



# Earn the Boy Scout Landscape Architecture Merit Badge

Based on notes from Darren Solana, ALSA San Diego, and colleagues' 2008 Chapter activity  
Reviewed by Jim Coffman

## Summary

This Career Discovery activity introduces Boy Scouts to the career of landscape architecture and the wide array of skills it involves and services it provides.

At the end of the session, Boy Scouts will have completed the requirements for the Landscape Architecture Merit Badge.

This Career Discovery activity can be implemented in different ways depending on the time available and the audience's age. See the appendix for other implementation possibilities.

## Want to work with Girl Scouts?

We recommend that you contact your local council, and offer to connect as a partner who can offer expertise in landscape architecture. This way, you can work directly with girls (and adults). The Girl Scouts' core curriculum consists not only of badges but also National Leadership Journeys. Girl Scout councils are always looking for experts to support Journey content.

## Publicize and Document Your Activity

By taking the time to create and implement a WLAM Career Discovery activity, you achieve two great results—you promote the profession while teaching students about sustainability, ecological issues, and the technical aspects of landscape architecture.

Be sure to publicize your activity within your community and document it to share your experience with other ASLA chapters. Refer to the appendix for suggestions on publicizing and documenting your activity.

## Grade Level: 6–12

## Duration

The suggested timeframe for this activity is a one-day, six-hour session.

## Personnel

- Landscape architects (2–6 depending on group size)
- Scoutmaster

## Costs

- Lunch and snacks, as needed
- Plants in pots (or get on loan from a nursery)
- Photocopies

## Learning Objectives

Scouts will:

- Learn about landscape architecture as a career.
- Be able to differentiate between landscape architecture and other careers such as horticulturist, urban planner, civil engineer, etc.
- Learn to identify 11 plants.
- Map and analyze a site.
- Earn a Landscape Architecture Merit Badge.



## Materials

### PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS

- Images of landscape architecture projects
- Materials associated with your project to present to students
- Project materials your firm has produced; example models your firm has built/created
- Copies of *Landscape Architecture Magazine* or other sources for Scouts' design inspiration
- Copies of the ASLA career discovery brochure, *Your Path to Landscape Architecture* (obtained by contacting ASLA's public relations and communications coordinator JR Taylor at 202-216-2345 or [jtaylor@asla.org](mailto:jtaylor@asla.org)).
- [ASLA PowerPoint presentation](#)

### EQUIPMENT

- Computer, projector, and screen for the PowerPoint presentation
- Writing surface (board, flip chart, etc.) and markers
- Work tables or clipboards

### SUPPLIES

- Plants that grow locally (5 shrubs, 5 trees, 1 ground cover; different shapes, sizes, and textures; consider using native plants)
- Extra pencils and paper (if Scouts forget to bring them)
- Measuring tape (about 1 for every 2 Scouts)
- 11" x 17" paper for each Scout

### SESSION HANDOUTS (SEE APPENDIX)

- *Landscape Architecture FAQs*
- *Boy Scout Landscape Merit Badge Requirements*

## Preparation Checklist

At least one month in advance:

- Contact the local Boy Scout office or Scoutmaster. Discuss transportation to and from the sites.  
Arrange to attend a troop meeting to heighten interest for your activity.
- Have at least one landscape architect register with the Boy Scouts as a merit badge counselor (see appendix).
- Review the Landscape Architecture Merit Badge requirements (see appendix).
- Select two sites to visit: a local site designed by your office and a nearby school or place of worship.
- Arrange transportation or walking routes to the two sites.

One week prior:

- Contact the Scoutmaster to reconfirm the date, time, and meeting place. Remind the Scoutmaster to bring an Application for Merit Badge (blue card) for each Scout. Reconfirm transportation to the sites.
- Gather images of different types of landscape architecture projects.
- Choose one of your projects to share with the Scouts. Gather pertinent materials including the site plan.
- Check the Boy Scout website for the current requirements for this merit badge (see appendix for web link).
- Make copies of materials to distribute during the session.

After the session:

- Be prepared to assist Scouts who may need additional information.



## Procedure

### ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Gather materials (see materials list on the previous page).
- Set up lunch and snacks, as needed.
- Select images of local landscape architecture projects to show Scouts.
- Be sure there's a surface on which to write (chalk board, white board, or flip chart) and markers.
- Set up computer, projector, and screen to show the PowerPoint presentation.
- Set out the 11 plants on tables with plenty of room for Scouts to walk around them.

### WHAT TO DO

#### SET THE STAGE

TIME: 15 MIN

1. Introduce yourself and your colleagues. Write your names where Scouts can refer to them.
2. If the facility is unfamiliar to the Scouts, be sure to tell them where the restrooms are located and where they can get a drink of water.
3. Tell the Scouts you are a landscape architect and today they will learn about what landscape architects do and what it takes to become one. They will learn how landscape architecture differs from some other careers, identify some plants, and visit a couple of sites to do some mapping. They will fulfill the requirements for the Landscape Architecture Merit Badge.
  - If it is World Landscape Architecture Month, inform Scouts about its significance. The month also encompasses Earth Day on April 22 and the birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted on April 26, who founded the American landscape architecture profession.
  - You may wish to connect your presentation to PARK(ing) Day, an annual event in which local community members, students, and designers transform metered parking spaces into temporary parklets. It occurs on the third Friday of September.
4. Pass out copies of the Landscape Architecture Merit Badge requirements as needed.
5. Check to see if anyone needs a pencil or paper to take notes.



## INTRODUCE YOUR PROFESSION

TIME: 30 MIN

This introduction fulfills merit badge requirements 1 and 2a.

6. Read aloud the requirements and make sure the Scouts understand them.
7. Provide your presentation about the landscape architecture profession. Some resources for your introduction include:
  - ASLA PowerPoint presentation
  - ASLA *Your Path to Landscape Architecture* brochure
  - *Landscape Architecture FAQs* handout
  - Career Discovery activity: *Presentation: Be a Landscape Architect!*
8. Show a few examples of local projects.
  - Point out that landscape architecture encompasses hardscape elements such as pathways, benches, walls, fences, etc. as well as planting design.
  - Point out different plants used in the project examples shown.
  - Ask Scouts why different plants are used. Briefly discuss why different plants are used in different projects.
9. Explain to Scouts that landscape architects are increasingly concerned about the sustainability of the landscapes they create. Define “sustainable landscape.”
10. Ask for ideas about practices that would promote more sustainable landscapes. Offer a few ideas if students are slow to make suggestions. Sustainable practices might include:
  - Water conservation (xeriscapes, rain gardens, grouping plants with similar water needs)
  - Control water runoff (bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs)
  - Match the plant to the conditions
  - Use native plants
  - Plant nitrogen-fixing plants to reduce fertilizer use
  - Create natural looking designs to reduce maintenance needs
  - Create wildlife habitat
11. After your presentation, ask Scouts if they need any additional information to fulfill the requirements. Discuss as needed.



**BREAK**

**TIME: 15 MIN**

**PLANT IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT**

**TIME: 60 MIN**

This plant identification activity fulfills merit badge requirement 5.

12. Read aloud the merit badge requirement and make sure the Scouts understand it.
13. Remind Scouts why landscape architects select different plants for their projects.
14. Show Scouts where the plants they are to identify are located.
  - Remind Scouts that these plants are on loan from a local nursery and that they need to be gentle if they touch the plants.
  - Tell Scouts there are copies of *Landscape Architecture Magazine* to give them ideas about using plants effectively in landscapes.
  - Ask Scouts to:
    - Identify the plants
    - Draw pictures of the leaves, flowers, stems, etc.
    - Think about how to use these plants in various landscapes
15. After 30–40 minutes, reconvene the group and discuss any questions. Ask Scouts to share their ideas for using the different plants in landscapes.

**REVIEW YOUR PROJECT THAT SCOUTS WILL VISIT**

**TIME: 30 MIN**

16. Show images of your landscape architecture project the Scouts will visit after lunch.
  - Explain the process used to complete the project—assess/design/build.
  - Show any relevant project-related materials that are available such as concept sketches, and/or DVD and CD packages.
  - Highlight a key issue that you had to address in the project and describe how you went about problem-solving it.
  - Describe any other professionals that you worked with on the project.

**LUNCH AND TRAVEL TO THE SITE**

**TIME: 45 MIN**



**EXPLORE THE PROJECT SITE**

**TIME: 60 MIN**

This activity fulfills merit badge requirements 3 and 4.

17. Read aloud the merit badge requirements and make sure the Scouts understand them.
18. At the site, distribute a copy of the site plan to each Scout. Help the Scouts understand the site plan and where they are on the map.
19. As you tour the site, discuss these specifics which are part of the Scout requirements:
  - Tell whether the design had separate spaces, a clear path system, and sun and shade variety
  - Tell about the places to sit, eat, or park a car
  - Tell whether you were always comfortable and protected
  - Tell about some of the trees, shrubs, and ground covers used in the design
20. Be sure to ask the Scouts for questions.

**TRAVEL TO SITE AND SNACK TIME**

**TIME: 35 MIN**

Travel to the school or place of worship you have selected. Provide Scouts with a snack en route or once you arrive.

**DRAW SITE PLANS**

**TIME: 60 MIN**

This activity fulfills merit badge requirement 6.

21. Read aloud the merit badge requirement and be sure Scouts understand the task.
22. Divide the Scouts into groups of 2 to 3 with a landscape architect leading each group. Distribute 11" x17" paper and measuring tapes. Help Scouts draw their site plans.
23. Reconvene groups and ask if there are any questions.



**WRAP UP AND MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR SIGNATURE**

**TIME: 10 MIN**

24. Divide the Scouts into groups of 2 or 3 (the same or different groups they worked in to draw site maps).
  - Have the landscape architect in each group check the Scouts' work against the merit badge requirement list to be sure all requirements are complete.
25. Have the merit badge counselor sign off on the Application for Merit Badge (blue card).
26. Thank the troop for their participation.
27. Be sure each Scout has a ride home (either parent pickup or return Scouts to original meeting facility).



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### **HANDOUTS**

*Landscape Architecture FAQs*



## Publicize and Document Your Activity

Don't let the effort you put into creating and implementing a Career Discovery activity go unnoticed!

Staff at ASLA National is always on hand to help promote your events to local media; feel free to contact them at anytime. If you would like to reach out to local media yourself, below are some tips to assure your name appears in print or online.

### **PUBLICIZE**

For tips on reaching out to local media, refer to the PR Handbook, available as part of ASLA's Chapter Operations Workbook. It is online at:

<https://www.asla.org/ChapterOutreach.aspx>

You'll find tips like these:

- Pitching the story to the media
- Formatting the press release
- Appealing to the audience
- Making the story relevant
- Social media tips

### **TAKE PICTURES & VIDEO**

Be sure to take lots and lots pictures and video! ASLA National would love to share your activity online as inspiration for the other chapters.

Send us photos or video of your event featuring:

- Students interacting with professionals (we must have a signed photo release from parents to use the photos)
- Your presentation materials
- The activity in process
- The end result of your activity

### **DOCUMENT**

Email public relations and communications coordinator JR Taylor—at [jtaylor@asla.org](mailto:jtaylor@asla.org)—to report on the activity or activities that your chapter completes.



## Alternative Ways to Implement the Activity

This *Earn the Boy Scout Landscape Architecture Merit Badge* activity can be implemented in different ways depending on the time available and the setting.

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### SET UP A BOOTH AT A BOY SCOUT EVENT

Audience: Grades 6–12

Estimated time: one day

#### GOAL

Set up a booth at a Boy Scout event to assist Scouts in completing requirements 1, 2a, and 5 of the Boy Scout Landscape Merit Badge (see appendix). Scouts will need to complete the other badge requirements before or after this event and could coordinate with you to fulfill these requirements.

#### RESOURCES

Refer to the ASLA Career Discovery activity *Participate in a School or Community Event* for tips on organizing a booth.

Hand out copies of the ASLA Landscape Architecture brochure and the *Landscape Architecture FAQs* handout (see appendix).

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### WORK WITH SCOUTS INDIVIDUALLY

Audience: Grades 6–12

Estimated time: 4–6 hours in one session or multiple sessions

#### GOAL

Work with two or more Boy Scouts to complete the requirements for the Landscape Architecture Merit Badge. There must be at least two Boy Scouts at any meetings with the merit badge career counselor.

#### RESOURCES

Use the Career Discovery *Job Shadow Experience* activity as a guideline.



## Boy Scout Landscape Merit Badge Requirements

For information on the process of earning a merit badge, go to:

<http://www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors.aspx>

Check for the most current requirements for the Landscape Architecture Merit Badge

<http://www.usscouts.org/usscouts/mb/mb067.asp>

Requirements:

1. Explain the differences between a landscape architect and a horticulturist, a landscape contractor, an architect, an urban planner, and a civil engineer. Give an example of the work each might do that is unique to that vocation. How might people in these positions work with a landscape architect?
2. Do ONE of the following:
  - a. Visit a landscape architect's office or invite a landscape architect to your troop meeting to tell about his or her work. Find out about and discuss the following with your merit badge counselor:
    1. What a landscape architect's daily work is like.
    2. The education one must have to be a professional landscape architect.
    3. The methods used in developing a design.
    4. The drawing tools and computer equipment used in design.
  - b. Log on to the American Society of Landscape Architects' Web site at <http://www.ASLA.org> and find out more about the landscape architecture profession and schools that educate landscape architects. Using documents printed from this Web site, report to your counselor what you have learned.
3. Go to a completed landscape project that a landscape architect has designed. Before you visit the site, obtain a plan of the design from the landscape architect if one is available.
4. Make a report in the form of a short talk to your Scout troop on what you found in requirement 3. Discuss the following:
  - a. Tell whether the design had separate spaces, a clear path system, and sun and shade variety.
  - b. Tell about the places to sit, eat, or park a car.
  - c. Tell whether you were always comfortable and protected.
  - d. Tell about some of the trees, shrubs, and ground covers used in the design.
5. Identify five shrubs, five trees, and one ground cover, being sure that you select examples of different shapes, sizes, and textures. With the help of your counselor or a local nursery,



choose plants that will grow in your area. Bring pictures of the different planting materials or, if possible, examples of their branches, leaves, or flowers to a troop meeting. Be prepared to tell how you might use each in the design of a landscape.

6. Look at and study a place of worship or school grounds to find the place where most people arrive by bus or car. Show you can do the following:
  - a. Using a measuring tape, measure and draw the entry and its nearby area using a scale of 1/8 inch equal to 1 foot on an 11-by-17-inch piece of paper. Be sure to include the driveway and the wall and door where people enter the school or place of worship. Indicate any sidewalks, structures, trees, and plants within the study area. Make a copy of this plan to save the original. Do the next two items on copies.
  - b. On one copy, use directional arrows to indicate where the water drains across the site, where ditches occur, and where water stands for a longer period of time.
  - c. Decide how you can make the place safer and more comfortable for those using it. Redesign the area on another copy of the plan. You may want to include new walks, covered waiting areas, benches, space-defining plantings of trees and shrubs, and drainage structures.

# Landscape Architecture FAQs

Landscape architecture is a profession committed to the stewardship of the land while creating healthy, enjoyable, and secure places for the present and future. Landscape architecture combines art and science. It is the profession that designs, plans, and manages our land.

Landscape architecture has strong roots in the United States and early examples, such as Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, are still much admired. The actual term landscape architecture became common after 1863 when Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed New York's Central Park.

## **WHAT DOES A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT DO ON THE JOB?**

Landscape architects deal with the increasingly complex relationships between the built and natural environments. Landscape architects use sustainable design practices to plan and design traditional places such as parks, residential developments, campuses, gardens, cemeteries, commercial centers, resorts, transportation facilities, corporate and institutional centers, and waterfront developments. They also design and plan the restoration of natural places disturbed by humans such as wetlands, stream corridors, mined areas, and forested land. Their appreciation for historic landscapes and cultural resources enables landscape architects

to undertake preservation planning projects for national, regional, and local historic sites and areas.

## **WHAT SKILLS DOES A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT NEED?**

- Sensitivity to landscape quality
- Understanding of the arts and a humanistic approach to design
- Ability to analyze problems in terms of design and physical form
- Technical competence to translate a design into a built work
- Skills in all aspects of professional practice including management and professional ethics

## **WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS?**

A formal education is essential to gain the skills and knowledge to become a landscape architect. Professional education in landscape architecture can be obtained at the undergraduate or graduate level. There are two undergraduate professional degrees. These usually require four or five years of study in design, construction techniques, art, history, natural, and social sciences. There are generally three types of graduate degree programs. For more information visit ASLA's Career Discovery page: [asla.org/yourpath](http://asla.org/yourpath)

At present, all 50 states license (or register) landscape architects. Each state sets its own requirements for registration, but all require candidates to pass a national examination (the Landscape Architect Registration Examination, or LARE).

## **WHERE DO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS FIND JOBS AFTER GRADUATION?**

Landscape architects are employed in private, public, and academic organizations. Private sector opportunities are found within landscape architectural, engineering, architectural, and planning firms. Landscape architects may also work with other types of private corporations that have physical planning departments, or offer products and services related to land planning and development. Public sector employment opportunities are found within federal, state, regional, and municipal agencies involved in land planning, development, and preservation. Landscape architects in academic practice teach and conduct research in the professional programs offered by colleges and universities across the country.

## **WHAT IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT'S SALARY?**

Landscape architectural salaries vary depending on the years of experience, geographical location, and type of position. The average annual salary and bonuses for those in the landscape architecture field total \$78,600, according to the 2010-11 ASLA National Salary Survey.

For more information about a career in landscape architecture, visit ASLA's Career Discovery page: [asla.org/yourpath](http://asla.org/yourpath)