all must preserve and protect, each in his own way, before they are lost forever.”

Mary Reynolds, Garden Designer
Chelsea Garden Show Application Nov. 2001

Learning More—Great Books to Read

- Planting in a Post Wild World
  Thomas Rainer & Claudia West
- Naturalistic Planting
  Nigel Dunnett
- The Dynamic Landscape
  Nigel Dunnett, James Hitchmough
- Plant Driven Design
  Lauran Springer Ogden
- Planting: A New Perspective
  Piet Oudolf, Noel Kingsbury
- We Are the ARK
  Mary Reynolds
- Steppes
  Denver Botanic Garden
- The Crevice Garden
  Kenton Seth, Paul Spriggs

Braiding Sweetgrass
Robin Wall Kimmerer

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