

Site Assessment Checklist



**URI Outreach Center
Landscape Restoration Program**



Site Assessment Checklist

Not all fields below apply to every site. Lines are meant for optional note taking during Site Assessment, but most notes should be taken on site maps and/or prepared in written Site Assessment summary.

CLIMATE

USDA Hardiness Zone(s) _____ Growing Days _____

Annual Precipitation _____ Seasonal Distribution _____

Estimated First Frost Date _____ Estimated Last Frost Date _____

Chilling Hours (important for fruit tree dormancy) _____

Extreme Weather Potential _____

- Microclimate spaces – variations in soil moisture, wind, frost pockets, etc. *(label)*
- Sun / Shade Patterns *(label)*
- Prevailing Wind Direction *(label)* Storm Wind Direction *(label)*

LANDFORM

Topographic Position (i.e. mid-slope, hill crest, valley floor, etc.) _____

Estimated Seasonal High Water Table Depth _____

Estimated Depth to bedrock, hardpan, or impermeable soil layers _____

Elevation _____

- Slope % = $\frac{\text{Rise}}{\text{Run}}$ _____

WATER

Type of supply (spigots, pipes, filters, etc.) _____

- Location of Sources of Supply *(label)*
- Flow Patterns: concentration and dispersion areas *(label)*
- Potential Pollution Sources _____ *(label also)*
- Flooding, Puddling and Ponding areas *(label)*
- Erosion – existing and potential areas *(label)*
 - Rills: visible channels of erosion up to a few inches deep *(label)*
 - Gullies: channels deep enough to step in *(label)*

ZONES OF USE

- Property Lines, Easements, Rights of Way (*label*)
- Existing Zones of Land and Water Use – i.e. where do people fish? Recreate? garden? (*label*)
- Environmental and Regulatory Limits – i.e. zoning & wetland regulated areas (*label*)
- Current uses by neighbors and passersby (*label*)

SOIL

Predominant Soil Types _____

- UCONN or UMASS Soil test (for topsoil fertility, pH, heavy metal, % organic matter)
- Predominant Texture and Consistency - Ribbon Test (*label*)
- Drainage Characteristics – Percolation Test (*label*)
- Compacted soil area – i.e. high traffic areas, worn grass, ponding after rain events (*label*)
- Erosion areas – i.e. worn-down, gravelly areas, steep slopes, exposed roots (*label*)

Data Collection Resources:

- Soil survey for your area (click “Start WSS”):
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>
- Latitude and longitude of geographical and cultural features in the US:
<http://geonames.usgs.gov/index.html>
- Geographical features search:
<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/f?p=154:1:8854377696268532>
- Plant hardiness zones: <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>
- Sun azimuth and altitude data: <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/AltAz.php>
- Sun charts: <http://solar.dat.uoregon.edu/>
- Tree and climate change data: <http://www.arborday.org/>
- Plant data: <http://www.pfaf.org/user/default.aspx>
- Temperature, precipitation, and wind data from personal weather stations around the US:
<http://www.wunderground.com/weatherstation/index.asp>
- To determine the number of gallons of water that fall on a roof in a given year, multiply:
(annual precipitation) x (catchment area) x (0.623) ... This will give you gallons/year for any given surface area.
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):
<http://www.noaa.gov/climate.html>
- National Data Centers (NDC): <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/ncdc.html>

SITE ASSESSMENT MAP

Record approximate positions of landscape features and climatic observations here.



AESTHETICS / EXPERIENCE OF PLACE

Disharmonies – i.e. noise, views, visuals, feelings, spaces (*label where appropriate*)

Sense of Place - unique elements of the site that connect you to the place, the region

Outdoor Rooms - define spaces [walls, ceilings, floors], qualities, feelings, functions, features

Arrival and Entry Experience - sequencing, spaces, eye movements, feelings, etc.

View Lines and Corridors - define them, inside and outside, existing and potential

Visual Integration - alignment of elements, unity and variety, compositions, textures, colors

Public/Private Continuum, Formal/Informal Continuum

Existing Overall Feelings / Qualities / Experience