

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Project Summary

In 2005 The University of Arizona College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA) and the National Park Service (NPS) entered into a Cooperative Agreement for the completion of two Cultural Landscape Reports (CLR) for Bryce Canyon National Park – one each for two of its National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Historic Districts: the Bryce Canyon Lodge Historic District and the Old NPS Housing Historic District. The dual purpose of this collaboration was to both provide the management team at Bryce Canyon National Park with an important tool for better understanding and planning for these historic areas within the park, and to provide an unique educational opportunity for CALA students interested cultural landscape research and preservation work.

Work was initiated with a “kick-off” site visit in December 2005. The Principle Investigators R. Brooks Jeffery and Lauri Macmillan Johnson and two graduate student researchers, Pria Syuri and Joy Lyndes from CALA met with Park and Xantera (Concessionaire) administrators, including: Kristin Legg, Chief of Resources Management (Cooperative Agreement Park Key Official); Kim Barker, Cultural Resources Intern; Craig Axtell, Superintendent; Mark Biel, Resource Management Specialist; and Gordon Taylor, Trina Smith, and Rob Harsh from Xanterra. Jill Cowley, Historical Landscape Architect and Cynthia Herhahn, Archeologist with the Intermountain Region, Cultural Resources, Cultural Landscape Program NPS also attended this initial meeting. Jill Cowley provide CLR training both at Bryce Canyon and at The University of Arizona and has served as a project mentor, reviewer, and final NPS Key Official.

The actual data collection was initiated during a site visit in June 2006, and developed further in August of that year. The primary goal of this research was to examine existing conditions, conduct research in the Park’s archives both photographic and written, and conduct interviews with Park staff. Kim Barker performed the initial analysis of the Park Superintendant Reports. Pria Syuri completed the first draft of Chapter 2 and 3, History and Existing Conditions, which was supported by these site visits as well as the documents and historic materials that had been collected. Additional site visits in March and July of 2007 focused upon collection of detailed site condition data, vegetation information, and historical maps and photographs for initial analysis and recommendations. Wendy Lotze prepared the second draft of Chapter 3 Existing Conditions as well as Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis and Recommendations (the latter two prepared in collaboration with Professor Lauri Macmillan Johnson). Wendy Lotze’s work continued after her graduation from the School of Landscape Architecture through a contractual agreement with her employer, Olsson Associates. A team of students including Allison Kennedy, Laura Bolyard, Lisa Erly, and Sarae Hoff worked on the final draft of Chapter 2 History. Brent Jacobson contributed assistance with many maps and figures within the document, and

Sarae Hoff worked on final copy editing, map editing, and assisted Wendy Lotze in Final Document Layout.

In March of 2007 Kristin Legg was replaced by Juanita Bonnifield, Cultural Resources Specialist as the Cooperative Agreement Park Key Official. A meeting between the new CALA team (Wendy Lotze and Lauri Macmillan Johnson) and the Park Management Team, including the new Park Superintendant Eddie Lopez, in June of 2008 reviewed initial analysis and recommendations on site. Reaching the final document involved all remaining CALA team members (Wendy Lotze, Lauri Macmillan Johnson, and Sarae Hoff), responding to the results of the Management Team meeting and the initial draft review.

Scope of Work and Method

Purpose of the Cultural Landscape Report

The Scope of Work created for the project by the NPS in 2005 established the need for a document which will provide “detailed research, analysis and evaluation, and treatment strategies for preservation of resources that contribute to the historic character of these two landscapes”. Through the course of the project, the teams added the additional goal of creating a usable, flexible document that will serve to answer not only the immediate needs of Park management, but to provide overarching guidance for issues that the Park will likely face in the future. This purpose is achieved through the following steps:

- Study and documentation of the physical evolution (history) of the Study Areas, including changes to both the built and natural environment.
- Documentation of the existing condition of the cultural landscape, including the identification and examination of character defining landscape features.
- Compare and analyze the existing landscape to determine a period(s) of significance and the significance of individual landscape characteristics to that period.
- To create a set of treatment recommendations which will aid future efforts to preserve and even enhance the character of the historic Districts.

Although Bryce Canyon National Park encompasses a number of historic structures and districts, the scope of this project was limited to the Bryce Canyon Lodge Historic District and the Old NPS Housing Historic District (*Figure 1-1 and 1-2*). Both of these Districts are located in the heart of the existing Developed Area of the park, and both have had an important role in visitation and management since the Park was created.

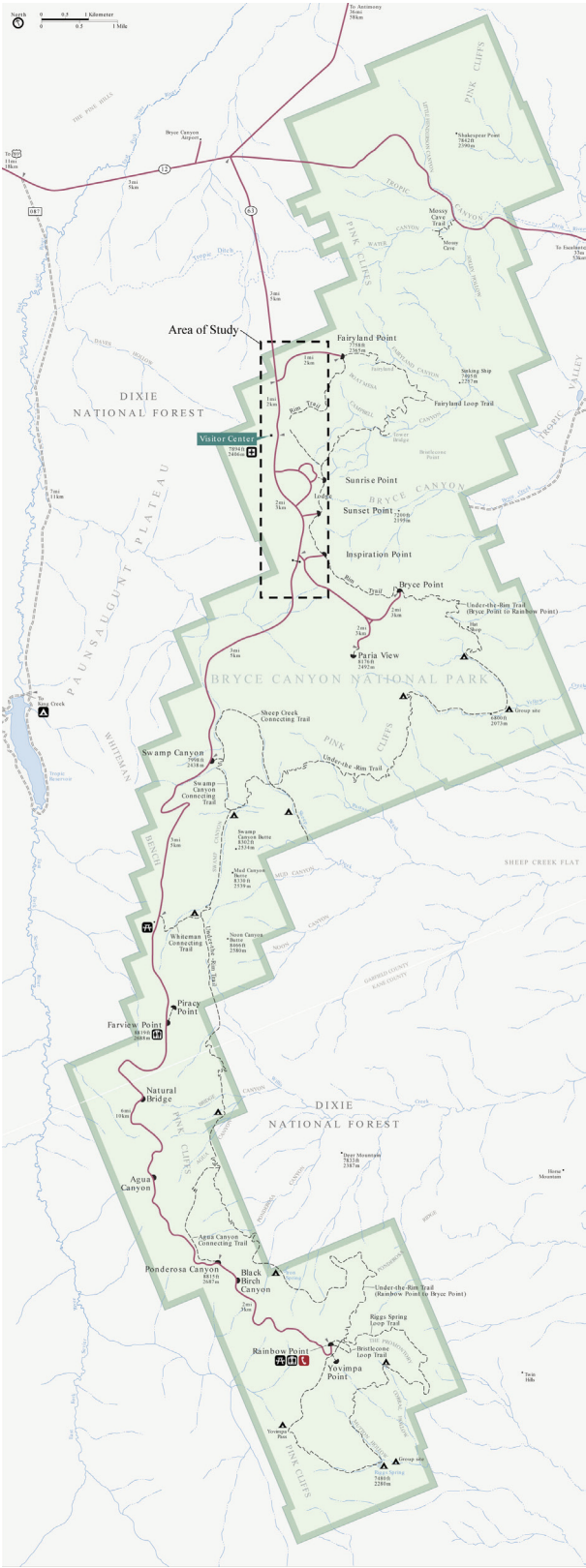


Figure 1-1.
Bryce Canyon National Park Map

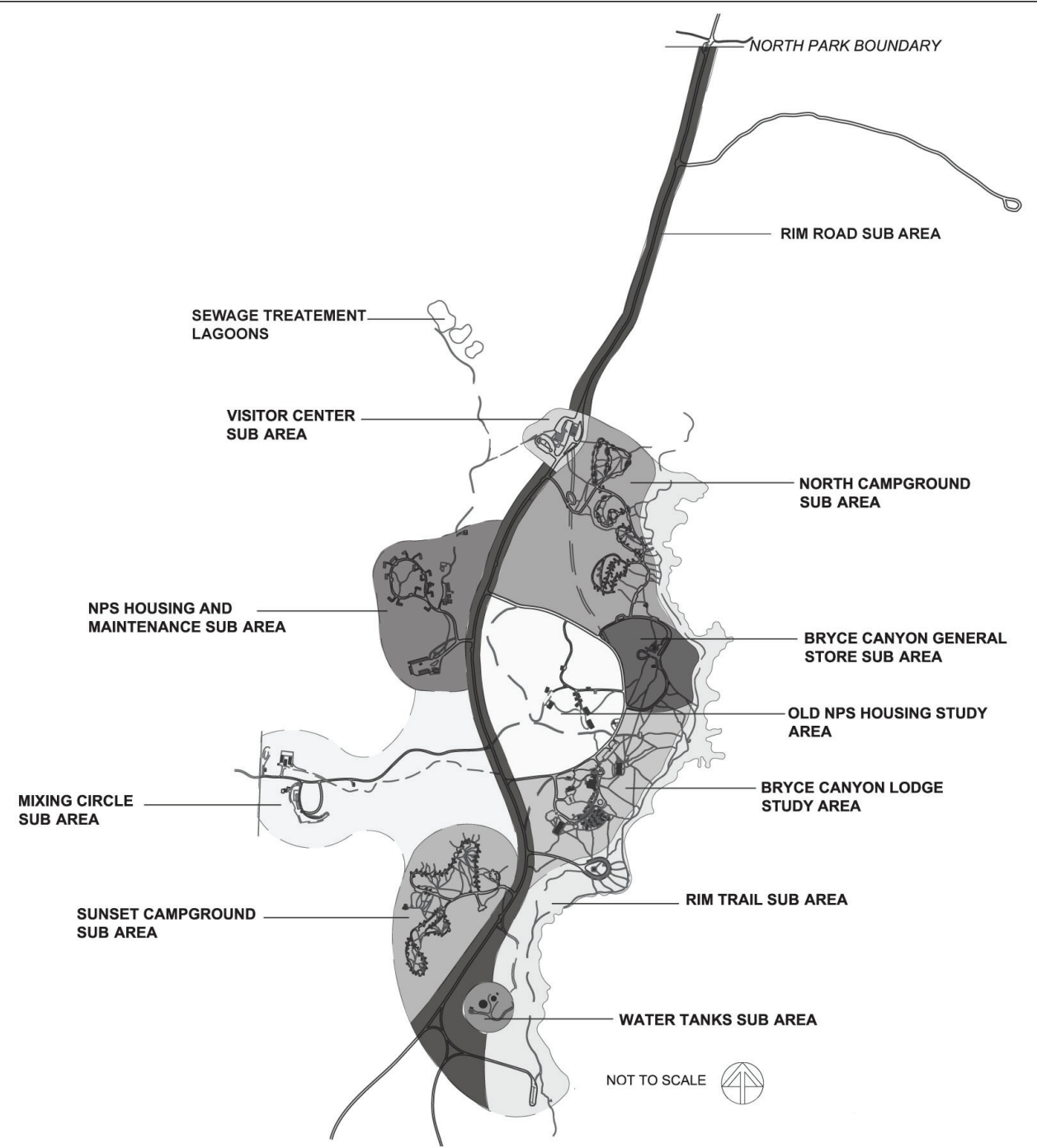


Figure 1-2.
Bryce Canyon National Park Study Areas and Sub-Areas Map

Changes to Scope of Work

The original Scope of Work included the completion of two separated CLR documents for the Bryce Canyon Lodge Historic District and the Old NPS Housing District. Discussions and work completed at the beginning of the project, however, lead the CALA team to the conclusion that a single CLR which encompassed two “Study Areas” would be both more efficient and a more complete way of treating these two contiguous Historic Districts. Considerations included the chronologically similar periods of significance for each area, their physical proximity and the fact that both areas had been impacted by many of the same developmental changes. NPS personnel concurred, and the team set out on creating this document.

During the initial site visit to collect existing condition data and archive information, it became obvious that it would be difficult to isolate the two Study Areas from the larger context of the Park’s Developed Area. A decision was made by the CALA team to perform historical research and inventory on the entire Developed Area of the Park, in order to provide a more holistic picture of how these Historic Districts fit into the past and present operations of Bryce Canyon National Park. Over the following year, extensive site information was collected on the entire Developed Area and organized according to the CLR feature categories.

As the CLR process progressed, however, it became clear that completing the CLR level analysis and recommendations on the entire Developed Area would require more resources and time than allotted by the project contract. The NPS team and the CALA team together decided that further work on the Developed Area beyond the Study Areas would be abandoned and that efforts would be refocused upon the original scope of the Bryce Canyon Lodge Historic District and the Old NPS Housing Historic District. The collected historical and existing condition data for these “Contextual Areas” has been included in this document, however, both as an additional resource to Park planning in the future and to provide necessary context for the Study Areas (see Chapter 3 Introduction for further details). The CALA team still holds that the examination of the Park’s Developed Area landscape as a whole (rather than as a sum of parts) would be more effective in preserving the unique, rustic character of Bryce Canyon National Park.

Project Method

This document was created in accordance with *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Technologies* published in 1998 by the NPS and specialized professional guidance from Jill Cowley, Historical Landscape Architect with the NPS. These resources helped to establish the content, format and method of this CLR. Additional resources consulted for this process are noted in the References section at the back of the document.

Historical Research

The primary resource for general historical information on the Park was the *Historic Resources Study: Bryce Canyon National Park* completed by Nicholas Scrattish in 1985. Additional research was conducted during a series of visits to the Park between October 2005 and March 2007 through the examination of records in the Bryce Canyon National Park archives (which have subsequently been relocated to Zion National Park). Those documents which proved the most illustrative of the developmental history of the Park were reports from the Park Superintendent – completed annually before the 1940’s and monthly thereafter. These reports, combined with letters, recordings of oral histories, maps and other official park documents provided substantial information about the evolution of the Park from the time of its creation through to the modern era.

Because this research was conducted over nearly three years by six different students, some of the records and references have become crossed, confused or lost entirely. Although efforts were made by the team assembling the final document to correct as many of the missing references as possible and fill in any gaps in information and rectify inconsistencies, it was impossible to complete the history section to the level of accuracy and detail desired. The team is confident that the information collected and presented in earlier drafts was correct and from trustworthy sources, though precise references may be lacking. None of these inconsistencies affect the core content on which decisions of significance and treatment recommendations are based

Existing Conditions Field Surveys

The same field visits used to examine the archives at the Park also served as opportunities to collect information about the existing conditions on the site. All field studies combined both written and map based notations of feature locations and conditions with extensive photography and film records. Base AutoCAD maps provided by the Park were augmented with field observations to provide the basis for the maps presented in the text. During the July 2007 field visit, the team met with members of the Southeast Utah Group (NCN Plateau) team who were working in the field to create a Vegetation Map for the park as a whole. Although this team’s work essentially excluded the Developed Area, during the day-long meeting, they were able to assist the team in identifying specific plants and vegetation patterns within the Study Areas.

Evaluation of Significance

An examination of the existing NRHP documentation for both of the Historic Districts, as well as the associated Bryce Canyon National Park Multiple Property Submission was completed. Although the existing

documentation reviewed the contributing status of built elements within the Districts, further standards were developed for evaluation of landscape elements as well as the interface between the landscape and the built environments. These standards were extracted from a variety of sources, including *Building the National Parks* written by Laura Flint McClelland in 1998, which provided additional guidance as to the trends and aesthetics of landscape architecture in the National Park Services during the period of significance.

Comparative Analysis of Landscape Characteristics

The existing and historic conditions of each Study Area were examined, and the results were organized according to the landscape feature categories detailed in Chapter 3, Existing Conditions. The analysis was based upon the field surveys, photography, mapping, and the physical history created in Chapter 2. Where necessary, illustrative figures and comparative photographs were presented to further illustrate the findings of the analysis. A detailed roster of landscape characteristics identified in the Existing Conditions Chapter, accompanied by their determination as “contributing”, “non-contributing” or “compatible” within the periods of significance has been included as Appendix A.

Treatment Plan

The team followed the guidelines presented in *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* when identifying the preservation approaches for the Bryce Canyon CLR Study Areas. The team considered the current use, historic integrity and future needs of each area before establishing a treatment recommendation for these areas.

Overall Treatment Guidelines were designed to assist in maintaining and improving integrity throughout the two Study Areas in the face of unforeseen future development or impacts. This section was designed to provide general guidance which would be adaptable and flexible to meet the needs of Park management and visitors while still providing the highest level of integrity for the cultural landscape. Additional, Specific, Treatment Recommendations were presented in order to address unique issues found within each of the Study Areas and to address specific needs identified by the management team in the Management Objectives.

Summary of Findings

This report supports the period of significance for each District as given in their respective NRHP forms (1924-1945 for the Lodge and 1928-1945 for the Old NPS Housing). However, the initial documentation failed adequately to address the significance of Bryce Canyon’s early planning efforts as examples of the substantial role of landscape architecture in Rustic style and Simplified Rustic style national park design and planning of that time period. The focus upon integration of the natural and built environments, and the aesthetic importance given to creating communities that felt as though they were a part of the forest were critical factors in the early development in Bryce Canyon National Park. Because of the importance of this landscape planning element, a recommendation was made to expand the protection of the NRHP District boundary to include those natural elements and character defining landscape features that help to create a sense of place for the significant architectural units. Even in areas where significant structures have been removed (such as the Standard Cabins), the remaining natural landscape maintains a significance on its own.

The overall treatment approach recommended by the report was preservation of existing resources, combined with instances of rehabilitation where needs may arise for structures to adapt to future needs and uses. Both of these approaches seek to maintain as much as possible those historic elements which continue to contribute to the overall character of the District, and to employ only those techniques, scales and materials in new work which reinforce this character.

Although the Bryce Canyon Lodge’s main structure and high-end “Deluxe Cabin” accommodations are still intact, the removal of the smaller “Standard Cabins” throughout the District has radically changed not only the built environment, but also the sense of community and intimacy that was once a part of the visitor’s experience. The removal of these cabins was called for in the 1987 General Management Plan for Bryce Canyon National Park, in an effort to improve the quality of visitor and employee accommodations in the Park. Their replacement, however, with five large, dormitory-style structures negatively impacted both historic Districts by altering both the scale and the relationship of the built with the natural as established by the original designers. Although the immediate removal of these structures may not be feasible, recommendations which effect circulation and views in these areas can help to restore some of the original spatial organization.

The treatment of the historic Lodge in recent years has resulted in a number of negative impacts to the way visitors first view the structure, and as a result, has compromised the integrity of the building. Simple changes to circulation, combined with more dramatic infrastructure changes including the alignment of the Lodge Access Road and removal of façade treatments, are recommended to restore the significance of the front of the Lodge to visitors and to help reinforce the role of the Lodge as the visual focus and experiential center of the District.

Throughout the project, the NPS has continued to express concern about the condition and integrity of the natural systems in the Study Areas – particularly the density of the forest cover and the health of the meadows. Although this report was able to reach some general findings about the evolution of the environment since the period of significance through the examination of historic photographs, NPS reports and current conditions, the lack of site-scale vegetation data over time hampered the study considerably. Because the natural condition is a key player in the historic integrity of these Districts, and because changes in such highly impacted areas typically occur on a micro-site scale, the recommendation was made to develop a system of vegetation monitoring throughout the Developed Area. It is the intention of this recommendation that a baseline be established, and that as much historical and forest succession information as possible be extrapolated by experts in forestry. Such information will be critical to future forest and cultural management of these resources.