



ADVOCATES

Who Was Frederick Law Olmsted

Frederick Law Olmsted (FLO) was a 19th-century innovator, author, city planner, and father of landscape architecture whose remarkable landscape designs have literally changed America's face. He understood that thoughtful design and planning of parks and public spaces have powerful social, environmental, economic, and health impacts on the lives of people and communities. These values are expressed in thousands of parks and landscape projects designed and inspired by FLO and the Olmsted firm.

Olmsted and the Olmsted firm promoted comprehensive urban and regional planning, connecting communities through a network of parks and natural spaces. Olmsted envisioned the preservation of America's great scenic features for the enjoyment of all Americans and his son (FLO Jr.) played a critical role in the creation of the National Park System. Olmsted and the Olmsted firm undertook nearly 6,000 projects over 100 years. These landscapes are part of America's cultural heritage. They can still be enjoyed, coast to coast – including New York's Central Park, Boston's Emerald Necklace, the grounds of the United States Capitol, Seattle's Washington Park and the Palos Verdes community in California.

Why Does FLO Still Matter Today?

Olmsted's democratic vision and values are more important today than ever. He believed public parks and civic spaces belong to all Americans and that all communities deserve access. FLO understood that thoughtful design and planning of parks and public spaces have powerful social, environmental, economic, and health impacts on the lives of people and communities. In good times and in times of national crisis, public parks give people from all walks of life a place to connect and to experience the restorative power of nature.

Olmsted viewed urban parks and civic spaces as "lungs of the city," enhancing physical and mental wellbeing. This has never been more true than now as parks and public spaces have proved their value as critical urban infrastructure in the face of the pandemic. Public parks and community spaces promote physical health, restoring people's connection to nature, and providing essential active and passive recreation opportunities. Likewise, access to these places can also positively impact mental health, improving mood and enhancing overall psychological wellbeing.

Access to parks and connection with nature is essential in high-density urban areas where residents often suffer disproportionately from underlying health conditions. For those communities, public parks provide critical free, safe opportunities for physical activity. Yet, equitable access remains out of reach for many, often due to policies and actions that have neglected underserved communities and communities of color.

Communities with shared green spaces often have stronger social connections. Parks serve as America's town squares where diverse individuals and groups can come together and find common ground, whether playing host to family celebrations, local festivals, political rallies or other communal activities.

Public parks also offer a wide range of economic benefits. The ongoing care and maintenance of parks help create jobs, encourage tourism and provide event venues that attract local vendors' opportunities. Neighborhoods with

parks have increased property values. Further, parks can help take the pressure off aging stormwater infrastructure, making it last longer and saving local governments much needed dollars.

Designs by Olmsted and the Olmsted Firm heralded modern principles of conservation and sustainability. Thriving parks and landscapes are essential to the planet's ecological health since they address stormwater, help moderate temperatures, and make urban areas more livable. With growing natural and human-made threats like climate change, development, water shortages and aging infrastructure, protecting America's high-quality green spaces are vital.

What is the Olmsted 200 Campaign?

April 26, 2022 marks the 200th birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted. The national Olmsted 200 campaign engages a creative coalition of landscape architects, design professionals, city planners, public health professionals, conservationists, community leaders, historians and educators to celebrate the life, leadership and enduring influence of this American visionary. The Bicentennial will include national and local celebration events, advocacy and education about Olmsted's life, legacy and values to build public and policy support for America's natural and historic spaces.

The National Association for Olmsted Parks manages the Olmsted 200 campaign, along with founding partners the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Garden Club of America, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, City Parks Alliance, National Recreation and Park Association, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, The Trust for Public Land, American Public Health Association and the Landscape Architecture Foundation.

How Can I Help Olmsted 200 Advocate for Parks for All People?

Your participation and assistance are critical to the campaign's success. We're counting on key community leaders and influencers in the conservation, environmental, community organizer, public health and other fields to help FLO's legacy live on. Together we can renew public and policy commitments to accessible public parks for all people.

There are many actions you can take to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the health, ecological and economic benefits of parks. Use our Advocacy Toolkit to build support for existing parks and also to create new green open spaces. We have tools and templates to help you:

- Organize lobbying days to spread the word to local officials
- Secure proclamations recognizing Frederick Law Olmsted Day or Month
- Nominate a local park for the National Register of Historic Places
- Access funding for parks through Land & Water Conservation Fund grants and public-private partnerships
- Voice your support for parks for all people through an op-ed, blog post or a letter to the editor
- Spread the word about Olmsted 200 on social media and through your networks
- Incorporate Olmsted 200 into your conferences and programs
- Host or attend local and national FLO-related events
- Tell us about your activities and efforts so we can share them with others

For more information, tools and resources, visit www.Olmsted200.org.