Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation

32nd Annual Meeting

Enchanted Landscapes: Exploring Cultural Traditions and Values

Albuquerque, New Mexico

April 21–24, 2010

Abstracts of Papers and Works-In-Progress
Arranged in Order of Presentation
THE ENCHANTMENT OF IMAGES: ART AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION IN THE U.S. SOUTHWEST (work-in-progress)

Jill Cowley, National Park Service, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Images can indeed be enchanting – they can have a profound influence on how we perceive and value cultural landscapes. The U.S. Southwest has a long tradition of landscape images created by peoples from various cultural backgrounds. These images tell stories, represent ways of seeing the landscape, and have been used for the cause of historic preservation.

Following an overview of Pueblo, Hispanic and Anglo-American images of southwestern landscapes, this Work in Progress presentation will focus on 20th and 21st century images of northern New Mexico landscapes managed by the U.S. National Park Service. Images of these landscapes include romantic, symbolic, and realistic representations, which have influenced and been influenced by the growth of regional art colonies, tourism, and Santa Fe Style. For example, traditional Pueblo pottery, New Deal Era Pueblo paintings, and Euro-American paintings associated with Bandelier National Monument are part of the story of preservation of this multi-cultural landscape. Images of the Civilian Conservation Corps–constructed Old Santa Fe Trail Building property reflect National Park Service traditions in relation to the development of the Santa Fe Style.

This presentation will be broadly relevant due to the potential significance that imagery of and associated with cultural landscapes can have for preservation priorities and approaches. Discussion questions can include: How might the dynamic between artistic appreciation and historical appreciation influence cultural landscape preservation and interpretation? How can images communicate different cultural viewpoints on cultural landscapes? What should be the National Park Service’s role in sharing, interpreting, creating, and responding to these images?
A UTOPIAN VISION: THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE AND THE NAVAJO NEW DEAL
(paper)

Lillian Makeda, University of New Mexico-Gallup, New Mexico

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933, the landscape of the Navajo Nation had witnessed years of dramatic change. Vast areas of grassy terrain and arable land lay bare and inscribed with a rapidly expanding network of channels and ravines. Roosevelt’s Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier attributed the transformation to soil erosion from overgrazing. The experts he assembled for his staff were certain that dire consequences would ensue without immediate implementation of emergency measures.

In June 1933, Collier dispatched a survey team to the Navajo reservation, and Mexican Springs, 20 miles north of Gallup, New Mexico was selected as an experiment station for developing strategies to address soil erosion on Diné (Navajo) lands. The newly formed Navajo Project was to play an important role in the overall mission of the Soil Erosion Service (created in September 1933) and its successor, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). By 1935, the SCS was supervising 40 demonstration projects nationally. The Navajo Nation, in its entirety, was the largest project by a significant margin and formed 40 percent of the total acreage involved. Nearly 200,000 acres of the Navajo reservation were fenced off for experimentation and demonstration supported by a staff of 85 professionals and over 700 Diné laborers.

The photographic record for the Navajo Project displays an extraordinary variety of structures, at times elegant in their simplicity and at others staggering in their scale. Canals, terraces, charcos (retention dams), water spreaders, drop structures, contour furrows, check dams, diversion dams and more were all part of the engineering repertoire employed by the SCS. By mid-1935, over 244 linear miles of erosion control structures had been built on the Navajo reservation.

By 1936, protests about the project were reaching the halls of Congress, and in 1943, the Navajo Tribal Council passed a resolution requesting the removal of the demonstration areas. The SCS left Mexican Springs shortly afterwards. Seventy years later, the long-term effects of their work remain unknown. The former demonstration areas are now reduced to “lumpy landscapes” that are barren and desolate. Their appearance is completely at odds with the green pastures and burgeoning fields envisioned by the SCS.

Sadly, accounts of the New Deal in New Mexico have largely ignored public works on the Navajo Reservation. The Civilian Conservation Corps–Indian Department, Public Works Administration, and Works Progress Administration were all active among the Diné and millions of dollars were disbursed. While the changes wrought by the SCS have become difficult to decipher, the remains of “the Indian New Deal” also include hundreds of buildings, many of them part of Collier’s revolutionary education program. This paper will examine the landscape transformations accomplished by the SCS and analyze the impact that they had on the Diné. Significant questions remain unanswered: What did the Navajo Project accomplish? Why did it disappear into history? Is there a connection with Foucault’s work on heterotopias? How does the Navajo Project relate to other colonial landscape interventions?

1 Bruno Klinger to D.S. Hubbell, 8 April 1937, “Establishing of Navajo Experiment Station,” SCS Records, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico-Albuquerque.
3 Ibid., 4. The Navajo Nation covered 16 million acres; the 40 projects together totaled 40 million acres. The Rio Grande project in New Mexico was the second largest unit and initially covered 11.5 million acres.
For a description of some of these structures, see Navajo District Annual Report 1937-1938, US Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Region 8, 17-27. New Mexico State University Library Archives and Special Collections Department.


See, for example, the testimony of Frank Cadman in Congress, Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs, Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States, part 34, 75th Congress, 1st Session, August 19, 1936, 17958-17960.


Notes:
SILVER HILL’S REFORESTATION PROJECT: A NEIGHBORHOOD’S COLLABORATIVE DRIVE TO RESTORE A CHERISHED WPA-ERA STREET TREE CANOPY FOR FUTURE ALBUQUERQUEANS (work-in-progress)

Elizabeth Doak, Silver Hill Neighborhood Assoc., with Liz Reardon and John Pope, Morrow Reardon Wilkinson Miller (MRWM) Landscape Architects, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Silver Hill Historic District Landscaping Project was initiated by neighborhood residents to restore the striking historic street tree plantings along the District’s parkways and median. The 1986 nomination to the National Register of Historic Places cites the District’s trees as a defining component of the neighborhood’s historic character. In the 1920s, Siberian elms were planted by renowned Mayor Tingley. This elegant monoculture thrived for 50 years.

By the close of the 20th century, multiple challenges were posed by an urban landscape at the end of its lifespan. When a University of New Mexico graduate student approached her neighborhood association in 1999 with a proposal to focus her thesis on the topic of concern, the moment was ripe. A tree inventory had recently been completed by the City. The neighborhood had taken steps to secure funding for a comprehensive plan.

The graduate student project resulted in the Silver Hill Streetscape Manifesto 2001, a Neighborhood Plan of Action. The neighborhood’s applications for legislative funding led to the development of the Silver Hill Historic District Masterplan for Streetscape and Landscape Improvements by MRWM Landscape Architects.

The fruits of the Masterplan are the completion of the first two phases of the project, the reforestation of Silver Avenue and Gold Avenue. Our final phase, the reforestation of the north/south side streets, is pending.

Questions:

How is a reforestation project justified in the arid Southwest?

What criteria guide the composition of the tree palette?

How has the collaboration between multiple stakeholders affected the outcome of the project?
Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) noticed a growing issue of architecturally-centered National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations within their own agency and others across the country. The issue of architecturally-centered information and NRHP listings was most apparent in their own website, one of the main modes of transferring information about historic preservation to the public and other professionals. In coordination with PHMC, my professor and I organized a study to help clarify the difference between architecture and historic landscape character.

In the preliminary PHMC website review, it became clear that architecture-related information outnumbered landscape content about four to one. Although information in all sections was helpful and accurately described for both types of historic preservation, landscape preservation did not have its own vocabulary but used architectural-related terms to describe style and periods of significance. Additionally, historic landscape photography was building centric instead of depicting spaces and landscapes. These findings illustrated what needed to be done in the next steps of the study.

I began researching landscape vocabulary and comparing it to what was on the website. I was guided by the Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines for historic landscape preservation, which listed four generic types: historic designed, historic vernacular, ethnographic, and historic sites. However, the PHMC website listed five landscape types. It was evident to suggest uniformity in vocabulary and distinctions between these agencies, conforming to the Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines. I reviewed landscape nominations made in the past ten years to understand what vocabulary was used and to get a general sense about NRHP nomination content. Overall, landscape language was lacking in all resources, and realized that I needed to find ways to help remedy this issue.

To get started, I chose historic landscapes across Pennsylvania that related to each of the four landscape types listed by the Secretary of the Interior. Some principle sites included Woodward Hill Cemetery in Lancaster (historic designed landscape), Scranton coal fields (historic vernacular landscape), Lancaster Amish country (ethnographic and vernacular landscape), and Valley Forge (historic site). After visiting and photographing historic-landscape sites, I included these photos in a presentation, which I gave at a PHMC nomination committee meeting last spring. The presentation discussed my research and field findings. My suggestions were found to be applicable to their website, and they were enthusiastic to begin making some changes. I presented them a copy of my work and photography.

Historic landscapes are disappearing rapidly due to a lack of knowledge in preservation techniques, neglect, and increasing development from all sectors. Historic landscapes are important pages of cultural history that help interpret past generational activities. Some landscapes remain vital to larger communities, such as the many agricultural landscapes across Pennsylvania. NRHP nominations for historic landscapes should allow necessary change, unlike architectural nominations, which tend to be accurate representations of a bygone era. I hope that my suggestions and findings from this study will inform future actions within state preservation offices as well as at the national level.
ENCHANTING PLACES: WHO IS ENCHANTING WHOM? (paper)

Lynda Schneekloth and Robert Shipley, University at Buffalo, SUNY, New York

Cities are the junkyard of history. People daily inhabit a world full of places, buildings, landscapes, and stories of past inhabitation all jumbled together with constant erasures and insertions. Within this dance of city building, its making and unmaking, only a few places, buildings, landscapes, and stories are preserved. What is it about these entities and conditions that single them out as being worthy of our time and attention, our energy and often, even prolonged and contentious fights?

*Enchanting Places* has at least two meanings. The first resides within human, both perceptually and culturally, in that we find a place enchanting. The second is perhaps more interesting and the main thrust of the paper: we posit the idea that it is not only our choice and values that determine our work as preservationists. The artifacts themselves -- whether made of stone or plants -- may have a role to play by enchanting us, putting us under their spell, calling to them. This position questions modernity’s carefully-delineated categories between *Homo sapiens* and everything else, a belief/story that agency and intention belong only to humans. As an inquiry, we are suggesting that places and things might have a presence that compels us to act.

The vehicle for this exploration rests in our practice and we will look closely at three engagements. One investigation revolves around the grain elevators that stand along the Buffalo River, once a thriving industrial area and now a contaminated, mostly abandoned landscape. Another is the now-empty Buffalo Psychiatric Center complex, designed by H.H. Richardson sitting on grounds designed by F. L. Olmsted. The last engagement is the Buffalo Olmsted Park and Parkway System, the skeleton of a beautifully planned city, that fell into disrepair during the mid-20th century along with the entire city, but whose presence inspired a concerted citizen’s movement and recent plans for restoration.

These landscapes without doubt have enchanted all who have been involved in their restoration. Each of them brought together groups of people committed to their preservation, each demanded hard work to develop strategies to conserve and maintain over time, and each continues to be challenged in some way. Some of these actions can surely be accounted for by the presence of people who recognize the importance of the markers of the past and who are willing to commit themselves as a lifework to saving small pieces of the world. But, this condition does not fully explain why this and why not that, why some places and landscapes, and not others. Using our own work and the thoughts/theories of a diverse groups of scholars,¹ we seek to explore this small crack of indeterminacy to explicate some of the ways in which places and artifacts themselves bring us under their spell.

1. For example: David Abrams (1996); James Hillman (1982); Martin Heidegger (1951); Lucy Lippard (1997); Feya Matthews (1996); Robert Sardello (1992); Elaine Scarry (1999).
ENCHANTMENT, DISENCHANTMENT, AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN THE LANDSCAPE OF CATHOLIC HILL, GUELPH, ONTARIO (paper)

Mary Tivy, Puslinch, Ontario, and Wendy Shearer, MHBC Planning, Kitchener, Ontario

Introduction:
Religious landscapes are places of enchantment. In the consecrated space of the Roman Catholic Church miracles are expected, holy water is offered, reliquaries hold saint’s bones, icons guide the penitents, and Priests administer the holy rites for life crises: baptism, Holy Communion, marriage, and death. Catholic Hill, in Guelph, Ontario, is one such enchanted landscape. The recent fight to prevent the demolition of the 1856 stone Loretto Convent on Catholic Hill and to rehabilitate both the building and its site highlights a century and a half of changing allegiances toward this cultural landscape, underlines the power of built landscapes in civic identification and community memory, and presents challenges to adapt a sacred site for secular use within the boundaries of a large religious complex.

Background:
Guelph, Ontario is a planned city founded in 1827 by John Galt, a Scottish poet who established the Canada Company. This was an ambitious, and some might say, enchanted, business venture to turn a million acres of vacant Crown lands in southwestern Ontario into a prosperous landscape anchored by a number of baroque and Georgian style cities. Critical support for Galt’s venture came from his friend and mentor, Alexander MacDonell, the Scottish Roman Catholic Bishop of Upper Canada, and a powerful member of Upper Canada’s governing council. Consequently, when Galt drew up his plan for his first city, the company town of Guelph, he allotted the principal and most prominent parcel of land in the city for the Catholic Church. The broad vista leading up to the hill was cleared and named MacDonell Street, after the Bishop. The 6 acres on this rise known locally as “Catholic Hill” or “Holy Hill” became the setting for a magnificent Catholic Church, priests’ house, convent with chapel, and schools constructed of local limestone. These structures were surrounded by trees, vegetable and ornamental gardens and secluded meditation gardens. Today this complex forms the oldest extant built landscape in Guelph.

Catholic Hill is a complex of buildings on a site that has been at risk since their construction in the mid 19th century. Initially this threat came from opposing cultural traditions and values: the local majority Protestant population targeted this growing stronghold of Catholicism that rose over their town. Political and religious fires between the Orangemen and Catholics literally burned down the original Catholic Church on Holy Hill in 1844. Military protection was provided on MacDonell Street during Orange Day celebrations in the 1850s when Irish Protestants and their supporters marched toward Catholic Hill threatening to drive out the nuns from their convent and destroy it.

However, the convent remained unharmed until 2005 when the Catholic Diocese itself decided to deconsecrate the convent and tear it down. This time a different crusade led by another faith advanced to the convent on Catholic Hill, not to burn it down as the Protestants had tried to do before, but to save it, not in the name of the Roman Catholic Church, but in the name of community memory and civic identity. Ironically the Catholic and civic loyalties toward the sanctity and utility of Catholic Hill’s convent had become reversed in the century and a half since it was built. A vigorous argument by the citizens of Guelph to protect the now secular sanctity of the convent and its site on Catholic Hill as a place of local cultural identification prevented the destruction of the building. Appropriately it was resolved that this formerly consecrated building become a sanctuary for another religion — civic piety — through its adaptation as the new home for the Guelph Civic Museum. In so doing the building will ostensibly move from a religious to secular purpose but may prove no less enchanted. Here the relics and icons of Guelph’s past will be identified, collected, preserved, displayed under glass, and interpreted, not by curates, but by curators of the civic past. The challenge of this new arrangement
will be to comfortably juxtapose the needs and philosophies of a secular and municipally operated facility and maintain the integrity of the extraordinary religious and historical landscape of Catholic Hill.

Discussion and Questions
The paper discussion will focus on the current challenges to both preserve and successfully re-adapt this building and its original landscape, to acknowledge its legacy in this process, and to maintain a civic sanctuary within the boundaries of a still-functioning religious landscape. Questions about the shifting meaning of the sacred and profane in identifying and preserving cultural landscapes will be addressed.

Notes:
iPhone APPLICATION – HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FEATURE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (work-in-progress)

Debbie Smith, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, Natchitoches, Louisiana

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) is a National Park Service (NPS) center that advances the application of science and technology to historic preservation. Working in the fields of archeology, architecture, landscape architecture and materials conservation, NCPTT accomplishes its mission through training, education, research, technology transfer, and partnerships. In partnership with our in-house computer programmer, NCPTT’s Historic Landscape Program is building an iPhone/iPod touch/iPad application for field inventory and assessment of historic landscape features.

Typical NPS historic landscape maintenance plans are in notebook form, with multiple pages for record keeping. Intended field use, these record sheets are cumbersome and rarely updated. In addition, if records are kept, they require manually input into a computer for synthesis. This application is the first phase of an envisioned electronic management plan designed to efficiently collect field data that will synchronize with a management system used to prioritize and schedule landscape maintenance.

The application is not intended to be compatible with the NPS Facility Management Software System (FMSS), though at least one FMSS field will be included in the database for cross reference. The intended audience is any historic site (NPS and non-NPS) that requires a detailed inventory and condition assessment of one or more landscape feature types (vegetation, circulation, etc.) and/or would like to efficiently manage cyclical maintenance tasks. It could also be an efficient inventory/assessment tool for recording conditions following a severe storm or natural disaster.

The work-in-progress will include a short presentation explaining the project, and an opportunity for members to try the application on an iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad.
CONSTRUCTING NARRATIVE MEANING: EMPLOYING HIGH-TECH DIGITAL SCANNING ALONG WITH TRADITIONAL DOCUMENTATION METHODS TO DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF CONNECTIONS, CONTEXT, AND RELATIONSHIPS THAT SHAPE AND DEFINE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF THE AMERICAN WEST (paper)

Ekaterini Vlahos, University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado

Fort Laramie embodies the sweeping saga of America’s western expansion. The cultural landscape offers a rich location for documenting, discerning, interpreting, and revealing stories about the relationships of people and place. Native Americans, trappers, traders, soldiers, cowboys and homesteaders, among others, would leave their mark on a landscape that would ultimately define the American West. This session presents Fort Laramie as a case study that highlights specific processes of site documentation and interpretation developed at the university in partnership with a government and not-for-profit agencies. The processes offer some new ideas, techniques, and technologies for presenting and sharing narratives with visitors and others interested in the ideas of cultural landscapes as places of collective memory and image.

Fort Laramie as a site holds many “layers” to be discovered and recorded, including structures, site features, trees and plantings, circulation systems, archaeological information, and unique histories. Intensive research into archives, texts, visual images, oral histories, and examination of the site was used to determine historic periods of significance.

Using high-tech digital scanning in addition to traditional Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Landscape Survey, survey, and inventory, this project demonstrates how these practices support a dissemination of findings that not only constructs narratives of the past, captures conditions of the present and informs decision making for the future, but also registers the site within a larger context of spatial meaning and cultural activities.

Findings support that the high quality of the documentation and research supports in-depth narratives and interpretations, and provide the base data necessary to constructing the story over time and space through digital imaging and modeling. This approach also highlights not only practices in the field for documentation, and the deep integration of historical research, oral histories and site analyses as they inform the interpretation, but also significantly impacts preservation decisions and involves the communities and constituents affected.

The questions that directed the project are: How can one use a multitude of resources and materials available, combined with new technologies, to reveal the traces of the past and tell a narrative – a story of place? Also, how can one document, interpret, organize and manage an existing inventory of data, including but not limited to historic maps, photographs, written reports, journal entries and drawings to reveal the story of a place and to guide preservation efforts?
PATTERN ON NATIONAL FOREST LANDS: EXPLORING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE CHANGE AS EVIDENCED THROUGH HISTORIC CAMPGROUND DESIGN IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST (work-in-progress)

Karl Dietzler, Dual Master’s Candidate (MLAIMS), University of Oregon Landscape Architecture Program and Historic Preservation Program

Historic campgrounds on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands are a key location where the public experiences the intersection of cultural and natural resources. In the Pacific Northwest Region, existing historic Forest Service campgrounds usually date from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)/New Deal era of the 1930s; however, some designs may exist previous to this period.

These designed campgrounds were envisioned in an era of rapid technological change, where increasing industrialization, urbanization, and rural accessibility facilitated a cultural need for both preservation of, and accessibility to, natural resources.

The cumulative effects of time, weathering, and absence of a strict preservation management mandate have eroded campground composition, configuration, and historic integrity. This presentation includes an initial inventory and assessment of selected threatened historic campgrounds, based on criteria such as degree of existing historic integrity, range of geographic accessibility, and ecoregion. Based on the criteria, a range of treatments for the future rehabilitation and preservation of these significant cultural landscapes are proposed.

The goal of this case study approach to these campgrounds is to reveal the continuum of Forest Service landscape history through USFS recreation and recreation policy, the importance of cultural resources in creating public connections to a sense of space and time, and the importance of thoughtful design that embraces context at the site and regional level.

Key questions: what has been the impact of USFS priorities on these campgrounds and what is their status; what is the lasting legacy of the CCC improvements; and what are appropriate preservation treatments for these campgrounds.
THE GARDENS OF ALCATRAZ: HEALING THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND A DAMAGED LANDSCAPE
(paper)

Russell Beatty, University of California, Berkeley, California

Popular images of Alcatraz relate to the Federal Penitentiary – The Rock – where hardened criminals were incarcerated during a very brief period in middle of the 20th century. The original island sculpted as a military fort during the Civil War became first a U.S. Army installation and later a military prison. Prisoners and staff found refuge in the planting of gardens to beautify and create a more inhabitable environment. During the Federal period, a few staff members and inmate gardeners created amazing displays of flowers. This compelling story relates the efforts that lifted the human spirit of the gardeners and softened the harsh landscape of an island prison. Today, The Garden Conservancy (TGC) and the Golden Gate National Park Conservancy (GGNPC) are engaged in the rehabilitation of many of these garden areas.

This paper will present this story and the rehabilitation of the gardens in four parts:

1. Introduction
   - Gardening as a basic human need
     Relief from stress and creative improvement of landscapes
     Refuge from horrors of isolation from society or incarceration

2. Early History of Alcatraz: Military Period (1853-1933)
   - Original barren landscape reshaped as a fort guarding the Golden Gate
   - Victorian gardens of military officers
   - Military prison (1907)
     Gardening by low risk prisoners
     California Spring Blossom & Wildflower beautification

   - “Persian Carpet” of iceplant
   - Freddie Reichel (warden’s secretary) beautification efforts
     Inmate prisoners working with Reichel
   - Elliott Michener’s gardens below the exercise yard – a life-changing story of survival and rehabilitation (based on personal interviews and correspondence)

4. National Park Service
   - Period of neglect (1963 – 1996)
   - Gardens of Alcatraz (1996) sparks interest in gardens and their story
   - TGC garden rehabilitation program in association with GGNPC
   - Rehabilitated gardens and their interpretation as part of NPS visitor program

Relevance to Conference
In contrast to many landscape preservation efforts, the story of the gardens of Alcatraz and the efforts to rehabilitate and interpret the gardens of inmate gardeners add an important cultural dimension to one of the nation’s most visited historic places. The combination of the rich cultural story – how the simple, creative act of gardening – changed lives on one of the world’s most desolate and inhumane places and the resulting beautification and softening of The Rock. Thus, the story of the gardens of Alcatraz is a compelling account of men and plants brought together on an island uninhabitable by either. Today, the rehabilitated gardens and the rich tapestry of plants are a living history of an island in constant change.
Questions for discussion:
1. How does one approach the preservation of a landscape or gardens that tell an important historical story with little concrete documentation?
2. In the case of the Gardens of Alcatraz, how is it possible to recreate, with any degree of accuracy or authenticity, gardens that were the inspiration of inmate gardeners some 60 years ago -- gardens that were largely ephemeral displays of flowering annual and perennial plants?
3. Is there a danger of appearing to “fake it” in the justified effort to tell the story and interpret it to help visitors visualize the gardens that once existed?

Notes:
According to the Oxford English Dictionary, enchantment is “the action or process of enchanting, or of employing magic or sorcery.” The association between a public park, whose purpose is discovery, education, and visitation, and the concept of enchantment might therefore seem tenuous, at best. Still, at park sites like Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, the feeling of enchantment is a fundamental characteristic of the historic landscape.

From the very beginning, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens has been a place of mystery and enchantment. Sometime in the 1880s, a one-armed Civil War veteran named Walter B. Shaw decided to plant a few water lilies from his native Maine down on the swampy, malarial banks of the Anacostia River; a place most people studiously avoided. By 1889, out of this “more than worthless tract of swampy land...little better than pest holes” miraculously came a commercial crop of beautiful, radiant white flowers (Washington Post, October 11, 1909).

The aquatic gardens’ mysterious origins were only one small part of their allure. The magical beauty of water lilies and lotus has captivated the human imagination for centuries, from Asia to the Americas, and in the early 20th century, it captured the attention of Washington, DC. By the 1930s, the gardens were shipping more than 3,000 lilies a day around the country, and welcomed up to 6,000 visitors a week during the summer months. With over 75 types of water lilies and 42 ponds, it was truly a magical place.

Since their acquisition by the federal government in 1938, the gardens have undergone a succession of changes, but their power to enchant has endured. The neighborhood where they are located is now a thoroughly urban one; but passing through the fence into this unusual landscape is every bit as enchanting as it ever was. Unfortunately, much of this feeling can be attributed to the combined role of urbanization and neglect, over the past decades.

The major issue now confronting the National Park Service is thus, how to rectify the overall loss of integrity inflicted by these years of neglect, but at the same time preserve the enchantment of the gardens despite their surrounding urban environment. Theft, vandalism, noise pollution and overcrowded wildlife all threaten to dissolve this core element of the gardens’ historic character. With the increasing development of American cities and suburbs, these issues are shared by many of today’s parks and public sites. My talk will touch on some of the most pressing challenges facing historic landscape preservation in settings such as these. The aquatic gardens case illustrates how landscape characteristics such as natural features, vegetation, and topography are crucial to capturing the feel of an untouched landscape, and thus protect its enchantment. Using this example as a guide, how can the National Park Service seek to actively preserve a feeling of magic and enchantment in other historic cultural landscapes? My talk will address this question and others.
MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY: A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING AND PROTECTING SPECIAL PLACES (work-in-progress)

Shary Page Berg, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Heritage Landscape Inventory program established in 2001 by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is an innovative grassroots approach to identifying and protecting heritage landscapes, which are broadly defined as “special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past.” In the past ten years, 97 communities (over ¼ of the state) have participated in the program, identifying more than 5,000 landscapes representing a wide range of resource types.

The process begins with a community meeting involving participants from multiple groups and constituencies. Participants are encouraged to think broadly about the values that define the character of their community and to identify special places, especially those that are not well known. Typical lists include: town centers, historic neighborhoods, agricultural land, open space, cemeteries, lakes, rivers, scenic roads, industrial properties, archaeological sites, and views.

Next, participants are asked to review the list of resources identified by the community and to select a small number of priority landscapes that are most important to the community, are threatened, and are unprotected. Each community receives a reconnaissance report that lists all of the resources identified by the community; provides recommendations for the priority landscapes; and includes a customized “tool-kit” to address key preservation and planning issues. As each area is completed, there is a regional conference for information sharing and technical assistance.

The response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive. At the local and regional level, participants have expressed their enthusiasm for a process that was proactive rather than reactive and that brought together people from diverse perspectives to coalesce around shared concerns. The program has helped to clarify municipal and regional goals, developed positive solutions for preserving specific landscapes and forged new partnerships.

The process has also brought attention to regionally significant landscapes and resulted in some important preservation success stories. At the state level, the program has identified important landscape resource types and issues that pose a particular challenge for municipalities. DCR has developed a series of popular preservation bulletins on topics such as burial grounds, town commons, scenic roads and stone walls, and provides a monthly e-bulletin to all communities who have participated in the program.

In summary, this innovative and effective program has combined documentation, planning, and constituency building and has grappled with categories and combinations of heritage resources that have been under-represented in traditional historic resource surveys. The program has also extended well beyond the participating communities. The award-wining handbook Reading the Land and the technical bulletins have widely distributed, and the program methodology has been utilized in educational programs at seven colleges and universities.

What other examples of community-based identification of heritage landscape resources exist? Should the public (as opposed to professionals) be involved in identifying significant resources?
This paper examines and compares recent landscape architecture community studios that studied heritage landscapes. Students were asked to develop planning and design strategies sympathetic with Aldo Leopold’s position that the human is a “citizen” not a conqueror of the land-community. The major challenge for students was to work toward concepts that integrated components of sustainability to include heritage, social justice, environment, and economic viability, factors that Leopold recognized as critical to a “land ethic.”

Publication of Aldo Leopold’s *Sand County Almanac* in the 1940s began a discussion about how we should think of and use our land and landscapes. The early discussion constituted a holistic look at sustainability—before “sustainability” became an off-handed buzzword. Leopold’s land ethic demonstrated how all factors impacting the land should work together with integrity, not separately as manipulative actions, to achieve true sustainability. The discussion has waxed and waned over the decades, but as of late, it has increased in momentum with the popularity of work by writers such as Michael Pollen, Barbara Kingsolver and others.

Students were introduced to these writers as well as “new agrarians” such as Eric Freyfogle, who have built on Leopold’s concepts. They promote good land use through an intimate knowledge of the land. The implications for this are far reaching, calling for land resources in the form of modestly-scaled farms and food security; management of land and space to achieve negotiable communities and healthy neighborhoods; and communities that understand and respect its cultural roots, among others. The implications for design and planning are significant in the challenges to address natural and cultural systems as mutually defining while considering impacts of scale.

This paper compares two cases in which new agrarianism philosophy served as a framework for study and application. One project focused on a rural area in the Czech Republic; the other, located in Pennsylvania, examined a small city and its surrounding landscape. Both sites carried the strong imprint of their heritage, clearly evident in the landscape.

While project sponsors and community members were aware of sustainable approaches as discrete efforts, new agrarianism represents a way to understand sustainability more holistically. Through community engagement and design studio activities, students, and stakeholders identified scenarios for developing and managing natural and cultural resources in ways that maintained landscape heritage.

The paper further discusses processes leading to recommendations for innovative physical systems, practices, and relationships. Outcomes based on student and community perspectives are compared. Projections for future projects based on the new agrarian philosophy are also made.

Questions for Discussion:

What role could/should landscape preservationists play in as the planning and management of living, rural landscapes?

How can the emerging field of “rural design” address heritage issues?
EXPLORING ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST: HOW ARE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES FARING? (paper)

Nancy Brown, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Alexandria, Virginia, and Sarah Schlanger, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, New Mexico

We are a year into the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Obama administration’s focus on energy independence. Throughout the country energy projects - some renewable energy in the form of wind or solar projects, others traditional gas and oil development, plus the new and upgraded transmission lines that will carry the energy - are being processed. Nearly all these energy projects have adverse effects on cultural landscapes. Using Bureau of Land Management (BLM) projects as the basis for discussion, this presentation will look at how impacts to cultural landscapes are being addressed as the nation moves forward in developing its energy independence. These energy projects have the prospect of directly impacting landscape resources, but also of indirectly impacting viewsheds and introducing noise and atmospheric changes through dust and pollution to historic sites, trails, and national parks. We will describe the BLM’s Visual Resource Management Program and how that is being used to protect historic trails across the West. We will also discuss 31 fast-tracked renewable energy projects on BLM land that must complete their compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act’s Section 106 by this fall in order for the companies to receive ARRA funding. With no easy answers, this is a continuation of the conversation we started at last year’s Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation meeting that began exploring energy impacts to cultural landscapes.