

Keynote Presentations

Keynote Luncheon, March 7th

Japanese Knotweed Control Solutions: Latest Techniques from the UK

Japanese knotweed is one of the most difficult invasives to manage in the urban and suburban landscape. Armed with the latest techniques and nearly a decade of experience, Mike Clough is working to control and eradicate Japanese knotweed in the United Kingdom (UK). Based on his extensive research of invasive control methods, he will present a brief history of Japanese knotweed in the UK, including how and why it has spread and the problems it has caused. He will cover the latest techniques in chemical, non-chemical and bio-control (the release of Psyllid aphid) strategies as well as new “soil sifting” technologies. Mike Clough will also briefly address other invasives under control in the UK, such as Himalayan balsam, Giant Hogweed, and Ragwort.

Mike Clough formed Japanese Knotweed Solutions Limited (JKSL) in 2002 in response to his observation of the dramatic spread of invasive weeds, in particular the aggressive invader, Japanese knotweed. For the past 9 years, Mr. Clough has traveled around the UK educating local authorities, construction companies and environmental associations about his extensive research and effective invasive control methods. Prior to forming JKSL, Mike Clough, educated at Leeds Metropolitan University of England, was an award winning Landscape Architect.

Keynote Dinner, March 8th

Landscapes Coming Full Circle: Cultivating Resilience in a Time of Transition

Until recently, every generation has relied upon the local landscape to support basic needs; landscapes were not merely decorative. However, confronted by the challenges of climate change, post peak oil and resource scarcity, landscape designers and land managers will be forced to reevaluate how they view and use land. Ben Falk has already begun the process of developing landscapes that prepare us to meet these challenges. He will discuss his work and vision of landscapes that will allow communities to more successfully face the challenges that lie ahead—landscapes designed to maximize productivity of the land while reducing outside inputs. Ultimately, these productive landscapes and the “whole system approach” involved in their design and construction will allow communities to be more self-reliant and resilient in the future. Ben will discuss principles that drive his firm’s design and development work, examples of these in action across the globe, and strategies for developing such systems in conventional suburban and urban landscapes.

Ben Falk developed Whole Systems Design, LLC (WSD) as a land-based response to biological and cultural extinction and the increasing separation between people and elemental things. At the Whole Systems Research Farm in Vermont, WSD is developing land production and ecological restoration methods aimed at increasing self reliance in the face of peak oil, climate change, and other shifts. Mr. Falk’s integrative approach to developing landscapes and buildings is continually informed by his life as a designer, builder, ecologist, tree tender, and backcountry traveler. He has studied architecture and landscape architecture and holds a master’s degree in land-use planning and design. He teaches design courses including permaculture, microclimate, and design for climate change.