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Career Exploration: Landscape Architect

As a child, Doug Cole was always intrigued by the unique and memorable places he visited. He was not sure why particular places would trigger certain emotions but he knew there was something that made them special.

"It wasn't until college that I discovered landscape architecture," he said. "There I began to study and practice the art of designing memorable and lasting places."

Cole, a landscape architect and partner in the firm designforum, enjoys the fact that he has the ability to transform a raw or misused piece of land into a meaningful place that serves a necessary purpose.

"Providing people with a real place, a place that will hopefully be enjoyed for hundreds of years, is amazingly gratifying," he said.

Landscape architects design environments, everything from the intricate details and horticulture of a residential garden to the complex organization of a large city or region.

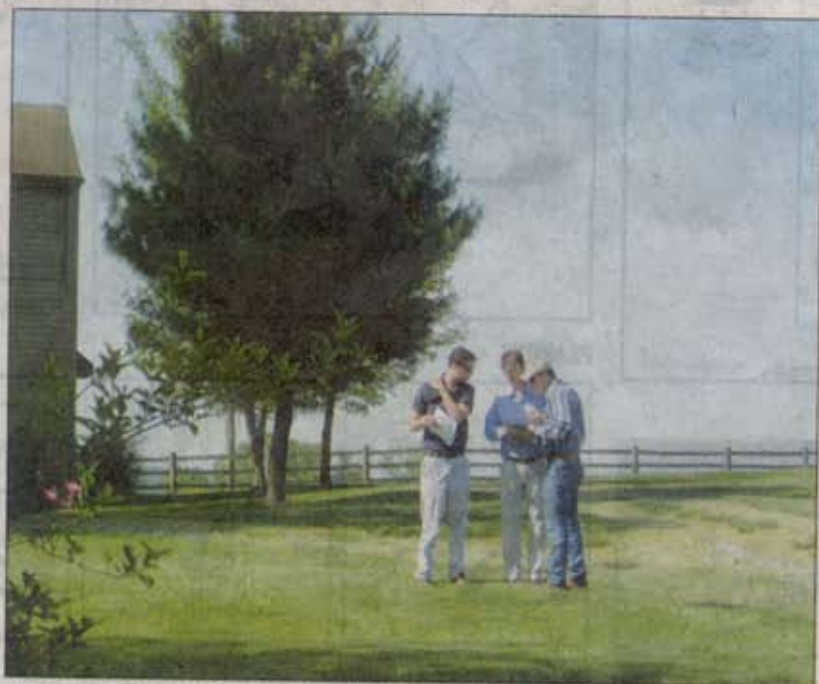


Doug Cole
Landscape Architect
designforum

"The moment one steps outdoors, the places that surround are the work of landscape architects," Cole said.

There are several areas of expertise within the field. They include urban design,

community and regional planning, interior and exterior garden design, parks and recreation planning and design and historic site and natural area preservation. Other areas include landscape restoration and management, research and academic programs, energy and water conservation and



Landscape architect Doug Cole and members of his team design outdoor spaces that transform a piece of land into a place that serves a necessary purpose.

environmental planning.

Tasks within the job are diverse.

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- Doug Cole

"By nature, landscape architecture should be highly collaborative," Cole explained. "Yet to accomplish project goals, the tasks being carried out by each individual in the office each day vary greatly. There is a great balance of design work in the studio and also onsite analysis and implementation as a project progresses from the conceptual design phases to construction."

Landscape architects are creative and passionate about preserving and enhancing natural and built environments.

"They strive to increase the quality of life of all people," Cole said.

A bachelor's or master's degree in landscape architecture is required to get into the field.

"Opportunities to study abroad are provided and encouraged in most programs," Cole said. "Once you are in school, internships within related fields are recommended."

As with many jobs, conflicts of interest can arise when you are working with several entities on a project.

"Responsible and successful landscape architects are proficient at interpreting the circumstances of each project and producing a design strategy that accomplishes the goals of all parties involved," Cole said.

The need for landscape architects is increasing.

"The field is growing in all parts of the world," Cole said.

By Joan Tuppence, Joan Tuppence & Associates, Inc