



Conservation Design Forum

Landscape Architecture · Planning · Civil / Water Resources Engineering · Sustainable Urbanism · Ecosystem Sciences

PRINCIPAL'S INSPIRATION

Remarkable progress has been made as “green” concepts have gone from obscurity to prominence in the national dialogue during the past decade. Conservation Design Forum (CDF) has been at the forefront of this movement. We teach that water should never be squandered as a waste product to be dealt with elsewhere. Conventional water collection and discharge strategies leave where the rain fell in deficit, and overwhelm downstream environments. Alternatively, when manifested as a resource, water reflects enduring beauty and nurtures life. Conservation Design Forum’s goal is to 1) strengthen the relationships between humans and their natural environment through creative design, and to 2) deliver the highest quality service and products to our clients. The following four ideas make the CDF approach unique:

1. **Collaboration.** Fundamentally, we believe each project reaches its highest potential through the spirit of collaboration; for this reason we routinely draw upon the broad range of expertise within our staff throughout the design process coupled with collaboration from a rich and diverse mix of outside professionals.
2. **Uniqueness of Place.** Each place on earth is unique; therefore each design solution must be aware of these issues and respond directly to them.
3. **Rainwater.** The CDF design process derives from our understanding of historical patterns of hydrology, and the inherent relationships between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems with respect to the movement of water and system stability.
4. **Human Integration.** We have a deep appreciation that everywhere in North America has been influenced by human involvement. Humans are an integral part of the natural world and have had a profound influence on the evolution of what we refer to as “nature”.

CDF First Principles of Planning and Design

1. **Sustainable results** can only be achieved with a committed sponsor, experienced team, integrated design process, and beautiful, high quality craftsmanship. To paraphrase Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins: optimizing one component can pessimize others and usually causes components to work against each other.
2. Planned open lands that are degraded and/or completely altered should be restored as sustainable landscapes through restoration of natural hydrology, permaculture applications, and long-term stewardship creating **stable, healthy, water-rich habitats**.
3. **Remnant native landscapes** are irreplaceable and unrestorable if obliterated. Sustainable development avoids impacting these systems and seeks to leverage appropriate land management of the region’s remaining remnant areas. Healthy systems are capable of holding a great deal of rainwater and obviate concerns for flooding.
4. Properly rehabilitated and managed, a property’s remnant landscapes have the potential to create an **authentic context** like no other place. Children will be able to explore, play in, and become

connected to the living world in their neighborhood; an idea espoused in Richard's Louv's recent book, *The Last Child in the Woods*.

5. As a **water conservation** strategy, the use of potable water for landscape irrigation, make-up water for ornamental water features, toilet flushing, and other such uses should be minimized.
6. **Green infrastructure** should be deployed to serve multiple functions, in addition to the facilitation of rainwater into the groundwater table. Roads, paths, park spaces, and other built elements should be designed and built for durability and beauty. That which is beautiful is loved; that which is loved is sustained.

Predictions

- "Two out of every three people in the world will be facing water shortages by 2025...global conflict will inevitably result..."
- By the end of the 21st Century, water is the new oil. - The United Nations

Facts

- ONLY 3% OF THE WATER ON EARTH IS FRESHWATER
- ONLY 1% IS AVAILABLE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION
- Approximately ONE QUARTER of the World's Available Fresh Water Resides Within the Great Lakes
- 95% of the United States' fresh water is on deposit in the Great Lakes
- 30% of annual municipal freshwater consumption in the Eastern United States is attributed to watering lawns, and up to 60% in the West.

Beliefs

We believe physical and visual access to clean water and a healthy environment is inspirational, and creates an enduring relationship between people and the places we occupy.

We believe it is critical to enhance the relationship between people and the natural landscape by understanding, sustaining, and restoring the health of the environment and our place within it.

We believe sustainable "green communities" require excellent planning, engineering, and architecture. The connection between the wisdom and creativity, within a set of guiding first principles, will lead to healthy, happy, sustained living.

We believe the earth is born again with each new child, and every child should have access to healthy choices for play, learning, and sustenance.

We believe elders carry the wisdom of our people, and that elders should be wholly integrated into a vital and sustainable community.

We believe our work and the work of our clients creates a healthier, more inspiring place for people now - and seven generations hence.

We believe one of our most important assets is the health and motivation of our staff in an environment that challenges, nurtures, and supports their professional and personal growth.

We apply these beliefs to create more sustainable urban, suburban, and rural settings and enhance our living spaces.