



VERDONE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, Jackson, Wyoming verdone.landarch.com

The story is a familiar one: After college, a young man moves to Jackson Hole for climbing and mountaineering, not intending to stay—and years later finds he never left. Jim Verdone, founder of Verdone Landscape Architects, says, “In the beginning it was the mountains that brought me to Jackson and the incredible wilderness that we have access to.”

In college, he’d started a degree in forestry but switched to landscape architecture when he learned about the program. At first when he started his business, he did a little bit of everything to make ends meet—from public projects to commercial and development planning. “There was not a very strong residential design market in Jackson when I started out,” Verdone says. Verdone was in fact a pioneer in Wyoming residential landscape design—he holds the very first landscape architect license in the state, and he was the first appointed by the governor to sit on the Board of Architects and Landscape Architects. As a result, he assisted writing the first set of rules and regulations governing the practice of landscape architecture in Wyoming.

When Verdone looks back, he says as homeowners became more educated about the value that landscape architects bring to their projects, Verdone’s business grew. “Our clients love the native landscape as much as we do and are just looking for ways to make it work for their program.”

He recalls a project he’s proud of—a 780-acre residential development with a golf course located on a property with an abundance of natural resources. “We were selected to do the planning and entitlement work, but as we gained the owners’ trust, our role expanded to help coordinate the various disciplines involved. It supported my thoughts that landscape architects have a unique educational background to be good decision makers in the land development process.”

One of his favorite innovations is a native grass sod product that his team has worked on with a local grower. “It has really allowed us to be able to convince owners to embrace the native landscape look, and it avoids the long time for a native grass community to develop.” He adds, “Seeing how those initial thoughts in the design process incubate and then blossom into fruition is always a great reward.” —*Darla Worden*

JIM VERDONE

Landscape Architect

PHOTOS: THIS PAGE, ASHLEY MERRITT; OPPOSITE, ROGER WADE

SNAPSHOT

Founded Verdone Landscape Architecture in 1984.

PIONEER

First licensed landscape architect in the state of Wyoming.

INDUSTRY

Past president of the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards.

COMMUNITY

President, Town of Jackson Main Street Organization; founding member, Friends of Pathways; volunteer, repairing and restoring Jackson’s Old Pass Road.

SELECTED HONORS

Inducted into the American Society of Landscape Architects, Council of Fellows, for Body of Work.

NOTABLE READ

Ian McKarg’s book Design with Nature. “It was such a great approach to break down complex natural ecosystems into a rational decision-making format.”



“I’ve always been intrigued by historical irrigation structures and practices in the West,” Verdone says. “In this project we used a wooden flume to get water around the house in a very tight space.”