

## Best Practices in Historic Preservation

Preservation tools and programs are necessary to ensure that the irreplaceable historic landscapes and buildings that interpret the Freedom's Frontier story are protected. Successful preservation programs are comprehensive in nature, offering tools not only for the appropriate use of individual buildings and landscapes, but also for a holistic approach to the identification and protection of the region's overall character.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* provides guidance for the consistent review of projects on individual buildings and landscapes in accordance with preservation laws and funding programs. All preservation projects should be reviewed in accordance with these standards.

The best preservation programs combine application of the Standards to individual projects with a holistic application of Education, Planning/Documentation, Advocacy/Stewardship, Public Policy and Interpretation. These approaches, illustrated by the following examples, will help ensure not only that known individual sites are preserved, but also that the historic character of the region is maintained.

### Education

#### **Ohio State Historic Preservation Office: Building Doctor Program**

Summary: Although most historic building owners have the best intentions for preserving their properties, few have a working knowledge of appropriate preservation techniques. Unfortunately, improper work on historic buildings can result not only in the loss of historic character, but also – as in the case of high pressure water cleaning and sandblasting – lead to accelerated deterioration. Because many property owners lack the resources to hire historic preservation specialists, there is a demand for public programs that connect historic property owners with preservation experts.

For more than three decades, the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office's **Building Doctor Program** has been the gold standard for educating owners about maintaining and preserving their old buildings. Each year, Building Doctors hold "Clinics" or two-day workshops in communities throughout the state. On the first day, Building Doctors offer a general overview on how to address common old-building problems, including failing plaster and deteriorated windows. On the second day, the Building Doctors tour nearby buildings, offering expert advice to building owners.

Building Doctors are qualified experts; the professional must hold a master's degree in history, historic preservation, architectural history or planning and have one year of field experience before the state approves them as instructors.

Although the workshops and site visits are free to the public, they require a local cosponsors (generally historical societies and community groups), which pay a \$275 fee to host a Clinic. The program is successful in introducing preservation to building owners in a helpful un-intimidating way. Together, the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office and its partners host eight Building Doctor workshops each year. In the past twenty-five years, the Building Doctors have assisted hundreds of buildings throughout the state.

Partners: Ohio State Historic Preservation Office  
Clinic Co-sponsors

Links: <http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/programs/bd/bd-01.html>  
<http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/programs/bd/bd-02.html>  
<http://crm.cr.nps.gov/archive/25-05/25-05-08.pdf>



### **Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana: ArchiCamps Summer Camp Program**

Summary: In recent decades, the environmental movement has made great strides. One secret to its success? Early education. In their first years of school, students are taught to “reduce, reuse and recycle.” The increasingly standardized curricula have left little time for American History and art, let alone more specialized topics such as historic preservation and local history. Some organizations have committed to fostering an early appreciation for heritage by hosting summer day camps. Summer day camps are increasingly prevalent today as more dual-income families need to find day care for their children during the summer months.

Since 1997, the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana’s decorated **ArchiCamp** has offered a fun way for Indiana kids (ages 8-12) to learn about their local heritage. Each year, the foundation partners with three to five local organizations to host two-day camps. Each camp is unique, with the schedule and hands-on activities guided by local stories and places. For instance, a camp in South Bend challenged kids to name as many forms of transportation as possible as a way to learn about the community’s transportation history. The program combines crafts, field trips, presentations by local experts, and fun activities to achieve the following goals:

- To use historic architecture to educate and excite children about local history and the built environment;
- To introduce career opportunities in history and historic preservation; and
- To instill stewardship and responsibility for heritage.

Through these interactive learning camps, kids gain an appreciation of their heritage. The foundation nurtures a relationship with local cosponsors. And local organizations acquire a structure that they can use to continue their own camp program.

Partners: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana  
Local co-sponsors

Links: <http://historiclandmarks.org/tours/Pages/SummerCamps08.aspx>

### **Preservation Dallas: Historic House Specialist Program**

Summary: Realtors play a key role in sharing a community's charm to prospective residents and building owners. The more realtors know about their community's history and historic architecture, the better equipped they are to market historic buildings to potential buyers that will maintain them properly. Part of a realtor's job is helping their clients create a vision of how a building can fit the needs of their client, and thus on a regular basis they are in a position to suggest changes to existing buildings as part of their sales pitch.

This is the premise behind Preservation Dallas's celebrated **Historic House Specialist Program**. In two-day seminars, local preservation and real estate experts share the tools realtors need to market the city's core neighborhoods. Topics include neighborhood history, architectural history, building materials and proper maintenance, and an orientation to the organization's Intown Living Center, which offers research materials associated with the city's core neighborhoods.

Program graduates, who number more than 250, obtain a certification that earns them the right to use the "Historic House Specialist" logo on their marketing materials and business cards. In addition, they may earn continuing education credits through the Texas Real Estate Board. The program provides a small revenue stream for Preservation Dallas.

Partners: Preservation Dallas  
MetroTex (Local Real Estate Organization)  
Texas Real Estate Board

Links: [http://preservationdallas.org/new\\_site/about/programseducation.php](http://preservationdallas.org/new_site/about/programseducation.php)

## Planning/Documentation

### **Texas Historical Commission: RIP (Record, Investigate, Protect) Program**

Summary: Often, graves are the only remaining physical representation of persons or the communities they called home. Cemeteries mark the location of ethnic churches and historic settlements, where they often doubled as the first community parks. The information on grave markers and headstones is useful to genealogists, historians, and descendants. Unfortunately, because cemeteries do not generally qualify for historic designation and related protection, they are endangered. When we leave cemeteries unmarked, allow them

deteriorate, or destroy them with new development, we lose important connections to our past.

Concerned with the rapid rate at which the state was losing its historic cemeteries to neglect and sprawl, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) founded a unique cemetery preservation program called **RIP (Record, Investigate, Protect)**. In the program's first phase, funded in part from a grant from the Texas Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement Program, THC began mapping and surveying cemeteries in 49 of the state's fastest-growing counties. The urgency of the work became clear when project statistics revealed that 37% of the cemeteries in the pilot program were endangered. The THC recently completed on-site surveys of cemeteries statewide. Surveyors rated cemeteries by threat level (low, medium, high) and mapped their findings on a searchable GIS system.

Once they had identified and mapped cemeteries, THC began working with county historical commissions and community volunteers to designate and preserve them. Toward this end, THC established the Historic Texas Cemetery program, a way to designate and add a layer of protection for cemeteries. As part of the designation process, Historic Texas Cemeteries are permanently recorded in deed records. To date, more than 1000 cemeteries have been designated. THC has created a companion program called the RIP Guardian Program, which encourages an understanding of ethics and preservation principles and educates community volunteers on appropriate preservation techniques.

Partners: Texas Historical Commission  
County Historical Commissions  
Community Volunteers

Links: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/cemeteries/cemrip.shtml>  
<http://members.aol.com/TombView/preservation.html#TX>

### **National Endowment for the Arts: *Your Town: The Citizens' Institute of Rural Design***

Summary: Preserving rural character and creating sustainable local economies requires a two-pronged approach. To succeed, communities must focus not only on revitalizing historic downtowns and landscapes, but also on combating threats to their unique

identity, such as sprawl. Many small rural communities do not have trained planning professionals who can help them evaluate the available options to help them protect the character of their communities.

The award-winning *Your Town* program, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), connects community leaders with design professionals. During an NEA-funded 2 ½ day workshop, participants learn about challenges and threats to rural landscapes nationwide, discuss issues related to their community, and work together through planning to identify solutions. By the end of a *Your Town* workshop, community leaders have identified what makes their community unique and begun the planning process for preserving it.

The following are the goals of the *Your Town* program:

- To raise consciousness of the role of design in rural communities;
- To equip participants with the tools and techniques to identify, protect, enhance their towns and landscapes;
- To influence the working methods and relationships of those who are already providing assistance to rural areas on design and community development issues;
- To teach the fundamentals of the design process and presentation skills;
- To apply design processes to rural community problems and enhance the ability to develop effective solutions;
- To provide a forum for rural technical-assistance providers to share their professional skills and to exchange ideas and experiences with rural communities; and
- To build a network of design-conscious technical-assistance providers and decision makers around the country.

Partners: National Endowment for the Arts  
Landscape Architecture Dept., State University of New York at Syracuse

Links: <http://www.yourtowndesign.org/>

## Advocacy/Stewardship

### **Historic Savannah Foundation: Revolving Fund**

Summary: In many communities nationwide, historic preservation advocates lack the tools necessary to save deteriorated buildings from demolition. Unless the preservation community is prepared in advance of a preservation emergency, efforts to save buildings are likely to fail. In order to succeed, preservation advocates must establish partnerships and build their treasuries in preparation for the threats to come.

During the last half century, one of the nation's oldest preservation advocacy groups, the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF), has had a system in place to rescue old buildings from the wrecking ball. Since establishing its celebrated Revolving Program in 1959, the organization has saved hundreds of historic buildings. HSF uses its not-for-profit status to solicit tax-deductible gifts from donors. In some cases, the organization accepts donations of endangered properties. It uses donated funds to purchase others. Once HSF purchases the threatened property, it markets it for re-sale through its publications and website. To ensure the building's long-term preservation, it places protective covenants on the property. It then uses the money from the re-sale to purchase other endangered properties. HSF focuses its efforts on buildings located within historic districts.

HSF has a strong relationship with the City of Savannah's inspection department, which notifies HSF when a property is slated for condemnation.

Partners: Historic Savannah Foundation  
City of Savannah

Links: <http://www.historicsavannahfoundation.org/>

### **Teton Regional Land Trust: Conservation Easements for Hollingshead Homestead**

Summary: The nation's most productive farm and ranchlands often lie within the counties with the largest population growth. Development in these counties threatens not only the character of the historic landscape, but also the viability of family farms and ranches. Until recently, economics tilted on the side of development. Even farmers who felt strongly about preserving their land were often forced to sell as surrounding development drove up tax valuations. As energy prices increase, fewer children stay on the family farm, crop prices rise, and farmlands become scarcer, farmers are joining forces with conservation groups to protect the nation's agricultural lands.

Conservation easements provide an economic incentive to farmers who wish to preserve America's farmland and protect the rural landscape. Conservation easements restrict the use and development of land through an agreement between the landowner and an organization, such as a land trust. In return for selling or donating their development rights, property owners receive income-tax benefit. Organizations monitor the properties to ensure conditions of easements are being met.

Teton County, Idaho, in the valley between Teton and Big Hole Mountains takes pride in its natural beauty. A recent guide to living in the county notes that "Our wide-open spaces provide more 'elbow room' than you may be accustomed to, but with that freedom to move comes responsibilities." The Teton Regional Land Trust assists property owners in stewarding the resources that make the region unique.

The Teton Regional Land Trust's easement on the Hollingshead Homestead protects not only the property's 40 acres, but also its eight historic buildings. The easement restricts development on the land and requires that work on the buildings be consistent with their historic character. To develop requirements related to the buildings, the land trust consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The property owners take satisfaction in knowing the land they love will be protected for future generations.

Partners: Teton Regional Land Trust  
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Links: <http://www.tetonlandtrust.org/>

## **Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy: Park Management**

Summary: Although most Americans place a priority on parks and open space, funding for cultural landscapes is limited. Many local parks programs are focused on recreation and basic maintenance. Few have access to the expertise, let alone the funds, necessary to preserve their historic parks and parkways.

Recognizing the need to preserve the city's historic Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park system, Buffalo citizens founded the Friends of the Olmsted Parks – later re-named Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy – in 1978. In 1995, the Conservancy partnered with the City of Buffalo to help preserve the nationally significant parks. In 2004, the Conservancy became the nation's first not-for-profit organization to manage a park system, which includes six major parks, eight parkways that connect the parks, nine circles, and seven smaller spaces.

The Conservancy uses members and volunteers to carry out its mission, "to broaden awareness of, appreciation for, and investment in Buffalo's Olmsted Park System in order to enhance, restore and maintain this cultural treasure for the benefit of current and future generations."

Partners: City of Buffalo, New York  
Erie County, New York

Links: <http://www.buffaloolmstedparks.org/default.asp>

## **Public Policy**

### **Maine: Informed Growth Act**

Summary: Sprawl is a threat not only to our communities' financial and historic resources. Big box development requires a piecemeal and inefficient approach to new infrastructure, which diverts community investment away from dense community cores and historic neighborhoods. Surveys nationwide have shown that Americans dislike sprawl and the traffic congestion it creates – preferring to live and work in communities with a more cohesive sense of place.

Moreover, most Americans overwhelmingly support sprawl-curbing public policies.

After carefully studying housing trends and the economic effects of sprawl, the State of Maine launched an effort to stop sprawl's drain on local economies. The first act of its kind in the nation, the Informed Growth Act gives Maine communities the tools they need to make informed decisions about proposed developments. Only projects that are shown to have no adverse impact on the local economy are approved.

Stakeholders: Maine State Planning Office

Links: [http://www.informedgrowthact.com/iga\\_ganda.pdf](http://www.informedgrowthact.com/iga_ganda.pdf)

## **Interpretation**

### **Civil War Trails, Inc.: Civil War Interpretive Trails Program**

Summary: While there are a large number of Civil War sites in Virginia, until just a few years ago few offered tangible visitor experiences and there was no easy way for Civil War travelers to find Virginia's Civil War sites. That changed with the development of the Virginia Civil War Trails, Inc. Based in Richmond, Virginia this organization developed a series of Civil War Trails in Virginia, using specific campaigns or battles to provide a logical chronology (and geographic connections) to connect Civil War heritage sites. Each trail includes low-profile interpretive markers and a trail brochure which is available in both hard copy and in a downloadable format from [www.civilwartrails.org](http://www.civilwartrails.org). Downloadable information on the website includes podcasts, maps (including interactive maps using Google Earth), an online calendar of events and a virtual bookstore selling hard-to-find Civil War titles for pre or post visit perusal.

In developing interpretive materials for each trail, Civil War Trails, Inc. devised an approach which begins and ends with local historians and stakeholders. The process includes a review by a statewide panel of historians as well as staff from Civil War Trails, Inc. with an understanding of the kind of human interest stories that will capture the interest of the casual Civil War traveler. Local historians draft the preliminary copy, which is then reviewed for accuracy by a state panel of historians. Elements of the story that will have the greatest appeal for travelers are then extracted by the

Civil War Trails, Inc. staff for inclusion on interpretive panels, brochures and other interpretive materials. The revised copy goes back to local stakeholders for a final sign-off. This multi-layered review process allows for strong local input while ensuring that the final product is as accurate, unbiased and engaging as possible.

Maintenance and upkeep of the extensive system of interpretive signage was also a concern for Civil War Trails, Inc. While it is relatively easy to find grants to fund sign development and installation, most funders simply don't get as excited about paying for the repair or replacement of damaged or vandalized signs. In addition, patrolling the growing collection of interpretive signs would be impossible for the small staff at Civil War Trails, Inc. The solution was to create a corporation where each new interpretive sign is sponsored for an annual membership fee by a local entity such as a chamber of commerce or convention and visitors bureau. This annual fee provides the member with voting rights at Civil War Trails, Inc. and pays for the cost of replacement panels or signage as needed. The local sponsors for each sign have a greater incentive to monitor the condition of the signs in their area as they have essentially paid for an insurance policy which will cover the costs of needed repairs to keep all the signs in top condition.

The Civil War didn't stop at the Virginia state line, and based on the success of this program in Virginia, Civil War Inc. expanded to include two other states, Maryland and North Carolina. All three states now have joint interpretive and promotional Civil War materials that use a shared logo, a common approach and the collective marketing power of a larger region.

Partners: Civil War Trails, Inc.

Links: [www.civilwartrails.org](http://www.civilwartrails.org)  
<http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/successStories/virginia.htm>