



B N W S

This background paper, which was requested by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,¹ identifies and examines the principal technological issues related to the identification and preservation of prehistoric and historic landscapes. It extends the general assessment of *Technologies for Prehistoric and Historic Preservation* released by the committee in 1986.

Debate over the Olmsted Heritage Landscapes Act of 1985,³ which passed the House but not the Senate during the 99th Congress, brought to light numerous questions related to technologies and the preservation of historic designed landscapes. This background paper explores several important issues raised in that debate and places them in the overall context of prehistoric and historic preservation. It emphasizes technological issues related to the identification, analysis, and evaluation of prehistoric and historic landscapes.

The background paper derives principally from a workshop convened by OTA on February 27-28, 1986, which met to discuss the range of issues in the preservation of landscapes. OTA also received additional material from review comments on a draft summary of that workshop, staff research, personal interviews with landscape professionals from a variety of disciplines, and from an informal meeting on landscapes held at OTA, November 13, 1986.

The February 1986 workshop identified and examined technologies for discovering, surveying, analyzing, interpreting, and protecting both prehistoric and historic landscapes. It discussed the

benefits and limitations of available technologies and suggested new ones that could be applied to the preservation of these important cultural resources.

Some of the material in this background paper appeared in *Technologies for Prehistoric and Historic Preservation* in different form and organization. That comprehensive report considered technologies for the preservation of archaeological sites and historic structures, as well as prehistoric and historic landscapes. The reader may refer to OTA's previous report for a general overview of the issues common to all preservation disciplines, as well as to landscape concerns not dealt with herein. In both papers, preservation technology refers broadly to any equipment, methods, and techniques that can be applied to the discovery, analysis, interpretation, restoration, conservation, protection, and management of prehistoric and historic structures, sites, and landscapes.

This background paper is organized according to three broad categories: 1) discussion of the primary problems or issues that face landscape preservation; 2) identification of the tools for addressing these issues; and, finally, 3) exploration of policy options for putting technologies to work.

In many circumstances, attempting to define and interpret the prehistoric cultural landscape is an important component of studying prehistoric sites and societies. Certain prehistoric landscapes may also play an important part in local history. However, for reasons of clarity and simplicity, in the balance of this background paper we have reduced the cumbersome term "prehistoric and historic landscapes" to the simpler one, "historic landscapes." Thus, when we refer to historic landscapes, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, we generally also mean prehistoric landscapes. Some landscapes, prehistoric as well as historic, can be considered to be a subset of the larger class of archaeological sites.

¹Letter of Oct. 8, 1986, signed by Representatives Morris K. Udall and John F. Seiberling.

²U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Technologies for Prehistoric and Historic Preservation OTA-E-31 9* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1986).

³H. R. 37.