

# SLAM

DESIGNING THE SOUTHWEST  
SOUTHWICK LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL MEMO  
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southwick  
LA

*Duct tape is like the force. It has a light side, a dark side, and it holds the universe together....*

- Carl Zwanzig

SLAM BOOK REVIEW- BY: LINDZAY GREEN

**LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS: SAVING CHILDREN FROM NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER** BY RICHARD LOUV

Think about how a stroll through a garden or a challenging climb to the top of a Red Rock trail can be so relaxing. Exploring nature can be a huge stress reliever for adults; but what about the children? Children deal with stress every day; it may be a different kind of stress, but stress nonetheless. They need an outlet to filter out these stresses in order to have healthy minds and bodies. This is what Richard Louv analyzes in his award winning book. He presents a compelling argument that children, and the rest of us for that matter, require regular contact with nature to maintain physical and emotional health. The steep consequence of separating our children from the natural world is a term coined by Louv as "nature deficit disorder." This term is not meant as a medical diagnosis, but more of a jumping off point for thinking about the constraints as well as the opportunities that this situation presents us with.



Lindzay's nieces at the Children's  
Discovery Trail in  
Red Rock Canyon, Nevada

Louv notes grim statistics describing the "de-natured" path that our children have started taking. He cites a 2003 study showing that rates of prescription antidepressants for children has doubled in five years; a large percentage being preschoolers. He argues that modern culture takes an emotional and physical toll on children. This book is full of "eye opening" statistics. However, it is not completely devoid of hope for our children's future. Louv also offers ideas on an alternative future, one in which parents help their kids experience the natural world more deeply and in the process; find a family connectedness.

I can give only a glimpse into this book in such a short introduction. However, I do believe that this is a startling, important book for anyone who has, works with, designs for, or plans on having children.

## Northwest Career and Technical Academy

The Northwest Career and Technical Academy presented interesting challenges, being designed to educate local high school students in specific fields such as medicine, transportation, engineering, culinary arts and media technology. The main building is architecturally divided into separate pods for each of these specialties. Due to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) requirements for the project it has more windows and landscape areas than typical Southern Nevada school buildings. The campus not only functions as a school, but also has the capabilities to function as a banquet facility, complimenting the culinary arts training program. Outdoor spaces were designed to compliment the architecture and the functions of the school, while providing a pleasant and inviting experience for students and visitors as well as being environmentally responsible. The landscape design creates unique experiences for different areas of the campus and carefully transitions from the required palm-lined City street into an attractive desert landscape. As an educational environment, objectives were developed to provide examples of environmentally responsible design for the students to observe and study. Native planting areas which will not require irrigation after the plants have become established is one way this is achieved. Another goal was to provide unique and attractive views from each of the study pod windows, such as the meditation herb garden near the medical educational study pod. The Northwest Career and Technical Academy is located at 8200 Tropical Parkway in Las Vegas, Nevada.



## FAVORITE FAUNA: VIGNA CARACALLA - SNAIL VINE

Here at SLA we work with plants almost every day, so we thought it would be a great idea to poll the office and find out what the employee's favorite plants are. We were pleasantly surprised at the wide variety of responses. The first plant of the month turns out to be Sarah Naber's favorite: the Snail Vine (*Vigna caracalla*). She discovered the Snail Vine, sometimes called the Corkscrew Vine while browsing the plant selection at her local Home Depot. She was instantly attracted to the unusual shape of the violet colored flowers. A perennial vine here in the Las Vegas Climate, the Snail Vine gets its name from the spiraling petals that resemble a snail's shell. The vine can rapidly spread to 10ft.-20ft. in a full sun exposure. Native to tropical areas of the Americas, this plant loves heat and humidity. The monsoon's here in the Las Vegas Valley give *Vigna caracalla* a real growth spurt late in the summer. The Snail Vine can be a great addition to the landscape from spring through the fall but will likely freeze back to the ground when temperatures drop below 25° F.



PHOTO OF THE MONTH



LIQUID PHENOMENA  
FERN CANYON, NV  
LINDZAY GREEN

Keep an eye out for next month's SLAM as we cover another SLA employee favorite, the only palm native to New Zealand.