



# Plan a Community Event

Based on notes from Jon Wreschinsky, ASLA San Diego, and colleagues' 2008 Chapter activity  
Reviewed by Jamie Csizmadia

## Summary

This *Plan a Community Event* activity provides directions to assist an ASLA chapter in planning an event that improves or contributes to the community. It is an opportunity to give back to your community while educating people about the role of landscape architecture in preserving and protecting the environment.

## Publicize and Document Your Activity

By taking the time to create and implement a World Landscape Architecture Month Career Discovery activity, you achieve two great results—you promote the profession while teaching people 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:** Children and adults

## Duration

Typically an event requires a one-day commitment along with time for planning.

## Personnel

Variable, but 7–10 chapter members should be involved in the planning and execution.

## Costs

Costs will vary for this activity based on the type of event you plan.

Possible costs to include are:

- Building and craft materials
- Equipment rental
- Printing costs for brochures and/or instructions
- Name tags
- Refreshments

Consider trying to find a co-sponsor who can supply materials and/or help with the cost of the activity.

## Goals

People will:

- Understand that landscape architecture encompasses a wide variety of activities
- Understand ways that landscape architects contribute to preserving and protecting the environment



## Get Started

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### STRATEGIZE

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As you begin to plan your event, the chapter should answer some preliminary questions. The answers to these questions may change as you work through specific details. That's OK—it's even good because you want to be responsive to the needs of your community and partners.

Answer the following questions to see if planning a community event is right for your chapter.

**What is the most important thing we want to accomplish with this event?** Write this down, because you will not want to forget it.

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**How many chapter members do you want to involve? Who can work on this? How much time can each member commit?**

Be realistic about the commitment each member is able to make so that the rest of the planning can go smoothly. This should be a positive experience for all involved.

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**What are the key issues to address in your community? Who can you collaborate with in your community?**

You probably do not have all the knowledge and resources to do everything by yourself. There are already groups and advocates in your community who care about an issue and would want to be involved in this kind of event.

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## Get Organized

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### ORGANIZE A TEAM & MAKE AN ACTION PLAN

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Start planning well in advance—at least two or three months prior to the event.

Identify a core group of 7–10 chapter members who will be involved in planning and executing the event.

Once core team members are identified, meet to agree on the objective of the event, to develop a timeline, create a budget, and assign responsibilities.

#### SELECT A DATE

Be sure your event doesn't conflict with another community or local/national event, such as a major sporting, school, or church activity. Don't make people have to choose!

#### PLAN FOR SUCCESS

In your action plan, establish measurements that you can use to identify success and areas for improvements. These measurements might include: the number of chapter participants; the number of community participants; the number of partners contacted; the type and impact of pre-event publicity; the type and impact of post-event media coverage; the number of requests for more information/follow-up.

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### SET YOUR OBJECTIVE

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It's a good idea to develop an event objective to guide you and keep things focused.

A sample objective is:

- Involve community members in an event to place markers on storm drains. The event will raise awareness of how our waterways and wetlands are polluted by trash, motor oil, and other pollutants that enter the storm drains.

#### OUR OBJECTIVE IS:

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## Plan a Community Event

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### IDENTIFY AND SECURE PARTNERS

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Build a base of supporters outside of your chapter.

- There is usually a community group that is willing to get involved. Possibilities include Master Gardeners, scouts, church groups, schools, etc.
- Invite students from your local landscape architecture program to join you. They can assist with the hands-on experience and they can share their interests and career path with people
- Find allies and support from elected officials and government agencies. Be sure to check out whether any funds might be available for your project.
- Tap into the business community. Stress that support of your event is an impressive and cost-effective opportunity for positive community exposure.

Your partners' support can range from providing letters of support to providing supplies (materials, food) and services (free publicity, volunteers during the event).

#### OUR POTENTIAL PARTNERS ARE:

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### EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY

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Use your event as an opportunity to educate people about landscape architecture and to make a connection between what landscape architects do and the environment. What do you want people to remember when the event is over?

#### OUR KEY EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES ARE:

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**EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY** (continued)

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Consider using one or more of these resources:

- Create a handout and/or display board to educate people about the environmental issue(s)
  - Create a display board illustrating different aspects of the profession
  - Distribute the *Landscape Architect FAQs* brochure handout (see appendix)
  - Distribute copies of the *Your Path to Landscape Architecture* brochure, which is available from ASLA National – contact PR and Communications coordinator JR Taylor at 202-216-2345.
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## What You Can Do: Event Ideas

Community events that ASLA chapters completed in 2008 are described below.

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### **POWAY FIRE RE-VEGETATION**

Following the devastating 2007 wild fires in California, Poway members of the ASLA San Diego Chapter worked with local businesses and community volunteers to re-vegetate planters ravaged by the fire. Donations from Monrovia Growers and Walter Anderson Nursery helped ASLA members and volunteers from Cuyamaca College and Poway Girl Scouts to replant vegetation.

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### **MARK STORM DRAINS**

Members of the ASLA Louisiana Chapter, students from the Louisiana State University landscape architecture program, and staff from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality spent a Saturday affixing nearly 500 medallions to downtown storm drains to warn against polluting state waterways. “No dumping,” the medallions read, “Drains to bayou.”

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### **IMPROVE A COMMUNITY RESOURCE**

The first phase of the project took place in 2007, when the Minnesota ASLA Chapter and a team of designers from the Minnesota Chapter of Architecture for Humanity (AFH), the Minnesota Landscape and Nursery Association, and the University of Minnesota created plans for the Lao America Cultural Center in Minneapolis. Pervious pavers left over from the ASLA national convention were used in a design intended to create a usable outdoor area for this community building, and to serve as a model for the use of pervious pavers and rain gardens in the neighborhood.

In 2008, the chapter built both the hardscape and softscape elements of the plan, including a patio, retaining wall, landscape plantings, and terraced rain gardens designed to reflect the rice terraces found in Laos.



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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 of 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.

# Landscape Architecture FAQs

Landscape architecture is a profession committed to 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)