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IN TOUCH WITH THE LAND



LEFT Tim Shinabarger (United States, b. 1966), *Black Timber Bugler*, 2007. Bronze. Life-size. Gift of Joy and Tony Greene, National Museum of Wildlife Art. ©Tim Shinabarger.

In addition, he also has considerable experience working on high-end residential design and construction, large-scale resort master planning, habitat creation and restoration, golf course design, and subdivision planning. “We’re a small firm,” explains Kuszak. “However, our strength lies in our involvement in every phase of the process from construction and design to permitting. Our message to clients is never lost in translation or communication because we don’t have layers of management. We ensure a design all the way until the end.”

Although Snider spent the early part of his career working on large-scale master plans for urban and recreational development at a nationally recognized planning firm, he eventually landed in Jackson. Spending several years as a project manager, he oversaw the design process from conceptualization through construction implementation on a broad range of land planning and design projects. “Landscape architecture is a unique profession,” says Snider. “We create our jobs, find resources, and identify and then solve problems. We must constantly be creative. It’s extremely gratifying to have opportunities to exhibit the role that landscape architecture can play.”

The Agrostis team is committed to helping clients realize a vision and to create spaces that inspire their clients to live outdoors more. They listen to clients and discuss extensively what they want to do before designing and implementing a plan. But once they begin the design process, they are efficient.

As a leading Wyoming landscape architecture firm, Agrostis offers top-notch planning services and designs for hardscapes, water features, fireplaces, and fire pits. In addition, Agrostis provides planning and specifications for outdoor kitchens, spas, and pools as well as ponds and streams, other habitat enhancements, and native landscape restoration. Most of Agrostis’ projects to date are residential, but they are open to and interested in public projects.

AGROSTIS, INC. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND LAND PLANNING DESIGNS INSPIRE

Taking cues from impeccable aesthetics and diligent land planning, Agrostis, Inc. is one of Jackson Hole’s premier landscape architecture firms. Owners Heath Kuszak and Jason Snider established their firm in 2008 to provide a full range of professional landscape architecture and land planning services with distinct attention and focus on client satisfaction.

The foundation behind Kuszak and Snider’s professional expertise is integrity and ingenuity. Kuszak’s professional career in Jackson is extensive as he worked at engineering and landscape architecture firms in the area where he provided services from drafting to managing large projects.



whj } shoptalk

WHEN TALENTED PROFESSIONALS TALK, WE LISTEN. WELCOME TO *WESTERN HOME JOURNAL'S* SHOPTALK

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AGROSTIS INC.

JASON SNIDER
HEATH KUSZAK

Agrostis, Inc. is a client-focused firm providing a full range of landscape architecture and land planning services to clients in the Jackson Hole area. Founded in 2008 by Heath Kuszak and Jason Snider, Agrostis has been built on its founders' passion for landscape architecture and close and collaborative relationships with the best architects, design professionals, and contractors in the area. Kuszak and Snider agree that what makes their work so rewarding is "being able to work with the amazing clients we have met over the years." With a portfolio that tells many stories of exceptional projects, the partners at Agrostis are proud of the range of projects they've completed since 2008 and say that every project starts with an appreciation for each individual site.



What do you strive to create when you're working on a project? What's most important to you?

The most important thing we strive to do is meet our client's goals. The design process is also very important to us. We learned long ago that while every project is different, we can apply a similar problem-solving process to each of them to successfully navigate each project's unique challenges. It's important to be able to develop a concept that we can easily communicate to a client; we use verbal, written, and graphic communication to ensure our clients have a thorough grasp of the concept. It's important to us to make sure we are listening to our clients. Before we put pen to paper or a shovel in the ground, we need to understand why they want to be in Jackson, how they want to live inside and outside of their homes, and how they want to experience the landscape.

Ultimately we hope that understanding will lead us to create something beautiful and inspiring for our clients.

What project (or projects) is most notable to you and your firm?

The Jensen Canyon Residence. The entire process—from our initial meeting with the clients and their family to seeing how they live in the home and interact with landscape—has been incredibly rewarding.

A well-designed residential landscape has to be...?

Functional and beautiful. It has to make its owners want to go out and experience it—see it, touch it, breathe it in. It should make you want to live outside more.

Is your work easily recognizable, why or why not?

We never begin a new project with a preconceived notion about a particular design element or

personal stamp that we need to see or want to put into the landscape. It's really all about the client and helping them realize their vision for the project. Sometimes, the best design may be very traditional, representing a straightforward approach to the materials and their use. Other times we need to bring a fresh perspective to the use of materials to help our clients see how design problems can be solved in interesting ways.

Name three essential tools of the trade that you use to get your work done.

Tools of intellect have greater importance for us than anything—creativity, communication skills, and a willingness to learn. Everyone uses computers and mobile devices nowadays to do their work so those go without saying. Other tools we continue to use are hand-drawn graphics—giving our clients the ability to visualize components of a design which may

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-Heath Kuszak and Jason Snider, Agrostis, Inc.

otherwise be difficult to understand in a 2D drawing; a creative approach to problem solving—allowing us to discover interesting alternatives for our clients whether they be small or large projects; and a willingness to adapt—understanding challenging field conditions and collaborating with contractors and other consultants to come up with the best solution. Our egos don't stand in the way.

Do you work in a sustainable way?

We think so, and for a number of reasons. We work so much with native plants that we are often starting with a sustainable landscape. Everything requires some form of maintenance to thrive, so no project can just be installed,

walked away from, and expected to be successful. We also like to seek out hardscape and site furnishing materials available in our region and incorporate them as often as possible. To some extent, we try to be a sustainable force in our community by utilizing our client's resources to employ and engage a wide range of skilled designers and tradesmen in and around our town. Finally, we think our office and business model functions efficiently and sustainably. We are committed to staying small and not burdening our clients with additional fees associated with multiple layers of management where ideas and communication often lose their way.



“OUR MESSAGE TO CLIENTS IS NEVER LOST IN TRANSLATION OR COMMUNICATION BECAUSE WE DON’T HAVE LAYERS OF MANAGEMENT. WE ENSURE A DESIGN ALL THE WAY UNTIL THE END.”

-Heath Kuszak Agrostis, Inc.

About their work, Snider says, “It’s not just about landscape design, it’s an opportunity to explain how we can help people realize their goals creatively.”

Experts in quality design and problem solving, Kuszak and Snider are especially attuned to the procedures and processes involved in home subdivisions, which have become more complex with stricter codes. Kuszak explains how Jackson Hole is experiencing a surge in “boxy, modern, contemporary, minimal houses,” which are mostly wood and metal construction. “We like to work on those structures because it’s a challenge to incorporate them into the native landscape,” he says. “It involves cleaner lines and harder edges. In traditional homes, there are more loose organic forms in the landscape.” Snider adds that they enjoy working on new construction and working with more contemporary materials or modern interpretations of traditional materials.

Besides new materials, Snider and Kuszak are extremely conscious of the region’s care for its natural habitat, using native plants, stone, and riparian vegetation, which are true to Wyoming and Teton County’s environment. “People who come from the East coast, Texas, and California are used to a very different flora and fauna than what exists in the Intermountain West,” explains Kuszak. “There are not many nursery-available tree species here, but we rely on those species and shrubs to provide structure to the landscape, which we complement with perennials, flowers and reclamation practices to create a unique design.”

All of their knowledge and experience matters when Snider and Kuszak are presenting design solutions because they can each speak clearly and intelligently about the micro and macro concepts for their designs. “Many of our clients are second-home owners and absent for the process,” reveals Kuszak. “They rely on us and the rest of the design team to manage their expectations. We do a great deal of project management to make sure it all happens properly—it’s one of our strengths.”

“IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT LANDSCAPE DESIGN, IT’S AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN HOW WE CAN HELP PEOPLE REALIZE THEIR GOALS CREATIVELY.”

-Jason Snider Agrostis, Inc.

Professionally licensed in Wyoming and Idaho as well as CLARB certified, Agrostis specializes in a broad range of landscape architecture and planning services, as well as site selection, property evaluation, permitting and project management. Agrostis also presents documentation to its clients for all projects through conceptual plans, and construction documentation, and is then diligent about overseeing construction to ensure the integrity of the design—it’s a full service landscape architecture firm with the added benefit of abundant knowledge and experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL AGROSTIS AT 307.413.5123 OR VISIT THEM ONLINE AT WWW.AGROSTISINC.COM



agrostis,inc. landscape architecture
land planning

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