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Northwest Landscape Professional

The NWLP – Northwest Landscape Professional – is the official publication of the Washington Association of Landscape Professionals and is published and distributed quarterly to WALP members and extended gratis to select courtesy subscribers.

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The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals is monitoring the ongoing COVID-19 concerns on public safety.

WALP has developed a resource page on our website to give members and affiliates in the landscape industry up to date information on how this crisis affects landscape professionals. WALP leadership continues to work on your behalf to get answers from the government on key issues that impact our staff, customers, and our businesses.

Please visit www.walp.org/covid-19-resources for the most up to date information. We wish you all good health during this challenging time.

For information regarding advertising opportunities, please call us at (360) 350-4464 or email at info@walp.org.



Happy Fall!

*Ella Vogelpohl
Ragen & Associates
2021 WALP State President*

I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. We have all had COVID touch our lives and hopefully things will progress to a new normal soon. We have had some in person meetings and events happen in the past few months. If you have missed them, we are using the social distancing and health standards to make sure everyone feels safe and secure.

Thank you to everyone who attended the “Old Fashion Company Picnic – WALP Style” at Emerald Downs. Thank you, Dale Gellner for putting on such a great event! I also want to thank all the golfers, sponsors, Dale Gellner, and Ken Yozoru for such a great “2021 WALP Golf Tournament”. The Snohomish County Chapter has had a couple of in-person chapter meetings at Pacific Stone Company and at Puget Sound Plants. I know the King County Chapter and the Southwest Chapter have some in-person meetings coming up soon and Snohomish County Chapter will continue with holding in-person functions.

As posted in a recent WALP Wednesday, there was a Celebration of Life for Brendon Nepon on September 18th. Brendon always wanted to have a bowling tournament for our members, and I am planning on putting one together for the month of November. Please keep an eye open for it in the WALP Wednesday. You don't need to be a good bowler, because it will be a 9-Pin, No-Tap tournament, which means 9 pins down on the first ball will count as a strike.

There are still a few other events to take place this year. Please put in your outstanding project entries for the Northwest Premier Landscape Awards Program. If you have questions, please contact Lloyd Glasscock. There should also be at least one holiday party in December, so please watch the WALP Wednesday for details.

Looking forward to 2022, we will have our Strategic Planning Meeting in November and our Annual Meeting in January. Once lives and social times come to a halt, it takes a while to get back on our feet. 2021 has been a challenging year, but we are heading for a brighter 2022. Thank you for allowing me to be your state president this year. 🍀

Cover photo: *Green Spaces Landscaping, 2020 Grand Award winner for Design/Build. Project: Parikh Outdoor Living Space.*

Mission Statement For The Washington Association Of Landscape Professionals

To promote professionalism, integrity, and education to a thriving membership within the Green Industry and the communities served.

Vision Statement For The Washington Association Of Landscape Professionals

- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals is a publicly recognized and unified industry of landscape professionals who embody business and technical excellence.
- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals provides and promotes the opportunity to mentor and support its members.
- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals' members receive value and benefit by sharing knowledge, resources, and experience.
- The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals is the networking place and referral resource for “Green Industry” professionals.

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WALP Office

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Membership Committee

Tim Buiten
Tim's Complete
Landscape Management



Executive Director's Message

Peter Dervin
Executive Director
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At the beginning of August, Annual Membership renewals went out to our membership. Thank you to those who have renewed in your State Association. The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals, founded in 1983, has been an engaging business and industry non-profit trade association which has provided networking and educational programs since its inception. For those who have not yet renewed or joined, please make payment as soon as you can as in October, we will beginning the process to compile information for the 2022 WALP Membership Directory. Both New and Renewing Members can do so online at walp.org.

2020 and into 2021, the COVID pandemic has proved to be a very challenging time for our association. Slowly, we are getting back to meeting up. Most recently we were able to get out for the WALP State Golf Tournament which was held at Legion Memorial Golf Course in Everett. We had over 120 golfers and fantastic support from our sponsors. Thank you to Horizon Distributors for being the Title Sponsor. Of special note, thanks go out to Dale Gellner of Mutual Materials for coordinating with the golf course, our sponsors and the golf teams to make this event so successful.

What's coming up going into the rest of the year, our annual strategic meeting is in the planning stages. The WALP Conference committee is reviewing when we may be able to schedule this event. Normally we would be looking at a January date but uncertainty still remains as to what we are able to do with large groups indoors.

As we move into the Fall season, please continue to be safe and healthy, hopefully we can all get together in person at an upcoming WALP event. 🌿



The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals was founded in 1984 by a group of landscape professionals who wanted to define professionalism, develop educational programs, and evoke legislative representation on the issues pertinent to the Landscape Industry.

The Washington Association of Landscape Professionals (WALP) is a non-profit organization of landscape professionals dedicated to providing opportunities that promote professionalism, integrity, and education within the Landscape Industry through the members it serves.



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WALP Chapter Updates



Snohomish County Chapter

*Brandon Cook
Snohomish County Chapter
Director*

The leaves are already turning, and as they do Snohomish County WALP is here to support you! We will be having an absolutely great time at our Costume Party Glow Golf Event in October. We'll be putting together our steering meeting for November, so if you have ideas, want to see how we put together our plans each year or just want to chat with fellow members our steering meetings are always a fun time. And of course, we're doing our best to put together a Snohomish County

Christmas Party.

It's been an absolute honor to serve our industry this year as your Snohomish County President and our Snohomish County Board is looking forward to a fun end of the year!

Cultivating Joy.



SW Chapter

*Don Bottemiller
SW Chapter Director*

Covid has affected our chapter for a year and a half now. No chapter

meetings. State meetings by zoom. It is time for us to start looking at what our chapter wants to do to get back into meeting. September will hold a BBQ social so we can think about what, where and when we want to meet. We will need to have everyone in our chapter help participate in the process. Our next several meetings will focus on this.

We held our annual state WALP golf tournament on September 10th in Everett. While our chapter had only one foursome participate, we all had fun. We had two employees from D&D Nursery and two from Woody's Landscaping. 🌿



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Northwest Premier Landscape Awards Program

Lloyd Glasscock, Northwest Flower & Garden Festival, Awards Committee Chair

Fall has arrived and days are shorter. That mean as busy as it has been, and likely will be for another month, many landscape professionals will be working until dark...of course many were already. Before the rains come in earnest take advantage of the sunshine and get photos ready for the Northwest Premier Awards Program.

The purpose of the program is to recognize outstanding performance by member firms; foster pride in superior workmanship; publicize the Association and Industry and encourage future business for WALP members. Benefits can include pride in team accomplishment when earning an award and a ready-made method for updating websites and other social media thru images taken for entry forms. 'Bragging

up' awards received is a good way to market a company to the public thru a website, blog post or press release.

Entering the program is fairly straightforward; it's a matter of taking images (even with a cell phone) and assembling the information on the entry form which is available on the WALP website, www.walp.org. It would likely take the average member 15 minutes per entry. The challenge would be sorting thru all the terrific projects completed to choose which ones to enter!

All sizes of projects can be entered, even sections of a project. Supplier members are also eligible to enter in the 'Owner's Project' or 'Unique' category. Categories include; Design/Build, Residential Maintenance, Commercial

Maintenance, Color, Container Gardening, Public Works, Lighting, and many others. An interesting category is 'Hardscaping' which often features entries with patios, gazebos and outdoor living areas with a minimum of planting. Sometimes the planting has been done by the homeowner, which is noted on the entry form, still making it a challenge for judging sometimes.

The program has three award levels. An **Award of Merit** means the project meets industry standards. Program Judges are landscape professionals as well as WALP members and this standard is taken seriously, indeed it sometimes appears to be a high bar. An **Award or Distinction** means the project is exceptional, but still with room for

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'Parikh Outdoor Living Space' entered by Green Spaces Landscaping earned a **Grand Award** in the 2020 Awards Program in the Design/Build category. Here the project is shown in daytime and with the lighting featured at night.

improvement somewhere. A **Grand Award** generally means the project is exceptional but with no obvious room for improvement. Usually there is some 'wow' factor considered for a Grand Award, even in small projects. In all categories the degree of difficulty, be it

access or site conditions or some other factor is taken into account.

Cost to enter the program is \$155 per entry with each additional entry at \$125. Entry forms and other information has been featured regularly in WALP Wednesday including

the entry deadline, which is Oct 29 (Halloween weekend...spooky...). Have questions about whether a project is 'award worthy' or what category to enter it in? Feel free to reach out to Lloyd Glasscock at kaibab66@gmail.com or phone 425.422.3336 with questions. 🌿



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2021 WALP Golf Tournament

by Kenny Yorozu

As Chair of the WALP Golf Tournament this year, I would first like to thank Dale Gellner of Mutual Materials for all of the work he put in to make this year's tournament such a success.

The weather was perfect and the golf course was in great shape. Without his coordination with the golf course and the sponsors it wouldn't have been possible. Next, I would like to thank the sponsors. As with all of our events, we would not be able to provide our members the ability to not only have a good time but be able to network with others in our industry.

Events like this is what we have always hoped for our association. The ability to continue friendships, share thoughts and ideas and just have a good time. This will be my last year as chair of the golf tournament after 20+ years. Dale has agreed to take over as chair of the golf tournament. I look forward to next year and the years to come. 🌱



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1st Place Winner – Horizon team



Tied for 2nd Place – Mutual Materials team



Tied for 2nd Place – Lynnwood WinSupply team

■ PART 3 – Guaranteed Labor for 2022 At Lower Wages – For WALP Members



The H-2B federal worker program provides reliable workers who work only for you, but it has been hard to use because there are very few visas, and the required wage, especially in urban areas, has been too high. **WE HAVE SOLVED BOTH THOSE PROBLEMS.**

- WafLa can **GUARANTEE** WALP members a motivated workforce of H-2B workers from March – September of 2022.
- WALP and wafLa have petitioned the feds for a wage that fairly reflects the wages landscapers are actually paying in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties!

In order to guarantee workers for next season, you must be a WALP member, and you must contact wafLa by 11/1/2021 to start the process. If you are interested in learning more, please read on, or schedule a consult with us at <http://wafLa.org/guestworkers> or call (360) 455-8064 x 110.

What is the H-2B Program?

The H-2B program permits U.S. employers to hire foreign workers to perform seasonal non-agricultural jobs when there is a shortage of U.S. workers. Employers must agree to offer a prevailing wage that is set by the feds, OR do their own survey of wages paid in the local area.

What is the catch? In most years, the number of H-2B visas is insufficient to meet demand, especially for the peak season from late March through September. Employers waste time and money applying for visas that may not be granted.

How Can WafLa Guarantee Me H-2B Workers?

Normally, the U.S. government only allows 66,000 workers to enter the U.S. with H-2B visas each year. This is divided into two 6-month periods of Oct – March and April – Sept. Once the H-2B cap fills by for each 6-month period, no more workers can enter the country with H-2B visas. But once a worker obtains an H-2B visa, it is good for the entire fiscal year.

WafLa has obtained visas for workers starting in October to work in the Christmas tree and wreath business. The workers will complete this job by mid-December, and their visa is **available for another employer from mid-March until the end of September.**

WafLa has over 300 of these visas, and we are making them available to WALP members. In order to qualify for visas in mid-March, you must submit a prevailing wage determination request and a job description to the feds by November 1. The cost for this request is \$500. **It is fully refundable if you don't get workers.**

OK, But How Can WafLa Guarantee me lower H-2B Wages Than Anyone Else?

The H-2B regulations require employers to pay a prevailing wage

to all workers, so that you don't use foreign workers to lower wages for U.S. workers. The prevailing wage in King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties is currently \$20.08 per hour. However, the H-2B regulations allow employers to submit government sponsored surveys to obtain lower wages. WafLa and WALP have hired WSU to conduct a survey which will obtain an actual wage that landscapers are paying workers, **and we believe it will result in a wage that is 10 – 15 percent lower than the government rate.**

What are the Requirements of the H-2B Program?

■ Transportation and Visas:

Employers must reimburse H-2B workers for their round trip travel expenses from their home country, and this applies to U.S. workers who travel to the job from outside the area. There are also visa fees and miscellaneous expenses incurred during the process of obtaining the visa.

■ Housing:

Employers are NOT required to provide housing or transportation for H-2B workers. However, employers are generally expected to help arrange housing and transportation to work for H-2B workers. Workers pay for their housing and transportation. If the employer assists in this, the employer is not permitted to make a profit. For example, if you provide a van to take workers to the job sites, the charges to workers must be reasonable.

■ **Taxes and Wages:**

H-2B workers are subject to the same taxes as U.S. employees, but there is good news. H-2B workers are not eligible for unemployment, and employers don't need to pay unemployment premiums for these workers. As noted above, the wage that must be paid to H-2B workers is determined by the U.S. Department of Labor, and this wage must be paid to the H-2B workers and U.S. workers similarly employed by the employer.

■ **Other Requirements:**

First, employers must be able to demonstrate that their need for the H-2B workers is seasonal or temporary in nature, not to exceed 9-months per year. Next, employers may not provide

preferential treatment to foreign workers, specifically concerning wages and benefits of employment. Finally, H-2B workers may only work for the employer who sponsored them for their visa.

If you are interested in learning more, please schedule a consult with us at <http://wafla.org/guestworkers> or call (360) 455-8064 x 110.

This column is produced by wafla for informational purposes only. The items contained herein are provided for general information and do not constitute legal advice. Wafla does not provide legal advice or counsel; and readers should make their own inquiries before making any decision based on this or any other information received from wafla.



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Financial Performance



Rod Bailey
Alder Springs Enterprises, LLC

In my consulting work with clients around the country I usually need to start with a review of their financial performance as exhibited in their financial statements, the Income or Profit and Loss Statements and the Balance Sheets

This information, if presented properly, tells me a lot about the company and certainly helps identify those areas in the company we need to target for improvement. You will note in the previous sentence I said "...if presented properly...". Unfortunately,

many of the statements I see are not "presented properly" particularly with respect to four characteristics, those being: 1. Departmentalization, 2. Determination of proper Gross Profit Margins (preferably by department), 3. Treatment of Depreciation and, 4. Treatment Labor and Wages. I have written and published a number of articles regarding Depreciation. Call me if you have any questions there. What I want to focus on here is the presentation of Gross Profit Margins.

What is Gross Profit?

Very simply, Gross Profit is Revenue minus Direct Costs of Producing that Revenue. You can modify your Gross Profit by either changing your pricing or by utilizing greater efficiency in the cost of and utilization of the labor, materials, subcontracts and equipment that produce the revenue.

What are Direct Costs?

Direct Costs should include only those cost and expenses that you can track directly to the jobs you are producing. They typically include:

- Direct Production Labor

- Direct Labor Payroll Taxes
- Direct Materials and Supplies used on the jobs
- Subcontractors on those jobs
- Rental Equipment you rented specifically for those jobs, or your own equipment rates if you estimate them and include them as Direct Costs in your bids.

The real question here is are they the direct costs you considered when you developed your estimates and bids and can you account for them directly to the jobs you are doing. There are some "Ifs" that you can treat as Direct Costs but only if you considered them and itemized them in your bid. Some costs I have seen treated as Direct Costs can include Travel Time Labor, Load Outs and Unloads, Dumpage and Disposal, Internal Equipment Rates and Charges. The big question here is "Did you itemize them In your estimate and bid and can you track them to your jobs produced?"

Hopefully, you are doing Job Costing in your accounting program

continued on page 14

so that you can track the actual Gross Profit vs. the estimated and bid Gross Profit as a management tool.

Any costs not included in Direct Cost for Profit Margin determination are considered “Overhead” and are normally tracked as “Indirect Costs”, i.e. those costs you can’t track directly to each job but can assign to each production department, or “G&A Expense” (General & Administrative Costs) only assignable to jobs or departments on an arbitrary basis.

The fourth problem I frequently see is the categorization of labor and wage costs. There are four potential types of labor and they should be tracked and recorded separately rather than simply be lumped together in an account called Wages. The classifications which should be recorded, tracked

and reported separately are 1. Direct Labor Wages (those trackable directly to billable jobs in each separate Department), 2. Indirect Labor (those trackable by department which support but are not trackable to specific jobs) such as shop time, equipment downtime, paid time in training or other department support operations, usually travel time and morning loadout, supervisory activities of crew leads and supervisory labor, (I have a list of such Indirect Labor categories available on request and too long to include here) 3. Administrative labor which might also include Sales personnel, office and accounting personnel, and 4. Owner Salaries which are clearly Overhead wage and salary expense.

My main point here is that Direct

Labor reflected in Direct Costs should only be labor directly productive on billable jobs. If I see an account titled “Wages and Salaries” down in Overhead expenses we have lost the ability to measure Gross Profits accurately and compare ourselves to other companies in the industry.

Why are Gross Profit Margins so Important?

Answer: THEY ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TOOL IN MANAGING PRICING AND PROFITABILITY!!!!!! Once you understand Gross Profit Margins you have answered your Pricing problem as well as your company Budget problem (but that’s another article).

To get your price you divide your estimated Direct Cost by (1.00 – Budgeted Gross Profit % in decimal equivalent). You need to understand and measure Gross Profit by line of business and compare yourself to both industry medians as well as to track your own Gross Profits over time. The most important ratios are those you track for your own company.

ADVISORY NOTE: Do not use the Cost Of Goods Sold and Gross Profit numbers shown by your CPA in your annual Tax Return. I have seen CPAs include everything including the kitchen sink in their determination of “Cost of Goods Sold”. Usually they toss in all labor and payroll tax expenses, sometimes shop and building rents, shop supplies, uniforms and small tools, etc. etc. Your Direct Costs and Gross Profits should come directly from your company budgets and preferably from departmental budgets and include only those Direct Costs identified above.

Gross Margins Can be Different for Each Line of Business

Consider the following Gross Margin Percentages as reported in

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industry Cost Study reports:

Design/Build Contracting	44.5%
Bid/Build Contracting	41.9%
Exterior Maintenance	51.8%
Lawn Care	51.6%
Irrigation Installation	52.1%
Maintenance and Irrigation Enhancements	58.2%

I met one maintenance contractor who used to bid his Commercial Maintenance work at 5% net profit target because he knew he would make it up by charging 25% on the virtually guaranteed 30-35% of his volume in Enhancement work. (Now that's another story)

How Does This Work Out?

An example, using our pricing formula could be as follows:

Landscape Project	
Direct Cost	\$85,000
Budgeted Gross	
Margin Percent 45.5 %	.455
Price = \$ 85,000 /	
(1.00 - .455) =	\$ 155,963

That Was Easy Wasn't It?

Now that you understand how to use gross profit analysis to manage your profitability you can focus on the really important stuff such as training labor to improve field efficiency, making smart decisions on equipment Lease vs. Buy, reducing your Overhead costs, focus on building your maintenance volume and the enhancement work. If I were running behind my budgets at mid year I would focus on developing enhancement projects!!!! It worked for me and it was the quick high Gross Profit button to push.....

A Cautionary Statement

Use the numbers you generate for your company, not the sample numbers I used here!!! 🌿

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Puget Sound shoreline bluffs often have sediment layers that impact how water infiltrates the ground and can increase risk of landslide. (Photo: Mary Krauszer, Pierce Conservation District)

Managing Drainage on Marine Waterfront Properties

Mary Krauszer, Steve Hagerty, and Karin Strelieff with Shore Friendly South Sound



Around Puget Sound, waterfront properties are incredibly beautiful –and dynamic –places. These landscapes face normal coastal conditions like shoreline erosion and significant amounts of water draining to the beach – processes that sometimes leave landowners looking for professional help.

Not surprisingly, landscaping activities play a critical role in property management on marine shorelines. Good landscape management can focus on reducing potential risks from landslides, erosion, and flooding – and poor practices can increase those same risks. Homeowners throughout the region are looking for knowledgeable

professionals to manage their landscapes in a way that sustainably protects their property and limits risk. The Shore Friendly Program, hosted in all twelve counties with Puget Sound shoreline, connects landowners to guidance and professionals to support their management and sustainability goals. In this article, we summarize important challenges and opportunities associated with drainage management on marine waterfront properties.

Why should smart drainage management be a priority on shoreline properties?

An important concept for waterfront management is to respect the relationship between water, vegetation, and geology. Puget Sound shorelines typically include layers of different types of sediment beneath

the ground surface. There may be sediments like sand and gravel, which allow water to drain quickly through them, located above layers of clay, silt, or rock that slow or block water movement. Depending on the site, seasonal rainwater draining through these different layers of sediment can contribute to slope erosion or instability on marine shorelines. Likewise, excessive irrigation water soaking into coastal bluffs can become a source of slope instability. The key takeaway is this: excessive water running across or through a coastal property, especially a poorly vegetated landscape, can influence land stability and risk. Property management and landscaping activities that impact surface and groundwater should be carefully considered on coastal properties.

When to recommend drainage solutions to a homeowner?

Landscape professionals can help homeowners recognize drainage concerns and consider solutions. On properties receiving regular professional landscaping maintenance, there may be areas of the property that the homeowner does not frequently monitor. This may be particularly common on vacation properties. Your customers will thank you if you can alert them to a potential drainage problem before it escalates into a land stability issue. In some cases drainage concerns can be addressed with simple fixes, but in other cases you will want to team up with drainage professionals like engineers to design appropriate solutions for your client's property. It is critical to keep in mind that poorly considered or quick drainage "fixes" can sometimes turn into serious problems

themselves – for which you will then be responsible. You will first want to focus on identifying the problem and then help steer your client to the right solution for the site. On marine waterfront properties, the right solution often means having the right team to address the drainage issue-especially for complex marine bluffs and sites with steep slopes, where a drainage failure could trigger a landslide.

Common signs of potential drainage concerns include:

- old existing drainage infrastructure: cracked, blocked, disconnected, or leaking pipes
- sudden changes in drainage patterns on the property, particularly when the volume of water on the property appears to be increasing
- pooling or standing water above a steep slope or bluff,
- excessive runoff from your client's property, neighboring properties, or roads that direct water towards the shoreline,
- visible surface erosion (such as rills) from water drainage in areas of bare soil or landscaping
- increases in the number (or volume of water from) seeps draining along the exposed face of a bluff or slope,
- visible changes such as areas of subsidence or cracking in the ground surface above a slope or bluff
- sudden changes in the volume of water in natural stormwater pathways such as ravines or nearby creeks.

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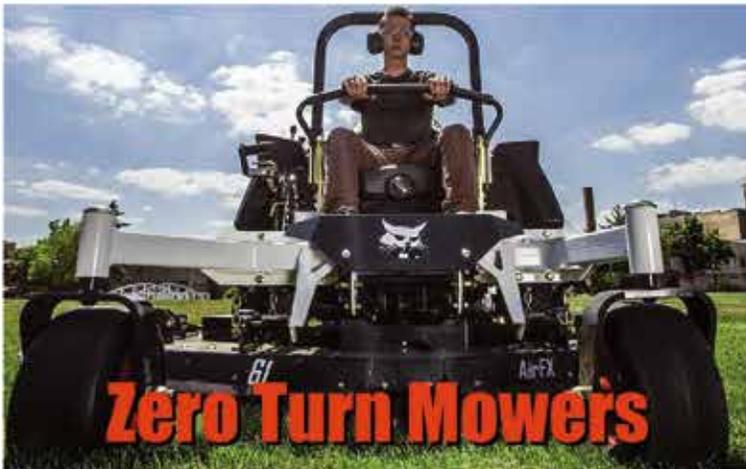


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- Consider recommending creation of drainage plans and infrastructure if your client plans new development activities that will add impervious surfaces or will otherwise increase stormwater runoff (projects like large hardscape patios, new buildings, clearing forested areas etc.).

If you notice these signs, speak with the homeowner about your concerns and connect them with the right experts to help them explore management options. Remember to bring in the appropriate experts before making recommendations; drainage management on marine shorelines can be a very serious issue. Often working with an engineer or coastal geologist will result in the best solution and the least liability for your company.

What to keep in mind when exploring drainage solutions?

In general, drainage solutions on shoreline properties should capture and conduct water away from high risk areas and outlet to a safe discharge location where the excess water won't destabilize a slope, cause erosion, or contribute to water quality problems. Drainage infrastructure will need to be customized to the property. For general concepts related to shoreline drainage management, consider reviewing *Managing Drainage on Coastal Bluffs*, Ecology publication # 95-107 (print version titled: "Surface Water and Groundwater on Coastal Bluffs: A Guide for Puget Sound Property Owners" <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/95107.pdf>)

Tips for drainage management on coastal properties:

- *Direct extra water (like roof drainage from downspouts) away from slopes, bluffs, and structures.* Never release piped water at the top or on the

face of a bank, slope, or bluff as this can saturate soils, trigger slides, or exacerbate erosion.

- *Whenever possible, keep drainage infrastructure above ground* and build in inspection points for easy monitoring. This also makes maintenance much easier as new leaks are easy to spot and repairs are less complex. Above-ground systems also decrease the chance of triggering grading permits and minimize overall site disturbance. Last but not least, above ground drainage systems offer a key opportunity for adding new landscaping around the property to screen the drain pipes!
- *On properties without steep slopes / high bluffs, explore opportunities to use beautifully planted swales or other landscape features to convey water to an appropriate destination.*
- *If the drainage project incorporates pipes to convey water, use high-quality materials that will last;* schedule 40 PVC, HDPE, or other strong pipe is preferred and should be securely anchored to avoid shifting and stress during high flows. Avoid cheap corrugated pipes that commonly crack and leak with age. Make sure to create maps for your client showing their drainage infrastructure on the property.
- *Locate the pipe discharge point away from high risk areas. Consider using an energy diffuser* at the pipe end to decrease the erosive energy of the discharging water. Without this, high flows of water during storms can scour and erode sediment around the pipe end, creating new problems. In many cases, water discharged into existing vegetation or driftwood/logs etc. disperses effectively. If you need to use

rock at a discharge point located near/on the beach, check about permitting requirements from the WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Outfalls waterward of Mean High Water or outfalls requiring excavation/fill to install them near the shoreline may also require USACE permitting.

- *Protect your client by getting the right permits for your project:* check with your local planning department for precise permit requirements for your planned drainage infrastructure. Secure all proper permits for water discharged to a marine shoreline and for any work to take place on the property above the shoreline. Make sure

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your client knows that they need to understand any permits or restrictions regarding work in shoreline buffer areas, as it will be their responsibility to comply with regulations. To protect your business and professional reputation, help your client avoid trouble by securing the required permits.

- *Consider partnering with a licensed geologist and/or professional engineer for drainage solutions on high risk properties such as shorelines with high bluffs, signs of slope instability, significant erosion, and on properties where the residence is very close to the bluff crest or shoreline.*

Long term success for drainage solutions

- *Provide the homeowner with schematics of any drainage infrastructure and recommend they pass them on to future property owners, along with your company name and contact information.*
- *Establish an inspection schedule with the homeowner. If you install drainage infrastructure make a monitoring and maintenance plan with the homeowner, such as a twice-annual inspection. For higher risk properties or properties where the homeowner is only there seasonally, you can offer more frequent inspection services. This will allow you and the homeowner to detect problems such as clogs or so they can be addressed promptly. Inspection services offers piece of mind and risk reduction for the homeowner, as well as repeat business for your company.*
- *During inspections, make sure that all pipe connections are sealed, with no leaks or breaks. You can check the drainage system by running water through the system during the dry season, but it is also useful to monitor during heavy rain. Confirm that the amount of water going in equals the amount coming out. If there is a significant difference there may be a leak. Fix any drainage issues immediately.*
- *Installing more deep-rooted shrubs and trees, as well as protecting existing native vegetation on the property should always be part of a shoreline drainage management strategy. Trees and shrubs play a critical role by helping to intercept water and to stabilize slopes with their roots.*



Many water sources can contribute to instability on coastal bluffs.
(Image: www.shorefriendly.org/)

- As mentioned in the prior section: keep drainage pipes and infrastructure above ground where possible, for ease of maintenance. Smart landscaping can screen the pipes.

Common landscaping activities that can contribute to drainage issues

When recommending landscaping changes to your customers, consider how they will impact surface and groundwater on the property.

Common landscaping activities that can contribute to drainage problems include:

- *Clearing vegetation, especially trees, for view.* Clearing can lead to stormwater runoff issues. Encourage landowners to keep native trees and shrubs in place and prune strategically for views. Consult an arborist for proper pruning techniques for difference species. If clients are open to planting more deep-rooted vegetation like shrubs and trees, work with them to convert lawns to landscapes you can maintain for them!

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- *Installing plants with high water needs and irrigation systems near slopes or bluffs* can be a recipe for disaster. Saturating soils near an unstable area can exacerbate erosion or even trigger landslides. Instead, encourage your clients to stick with native plants that are adapted for shorelines and will require little watering once established. Recommend native species that can tolerate pruning for installation in view corridors.
- *Installing below-ground irrigation or drainage systems in areas prone to instability* can be dangerous if they leak or if the homeowner waters excessively, as this water can saturate and destabilize soils. We do not recommend burying irrigation systems between a house and a bluff crest or in a slope composed of sediment layers that include clay. Instead, keep watering systems above ground for easy monitoring and control of water outputs.
- *Locating ponds, water features, rain gardens, or other landscaping elements that will collect water and could either leak or soak water into the ground in the area* between a house and high bluff or slope can exacerbate instability. Locate these elements far away from bluffs and shorelines to ensure they will not contribute to saturated soils in landslide risk areas. These landscape features do not pose as much of a risk on lower bank properties without steep slopes.
- *Clearing large areas of vegetation to install lawn* commonly causes drainage issues to arise on shoreline properties. Grass will not intercept and disperse rainfall or pull water up out of the soil through transpiration as effectively as



Drainage outlets at the shoreline should be located in a well-vegetated area if possible and fitted with a diffuser tee to dissipate energy and avoid causing erosion at the discharge point. (Photo: Karin Strelhoff, Thurston Conservation District)

diverse, layered, native vegetation. Work with landowners to plan appropriately sized lawns that leave room for vegetated buffers.

- *Conversion of native vegetation to impervious surfaces*, such as paved patios or driveways, can increase runoff and contribute to drainage issues. New impervious surfaces upland of the house can also have this effect. Try to minimize impervious surfaces wherever possible, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is installed to manage the additional stormwater generated by these surfaces.

Make drainage management a priority when working with your shoreline clients. This will ensure that your landscaping solutions help mitigate risk rather than contributing to it. Your customers will thank you.

Sources

Managing Drainage on Coastal Bluffs, Ecology publication # 95-107 (print version titled: “Surface Water and Groundwater on Coastal Bluffs: A Guide for Puget Sound Property Owners” <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/95107.pdf>)

Managing Vegetation on Coastal Slopes, Ecology publication # 93-31 (print version titled: “Vegetation Management: A Guide for Puget Sound Bluff Property Owners”) <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/9331.pdf>

Stormwater and Coastal Bluffs: A Guide to Improving Stormwater Management on Your Property, Northwest Straights Foundation Shore Friendly https://nwstrightsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SF_STORMWATER-DRAINAGE-BROCHURE.pdf 🌿



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This year's show brings back the industry-renowned exhibit hall, featuring the popular new product contest showcasing the newest irrigation

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