

Creating a Broader HALS Network

The establishment of the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) in 2000 was like Kris Kringle receiving mountains of mail in Miracle on 34th Street. The U.S. Government finally recognized historic landscapes as legitimate siblings of historic buildings and structures in the NPS family of Heritage Documentation Programs. Suddenly, all of those buildings and structures floating in large format black and white photos with no visible means of support were poised to leap from the page in vibrant Technicolor with an entourage of plants and ponds, a network of roads and paths, and vistas stretching to the horizon. In our dreams, maybe.

Using HALS

Now that we have HALS, what is it that we do have? Another compliance tool for documenting historic properties before the road goes through? Only if we let it be. HALS has the potential to raise awareness of historic landscapes, provide baseline information for their management, and leverage significant funding for their preservation.

As part of the MOU establishing HALS, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) created a network of HALS Liaisons from each state. Their work is overseen by a HALS Liaisons Coordinator selected by the chair of the Historic Preservation-Professional Practice Network (HP-PPN). The state Liaisons are appointed by their respective ASLA chapter presidents, and charged with the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Lobby federal legislators for initial and ongoing Congressional funding of HALS.
2. Compile, prioritize, and update a list of local examples of historic landscapes that are threatened, highly significant, and/or highly valued.
3. Assist the Chief of HALS to compile a comprehensive national inventory of possible HALS study sites.
4. Identify one or more historic landscapes that merit complete documentation pursuant to the guidelines and coordinate such documentation as resources allow.
5. Coordinate HALS activities with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
6. Advise on the review and revision of state and local historic preservation laws and standards to include documentation of historic landscapes.
7. Educate government agencies and consultants about the use of HALS for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the Transportation Department Act of 1966, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Promote public awareness of the importance of historic landscapes and the use of HALS.
8. Encourage donations from local philanthropists to the HABS/HAER/HALS Foundation for supplemental private funding of HALS.

A Broader Network

Many members of the AHLPP are actively promoting HALS, but we need to work with the Liaisons to create a broader network of advocates. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has lent credence to landscape preservation recently, emphasizing site and

context. We need to enlist the Trust and other preservation partners like NCSHPO, and local preservation organizations and individuals in the campaign to implement and fund HALS.

To identify the HALS Liaison in your state, contact your local ASLA chapter

<http://www.asla.org/states/ChPr.htm>

or go to <http://host.asla.org/groups/hppigroup/directory.htm>. For more information, contact HALS Liaisons Co-Coordinator, Susan Crook at 435-773-7920/ scrookla@gmail.com, or David Driapsa at (941) 591-2321/ agarden@naples.net.