

ASLA Honorary Membership
Nomination Narrative

Nominee: Vida Germano
Nominee's Address: 3075 Camino Diablo
City/State/Zip: Lafayette, CA 94549
Phone: 415-623-2367 (work)
Email: vida_germano@nps.gov

Nominator: Robert Z. Melnick, FASLA
Professor Emeritus, University of Oregon
Director, Cultural Landscape Research Group

Introduction

Vida Germano is a champion of cultural landscapes throughout the western United States, from Guam and the Pacific Islands, to Hawaii, and California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. As the National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Program Manager for this large and diverse territory, Vida is a leader in the recognition, documentation and protection of these significant, and often threatened, landscapes. She is an articulate spokesperson for their importance, and a skilled advocate for the technical details that will enable these valuable landscapes to be accessible now and into the future. She sees and understands the large landscape picture as well as the intimate landscape details – and their linkages to the American story in all realms.

I am pleased to nominate Vida Germano for honorary membership in ASLA. She holds degrees in history (California State University, Chico) and historic preservation (University of Oregon), but her passion and driving force is the beauty, meaning and protection of significant cultural landscapes.

There are three realms in which Vida excels: Advocacy, Education, and Climate Change. Combined, they highlight someone who understands cultural landscapes, treasures their importance, supports landscape architecture, and recognizes the challenges these landscapes face in the era of climate change.

Advocacy

In her role as regional Cultural Landscapes Program Manager, Vida has taken the responsibility to educate her colleagues on the importance of cultural landscapes in the parks. I have been fortunate to observe her with other National Park Service employees, as she explains why and how a cultural landscape is significant, and the ways in which landscape architects plan, design and work. Her non-design colleagues are regularly impressed by her knowledge of the landscape, and her ability to envision its future for visitors and park employees alike.

While her job takes her to national parks, Vida regularly speaks at regional and statewide conferences, such as the California Preservation Foundation. In that public role, she is not only representing the National Park Service; she is representing the landscapes all around her, places that people look at every day but often don't really see.

Education

For a number of years, Vida has played a major role in collaborating with landscape architecture degree programs and other partners, most notably at the University of Oregon, to educate students, and others, providing an opportunity for both theoretical and practical experience. Other partners include: National Council for Preservation Education; University of Guam; California State Parks; University of Hawai'i; The Nature Conservancy; Student Conservation Association; and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

In recent years, she has been the main mover for landscape architecture design studios at: Redwood National Park; Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area; Channel Islands National Park; Cesar Chavez National Monument; and Yosemite National Park. For each of these projects, whether in the field or in studio, Vida has been much more than a client; she has been a full and vibrant participant. She was active in developing the studio programs and goals, and then worked closely with students, alongside university faculty, teaching them about cultural landscapes, national parks and the central role of landscape architects in park development and protection. It is important to note that this is beyond her usual employment responsibilities. It comes from a caring for these landscapes, and a desire to help educate and train the next generation of cultural landscape specialists.

In addition, Vida has employed student summer interns to work with her on national park cultural landscape projects. For many students, this has been far more than a summer job in a National Park Service office. It has impacted the course of their careers and future employment decisions, whether in public or private practice. It has helped them to better comprehend the role of landscape architects in American society.

Climate Change

In the western parks, Vida is a leader in understanding and addressing the effects of climate change on cultural landscapes. Through her initiative, NPS funded a major study with the University of Oregon's Cultural Landscape Research Group that assessed the impact of climate change variables on significant cultural landscapes throughout the region, focusing on diverse sites in Hawai'i, California, Washington and Idaho. Vida was a full and very active participant in this multi-year research project, which won a Honor Award from ASLA in 2017. The project would not have happened without Vida's guidance, participation and leadership. She was instrumental in structuring the research design and implementation, as well as editing the final report. In project concept, research design, field reconnaissance and document preparation, Vida was a key and vital player. Most importantly, Vida understands that climate change impacts both natural and human systems, and that assessing cultural landscape vulnerability to climate variables requires an understanding of natural forces (such as erosion, sea level rise, and drought) and human activities (such as pollution, inappropriate building sites, and poor maintenance) that together impact these significant landscapes

Final Comment

Vida Germano undertakes all of these activities through a love of landscape and a deep appreciation for landscape architecture. She should be recognized through honorary membership in ASLA. Thank you.



January 13, 2020

Honorary Membership Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Honorary Membership Selection Committee:

I wholeheartedly support Vida Germano's nomination to be an Honorary Member of ASLA given her knowledge, approach and advocacy for many of our nation's most iconic landscapes, and I am grateful for the opportunity to outline why.

I had been working with Vida for nearly five years before I found out she didn't have a landscape architecture degree. Given her passion for the resource coupled with her knowledge and sensitivity to landscapes as interconnected systems I assumed she was trained as a landscape architect. She understands the technical aspects of landscapes; their materials, including knowing more about plants than some of the other landscape architects on the teams we work with. She also approaches projects with a design-thinking approach, something not typical for someone with her educational background.

She is a tireless advocate for our shared landscape heritage, something you think would be easy within an agency devoted to parks, and thus landscapes, but curiously enough the landscape part of the National Park Service is not always front and center in terms of planning and design projects. Vida keeps it there and deftly works with people from multiple disciplines to ensure the landscape remains at the forefront of the discussion and not as a place to mitigate other design projects.

She's also been a mentor to countless students at her alma mater of the University of Oregon, working with the university's landscape architecture department to support studio projects that bring students into the national parks using them as living laboratories for research, planning and design thinking. National parks are unique and bring a complex set of issues for landscape architecture students to address that they wouldn't find anywhere else and Vida recognizes that. However, the efforts Vida champions and supports aren't only for the students benefit. These studio projects inject new ideas into the minds of those stewarding our national parks, and Vida is cognizant of the value of that endeavor.

ASLA would benefit greatly from having Vida Germano as an honorary member of its organization.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lm'.

Laurie Matthews
Director of Preservation Planning and Design, MIG; and
Adjunct Faculty of Professional Practice, Department of Historic Preservation, University of Oregon



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
15 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

IN REPLY REFER TO:

January 2, 2020

American Society of Landscape Architects
Honorary Membership Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Board of Trustees:

I am writing to nominate Vida Germano for an honorary membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) based on her contribution to the profession of landscape architecture and, in particular, to the field of cultural landscape preservation. As Cultural Landscape Program Manager for the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service, Vida provides leadership for a program that is responsible for the stewardship of cultural landscapes—their inventory, preservation and treatment—in collaboration with park managers. The region includes more than 60 national park sites within the eight states of California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, portions of Arizona and Montana and the territories of Guam, American Samoa, as well as the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prior to joining the National Park Service, Vida worked in historic preservation with the California Department of Transportation where she served as the San Francisco Bay Area district's cultural landscape specialist. Vida joined the National Park Service in 2008 as a member of the Pacific West Region's Cultural Resources Program to coordinate an inventory of national park cultural landscapes. In 2018, she assumed a leadership role for the region's entire Cultural Landscape Program.

Vida has completed and managed a broad and impressive range of professional work to guide cultural landscape stewardship in national parks. The Pacific West Region's cultural landscape inventory now includes one hundred and sixty-five documented landscape resources, a substantial number of cultural landscape reports have been prepared to guide management, and technical assistance to guide preservation maintenance is available to every park in the region. The ability to complete this work is based, in large part, on Vida's success in expanding the capacity of the region to serve parks. In addition to the work that she has completed on her own or managed through contracts, she has created a network of university partners and an internship program to assist in undertaking the work. Through these efforts, faculty, students and young professionals are provided opportunities to learn about the national park system and cultural landscape preservation.

Vida not only advises national parks on the management of cultural landscapes but also serves as an instructor of cultural landscape practices to staff in cultural resources and facilities programs

throughout the National Park Service. She provides similar assistance to the agency's historic preservation partners including the Pacific Northwest Preservation Field School, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Oregon, and the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at University of California, Berkeley.

Vida has been in the forefront of efforts to assess the impacts of climate change on cultural landscapes in national parks throughout the Pacific West. She served as the project manager for a study that assessed how these landscapes might be affected by key climate variables, and developed recommendations for future research toward the agency's goal of ensuring cultural landscapes' resilience in light of climate change variables. The research resulted in a publication *Climate Change Impacts on Cultural Landscapes in the Pacific West region of the National Park System*, which received an ASLA honor award in 2017. Vida is continuing her work in this area by developing a vulnerability assessment for cultural landscapes facing environmental threats to help build resiliency into their future management.

I have worked with Vida during the past eleven years as her peer and counterpart in the Northeast Region of the National Park Service and can attest to the tremendous impact she has had on preserving the landscape legacy within the national park system. I strongly feel that awarding Vida an honorary membership in the ASLA would serve to highlight her role in the success of the program and her contribution to the field of cultural landscape preservation within the profession of landscape architecture. I hope you concur that her service to the profession warrants this recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert R. Page". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert R. Page, FASLA
Director, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12
333 Bush Street, Suite 500
San Francisco, CA 94104-2828

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Honorary Membership Nomination
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington DC 20001-3736

I believe that Vida Germano is the most deserving candidate for an honorary membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), not because I can speak with any authority about the value of that membership but because I believe Vida deserves every honor we can bestow on her for the work she does for the American public in the preservation of the nation's historic landscapes in our national parks. And given the role that landscape architects and the profession of landscape architecture have played in the history of these most public landscapes, how we conceive of and understand them, Vida Germano is an obvious choice.

My perspective is that of a program manager, a historian and bureaucrat, charged with the oversight of and assistance in cultural resources management for parks and partners from Yosemite to Yap. What has always impressed me is that of the array of resources we preserve and protect, cultural landscapes are the most recognizable and understood of them all. And this is no small thing to accomplish. You can't hold a landscape like an archaeological feature, you can't hammer a nail into a landscape like a historic structure, and you can't put a landscape on display in a museum exhibit. In the thirty years that I've been with the National Park Service, I've watched the landscape program evolve from a conceptual model into a management reality, from a vision of documenting the history and culture of a place into everyday park managers reading and understanding landscapes as resources to preserve and care for.

This success wasn't accomplished by people talking about the value of cultural landscapes but by those who demonstrated their value, who documented their existence, who planned for their management, and who advised on their treatment. This was done by people like Vida, and in my mind, Vida stands above them all. She led the way. She did the work. I believe that she, as our region's Cultural Landscapes Program Manager, and throughout her earlier career with us, has been the driving force--quiet and humble, understated and passionate--of that success. She's created an expansive program of inventory, preservation and treatment of cultural landscapes, tackled the impacts of climate change head on with practical approaches to active management and treatment, and championed the use of vulnerability assessments to prioritize management options and to help build resiliency into the future management of cultural landscapes for park managers and preservation partners. In 2017 the ASLA recognized her work by giving her an honor award for leading a pilot project to understand the effects of climate change on cultural landscapes.

And did I mention she's the only staff I have to manage cultural landscapes across more than sixty national parks in six states and three Pacific territories, and to assist partners in the Freely Associated

INTERIOR REGION 8 • LOWER COLORADO BASIN*
INTERIOR REGION 9 • COLUMBIA—PACIFIC NORTHWEST*
INTERIOR REGION 10 • CALIFORNIA—GREAT BASIN
INTERIOR REGION 12 • PACIFIC ISLANDS

AMERICAN SAMOA, ARIZONA*, CALIFORNIA, GUAM, HAWAII, IDAHO, MONTANA*,
NEVADA, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, OREGON, WASHINGTON

*PARTIAL

States of Micronesia? She brings to her position an impressive range of knowledge and experience. She joined the National Park Service in 2008 as a member of the Pacific West Region's Cultural Resources Program, leading the inventory of cultural landscapes. Prior to coming to the Park Service, Vida worked in historic preservation with the California Department of Transportation where she served as the San Francisco Bay Area district's cultural landscape specialist. She holds a Master's of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Oregon, with a concentration in cultural landscape preservation, and a Bachelors of Arts degree in History from California State University, Chico.

Well known for her professional expertise and tireless work ethic, Vida not only advises parks on the management of cultural landscapes but also serves as an instructor of cultural landscape practices to NPS staff in cultural resources and facilities programs throughout the agency. She provides similar assistance to our historic preservation partners including the Pacific Northwest Preservation Field School, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Oregon, and the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at University of California, Berkeley.

She is a wonder, a rare balance of experience, academic training, temperament, and passion. No one, I believe, deserves the honor of membership in the ASLA, than Vida Germano.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DL', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

David Louter, Ph.D
Chief, Cultural Resources Program



December 17, 2019

Honorary Membership Nomination
American Society of Landscape Architects Committee Members
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

RE: Letter of Support Nomination of Vida Germano for Honorary ASLA Membership

Dear American Society of Landscape Architects Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to support the nomination of Vida Germano as an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to work with and learn from Vida in several ways over the years.

One of my first projects at California State Parks was in collaboration with the Pacific West Regional Office of the National Park Service to survey the cultural resources and landscape of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the park's resources for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark program. Our oldest state park, Big Basin, witnessed a shift in the conservation movement, saving the ancient redwoods, early park development, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and post-World War II era expansion. These many contexts are visible in the natural and built environment. Vida captured all of the nuances of this vast landscape, her work contributing not only to the survey but also resulting in two National Register nominations, a National Register Multiple Property Submission, and a National Historic Landmark nomination.

Since then, Vida has become a leader in the effects of climate change on cultural resources including cultural landscapes. I have carefully followed her work in this area as it is a great concern of California State Parks. Not only have I attended her well informed sessions at the annual California Preservation Foundation conferences, but also invited her to speak to California State Parks cultural specialist annual training. Her expertise in this subject led to Vida's presentation of a co-authored paper, "Incorporating Local Knowledge into Vulnerability Assessments for Cultural Landscapes" at the 2018 United States Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS) Symposium, Forward Together: A Culture-Nature Journey Towards More Effective Conservation in a Changing World.

Last fall, I had the opportunity to observe Vida work with a class of graduate students from the Public History Program at California State University, Sacramento. Meeting on the site of Pond Farm Pottery, which the students were preparing a National Historic Landmark nomination for, Vida explained the concept of cultural landscapes to them

American Society of Landscape Architects Committee Members
December 17, 2019
Page 2

and walked them through the steps of reading the landscape. Their professor, Dr. Anne Lindsay, has since expressed to me how invaluable Vida's insights, instructions, and interaction has been for the students to develop the landscape portion of the nomination and to increase their own awareness of the impact of cultural landscapes.

Vida is a leader in the cultural landscape field, a pioneer in the effects of climate change on cultural resources and landscapes, and a compassionate and kind person. She is advancing the field of cultural landscapes and, for these reasons, Vida Germano would be an outstanding choice to receive an honorary membership in the ASLA.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Kennedy
State Historian
National Historic Landmark Coordinator
Cultural Resources Division
California State Parks



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Park Cultural Landscapes National Program
319 Second Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Honorary Membership Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Nominee: Vida Germano

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to submit this letter in support of the nomination of Vida Germano for honorary membership in the Society. Vida is a former recipient of an ASLA professional honor award for her work in cultural landscapes and climate change in the NPS, Pacific West Region. She leads the regional cultural landscapes program, and has worked to preserve more than 200 landscapes for the last 12 years. During this time she has magnified the scope of historical research and the range of management issues addressed by NPS in the West Coast and Pacific Islands. Due to Vida's tireless advocacy and multi-faceted expertise, we better understand the impacts of climate change on cultural landscapes. She has engaged NPS staff, federal partners, academic institutions and communities in an informed response to build resilience. Formerly underserved communities and traditional cultural groups are more involved in the preservation of their significant places, and a greater diversity of voices and values are recognized.

In Vida's early career, she worked in one of the most politically challenging areas of preservation: on large transportation projects within a state agency. Despite the complexity of her current position with an incredible work load and understaffed capacity, she still regards those early years as the hardest of her career. The difficulty of protecting cultural landscapes in the wake of large transportation projects shaped Vida's ability to be a preservation leader. Vida understands that adversity can be met with a reasoned argument based on thorough research and a creative approach to problem-solving. She has successfully steered the preservation of NPS cultural landscapes through the most inauspicious circumstances, including a 100-year flood in Death Valley at Scotty's Castle, the devastating wildfires within the Tower House Historic District at Whiskeytown NRA, the eruption of Kilauea affecting several historic districts in Hawaii Volcanoes, and typhoon damage to the historic districts of parks in Guam and American Samoa. To each challenge, Vida brings a cool-head and the ability to gather key information and objectives.

Vida's work has had a national influence on the NPS and has bolstered the confidence of her peers in preservation. As the national program manager for cultural landscapes, I regard Vida as one of the nation's most gifted cultural landscape preservationists. The sustained quality, abundance and creativity of her work in cultural landscape preservation deserve recognition by this honor.

Sincerely,

Susan Dolan
Bureau Landscape Architect