

More than a database: the National Park Service's Cultural Landscapes Inventory improves resource stewardship

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The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. An overview of the CLI is included here, followed by specific case studies describing how CLI information is being used to assist in park management.

The CLI is an evaluated inventory that provides baseline documentation for cultural landscapes. It documents general descriptive information, existing documentation, and management information. The CLI looks at the physical development and historical significance of the landscape, including eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Existing and historic characteristics that contribute to the significance are described and evaluated. They include characteristics such as natural systems, spatial organization, land use, vegetation, circulation, structures, and views. The CLI also assesses the integrity and condition of the landscape. Information is gathered primarily from secondary sources and through field surveys of the landscape. To automate the inventory, the Cultural Landscapes Automated Inventory Management System (CLAIMS) database was created in 1996.

A hierarchy was developed to accommodate the diversity of cultural landscapes. A large landscape may be broken into component landscapes, which allows each to be documented in more detail. The hierarchy also allows for the documentation of features that contribute to a site's historic character, such as a building, fence, or planting.

There are four types of cultural landscapes. *Historic designed landscapes* range from the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to small designed gardens. The second type is *vernacular landscapes*, including villages and farms (Figure 53.1). The third type is *historic sites*—those places associated with important people and events, such as the homes of presidents or battlefields (Figure 53.2). And the last type is *ethnographic landscapes*, those sites associated with traditional cultures, which include both ancient Indian sites and places where cultural traditions continue today.

The CLI is completed in a four-level process, with each level building on the previous one. They are:

- Level 0: The *park reconnaissance survey* identifies the scope of landscapes and component landscapes in a particular park, existing and needed information about the resources, and immediate threats to the resources, and establishes priorities for Level I inventory.
- Level I: The *landscape reconnaissance survey* identifies existing and needed information for a specific landscape or component landscape in a park and estab-

lishes priorities for Level II inventory. A site visit is conducted and an initial evaluation is done of the significance and character of the landscape or component landscape.

- Level II: The *landscape analysis and evaluation* defines the landscape characteristics and their associated features of a specific landscape or component landscape. Both existing and historic conditions are analyzed to determine contributing character-defining features. National Register eligibility is evaluated and integrity and condition assessed. Landscapes at this level are on, or eligible for, the National Register, or are otherwise treated as cultural resources.
- Level III: The *feature inventory and assessment* provides an inventory and evaluation of a physical feature identified in Level II as contributing to the significance of a landscape or component landscape.

Thus, the CLI is an ambitious undertaking that provides many benefits. The next section focuses on examples from specific parks and illustrates how the CLI is assisting in resource stewardship.



Figure 53.1. Edisen Fishery at Isle Royale National Park is an example of a vernacular landscape. Photo by NPS Midwest Regional Office CLI, 1997.

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area encompasses approximately 123,000 acres on the Cumberland Plateau in northeast Tennessee and southeast Kentucky. The Cumberland Plateau is characterized by two very distinct landscapes: the plateau itself, with gently rolling, forested hills; and the gorges that run through it, made by the action of rivers such as the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River.

Starting with Native Americans, the region has been considered valuable for its natural resources. Both the Cherokee of the Tennessee Valley and the Shawnee of the Ohio Valley claimed the Big South Fork region as a hunting ground. By the mid-1700s, European Americans had begun to explore the area. Between the Revolutionary and Civil wars, the first major influx of settlers came to the Big South Fork, establishing farmsteads on the relatively fertile land in the gorge. These subsistence

farmers supplemented their income with small-scale niter mining, salt extraction, and oil drilling. Farming was following by an increase in the extractive industries, including oil, coal, and timber. By the mid-20th century, much of the land had been cleared of timber and polluted by oil drilling and coal mining. Plans to dam the gorge were made in the 1930s and again in the 1960s, but public opposition kept the designs from being implemented. In 1974, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area was authorized, and in the following years land within its legislative boundary was purchased, ranging from tracts of former logging land numbering in the thousands of acres to small family parcels. In 1976, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers named the National Park Service (NPS) the interim manager of the park, and in 1990 lands and management were fully turned over from the Corps to NPS.



Figure 53.2. Bloody Lane at Antietam National Battlefield is an example of a historic site. Photo by Nancy Brown, 2000.

Beginning in 1997, the cultural landscape team from the NPS Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, began documenting the many cultural landscape features of the park for the CLI Level I. Features at the park included cemeteries that were both actively tended and long ago abandoned. Industrial remnants at the park included an intake valve at the Blue Heron Mine site and the Beatty Oil Well. Transportation features, like a stone-lined footbridge at No Business Creek, remained in place, as did evidence of subsistence farming, in the form of remnant fields, farmhouses, and fences.

Using ArcView geographic information systems (GIS) software, the cultural landscape team mapped these cultural resources and produced a large-scale drawing showing all the different features. The next step was to synthesize this information and generate a cultural landscape hierarchy. Some features were very remote and were the only remaining part of a formerly intact cultural landscape. However, several farmsteads were found to retain enough integrity to warrant listing on the Na-

tional Register. More attention was focused on these farmsteads, which were now regarded as component landscapes within an overall Big South Fork landscape. For each of the component landscapes a more detailed inventory was conducted. They were also mapped at a closer level of detail using AutoCAD.

This baseline inventory has become a valuable source of information for the park and for the region. Natural resources have been mapped using GIS, including ArcView, for many years. Beginning to map cultural resources in the same format prompts a better dialogue between these two resource types. The CLI has also been referenced in the ongoing process to develop the park's general management plan. Furthermore, the inventory has been used as the starting point for a National Register multiple-property nomination encompassing all the identified component landscapes.

Schoodic Peninsula, Acadia National Park

For the past two years, Schoodic Peninsula has been the focus of research, fieldwork, and long-term planning by a multidisciplinary group of resource professionals. This serendipitous timing of work was prompted in part by the U.S. Navy, which is decommissioning a cryptography base on the peninsula with the intent to transfer the property to Acadia National Park. Now the challenge remains to re-use, interpret, and protect the base and the surrounding peninsula with its island-studded views, deep woods, and complex history.

With assistance from the Navy and local residents, several NPS projects were initiated that will provide crucial information about the cultural resources on park lands at Schoodic. These ongoing projects include a nomination to the National Register for the Schoodic Peninsula Historic District and two CLIs. The information compiled for these projects will also be used in preparing an amendment to the park's general management plan.

The major challenge was to describe and evaluate extant cultural landscape features on Schoodic Peninsula for multiple projects. To accomplish this, a three-phase data collection strategy was implemented. The first phase consisted of collecting copies of historic documents through archival research. Pre-existing studies completed by NPS, the Navy, and the University of Maine were also consulted. The next phase consisted of inventorying and evaluating cultural landscape features in the field. At the conclusion of the fieldwork, a checklist was produced to guide the global positioning systems (GPS) mapping, the last phase of the project. Under the direction of Nigel Shaw, GIS program manager of the NPS Northeast Region, a GPS "swat" team was assembled to collect the data in the field. Members of the team split into pairs to complete the data collection process.

The GPS team collected georeferenced data on the vast majority of the cultural resources on the peninsula within park boundaries. These included the visitor facilities and park support facilities, such as buildings, structures, small-scale objects, parking areas, signs, and roads. Small-scale engineering features, such as culverts, headwalls, and steps, were also mapped. Landscape features, such as historic orchard remnants and vegetation boundaries, were also included. Additionally, some of the known archaeological sites were mapped, as well as the park's northern boundary.

At the conclusion of the fieldwork, the GPS data were compiled and edited at the New England Technical Support Center, University of Rhode Island. The data layers will be superimposed on digital orthophotographic quadrangles supplied by the Navy. Maps will be generated to accompany the CLIs and the National Register nomination. Most importantly, the GIS data will assist Acadia's staff in resource management, planning, interpretation, and maintenance efforts.

The concurrent nature of these cultural resource projects at Schoodic presented a fortuitous timing of work. Specifically, it provided an opportunity to integrate archival research and fieldwork efforts, as well as the collection of georeferenced data us-

ing GPS and GIS mapping strategies. Ongoing archaeological surveys at Schoodic also contributed to a greater understanding of the early history of the peninsula. The existence of recently completed biological, geological, and palynological studies provided an excellent opportunity to synthesize existing studies and to view the peninsula through the lens of environmental history. The one-time, intensive-mapping phase by a GPS swat team resulted in greater efficiency of data collection, as well as more uniform results. Individual members of the team not only learned or perfected their GPS skills, they also had the rare opportunity to work together and share their expertise.

Conclusion

The CLI is a relatively new program, but has already added to the knowledge and understanding of park landscapes. It is providing valuable information that assists in protection of resources, and is used for park planning and maintenance decisions. The information enhances the story being told in many parks, adding to the overall visitor experience. The CLI is improving stewardship of the landscape resources significant to this nation's heritage.