



On cultural landscapes

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Chair, IFLA Americas Region Cultural Landscapes Committee

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The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has established International Scientific Committees (ISC) on various cultural heritage themes and issues. These ISCs are ICOMOS technical bodies that undertake research, develop conservation theory, guidelines, and charters, foster training, and promote international exchange of scientific information.

The ICOMOS/IFLA Cultural Landscape Committee (ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC) was founded as a joint group gathering landscape architects and conservation professionals in a multi-disciplinary forum. It is currently chaired by Dr Luigi Zangheri, an architect and professor from Italy.

IFLA founded and fostered a separate IFLA Historic Gardens Committee, which later became the IFLA Cultural Landscape Committee (IFLA CLC). Hans Dorn, prominent IFLA member and landscape architect presided as the committee chair from the 1980s through to 2006. Dorn also served as an expert member of the ICOMOS/IFLA CLC at the same time. At the Minneapolis IFLA World Council Meeting in 2006, Patricia O'Donnell, FASLA was appointed Chairperson of the IFLA CLC, and Hal Moggridge accepted the role as IFLA's representative to the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscapes Working Group.

The IFLA CLC is growing through Regional Committees in all three IFLA regions, each part of an expanding global IFLA Cultural Landscapes network. The current work plan includes objectives of sharing expertise, and making tools to enhance understanding and preservation of cultural landscapes more readily available.

Among the important activities developed by the ICOMOS/IFLA CLC, is its annual meeting, which is hosted in the various countries of committee members. The most recent meeting took place in San Jose, Costa Rica, with fifteen international experts participating during 26-30 November, 2007 in both committee meetings and community and university activities.

During the sessions of the ICOMOS/IFLA ISC, crucial issues were addressed. Such issues included seeking to focus governmental attention on situations where cultural landscapes were at risk of suffering damage or destruction. Organizational matters were also discussed. At the request of the ICOMOS General Secretariat, the need to develop supplemental technical guidelines and recommendations to assist international experts in evaluating World Heritage cultural landscapes was also addressed. Such recommendations could enhance preservation and restoration of valuable historic sites.

As frequently happens in these meetings, the host country and the region enjoyed not only the benefits of the experts' presence through the Committee technical activities, but also there were enhanced opportunities for information exchange between the public and local professionals and publicity in local publications.

Participants in a day-long event on 26 November at the University of Costa Rica included both students and lecturers, as well as members of the ICOMOS/IFLA ISC. Luigi Zangheri, President, Sonia Berjman, Vice President for Latin America, and Mónica Luengo, Vice President of the Mediterranean Countries, were among the participants and later in the evening gave their presentations on cultural landscapes to a most interested audience. Shintaro Sugio from Japan, Darwina Neal, IFLA Vice President for the Americas, and Margarita Montañez, ISC Committee member and coordinator of the IFLA Cultural Landscapes South American Subcommittee, also attended. In addition to the key note presentations, other activities included discussion groups and exchange of information and experiences with the students from the School of Architecture and the Masters in Landscaping Program, as well as with university authorities and the academic community. Another important activity was a two-day seminar that took place at the Veritas Institute, with enlightening presentations by Arch. Saúl Alcántara, ICOMOS/IFLA CLC member from the Mexican Institute of Anthropology and History; Dr. Sonia Berjman, ICOMOS/IFLA CLC Vice President for Latin America; Patricia O'Donnell, FASLA, ICOMOS/IFLA CLC Member and IFLA CLC Chairperson World Level; and Prof. Homa Irani Behbahani, representative of the University of Tehran.



*Costa Rica IFLA Americas CLC Group Meeting
November 28, 2007.*

Left to right, Front Row:

Patricia O'Donnell (USA), ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC and IFLA CLC World Level Chair; Margarita Montanez (Uruguay), ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC and IFLA CLC Americas Coordinator for South America; Sonja Berjman (Argentina), ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC, Vice President for Latin America; Darwina Neal (USA), IFLA Americas Region Vice President; and Desiree Martinez (Mexico), IFLA Americas Region Secretary.

and Back Row:

Saul Alcantara (Mexico), ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC and IFLA CLC Americas Coordinator for Central America; Carlos Jankilevich (Costa Rica), ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC and IFLA CLC Americas Chair and Event Organizer; and Jose Enrique Garnier (Costa Rica), Representative of Costa Rican CLC National Committee.

The presence of these experts was highly valued due to the fact that, at the same time, another event was being launched at the Veritas. This event included the San Jose Metropolitan Planning authorities who were able to exchange views about the Plan with the ICOMOS/IFLA CLC experts. Also, on 29 November there was a lunch time discussion between members of the Scientific Committee and the authorities of the Heritage Office under the Cultural Minister of Costa Rica.

After the meeting of the ICOMOS/IFLA ISC, the members of the IFLA Americas Region CLC who were present had a separate regional session. They were joined by Desiree Martinez, IFLA Americas Region Secretary, and IFLA members from Costa Rica. Key subjects during this session were the structuring of the regional network, the set up of national committees, and the development of the cultural landscape inventories within each country. Special consideration was given to the establishment of the IFLA CLC Website.

The whole event had ample media coverage during and after the experts' visit. Local newspapers and specialized magazines followed with enthusiasm the novelty of the cultural landscape issues, as well as the interesting points of view and personalities of the attending visitors.

In spite of the tight agenda and the multiple programmed events, the participants had the opportunity to travel through Costa Rican historical sites, to visit the Rainy Humid Tropical Forest, and to enjoy viewing the various volcanoes! The event was organized by Landscape Architect Carlos Jankilevich, who was elected as a voting member of the ICOMOS/IFLA CL ISC, and is also serving as Chairman of the IFLA Americas Committee on Cultural Landscapes.

ISOLA Conference Tamil Nadu, India

Diane Menzies

IFLA President

At the end of February the Chennai Chapter of the Indian Society of Landscape Architects (ISOLA) held a joint IFLA Asia Pacific Region and ISOLA conference in Chennai, in the Tamil Nadu Region of southern India. With the theme of *Responsible and Responsive Landscape Architecture*, the papers featured a number of environmental care messages. This included presentations on city farming, urbanism and hydrology, back to nature, and landscape development of the Lanta islands.

Akshay Kaul, a landscape practitioner from New Delhi who specialises in rainwater harvesting and waste-water management and its integration into landscape design, gave an inspiring presentation, taking an ecological approach to landscape strategies. In his work, he sought to restore and re-establish the connection between people and natural forces, which he conceived as an on-going dialogue with water, soil, plants, and wildlife.

He said, "As we look back at the time line to search for meaningful paradigms for landscape in a rapidly transforming society, I derive my inspiration and strength from our culture and philosophy. One in which all forms of life partake equally in the drama of the universe, subtle and gross. Man is but a small part of this universe, not the centre, a hard