



ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

LIVING SCULPTURE

by

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Bruce J. Morgan is an internationally recognized environmental artist, landscape designer, writer, conservationist, and wilderness explorer.

Please enter [here](#) to review my portfolio of projects and services throughout the world.

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Embassy Suites Hotel, Miami airport location

A view of the lavish interior landscape in the hotel atrium.

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About the Designer

*Embassy Suites Hotel, Miami airport
location*

A view of the lavish interior landscape in the
hotel atrium.



Aberdeen Marina Club, Hong Kong, China

This massive pool is actually built over the
ocean, quite an engineering feat! Notice the
masts of the yachts beyond, and the
"borrowed" scenery of beautiful Hong Kong
island. Conceptual design and rockwork by
Bruce J. Morgan.



*Embassy Suites Hotel, Altamonte
Springs, FL*

A view of the atrium wintergarden and
falls, looking toward the lobby.

About Living Sculpture by Bruce J. Morgan

By profession, I am a consultant and design/build contractor involved in conceptual landscape design, land planning, and the construction of aesthetic features such as monumental stone sculpture, waterfalls, streams, swimming pools, lush temperate and tropical gardens, artificial ecosystems, interpretive trails, and habitat design for wildlife enhancement.

My projects grace the public and private spaces of architectural settings throughout the United States, Mexico, South America, the Caribbean, and in Hong Kong.

I provide a complete service including feasibility consultation, design, project coordination, construction supervision, and the provision of labor and materials for the finished product. Each project is conceived and executed as a work of art. Systems are designed for minimal maintenance. Indigenous themes and materials are used wherever appropriate. Every effort is made to replicate the intricacy and beauty of nature.

Many of my past commissions have been for water features and the associated landscapes at universities, botanical gardens, and in the atria of large hotels. Recent commissions include resorts in the Caribbean and elsewhere such as the Fort Young Hotel in Dominica, an elaborate poolscape on St. Kitts, the atrium and poolscape of the new Hotel Marriott in Quito, Ecuador, and a surreal cloudforest aviary for the new Miami Beach Marriott.

Current commissions include a water conservation and wildlife enhancement feature for a resort in Grenada, "fantasy" themed pools for resorts in Barbados and the Dominican Republic, the master planning of a proposed destination resort on Eleuthera, renovation of the Bimini Big Game Club, and the ecological restoration, trail system, and landscaping of a private island in the Bahamas.



< Embassy Suites Hotel, Jacksonville, FL.

A view of the atrium wintergarden from above. The two atrium water features are hidden beneath the overhanging vegetation. This garden grew to become even more lush and beautiful. Winter weddings are often held beneath the canopy of trees.

Embassy Suites Hotel, Jacksonville, FL. >

A view of one of the atrium waterfalls shortly after installation. The microclimate created by the falling water caused the tree fern to grow rapidly into a magnificent specimen.





< South Beach Marriott Hotel

Miami Beach, Florida.

An exploration of texture, light, and detail.

Ocean Terrace Inn >

St. Kitts, West Indies.

As the landscape matures a sub-canopy of frangipani and other flowering tropical trees will cast a dappled shade over the pool. The water will become covered with blossoms. Shafts of sunlight will illuminate the deep blue water, and an earthly paradise will be attained



DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

The role of the environmental artist should be to integrate the beauty of nature into the built environment, an effort to reconcile the works of man with those of nature. Toward this end, I work with architects, developers, and enlightened private clients to interweave these themes into our lives and buildings. Everyone benefits when given an aesthetic respite from the rigid geometry and concrete confines of conventional urban life.

I provide many of the same services as a landscape architect, but from a somewhat different perspective. All of my designs are site specific, and to a large degree "site realized". Fine art is never accomplished by the "paint by numbers" approach that typifies most landscape installation. All infrastructure and hardscape is placed in accordance with the design documents, but decisions as to the placement of individual stones, plants, and waterfall effects are made on site after careful consideration. This sculptural approach to landscape design insures the aesthetic excellence of the final product.

The common thread in all of my work is an understanding of the beauty of nature, and the ability to incorporate it into an architectural setting. The goal is nothing less than to give the gleaming cities of tomorrow a wild green heart.



< Embassy Suites Hotel, Altamonte Springs, FL.

A view of the main atrium water feature which demonstrates the clarity of water achieved through low maintenance bio-filtration. Guests are encouraged to explore and interact with the features in the atrium wintergarden

Embassy Suites Hotel >

Miami airport location

A view of the atrium wintergarden featuring rare palms and other tropical vegetation





< Wertheim Conservatory at Florida International University, Miami.

Looking down at the bromeliads and other epiphytes in this simulated rainforest ecosystem.

Park Suites Hotel > Nashville, Tennessee.

A view of the atrium hardscape and gardens, looking toward the lobby.



< Ocean Terrace Inn, St. Kitts, West Indies.

Lawyers may not approve, but it is impossible to keep people from exploring the hidden secrets of nature at the Ocean Terrace Inn.

SERVICES

Consultation services:

I am pleased to offer comprehensive conceptual landscape design services for both commercial and residential projects. This may include feasibility studies, site evaluation, land planning, project coordination, the preparation of conceptual design drawings, and construction documentation. Third party review of plans produced by others is also available.

Design/build services:

Many of the projects shown on this website were designed and built by Bruce J. Morgan under a fixed fee "turn key" design/build agreement. This is one of the most efficient and cost effective methods available. Under such an agreement, I accept responsibility for all aspects of the project. Since my projects are frequently located far from my office, I utilize locally available materials, equipment, and labor. Most importantly, I remain on site whenever necessary, locate all materials myself, direct the work, and personally attend to all sculptural detailing.

Project management and construction supervision services:

On large projects, projects overseas, or where design/build services are not appropriate, it may be more cost effective for me to provide design, project coordination, and construction supervision services, but not labor and materials, which are provided by the local general contractor. I normally provide such services under a fixed fee, or per diem agreement, plus expenses.

I take an active "hands on" approach to all of my projects, and personally attend to the placement of all plants, stonework, and sculptural finishes.

All contractual agreements are structured to best serve the needs of the client.



< Marriott Hotel, Quito, Ecuador, South America.

A view of the eastern falls from the Jacuzzi. The health spa and hotel tower are visible across the pool. I served as a design consultant for the landscape, falls, and pool.

Embassy Suites Hotel >

Jacksonville, FL.

Construction of the two atrium water features, showing formwork, infrastructure, and shotcreting of the structural pool shells. Please compare the structure in the foreground with the following photo.



< Embassy Suites Hotel, Jacksonville, FL.

A view of the smaller of the two waterfalls upon completion.

Embassy Suites Hotel >

Miami Airport location.

Planting giant royal palms in the pool enclosure.





< La Source Resort, Grenada, West Indies.

Bruce Morgan directing stonework at this lavish destination resort.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECT LOCATIONS

Within the United States I have undertaken projects in the following cities:, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Altamonte Springs, Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Tampa, Gainesville, Pensacola, Nashville, Baton Rouge, Raleigh, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

International project locations include: Hong Kong, Ecuador, Mexico, Grenada, St. Kitts, Dominica, and the Bahamas.

Planning for projects that have not yet been implemented include locations in: Belize, Antigua, Barbados, Eleuthera, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Indonesia.

One might reasonably ask how I have accomplished so many projects in such widely separated locations. The answer is efficient scheduling. Most projects are undertaken sequentially. I minimize cost by utilizing local themes, materials, and labor, and insure aesthetic excellence by personally supervising the sculptural details of each project.

Please see Gallery of selected projects, and Projects by type for examples of my work.



**< Crowne Plaza Hotel, Rockville, MD
(Washington, DC)**

A view of the atrium falls from the lobby. This massive project, only half of which is visible in the photo, was constructed entirely by hand due to site access problems which precluded the use of heavy equipment.

Aberdeen Marina Club >

Hong Kong, China

A view of the club from the top of the falls.
Bruce J. Morgan provided conceptual design for the pool, and construction supervision services for the extensive rockwork and falls.



< Embassy Suites Hotel, San Francisco, south airport location

Interior landscape by Bruce J. Morgan

Fort Young Hotel >

Dominica, West Indies

A view of the top of the waterfall from the battlement of the Fort, looking toward the restaurant, with the cruise ship terminal in the distance.



< Marriott Hotel, Quito, Ecuador, South America

An overview of the pool as seen from the lobby bar

Park Suite Hotel >

Nashville, Tennessee

A balcony view of the atrium restaurant, and a guest enjoying the tropical ambience.



< Coco Cay, Berry Islands, The Bahamas

The task: to transform a one mile long uninhabited desert island into a world class resort for a major cruise line while respecting the fragile island ecology.

WATER FEATURES

The design and construction of waterfalls, springs, streams, pools, and the associated gardens is my primary business. No other aspect of the landscape so fully expresses the beauty of nature.

For a water feature to be successful as a work of art it is critically important that it not appear to be artificial or out of context. Views must be controlled such that the origin of the water is never evident. Likewise, the water must always be a small element within a larger landscape. If the terrain is not suitable, it may be derived from architectural grade changes, or implied through the massing of plants. Edges, straight lines, and borders do not occur in nature, and have no place in a naturalistic water feature. Waterfalls are created by erosion; and this, and other natural processes, must be evident in the design. If these and other simple precepts are followed then it is possible to create a water feature that will be an enduring work of environmental art.

All of my water features are designed to function as aquatic ecosystems, and may provide habitat for plants, fish, birds, and other wildlife. I utilize integral bio-filtration systems to insure minimal maintenance.



< Jacksonville Airport Holiday Inn

A view of the atrium falls from the lounge. These falls wrap around and disguise the structural column which supports the atrium skylights. The opposite side features a "Great Stone face" sculpted in flint.

Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel >

Tampa, FL

Detail of a small stream disappearing into an artificial sinkhole pool in the courtyard of the hotel. This beautiful garden also features a grove of giant bamboo



< Embassy Suites Hotel, Orlando, FL

A view of the smaller of two water features in the atrium.



< Holiday Inn North, Raleigh, NC

A detail of the falls. Quartz is an extremely difficult kind of rock to work with.

Marriott Hotel >

Quito, Ecuador, South America

The strange cold tropical climate of Quito can be seen in this photo. A banana (Ensete sp.) grows near a large conifer more typical of Montana. There are no seasons. The air is always cold at 10,000 feet. The pool must be heated at great expense or no one would ever swim!



First Baptist Church >

Jacksonville, FL

A view of the baptismal font



**< Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville,
FL**

A detail of one of the falls



< Ecosystem restoration

This beautiful forest had been degraded by grazing, and an invasion of exotic and second growth species. It has been restored through selective thinning and ecosystem management to return it to its original condition, and is now a haven for wildlife. Non invasive azaleas have been added to bring color to the landscape.

RESORT AMENITIES

AND

"TROPICAL FANTASY" SWIMMING POOLS

Visitors to tropical resorts go in search of paradise. Some seek the solitude of a hidden beach, others a distant vista. Almost all dream of an azure lagoon with palms and frangipani.

In every destination resort the location itself is the most important amenity, whether it be mountain, forest, or shore. Environmentally sensitive planning is the first essential step. Add to this a blue lagoon pool of many levels, thundering cascades, grottos, intimate spas, and lavish tropical gardens. Challenge the guests with good books, seminars, and a stiff regimen of health, activities, and exercise. Build a fire on the beach, and let them hear calypso late into the night. Give them opportunities for solitude, and opportunities to explore interpretive trails deep into forest. Let them learn about the land and people by guiding them to distant villages and peaks. If you pamper them as well, they will surely think that they have found paradise.

There is more to being all inclusive than just not having to carry money in your bikini. How can someone be swept up into the magic of the moment if their surroundings are obviously new, sterile, and artificial? This is a problem inherent in all new construction, no matter how talented the designers and craftsmen. The entire environment must be all inclusive. Verisimilitude is the key. How can they hear the jungle drums of their inner primal selves unless the magic is complete? The secret is in the details, in the tiny fern growing in the crack of an ancient boulder, in the lizard basking on a sizzling rock, in the cool trickle of a mossy brook. It is this aspect of my art that I have elevated above all others.

I am pleased to offer complete land planning, landscape design, amenity planning, and construction services for tropical resorts. My utilization of local themes, materials, and labor will insure that your new resort be built at reasonable cost, require minimal maintenance, and will celebrate a unique "sense of place" that will distinguish it from all others.



< Ocean Terrace Inn, St. Kitts, West Indies

An old quarry was transformed into a beautiful tropical pool.

Ocean Terrace Inn >

St. Kitts, West Indies

Romance is what it's all about. Secluded nooks, hidden grottos, stone canyons, and overhanging vegetation provide opportunities for adventure, exploration and intimacy. The pool staff might complain about frangipani blossoms covering the water, but guests surely won't.



< Ocean Terrace Inn, St. Kitts, West Indies

Seven different waterfalls cascade through the tropical landscape of the Ocean terrace Inn.

Ocean Terrace Inn >

St. Kitts, West Indies

Frolicking maidens are good business in the Caribbean where pleasure is a way of life. One of several waterfalls at the Ocean Terrace Inn interactive pool and gardens.





< Ocean Terrace Inn, St. Kitts, West Indies

Nymphs and Satyrs often lurk beneath waterfalls, and within us all. Excessive hedonism and an overexposure to beauty have severely distorted this young woman's sense of time and space.

Marriott Hotel >

Quito, Ecuador, South_America

A view of the main pool. The cold dry high altitude tropical climate of Quito requires a mixture of temperate and tropical zone plants. This difficult landscape challenge was successfully resolved with the aid of an experienced local gardener.





< Marriott Hotel, Quito, Ecuador, South America

The main falls are powerful, overhung with massive stones, and a little intimidating. If it isn't a little bit scary, then nobody's having any fun. Go ahead, blast your head in the torrent of heated water!

Marriott Hotel >

Quito, Ecuador, South America

This kid is having fun! He is in a heated pool with palm trees in an exotic city in a far away land surrounded by snow capped volcanos. You could have fun too!



MONUMENTAL STONEWORK

Monumental stonework is almost a lost art. I have kept the tradition alive with the installation of over 3,500,000 lbs. of stonework in locations throughout the world. This has included the careful placement of boulders weighing up to 20 tons apiece.

I practice "dry stone" technique in which mortar is secondary to gravity and fit. This is the most difficult, but structurally sound, method possible. I personally attend to all structurally and sculpturally important details. All mortar joints are either invisible, or carefully disguised. Natural forms and textures are faithfully replicated. The result is a monumental work of art that will endure for generations.

I prefer to use natural rather than artificial materials. The indiscriminate use of fake rocks and plastic plants in theme parks and zoos has resulted in the proliferation of absurd designs that resemble the "set to the Flintstones". Some things, such as plants and rocks, should be real whenever possible. Aside from any other consideration, "letting the materials speak" makes for better art.

In circumstances where the use of artificial stone is structurally or thematically necessary, I am prepared to offer supervisory services to insure the structural and aesthetic integrity of artificial stonework provided by others.



< Aberdeen Marina Club, Hong Kong, China

Construction of the main falls using slate boulders from China.

Jacksonville Airport Holiday Inn >

The "Great stone Face" is sculpted from fossiliferous limestone and flint. The opposite side of this sculpture features a waterfall facing the atrium restaurant and lounge



< Ocean Terrace Inn, St. Kitts, West Indies

There is a whirlpool spa hidden in the rock wall just behind the young lady, but who needs it with powerful cascades to sit in? Exploration and discovery are the essence of the Ocean Terrace Inn experience.

Royal Islander Resort >

Cancun, Mexico

A balcony view of one of the four falls which face the lobby. Total drop 18 feet. This project was built with the assistance of Mayan Indians whose forefathers have worked with stone for thousands of years. Photo taken prior to completion of the landscape.



< Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, FL

Over 300 tons of stone were used in the construction of the four waterfalls and rapids

Bruce J. Morgan's design studio >

Archer, FL

A view from the studio window of a mossy chert waterfall. The pool attracts wildlife, and is designed to house a collection of native fish and turtles.



LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Landscape design is not simply a matter of deciding what plant goes where based on aesthetic preference. It is more a matter of understanding the ecology of the site, the microclimates created by the architecture, and how the site will change over time.

I prefer to work with a broad plant palette, and include a wide diversity of colors, forms, and textures. My primary expertise is in the use of tropical, subtropical, and montane vegetation.

Conventional landscape design is static in that it assumes a maintenance crew will mow the lawn and trim the bushes forever after. A more dynamic approach factors in vegetational succession, and assumes that maintenance will not occur. Toward this end, I favor the use of indigenous vegetation wherever possible, and designs that may be allowed to "go wild". The end result is a timeless quality, a "sense of place" in the landscape, and reduced maintenance costs.

I am pleased to offer either landscape design documentation, or complete design/build services.



< **Southbeach Marriott Hotel, Miami Beach, FL**

Looking down at the extravagant forms and colors of the bromeliads.

Sheraton Suites Hotel > Tampa Airport location

A view of the lush atrium landscape and water feature with Bruce J. Morgan in the background. This atrium features one of the tallest trees ever used in an interior landscape





< Ocean Terrace Inn, St. Kitts, West Indies

Massive Royal palms dominate the landscape around the pool. The understory is composed of beautiful flowering tropical weeds.

Embassy Suites Hotel > Miami airport location

An atrium view of the interior landscape.



LAND PLANNING:

A CASE STUDY

The Potlatch Club, located on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas, will be a four star destination resort. The site is extraordinarily beautiful, an undulating landscape of dramatic hills and dunes cloaked in palms, gumbo limbo, and lush native vegetation. All of this overlooks an azure bay framed with a crescent of pink sand beach. The extensive coral reefs begin just a few feet offshore, and are protected by barrier islands.

As a land planner, my first concern was to make certain that any proposed development would not compromise the beauty or environmental integrity of our greatest asset, the site itself. Toward that end I recommended low density, environmentally sensitive architecture, and a generous setback from the beach.

Many resort developers feel that only a "view of the sea" has value, so they mass development along the shore. In so doing they degrade the beach, diminish the value of the rest of their property, and in effect, "kill the goose that lays the golden egg". In a crowded world of identical resorts, how much is it worth to a guest to have a "Robinson Crusoe" experience on a pristine beach? A generous setback will insure a quality guest experience, and the entire property will retain its full value.

The Potlatch Club is intended to be a "boutique" resort, not a mass market all inclusive, so the design expresses a "sense of place". We chose to mimic the Bahamian vernacular by creating individual quaint, but very luxurious, Victorian cottages scattered apparently at random among the dunes and connected by sand footpaths. It will appear to be a traditional "village" that grew by organic process, not by master plan, and as such will appear to be one with nature. When complete it will be one of the most beautiful and environmentally sensitive resorts in the Caribbean.

The hand of the master planner should never be evident to the guest. Instead, people and services should flow effortlessly through the site so that the guest knows nothing but the simple comforts of the cottage, the winding path to the beach, and the beautiful sunrise.

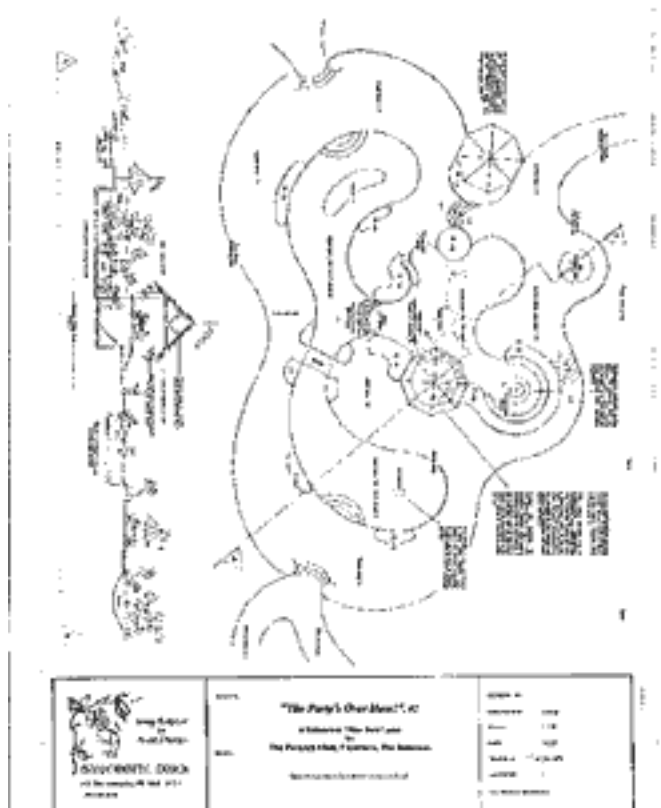


< Potlatch Club, Eleuthera, The Bahamas

The master plan, prepared in association with LPA Architects.

Potlatch Club > Eleuthera, The Bahamas

Conceptual plan for the Blue Hole pool, a tropical fantasy come true.



WINTERGARDENS

AND

HOTEL ATRIUM SPACES

To bring the outside in, to create a vibrant living garden within the confines of a building, is one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary architecture. In cities, and in inclement climates, the atrium may be the only opportunity to integrate warmth, sunshine, and greenery into our lives. To successfully create an atrium garden requires an in-depth understanding of the physiological requirements of plants, and how these relate to the architectural setting.

I have designed and constructed atrium gardens and water features for numerous large hotels across the country, and in so doing have gained a thorough understanding of the architectural parameters that will support an interior landscape with minimum maintenance requirements.

I am particularly interested in developing wintergarden concepts for eldercare facilities. Let the golden years of our lives be filled with light, life, blossoms, and butterflies. Pick a fresh tomato in January. Sit with your friends on a sunny bench while the cold wind blows outside. All of this, and more, is possible if we design health and eldercare facilities that fully integrate landscape design and architecture.



< Embassy Suites Hotel, Altamonte Springs, FL

A view of the lavish atrium landscape and falls.

Crowne Plaza Hotel >

Rockville, MD (Washington, DC)

An atrium view of the main falls



Sheraton Suites Hotel, Tampa Airport location

Guests enjoy atrium dining beneath the canopy of enormous trees.

Park Suite Hotel >

Nashville, Tennessee

A beautiful stream, sculpted from Tennessee ledge rock, runs the length of the atrium wintergarden. Notice the palm tree curving above the stream as though it had grown there naturally. Good landscape design always attempts to mimic natural processes.



< Marriott Hotel, Quito, Ecuador, South America

The main interior waterfall is located in a dramatic vaulted atrium space. It spills from the upper atrium containing the lobby to the lower atrium on the level of the restaurants and pool.

LIGHTSCAPES AND NIGHTSCAPES

Lighting brings texture, depth, and drama to the landscape.

Sunbeams separate into myriad rainbows in the mist of a waterfall. Dappled light passing through palm fronds breaks into prismatic patterns on the floor of a tropical pool.

At night subtle spa lighting is an invitation to romance. The powerful surge of a cataract is brought to life by underwater lighting. In either case, less is more; the source of illumination should never be evident.



< Fort Young Hotel, Dominica, West Indies

A free rainbow with (almost) every waterfall. Depending upon the sun's angle, the mist from a waterfall may generate a beautiful rainbow.

Southbeach Marriott Cloudforest Aviary,

Miami Beach, FL >

Shadows add to the sculptural complexity of the stonework.



< Southbeach Marriott Cloudforest Aviary, Miami Beach, FL

Underwater lighting brings the falls alive at night, and emphasizes the organic textures of the materials. All of this is real. There are no fake rocks, plastic plants, or animatronic animals. This is real living sculpture.



Royal Islander Resort >

Cancun, Mexico

A night time balcony view of the second of four cascades. Total drop 18 feet. These photos were taken prior to the completion of the landscape. The cascades will ultimately feature a lush landscape of flowering tropical vines.



UNIVERSITIES

AND

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

Universities and other public institutions often have funding available for art in public spaces as part of new construction programs. The selection of an artist for such work is often highly politicized, and the resulting art is sometimes considered to be elitist and inaccessible by the public. Not everyone appreciates abstract stainless steel sculpture, or art which is offensive. As a result, there has been much criticism of the use of public funding for art.

Such controversy can be avoided by the selection of environmental art that is beautiful, serene, timeless, and celebrates a sense of place.



< University of West Florida, Pensacola, Fl

A beautiful stream issues from the entrance of the College of Education building, then tumbles down the hill to the parking area below. Part of the Art in Architecture program for the University.

University of West Florida >

Pensacola, Fl

A detail from the previous photo. Emerald moss on the rocks indicates ecological success.





< University of West Florida, Pensacola, Fl

Frolicking in the falls. A student expresses her approval of art in public spaces.

University of West Florida >

Pensacola, Fl

A small artificial stream runs along the concourse of the administration building.





< University of West Florida, Pensacola, Fl

A stream detail. Art should be timeless, not trendy

CONSERVATORIES

The Wertheim Conservatory at Florida International University is intended to be a living laboratory for the benefit of students and researchers, and to house a collection of rare and endangered plants. The building is a futuristic glass structure with computerized environmental control systems including artificial fog.

In the interior I sought a fusion of art and science. The handrail of the bridge is a carved mahogany serpent. Enormous ancient tree trunks are hung with rare epiphytes. The pool and falls feature an integral undergravel bio-filtration system that has kept the aquatic ecosystem crystal clear for years with virtually no maintenance.

Many rare and unusual plants live in the conservatory, some of which I collected on a two month long expedition to the jungle wilderness of Guyana.

We were especially honored to have Sir Ghillian Prance, director of Kew Gardens in London, as keynote speaker for the opening of the conservatory.

In the following photographs, please note the extraordinary degree of growth and ecological maturation in a short period of time, all with little or no human intervention after installation. Good landscape design sets the stage, then steps back to allow natural processes to do the rest.



< Wertheim Conservatory at Florida International University, Miami

Looking down the falls prior to completion of the landscape. The bridge features a mahogany python as a handrail, contributing to the surreal aspect of the design.

Wertheim Conservatory at Florida >

International University, Miami

A detail of the waterfall when the garden was only four months old, demonstrating an extraordinary rate of growth and ecological integration. This artificial ecosystem simulates a tropical rainforest, and serves as a living laboratory for the University. With good architecture and environmental control systems almost anything is possible.





< Wertheim Conservatory at Florida International University, Miami

A view across the jungle pool. The garden features ancient stumps and tree trunks weighing several tons apiece which were individually collected from the field. These provide opportunities for the display of orchids and other epiphytes, and are natural works of art.

Wertheim Conservatory at Florida International University >

Is it real? Or is it Living sculpture by Bruce J. Morgan? This could be a scene from some faraway rainforest. Only the building in the background gives it away. This incredible degree of ecological complexity was achieved in less than two years with little maintenance.





< Wertheim Conservatory at Florida International University

Watch out for the trio of weird carnivorous plants (Nepenthes) hanging in front of the falls! Don't worry, they only eat bugs. The conservatory was designed to be a living laboratory for students and researchers. Only a skilled botanist could tell that this is not a scene from the jungles of Borneo.

BOTANICAL GARDENS

One of my most successful projects has been the design and implementation of the Gainesville Regional Utilities wastewater treatment project located at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens in Gainesville, Florida.

This project demonstrates the creative re-use of tertiary effluent. It is intended to be an educational display which demonstrates the importance of conserving water, demonstrates phyto-remediation techniques, and serves as an aesthetic asset for the Botanical Gardens.

I provided conceptual design for the site, layout, and the implementation of the massive stonework and aquatic ecosystem. The four primary waterfalls, streams, pools, and rapids are over one quarter of a mile long, and contain over 300 tons of enormous boulders, thus making it one of the largest sculptural projects to have been undertaken in recent years.

The site is a haven for wildlife within the City limits. Numerous fish, turtles, birds, and alligators call it home. We are even honored to have eagles and ospreys as regular guests. This project has been very well received by the community, and the site is frequently utilized for weddings, memorial services, garden parties, fund raising events, and art festivals.

In all of my projects I strive to use a broad plant palette worthy of a botanical garden.



< Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, FL

A springtime view of the main falls. The entire system is 1/4 mile long, including streams, rapids, and pools. This project demonstrates the creative re-use of tertiary effluent from the City of Gainesville wastewater treatment plant. The site is extensively utilized for weddings, funerals, and other events.

Kanapaha Botanical Gardens >

Gainesville, FL

A detail of the stream showing how water can be sculpted with the placement of stone to resemble a natural erosional feature.



< Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, FL

An autumn view of the falls with bamboo and giant *Victoria amazonica* water lilies.

Kanapaha Botanical Gardens >

Gainesville, FL

A view across the pool to the lower falls.



ARTIFICIAL ECOSYSTEMS AS ART

The cutting edge of urban landscape design is the creation of artificial ecosystems complete with floral and faunal components.

The surreal design of the Cloudforest Aviary at the Southbeach Marriott in Miami features state of the art environmental control systems, massive sculptural stonework, ancient gnarled tree trunks, and a lush rainforest landscape with rare orchids and other epiphytes. Visitors are free to interact with living animals such as birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians. The hotel guest steps directly from the lobby into a world of water, color, and vibrant life.



< **Southbeach Marriott Cloudforest Aviary,**
Miami Beach, FL.

The timeless beauty of falling water is the aesthetic focus of the Cloudforest Aviary. Massive cantilevered stones control the flow. The pool features a low maintenance bio-filtration system with koi and other fish. Multicolored finches and doves fill the air.

Southbeach Marriott Cloudforest Aviary >
Miami Beach, FL.

This surreal work of environmental art features an unprecedented degree of visual and ecological complexity. This complexity will greatly increase as the ecosystem matures. Even now it would take hours for a guest to discover all the hidden crevices, and the life that lies within.





< **Cloudforest Aviary, Marriott Southbeach,**

Miami, FL.

The Red Eyed Tree Frog, *Agalychnis callidryas*, a rainforest jewel, uses it's bright colors to startle potential predators. In the Aviary it eats tiny crickets. Those crickets that escape the birds and frogs contribute their beautiful songs to the night sounds in the Aviary, just like in the real jungle.

Cloudforest Aviary, Marriott Southbeach >

Miami, FL.

The Giant Day Gecko, *Phelsuma Grandis*, darts about the foliage in search of fruit and small insects. It thrives on a diet of apricot baby food in captivity, and keeps the aviary plants free of pests. In bright sunlight the little monster's colors glow with an iridescent sheen.



< **Wertheim Conservatory, Florida International University,**

Miami, Fl.

Every Eden requires a serpent. The mahogany handrail was sculpted by prominent artist Thomas Glover W. of St. Augustine.

Edgewood Lounge >

Jacksonville, FL.

A brick patio was transformed into a simulated rainforest complete with ornamental reptiles. This was my first artificial ecosystem project, built over 25 years ago as I began my career.





< Bruce Morgan's design studio.

Archer, FL.

It's all in the details. A large boulder covered in ferns and moss is cantilevered over a dark pool filled with native fish.

STORMWATER RETENTION

Almost all municipalities require stormwater retention basins for any new construction project. These can be ugly mosquito infested holes surrounded by a chain link fence, or they can be vibrant ecosystems that are havens for wildlife, and a joy to behold.

Land is much too expensive to waste on an ugly retention pond when it can become a primary aesthetic asset with clear flowing water, birds, fish, and blossoms, all located next to the clubhouse, or at the entrance to your new development.



< Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, FL

A view of the lower pool. The water is naturally cleansed by the ecosystem.

INTERPRETIVE TRAILS

The intrepid travelers of today want to explore and learn about the cultures and landscapes of the countries that they visit. They want challenging exercise and an opportunity to get away from the crowd. There is no better way to see an unknown land than to hike the mountains, walk the shores, and interact with the people, but how to safely accomplish this, especially in rugged terrain?

An artfully contrived interpretive trail can turn a stroll into an adventure. The hidden secrets of nature are revealed, the ancient tree, the distant vista, the daily life of the village.

Coco Key in the Bahamas was a pristine island regularly visited by cruise ships. The native scrub was beautiful, but too thick for the casual tourist to penetrate, and the rocky shoreline was too rugged for bare feet, so the guests just sat on the beach with nothing to do.

Now, a two mile long interpretive loop trail takes the adventurous guest to the wild west end of the island and back. Along the way the trail visits thousand year old lignum vitae trees, rock formations, caves, hidden beaches, and pirate ruins. Along the north coast the beautiful windswept bonsai forest is now accessible. "Cool spots" with comfortable seating will soon be developed along the way. Unobtrusive information will enable the guest to learn all about the history, geology, and vegetation of the island. At the far end a funky thatched bar will offer fresh coconuts and cold drinks.

Let me help your guests to see and understand the inherent beauty and ecological complexity of your resort property.



< Coco Cay, Berry Islands, The Bahamas

This hidden beach, and many of the other beautiful natural features of this pristine island, will soon be accessible to tourists by means of a two mile long interpretive nature trail. There's a cold drink waiting for you at the end!

Coco Cay, Berry Islands, The Bahamas >

The secrets of nature are revealed to those who choose the road less traveled.



< Private trail system in north Florida

A well designed trial should be intuitively easy to follow without unnecessary signs. It should visit the most beautiful natural features of the landscape. Most importantly, it should challenge the visitor. Just say no to handrails!

Manatee river trail system, Belize >

A new fifteen mile long trail system enables eco-tourists at access what would otherwise be impenetrable jungle in the Manatee river wilderness.



< Manatee river trail system, Belize

Jaguar tracks! A well designed trail system is the best possible way to observe wildlife.

Private trail system in North Florida >

The trail leads on...



ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

AND

HABITAT DESIGN FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT

Wild values and the beauty of nature can be found anywhere, from a weed struggling to survive in the cracked concrete of a sidewalk, to the grandeur of Yosemite. An understanding of ecological processes makes it possible to greatly enhance the beauty and productivity of any ecosystem, whether it be a backyard or a vast wilderness area.

Landscape designs can be as sterile and hard to maintain as a suburban lawn, or they can be as diverse and ever changing as nature itself. We can invite wild creatures to share our lives, or we can shut them out. The decision is ours.

Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, located within the city limits of Gainesville, Florida, has become a haven for wildlife. Tertiary effluent is discharged into the large water feature. The nutrients contained therein have created an explosion of life. Fish have multiplied by the thousands, and with them have come innumerable frogs, snakes, turtles, alligators, and birds. Guests at the Gardens can sit in a comfortable pavilion and watch the drama of life being played out. Stately egrets and herons stalk the shoreline in search of fish. Migrating sandhill cranes find a bonanza of frogs to sustain them for the long flight north. Eagles and ospreys vie for fishing rights. All keep an eye out for the alligator. All this is possible within the city limits because the landscape design works with the processes of nature, and encourages interaction between people and wildlife.

The highest art of all is ecosystem restoration. Almost every ecosystem in America has been degraded to some degree. By understanding how nature works it is possible to improve even the most abused property. To do so will invite wildflowers and wildlife to move back in and share our lives. Ecosystem restoration may involve removing invasive exotics, creating habitat, and planting native species. It may involve thinning an existing forest to simulate old growth characteristics. It may be a matter of reintroducing wildlife. On a larger scale, the most important consideration may be the restoration of natural processes such as fire. Every site is unique, and requires careful evaluation.

It is good to design a beautiful garden, but it is far better to attempt to restore the beauty and complexity of the original ecosystem.



< Habitat design for wildlife enhancement

These are fall colors Florida style. The waterfalls, streams, and artificial wetlands at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens in Gainesville are now eight years old. The ecosystem has matured, and hosts an incredible diversity of life from alligators to eagles, all within the City limits!

Habitat design for wildlife enhancement >

This sculptural stone water feature is located adjacent to Bruce J. Morgan's design studio. It is filled with native fish and turtles. It attracts a wide variety of wildlife such as reptiles, amphibians, deer, fox, bobcats, hawks, owls, and countless songbirds.



< Ecosystem restoration

This mature live oak forest is being taken over and destroyed by invasive fast growing laurel oaks.

Ecosystem restoration >

The forest in the foreground has been selectively thinned to promote biodiversity and old growth characteristics. The forest in the background has not been thinned, and is a thicket of invasive second growth species that threatened to destroy these beautiful ancient trees.



WILDERNESS EXPLORATION & CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

The Chinese proverb says, "It is better to walk a thousand miles than to read a thousand books". I have tried to do both, and am way over the mark on both counts. Travel is the best possible education for a naturalist, so every year I spend at least three months abroad with a backpack heavily laden with books. I am particularly interested in tropical wilderness areas where I can pursue my interests in botany, herpetology, and speleology.

My travels have taken me to many remote locations in the western hemisphere, including locations in the United States, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Guyana, and Brazil. In Asia I have visited remote parts of China, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

I am privileged to have been the first outsider to have visited many of these areas. All of my expeditions have been self funded. I prefer to travel alone or with a few close friends, among whom have been headhunters, bandits, shamans, subsistence hunters, artists, and scientists. I always do things the hard way, on foot or by dugout canoe with minimal supplies.

Highlights of these expeditions include the discovery of a previously unknown plateau in Borneo, a five week crossing of the Pakaraima mountains in Guyana, and numerous extraordinary discoveries in Belize such as one of the world's tallest caverns, two "lost" cities, and numerous other previously undiscovered caves and archeological sites.

These experiences inform my work, and have convinced me of the importance of protecting what few wild areas remain. Toward this end I am active in the conservation movement as a writer and activist. My essays are published locally, and in Wild Earth magazine.

I feel strongly that conservation through private initiative is the only hope for many of the world's wild places. Toward that end I work with enlightened developers and land owners to formulate land management practices that will foster biodiversity and wilderness values. As an environmental artist, I strive to interpret the freedom and beauty that I have experienced so that others may be inspired to appreciate and protect the natural world.



< Sarawak, Malaysia

Despite the swords, my friends in Borneo in longer hunt heads. Here, they have captured bats in a remote cave, to prepare the worst dinner I have ever eaten.

Western China >

The eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau in western China, land of pandas. This is one of the last remaining natural habitats in this tragically overpopulated but beautiful country.



< Brazilian/Guyanese frontier

Kurutuik Falls is on the Ireng River, the northernmost tributary of the Amazon, in the heart of the Pakaraima mountains along the Brazilian border with Guyana. This vast area of primeval rainforest and savanna features many magnificent waterfalls, and is inhabited by only a small number of Amerindians living traditional lifestyles.

Guyana >

Bruce Morgan and companions at the base of an enormous jungle tree in the wilds of Guyana.



WILDERNESS EXPLORATION

AND

CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

(PAGE 2)



< **Guyana**

Utchi falls thunders down almost 600 feet from a "lost world" plateau near the frontier with Venezuela. The primeval landscape below is perpetually bathed in mist. This magnificent waterfall was the culmination of an arduous five week trek across the Pakaraima mountains.

Belize >

The upper part of the entrance to the Great Cave of the Manatee River in Belize. This enormous cave entrance is well over three hundred feet tall, one of the largest in the world. The Mayan Indians used this cave for many of their sacred rites, but left almost a thousand years ago, and I was privileged to be the first modern explorer to discover it.



< Belize

A view of a lower part of the entrance to the Great Cave of the Manatee River in Belize. Notice the tiny figure standing in the gloom in the center of the photo. The vast chambers within are hung with huge stalactites, and are littered with priceless artifacts which record the entire history of the Mayan civilization in Belize

Belize >

A side view of a small part of the upstream entrance of the Great Manatee River Cave in Belize. Notice the tiny figure in the center of the photo. The beautiful Manatee River flows through the cave to another enormous entrance, then through pristine jungle and mangrove to the scenic Southern Lagoon, and thence to the sea.



< Belize

Brother Moses sitting in the entrance of a cave that contains a human skull and ritual offerings. I discovered this cave on my most recent trip to Belize in January 2002.



ABOUT THE DESIGNER

I consider myself to be a professional naturalist who makes his living as an environmental artist and landscape designer. The landscapes that I create are expressions of my appreciation and understanding of the natural world, and are intended to integrate the wild beauty of nature into the built environment.

My home and studio are located in deep forest near Gainesville, Florida. I have chosen this location because I travel frequently to projects all over the world, and prefer have my design studio located in a quiet rural location where I can be inspired by the beauty that surrounds me, yet take advantage of the University of Florida, its extensive library, and the international community of artists and scientists that live here.

I have been self employed as an environmental designer since the early seventies, and have worked and traveled all over the world. Please refer to my Gallery of selected projects, or Projects by type, for examples of my various projects around the globe.

My interests are varied and many, including architecture, art, literature, ecology, botany, geology, herpetology and speleology. My personal heroes were the Renaissance thinkers who sought to encompass all knowledge, and the Victorian era explorer scientists such as Humbolt and Wallace who combined wild adventure with the quest to understand the intricacies of life.

Much of my life has been spent on expedition far afield in the wilderness; attempting, as I sometimes put it "to be the last wild man to see the last wild place". My explorations have taken me to many remote tropical wilderness areas. These experiences have served to broaden my understanding of the landforms, ecosystems, and diverse cultures of the world, all of which I try to incorporate into my work. Please refer to Wilderness exploration and conservation activities to learn more about my many adventures.

When not at work or traveling, I devote much of my spare time to conservation efforts, writing, and to the company of my companion Dr. Ann Harman.



Bruce Morgan on a mountaintop in the Ecuadorean Andes.

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Please understand that I travel frequently on business. If I do not promptly respond to your message it is because I am overseas, and will immediately contact you upon my return. Thank you for your patience.



It's a tough job designing pools and gardens in the Caribbean, but someone has to do it.