



**Written Statement of Cara Welch, Director of Government Affairs
for the American Society of Landscape Architects
on the FY 2004 Interior Appropriations Bill**

**Submitted to the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Interior
On
the Historic American Landscapes Survey
April 1, 2003**

On behalf of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the national organization representing over 13,000 landscape architects, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY 2004 Interior Appropriations process.

Specifically, ASLA urges the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to appropriate \$800,000 for initial funding of the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), which would be used to refine a long-term program implementation plan, develop landscape documentation guidelines, determine site selection criteria, and test these methodologies on several pilot projects.

The Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) program was established by the National Park Service (NPS) to document historic landscapes that serve as tangible evidence of our nation's heritage and development, and to ensure their recognition by future generations. From carriage roads to battlefields, designed gardens to vernacular homesteads, industrial complexes to summer estates, these landscapes represent the influence of human beliefs and actions over time on the natural landscape.

Background

The survey will cover landscapes of all types from the utilitarian working landscape to the largest and most monumental. Landscapes of every description will be included so that a complete picture of the culture of the times as reflected in the landscapes may be put on record. This will be achieved through measured drawings, written histories, and large-format photographs, resulting in a lasting archive of America's historic landscapes and primary source material for the emerging cultural landscape preservation movement.

Precedence for HALS clearly exists. Since 1933, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), the oldest federal preservation program, has documented historic buildings and made available to the public an archive of records of America's architectural heritage. The following year, NPS entered into an agreement with the Library of Congress (LOC) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) as cosponsors of the HABS program. Under this agreement NPS administers the operations of HABS with funds appropriated by Congress and supplemented by donations from individuals, foundations, historical organizations, and local, state and federal agencies.

In 1969, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) was established as a companion program to HABS to document structures of technological and engineering significance. This was to be the engineering and industrial equivalent of the HABS program designed to raise the public's awareness, understanding, and appreciation of American's technological heritage. Like HABS, HAER was also established through a tripartite agreement among NPS, the LOC, and the American Society of Civil Engineers and, subsequently, with other professional engineering associations. HAER is also administered with funds appropriated by Congress and supplemented by donations from individuals, foundations, historical organizations, and local, state and federal agencies.

Current Status of HALS

The establishment of HALS as a companion program to HABS and HAER to document historic landscapes is long overdue. During the past 20 years, historic preservation has been broadened beyond the singular historic building or urban district to include the historic landscape that provides the setting and context for a property. It is now time to advance the field and initiate a program to document our nations landscape heritage.

ASLA has entered into a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NPS and the LOC to collaborate on the documentation of historic American landscapes. These joint efforts will help promote and expand the fledgling Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) program.

ASLA urges the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to appropriate \$800,000 for initial funding of the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS). Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation.

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