

## A True Pioneer of Lower-Impact Development

**R**edding, Connecticut, native Steven Trinkaus, P.E., CPESC, CPSWQ, has been a civil engineer consultant for 33 years. His work has made him well known in the industry and has led him to play a huge part in various lower-impact development (LID) projects across the world.

Trinkaus' undergrad was in forest management from the University of New Hampshire. Soon after graduating, he found work with a local land surveyor and professional engineer, which led to his interest in land development. Based upon his undergraduate degree and field experience, he applied for and passed the licensing exam for professional engineering, which he completed in 1988. By 1990, this bright young professional was on his own as a full consultant. "I knew if I didn't at least try to run my own business, I would regret it later on in life," Trinkaus proclaims. "I was single and had lots of time on my hands, so I disciplined myself and achieved my goals, and the rest is history," he jokes.

Married 20 years last October, Trinkaus raves about his wife, Nannette, and two kids, David and Kate. In his free time, Trinkaus enjoys biking trails near his house, skiing the Tetons in Wyoming with his family—"and golfing," his wife adds. This highly successful engineer and businessman, is a family man to the core.

Trinkaus's second passion is teaching. "Teaching is either in your blood or not. Coming from a family of teachers, I didn't initially want to teach," he states. "When I was in college, I would travel home

during holiday breaks. I would meet my mom and her middle school class at the nature reserve near their school, which was the same park I helped cut the original trails for when I was a kid," he proudly admits. "I taught these kids about the forest, using what I learned from my studies. My mom once said, 'Those kids eat out of your hands,'" he says. This is when he knew he had the ability to teach.

His first experience teaching at a conference was at StormCon in 2008. Attendees enjoyed his class because



Steven Trinkaus

Trinkaus explained his LID process. "It was something students could take back with them and use for their own sites," he says. Soon after, Trinkaus taught a course in LID at the 2010 Environmental Water Resources Congress in Palm Springs, California. This course led to an invitation to present LID in South

Korea and Taiwan.

At last year's IECA conference in San Diego, Trinkaus taught a full-day course. Attendees were so intrigued about his LID practices that they requested more courses about LID designs. "It's important for people to know that LID is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Your application should fit your geographical area, and you should have regional modification," says Trinkaus. At Environmental Connection 2014 in Nashville, Trinkaus will teach a full-day course titled *EC143-1-7: Low Impact Development—Solutions for Real Problems*.

Trinkaus's most recent assignment, located in South Korea, is a five- to six-year project in which he will assist Pusan National University, the Korean Water Corp., and the Korean Land and Housing Corp. in developing LID approaches suitable for the geography and hydrological conditions of South Korea, based on the LID practices he has used in his projects in the northeastern United States. A unique aspect of the Korean LID project is the creation of Eco Delta City, located south-east of Gimhae International Airport in Busan. The new city comprises approximately



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75,000 acres and will incorporate such LID concepts as infiltration systems, rainwater harvesting, and rainwater reuse. Trinkaus works closely with Dr. Hyunsuk Shin, a professor at Pusan National University. The two will review the designs of the LID research done at Pusan National University. "It's exciting to be part of these mega-scale projects," says Trinkaus.

This long-time IECA member and recently elected IECA Northeast Chapter president has been involved with the Northeast Chapter and currently serves on the chapter's board as its state representative for Connecticut. He mentions that his membership gives him the professional opportunity to meet new people who are focused on a more proactive approach to sustainability. He says IECA has helped

him learn from other people's experiences. "All organizations, like IECA, have a seat at the table to making a difference for the future. The more impact we can make now, the better off future generations will be," he says.



Trinkaus's most recent assignment, located in South Korea, is a project for which he will use and tweak LID practices he has used in the US.

Trinkaus shares some intriguing advice for those in the industry. "Don't be afraid to mess up. If you make a mistake, learn from it and move forward. If you get everything right the first time, it could have been luck, and it's OK to be lucky once in a while," he laughs. "Stay passionate, but, most of all, maintain your integrity, because if you lose that, you're done."

Since becoming an expert in LID, Trinkaus wants to educate as many people as possible to move toward a more sustainable approach to development. "I am driven to succeed and make a difference in our industry," he says. "My ideal legacy is to be recognized as a pioneer in the sustainable development industry," he concludes, which is yet another goal he has already achieved. ☞

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