

# VINEYARD

revealing the relationship between Americans and their land

AN OCCASIONAL RECORD OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE

VOLUME I, ISSUE 1 / 1999

## Cultural Landscape Currents— On-line “success stories” highlighting sound stewardship of our cultural landscape

The new website for the Historic Landscape Initiative's Cultural Landscape *Currents* examines and promotes successful examples of the sound stewardship of cultural landscapes by sharing engaging and educational “success stories” with the broadest possible audience. Each project featured in *Currents* successfully applies *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. The richly illustrated projects include text and visuals that range from the landscape's history and existing conditions to in-depth treatment recommendations, an annotated bibliography of related readings, project maps to orient visitors, and hot links to the websites of the stewards groups for properties featured in *Currents*.

In the January 1999 issue of *Land* magazine, contributing author Bill Welsh notes that, “Cultural Landscape *Currents* is a fast and cost effective way to get technical information to landscape architects and other design professionals interested in landscape architecture, historic preservation, and related issues.” Welsh continues, “In the past, design professionals have had to wait six to eight weeks to

receive technical information through the mail after paying a nominal fee.” *Currents* is free and available now!

Projects selected for *Currents* represent a variety of cultural landscapes, including parks and gardens, rural historic districts and battlefields, even native American cultural sites. *Currents* embraces complex issues and aims to be a state-of-the-art forum for investigating landscape preservation work representing multiple professions—landscape architecture, planning, history, geography, archeology, ecology, use, interpretation, and management—and a variety of stakeholders—owners, stewards, residents, tourists, and special interest groups. The great benefit to web delivery of *Currents* is updating project information as it happens.



*Currents* is current. By partnering with outside authors, *Currents* aims to highlight local projects with national significance.

Suggestions for future topics and guest authors are welcomed.

Inaugural *Currents*—Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Historic Columbia River Highway in Oregon—reflect diversity of type, location, and treatment focus. Future *Currents* will include case studies from Rancho Los Alamitos in Long Beach, California; Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and the Village of South Hampton, Long Island.

### Benjamin Franklin Parkway

The rehabilitation project at Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway focuses on the

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## Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture conference papers available now

In 1995, The National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative participated in the Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture conference at Wave Hill. Proceedings from the conference are now available.

Until now, such a compilation had yet to be prepared on this subject, and in no other situation had such a diverse group of academics, designers, and managers been brought together. Including 12 essays and an introductory message from the Historic Landscape Initiative, the proceedings discuss the problems and dilemmas of saving landscapes that are not old enough to have won a popular constituency. The papers represent distinctive views of those inter-

ested in the design and preservation of such landscapes—two groups who most often share competing concerns. Representative papers include: “Preserving the Recent Past” by Peter E. Walker; “Preservation in the Age of Ecology: Post-World War II Built Landscapes” by Elizabeth K. Meyer; “Playing for Time: Preservation Issues in Contemporary Playground Design” by Lisa E. Crowder; and “Nourishing the Human Gene Pool: Let Us Make and Preserve a Legacy of Landscape Architecture” by Richard Haag.

To illustrate the issues put forth in the Spacemaker Press publication, the following excerpt is from the introduction of *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture—the Proceedings from the Wave Hill Conference*:

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Rehabilitated Benjamin Franklin Parkway  
Photo courtesy Michael Nairn



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#### *Mission of the National Park Service*

The National Park Service is dedicated to conserving unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Service is also responsible for managing a great variety of national and international programs designed to help extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.



# HPS

Heritage  
Preservation  
Services

Welcome to the premiere issue of **VINEYARD**

Why name this occasional record of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative after a specific landscape feature? According to Webster's Dictionary, "Vineyard" (vin'yerd) is not just a "ground planted with cultivated grapevines," but is also "a spiritual, mental, or physical endeavor." Such dual meanings are central to this nation's legacy of cultural landscapes. The goal of *Vineyard* is to reveal the stories of the landscapes themselves, from the perspective of the people who are involved in their stewardship.

*Vineyard* includes—

- ◆ *Features* highlighting Historic Landscape Initiative (HLI) partnership projects;
- ◆ *In The Field* focusing on often controversial, nationally significant landscape preservation projects where the HLI has worked with state and local partners to provide technical support;
- ◆ *In Every Issue* addressing specific treatment and survey projects such as profiles on the treatment and management plan for Decatur, Georgia's historic cemetery and the Indiana statewide landscape survey; and
- ◆ *Updates* on ongoing activities, conferences, and other news.

*Vineyard* articles are authored by HLI staff and guest contributors such as *In The Field*, designed specifically for presenting regional perspectives. Selected articles will also include related bibliographic citations and related organizations as mini-resource guides at the end of the articles. *Vineyard* is carried out in partnership with local, state, tribal, and Federal partners.

Send your suggestions, queries, or requests to be added to our mailing list to [Vineyard@nps.gov](mailto:Vineyard@nps.gov)

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE MISSION

The Historic Landscape Initiative develops preservation planning tools that respect and reveal the relationship between Americans and their land.

The Initiative provides essential guidance to accomplish sound preservation practice on a variety of landscapes, from parks and gardens to rural villages and agricultural landscapes.

The Historic Landscape Initiative is committed to ongoing preservation of cultural landscapes that can yield an improved quality of life for all, a sense of place, and identity for future generations.

## *Cultural Landscape Preservation Directory ... on line in 2000!*

The *Cultural Landscape Preservation Directory* will be the first on-line fully annotated and indexed sourcebook and guide to the many federal and state agencies, tribal organizations, academic institutions, non-profits, and friends groups currently engaged in the preservation, protection, and interpretation of America's cultural landscape legacy. The Directory addresses a broad range of cultural landscape types, including designed landscapes, vernacular landscapes, historic sites, and ethnographic landscapes.

The intended audience is diverse and includes a variety of historic preservation professionals, practitioners, cultural resource stewards, historic property owners, educators, students, and others. The Directory emphasizes those organizations that share the stewardship ethic of the National Park Service, highlighting those initiatives by lesser-known regional and local organizations to serve as models for similar undertakings elsewhere in the nation.

In all, over 700 organizations are represented, covering all 50 states, with information retrievable by geographic location and subject area. And the best part—the directory will be on line in the year 2000!

A sampling of the database holdings can be gleaned from the organizational profiles for the three states that follow—

### Hawaii

Since the mid-1980s, cultural landscape preservation has become a critical issue within Hawaii's historic preservation community and within local communities throughout the Hawaiian islands. Population pressures—brought about through a marked increase in tourism and associated development—threaten vernacular, ethnographic, and designed landscapes throughout the state. The Historic Preservation Division of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources works closely with grassroots preservation groups such as Outdoor Circle and the Historic Hawaii Foundation, to ensure that Hawaii's landscapes, both contemporary and historic, are preserved. Within the past year, the Historic Preservation Division raised the public's awareness that resulted in saving a line of royal trees along a historic Honolulu boulevard from obliteration. They also partnered with the National Park Service and the University of Hawaii's Historic Pres-

ervation Program to sponsor a 1995 conference: "Preserving Hawaii's Traditional Landscapes." The proceedings from this conference were published in June 1998.

### Massachusetts

The state of Massachusetts has had a long association with the profession of landscape architecture, beginning in 1883 when Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903) relocated his office from New York City to the Boston suburb of Brookline. Today Olmsted's home and office, Fairsted, is the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site which houses more than one million documents and approximately 150,000 drawings. The site is also home to the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, which provides innovative landscape maintenance training and programs in skilled workforce development. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, aside from its extensive legacy of Olmsted-designed parks and parkways, reserves, gardens, institutional grounds, cemeteries, and residential subdivisions, boasts an extensive and widely-varied tradition of cultural landscapes. Today these efforts include governmental programs such as the Metropolitan District Commission, academic institutions such as the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, private land trusts such as Deerfield Land Trust, and several hundred diverse friends groups with a keen interest in the state's landscape resources. For example, the country's oldest public garden

and rural cemetery (c.1831) have benefited from long-standing friends groups Partnering to Preserve the Country Estates of Louisville's River Road Historic District associated with them: the Friends of the Public Garden in Boston and the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

### Louisiana

Rich and diverse in history, population and geography, Louisiana's mosaic of designed, vernacular, and ethnographic landscapes remain a relative secret. Efforts have continued for many years, led in part by the State of Louisiana's Division of Historic Preservation, to recognize the unique Isle Brevelle settlement along Cane River in central Louisiana, a community established by and for free people of color, of mixed French, African, and northern European descent. Descendants still live along the lifeblood of the Cane River settlement, they continue to worship at the same church site as their ancestors since the antebellum era; and in some form still inhabit the late-twentieth century cultural landscape through many of the same vernacular traditions of more than a century ago.

Look for the Directory on the HPS/HLI website at <[www.cr.nps.gov/hli](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hli)> in 2000.

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*Aerial view of Hanalei, K'auai showing traditional taro cultivation patterns*  
*Photo courtesy NPS*





*Historic Columbia River Gorge  
Photo courtesy NPS*

### Cultural Landscape *Currents* continued from cover

historic parkway's tree allees and turf. The project examines instances where total replacement of an historic designed landscape feature is warranted. It also addresses such contemporary concerns as urban pollution, vegetation health, and longevity—in the context of limited maintenance and intensive pedestrian and vehicular use.

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway *Currents* specifically focuses on the rehabilitation treatment of the tree plantings on two central medians of a grand boulevard designed by French urban planner Jacques Greber (1882-1962). The decline and loss of the original, formally-spaced allee of double red oak trees (*Quercus rubra*) stimulated a planning and implementation project that replaced these character-defining features.

In many landscape preservation projects where replacement is an issue, public resistance to the removal of mature canopy trees has been an obstacle to developing a preservation treatment plan. In the case of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, public education was an integral part of the plan; diseased and dying trees were removed and new trees of mixed but compatible species were planted in a specially formulated soil that promoted health, vigor and increased longevity.

Thorough documentation of the history and existing conditions coupled with a broadly conceived public outreach program led to public consensus for this rehabilitation treatment. The results: the return of the visual and spatial relationships of the parkway to two double rows of parkway trees in a more sustainable environment, a comprehensive maintenance and management agenda and a more informed constituency.

### Historic Columbia River Highway

The Historic Columbia River Highway was constructed between 1913 and 1922, and is the first scenic highway in the United States. Since the late 1980s, the road and associated historic designed landscapes have undergone rehabilitation; highway segments abandoned in the 1930s and 1950s now serve as trails.

The Columbia River Highway, renamed the Historic Columbia River Highway, was a technical and civic achievement of its time, successfully combining ambitious engineering with sensitivity to the surrounding landscape. The Highway has gained national significance as one of the earliest applications of cliff-face road building in modern highway construction history. The Highway's design and execution are the products of two visionaries—Samuel Hill, the lawyer, entrepreneur and good roads promoter, and engineer and landscape architect, Samuel C. Lancaster. Many citizens provided strong leadership and advocacy for construction of this “King of Roads.”

The Highway runs from Troutdale, just east of Portland, to The Dalles, about 74 miles total. Too narrow and winding for larger automobiles and transport trucks, within a decade of its construction the Highway was bypassed. Two major segments were preserved as scenic drives, but large portions were abandoned and significant resources were lost.

Destruction of the Highway's Hood River

Bridge in 1982 sparked a groundswell of support for saving and restoring the Highway. In 1986, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act called for restoring the highway and for creating trails to connect intact and abandoned segments for recreational use. Public interest grew for returning drivable portions of the Highway to their 1920s appearance and rehabilitating abandoned segments for trail use.

The Historic Columbia River Highway project focused on the rehabilitation of the roadway itself and the repair of contributing landscape features such as masonry guard walls, dry masonry retaining walls, guard rocks, bridges, viaducts, and tunnels. Work has been completed on those segments open to motor vehicles, about 40 miles of the 55 total extant miles. The Oregon Department of Transportation is currently rehabilitating abandoned segments for non-motorized use as the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail. In 1998, the route was designated an All-American Road.

To learn more about *Currents*, visit [www2.cr.nps.gov/hli/currents](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/hli/currents).

*Look for Currents on Reynolda Gardens in  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
Photo courtesy Archives of American Gardens,  
Smithsonian Institution*



## Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture

continued from cover

*An excerpt from the Proceedings introduction—*

As the papers from the Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture conference held at Wave Hill in November 1995 are revisited, the following questions can be asked: why is it that the profession has to be hit over the head with the 20-pound book, (New York 1960), *Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* by Robert A. M. Stern, et al, before we'll even consider developing an equally in-depth contextual statement for modern American landscape architecture? Without such a manifesto, the importance of modernist landscapes will remain invisible to all but a few. Where are the vehicles that will help the public share our vision?

As this very question was recently raised, Jasper Johns' painting "Numbers 1964," which hangs at Lincoln Center's New York State Theatre caused great discussion about Johns' "living work of art." Discussion of the Lincoln Center follows. No mention was made of the courtyard design by landscape architect Daniel Urban Kiley.

Since the Wave Hill conference was held, there has been an increase in professional discourse on preserving modern landscapes. As a result, significant works of landscape architecture may now have a better chance of survival. Now that more has been done to develop an expanded professional forum, what about the general public?

Consider the restoration and redesign of New York City Central Park's "adventure playground" at 67<sup>th</sup> Street to meet contemporary safety requirements; or the rehabilitation of Reston, Virginia's Lake Anne Village Center's focal concrete fountain; and the preservation efforts at Gas Works Park in Seattle, Washington. Not only are the original designers and landscape architects involved with the stewards of these modern places, but affiliated friends groups played an active role in each case and created the impetus for considering these projects more than just new design, but rehabilitation projects—in fact, historic preservation endeavors.

How can these success stories be better understood and shared with a broader public? How can we take the steps to nurture a greater public interest in the future of our designed landscapes?

Why does the public so often allow for the demolition or complete overhaul of modernist works? Research findings about public tastes and perceptions published in Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid's *Painting by Numbers*, (1997) provide valuable clues.

Russian immigrant artists Komar and Melamid, assisted by a professional polling firm, conducted a survey of what Americans, regardless of class, race or gender, really want in art. This first-ever, scientific poll surveyed 1,001 American adults. Questions included: What is beauty? Who defines it? And why is high art so remote from most people? Using the survey results, Komar and Melamid painted the works that were deemed "America's Most Wanted" and "America's Most Unwanted." The conclusion reached about aesthetic attributes in painting can also apply to works of landscape architecture:

### **Art should be relaxing to look at?**

66% agree  
15% disagree

### **Realistic or Different-looking?**

44% realistic  
25% different

### **Sharp angles or curves?**

22% sharp angles  
61% soft curves

### **Colors blended or separate?**

45% colors blended  
20% separate

### **Favorite Color?**

24% blue  
15% green

Landscapes of the historic Hudson River Valley or the works of pioneering landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., or Jens Jensen, possess the same characteristics that appear in art that is "most wanted" in this country. Conversely, Sasaki, Dawson and DeMay Associates design for Boston's Copley Square, like Lawrence Halprin's design for San Francisco's Embarcadero Center, Richard Serra's Tilted Arc in New York City, or Dan Kiley's Lincoln Center courtyard, all reveal the same commonalities. They each possess many of the same characteristics that appear in the "most unwanted" painting—to the visitor, a monochromatic,



*Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Photo Courtesy Lawrence Halprin, 1967*

architectonic scene deemed unfamiliar and even unnerving. It's no surprise that the "shelf life" for any of these projects has been less than 20 years and their preservation often becomes highly controversial.

In an article that appeared the week after the Wave Hill conference in *The New York Times*, columnist Anne Raver notes that "these invisible landscapes are being taken up by a growing number of landscape architects around the country, who are organizing to protect their work, both as works of art and as vessels of cultural history."

Perhaps Ms. Raver's statement (paraphrasing from *Invisible Gardens* by Peter Walker and Melanie Simo) holds the key to this situation. The future of this irreplaceable legacy lies in the hands of the professional community of landscape architects, who are increasingly doing a better job of educating themselves and must now communicate with the public about the significance and uniqueness of these distinctive places. The public seems ready to listen.

See page 16 for *Proceedings...* ordering information.