IN MEMORIAM:

CHARLES MCLAUGHLIN

We are saddened by the death last September of Charles Capen McLaughlin (1929-2005), founding editor of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers and a leading figure in the formation of the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP). Charlie began his work in the Olmsted world early on, choosing Olmsted’s social and planning thought for his prize-winning senior thesis at Yale in 1951. In making this choice, he seems to have drawn from two traditions — the enjoyment of the outdoors and natural world that characterized the career of his father, a noted geologist of the American West, and the concern for scholarship and intellectual pursuits represented by his stepfather Kenneth Murdock, an eminent Colonial historian.

Charlie’s involvement with Olmsted continued in graduate school at Harvard, where for his dissertation on American Civilization in 1960 he edited a number of Olmsted’s most significant letters. He expanded on this editing work in the years following completion of his dissertation as he began teaching at American University (AU) in Washington, DC. During the next decade, he personally financed and directed the work of a small but dedicated coterie of AU students in carrying out much of the research and drafting of annotation that would appear in the early volumes of the Olmsted Papers. In this early work, he received generous assistance from Olmsted’s biographer Laura Wood Roper, who shared her information on Olmsted’s Papers in the Library of Congress. Following the Olmsted Sesquicentennial observances in 1972, funding became available from two federal agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Historical Publications Commission. It was then possible to hire a full-time staff of editors and assistants to work on the Olmsted Papers project. Charlie served as editor-in-chief of the papers until his retirement in 1992 while continuing his teaching career at American University.

During these years, his role as a teacher was a significant one. Through his courses in American intellectual history and urban history he kept alive longstanding traditions of cultural studies, combining them with newer aspects of the discipline of history and displaying a wide-ranging intellectual curiosity. In addition to his scholarly contributions he was a greatly appreciated mentor and encourager of a generation of students at the university.

continued on page 7
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

When NAOP undertook a strategic planning process five years ago, “networking and communications” emerged as a priority for the organization. The planning report stated that the achievement of all of NAOP’s objectives depends significantly on the vitality and effectiveness of its network of members, affiliated organizations, and other friends and partners. In the past six months we have made significant progress in improving existing and developing new informational resources in order to strengthen these connections.

Our Web site (http://www.olmsted.org) has been substantially redesigned to serve as a central source of public information about the Olmsted legacy, enhanced to allow greater exchange between the national office and members, and upgraded to provide timely information and tools for use by professionals and citizens working on behalf of historic landscapes. In partnership with City Parks Alliance, we have also launched Parks Practices (http://www.parkspractices.org), a Web site that highlights the experiences of city parks organizations from around the country and facilitates a sharing of lessons learned.

In the coming year we will be working on several projects, linked to our Web site, that will broaden awareness of the Olmsted principles of design and preservation of historic parks and landscapes. They include republication of the “Greenbook” — an updated Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted firm 1857 – 1950, in partnership with Fairsted, as a companion to the Olmsted Research Guide Online; two new workbooks: a revision of Volume 2, “An Ecosystem Approach to Woodland Management: A Case Study of Prospect Park,” and an analysis of the Landmark Society of Western New York’s experience over 25 years in protecting Seneca Park from land acquisition by a zoo; and the compilation of an inventory of Olmsted research reports.

Finally, we have moved the hub of NAOP activity and are now located in a larger space at 1111 16th Street, NW, in Washington, DC. We still have many bare walls and appreciate donations of color or B&W photos and plans of historic parks. Please contact us if you will be in the nation’s capital so that we may welcome you to our new office and learn about your local research, preservation and advocacy efforts.

—Catherine Nagel

FOUNDERS’ FUND

The NAOP board has created a Founders’ Fund for Education in honor of Dr. Charles C. McLaughlin. The NAOP fund is devoted to education and outreach to inform current and future generations about the magnificent legacy of the Olmsteds with a goal of protecting their many public and private landscapes and giving renewed emphasis to their principles of landscape planning and quality design.

The variety of work to be supported by the fund includes fostering a new generation of Olmsted scholarship by supporting research and publications related to the work of the Olmsteds and their firm, continued editing of the Olmsted Papers and educational outreach regarding the Olmsted legacy. We welcome contributions to the Founders’ Fund. Please make donations payable to NAOP with a note identifying the contribution to the Founders’ Fund.

UPDATE ON WWW.OLMSTED.ORG AND NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

NAOP launched the newly redesigned Web site, http://www.olmsted.org, last October to rave reviews. The fresh look and user-friendly aspects of the new Web site are another step toward NAOP becoming a central source of information about the Olmsted legacy and the network of people who are working on the preservation of historic parks. Shortly after launching the new look, NAOP began the 2nd phase of the site overhaul. The site now offers many interactive features including password protection, online membership and donation capabilities, and online forums. Explore these news features at http://www.olmsted.org.

We are also phasing out the use of our AOL e-mail account. Please update your records with the following e-mail contact information:

General information: info@naop.org
Catherine Nagel, executive director: nagelcatherine@naop.org
April Croft, program manager: croftapril@naop.org
Brett Sheppard, membership coordinator/office manager: sheppardbrett@naop.org

Field Notes is a publication of the National Association for Olmsted Parks. Letters welcome! Send to info@naop.org

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Publication deadline for the fall/winter Issue is August 11, 2006
Northeast

Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Capital Campaign for Buffalo's Olmsted Parks System has reached its goal. Over the past five years, nearly $13 million has been raised for Buffalo's historic Olmsted Park System through contributions from foundations, corporations, government, community groups and individuals. Specific park projects include researching and writing the 20-Year Parks Management and Restoration Plan, endowing salaries for Zone Gardeners, purchasing landscaping equipment and restoring historic park structures.

Each of the six Olmsted-designed parks, their neighboring parkways and circles has benefited with newly constructed pedestrian pathways, landscape enhancements, the rebuilding of circles, shelter houses, play spaces and a wading pool.

Buffalo now goes into the second phase of its parks campaign, with a goal of $12.6 million for projects that will continue to beautify Buffalo's Olmsted parkland and keep the Olmsted system in the national spotlight for the significant role it plays in re-building the region.

In addition, the February 2006 issue of Landscape Superintendent and Maintenance Professional magazine featured an in-depth article about the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy. In a three-page, full color spread, the conservancy is recognized for its highly regarded park maintenance practices, the Zone Management System. Visit http://www.buffaloolmstedparks.org for more information.

Catena, the Digital Archive of Historic Gardens and Landscapes, is a free educational resource for teaching the history of gardens and landscape architecture. Its primary mission is to fill a void in American higher education by assembling a searchable collection of historic and contemporary images that include plans, engravings, paintings and photographs. The current collection focuses on the history of European villas and their gardens from antiquity to the early twentieth century. Sponsored by the Bard Graduate Center through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Catena, the Digital Archive of Historic Gardens and Landscapes and its companion Web site, is envisioned as part of a larger, typologically organized archive of digital images with accompanying educational materials. The Web site is viewable at http://catena.bgc.bard.edu/.

Connecticut State Senator Bill Finch (D-Bridgeport) was honored with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects’ (ASLA) 2005 Connecticut Olmsted Award. Senator Finch received the award at the society’s Olmsted Celebration last October. The Connecticut Olmsted Award is given annually by the chapter to a person or organization who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to stewardship of the land, in the spirit of the award’s namesake, Connecticut native Frederick Law Olmsted.

Finch was selected for the award based on his ongoing efforts to reduce pollution in the state, promote agricultural conservation and protect Long Island Sound.

Senator Finch was also the chief sponsor of the legislature’s bill to honor Olmsted’s contribution to architecture in Connecticut at the Beardsley Zoo, Trinity College and Yale University. Last year, the bill passed through both chambers and was signed by the governor, designating April 26 of each year Frederick Law Olmsted Day. Visit http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/pr/finch-051020.html for more information.

The Inaugural Observance of Frederick Law Olmsted Day in Connecticut in honor of its native son will be held April 26th at the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford. This conference will focus on Olmsted’s early life in Connecticut, which instilled his love of its countryside and the enduring legacy of his ideas and the many landscape designs still treasured today. Sponsored by the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance and the Connecticut Chapter of ASLA, the major speakers include: Charles Beveridge, the noted author and editor of many authoritative works on Olmsted; Tupper Thomas, president and park administrator of the Prospect Park Alliance, Brooklyn, NY; and Faye Harwell, landscape architect of Rhodeside and Harwell, Alexandria, VA. An afternoon bus tour of Olmsted Hartford sites will conclude the events. For further information or questions, send an e-mail to norma_williams@sbcglobal.net.

Andrew Jackson Downing Memorial Park announces success in restoring this amazing 35-acre landscape park located in the heart of the City of Newburgh, NY. The park was designed by Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted as a memorial to their mentor and teacher. It was also the last collaborative
effort by Olmsted and Vaux — as well as the only project that included both their sons, John Olmsted and Downing Vaux. For more information, please contact Christopher Tripoli at 845-565-5559 or via e-mail at downingpark@verizon.net.

Anne Eades, president of Friends of Buttonwood Park in New Bedford, MA, reports they are “going great guns down here” on the south coast of New England and looking forward to a year long celebration of their 20th year anniversary as Friends of Buttonwood Park. They are gearing up for spring by getting their 35 Friends of Buttonwood Park volunteer “Tree Keepers” ready. Watering and tending each of their 150 new trees has provided a great opportunity for the neighborhood volunteers to contribute to the renaissance and upkeep of this beautiful Olmsted urban greenspace. For more information, visit http://www.buttonwoodpark.org/.

Friends of Pinebank in Brookline, MA, reports that a recent structural assessment of Pinebank, the Victorian-era mansion overlooking Jamaica Pond in Boston’s Emerald Necklace park system, recommends that “Pinebank be taken down.” The 138-year-old Pinebank mansion is the only large building Frederick Law Olmsted incorporated into his Emerald Necklace parklands. Friends of Pinebank believes many useful community purposes are feasible for a renovated building and speaks out against demolition by neglect. Visit http://www.pinebank.org for more information.

NAOP Trustee Barbara Wilks and her firm W Architecture and Landscape Architecture were awarded the 2004 Award of Merit for Analysis and Planning by the American Society of Landscape Architects for their design of the West Harlem Master Plan and Waterfront Park. For more information, visit http://www.w-architecture.com.

Northfield Mount Hermon School, a preparatory school located in Northfield and Gill, MA, has recently discovered that the 1909-1911 landscaping of Perry Pond on the Northfield campus was an Olmsted Brothers firm project. The associate in charge was Percival Gallagher, who designed many campus plans throughout the nation at Phillips Academy, Bryn Mawr, Vassar and the University of Washington. Recently, he has been recognized for his 1920s garden designs for the Landon family at Oldfields, now on the grounds of the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

The Arthur Perry family of Concord, MA, not only gave the money for the pond’s improvement to the then Northfield Seminary but also worked with Gallagher on the design. They wished to enlarge the pond for skating as well as to provide a focal point for the hillside campus. Gallagher’s plan included improving a bridge and strengthening a dam by appropriate plantings of native trees. Flowering shrubs and perennials softened a causeway between upper and lower pond areas. The original planting plan and plant list, archived at Fairsted, demonstrate that most of the trees and the picturesque stone bridge extant today are original.

The Northfield Mount Hermon School initiated this documentation in order to responsibly steward the Northfield campus, recently vacated when the school consolidated on the Mount Hermon campus. Alumni are hoping that new knowledge about this significant landscape will help protect its integrity in the future. For more information, visit http://www.nmhschool.org/about/future/northfield/.

On October 17, 2005, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Congressman Major R. Owens joined Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall, Prospect Park Alliance President Tupper Thomas and Robert Witherwax of the Eastern Parkway Cultural Row Neighborhood to announce a $5.9 million reconstruction of Brooklyn’s Eastern Parkway, between Washington Avenue and Grand Army Plaza. The reconstruction plan, developed with the Prospect Park Alliance, will restore Frederick Law Olmsted’s and Calvert Vaux’s vision of a beautifully landscaped
median along the parkway and Prospect Park that affords vistas of Grand Army Plaza.

The project will return approximately 1,700 linear feet of landscaped median to public use to make the area safer for pedestrians. Funded with $4 million from the Mayor’s Executive Budget and $1.9 million dollars of federal transportation funds allocated by Congressman Owens, it is scheduled to begin in fall 2007 and will be completed in 2009. New street trees, lighting, signage and benches will be installed to the medians and parkway. For more information on the Prospect Park Alliance, visit http://www.prospectpark.org.

The Olmsted legacy in the Union County Park System in New Jersey and the “nearly lost” Olmsted treasures were the subjects of a presentation by Kathleen P. Galop, Esq., and Sean Ryan, ASLA, at the NJ Chapter of the ASLA Meeting in Atlantic City, NJ, in January. Galop and Ryan focused attention on the connected system of parks, parkways and boulevards that exist today and that had been envisioned by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects firm when recommending lands to be acquired for the Union County Park System in its report in 1921. They also discussed the legal intricacies surrounding the formation of the Union County Park System under New Jersey’s Park Act legislation.

With support from grants from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and the New Jersey Historical Commission, Galop and Ryan have worked on locating, organizing, inventorying and cataloguing the park system’s dispersed archives, which include over 15,000 historical photographs, dozens of original Olmsted maps and drawings, scrap books and planting plans. The audience for their presentation, New Jersey’s landscape architects, left the talk with a greater appreciation for the significance of the Olmsted design for these parks and the importance of saving the archives. For more information, you may contact Galop at kpgalop@att.net and Ryan at sryan@ucnj.org.

**Southeast**

The Louisville Olmsted Park Conservancy has its first real home since moving into the Metro Park headquarters in Joe Creason Park in January. The Olmsted Center, a new moniker for the space, will not only house conservancy staff, but will also eventually provide an area for the public to research archival materials. “It will be such an advantage to have all our materials and resources under one roof. We look forward to assisting people who are interested in Olmsted by providing a place where they can read and examine historic plans, photographs and documents on each of the 18 Olmsted Parks and Parkways,” said Susan Rademacher, conservancy president. For more information, visit [http://www.olmstedparks.org/](http://www.olmstedparks.org/).

Lucy Lawliss, NAOP co-chair and cultural resources program manager with the National Park Service (NPS) in California, will be the guest speaker at the third annual Olmsted Birthday Luncheon in Atlanta, GA, on April 27. Organized by the Georgia Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, this yearly event celebrates the life and work of Olmsted at a luncheon with a guest speaker near the date of his birthday. This year’s attendee list has been expanded with members from the Georgia Planning Association and the Georgia Urban Forest Council also invited to attend. For more information, visit [http://www.gaasla.org](http://www.gaasla.org).

This year is going to be an exciting time for Piedmont Park in Atlanta, GA, with the approval of The BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD), which will provide the majority of funding to invest in greenspace, trails, transit and affordable workforce housing as well as jumpstart redevelopment along the entire BeltLine; the approval of the new Master Plan for the Park; and now — the 10th Landmark Luncheon on May 10. This annual event, which began 10 years ago as a fundraiser for Piedmont Park Conservancy, was originally themed to honor different historic landmarks within the park. That tradition continues this year as they celebrate the completion of another restoration project — the Active Oval/Ball fields.

Piedmont Park’s Active Oval | Ball fields in Atlanta, GA, were recently restored. Photograph courtesy of Sarah Shanks, Piedmont Park Conservancy

This year’s event, led by George and Amanda Olmstead, will honor Turner Broadcasting Systems for their continued financial and volunteer support of green space in Metro Atlanta. The event will also applaud the tremendous contributions of the Atlanta Track Club, which donated a state-of-the-art, crushed gravel path around the restored ball fields. Good food, engaging speakers and stylish hats will be highlights of this beautiful spring luncheon in Piedmont Park. Visit [http://piedmontpark.org](http://piedmontpark.org) for more information.
**Mid-West**

The Whitaker Foundation has awarded a grant of $200,000 to restore and enhance the historic urban forest at **Tower Grove Park in St. Louis, MO**. The grant includes a challenge opportunity whereby the Whitaker Foundation will provide $150,000 in matching funds if the park raises that amount before the end of the grant period.

The Whitaker Foundation funding will allow more planting of new trees, which will aid in balancing and diversifying the collection to demonstrate the full range of species that can grow in St. Louis. It will also support the removal of dead and dying trees, and maintenance of the current inventory of living trees in a healthy and attractive condition. The overall result will be an urban forest that is not only healthier and more attractive, but also one that is closer in spirit to the gardenesque style of its original planting. For more information about Tower Grove Park or how you can assist in matching the challenge, call 314-771-4454 or visit http://www.towergrovepark.org.

**West**

Funded by a HGTV-Save America’s Treasures Grant, the Dunn Gardens in **Seattle, WA** was able to complete five restoration projects in 2005. Among these projects was the restoration of the Great Lawn, one of the signature features in this Olmsted-designed landscape. About 13 years ago, large amounts of sand were brought in to form a base and contour most of the lawn area, and the lawn became much more dependent on summer watering. The renovation corrected this problem. The lawn was rototilled, and 170 cubic yards of compost and 5000 lbs. of amendments were incorporated along with 60 bales of peat moss, 800 lbs. of fertilizer, drought resistant seed and sphagnum moss. The lawn is now beautiful, water use is down about 40% of previous years, and the weed population has dropped dramatically. For more information, visit http://www.dunngardens.org.

The Friends of Piedmont Way in **Berkeley, CA**, have won a National Trust Preservation Fund matching grant to advance the preparation of a HALS (Historic American Landscape Survey) listing. Frederick Law Olmsted envisioned this residential street in 1865, incorporating design concepts that predate and establish the foundation for his later work at Riverside. For more information, visit http://www.nationaltrust.org/about_the_trust/newsletters/wro/wro-1205.pdf or http://www.piedmontway.org.

In October 2006, more than 6,000 parks and recreation professionals will arrive in Seattle to attend the 2006 annual national conference of the National Recreation and Park Association. The conference will showcase Seattle’s Olmsted park system through tours and workshops. It will also provide opportunities to discuss the broader Olmsted legacy with park managers, both locally and nationally, and the importance of restoring and enhancing historic parks. For more information, visit http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/.

**Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks** conducted a workshop in January regarding the care of the historic Olmsted legacy as part of an all day 2006 Park Resources Conference hosted by **Seattle Parks and Recreation** for several hundred of the in-the-field park resource and other maintenance staff who take care of all the parks, boulevards and trailways in the city’s inventory. For more information, visit http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/friendsofholmstedparks/ and http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/.

Two fountains, a reflecting pool, and an Art Deco bas relief sculpture are currently undergoing restoration at Woodland Park’s nationally-recognized rose garden, one of Seattle’s favorite John Charles Olmsted-designed green spaces. Seattle Parks Foundation, a private nonprofit for parks, has raised $77,000 so far for the restoration. Visit http://www.seattleparksfoundation.org/project_RoseGarden.html for more information.

**International**

NAOP Trustee Daniel Chartier received the 2005 award for an individual given by the Conseil des Monuments et Sites du Québec for his work on behalf of cultural landscapes. One of the three areas of endeavor/accomplishment cited in the award certificate is his expertise and sharing of his knowledge of the work of Frederick Law Olmsted with particular regard to Mount Royal. An article in La Presse, Montréal, the leading French language newspaper, called Daniel “the defender” of Olmsted’s original idea for a slow, gradual ascent of the “Mountain” — the name favored by Olmsted as a term of respect. The conseil is a private non-profit provincial organization whose mission is the protection and restoration of Quebec’s patrimony — buildings and cultural landscapes. For more information, visit http://www.cmsq.qc.ca/honneur/honneur.htm.
The 10-story high main stairway of Mount Royal has been completely rebuilt at a cost of almost $1 million Canadian dollars provided by the City of Montréal. The stairway now adheres more to Frederick Law Olmsted’s original idea for a slow, gradual ascent of the Mountain. The stairway facing downtown Montréal gives access from Cragsfoot to Upperfell, district names given by Olmsted. Visit http://www.ville.montreal.qc.ca for more information.

Both Charlie’s knowledge of Olmsted and his great charm gave him a significant role with NAOP. He was a founding member in 1980 and served as co-chair during its earliest years, first with Joan Bozer of Buffalo, NY, and then with Betsy Shure Gross of Brookline, MA. They were key players in establishing NAOP as an effective, and national, force for spreading understanding of the work of Olmsted and his firm and for preserving and restoring the legacy of the land. He can indeed be said to have played a special part in giving “a human face” to Olmsted studies and the Olmsted movement. Joan Bozer remembers him fondly, stating, “Charles McLaughlin was a gentle, witty and brilliant Olmsted guru who was a leader in establishing NAOP. He inspired a national resurgence of appreciation for Frederick Law Olmsted’s national legacy of magnificent landscapes.”

Charlie played a significant role in other venues as well. He was active in the controversy over extension of the West Front of the U.S. Capitol in the early 1970s, making a film on the subject for television, and writing an influential article, “The West Front in Peril? The West Front Controversy from Walter to Stewart.” He also served for a number of years on the Joint Committee for Landmarks for the National Capital.

Following Charlie’s retirement from American University, he returned to his study of Olmsted’s early years, editing “Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England,” Olmsted’s delightful account of a walking tour in 1850. Excerpts from this new edition describing his response to the English landscape are presented in the Reprints section of this issue of “Field Notes.”

More striking, however, than these qualities of Charlie’s — his intellectual curiosity, scholarly activity, and preservation advocacy — was the example he set of sheer personal courage, persevering day after day in the face of the adversity of the crippling effects of polio, always valuing bonhomie and maintaining a tone of civility, graciousness and good humor. Combined with this was his persistent and irresistible love of puns and generous appreciation of other people.

Charlie was in many respects the representative member of the first generation of the Olmsted revival. We will not see the likes of him again and we will miss him very much.

-Charles E. Beveridge
News From Fairsted

The Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site remains closed to visitors during a construction program to improve its fire suppression, museum climate and site drainage systems. Though the Olmsted site is closed for construction, the Olmsted Archives remains open for limited archival reference services; check the Web site for contact information and updates at http://www.nps.gov/frola.

The Olmsted site and NAOP continue our joint project to expand the popular Olmsted Research Guide Online. Recent work entered data associated with the Olmsted firm’s plan index card collection, including the number of plan index cards for each design project, as well as the date range and draftsmen listed on the cards for each project.

The Olmsted site is pleased to announce that in 2006 we will begin a new Historic Resource Study, to examine the physical, intellectual and social environment of Brookline, MA, during the periods of FLO Senior and the Olmsted firm. We seek to document and better understand the environment that initially drew FLO to Brookline and more particularly to the Green Hill community immediately surrounding Fairsted. The study will also examine the influences of the community on Olmsted and the Olmsted firm, and their reciprocal influences on the community. The study will be prepared in collaboration with the Organization of American Historians.

– Lee Farrow Cook, Site Manager, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

ADVOCACY UPDATE

U.S. Capitol Grounds

NAOP continues its work on behalf of the Olmsted-designed U.S. Capitol Grounds. Following a discussion with the NAOP Board in September 2005, Beverly Wood, Office of the Architect of the Capitol, made a commitment to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report as part of the master planning process for the U.S. Capitol Complex. Subsequently, NAOP has been working with her staff to provide expertise on the Olmsted vision as architectural elements, such as the Olmsted walls and the Summer House, undergo restoration. In the coming months we will continue our work to build a coalition to support recognition of this historic landscape as a part of the nation’s heritage. We are also exploring the possibility of developing a Washington, DC, regional tour that would highlight Olmsted projects and bring greater awareness to the body of work by the firm in the nation’s capital.

Piedmont Park

The Atlanta City Council approved construction of a parking deck inside Piedmont Park at its November 21, 2005, meeting by a vote of 12 – 3. Eighteen of 19 neighborhood planning units (NPUs) in the city opposed the deck. (City ordinance requires master plans/amendments for parks of more than 100 acres go to the City’s 24 neighborhood planning units for review.) The staff of the Atlanta Urban Design Commission (AUDC) recommended against the deck and four of the seven members of the AUDC present at the hearing for review and comment opposed the deck in their comments. A special task force appointed by the mayor issued a report endorsing the deck. The Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs and the mayor supported construction of the deck.

NAOP sent a letter to the members of the Atlanta City Council in November 2005, asking that the 1995 master plan continue to guide the historic park’s rehabilitation and that a deck inside the park be reconsidered.
City Proposes Transfer of Historic Olmsted Park for Commercial Development

Editor’s Note: This update is provided by the McMillan Park Committee as a follow-up to the NAOP board’s visit to the site on September 25, 2005.

In a surprise move on March 29, Mayor Anthony Williams of the District of Columbia announced plans to accelerate the proposed transfer of the historic 25-acre McMillan Reservoir Sand Filtration Site to the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) for commercial development. NCRC, a semi-private real estate development corporation that states it has “the sites, projects, expertise and toolkit of incentives to make deals happen,” selected the McMillan site from several offered by the city in a money and land swap deal.

Located three miles north of the U.S. Capitol with commanding views of Washington’s monumental core, the Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. designed landscape is part of the historic McMillan Reservoir Park, a 100 plus acre park and water filtration facility for the district. The remainder of the property outside of the 25 acres continues to serve as part of the city’s water supply infrastructure and is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The District government purchased the decommissioned facilities in the mid 1980s and has offered the property several times in the past to developers, without success.

The McMillan Park Committee, Inc. (MPC), a local non-profit citizens’ organization has been working since the 1980s to promote the restoration and re-use of the Sand Filtration Site as a public park. MPC is tracking the proposed transfer and has been working with NAOP staff and board members for over a year on advocacy issues. In September 2005, MPC, working with NAOP staff, organized a tour of the site and neighborhood for NAOP board members.

For more information, contact Richard Houghton of the McMillan Park Committee at 202-526-7380 or via e-mail at mrac.brookland@verizon.net.

For more information on NAOP’s advocacy, visit http://www.olmsted.org.

MAJOR URBAN PARKS SUMMIT PLANNED FOR MAY

Hundreds of city park directors, staff, advocates, users and reformers are expected to converge on Chicago on May 17 and 18 for a special “Urban Parks & Recreation Summit,” the most important gathering of its kind in many years. City Parks Alliance, NAOP’s partner, is a co-sponsor of this one-time event along with the National Recreation and Park Association and Trust for Public Land as well as other organizations.

Among the workshops to be presented will be “Making the Most of Historic Parks,” which will focus on how great historic parks are helping to revitalize local economies. NAOP Co-Chair, Susan West Montgomery, will moderate the panel. Hosted by the Chicago Park District, the summit will feature nationally recognized speakers and include tours of Chicago’s parks. NAOP members are encouraged to come to Chicago where a number of interesting examples of waterfront development have been completed or are in the process of execution. For more information, visit http://cityparksalliance.org. The NAOP board meeting will immediately follow the summit. A tour of Chicago’s historic parks will take place on Saturday, May 20 from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Invitations will be sent to NAOP members in the Chicago area.
UPCOMING EXHIBITION
Altered Landscapes, Central and Rock Creek Parks:

Photographs by Victoria Cooper

Exhibition at the American Institute of Architects Headquarters Gallery
1735 New York Ave., NW, Washington, D.C.
Gallery open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Admission Free

The Octagon, the Museum of the American Architectural Foundation, in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects, is pleased to present an exhibition of evocative photographs by Washington, DC–based artist Victoria Cooper. Featuring over 45 images, the exhibition highlights the dramatic beauty of two of the East Coast’s most beloved city parks.

The brilliant engineering and masterful artistic vision of Frederick Law Olmsted serves as the inspiration for this stunning collection of images. The majority of the exhibition’s images relate to the altered landscape of Central Park, complemented by a smaller series of photos of Washington, DC’s Rock Creek Park. Although geographically the two parks could not be more different, there exists a continuum of design influence from Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. to his son Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., who was responsible for the design and development of the District’s regional park system. In addition to framed prints, a large-scale installation is planned for this exhibition. This breathtaking work titled Cathedral of Trees will be composed of six large-scale panels of images printed on silk and will evoke the sensation of being under the canopy of trees that line the famous Promenade in Central Park.

Victoria Cooper received a BFA from New York University School of the Arts and is an award-winning professional photographer. For additional information, visit http://www.archfoundation.org/octagon/exhibitions/upcoming.htm and http://www.victoriacooper.net.

“EDENS LOST & FOUND” TO AIR THIS SPRING ON PBS

“Edens Lost & Found” a four-hour PBS series that premieres in May 2006, showcases extraordinary stories of environmental rebirth in four very different American cities: Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Seattle. Each one-hour program examines the unique environmental, economic and social issues that face one of the country’s great cities and the innovative solutions that have helped to turn its problems around.

The PBS series begins with “Chicago: The City of Big Shoulders” on Thursday, May 18 at 10 p.m., which features a brief discussion of Olmsted at the beginning of the show (check local listings). The series continues the following week with “Philadelphia: The Holy Experiment” hosted on May 25th (check local listings). The series will resume in fall 2006 with programs that feature Los Angeles and Seattle.

Produced by award-winning television producers Harry Wiland and Dale Bell, “Edens Lost & Found” is the centerpiece of an extensive public campaign to target decision makers in industry and government, engage citizens in the challenge of urban sustainability, and share ideas that have proven effective and can be readily replicated.

PUBLICATIONS


The Friends of Maryland’s Olmsted Parks & Landscapes (FMOPL) has published a series of three driving tour booklets. The series, Baltimore’s Public Landscapes, includes “The Olmsted Influence — A Driving Tour Through Northern Baltimore,” “From Private Estates to the Public Domain — A Driving Tour of West Baltimore’s Olmsted Legacy,” and “Waterfront and Neighborhood Parks — A Driving Tour of Southern Baltimore’s Olmsted Legacy.” Major features of the tours are stream valleys, scenic boulevards, historic neighborhoods and large and small public parks. Publications are $5 each and can be ordered by e-mailing FMOPL president, Judy Dobbs, at jbec423@comcast.com.

Old Torrance, titled to describe the historic and beautiful downtown Torrance, CA, shows reminiscences of architects Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Irving J. Gill in this recently published book. Enthusiast Bonnie May Barnard captures past life through over 200 vintage photographs of the city’s industrial, business and residential districts. After viewing “Old Torrance: Olmsted Districts,” you’ll want to stroll the streets of the city, as many of the treasures found in these pages still exist and can be enjoyed in Old Torrance today. Author Bonnie Mae Barnard and her husband, Don, founded Save Historic Old Torrance (http://www.savehistoricoldtorrance.com), which is dedicated to preserving the historic landmarks in the city of Torrance. For more information, visit http://www.arcadiapublishing.com or call 888-313-2665.

This landscape history written by Carol Grove was published last fall by the University of Massachusetts Press in association with the Library of American Landscape History. It significantly advances our understanding of the inspiration behind the development of Tower Grove Park and the Missouri Botanical Garden. It chronicles the efforts of Henry Shaw to set up a park and garden in a St. Louis that was emerging from a river-based antebellum town to a large and more industrial city. It also provides insight into Shaw’s use and understanding of 19th century landscape concepts and literature, and their adaptation to the fertile ground of the Mississippi River Valley. For more information, visit http://www.towergrovepark.org/.

“Old Torrance: Olmsted Districts”
Authors: Bonnie May Barnard and Save Historic Old Torrance
Publisher: Arcadia Publishing
Images of America Series
Price: $19.99
128 pages/softcover

“Henry Shaw’s Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park”
Author: Carol Grove
Publisher: University of Massachusetts Press
in association with the Library of American Landscape History.
Price: $39.95, cloth
The Parks Practices Web site, a joint initiative of the National Association for Olmsted Parks and City Parks Alliance, was launched in January 2006. Viewable at http://www.parkspractices.org, the new resource seeks to highlight the experiences — both successes and challenges — of NAOP and CPA members, facilitate a sharing of lessons learned and provide opportunities for interaction among city park leaders and citizen groups.

“Local park leaders around the country face enormous challenges in their effort to restore, operate, maintain and fund their parks as well as serve increasingly diverse constituents,” said Catherine Nagel, executive director of the National Association for Olmsted Parks and City Parks Alliance. “The new Practices Web site provides a central source of information to highlight creative solutions that will assist urban and historic park leaders and advocates in meeting their current needs more effectively.”

Five topics have been chosen for the first phase of the site: Management of Natural Resources in Parks, Educating the Next Generation of Stewards, Involving the Community in Park Restoration and Redevelopment, Funding/Alternative Sources of Revenue and Making the Case for Parks. If you would like to prepare a case study, please complete the form on the Web site.