



# ASLA2022

## DESIGNING A BETTER FUTURE



### THE GARDENS OF ALCATRAZ

### HISTORY, HORTICULTURE, & HUMANITY ON THE ROCK

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2022 8am - 2pm



The name Alcatraz conjures images of an inescapable fortress surrounded by treacherous waters – a menacing specter of a cold, isolated, unsympathetic island of unrelenting grayness. But Alcatraz has a gentler history that has been uncovered by volunteers whose work to rehabilitate historic gardens has revealed the restorative effects of gardens on the human soul.

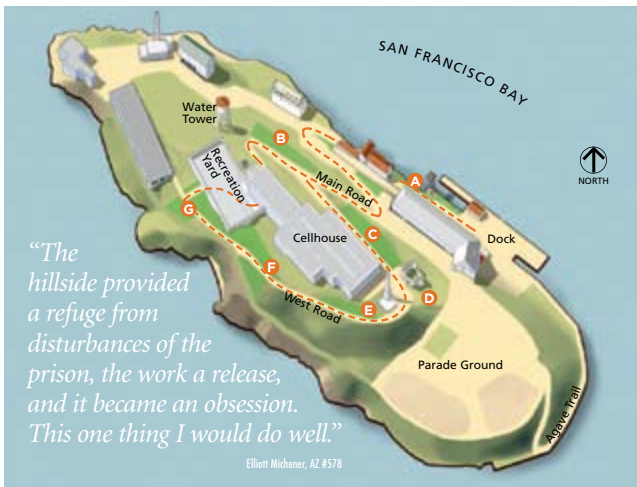
For more than a century, gardens tended together by wardens and prisoners bloomed beneath the forbidding concrete walls. While few inmates actually gardened, those who did spoke of its salvation, as revealed by archival interviews with former prisoners.

This field session will go beyond a recitation of historical content and will feature a discussion of contemporary horticultural programming in corrections. Youth and adults who are incarcerated are one of the least served populations in our society. Within the criminal justice system, little infrastructure is created for the education and holistic reform of inmates. The creation of prison gardens and vocational horticultural training can aid an inmate's successful reentry into society and begin to address systemic issues of racism and inequality.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the complex cultural significance and the history of garden preservation on Alcatraz.
2. Gain unique horticultural knowledge of gardening on Alcatraz and the ongoing challenges of landscape design + maintenance in the arid west (i.e. soil import/improvement, salty winds, drought).
3. Contrast Alcatraz's history of horticulture in corrections with a specific example of a contemporary garden designed by Bay Area landscape architects at nearby California State Prison Solano.
4. Understand how landscape architects can create partnerships that preserve, rebuild, interpret, and/or maintain historic gardens.





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## SCHEDULE / ITINERARY



8:00am – 9:00am: Presentation at the Convention Center

- Speakers: Sutter Wehmeier, Chris Kent, Shelagh Fritz

9:00am – 9:15am: Break and board bus

9:15am – 9:40am: Transit from Convention Center to Pier 33/  
Alcatraz Landing Ferry Terminal

10:00am: FERRY LEAVES FOR ALCATRAZ

10:15am – 10:30am: Introductory remarks from National Park  
Service on dock at Alcatraz

10:30am – 12:00pm: Alcatraz History Gardens Tour led by  
Shelagh Fritz and Marney Beard  
Landscape architectural topics that will receive particular focus  
include:

- Slope stabilization and soil-establishment/amendment over the years
- Weed and overgrowth removal & production of award-winning local compost
- Historic horticultural selections, surviving species, and contemporary edits to the palette
- Negotiation of historic preservation efforts with demands of protected nesting bird habitat
- Challenges of maintaining diverse & historic plantings with a very limited water budget
- Creation of gravity-based water catchment system to capture 12,000 gallons of rainwater, meeting the garden's annual water needs.

12:00pm – 12:45pm: Brown bag lunch at the Alcatraz dock

12:55pm: FERRY RETURNS TO PIER 33

1:15pm – 1:30pm: Board bus to return to Convention Center

2pm: Return to Convention Center and tour ends



Hospice Garden @ Cal State Prison Solano

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## SPEAKERS / FIELD SESSION GUIDES



### **Sutter Wehmeier - ASLA, PLA, BASE Landscape Architecture**

Sutter is a principal with BASE Landscape Architecture. His portfolio includes projects with endorsement from the Living Building Challenge and the world's first four-star certification from the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES). His areas of expertise include green roofs, horticulture, and stormwater management. Having previously managed a specialty plant nursery featuring over 10,000 species of plants, he has a deep appreciation for the magnificent diversity of the plant world. Sutter has also served as the president of the board of the Edwards Mother Earth Foundation, a charitable family foundation dedicated to mitigating global climate disruption.



### **Shelagh Fritz - Senior Program Manager, Alcatraz and Black Point historic gardens Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy**

Shelagh has worked on restoring the Alcatraz Gardens since 2006, first working for the Garden Conservancy, and then later for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. As a program manager, she oversees the design and plant selection to reflect the historic character of the gardens, works with volunteers and interns to care for the gardens, and works closely with the National Park Service. She has a strong interest in sustainable gardening, including composting and rain water catchment. Shelagh previously worked at Longwood Gardens and an English estate.



### **Christopher Kent - ASLA, PLA, PGAdesign**

Christopher Kent is a Principal at PGAdesign, where he works on a wide range of project with one focus on encourage people to spend more time outside by making the built landscape more inviting and useable and the natural landscape more accessible. Thirty years of practice in the Bay Area informs his experience across the spectrum of design work including campus design, hospital and other institutional facilities, trail and streets design, urban plazas, and multifamily housing. A highly effective communicator, Chris has a talent for engaging people in the design process, integrating feedback, and presenting solutions both elegant and functional.



### **Jessica Rozul - ASLA, BASE Landscape Architecture**

Jessica is a landscape designer with professional experience in urban open space projects in the SF Bay Area. Prior to joining BASE, she worked for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, supporting park projects through each stage of planning, design, compliance, and construction within the GGNRA. With a background in conservation ecology and community design, Jessica is passionate about creating ecologically healthy spaces that bring a sense of inherent beauty and connection to people. She earned her Certificate in Landscape Architecture from UC Berkeley Extension, and Bachelor of Science degrees in Environmental Studies and Aquatic Biology from UC Santa Barbara.



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## NOTES / RESOURCES

### RESOURCES

The Gardens of Alcatraz  
<https://www.alcatrazgardens.org>

The Garden Conservancy  
<https://www.gardenconservancy.org/preservation/gardens-of-alcatraz>

Insight Garden Program  
<https://insightgardenprogram.org/>

The Biggest Crop in Prison Gardens: Hope  
<https://thecrimereport.org/2021/12/21/1672893/>

Growing connection beyond prison walls: How a prison garden fosters rehabilitation and healing for incarcerated men  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10509674.2019.1615598>

Could Meditation and Gardening Break The Cycle of Prison Recidivism?  
<https://youtu.be/qkaDxV4Eg9w>