NAOP DENVER CONFERENCE

NAOP's conference and annual meeting, "Making a Visible Difference: An Olmsted Gathering in the Rockies", will be held on Thursday and Friday, May 14 and 15, at the Denver Botanic Gardens in Denver, Colorado.

Co-sponsored by Denver Parks and Recreation Department, Denver Botanic Gardens, the Park People, ASLA's Colorado Chapter and Jane Silverstein Ries, and the National Park Service, this NAOP conference will focus on the relevance of the Olmsted vision to the 21st Century. The program includes practical seminars on restoration and maintenance of Olmsted and historic landscapes, specific restoration problem analysis as well as design and historical policy issues, mobile workshops of Denver's parks and parkways and its Mountain Park system—and optional tours of the National Park System's Service Center with its visual simulator and cultural landscape projects. The conference co-ordinators, Carolyn and Don Etter, formerly of the Denver Parks and Recreation Department, have organized a full and interesting two day program taking advantage of Denver's unique park system.

Not only does Denver have an extensive 4,000 acre park and 30 mile parkway system within the city, but its 14,000 acre mountain parks located in the foothills and mountains of the Rockies outside the city limits are a remarkable example of civic leadership and environmental as well as aesthetic protection. The city park system was the first city wide park system to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and its Mountain Park System, also on the National Register (1990), was the first city park system to be located outside the city boundaries.

Denver's city parks and parkways "command the Denver urban setting...provide a structural framework, a design framework, functional framework, and an aesthetic framework for the city", as conference co-ordinator Don Etter stated in the nomination that he prepared for the National Register for Historic Places. In 1894, a year after the Columbia Exposition, the Territorial Governor John Evans and his son first conceived a comprehensive park and parkway system, but it was not until Mayor Robert W. Speer, who held office from 1914-1918, that the City Beautiful Movement took hold in Denver.

Mayor Speer's dream of a beautified Denver was a sharp contrast with the Denver of the 1890s when the
frontier ethic of rugged individualism squelched much sense of community and civic action. Mayor Speer transformed "a dusty, dirty town into a functional, beautiful city", as stated in the Mountain Park nomination for the National Register. Speer made his dreams come true. He developed a civic center, the city parks and parkways and the mountain parks, hired the country's leading planners and park designers like Charles Mulford Robinson, George Kessler, and the Olmsted Brothers, implemented a height ordinance to preserve the mountain views, banned billboards, and established a City Forester's Office and hired a landscape architect/planner to work on the "greening of Denver". These efforts of Mayor Speer and others civilized the city, making Denver beautiful and livable.

The Denver parks and parkways were guided by the advice of many people like Reinhold Schuetz, S.R. DeBoer, Charles Mulford Robinson, George Kessler and the Olmsted Brothers, but it was the 1907 Kessler plan, based on the 1906 Robinson plan that has been the backbone of the current in-city system. A windmill design of parks and parkways utilizing the mountain backdrop and providing much needed water made these parks seem like a "green oasis" - a veritable arboretum - at the edge of the High Plains, as Etter describes it. A great variety of areas existed in the 16 parkways and 15 parks on the Register from the 80 acre Cheesman Park in a high density residential area, described by Vincent Scully as one of the finest urban spaces in America, to City Park, a large 317 acre people's park as described by Robinson in 1906, with a wide range of active and passive uses, two lakes, pavilions, golf course, gateways, and the Museum of Natural History.

The Denver Mountain Parks consist of 13,488 acres of foothill and mountain parks interconnected by loop and spur scenic mountain drives owned by the City of Denver— all outside the corporate limits of the City. This system was planned and designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Saco Rienk DeBoer, the City of Denver's landscape architect and first city planner, and Jules J.B. Benedict and Burnham Hoyt, Denver architects. In 1912 a Special Park Committee, which outlined the legal and financial ways of obtaining the lands, saw this "Mountain Park for Denver...as the first step, and perhaps the greatest step in the great movement of making our mountains available to the people". "It is Denver's chance", the Committee states, "to open a gateway into the mountains and to take the lead in making Colorado more attractive to tourists than Switzerland". Olmsted went to work as soon as legal and financial hurdles were overcome. His 1912 memorandum laying out his general policies and design concepts was so well received that many of the key parcels in his acquisition plan were purchased prior to his 1914 plan. This Park System not only provided recreation opportunities, it protected the environment, preserved critical visual areas, and importantly, "created a series of protected open spaces which control the pattern of mountain and foothill development near Denver", according to the National Register nomination. It was farsighted regional planning.

Come to Denver to see for yourself. The seminars and tours should provide varied opportunities from practical sessions of restoration practices to mobile workshops of these unique parks. Learn how you can make a "visible difference".

Information on registration for the conference is listed in the CALENDAR on page 7.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NEWS

NAOP has been working with the National Park Service on Olmsted and historic landscapes ever since NAOP's inception and it is very exciting to report the recent progress of the Park Service on many fronts. For the NAOP members who were working with the Park Service in the 1980s, the following report should make them realize that all their past efforts have paid off.

WASHINGTON, D.C. Charles Bimbaum, a landscape architect and loyal NAOP member who has worked in New York for Walmsley & Co. and recently with Patricia O'Donnell, has joined the staff of the Park Service as the Historic Landscape Architect, the position previously held by Lauren Meier, now at Fairsted. Charles, also chairman of ASLA's Committee on Historic Preservation, can be reached at the Preservation Assistance Division by calling 202/343-9578. Welcome to Washington, Charles!

FAIRSTED The Park Service's National Historic Site at the Olmsted office and home, is bursting with activities, which are important not only in the Boston area, but to people involved in Olmsted and historic preservation work around the country. Fairsted, aside from being the depository of Olmsted maps and plans, has become under the able direction of Rolf Diamant a major source for information on historic landscapes.
A new film, *From Pencil to Park: Preserving Olmsted Landscapes*, co-sponsored by Fairsted and ASLA, will have its premiere at NAOP's upcoming Denver conference. This 17 minute film focuses on the importance of preserving Olmsted landscapes and their role in enhancing the quality of urban life. Filmed in Prospect Park, the Emerald Necklace, and at Fairsted, it features NAOP members, Charles Beveridge, Noni Ames and Katie Jo Johnson. Fairsted is sending twelve copies of the film to NAOP's office for free distribution to Olmsted and other groups interested in Olmsted and historic landscape missionary work.

Lauren Meier has joined the staff of Fairsted as a Cultural Landscape Architect. In her few years with the Park Service in Washington, Lauren was able to make incredible strides in establishing an intellectual and administrative basis for historic landscape preservation. We look forward to learning of her work at Fairsted.

The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation has been established at Fairsted as a clearinghouse to provide technical assistance and specialized training for public and private agencies and organizations in the preservation and maintenance of historic landscapes. Lauren Meier will be working for the Center along with Charles Pepper, a horticulturist.

In conjunction with the Center, an historic plants' nursery for plants now commercially unavailable is being established at the Minute Man National Historic Park in Concord. The ground breaking is scheduled for this summer.

Also, the new Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, through a cooperative agreement with Harvard's Arnold Arboretum, will obtain technical expertise on plant identification and propagation from the Arnold Arboretum. In turn, the National Park Service will help devise visitor programs for the Arnold Arboretum.

Fairsted has prepared an exhibit showing how the Olmsted Firm functioned. It may be viewed at the New England Flower Show in Boston from March 14 to 23. The interior of the Olmsted design office has been recreated for this exhibit which will explain the Olmsted firm's design process. The Fairsted staff thinks this exhibit is gold medal material, but, unfortunately, we have to go to press before the awards are announced. For those not in the Boston area, perhaps this exhibit will be seen at future conferences, as it can be reconstructed for reuse. It may be used at ASLA's next conference.

A landscape lecture series at Harvard co-sponsored by Fairsted, MAOP, Historic Massachusetts, and the Appalachian Mountain Club will take place this spring. The following lectures are planned:

**March 5**  
*John Stilgoe, Preservation in Recession*

**March 19**  
*Cape Cod: Test of Regional Planning*

**April 2**  
*Northern Forest Dialogue between Industry Conservation*

**April 16**  
*Tony Hiss, Experiencing the 21st Century in the New England Landscape*

It is hoped that these lectures will be videotaped so those of us away from the cultural hub of Boston can see and hear the lectures. For information on the possibility of obtaining the videotapes, contact Rolf Diamant at Fairsted.

And, of course, Fairsted is still concentrating on its task of conserving the Olmsted maps and plans and making those documents available to the public. Over 1,200 requests for documents are received at Fairsted each year. A new documents' processing laboratory has been set up in Springfield, but all research is still coordinated at Fairsted.
YOUR SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HISTORIC LANDSCAPE THEME STUDY

Olmsted historic landscape work, and in fact all historic landscape work, needs the resources and services of both Fairisted and the National Park Service. At this time there are critical appropriation matters before Congress which are vital to Fairisted and the Park Service’s work in historic landscapes and, thus, to NAOP members. One is the appropriation for the Park Service to begin the much overdue historic landscape theme study and the other is permanent funding of Fairisted’s Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Without a landscape theme study on historic landscapes, there can be no National Historic Landscape Landmarks. At this time an historic landscape may be listed on the National Register for Historic Places, but it cannot be a National Historic Landscape Landmark nor a World Heritage Site, which requires Landmark status for recognition. Dozens of other categories from bridges to buildings can be National Historic Landmarks because those topics have been subjects of a National Park theme studies, the Park Service’s method of identifying and evaluating nationally significant historic properties. Since 1983 such an historic landscape theme study has been an objective of the Park Service, but there has been no funding for it. It is imperative that such a theme study be funded.

Now is the time to write to your Representatives and Senators to urge them to support the funding of the historic landscape theme study whose first year cost is estimated to be $150,000—and to support permanent funding of $185,000 for the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation at Fairisted, which aside from the clearinghouse and technical information activities listed above, will carry out the theme study. Even though your Representatives or Senators may not be on the appropriations committees, your letters indicate your interest to your Congressmen, who can request that your letter be forwarded to the appropriation committees. When writing, explain how helpful the Park Service staff at both Fairisted and in Washington have been to your organization and community as it may be hard for a Congressman to see how historic landscape research translates into action in your community.

THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Trust has also launched a much needed program in historic landscape work at its properties around the country under the leadership of Frank Sanchis, Trust Vice President for Properties.

The first historic landscape survey of a Trust property has been completed at Shadows-on-the-Teche. This survey, funded by a National Endowment for the Arts grant, was undertaken by Susan Turner, a landscape architect on the faculty of LSU who was helpful in organizing NAOP’s conference in New Orleans. Lyndhurst has received a NEA grant for a similar historic landscape study, which will commence soon, under the supervision of Lyndhurst’s director, Suzanne Brendel-Pandich, well known to NAOP for her excellent work as administrator of Biltmore.

Chesterwood has applied for funding for an historic landscape study, so it seems the Trust properties are on the way to having their landscapes surveyed at last.

Landscape restoration and construction work is underway at some of the Trust’s properties. At Montpelier, with assistance from the Garden Club of Virginia, the DuPont garden is going to be restored following plans being prepared by Rudy Favretti. At Oatlands, also with help from the Garden Club of Virginia, a portion of the enclosing wall is being reconstructed. In California Filoli an irrigation system has been installed so that its 16 acre garden will flourish.

At Drayton Hall on the Ashley River near Charleston, the Trust has been successful in getting a “no wake” zone established on the River so so speed boats will not create the damaging wakes which had been fast eroding the river bank at Drayton Hall and also at Middleton. Although the new highway once proposed for the Ashley River Road in front of Drayton Hall was redesigned so it is now located parallel to the Road, there is now the threat of feeder roads from the new highway to the Ashley River Road. The Trust’s efforts over the years to protect this important historic road, which is part of the cultural experience of visiting the Ashley River historic sites like Drayton and Middleton, are to be commended.

As the country’s leading preservation organization, the Trust’s work in planning and protecting the historic settings and landscapes of its properties provides important examples in historic landscape work for local preservation groups everywhere.
NAOP
REGIONAL NEWS

MAINE

The Maine Olmsted Alliance has received a grant from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to begin a survey to document Maine's designed historic landscape legacy. This project to be directed by Shary Berg, landscape architect, former Fairstred director and NAOP board member, will be divided into four phases: 1/ parks, parkways and recreation areas 2/ private estates 3/ city and regional planning and improvement projects and 4/ campuses and institutional grounds.

For information on the Alliance Lecture Series for March, April, May, and June, write:

The Maine Olmsted Alliance
P.O.Box 6176
Falmouth, Maine 04105

NEW YORK

Albany: The Washington Park Conservancy has been effectively advocating the preservation and improvement of Washington Park, Albany's 90 acre pleasure ground. This park, planned by Bogart and Culyer who were involved in the construction of Central Park, reflects the ideas of Vaux and Olmsted, according to Paul Bray, Chairman of the Conservancy's Planning Committee.

The Conservancy commissioned an Historic Landscape Report with management recommendations for the Park which was prepared by landscape architect, Patricia O'Donnell, and historians, Charles Beveridge and Joy Kestenbaum, and donated to the City.

The Park's Moses Fountain has been restored and recently 18 newly designed benches were installed in the Park, thanks to donations from the Washington Park Conservancy. The benches, called "Albany Benches", were designed by Rhode Island School of Design artist, Merlin Szosz, in a cast iron frame evoking Albany's tradition of architectural ironwork, described in Diana Waite's book, Ornamental Ironwork, Two Centuries of Craftsmanship in Albany and Troy, New York.

Buffalo: The Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks is active on many fronts from coping with threatened encroachments to restoring its Olmsted arboretum. Perhaps most interesting for NAOP members is Buffalo's imaginative planning and research project, "Buffalo Greenways: An Open Space Plan for the 21st Century". This project anticipates not only restoring Olmsted's world renowned Buffalo Park and Parkway System, but expanding it to include new corridors with "recreational, scenic, cultural and historic resources".

Working with the Buffalo Greenways Advisory Board, the Buffalo Friends will start the second phase of the project, the development of the conceptual plan and design guidelines and criteria. The first phase of establishing a goals' statement has been completed. This statement is printed below as it represents a farsighted approach to greenway planning:

TO MAKE METROPOLITAN BUFFALO LIVEABLE, HEALTHY AND ATTRACTIVE.

Create a beautiful, accessible and consequential region-wide system of corridors that connect historic, cultural, scenic and recreational destinations.

Extend this system through all areas of the city especially areas currently underserved by green space and recreational opportunities. Extend system to meet corridors and parks outside city limits.

Form a safe, physically and aesthetically integrated web of corridors and destinations.

TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE EXISTING HISTORIC, CULTURAL, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES.

Make those resources the focal points of the system and the city. Use their character and quality as inspiration for the design of their connections.

Establish safe, clear and appropriate ingress and egress points to these attractions.

Develop alternative sites for uses that conflict with the nature or purpose of these existing areas.

Preserve and integrate existing parks, especially the Olmsted Park and Parkway System, into the Greenways plan.

TO CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND RELAXATION.

Make corridors themselves attractive and useful spaces.

The system should be multi-use where appropriate.

Create new destinations by capitalizing on currently "undiscovered" places of history, scenic beauty, recreational or cultural interest.
The Buffalo Friends have also participated in the Design and Architecture Committee of the Horizons Waterfront Commission, a public commission exploring planning and development opportunities for the 90 mile waterfront of the greater Buffalo area for the future. Last May this important Commission released its action plan, which recommended a 90 acre park on the outer harbor in Buffalo and continuous physical and psychological access to the water, as well as to the area's parks and greenways. Linkage between Buffalo's business district and the water was extremely challenging. Eight projects recommended in the report have already been funded.

OHIO

May is Ohio Historic Preservation Month and the Historic Preservation Office at 1982 Velma Ave, Columbus, OH 43211-2497 has a full calendar of events for the month.

WASHINGTON

Seattle: A NAOP board member from Steven Holl Architects in New York, reports on a new park being planned for the Marathon block in Seattle's financial district where the developer has been required to dedicate 50% of the land for a park or plaza. This opportunity to design a park in the Olmsted spirit in the heart of the city is being closely watched by the Citizen's Action Plan Chairman and Holly Miller, NAOP trustee and Superintendent of Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation.

TEXAS

Dallas: The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Society is in the process of planning a new visitor Center for its 66 acre gardens on White Rock Lake in Dallas. The proposed Visitor Center is to include a plant conservatory, plant growing houses, lecture hall, a restaurant, classrooms, and a major area— indoor and out— for exhibitions and public events. The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Society grounds form an oasis of park land within the city of Dallas. It is an elongated parcel bound on the west by White Rock Lake, about 1000 acres in area, and on the east by Garland Road, a divided roadway connecting several neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city. Extensive landscape restoration and new planting is planned as part of the overall project. Two buildings, both large former private residences, now accommodate some of the uses foreseen for the new Visitor Center.

PUBLICATIONS

Two important publications for every NAOP member are hot off the press with another soon to come:

One is The Historic Landscape Directory, a 100 page listing of organizations and institutions providing information on historic landscape preservation, prepared by Wave Hill and ICOMOS.

The other is the draft of the National Park Service Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes, which Lauren Meier prepared with assistance from many organizations and individuals. This draft will be released in March and should be reviewed within six to eight weeks after its release. NAOP members should review this draft very carefully and submit comments and suggestions promptly as these guidelines will provide direction and standards for historic landscape preservation work for some time to come.

Both the Directory and the draft Guidelines are available free from:

Ward Jandl
National Park Service
Preservation Assistance Div-424
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Telephone: 202/343-9578

May 14-15
Annual NAOP conference to be held in Denver. See lead article for more information.

Registration for the conference, lunches, conference materials and tours is:

- Individual: $90
- $110 after May 1
- Groups: $80 each, min 3 persons
- $100 after May 1
- Student: $60
- $80 after May 1

Refunds for registrants will be made if a written request is received by May 1. A $15 administration fee will be withheld on all refunds.

Registration fee checks should be made out to the National Association for Olmsted Parks and mailed to:

Olmsted Conference
Denver Parks & Recreation
2300 15th St, Suite 510
Denver, Colorado 80202

For hotel reservations, the Oxford Hotel is recommended.

Located in downtown Denver, the Oxford hotel is only 15 minutes from the Denver Botanic Gardens where the conference is being held. Conference registrants receive a 40% discount ($75 per night for single or double instead of $135). As the conference will begin at 8 am on the 14th, you will need to reserve a room for the night of the 13th. You can make reservations by phone, fax or mail directed to:

The Oxford Hotel
1600 17th Street
Denver, CO 80202
reservations: 1 800 228 5838
tel: 303 628 5400
fax: 303 628 5413

For additional information on the NAOP Denver conference, call NAOP, tel: 202 362 9511 or contact:

Susan Edwards
Denver Parks & Recreation
tel: 303 964 2523
fax: 303 964 2559.

May 28-30
Ohio Historic Preservation Conference, Renaissance Inn, Lorain, Ohio. For further information write: Ohio Preservation Office, 1982 Velma Ave, Columbus, OH 43211-2497 or call: 614/297-2470

July 28-August 3
A course, Preservation of Historic Landscapes, instructed by Robert Harvey, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Iowa, will be offered at the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies. The course focuses on the process and techniques of historic landscape preservation and includes lectures, case studies and field exercises. The fee for the course and accommodations is $500. Financial assistance is available from National Park Service grant funds. The deadline for registration is June 1 and May 1 for financial aid. For further information, write:

Campbell Center
for Historic Preservation Studies
P. O. Box 66
Mount Carroll, IL 61053
tel: 815 244 1173

Don't forget! NAOP dues should be in by May 1, 1992 for fiscal year 92-93. Membership form is on the last page of this NEWSLETTER.

Please send articles for the NEWSLETTER to NAOP by May 22. Your contributions are essential to its success. This NEWSLETTER was edited by Ann Satterthwaite and graphically designed by Janet Olmsted Cross.