

CSLA Welcomes Neil Dawe, NLALA, CSLA As President

Neil founded his firm Tract Consulting Incorporated in 1998. His team focuses on four customer service areas: landscape architecture, professional planning, graphic design and interpretation and exhibit design. He helped found the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Landscape Architects shortly after graduating from the University of Guelph and has served on the Board of Governors (now Directors) of the CSLA.

Excerpts from Neil's nomination script published to CSLA members in 2009:

My first vocation was not landscape architecture - in fact I knew very little about it. I started off in forestry and resource conservation, working in National and Provincial Parks. As a National Park Warden in Gros Morne National Park (where the locals affectionately called me a "moose narc"), I was introduced to landscape architecture by Sara Greutzner, Arthur Boutlier and Fred Hann. Soon I was studying Environmental Planning and Design at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design . There I was struck by the number of landscape architects - John Zuck, Peter Klynstra, Robert Parker, Gordon Ratcliff - teaching planning. What also struck me was the latitude they had in making decisions and solving problems. If no set solution existed, we were encouraged to find one - that was what really drew me to the profession. After working with the City of St. John's for five years as Assistant Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Corrina and I swapped our Volkswagon for my buddy's truck, sold what we had and made the leap to Guelph, Ontario. There I completed the Master in Landscape Architecture program. I landed a job with one of Newfoundland's great philanthropists: businessman Paul J. Johnson. Here was a man who truly embraces Burnam's adage: " make no small plans" . He lived and worked by the maxim "do it right the first time". Together, we built what I think is a truly great walking trail system, The Grand Concourse, or in more evocative terms: "Walkers Paradise." It was during this time that I helped found the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Landscape Architects and served as both President and sat on the then Board of Governors for the CSLA.

Finally, in 1998, my colleague Gerhard Weiland and I founded Tract Consulting Incorporated. Tract has seen steady growth and focuses on four key customer service areas: landscape architecture, professional planning, graphic design, and interpretation and exhibit design. The talented Mr. Weiland is now our senior landscape architect. I would enjoy speaking at length about our staff and what we do at TRACT but safe to say: Newfoundland might be short on fish but was never short on talent. Newfoundlanders, like myself, have developed a deeply loyal connection to the land, and even more usefully, a uniquely political understanding of what it means to respect a region's natural beauty.