Celebrating the Heritage of St. Marys, Ohio: A Proposal for a Canal Park and Greenway System

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LA 404: Fifth Year Comprehensive Project

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Abstract

Celebrating the Heritage of St. Marys, Ohio: A Proposal for a Canal Park and Greenway System

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Our country’s heritage is being lost. As Americans, we are rich in the history and culture of our nation. Unfortunately, the cultural heritage of our country is at risk due to many different factors. Some of these factors include urban sprawl, lack of maintenance and new technology. As part of our profession, landscape architects must remain sensitive to our heritage. We should aim to retain these heritage landscapes, celebrate them, and educate the public about them. One way to retain our past is to provide parks that celebrate the history of our country.

The city of St. Marys, Ohio is rich in cultural heritage. The Miami-Erie Canal, which at one time spanned the distance between Lake Erie and the Ohio River, flowed through St. Marys. The canal was used for transportation and industry (the use of mills along the canal). Few areas of the canal still exist; however, the most intact part of the canal that remains flows through St. Marys. The old towpath that the horses used when pulling the canal boats has now been converted to a greenway trail called the Buckeye Trail. There is an area of land near the northward entrance to the trail in St. Marys where several mills and locks are deteriorating. A multi-use park, with the theme of the city’s history, was designed for this area. This park not only celebrates the history of the area, but educates visitors and citizens as well. A greenway system through the city was also designed. It follows the historic canal corridor through the city and completes an existing but disconnected trail system. Through the designation of land area as a public park and the education of park visitors through environmental interpretation, the cultural heritage of St. Marys is being rescued.
Introduction

The cultural identities our country has been founded upon are at risk. With the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, Congress stated that historic properties were being lost and these sites should be preserved for future generations. The Historic Landscape Initiative lists reasons for the loss of historic landscapes. Several of these reasons are inappropriate use, insensitive development, vandalism and natural forces. In a 1987 report by the Department of the Interior deterioration is stated as the number one cause of damage to historical sites (Landmarks At Risk 5).

Government organizations such as the National Park Service and programs and laws like the Historic Landscape Initiative and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 form the basis for regaining our lost heritage. The purpose of this project was to contribute to the move toward regaining lost or degrading historic landscapes. This project encompassed an area of land rich in cultural history. More specifically, this project helped to recover an area of an historic transportation corridor in St. Marys, Ohio. A trailhead park along the Buckeye trail and near the downtown was designed and aimed to celebrate the theme of the history of the area. Through interpretation, the park also educates park visitors about the city’s history. A greenway system was also designed through the city, completing an existing but disconnected system. The greenway follows the historic canal corridor, reinforcing the theme of the city’s heritage.

As a case study, this project will provide future landscape architects with a reference project site when designing similar projects in the Midwest region. It also serves as an encouragement for other communities along the Miami and Erie Canal to recover their cultural history of the canal.

The popularity of greenways has grown in the past decade. Along with their popularity, innovative ideas of activities along greenways have developed. The greenway movement is still going full force and continues to be studied and analyzed. This park creates a series of nodes along the Buckeye Trail corridor, like beads on a necklace. The entire project displays and emphasizes the variety of activities that can happen along a greenway trail. The project contributes to the plethora of activities greenway trails can support.
Review of the Related Literature

Historical Perspective

Although landscape architecture has been prominent in the United States since the first part of the nineteenth century, it has been quite recently that historic landscape preservation has made its debut as a legitimate subcategory to the landscape architecture profession. The earliest known advocate for historic landscape study in the United States was Carl Sauer. In 1923 he proposed that the study of landscapes should be a primary discipline of geography. He was unsuccessful, however, being told that landscape would continue to be considered a subcategory of cultural geography (Alanen 13-15). Prior to the 1960s the focus of restoration and preservation was devoted to historical features, especially structures, rather than landscapes. What characteristics of landscapes were addressed were in documentation only and there was no discussion or analysis of them (Department of the Interior, A Guide to 13).

With the financial help of John D. Rockefeller, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg began in the 1920s and continued through the 1930s (Alanen 6). Colonial Williamsburg was one of the first landscape preservation/restoration projects in the country. Although the National Park Service (NPS) was acquiring land for parks long before the Colonial Williamsburg restoration, emphasis on preservation and history of the lands was not recognized until later in the 1930s (Department of the Interior, A Guide to 7).

Even with the recognition of the significance of these landscapes, true understanding and guidelines for the treatment of them were in the distant future. John Brinkerhoff Jackson was influential in bringing about awareness and understanding of historical landscapes. From 1951 to 1968 he was the editor of the magazine Landscape (Alanen 15-16). Despite his lack of desire to be called a preservationist or an environmentalist, many of his writings have been widely used to promote preservation.

In the early 1970s groups advocating the historic preservation of landscapes were formed, such as the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Historic Preservation Committee and the Association for Preservation Technology (APT) Alliance for Historic Preservation (Alanen 7). In 1975 the NPS decided that a more appropriate term for "historic" landscapes would be "cultural" landscapes.
Around 1980 there was a recognition that much of our country's national heritage was being lost. This led to the publication of *Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park Service* in 1984 that provided a manual for the identification, evaluation, and management of rural historic landscapes. Shortly after this publication the NPS officially declared cultural landscapes as important for recognition and protection in the NPS Management Policies. Unarguably one of the most important moves by the NPS was the revision of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in 1992 to include landscapes. This publication is the major source of the process of identifying historic places in our country. Between 1994 and 1998 several publications became available that provided guidelines for the identification, treatment and management of cultural landscapes in the United States. Two of these publications were *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* and *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (Department of the Interior, *A Guide to 10-11*).

**Case Studies**

**Southern Appalachian National Forest**

In their article, "Southern Appalachian National Forests; Interpretive Planning for Rural Historic Landscapes," Delce Dyer and Quentin Bass define cultural landscapes as patterns of land use over time (23). Areas near the Southern Appalachian National Forest developed plans for interpretive services. Plans included mission statements, goals, inventories of interpretive resources and a "Cultural Resources Overview." The "Cultural Resources Overview" documented and assessed the cultural resources of the forest. Several questions were asked as to what and how to reveal cultural landscapes to the public. Upon answering these questions design guidelines were developed for each site (23). The questions that resource managers and land use planners worked with were, what landscapes should we try to conserve; how do we handle the public with fragile cultural resources; what should we interpret to the public; how do we address increased tourism upon the cultural landscapes; and how should we incorporate tourist amenities, such as roads, restrooms, parking and signage with the least affect on the landscape (23)? After answering these
questions, old roads and water crossings in the forest were integrated into the forest trail systems, upland grazing “balds” were proposed to have interpretation from byways and some unused fire towers were planned to be used as interpretive sites.

Hanalei Valley, Kauai Island, Hawaii

Hanalei Valley is located on the northern side of Kauai Island between the mountains and the ocean. Several ecosystems provide the valley with many different resources. The habitation of the land was not easy, however, with natural elements and forces as adversaries. The first inhabitants of the island resorted to wetland agriculture. Today taro agriculture remains the predominant land use of Hanalei. Irrigation systems from the mountains bring fresh water to the taro fields. The rural landscape is dotted with irrigation ditches, farmhouses and even commercial areas and government buildings (47). Layers of human history have developed. Unfortunately this landscape is being threatened by tourism. The tourists who come to the island want to see a natural landscape and travel to Hanalei to see it. In 1985 a resort hotel opened near Hanalei and more tourists traveled here to the “less traveled” Hanalei (47). The tourists walk through the taro patches, water ski in the Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge, and damage earth dikes and bridges as well as the cultural landscape. The unfortunate problem with tourism in Hanalei is that development will spread in order to cater to the tourists’ needs, and sooner or later no one will want to come to the area since there is so much development. To combat this problem a group called 1000 Friends of Kauai was formed to come up with a plan to conserve the historic and cultural resources of the area while accommodating for growth (48). First the group compiled a cultural landscape survey that identified significant landscape components. Secondly, they developed a cultural resources protection plan and then design guidelines. In the future Hanalei will have design standards and guidelines for rehabilitation and new construction that will help protect the cultural resources of the area (49-50).

Delaware and Hudson Heritage Corridor, Port Jervis, New York

According to a National Parks magazine article, the Delaware and Hudson (D & H) Heritage Corridor Project has been termed by the National Park Service a “model project for
greenway parks – corridor parks linking open spaces and other significant areas, such as historic sites (“NYPiCA”).” The D & H Heritage Corridor consists of the Delaware and Hudson Canal and the Gravity Railroad system. The city of Port Jervis, New York is doing its part to continue the heritage corridor in their city. Through preserving a one-mile stretch of the corridor and turning it into a greenway for hiking and biking, the celebration of the heritage of the canal and railroad corridor occurs.

Much of the corridor exists on publicly owned land. However, in places owned privately, the trail is re-routed slightly. While mapping for the larger corridor, a city member noticed that this one-mile stretch of the canal was for sale. He advocated the city’s acquisition of the land to be added to the D & H Heritage Corridor. The opportunity for the celebration of the area’s cultural heritage and for heritage tourism in the area resulted in the Mayor’s support for the project.

The project relied greatly on the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program. This program helps guide citizens and state and local governments in revitalizing their rivers, preserving open space, and developing trail and greenway networks (Rivers Trails). Future plans for the heritage corridor in Port Jervis include adding to the trail and clearing debris from the canal.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

The goal of Wanuskewin Heritage Park was “to promote and work toward establishing a world-recognized heritage park that serves as a major tourist attraction and contributes to increasing public awareness and understanding of the cultural legacy of the Northern Plains Indians” (Crosby and Hanna 14). Through the Meewasin Valley Project, led by the Meewasin Valley Authority, this goal was achieved. On June 27, 1992 Wanuskewin Heritage Park opened its doors to the public.

The Northern Plains Indians left visible evidence of their culture behind. As an addition to Canada’s Old Northwest tourism region, the heritage park educates its visitors using this abandoned evidence. Planning for the park was detailed and sited sensitive. Because the name Wanuskewin means, “seeking peace of mind” or “living in harmony” (Crosby and Hanna 14) much care was needed in order that the culture and environment was minimally disturbed by site development and activity.
In planning for the heritage park a detailed site inventory and analysis was done, focusing on the effects of site development and activity. A resource management program was also developed, which included policies, guidelines and performance standards for the park. The resource management program greatly influenced the site planning and design. During the site and land development phase collaboration was key for the planners. Because of the rich heritage of the area, the planners were required to be sensitive of all interests. Workshop sessions were held to learn more about the area and to gain insight from concerned and interested citizens. The result of planning was a 136-hectare archaeological showcase and exhibition of prehistoric and present day Northern Plains Indian cultures.

Lowell National Cultural Park and Lowell Heritage State Park, Lowell, Massachusetts

Lowell, Massachusetts was the country’s first planned industrial community (US dept. of the Interior). Two canals were built through Lowell, the Pawtucket and the Middlesex Canals. These canals were first only used for transportation. However, later the canals were used for industrial power and defined Lowell as an industrial city. In 1977 the city realized that its historic and cultural resources needed to be secured. The Lowell National Cultural Park was proposed, focusing on three goals of improving the city economy, improving the quality of the environment and encouraging the appreciation for the area’s cultural resources (The Commission 8). Preservation, interpretation and the development and use of private and public entities were focused on as well. This type of project had never been proposed in the National Park Service so the cultural park at Lowell was a pioneer project requiring cooperation between federal, state, and local governments and private entities (The Commission 8).

The park is concentrated in the downtown but also encompasses the entire canal system and banks. A visitor center is the centerpiece and catalyst for commercial development. Interpretation in the park focuses on how industrialization influenced lives and how it contributed to modern society. Exhibits throughout the park include themes of technology and hydropower, free enterprise and capitalism, working and living in an industrial city, and immigration and the settling of the city (The Commission 9).

In 1974 the Lowell Heritage State Park was proposed (The Commission 105). The purpose of the heritage park was to preserve the cultural heritage of the area, and develop these resources to increase public appreciation and enjoyment. Objectives of the park were
to use interpretation to help the public better understand the region's culture, preserve and improve water related open space, provide public recreational opportunities along the river and restore, maintain and utilize historical sites and buildings associated with the water systems. The primary components of the park are major park sites, canal and riverbanks and watercourses, and historically and architecturally significant buildings. Unlike typical state parks of a single unit of land, the Lowell Heritage State Park is a system of dispersed parks that are connected through land and water circulation (The Commission 105).

**Design Issues, Trends and New Ideas**

The most significant challenge within the realm of historic landscape preservation is the activity of preserving a landscape while allowing for tourism, development, and change. It is impossible for a landscape to be completely frozen and void of change. The natural component of a landscape prevents this from happening. Many tourists travel in order to see natural landscapes. In an area where tourism is a large part of the economy it is likely that the historic and cultural landscapes are overlooked and dominated by the need to cater to the tourists. In Hanalei Valley on the island of Kawai, Hawaii this growth of tourism and the development to support it was threatening the cultural landscape (Melnick, and Keller). In his article "Science or Tradition?" Richard West Sellars discussed this debate. During a conference in 1991 the NPS was presented with the opportunity to become a leader in ecological land management. In the past, park management tourism was a very large economy for the NPS. Wilderness was compromised in that access roads were built throughout the parks and animals were killed as a result of tourism. Sellars, throughout his article, emphasized the debate of tourism against the environment. Not only was the landscape threatened by tourism, but also by development, such as urban sprawl. Although some tourists may overlook heritage, it is a growing interest among many. Heritage tourism is defined as "the practice of traveling to experience historic and cultural attractions to learn about a community's, region's, or state's past in an enjoyable and informative way" (Francaviglia 45). In 1990 50% of tourism in the country was heritage based (Francaviglia 45). Surprisingly, this replaced agriculture and industry as the country's major source of revenue.

There are several issues, trends, and new ideas that landscape preservationists are presently faced with. One question is how should cultural landscapes be revealed to the
public? An answer to that question is a process that the NPS currently uses. It is called environmental interpretation. First defined by Freeman Tilden, environmental interpretation is “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” (8). In other words, environmental interpretation aims not only to educate but also to inspire visitors to increase their knowledge and participation in environmental issues. Another question we are faced with is, why preserve? Although there are many answers to this question, a few answers to it are to forge a vital connection to the past, to retain places in the world, and to extend the legacy of collective memory to future generations (Connections).

An issue present today is the idea of the treatment of landscapes as museums (Connections). Many people want to “freeze frame” a landscape. They advocate walls around the landscape that keep people out and let the landscape stay by itself. The major problem with this view is that the landscape is alive and is always changing. It is impossible for us to keep it from changing. Another issue is the view that the landscape is our teacher and we can learn from nature (Melnick 33). In order to understand the landscape we must “read” it or see it and learn how it developed. An analogy for “reading” the landscape is that it is like learning a new language. We should recognize patterns, details, parts that fit together and parts that seem strange next to each other (Melnick 35).

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 aimed to provide a program for the preservation of national historic sites. As part of the National Park Service, the Historic Landscape Initiative is dedicated to protecting and promoting the preservation of our country’s historic landscapes. With laws like the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and programs like the Historic Landscape Initiative, a basis for the preservation of historic landscapes can be created.

Under the broad idea of historic landscape preservation there are several subtopics or types of historic landscapes. The first is a cultural landscape, which has several definitions. A broad definition is anywhere “human activity has changed the land” (Alanen 3). A more specific, yet still broad definition is “a geographical area... associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values” (Alanen 8). Under the subcategory of cultural landscapes, the NPS defined four types; historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. A
historic site is a landscape important because of an activity or event that took place there, or because it is associated with a famous person. A historic designed landscape is significant because it was designed, a work of art. The landscape that has developed as a result of the way a people used and lived on the land is characterized as a historic vernacular landscape. The final type of cultural landscape is an ethnographic landscape, which is a landscape that provides a connection between a cultural group and a place (Department of the Interior, A Guide to 12). An ethnographic landscape can be viewed in different ways by many different cultural groups (Hardesty 169).

Another type of historic landscape is a heritage landscape. A heritage landscape is one that must appear as though it belongs to a different time period and is an evidence of the past. A heritage landscape can be a reconstruction, but must display a “contemporary yet compatible design” (Francaviglia 46). In 1992, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) set criteria for cultural landscapes to be called World Heritage Sites. These criteria are a clearly defined landscape, an organically evolved landscape (changed in response to the natural environment), and an associative cultural landscape (reflection of natural elements to religious, artistic, or cultural associations) (Alanen 8). The ultimate purpose of a heritage landscape is to convey messages about the meaning of the past, or, in other words, reinterpret the past (Francaviglia 45). Like cultural landscapes, there are several categories of heritage landscapes. They are broken down into these categories according to the way they were preserved or in the way that they are marketed (Francaviglia 49). The first category is the passively preserved landscapes. These landscapes are islands that have amazingly escaped progress and change (Francaviglia 49). These landscapes are obviously rare. As opposed to passively preserved landscapes, actively preserved landscapes are those that have been intentionally set aside for preservation (Francaviglia 52). An example of an actively preserved landscape is an area of land settled and dominated by the Amish cultural group. Through early record and archaeological survey work, a landscape that has been resurrected from almost nothing through reconstruction is called a restored heritage landscape (Francaviglia 55). An assembled heritage landscape is also created to show history of historical events. However, an assembled landscape is one that had not originally occurred in that place (Francaviglia 58). Disneyland’s Main Street USA is an example of an imagineered landscape. It was created to reflect an essence rather
than reality (Francaviglia 61). Finally, an imaginarily preserved landscape depicts history in miniature form, such as a model or diorama (Francaviglia 61).

One final issue and thought is that if we are unable to preserve the landscape in its strict historic framework, we must maintain its character through management and preservation (Department of the Interior, Cultural Landscapes 10).
Rationale for Site Context and Site Selection

Location Maps
Site Location

Site Criteria

When selecting a site for this project, there were several criteria that helped determine the best place to locate the multi-use park and greenway system. The main requirement of the site was a proximity to visible history of the city. Visual access to historical elements provided a way to design a park that celebrated the history of the area. Another site requirement was access to the existing Ohio Buckeye Trail that runs beside the canal creating a linear path through the city and connecting it with other communities. The number of site visitors is anticipated to increase because it is located along this trail. Public access to the site was also an important consideration. A goal of the project was to raise awareness and
educate citizens and tourists about the history of the area. Another important criterion for
the site was that it must be located in an underutilized area. It was the desire that a
beautification process within the city take place within the site.

**Existing Historical Elements**

As part of the site criteria existing historical elements are present on or near the site. The
most intact part of the canal still existing today runs through St.Marys. The canal borders
the site to the east. A hydraulic race that separates from the canal at one point is at a higher
elevation than the canal and eventually empties back into it. The water flowing from the
race back into the canal powered the mills, of which two are still in existence. The two mills
that still exist are a flouring mill and a woolen mill. Unfortunately, both of these mills are
deteriorating and displayed a need to be restored in order to become usable again. A lock
also exists on the site, however a portion of the woolen mill is built over it. A railroad
company built a freight depot and passenger station on the site. The passenger station no
longer exists but the foundation of the freight depot remains on the site. These aspects of
the city history fulfill the requirement for the display of physical history on or near the site.

**Physical Connections**

The site also fulfilled the proximity requirement to the Buckeye Trail. Traveling south on
the Buckeye Trail into St.Marys, the trail meets the site. The trail begins again at the
southern end of the site and continues to head south out of the city. The site also bisects the
downtown, making it accessible by many people using the downtown for business or
residence. The middle school and high school are three blocks away.

**Site Beautification**

The site is in need of beautification, which met another site requirement. Currently, portions
of the site are used for a power plant, city vehicle storage and a parking lot. Materials on the
site include gravel, grass, weeds and asphalt. Clearly, the site chosen for the project fulfilled
all criteria mentioned previously.
Site Opportunities and Constraints

The site had opportunities as well as constraints. One opportunity was the connection to downtown. Because the site bisects the downtown, access and connection to the site was easily made. Through interpretation, a first-hand learning experience was an opportunity for the middle school and high school located three blocks away. Because many visible historical elements are located near and on the site, opportunities to connect visually from the site were present. One constraint that was evident was the power plant located near the site. Designing around it while providing maintenance access to it was a challenge. Another constraint was that the site is located in the flood plain. This limited site development and opportunities for new construction. A final site constraint was the condition of the historical elements. The mills are deteriorating and the lock is unable to be seen. Connecting to these elements through design was important, but visually, they are not the most attractive.
Project Requirements

Project Goals and Objectives

There were several goals and objectives that guided the project. These goals, along with objectives for each goal were:

1. Design a multi-use park along the Miami and Erie Canal and Buckeye Trail Corridor
   - Provide elements of a trail head park that can be used by people traveling along the Buckeye Trail
   - Include the celebration of the city's heritage as a theme of the park
   - Provide a park open to citizens and tourists for recreational activities
   - Plan for a city festival celebrating the city's heritage to be held in the park

2. Educate site visitors about the heritage of St. Marys, Ohio
   - Designate space for both indoor and outdoor interpretive displays that provide educational material about the city and its history
   - Form visual (and where possible physical) connections to existing historical elements

3. Expand the downtown from the existing one block corridor of Spring Street to other neighboring streets
   - Reclaim the canal corridor through the downtown
   - Set a new design standard for the city that will compliment the historic theme of the site and provide continuity throughout the community

4. Strengthen the park and open space system along the historic canal corridor and Buckeye Trail system
   - Provide conceptual ideas for connecting existing open spaces along the corridor
   - Identify opportunities for future connections to the open space system
   - Reclaim missing segments of the canal corridor
5. Promote private sector development within the site
   - Retail and commercial entities that will contribute to the theme of the heritage of the city
   - Potential patrons would include trail users, tourists and citizens

**Client Goals**

The client, the City of St. Marys, Ohio, identified several goals and project requirements. These goals and requirements were:

- While traveling along US 33, a main highway that goes through St. Marys, the slogan “St. Marys, Historic Canal Town” can be found painted on one side of a factory building. This project should be an element of supporting evidence for this slogan. It would be ideal to have park guides that would be able to give tours and convey the history of St. Marys and the Miami and Erie Canal through living history.
- The historical elements on and near the site were important to the development of the city and should be maintained in order to convey the heritage of the city.
- To better tell the history of St. Marys, the city should recognize the need to provide interpretive signage that conveys the history of the town and, most importantly, the canal throughout the site.
- Another way to bring canal history alive on and near the site is to restore the old and abandoned mills that the canal helped to power.
- One thing that was essential for transportation on the canal was the system of locks. One lock still exists but is covered by part of one of the mills. This part of the building could be removed so that the lock can be revealed, communicating further the history of the canal.
- The removal of the woolen mill would also provide a visual connection to the downtown.
- Because the Buckeye Trail is the old canal towpath, it is an important element of canal history as well. Since the canal runs from Lake Erie to the Ohio River, the Buckeye Trail provides an opportunity for bikers and hikers to stop at this site to rest, eat, or sleep. It is important that this site include a trailhead park – one that
will provide trail users with a place to rest and stop before continuing their journey. Bike racks, benches, a shelter, and a system of walkways will be important additions to the trailhead park.

- Other things that could attract trail users to stop in St.Marys rather than other towns would be services the town could offer. By using the old, restored buildings as a restaurant, an inn, or a bed and breakfast, these amenities would attract trail users. Because they would be located right along the trail bikers and hikers would not need to travel far off the trail to reach these amenities.

- The park and restaurants/bed and breakfasts would also be great attractions for citizens and residents of St.Marys. These building uses, however, are merely suggestions for site context improvement and are not included in the project.

- Other elements to be incorporated in the park are more vegetation, a playground, a place to fish, and a means of a spillover into Memorial Park. These elements will be beneficial to the citizens and residents of St.Marys.

- This site is in desperate need of a beautification process, which would include removing brush and shrubbery from the banks of the St.Marys River and the Miami and Erie Canal, cleaning up the site by removing gravel and unnecessary buildings and adding vegetation and site furniture, and by hiding and obscuring the power plant that is located on and near the site.

**Project Delimitations**

- This project was not a technical historic landscape restoration or preservation project. Rather, it was a project that aimed to raise awareness of the heritage being lost across our country.

- This project encompassed a variety of historical elements contextually, but did not focus on the restoration or preservation of these elements.

- New uses for vacant buildings where suggested, but architectural specifications were not addressed

- Site engineering was not addressed

- Information presented at interpretive areas were not specified.
Project Assumptions

There are several aspects of the project that were not confirmed or were not present. Assumptions made for this project were:

- The client expressed the need for and interest in the project.
- Preliminary public meetings conveyed community interest and support for the project.
- A program for the project was developed through public meetings and interviews with the client.
- The project was approved by the City Council.
- The lock beneath the woolen mill still exists but will require minimal restoration or reconstruction.
- Private entities throughout the city were willing to adapt to new design specifications.
- Land within the city that the site encompasses was open for development.
- The heritage of St. Marys was a main focus of the project. The definition of heritage is something passed down from preceding generations or tradition. A simple definition of heritage that was used for this project was history.
Design Process

For this project the design process included: existing projects and related topics research, project proposal, project research, base map, site inventory and analysis, goals and program, design concepts and master plan.

Existing Projects and Related Topics Research
Researching existing projects consisted of finding examples of case studies, or projects that related to the project. After finding these case studies the author explored how to incorporate design principles and apply them to the project. Topics related to the project were also researched. Design issues and trends, historical perspective, and relevant theories to the design were explored. The author was able to predict how these topics could contribute to the design of the project.

Project Proposal
After researching the project type, the author was able to write a proposal for the project. Elements within the proposal included the purpose and significance of the study, delimitations and assumptions, and site criteria and description. The purpose of writing the proposal was to outline background information for the project and how the author would move ahead in the design process.

Project Research
Upon completing the proposal the author was able to focus her research to site-specific elements. Data collection included maps, historical data, site photographs. Maps collected were from the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Sanborn Company, topography and engineering data from the City of St.Marys engineering department, a road map of Auglaize County and an atlas of Ohio. Historical data was in the form of photographs, news articles, maps, and personal interviews. During several visits to the site, the author took color photographs and obtained others from the City of St.Marys website. This data was collected so that a base map of the site could be prepared.
Base Map
The base map was created using engineering drawings received from Steve Opperman, the city engineer, and a series of aerial photographs obtained from the Terraserver Website. Historical maps were provided by Opperman and George Neargardner, a local historian, so that historical context could be mapped. By creating a base map, site inventory, site analysis, design concepts and the master plan could be prepared.

Site Inventory and Analysis
After a complete base map was prepared, it, along with site photographs and visits to the site were used to assess and analyze contextual and site related natural and cultural elements. Site inventory and analysis included information about the site such as the canal and river systems, topography, existing parks, the Buckeye Trail, streetscapes, land uses, views, circulation, vegetation and historical elements.

Goals and Program
Goals and objectives were developed and further defined the project. The goals provided a framework for the design concept and master plan phases. A matrix was completed that specified what types of activities and users the site could incorporate. A program was developed from the matrix and defined guidelines for the planning phases.

Design Concepts
By learning from site inventory and analysis design concepts were produced. Goals, objectives and the program guided the design of the concepts. Two design concepts were produced and opportunities and constraints for each concept were addressed.

Master Plan and Support Graphics
After reviewing each concept and its opportunities and constraints, a master plan was developed. Certain aspects from each concept were incorporated into the master plan. Support graphics were developed in accordance with the master plan to better convey spatial relationships within the design.
Base Map

Aerial Photograph

Downtown

City Parks

Site
Site

Vegetation
Parks
Water
Buildings
Site
Buckeye T.
Streets
Parking

Buckeye Trail
Contextual and Site Inventory and Analysis

Heritage of St.Marys, Ohio

The city of St.Marys, Ohio is rich in cultural heritage. This heritage can be divided into three major eras, the canal era occurring between 1845 and 1904, the industrial era ranging from 1845 and 1970 and the railroad era beginning about 1900 and ending in 1975. Many people are familiar with St.Marys because of the large hand-dug lake called Grand Lake St.Marys. What many people do not realize, however, is that the lake was dug to feed a large canal and lock system that spanned the distance between Lake Erie and the Ohio River and ran through St.Marys. The old towpath that horses used to pull the canal boats is now the Buckeye Trail. Upon the building of the canal, St.Marys grew into a thriving metropolis of its day. It was at one time larger than Fort Wayne, Indiana and Toledo, Ohio. Five mills were built along the canal, utilizing the moving water to operate business. Locks were used where a change in elevation of the canal was needed. As the railroad era began, the canal was no longer needed and was abandoned. Railroad companies moved into the town, building tracks and stations. However, St.Marys did not thrive like it did during the canal era.
The Canal Era (1845-1904)

Water System Dynamics

- Grand Lake St. Marys was hand dug as a reservoir to feed water to the Miami and Erie canal.
- A dam and aqueduct carry water from the lake to the canal.
- The lake feeds the canal from St. Marys north to Lake Erie. (See figure ?)
- The Lake was hand dug from 1844-1845.

- Canal boats used locks at water elevation changes.

- Locks existed along the entire span of the canal from the Ohio River to Lake Erie.
Canal Boat
(http://www.ridertown.com)

Canal Boat
(http://www.ridertown.com)

- Mules pulled canal boats using a towpath along the canal.

Mules Pulling Canal Boat
(Gieck)

Typical Canal Dimensions
(Gieck)
Industrial Era (1845-1970)

- Water from the canal was used to power five mills.

- Woolen Mill

![Image of Woolen Mill](http://www.ridertown.com)

*Parade On High Street Crossing Over The Miami-Erie Canal. The St. Marys Woolen Factory is on the Right.*

![Image of Woolen Mill](http://www.ridertown.com)
- Linseed Oil Mill
- Flouring mill
- Flouring Mill
- Saw Mill
- The hydraulic race is two lock level higher than the canal.

- When the water flowed from the race back into the canal power was generated.

- Examples of water powered mill turbines from Lowell, Massachusetts.
The Railroad Era (ca. 1900-1975)

- Passenger Station

Passenger Station
(Neargardner)

- Freight Depot

Freight Depot
(http://www.ridertown.com)
Existing Historical Elements

Canal Era (1845-1904)

- The most intact part of the Miami and Erie canal that exists today runs through St. Marys.

- Lock #13 remains covered below the woolen mill.

- The towpath that the horses used to pull the canal boats is now used as part of the Buckeye Trail.
Industrial Era (1845-1970)

- The hydraulic race and two of the five mills are the only elements of the industrial historical era remaining.
Railroad Era (ca. 1900-1975)

- The foundation of the freight depot is the only element of the railroad historical era left on the site.

Existing Freight Depot
Character of St. Marys

Grand Lake St. Marys State Park

- Tourism is a major part of the city's economy.
- Grand Lake St. Marys State Park is the major attraction in the city for tourists.
- The Park includes the lake, a campground, a marina, beaches, fishing opportunities and other recreational opportunities.

Map of Grand Lake St. Marys State Park

Grand Lake St. Marys

Grand Lake St. Marys State Park
The Downtown

- The population of St. Marys is almost 8000.

- The downtown is a viable part of the community where many local businesses reside.
Existing City Parks

Map of Existing Parks

Memorial Park
- Downtown
- Commemorates Military Veterans

K.C. Geiger Park
- Major Recreational park
- Ball Fields
- Ball courts
- Playground
Site Inventory

Memorial Park

- The annual city festival is held in Memorial Park, near the downtown.

- The park is a memorial to local war veterans.
The Miami and Erie Canal

- The banks of the canal are covered with vegetation

Miami and Erie Canal

Miami and Erie Canal
- The canal travels through a large pipe under the library parking lot.

- Pipe openings are located on the perimeter of the parking lot.
Canal and Buckeye Trail South of the Site

Canal South of the Site
The St. Marys River

- The St. Marys River flows through the city west of the canal.
- The riverbanks are covered with vegetation.

Banks of the St. Marys River

St. Marys River
Open Space and Topography

- An open space area at the northern end of the site includes structures used for city vehicle storage and for the power plant located on the opposite side of the canal.

- There is an evident elevation change from High Street into the northern open space.
The library parking lot services the library as well as some of the downtown.
Continuing Buckeye Trail

- The Buckeye Trail begins again south of the site and continues out of the city.

- The trail runs along the east side of K.C. Geiger Park.

Southern Buckeye Trail Entrance

Canal and Buckeye Trail

Buckeye Trail at K.C. Geiger Park
Streetscapes

Chestnut Street

- Chestnut Street Bisects the site between Memorial Park and the library parking lot

View of Chestnut Street
Spring Street

- The downtown is concentrated along Spring Street.

- A progression of views along Spring Street shows the commercial and retail of the downtown.

West Spring Street

Spring Street

East Spring Street
High Street

- A progression of views along High Street conveys a much different character than Spring Street one block away.
Site Analysis

Land Uses

- Vegetation
- Open Space
- Water
- Parking
- Government
- School
- Semi-private

- High income residential
- Average income residential
- Low income residential
- Downtown commercial
- Other commercial
Views

Positive Views

Open view into open space from High Street

View open through Spring Street bridge

View open across library parking lot

Negative Views

View between Memorial Park and the Buckeye Trail is blocked by buildings/canal seems to end

View between the northern open space and Memorial Park is blocked by the woolen mill

Difficult to see where the trail begins again

View between the Buckeye Trail and the open space is blocked by vegetation
Circulation and Access

Vehicular circulation (wider lines denote heavier traffic)

Unmarked Buckeye Trail through the downtown

Existing Buckeye Trail

Public parking lots

Beginning/ending points to marked trail

On-street parking
**Vegetation**

Scrub vegetation

Old growth vegetation

A. Dense vegetation

B. Vegetation along the river prevents views to the river

  Views to and from surrounding neighborhoods are blocked

C. Vegetation along the canal prevents views to the canal

  Views to and from surrounding neighborhoods are blocked

D. Vegetation hides the entrance to the continuing Buckeye Trail

E. Lack of vegetation along the trail allows views to the canal

F. Vegetation on the opposite bank of the canal prevents views to industry

G. Dense vegetation
Topography

10-42 foot elevation change from street level to canal level

Relatively flat parking lot

> 6% slope
4-6% slope
< 4% slope

Direction of water flow

Direction of water flow
Historical Elements

Existing foundation only

Structurally unusable space

- Existing
- Partially existing
- Non-existent
Summary

- - - Land currently available

Land that must be acquired

Potential for the continuation of the buckeye trail and the reclamation of the canal across the library parking lot

Potential for a visual and physical connection between Spring Street and High Street through the removal of a portion of the woolen mill

Potential for a multi-use park in the northern open space area

Potential for private sector development near the lock and woolen mill
The Program

The Matrix

Entrance/Acces
Circulation
Vehicular
Pedestrian
Bicycle
Exhibits
Outdoor
Indoor
Shelter
Open Air
Enclosed
Historical Elements
Lock
Mills
Canal
Railroad
Streetscape
Private Entities
Commercial
Retail
Lodging
Canal

- Clean and dredge the canal in the project area
- Remove the center section of the woolen mill to reveal the lock and canal between Spring Street and High Street
- Excavate and daylight the canal through the library parking lot
- Make necessary repairs to the canal lock beneath the woolen mill

- Examples of a lock at Metamora, Indiana
Greenway Corridor

- Consistent design vocabulary
  
  Lighting  Signage  Furnishings  Plantings

- Open Spring Street bridge to pedestrian circulation
- Hardscape trail through the city following the canal
- Activity nodes connected to the corridor

- Spring Street bridge showing pedestrian access closed
Interpretation of Heritage

- Signs, pictures, models, interactive displays
- Outdoor nodes
- Museum/visitor center
- Reclaim historical elements such as the lock, canal, towpath and mill buildings

- Examples of signs and displays
Multi-Use Park

- Boat dock for canal boat rides
- Shelter for picnicking and people on the Buckeye Trail
- Walkway system
- Removal of buildings on the site that serve no historic, architectural or aesthetic purpose
- Interpretational nodes

- Canal Boat that carries visitors along the canal in Metamora, Indiana

(Metamora, Indiana)

- Canal Boat in St.Marys
Private Sector Development

- Theme of heritage
- Commercial/retail shops
- Restaurant
- Inn

- Example of private sector development in Metamora, Indiana
Design Concepts

Concept #1: “The Original Canal”

A. Museum/visitor center
B. Open Space
C. New trail through existing park
D. Daylight portion of canal

Opportunities

Optimal connection to original canal
Optimal reference to historical elements
Combination of indoor and outdoor interpretation of heritage
Encourages private sector development
Trail follows canal through the city

Constraints

Less use of existing historical elements
Modification of many existing facilities
New open space physically disconnected from trail
Concept #2: "The Conservative App"

A. Museum/visitor center

B. Building left as is, interpretation of lock in museum

C. Directional signage along trail route

D. Daylight portion of canal

Opportunities

- Little modification of existing facilities
- Optimal use of existing historical features
- Combination of indoor and outdoor interpretation of history

Constraints

- Use of city streets for trail connection
- No optimal use of original canal
- Weak physical connection to downtown
- Discourages private sector development
Rationale for Selection of One Concept for Design Development

Concept two was a more “conservative approach” and aimed to retain the historical elements on the site. The woolen mill was untouched, the lock beneath remaining hidden. Interpretation and historical celebration was concentrated around historical elements as they existed and in the park designated in the northern open space. Although this concept required the least amount of change and adaptations made to existing historical elements, the goal of connecting the site to and expanding the downtown was not optimally met.

Concept one, “The Original Canal,” met all goals set for the project. By opening the canal through the library parking lot, the original canal was reclaimed, adding more opportunities for historical celebration along the corridor. Through the removal of the center portion of the woolen mill and the lock revealed, an opportunity for interpretation and historical celebration was available. The open space at the northern end of the site was designated as a park. The park contained opportunities for historical celebration, a place for festivals, a place for travelers along the Buckeye Trail to stop, and an area for citizens and tourists to experience recreational activities. Because the canal was opened through the woolen mill and the library parking lot, this opening provided a direct route through the downtown on the Buckeye Trail and connected the existing marked trails north and south of the site.
Master Plan, Support Gr

Master Plan

Canal (multi-use) Park
- Walkway system
- Maintenance drive
- Picnic shelter
- Boat dock
- Interpretational nodes
- Cleared vegetation
- Trail continued along canal

Lock and private sector development
- Trail along canal
- Interpretational node
- Lock revealed
- façade of woolen mill/new building
- Museum, restaurant, inn
- terraces step down to canal level

Memorial Park
- New trail through park

Library parking lot
- portion of canal day lighted
- Trail continues along canal
- Parking lot divided in two
- Pedestrian bridge across canal

Continuing Buckeye Trail
- New trail continued until connection with existing trail

Through Library Parking Lot
Canal Park

Maintenance drive

Buckeye trail extension

Picnic shelter

Boat dock and interpretive foundation

Railroad era interpretive centers

Interpretational noise abatement

Interpretational noise abatement
Lock and Private Sector Development

Promenade and park

New parking lot

Canal, lock and bridge

New inn and restaurant

Woolen mill facade

Outdoor cafe

Terraces from street
Conclusions and Meeting the Goals

The expectation the author had from the beginning of the project was to gain a better understanding of the design process through focusing on a project for an extended amount of time. This expectation was met and a better understanding of what a typical landscape architecture project might entail. As a result of this project the author feels more prepared to graduate from the educational realm of landscape architecture and enter the professional realm.

Throughout the process of this project details, angles of the project and the project as a whole underwent many minor changes. The finished product was very different from what it started out as. However, the changes that were made and the evolution the project went through all contributed to its final success. The author learned more than she expected from this project. Having no prior knowledge or experience in the subject type made it difficult to understand different angles to the project that were presented. Being exposed to these ideas and angles was a great learning experience. A greater ability to think critically was also an outcome of this project.

There were many other areas that the author would have liked to have addressed within the project. Given more time, the connection between the downtown and Grand Lake St.Marys State Park would have been analyzed. Because the concentration of tourists occurs at the lake and campground, it is important to attract this population to the downtown. More specific details within the project would have been addressed as well if time allowed.
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Visual Aids: Slides, Videos, Movies, Exhibits

Videocassette. Kwa.

