

CONSERVATION AND SERVICE: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AS TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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1. **ABSTRACT**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been a positive asset to remediation and water quality in the Agrarian environment by providing farmers with incentives and cost share programs. These give farmers the means to implement a number of best management practices, which improve runoff conditions and reduce nutrient pollution in the major waterways of the United States (US). Landscape architects are rarely, if ever, involved as implementers in this program, even though they frequently address water quality issues in urban environments. In this study, we compare the best management practices (BMPs) that landscape architects frequently use to improve water quality in the urban environment with BMPs that are used to improve water quality in rural agricultural environments. In particular, we compare their effectiveness at removing nitrogen and phosphorus through the utilization of the International BMP database. Our results show that the urban stormwater strategies are at least as effective at removing nitrogen and phosphorus as most rural strategies, suggesting that landscape architects would make ideal service providers for the conservation reserve program and that more cross-disciplinary efforts are needed. We explore opportunities for landscape architects to intervene as service providers of the CRP in the state of Illinois, and discuss next steps for research and engagement in agricultural landscapes.

1.1 **Keywords:**

Water quality, Conservation Reserve Program, landscape design, nitrogen, phosphorus, Upper Mississippi River basin