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 % = Rise __________________________
    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)
ACCESS and CIRCULATION

- Activity Nodes / Storage Areas (label)
- Pedestrian Access – current and potential (label)
- Cart and Vehicle Access – current and potential (label)
- Materials – i.e. mulch, compost, produce (label)

VEGETATION and WILDLIFE

Existing Plant Communities

Habitat Types

Existing or Possible Pests / Varmints

- Indicator species – i.e. wetland species = wetland (label)

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<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>PRESERVE? REMOVE?</th>
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BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Buildings – mark doors and windows (label)
- Permanent pavement (label)
- Snow piles (label)
- Power Lines - above and below ground (label)
- Electric Outlets (label)
- Outdoor water faucet, septic system, well locations (label)
- Underground Pipes and Drainage (label)
- Fences and Gateways (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
- 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://solardat.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 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