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# LANDSCAPES NORTH

NEWSLETTER

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## Preservation of Historic Sites and Cultural Landscapes

By: ASLA Policy Board Statement with Northern BC examples

The preservation and protection of nationally, regionally and locally significant historic properties, buildings, structures, districts, cultural landscapes, archaeological remains and objects, both designed and vernacular, are critical to maintaining history across generations. Protection of these cultural resources offers inspirational values and an appreciation of past ingenuity, accomplishments, hardships and hopes. The interpretation and public use of historic properties and cultural landscapes should be viewed as an integral part of their preservation.

Like most resources that have gained recognition in the field of preservation, as the integrity of resource type is threatened, there tends to be increased public outcry and ultimately a demand to act on behalf of the resource.

With maturation of landscape preservation a variety of inventory and documentation processes, analysis and evaluation methodologies and site / resource treatment standards have developed to assist and guide historic property managers in the decisions

about cultural landscapes. Cultural landscape reports have become commonplace for both privately and publicly held historic properties.

Without a comprehensive understanding of the site history and a plan to manage the site in place, well meaning but unstudied modifications may compromise the integrity of a significant historic property or cultural landscape. The identification, documentation, analysis, evaluation, treatment and maintenance of historic sites and cultural landscapes is critical to managing a site wisely. Such efforts help ensure that the resource is available for the education and enjoyment of future generations.

Development of cultural landscapes, including the placement of buildings and service facilities such as parking areas, roads, information facilities, visitor shelters, etc., should be based on the landscape treatment chosen for the site, be it preservation, rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction. Some examples of these sites in the Prince George Region are as follows: *(continued on page 2)*

## Message from Jay Lazzarin

that after reading these articles you can appreciate the opportunities, complexities and vast amount of research and planning necessary to develop appropriate treatment, implementation and maintenance plans. Usually this requires a multidisciplinary approach to ensure that a systematic planning process addresses all issues.

Wise stewardship protects the character and spirit of a landscape by recognizing history as 'change over time.' The potential benefits from the preservation of historic and cultural landscapes are enormous. These landscapes provide numerous opportunities that help us understand ourselves as individuals, communities and as a nation. Their ongoing preservation can yield an improved quality of life for all and, above all, a sense of place and identity for future generations.

This newsletter is highlighting the planning, treatment and management of historic and cultural landscapes. We hope

## Preservation of Historic Sites (continued from pg. 1)

The historic section of the **Wells Barkerville Cemetery** opened in the 1860s with the start of the Cariboo Gold Rush, a significant period of B.C.'s history. The recent challenge has been to select and develop the most appropriate treatment for the decaying wooden head stones, invading plant growth, erosion and control of visitor movement in and about the graves. (Pictured right.)



Within the central interior of British Columbia, near Dome Creek, lies a relatively small pocket of large cedar trees some of which are over 1,000 years old. This **Ancient Forest** is unique in that it is one of the few interior rainforests in the world and within its boundaries are some of the oldest and largest cedar trees. Only recently has there been a drive by a local hiking group and UNBC staff to preserve this landscape and develop a plan for its future. (Pictured left.)

Located 40 km NE of Prince George, along the shores of the Fraser River, the historic buildings of **Huble Homestead** and farm were a key trading post in the 1800s and early 1900s. Both the traditional log buildings and supporting farm landscape offer insight and appreciation for past accomplishments. (Pictured right)



## National Historic Sites – Management Plans are a ‘Living’ Document

National Historic Sites administered by Parks Canada, develop a management plan to assist in decision making. The management plan is a ‘living document’ as it is under constant review. At the core of every management plan is input from the public, visitors and stakeholders to ensure goals remain valid and effective.

For example, the most current management plan for Fort St. James National Historic Site was completed in 2002. Since then, Parks Canada commenced a management plan review in 2008, identifying key issues to be addressed. Parks Canada has since been seeking public input in the form of questionnaires, open houses, and management review sessions. The new management plan is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2012.



In 1805 the North West Trading Company established Fort St. James, which became the centre of northern fur trade in New Caledonia.

## FEATURED PROJECT

## BURNABY CENTRAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Client:** School District 41

**Project Management:** Giffles Partnership Solutions Inc.

**Architect:** Grant and Sinclair Architects Ltd.

**Contractors:** DGS Construction Ltd.

**Landscape Architect:** Jay Lazzarin Landscape Architect (JLLA)

**Landscape Contractor:** DGS Construction / Lund Landscaping

**Completed:** Phase 1 – September 2011 (Phase 2 – Fall 2012)

**Project Value:** \$50 Million



*Terraced planting beds utilizing onsite boulders clw vegetated bioswale.*

Working within a multi-disciplinary framework, JLLA was responsible for landscape design which included such features as an irrigated, sand-based playfield; bioswales assisting in onsite storm management; integration of the City of Burnaby's urban walkway; various retaining wall systems; as well as assisting in creek realignment and development of a vegetated riparian zone. The landscape design of this LEED Gold, design-build school, was truly a team effort as architectural, civil, and environmental inspirations are woven into many of the leading edge site treatments.

The design of the new 1300 student BCSS and the surrounding site gives the students, staff and visitors the feeling of attending a "school in the park." Every effort was taken to maximize the preservation of existing trees. An abundance of onsite granite boulders were excavated and utilized in the construction of several landscape features such as retaining walls and lining of creek beds, bioswales and a holding pond. In compliance with the owner's requirements, the majority of the landscape is designed as an attractive, low maintenance, self-sustaining site utilizing drought tolerant plant species.

Due to the confined site size, the project is being undertaken in two phases. With the completion of phase 1 and opening of the school in September 2011, phase 2 will entail the demolition of the existing school and construction of a new school gym, theatre, synthetic running track and field facility, and parking lot within this renovated area.



*Temporary holding pond collects large volume runoff prior to dissipating into a recharge chamber.*



*Vegetated Deltalock retaining wall and planted riparian zone adjacent to creek (8 weeks after installation).*



*Sodded rugby field, perimeter fence, and retention of existing cedar trees.*

# Recognizing Special Trees

By Valerie Giles

The next time you are out walking in your community, pay attention to the trees in your environment. Whether it's a single tree which has become a familiar landmark or a grove of trees which forms a canopy over the road or path, be aware that trees enhance our environment. While we can appreciate them visually, they are performing important functions in the ecosystem by filtering air and water and shielding us from hot sun or driving rain.

Many communities are establishing registers for heritage or special trees. The term "heritage" is normally applied to trees which are old and established. Some stands of trees (like orchards or wind breaks on farms) were known to be planted by pioneers. "Special" trees can be ones even recently planted but hold significance in the community. A tree can be considered special because it has an unusual shape or perhaps because it is an atypical type to be

*"A city's image...is defined not only by the built environment but also by ...significant living specimens—like trees."*

growing in the region. Other trees are special because they have become local landmarks or have cultural significance by virtue of markings signifying trails through the bush. Some even have myths and legends about them which have become part of local folk history. Ceremonial trees, like those planted by visiting dignitaries, are also popular for the interest generated in the event which that tree planting celebrated.

Registries of heritage or special trees are kept by local governments (in villages, towns and cities) and are features of their websites. Anyone wishing to call attention to a tree should alert the municipal or civic authorities to help generate and expand the list.

A city's image or a region's identity is defined not only by the built environment but also by the landscape features and significant living specimens - like trees.

Currently, the Prince George Heritage Commission is asking for input from citizens who may be aware of trees which have are considered

special and contribute to the experience of living in Prince George. Two examples are:

**The Cutbanks** - As people look across at the tree line atop the sandy hills overlooking the Nechako and Fraser rivers, their unique appearance is caused not just by erosion but also was shaped by another dramatic natural event. Residents had been on alert during the Second World



War because Japanese submarines had been detected off Prince Rupert. Fear of an attack was uppermost in people's minds in Prince George when loud noise and shaking occurred on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945 at 4:52 p.m. It was soon realized that instead of an air strike there had been a violent earth tremor. Three aftershocks occurred the next day. An eye witness watched as great sections of the cutbanks fell, kicking up huge clouds of dust as tons of earth and trees fell into the river. After that, the appearance of the cutbanks was forever changed.

**The Tree Line on Vancouver Street** - Planted by Prince George Rotary members in 1949, the stately trees are a perennial gift from civic-minded Rotarians. Thinking ahead to the millennium, the members wanted to leave a legacy to future citizens. Project chairman, Martin Caine, declared "I can envisage the time, 50 years from now, when there will be a nice tree-shaded boulevard, with green verges where the tired men and women of Prince George will stroll and say 'God bless the men who planted those trees.'"

Heritage or special trees can be anywhere - in a public place or on private property. The idea is to call attention to help protect them so their survival can be assisted. That way, they can be around to be enjoyed by future generations.

Contact your local government if you have information about special trees. With growing interest in this feature of our natural landscape, application processes are being put in place and public participation is actively encouraged.

## FEATURED PLANT

### Ninebark Shrubs

A popular deciduous shrub, valued primarily for its colourful leaves, ninebark shrubs are very hardy and do well in full sun or light shade. Their recent popularity can be attributed to their four season appeal: spring blossoms, colourful summer foliage, vibrant fall colour and the exfoliating bark is attractive in the winter setting. Commonly known as a medium to large sized shrub, it is easy to grow and care for.



#### **Physocarpus Opufolius "Diabolo" (Diabolo Ninebark) Zone 3 -**

Diabolo is one of the largest ninebark shrubs growing to a 10' height by 10' spread. Grown primarily for its deep burgundy coloured leaves, it is an excellent background shrub. Diabolo is attractive to bees, butterflies and birds. The white flowers offer a stunning contrast with the burgundy foliage.



#### **Physocarpus Opufolius 'Dart's Gold' (Darts Golden Ninebark) Zone 3 -**

Grown for its lush, golden coloured summer foliage, Dart's Gold is the smallest ninebark growing to a mature height of 4'-6" by 4'6" spread. Heavy spring pruning is encouraged to rejuvenate growth. **Pictured left.**



#### **Physocarpus Opufolius "Summer Wine" (Summer Wine Ninebark) Zone 3 -**

The newest variety of ninebark, 'Summer Wine' is a neat, dark crimson coloured shrub. It has compact branches growing to a height of 5'-0" with a 3'-0" spread. Requires light pruning, and maintains its crimson foliage through the fall. **Pictured left.**

#### **Physocarpus Opufolius 'Minda" (Coppertina Ninebark) Zone 3 -**

A relatively new variety, Coppertina is a cross between the golden ninebark Dart's Gold' and the purple leafed 'Diabolo.' In the summer the foliage is a rich red with white spring blossoms. 7' height by 5' spread. **Pictured right.**



# Questions & Answers

## A question commonly asked is, "What can I do with a steep barren embankment?"

With some questions, there is more than one correct answer. Factors that influence this choice include:

1. Budget,
2. Relative steepness and stability of the embankment
3. Quality and depth of existing soil / growing medium
4. Context of surrounding landscape
5. Slope orientation.

Possible treatments could include; (from simplest to more complex / expensive):

- Grading and tilling the growing medium to a slope less than 2H:1V and hydroseed with a mixture of native grasses, and wild flowers. It will be

important to incorporate fertilizer, mulch and tactifier within the mixture to promote quick germination and dense cover to minimize potential erosion.

- Together with the above, install plugs and/or small potted, drought tolerant indigenous shrubs and perennials that will root quickly and form a dense root system minimizing the potential for future erosion.
- Terrace the slope incorporating plant material between the terraces. A choice of materials you may wish to consider in constructing the terraced walls include:
  - Precast concrete blocks,
  - Pressure treated wood,
  - Large sized boulders, (greater than two foot diameter),

- Gabion baskets c/w cobble rock,
- Engineered 'green' walls.

The design and selection of the most appropriate material will depend on budget, site context, and the height and spacing of the retaining walls. In most cases walls exceeding four foot height require reinforcement and proper design to ensure structural longevity.

- Develop the embankment as a focal point for your garden. One possible treatment is the introduction and development of a water feature / waterfalls and pond incorporating boulders, or alternatively, formed concrete to simulate large rock features.



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