

LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL SPOTLIGHT



GEOFF HALL

As a pioneer in developing water-conserving irrigation technologies, Netafim leverages its five decades of innovation to provide today's landscape professionals with comprehensive solutions for efficient and effective irrigation, even in the most challenging residential and commercial landscapes. In addition to its industry-leading innovative products, Netafim also addresses the challenges of modern landscapes through education, training, research, and industry forums such as the Landscape Spotlight series.

Geoff Hall, RLA, LI, works at Pacheco Koch Consulting Engineers. He holds a bachelor's degree in landscape management from Brigham Young University and a masters in landscape architecture from The University of Texas at Arlington. His thesis work focused on water reuse in the landscape. He has been designing landscapes and irrigation systems for over 16 years in Texas and the Intermountain West. Geoff is a licensed landscape architect and licensed irrigator in the state of Texas.

What path led you to the landscape industry?

When I was growing up, I always really enjoyed working outdoors. I spent a lot of time outside as I worked on my grandfather's ranch and I was in the Boy Scouts.

I always wanted to be outdoors, so I knew from an early age that I wanted to do something that involved working outside. I was also very interested in art and took art classes as a kid. I look at the landscape design industry as the perfect mix of outdoor work and art.

How did your interest in art help you as a landscape design professional?

There's a lot of artists that are landscape architects and I think that makes a lot of sense. The challenge is that you have to balance that artistic vision with the technical vision.

I like to come at each project with a technical view, making sure that the technical doesn't overtake the artistic vision.

A public space such as a park is used by all different types of people for different reasons.

What process do you take to ensure that the finished product meets the differing needs of a large community?

When I'm looking at a park job, one of the things that I really like to do is interview the citizens and people that live around the park. We frequently will hold a public meeting where people can submit ideas and share their thoughts on what they would like the space to achieve.

That then allows us to go back and incorporate many of those ideas into any existing ideas we already have formulated.

What trends are you seeing in park design?

I am seeing a lot of interest in elements that attract natural wildlife. We have started to add pollinator pathways into a lot of our park designs. These are areas that include plants that attract butterflies and different birds and anything that pollinates flowers.

That goes hand in hand with an increase in people wanting to incorporate more wildflower areas into their parks. They provide a place for people of all ages to learn about local wildlife and, in a lot of cases, see biology in action. We are even starting to add these types of areas on golf courses and added one into the design of a large corporate headquarters.

Of course, you have to understand how wildlife interacts in these areas, and how it's part of an overall eco-system and not just an island in the middle of a park.

What inspires you to work on a park design?

I like to create connections. Whether that's a trail or a pollinator pathway, I like to provide a piece of nature that people may not otherwise have access to. What I'm really trying to do is bring the community together.

For example, I just finished a park design that had an existing pond. I went out there many times before it was built and during construction and I never saw anybody fishing. So, we installed six or seven little rock outcrops where people can stand and fish.

Now every time I go by the park, there's four or five people fishing. Just a little tweak to an existing design resulted in a behavior change. That's a powerful thing to be able to do with design.

What factors do you consider when choosing irrigation for your project designs?

I try to use drip as much as possible, especially in areas where you are going to have people walking by or cars and other elements where you don't want overspray to hit.

I really enjoy using drip because you don't have to worry about the height of your plants like you do with pop-ups or overhead spray. There are a number of factors that go into choosing the right irrigation for a specific area, but probably the most important factor is the maintenance.

A drip system requires that the person maintaining it understand how to operate its precision. A maintenance person may not think about the consequences that replacing a 0.53 dripper with 0.9 dripper will have on the system.

The level of maintenance required dictates the irrigation system design and changes how I choose equipment.

More information on Pacheco Koch Consulting Engineers can be found by visiting pkce.com

