ARCHITERRA DESIGN GROUP

BY JENNIFER KIRKLAND

The housing crash has dramatically affected architecture, design, and construction companies across the country, but the most forward-thinking of these have found ways to adapt to the demands of the moment and contribute in ways that will endure for decades to come. Architerra Design Group is a Rancho Cucamonga, California-based landscape architecture firm that has widened its scope from a primary focus in master-planned community projects to the development of nature preserves, municipal parks, and environment-sensitive corporate sites. The background and vision of company president Rich Krumwiede suggest this evolution was perfectly natural. Each of Architerra's projects reflects a deep commitment to drawing people in to participate with the environment in a meaningful way.

Architerra is currently working with the County of San Bernardino to enhance the North Etiwanda Preserve, a 1,200-acre natural open-space preserve that will feature a variety of sensitive native-plant communities. The firm is working to establish a trail system with interpretive signage highlighting the existing flora and fauna, as well as cultural artifacts. "The history of the old settlers and hunting cabins adds interest and helps tell the story of the plants, the animals, and the people that have been here over the years," Krumwiede explains. Architerra has worked with the county to develop solutions to control access and help prevent degradation to the site caused by off-road and off-trail use.

The firm is also working on the 65-acre Cucamanga Basin, a wetlands centerpiece to master-planned community The Colonies, which will serve both to help control flooding and recharge the groundwater supply. Architerra is restoring three native-plant communities in the basin, as well as establishing trails and overlooks with interpretive signage. Krumwiede comments, "We want to make the Cucamonga Basin interactive and unique in the area."

Numerous sustainable techniques, including the use of native plants, passive solar shading, storm-water cleansing, and low-volume irrigation, have blended harmoniously into Architerra's designs from the beginning. Adaptations next year to California's Assembly Bill 1881, the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which promotes water conserva-
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Rich Krumwiede, President

Archterra distinguishes itself by approaching each project with a fresh perspective and customized solutions. Krumwiede says that community development is the firm’s main strength. “Southern California is basically just one giant urban sprawl,” he says. “We promote parks and community gardens, to give people healthy alternatives for free-time activities, such as biking, walking, and working in gardens.”

The landscape design of Mercury Plaza in Rancho Cucamonga, incorporates working
Architerra’s master plan for the Cucamonga Basin enhances the water quality of off-site runoff into the basin through the use of constructed wetlands, drop structures, and a groundwater recharge basin. Plan by Architerra Design Group.

vineyards, bioswales, permeable paving, recycled glass in the concrete, decomposed granite, and a fountain in the shape of a giant camellia bloom. It offers numerous green, shaded break areas for the approximately 600 employees who work there. Krumwiede says, “It was very important to create a campus for the employees, to give them spaces for a variety of interactions, break areas to recharge their batteries.”

Cucamonga Valley Water District hired Architerra to redesign its entire corporate campus to be more sustainable and water-efficient. “They want to show their clients that they’re leading in the effort to cut back on water usage,” Krumwiede says. “We’ve created several demonstration gardens to help facilitate their community outreach and education programs.”

For the future, Architerra plans to continue educating its clients on sustainable solutions, as well as continuing to develop sustainable community designs and systems. “On the micro-level, we want to work on increasing the degree of sustainability in our projects,” Krumwiede says. “In the broader view, we want to make sure that our work endures over the next 20, 50, or even 100 years.”

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