WITH HERITAGE SO WILD: CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY IN UNITED STATES NATIONAL PARKS

The national parks of the United States hold a variety of cultural landscapes within their folds, representing human activities as diverse as mining, ranching, recreational, and ethnographic landscapes. After decades of neglect for many of these sites, the National Park Service (NPS) began to prioritize and systematize the inventory and treatment of such properties. One major piece of this process is the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) program. This paper explores the two sets of data generated by CLI in 2003 and 2009 and uses a variety of descriptive statistics, supplemented by field reconnaissance, to evaluate the inventory of cultural landscapes within the fifty-eight national parks. Although considerable progress has been made in recent years, some shortcomings remain. In particular, the CLI methodology in the national parks continues to prioritize those sites whose main human component is the NPS’s own park-related developments. The program has not been as effective in preventing the neglect of vernacular landscapes within these properties and has disproportionately removed ethnographic cultural landscapes from its baseline survey. Ultimately, this pattern is likely to skew the record of cultural history preserved in the national parks.

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The concept of cultural landscape was developed over a half-century ago, and the general awareness of the importance of preserving significant cultural landscape sites has been growing steadily ever since. The U.S. National Park Service (NPS), despite an early history of inattention to cultural landscapes, has in recent decades been heavily engaged in the practice of cultural landscape preservation (Alanen and Melnick 2000). The NPS is the largest repository of identified cultural landscape sites in the United States and a leader in providing direction and shaping the overall practice of the field (Alanen and Melnick 2000; Goetcheus 2008). Despite these developments, much work remains to be done.

In general, the preservation of cultural landscapes is considerably more complex than other forms of historic preservation, as standard methods and models that rely on “arresting decay” do not sufficiently ensure that the significance of such sites is retained (Mason 2008). This is especially true for various types of vernacular and ethnographic landscapes that evolved through use and derive their significance from a complex history of cultural and natural interaction. These landscapes may vary considerably in scale, drawing significance from multiple attributes, and require “management practices that are dynamic, innovative, and sensitive to their special nature” (Boyle 2008, 150). Given all these challenges, cultural landscapes in general are often “misunderstood or marginalized,” and some argue that in practice they tend to be reduced to merely “physical entities—comparable to historic districts, for instance—instead of also being seen as a method of considering, analyzing, and evaluating places” (Longstreth 2008, 1).

An important component of the NPS’s efforts to shape a responsible practice for cultural landscape preservation was the creation of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), initiated in 1994 to collect information on sites that were already on the National Register (NR) or potentially eligible for it (Goetcheus 2002). For an entity as large as the NPS, a clear and consistent system for inventorying cultural landscapes is a prerequisite for effective management. Management decisions are then developed under a separate program, the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), although some of the information needed for those decisions is recorded by CLI.

This paper focuses on the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) process within those properties specifically bearing the designation of “National Park.” These fifty-eight properties are only a subset of more than 390 sites managed by the NPS. The National Parks, commonly perceived as the “crown jewels” of the NPS system, are important to consider as a specific group of properties, because their management has historically focused on natural landscapes (including scenery and wildlife) and historic properties (including cultural landscapes) within them that have had a long history of neglect (Webb 1987). The concept of cultural landscapes challenges the “stark—and artificial—boundary between nature and culture” that past NPS management policies have created (Cronon 2003, 39), and nowhere have these boundaries been as stark as in the national parks.

The present study begins by reviewing the history of the NPS’s role in cultural landscape preservation, particularly in the national parks, to understand the evolution of cultural landscapes and to highlight their past neglect. The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)
Exceptions to this pattern included various Native American cultural properties, particularly in the parks of the Southwest, where they were preserved using an archaeological framework. This approach, coupled with the neglect of less dramatic sites in active use by Native American groups at the time of park designation, helped the NPS to propagate the “wilderness myth” (Spence 1999). That is, it fostered the impression that all native cultures were “dead and buried” at the time the parks were created, rather than active and alive, as many were. A somewhat different, but also temporally isolating, approach occurred with some sites associated with European cultural groups, such as the Appalachian community of Cades Cove (Great Smokies National Park). Here, select (pre-modern) sites were preserved as a way to recognize a “unique and vanishing culture,” albeit in an idealized (and primitive) manner (Young 2006, 171).

The passage of the Historic Sites Act in 1935 created a national policy to preserve historic sites, including those under the NPS’s jurisdiction. Benign neglect and destruction of historic sites continued, however, despite pressure on the agency to comply with the law (Webb 1987). After the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, large areas in national parks were recognized as part of the “National Wilderness Preservation System,” with the goal of protecting nature and natural systems. Sometimes this meant “rewilding” parts of the designated wilderness areas, leading to neglect or eradication of humanized landscapes associated with them (Cronon

![Fig. 1. Planned destruction of a dude ranch in Moraine Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, date unknown (Courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park).](image)
properties in which the NPS has or plans to acquire legal interest. Drawing largely from the scattered cultural landscape inventories that had previously been conducted on various NPS properties, a three-year initiative commenced in 1994 to design and field-test a cultural landscape inventory methodology (National Park Service 2001). That methodology has now been in use for over a decade and its findings collected in a comprehensive database created in 1996 (Brown et al. 2001).

The definition of cultural landscapes that the NPS adopted is broad-based to include geographic areas of cultural and natural resources that are associated with historic events, activities, or persons, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values (Birnbaum and Capella-Peters 1996). The agency categorizes resources into four (non-mutually exclusive) types: historic sites (significant for associations with important events, activities, and persons); historic designed (recognized for style of construction, associated with trends or events in the history of landscape architecture); historic vernacular (evolved through use by people whose activities shaped the land); and ethnographic (historic resources defined by different cultural groups) (Birnbaum 1994).

In practice, the distinction between vernacular and ethnographic landscapes often seems to come down to whether they are associated with the dominant culture (vernacular) or other cultures (ethnographic).

The CLI adopts a four-part hierarchy for subdividing landscapes into manageable components: landscapes, features, component landscapes, and component features. The application of the hierarchy depends on the character and complexity of the landscape. Complex landscapes may use all four classifications to fully explain their scope and the connections between the parts and the whole; others may need only a few.

The CLI is a comprehensive inventory of cultural landscapes in the national park system created to assist park managers in “planning, programming, and recording treatment and management” (National Park Service 2001, 9). The program aims to inventory all historically significant cultural landscapes already on the National Register or potentially eligible for it on all properties in which the NPS has or plans to acquire legal interest. Drawing largely from the scattered cultural landscape inventories that had previously been conducted on various NPS properties, a three-year initiative commenced in 1994 to design and field-test a cultural landscape inventory methodology (National Park Service 2001). That methodology has now been in use for over a decade and its findings collected in a comprehensive database created in 1996 (Brown et al. 2001).
the four-tier methodology was reorganized under a
two-tier “complete” (Level II-certified) and “incomplete”
(all else) system, and Level III was discontinued. With
this methodological shift, only complete records are now
included in the annual reporting of accomplishments
(NPS 2009). Despite this reorganization, the current
structure of the CLI database is much the same as the
original (except for the fields associated with levels); it
contains more than one hundred fields of data for every
site whose inventory has been completed.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY DATA
ANALYSIS

The analysis of the CLI data for national parks properties
is based on data from 2003 and 2009, respectively. The
goals of the analysis were threefold: to determine how
the types of cultural landscape in the national parks that
have been recognized through the Cultural Landscape
Inventory process vary by regions; to explain the range
of landscape attributes, types, and time periods; and
to establish specifically the degree to which cultural
landscapes that are vernacular or ethnographic fare
in comparison to historic sites and historic designed.
Broader issues around cultural landscapes preservation
in the national parks that emerge from the CLI process
are discussed in a separate section.

The analysis began by coding all of the landscapes
in the database by landscape attribute and landscape
type. Attribute was defined as a landscape’s
predominant class of use associated with historic
significance. The final list included: mining and
industry; agriculture; transportation; military; NPS park-
development; pre-NPS recreational; archaeological;
living ethnographic (those that met the NPS’s
definition of ethnographic landscape and were not
primarily archaeological in nature); entire settlement
(i.e., a whole village or town); and settlement-oriented
(i.e., those containing one or a few components of
a settlement other than the categories already listed
(such as a house, school, or store).

Table 1 lists some of the details for identifying
attributes. The research relied on hand-coding each
site listed on CLI through a multistep process, which
was later repeated for all new sites in the 2009 dataset.
Given the large number of sites (more than 1000), the
first step was a relatively automated one focusing on
the name of the cultural landscape. This was based
on the assumption that names often readily reveal the
single most significant attribute of the site (e.g., “Chittu
Historic Mining Landscape” is presumably a mining
landscape). Through repeated explorations of the CLI
database, wordlists typically associated with specific
landscape types and attributes were generated. For
instance, the attribute “NPS park-development” (i.e.,
those landscapes whose human-made components
consisted of developments by the NPS itself) was
suggested by a wide range of terms listed in Table 1.

However, site names did not always clearly indicate
landscape type or attribute, which was particularly
evident for sites with dominant natural features (e.g.,
Willow Park, Christine Falls). In addition, certain terms
suggested multiple possible attributes (e.g., the term
“trail” may or may not suggest park development).
Thus, for sites where the name did not clearly indicate
a single landscape attribute, additional research
was conducted to confirm or to determine attributes.

This piece relied primarily on a wide range of NPS
publications (both online and print resources), as well
as additional archival materials and fieldwork. Forty
entries (4%) could be assigned no attribute; these were
primarily landscapes that listed the entire park as a site
(e.g., Petrified Forest NP Landscape). The CLI data provided in 2003 did not explicitly
state to which of the four landscape types (historic site,
historic designed, historic vernacular, or ethnographic)
the sites in the incomplete list belonged. So, after
landscape attributes were determined, each site
was assigned a landscape type. NPS’s four cultural
landscape types were reorganized into three for this
effort; historic site and historic designed landscapes
were collapsed, since these two types share several
common characteristics, and very few sites in the
national parks derive their significance from association
with an individual historic person or event, one of the
main criteria for being a historic site. Table 2 shows
the correspondence between landscape attribute and
landscape type. The same forty entries that could not
be assigned an attribute were not coded for type.
Table 1: Coding scheme for landscape attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Initial automated terms</th>
<th>Hand coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>ranch, farm, agriculture, agricultural, cattle, barn, plantation, orchard, fishery, ditch</td>
<td>“mill” or “canal” to identify those related to agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and industry</td>
<td>mine, mining, furnace, coal, iron, factory, industry, industrial, dam, hydroelectric, lead, borax</td>
<td>“mill” to identify those related to industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>road, drive, parkway, highway, “hwy,” railroad, bridge, lighthouse</td>
<td>“canal” or “trail” to identify those related to transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>military, fort, army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement-oriented sites</td>
<td>church, residence, store, homestead, cemetery, hospital, school, cabin, house, saloon</td>
<td>All sites containing “cabin” were reviewed to check for “patrol cabins” which were recorded as “park development.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park development</td>
<td>ranger, campground, CCC, picnic, developed area, entrance, NPS, maintenance, residential area, housing area, trail shelter, overlook shelter, patrol cabin, museum, headquarters, visitor center, amphitheater</td>
<td>“trail” to identify those developed by the park for visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-NPS recreation</td>
<td>chalet, lodge, inn, hotel, resort, stables</td>
<td>All were individually examined to determine whether the property was developed by the NPS, in which case it was coded as “park development.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological</td>
<td>archeology, archeological , ancient, pictograph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire settlement</td>
<td>town, settlement, village</td>
<td>All sites named “village” to identify NPS-built tourist villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living ethnographic</td>
<td>ethnographic, homeland, ahupua’a (the Hawai’ian term for a communal land district), tipi, native</td>
<td>All sites with “native” were double-checked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Correspondence between landscape types and landscape attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape type</th>
<th>Included landscape attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic site/designed</td>
<td>Transportation&lt;br&gt;Settlement-oriented sites&lt;br&gt;Military&lt;br&gt;Park development&lt;br&gt;Pre-park recreational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic vernacular</td>
<td>Agriculture&lt;br&gt;Mining and industry&lt;br&gt;Entire settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic</td>
<td>Archaeological&lt;br&gt;Living ethnographic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

In 2003, the nationwide CLI dataset for the national parks contained 1,020 total sites; of these, thirty-one landscapes (about 3%) had received complete inventories (compared to 148 complete inventories in the remaining 334 properties). Eighteen of these thirty-one were parent landscapes, and the remaining were component landscapes of others on the list; thus, the list of completed parent landscapes within the national parks about six years into the program was quite short. In the 2009 analysis, the CLI dataset for national parks contained 764 entries, including 668 from 2003, plus ninety-six new ones. This implies that of the original 1,020 entries, 352 (35%) were no longer listed on the database in 2009. Of the ninety-six new entries, sixteen are truly new landscapes; seven are additional “entire park” landscapes (e.g., Capitol Reef NP landscape), all in the Intermountain Region; and seventy-two are new component landscapes. One lacked sufficient information to determine status.

Regional Variations

While the majority of the national parks are west of the Mississippi River, as of 2003, three of the top five parks with the greatest number of identified cultural landscapes were in the east (Isle Royale, Cuyahoga Valley, Voyageurs) (Fig. 2). All three parks are under the Midwest region, one of the three regions east of the Mississippi River. Of these, Cuyahoga Valley National Park (added in 2000, after twenty-five years as a National Recreation Area) has a density of inventoried cultural landscapes that exceeded other parks by a factor of more than 100 (26.5 entries on the CLI for every 10,000 acres, compared to 0.2 for the national parks as a whole). These regional differences are stark, as these three relatively small Midwestern parks together had almost as many identified cultural landscapes (246) as the entire Intermountain Region (252), which stretches from Montana to Texas and Arizona and contains parks with both rich Native American ethnographic and settler landscapes.

![Fig. 2. Counts of inventoried cultural landscapes by park and completion status, 2003 and 2009. This figure includes fifty-six entries, although there are currently fifty-six national parks. One park (Congaree NP) is not included because it was upgraded to a national park after the first round of this research had been conducted. Two other parks (Sequoia and Kings Canyon) are adjacent and jointly administered by NPS for most purposes, and are included as a single entry here (illustrations by author unless otherwise noted).](image-url)
The distribution patterns by 2009 display a major shift: while most regions still had approximately the same number of sites on the CLI as before, the Midwest region had nearly two hundred fewer. For the most part, that difference occurred in Isle Royale National Park and Voyageurs National Park, which lost eighty-one and thirty sites, respectively, while Cuyahoga Valley National Park lost thirteen. The sites removed from the baseline inventory were "determined not to be National Register eligible." The set of removed cultural landscapes is discussed in detail later.

Landscape Types and Attributes

In 2003, roughly half (579) of the cultural landscapes that had received a baseline inventory were historic site or historic designed, more than historic vernacular (297) and ethnographic (eighty-five) combined (Table 3). In terms of landscape attributes, NPS park-development was the largest category in 2003, almost as large as the next two combined (agriculture and settlement-oriented sites). Mining and industry rounded out the four major categories. In 2009, all three landscape type categories, and all but one landscape attribute category (pre-NPS recreation), shrunk in size although none more precipitously than settlement-oriented sites. NPS park-development remained solidly in first place.

Completed Inventories

The cultural landscapes that have reached complete inventory provide additional evidence about the types of sites given the greatest priority by CLI, whether intentionally or not. Of the thirty-one completed inventories by 2003, twenty had their historic significance based on their association with NPS park-development or by its federal precursors for park purposes. An additional five were constructed by other public or private entities with the original goal of tourism. Thus, six years into the CLI process, in the national parks, only six cultural landscape sites whose historic significance was not derived from NPS park-development or tourism had received a complete inventory. These included five agrarian sites, two each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape attribute</th>
<th>2003 Total</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>2009 Total</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining and industry</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>128 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>92 (90%)</td>
<td>10 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>140 (96%)</td>
<td>6 (6%)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>89 (81%)</td>
<td>21 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>82 (96%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>56 (75%)</td>
<td>19 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement-oriented site</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>139 (99%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57 (90%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11 (92%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS park development</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>268 (94%)</td>
<td>18 (6%)</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>229 (82%)</td>
<td>50 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-NPS recreation</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45 (94%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41 (82%)</td>
<td>9 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17 (81%)</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living ethnographic</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20 (83%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire settlement</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>5 (38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape type</th>
<th>2003 Total</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>2009 Total</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic site/designed</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>556 (96%)</td>
<td>23 (4%)</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>355 (83%)</td>
<td>71 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic vernacular</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>289 (97%)</td>
<td>8 (3%)</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>207 (82%)</td>
<td>44 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37 (82%)</td>
<td>8 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Columns are not required to add up to the total number of landscapes, since landscapes could be coded for zero, one, or multiple characteristics.
in Cuyahoga Valley National Park (Richard Vaughn and Point/Biro Farm) and Channel Islands National Park (Rancho del Norte and Santa Rosa Island Ranching District) and one in Joshua Tree National Park (Keys Ranch Historic District). The remaining was a settlement-oriented site in Voyageurs National Park (Ellsworth Rock Garden). The largest concentration of NPS park-development sites was found in Mount Rainier National Park, with eight sites, including the Road to Paradise, Longmire Campground, Wonderland Trail, and Nisqually Entrance (Fig. 3).

By 2009, the number of complete inventories in the national parks rose fourfold to 124, exactly half parent landscapes and half component landscapes. This list presents a more diverse cross-section of NPS sites; all types of landscape attributes are represented, and completion rates by landscape attributes are generally around 10 to 25%, with the exception of two attribute categories containing relatively few sites (Table 3). There is a wider range of vernacular cultural landscapes on the list, which also includes ethnographic (including a few archaeological) sites. In other words, the CLI has clearly made considerable progress since 2003, both in terms of the number of completed inventories and in their diversity. Nevertheless, the NPS park-development category remains by far the largest of any (fifty of the 124) completed landscapes. Moreover, some of the apparent equalization in the completion rates of sites with different types and attributes may be spurious, as will be seen later.

Period of Significance

Another way of considering how the CLI has evolved in the last decade is by comparing the period(s) of significance of the sites at each time point, information which is available only for complete inventories. Figure 4a shows a plot of periods of significance for completed inventories in 2003, arranged chronologically by starting date. The majority of landscapes have their period of significance fall between 1916 and 1956, while the lands represented in the national parks have a much longer history of human habitation. This pattern is directly related to the previous observation of the predominance of sites on CLI whose significance is derived from the agency’s own park-development history. This time period predominates, as it coincides with the era of rustic-style park developments frequently by the Civilian Conservation Corps, ending with the rise of Mission 66 in 1965.
There are wider arrays of time periods represented in the completed list by 2009. In fact, the time period covered by a few sites is on such a large scale that an additional chart is required to display that information clearly (Fig. 4b), so the remainder is visible on a more recent time scale (Fig. 4c). Nevertheless, the overall pattern remains consistent, with about half the cultural landscapes still having periods of significance during the early to mid-twentieth century. The most significant change is the increased focus on the late nineteenth century, a period one would expect to see highly represented given the rapid expansion of populations in the western U.S. during this time. In 2003, only about a quarter of completed inventories were from this time period, whereas by 2009, close to half were from the late nineteenth century. Thus, the CLI has successfully expanded the time period represented by the completed sites, although the early- to mid-twentieth century period remains far more prominent than might otherwise be expected.

**Removed Cultural Landscape Sites**

Three hundred fifty-two sites that had been on the 2003 dataset were absent from the CLI dataset for 2009. Table 4 shows the attributes and type categories of the cultural landscapes that were removed from CLI. In terms of landscape type, ethnographic has the highest proportion dropped, followed by historic vernacular, with historic designed/site the lowest. As for attributes, a lower proportion of NPS park-development landscapes were dropped than others, while a higher proportion of ethnographic landscapes were dropped. In other words, this suggests that some of the relative equality in 2009 for completion rates by types and attributes is actually driven by the fact that non-NPS landscapes have been dropped from the CLI at higher rates. Potential explanations and implications are discussed later.
As examples, the removed list includes numerous vernacular landscapes, such as mining towns, mines, fisheries, and logging villages in Isle Royale National Park, which operated in the second half of the nineteenth century. Among these is Ghyllbank, a copper-mining town for which the NPS has conducted surveys and mapping (Stadler 1999). In Voyageurs National Park, a variety of fishing and mining sites and a stamp mill were removed. In Great Basin National Park, removals included the Lehman Orchard, a hundred-year-old orchard planted by an early developer of tourism in the present-day park. The park maintains the remaining piece of the original orchard and irrigation ditch, which are also listed on the National Register (National Park Service 1975) (Fig. 5).

**NPS-developed Sites**

Despite the progress, in 2009, more than 40% of completed inventories in the national parks were still the NPS’s own cultural landscapes. For these sites, the “cultural” component of the cultural landscape is the NPS’s construction of boardwalks, viewing platforms, trails, roads, ranger stations, administrative headquarters districts, and other buildings and landscapes in the rustic “parkitecture” style common in the first half of the twentieth century (Fig. 6). The majority of these were categorized by the CLI as historic designed landscapes, with some as historic sites; however, some have been categorized as historic vernacular because of their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Cultural landscape units removed vs. retained from 2003 to 2009, by characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape attribute</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS park development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living ethnographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All remaining landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic site/designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic vernacular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig. 5. Portion of Lehman Orchard, Great Basin National Park, 2006.*
use of “pseudo-vernacular construction techniques” developed by NPS’s trained designers (Carr 1998, 285). Examples of historic designed landscape in Rocky Mountain National Park that were classified as vernacular landscapes in the baseline inventory from 2003 included Glacier Basin Campground, Endo Valley Picnic Area, and the Utility Area Historic District (National Park Service 1999) (Fig. 7).

DIFFERENTIAL LOSS AND PRIORITIZATION: POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Why were ethnographic and vernacular landscapes dropped from the CLI baseline inventory at higher rates than historic designed landscapes and historic sites? There is a variety of possible reasons, with different implications. One potential explanation for the disproportionate loss of ethnographic landscapes is the existence of other NPS programs that also document ethnographic landscapes and archeological sites, including the Park Ethnography Program and the Archaeology Program. The potential for overlap might conceivably have caused the CLI program to reduce its focus on these types of cultural landscapes. However, neither of these programs uses the same cultural landscape methodology as CLI, and ethnographic landscapes officially remain within the purview of CLI. Nor do these other programs consider vernacular cultural landscapes more generally (since NPS defines “vernacular” and “ethnographic” as two different categories of cultural landscape). For example, the Ethnographic Assessment and Documentation of Rocky Mountain National Park (Brett 2003) focused entirely on Native American resources, while there are numerous vernacular cultural landscapes in the park associated with non-native communities. The existence of these programs thus would not explain the greater loss of historic vernacular landscapes than historic designed/sites. Other vernacular cultural landscapes may receive some documentation outside the CLI program through a direct National Register nomination; however, this approach also rarely documents the “landscape context” and features associated with them (Goetcheus 2002, 24).

Future manageability of vernacular and ethnographic cultural landscape sites might also explain their disproportionate purging from the baseline inventory. The CLI considers the individual park’s planning needs as one criterion in prioritizing complete inventories, and it is reasonable to believe it might play a role in deciding which to drop from the baseline inventory. Vernacular landscapes are undoubtedly more challenging and expensive to manage than are designed sites, especially those whose significance does not relate to recreation or tourism. Grand River Ditch Historic District in Rocky Mountain National Park exemplifies this point. The Park recommended that the site be removed from
the CLI for a variety of manageability issues, even as the site exhibits great vernacular engineering and has the potential to inform about the contributions of non-Europeans in the development of the interior West (Fig. 8). This could be read as staff at the park level potentially guiding the CLI process toward a smaller, more narrowly imagined set of sites.

A third explanation is that the CLI may be removing sites from the baseline inventory that it or the individual parks see as having lost historic integrity. The CLI program explicitly prioritizes for complete inventory those sites that “retain a high degree of physical integrity according to National Register criteria” (National Park Service 2001, 25); fieldwork by the author in Rocky Mountain National Park suggests that an individual park’s determination of integrity is also sometimes an important factor in deciding which landscapes to retain or remove from the list and that the determination of integrity sometimes focuses exclusively on buildings. Integrity is, of course, important. But, vernacular landscapes in the national parks have generally experienced long periods of neglect due to disassociation with the cultural groups that created these sites, and those that remain do not often meet the integrity criterion above. Some have argued that the National Register criteria for historic integrity, which were created with historic built properties in mind, remain imprecise and inapplicable for vernacular landscapes generally (Boyle 2008). Yet, CLI continues to use them for prioritizing landscapes for complete inventory and presumably for determining which landscapes to remove from the list. Compared to pre-park vernacular, the NPS park-development sites in particular have a shorter history of development, are more likely to have received use-related maintenance, and retain greater degrees of historic integrity. However, they are on the whole likely to suffer from the fewest threats, comparatively speaking. In Rocky Mountain National Park, two high mountain roads in common use (Trail Ridge and Fall River) and the park’s Utility Area Historic District (site of park headquarters) have all been prioritized for complete inventory before vernacular sites such as Green Mountain Ranch (National Park Service 1998).

Regardless of the reasons for the observed patterns, the consequences of the differential removal and prioritization for completed inventories can be great. The complete inventories conducted by CLI are the result of an exhaustive process that takes significant time and effort; for national parks, the rate of complete inventories has been about ten per year, including component landscapes, and there are more than 750 sites currently in the database. Hundreds more have been removed from the list, while others of interest were never included in the first place. Cultural landscapes that do not receive a complete inventory for extended periods (potentially

Fig. 8. Grand Ditch, Rocky Mountain National Park, 2004.
many decades, given current rates) are more likely to continue to suffer from benign neglect and result in further loss of physical integrity. This is especially true for vernacular and ethnographic landscapes that do not actively retain their original use.

While listing on the CLI does not ensure that a site would receive treatment, it does ensure some level of protection, as the NPS mandates that “no cultural landscape listed in or potentially eligible for the National Register or listed in the Cultural Landscapes Inventory will be destroyed or deliberately neglected without review by cultural resource specialists and approval by the regional director” (National Park Service 1998, 108). Despite this, the CLI program is not comprehensive in its approach to creating a baseline inventory, as fieldwork in the Rocky Mountain National Park revealed. Many potential sites are not on the CLI at any level, nor even on a separate list that NPS maintains for landscapes to be considered for CLI listing after further research (NPS 1999). These include mining-related sites associated with the Colorado gold-rush era (e.g., the Lulu City ghost town); ranching sites (e.g., Harbison Ranch, the homestead of two unmarried sisters), and early recreational sites (e.g., Hidden Valley Ski Area), among others.

THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN THE U.S. NATIONAL PARKS

In the last decade, CLI has made significant progress in inventorying cultural landscape sites on all NPS properties; as of 2009, more than five hundred cultural landscapes sites have received complete inventories systemwide. In the national parks, where cultural landscape sites have seen years of neglect, the program initially focused on completing inventories for a set of sites that were relatively narrow in terms of the types, cultures, and time periods that they represented. In recent years, however, a fuller range of sites with more diverse human histories have received complete inventories, signaling a progression of the program in the right direction.

Nevertheless, some issues remain unresolved. As stated earlier, prioritization by CLI for complete inventories is likely to impact the nature of the historic record that is being inventoried (and eventually preserved and interpreted) in the national parks of the United States. By focusing on sites that are already on or potentially eligible for the National Register, and on cultural landscape sites that derive their historic significance from NPS park development, the CLI is not making the most of its opportunity to diversify the record of cultural history that could be preserved in the national parks.

It is important to remember that this is not a critique of the National Park Service or CLI in general; the NPS manages a far wider range of sites than just the national parks, and CLI inventories sites on all properties. Also, the agency has been in the forefront in developing innovative approaches for managing cultural landscape sites, particularly though its National Heritage Areas program. Although this research focused only on the national parks, the patterns it uncovered there are important in their own regard, since these properties remain pinnacles of natural beauty in the minds of most Americans. Nowhere is there greater potential to convey the truth of how much our environment has been shaped by us and vice versa, with all of the environmental benefits that can result when humans see themselves as part of nature rather than separated from it (Cronon 1995).

The recommendations that stem from this work require the CLI program, and the NPS more generally, to rethink some aspects of their approach to inventorying cultural landscapes in the national parks, particularly focusing on the unique challenges facing vernacular and ethnographic cultural landscapes. The issues that such sites face can be categorically different from those faced by historic designed landscapes and historic sites. Combining the two sets into a single program, making them compete over scarce resources, and using National Register significance and integrity and park planning priority as criteria in such a competition means that the truly vernacular and ethnographic cultural landscapes will generally lose. Although there is no easy solution, one relatively simple step that could provide a good beginning is to reorganize the CLI program to consider historic vernacular and ethnographic landscapes separately from historic designed landscape and historic sites, with methodologies (and budgets) that are
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ENDNOTES

1. The National Park Services’s initial development of cultural landscape preservation approaches occurred in Preservation Brief 36 (Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes) (Birnbaum 1994). This was followed by the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes in 1996 (Birnbaum and Capella-Peters 1996). Other National Register bulletins address aspects of specific types of cultural landscapes, including rural historic landscapes (#30), traditional cultural properties (#38), cemeteries and burials (#41), and mining sites (#42). Several other NPS programs have helped advance cultural landscape preservation, including the Historic Landscape Initiative (1989) and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (1992).

2. The database was originally named the Cultural Landscapes Automated Inventory Management System (CLAIMS). In 2005, the CLI switched to a web-based platform that provides NPS intranet access to approved users (National Park Service 2009). In addition, the use of the acronym CLAIMS as the name of the database has been discontinued.

3. Landscapes represent the entire area of interest, the “parent” to all components and features. Landscape features are the smallest identifiable elements that contribute to a landscape’s significance and can be managed as individual sites. Component landscapes are elements of a parent landscape that contribute to the property’s significance and could potentially be listed individually on the National Register. Component features are like landscape features, but for component landscapes (National Park Service 2001, 2009).

4. Level 0 identified the scope of existing cultural landscapes in the parks, determined immediate threats, and established priority for Level 1. Each subsequent step became more detailed and exclusive. More information on the four-tier level inventory can be obtained from the CLI procedures guide (NPS 2001).

5. Level III inventory was discontinued due to the apparent “lack of progress” even before the four-tier methodology was reorganized (e-mail communication, June 15, 2005, Lucy Lawliss, then head of the NPS Park Cultural Landscape Program).

6. In an e-mail communication from March 29, 2010, Randall J. Biallas, Chief Historical Architect and Manager, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, explained that the Levels methodology was discontinued as it was seen to be confusing and not useful. Despite repeated FOIA (NPS-2010-00034) clarification requests between February and May 2010, the CLI staff offered little by way of explaining what about the Level system was confusing or not useful. The request for official records (minutes of meeting, memos, etc.) pertaining to this methodological shift yielded a “no record” response. For outside researchers, this decision is unfortunate in that the former approach allowed for a greater degree of transparency to determine how different sites with different attributes were progressing toward complete inventory.

7. Some fields record data management information (e.g., date of completed inventory, name of the person(s) conducting the fieldwork, etc.). Others focus on geographical information, including regional context. Additional fields seek information on various aspects of historic significance and historic integrity, including National Register eligibility. Several others document characteristics, history, condition, and threats to the units. Some of these are narratives of considerable length and also allow graphics, photos, and maps as appropriate. More detailed information on CLI record fields can be obtained from the CLI procedures guide (National Park Service 2001, 2009).
8. The 2003 data were provided in two abridged versions. The first was a printed copy of a GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act) report of 2003 (containing data up through mid-2003) that the regions completed for the national office in Washington. This contained the full set of sites but a small set of information on each one and needed to be re-entered into electronic form by hand. The second version was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request; it included most fields of information, but only for those sites that had received a complete inventory (Level II-certified). Data for 2009 were also obtained through two FOIA requests in 2009; the first set included the complete inventory list, and the second set included the incomplete list.

9. For a complete bibliography of sources, see Chalana 2005.

10. Note that the set of landscape attributes selected for each site was not meant to be comprehensive; some complex sites may contain landscapes and components that correspond to multiple attributes, if examined in sufficient detail. Also note that there is the possibility of coding errors, given the reliance on secondary sources, which varied in detail among sites; however, it seems unlikely that a large and systematic bias would invalidate the general conclusions.

11. Randall J. Biallas, Chief Historical Architect and Manager, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscape Program. E-mail response to a set of question as part of the FOIA request (#NPS-2010-00304), February 12, 2010.

12. Randall J. Biallas, Chief Historical Architect and Manager, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscape Program. E-mail response to a set of question as part of the FOIA request (#NPS-2010-00304), February 12, 2010.

13. E-mail communication, Bill Butler, Park Archaeologist, Subject: Re: Fw: Rocky Mtn Question, dated 11/17/2003; copied to Jill Cowley and Cheri Yost.

14. CLI staff initially developed an inventory in consultation with Rocky Mountain Park staff, which includes those sites on the 2003 list explored in this analysis. In late 2003, there was further discussion about the list, and park staff suggested multiple sites for deletion. Among these were the Boker Club and Bachelor Cabin, a cultural landscape that park staff asked to be taken off the list, since it “no longer exist[s]” because the “cabins have been removed.” (E-mail communication, Bill Butler, Park Archaeologist, Subject: Re: Fw: Rocky Mtn Question, dated 11/17/2003; copied to Jill Cowley and Cheri Yost). The site had been removed by the time of the 2009 analysis.

15. This is certainly not to say that such sites are under no threat. Some need to expand to service more visitors, while utility areas may need to accommodate newer and larger equipment. However, on the whole, such threats are not as stark as for those vernacular and ethnographic landscapes that have not seen any form of traditional use for decades, such as agricultural or mining sites.

16. CLR is an even more exhaustive effort than CLI, and so far the program has completed only about fifty CLRs. Part one of a CLR (Site History, Existing Conditions, Analysis, and Evaluation) overlaps significantly with the CLI, and for that reason one or the other “as appropriate, is completed before any major park planning effort affecting a cultural landscape” (National Park Service 1998, 94). There are overlaps between CLR and CLI that could be streamlined to avoid duplication.

REFERENCES


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