Professional landscape architects and interested groups work to preserve landscapes every year. Historic landscapes such as gardens, farms, battlefields, scenic byways and parks are just some examples of “landscapes” that can be preserved for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

Preserved and historic landscapes exist at many scales; they can range from large tracts of land to a small front yard. They can be designed formal landscapes such as the Vanderbilt Garden in New York, as well as vernacular cultural landscapes such as the historic Shenandoah Valley.
Landscape architects make a difference by preserving cultural landscapes that show us how people's relationship with nature has changed over time.

Preserving Landscapes that Teach us About our Past

Cultural landscapes have properties that represent the combined work of nature and of man. They can include both natural elements, such as vegetation and geoformations, as well as man-made features. The forms, features, and uses of cultural landscapes reveal much about the histories of places and people.

Like historic buildings, some cultural landscapes are worth preserving because they are important parts of our national heritage and connect people to places.

Cultural landscapes come in many different forms, including designed landscapes such as parks and gardens like Central Park or the Vanderbilt Gardens in New York. But cultural landscapes can also be vernacular landscapes, that is, landscapes which are shaped by how they are used. Vernacular landscapes such as a farm, rural village, or industrial complex teach us about the work and culture of the people who use them. Both designed and vernacular landscapes might also be historic landscapes—those which are significant for their association with historic events, people, persons, or ideas. A Civil War battlefield or a historic road, such as the El Camino Real, are good examples of historic landscapes.

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