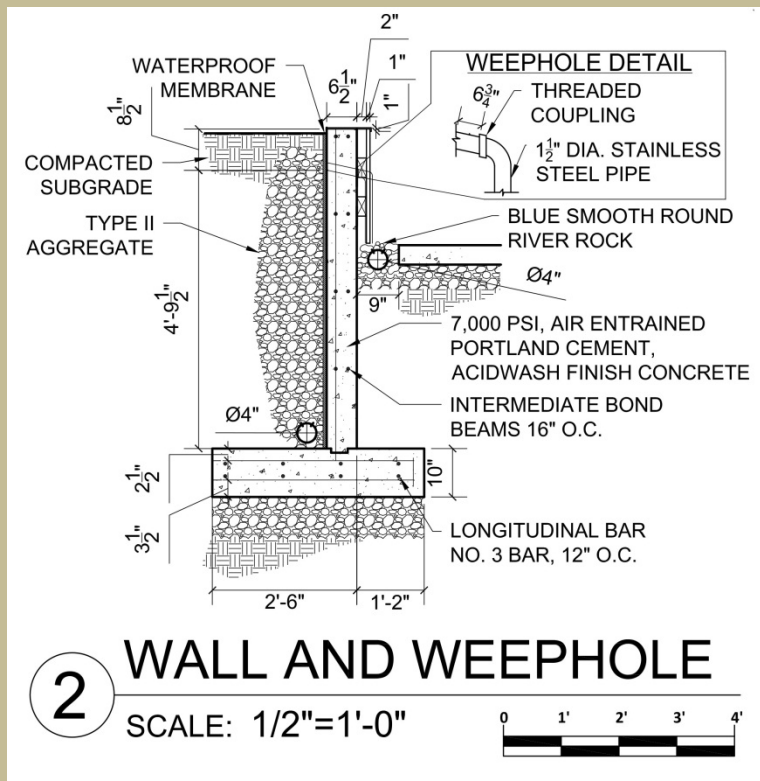


Course Focus
HORT 336 – Landscape Construction
by Jennifer Britton



"A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral."

For students in Environmental Horticulture pursuing the Landscape Design option, HORT 336- Landscape Construction serves as an introduction to materials and construction methods. So what does this mean you ask? As designers, we communicate with permitting agencies and contractors through drawings: plans, sections, elevations, details. These drawings indicate the thickness of concrete, placement of rebar, deck fasteners, all things functional and all things aesthetic- basically every built element. We submit these drawings to permitting agencies such as the City of Bozeman where they review for code compliance, public safety, health and welfare. These same drawings, also called contract drawings, are used for bidding and legal accountability. Pretty important stuff when you consider the price tag attached to construction and moreover the cost of correcting mistakes.



Drawing by Willy Chandler, Landscape Construction student

To introduce students to landscape construction we meet for studio class twice a week on Wednesday and Friday from 10:00-12:50. We begin with a basic understanding of construction documentation principals and compound on those little by little to give an overall understanding of the subject. The class curriculum mimics work they will experience in their future careers with studio projects organized around one site design - the grounds of a hypothetical office building. Students are tasked with creating a design required to contain paving, retaining walls, deck, and fence. Each of these components becomes

the semester's projects with students completing a coherent set of construction drawings in conformance with industry standards. We investigate structural qualities and limitations of construction materials and students participate in decision-making activities pertaining to their designs. Although we have brief lectures on relevant technical information needed to complete assignments, class time also provides opportunity for critique and feedback. Projects range from 2-4 weeks in duration with pin-up presentations for each project.

To have students experience construction forensics (when things go wrong), we take construction "walkabouts" on campus and in the surrounding neighborhoods, where students can see relevant construction practices and examine construction failures in-situ. Students also explore alternative building materials and sustainable practices through a materials research project and tour of the Refuge Sustainable Building Center in Bozeman; and to incorporate service-learning and concepts of social sustainability, students participate for one weekend day in construction with Habitat for Humanity or other volunteer organizations.

It is my goal that students leaving HORT 336 will have experience in investigating more than one answer to any construction project and develop extensive understanding into the generation of graphic plans. I hope students will have the ability to realize for themselves how their designs, selection of materials and installation methods effect people, environment and place.