



### news

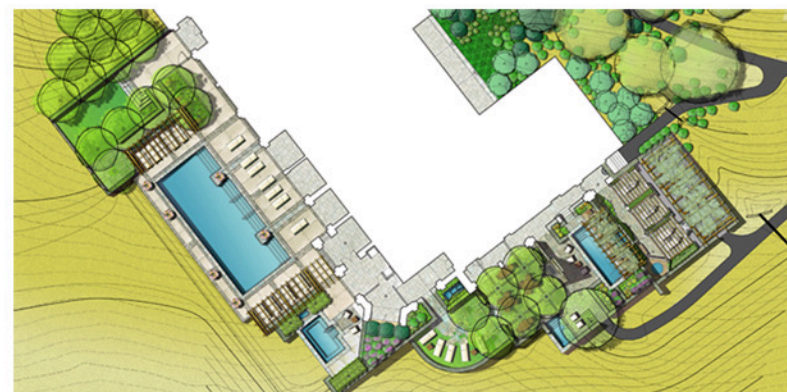
#### SITES Initiative in Pilot Phase

An initiative aimed at creating the nation's first guidelines and rating system for sustainable landscapes has entered the pilot phase with 150 participating projects across the country. The focus of the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) is to facilitate and reward development (or restoration) of sites (with or without buildings) that enhance the environment through sustainable practices and ecological improvements. The initiative is being led by the American Society of Landscape Architects and is modeled after The Green Building Council's LEED program. It is envisioned that the two rating systems will work in tandem. Learn more at: <http://www.asla.org/sustainablesitesinitiative.aspx>

#### Pilot Projects



### on the boards



**Lodge on Biltmore Estate** This past spring, VDC was retained as the project landscape architect for a new 152 room lodge and spa on the historic Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. The luxury lodge will be nestled into a natural, forested setting with great care taken to preserve large mature trees within the building site. As part of the outdoor amenity program, VDC designed and developed construction documents for a pool terrace with spa and overhead pergola structures as well as a spa terrace that includes an outdoor fireplace, two spa pools, a tree-bosque lounge area, and water features. The design also features a woodland arrival plaza and main lobby terrace with sweeping views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



### construction

#### Davis Event Center Campus

Last year VDC was hired by CJMW Architects of Asheville, NC to help develop the landscape architecture for a new addition to the Davis Arena at the WNC Ag Center. As we got further involved in the project, we soon realized that an overall master plan was needed to help better connect the Davis Event Center with the recently finished Boone Mountain Heritage Building as well as adjacent site uses and to create a flexible plan that could function for both the large annual state fair as well as smaller events throughout the year.

Currently under construction, the Davis Arena site design includes a new drop off and entry plaza, an event lawn space and several tree lined pedestrian corridors that help better connect both the parking lots to the entry of the Davis Arena, the Heritage Building and the site beyond. The project is registered with the U.S. Green Building Council and is expected to achieve LEED certification upon completion.



### visioning



#### Event Stage.

Recently, VDC was commissioned to develop an initial vision for a multi-use performance stage for the proposed Keowee River mixed-use development on Lake Hartwell. With the Lake as the back drop the performance stage is envisioned as a venue not only for outdoor concerts but also weddings, theater performances and various events throughout the year. The structure also includes restroom facilities, a 'back-stage' lounge, and a lower story with classroom space for use by community groups. VDC developed two options: one contemporary and one more mountain-traditional.



### material

#### Paver-Grate

One of our recent designs includes a bosque of trees set within small, paved plaza. Due to space limitations, we needed to minimize the size of the tree wells without compromising the growing conditions for the tree roots. The solution was a product by Ironsmith called Paver-grate. Paver-grate is a steel grate that can span up to 8' square tree wells and supports pavers over its surface. There is an opening for the trunk which can be expanded from 1 to 2 feet to accommodate trunk growth. The Paver-grate allows us to maximize usable surface area in the plaza while preventing compaction of soil around the tree's root ball. Pavers are sand-set to allow rain water to infiltrate into the planter. Because the planter is covered, evaporation is minimal, thus reducing the amount of water required for irrigation.

