

# WORKSHOP REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Future of Working Cultural Landscapes: Parks, Partners, and Local Products

October 21-22, 2008



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### Workshop convened by:

NPS Conservation Study Institute  
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park  
Shelburne Farms National Historic Landmark  
QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy



# Context for the Workshop

The landscape character of many parks and protected areas has been shaped by generations of land use and traditional systems of production that created a distinctive sense of place.





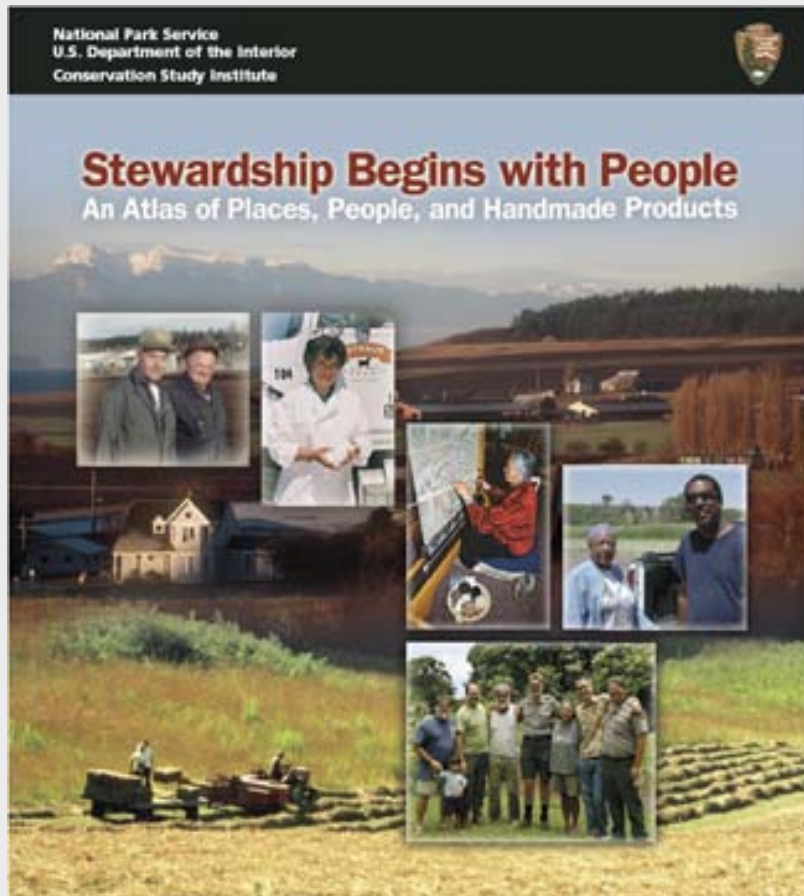
Today, many of these traditional land uses and their related products are being rapidly destabilized, displaced, and lost. The speed and scope of change is unprecedented.

With a sense of the urgency to conserve working landscapes, this is a time to rethink our paradigm for conservation.

There is an opportunity for national parks, partners, local communities, and producers to work together in new ways to conserve working cultural landscapes.



This workshop builds on the 2007 publication  
*Stewardship Begins with People:  
An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products*



The objectives of the *Atlas*:

- Recognize people practicing stewardship that is sustaining landscapes and living cultures
- Demonstrate the relationship between people, special products, and landscapes
- Model sustainable behaviors
- Enhance alliances between parks, producers, and communities
- Build a network of parks and partners involved in this work

# Workshop Objectives

- Share innovation, experiences, and best practices
- Discuss new approaches and partnerships to protect landscape character and promote sustainability
- Establish a network of park managers, cooperating partners, and producers
- Identify opportunities to advance this work





# Workshop Participants

## National Park Service

- Appomattox Court House National Historical Park
- Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park
- Carl Sandburg National Historic Site
- Minute Man National Historical Park
- Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership
- Monocacy National Battlefield
- Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
- National Capital Parks – East
- NPS Conservation Study Institute
- Point Reyes National Seashore
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park
- Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
- Fort McHenry National Monument
- Thomas Stone National Historic Site
- George Washington Birthplace National Historic Site
- Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve
- Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Hampton National Historic Site
- Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site
- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- James A. Garfield National Historic Site
- NPS Chief Historical Architect
- Chief of Concessions, Midwest Region
- Office of Cultural Resources, Midwest Region

## Italian National Parks

- Parco Nazionale Dolomiti Bellunesi

## Partners, Cooperating Associations, and Concessioners

- Accoceek Foundation
- McCarthy Area Council
- Alice Ferguson Foundation
- National Parks Conservation Association
- Alliance for Local Sustainable Agriculture
- Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear
- Cobb County Parks
- PRIZM, Inc.
- Cuyahoga Countryside Conservancy
- QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association
- Renewing America's Food Traditions
- Eastern National
- Shelburne Farms
- Great Smoky Mountains Association
- Western National Parks Association

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## Workshop Findings

1. Urgency for conservation
2. Opportunities and promising trends
3. Cooperation among the NPS, partners, and communities
4. Next steps to encourage stewardship of working cultural landscapes



# 1. Urgency for conservation of working cultural landscapes



- Loss of regional identity, distinctiveness, and character
- Fragmented landscapes
- Unraveling of traditional social/economic relationships to the land and loss of special products of place
- Loss of biological diversity
- Loss of context for stories linking people to the land and an estrangement from the landscapes that sustain us
- Concerns for climate change and food security

## 2. Opportunities and promising trends associated with working landscapes

- Emergence of the concept of cultural landscapes
- Recognition of the role of people and cultural traditions in creating and sustaining working landscapes
- Recognition that working cultural landscapes are often reservoirs of agrobiodiversity (including heirloom species)



## 2. Opportunities and trends, cont'd

- Growing attention to value-added artisanal products and locally-grown foods
- Interest in identifying local products with particular landscapes
- Interest in building community and engaging youth



### 3. Cooperation among the NPS, partners, and communities

Working together, national parks, partners, and communities can:



- Demonstrate a more harmonious way of relating to the land
- Interpret and highlight sustainability initiatives and model innovative stewardship of landscapes
- Provide a consistent message to park visitors in offering programs, products (food and other items for sale), and transportation that connect to place and sustainability
- Offer an alternative vision whereby visitors can see a more desirable future and rediscover the values associated with working cultural landscapes
- Make use of the NPS’s “power of demonstration” to enhance the visibility of landscape conservation efforts.



## 4. Next steps to encourage stewardship of working cultural landscapes

- Share the workshop message widely
- Create opportunities for practitioner exchange and learning around best practices in conservation of working landscapes
- Expand the network of practitioners/producers and identify network role(s) in enhancing and supporting landscape conservation efforts
- Encourage and support efforts within national parks to offer local products, foods, and services that support sustainability and landscape conservation
- Explore potential criteria and/or branding system(s) to encourage product authenticity and sustainable practices across national parks
- Continue/enhance international relationships and opportunities for practitioner exchange between countries
- Co-sponsor and engage park interpreters in regional festivals that offer opportunities to educate the public about cultural/culinary traditions, bridge cultures, and support local foods and products of place

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This presentation was prepared by the Conservation Study Institute; for the complete workshop PowerPoint report with case studies, or for more information on this initiative, contact [stewardship@nps.gov](mailto:stewardship@nps.gov)