CAREER PROFILE

LANDSCAPE & SITE RECLAMATION SCIENTIST

Turn devastated landscapes into thriving ecosystems.

WHAT IT IS

Imagine turning damaged, lifeless landscapes into thriving ecosystems. Landscape and site reclamation specialists do just that by restoring land damaged by mining, construction, or industrial activity. As a landscape and site reclamation scientist, you will rebuild soil, establish vegetation, manage water quality, and transform barren wastelands into productive ecosystems. This career blends soil science, ecology, hydrology, and environmental engineering to heal landscapes and protect the environment.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

As a reclamation scientist, your work moves between the field, labs, and project offices. Your day might include:

- Assessing disturbed sites for soil quality, contamination, and erosion
- Designing reclamation plans that include landscape grading, soil amendments, native plantings, and habitat restoration
- Overseeing contractors reshaping land and establishing native vegetation
- Monitoring water quality, soil recovery, and erosion control effectiveness
- Collecting samples, tracking restoration progress, and writing compliance reports
- Coordinating with engineers, ecologists, botanists, regulators, and local communities
- Visiting remote mines, industrial sites, or urban brownfields to plan and evaluate restoration success

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READY FOR SUCCESS

Your success starts with a passion for restoring damaged landscapes. Build a foundation in soil science, ecology, hydrology, plant sciences, and environmental engineering. Be comfortable with fieldwork in challenging terrain. Develop problem-solving skills, project management abilities, patience, and strong communication—you'll work with companies, agencies, and communities.

Seek mentors in environmental consulting, municipal open space, restoration projects, or government agencies. Volunteer or intern on habitat restoration projects to gain hands-on experience. Your work helps rebuild ecosystems, protect water quality, and create safe, productive land—the impact is lasting.

EDUCATION REQUIRED

This career is rooted in soil science, ecology, plant sciences, hydrology, and environmental engineering. **Most specialists earn a bachelor's degree in:**

- **Soil Science**
- **Environmental Science**
- **Ecology**
- **Landscape Architecture**
- **Natural Resources**
- **Land Rehabilitation**

Advanced positions often require a master's degree. Coursework typically covers soil remediation, restoration ecology, hydrology, and environmental regulations. Certifications like Certified Professional Soil Scientist, Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner, or Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control are valuable. Hands-on field experience is essential.

GETTING STARTED

Take biology, chemistry, earth science, and environmental studies. Volunteer for habitat restoration, community parks, or environmental clubs. Join soil judging, ecological restoration, or STEM programs. Seek internships with environmental consulting firms, renewable energy and mining companies, or EPA projects. Research universities with strong restoration ecology or environmental science programs. Learn about soil remediation, erosion control, and revegetation techniques.

GROW BY **6%** UNTIL 2032

JOB OUTLOOK

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 6% employment growth for Environmental Scientists and Specialists through 2032.

$77K AS OF 2024

AVERAGE SALARY

The median salary is $77,740, with experienced professionals earning more.