



Sustainable Landscaping Practices

NLS has always been committed to doing business in an environmentally responsible way and we're proud of the fact that many of the practices we pioneered are now becoming more commonplace. As a leading commercial landscape company, we believe it's our responsibility to be a role model for our industry and a source of best-practices for our clients and colleagues.

Integrated Pest Management

IPM is a holistic approach that utilizes a full-spectrum of techniques to manage pest populations while minimizing adverse economic and environmental side-effects. Water management, drainage, weed suppression and other strategies come into play that minimize the needs for chemical intervention.

Organics

A natural, organic approach to strong plants and turf is really a focus on creating healthy soil with an organic amendment regimen. Healthy soil helps produce healthy plants that are resistant to pests and disease. Our composting and soil amendment regimens reduce the need for traditional fertilizers and help protect the local water table.

Native Plants & Open Space Conservation

We consult regularly with our clients to identify areas on the property that are appropriate for reduced-water planting beds and drought tolerant plant material. Our design team always tries to incorporate native trees, plants, grasses and exposed rocks as appropriate. Also, whenever possible, we will preserve and care for nonhazardous trees in order to promote habitat and reduce heat islands.

Building Exterior & Hardscape Management

Impermeable surfaces, such as parking lots and walkways, as well as the buildings themselves, generate significant run-off. We work to ensure that storm water systems are kept clear and free flowing and we maintain vegetated swales and rain gardens without the use of chemicals. When the rain turns to snow, NLS uses as its primary de-icing method a liquid product that can be applied sparingly before a freeze, rather than a granular salt product that is broadcasted in heavy doses before and after a freeze.

Water Management Systems

Even here in the Pacific Northwest, effective management of our water resources is a top economic and environmental priority. NLS has a multi-faceted program that include strategies ranging from the relandscaping of inefficient growing areas to overhauling existing irrigation system hardware to installing state-of-the-art "smart systems" that work in concert with Mother Nature herself.

NLS is also well-versed in the various rebate and incentive programs offered by the water districts and municipalities in our region. We often serve as advocates and project managers for our clients to ensure that they take advantage of the beneficial environmental programs that incentivize good water stewardship.

Equipment Innovation

The mulching decks on our fleet of mowers are one of the most visible signs of our commitment to sustainability. The finely chopped clippings act as crude compost, reduce evaporation, reduce water consumption, as well as the need for fertilizer. They also increase the productivity of our crews.

LEED Certification

NLS is committed to the protocols and principles of the U.S. Green Building Council and LEED certification program. As part of our commitment, we have identified key individuals within the company to pursue their LEED Green Associate certification. This is a multi-phased process that started with the identification of practices currently employed that meet the standards set forth in the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Rating System. The second phase required us to develop specific solutions and implementation timelines for those practices not yet integrated into our operations. The third phase is a communications audit to ensure accurate representation of our operational efforts in all internal and external communications. Lastly, the monitoring and measurement phase, requires that we document the impact of all practices on our clients' properties that are seeking LEED certification status.

Partnerships

Identifying and understanding the various issues and opportunities associated with sustainable landscaping practices is not something NLS has done on its own. We reach out to and partner with other organizations in order to stay informed about emerging trends and best practices.

- Cascade Water Alliance
- Saving Water Partnership
- Seattle Green Gardening Program – Seattle Public Utilities
- EnviroStars Program



NLS Corporate Practices

Green Waste Recycling

Everyday we're asked, "What do you guys do with all that stuff?" That stuff — clippings, leaves, branches and other organic debris — gets turned into compost and recycled through our system in a virtuous cycle. NLS processes approximately 22,000 cubic yards of green waste every year — and growing. (As a visual, imagine 2,700 dump trucks lined up at your compost center.) In addition to this company-wide program, we work with clients to maintain their own green waste programs. In at least one case, this initiative processes the equivalent of 50 dump trucks of waste per year.

Vehicle Fluid Recycling

NLS operates more than 130 motor vehicles and hundreds more gas-powered pieces of equipment. And while we have begun to incorporate new technologies into our fleet and tool portfolio, managing the byproducts will remain an ongoing program. Our average annual consumption of oil is 800 gallons and all of it is recycled and/or used to heat our workshop facility. We also recycle more than 500 oil filters per year and all of our engine coolant.

Fleet Management

NLS manages a fleet of more than 130 vehicles of varying configurations. Our fleet management program monitors all aspects of vehicle performance, from routine maintenance to mileage tracking. Key highlights include:

Smart route mapping to maximize the efficiency of routes traveled during a work day in order to minimize fuel usage.

Nitrogen-inflated tires maintain optimal inflation over a longer period of time than standard O2-inflated tires due to the gas's larger molecules. Given the size of our payloads, proper tire inflation has an even bigger impact on fuel efficiency.

Our consolidated fueling protocol, whereby trucks are fueled individually during off-peak hours, has reduced idle-time at the pump and the associated emissions.

Daily vehicle audits track mileage and ensure that any mechanical or performance issues are brought to the attention of our fleet manager on a daily basis.

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