



PRESS FAQs

Who is Frederick Law Olmsted?

Frederick Law Olmsted (FLO) was a 19th-century innovator, author, city planner and founder of landscape architecture whose remarkable landscape designs have literally changed the face of America. Olmsted and the Olmsted Firm developed beautiful and functional landscapes throughout the nation, including parks and parkway systems, diverse recreation areas, college and institutional campuses, urban and suburban areas, planned communities, estates, cemeteries and specialized landscapes for arboreta and expositions. 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 a period of 100 years. These designs 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 Park System and the Palos Verdes community in California. These landscapes are part of America's cultural heritage.

Why does FLO's vision 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.

- **HEALTH + WELLBEING:** Olmsted viewed urban parks and civic spaces as “lungs of the city,” enhancing physical health and overall psychological wellbeing by providing a connection to nature and essential opportunities for active and passive recreation. 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.
- **STRONG COMMUNITIES:** Communities with shared green spaces often have stronger social connections. Olmsted and the Olmsted Firm promoted comprehensive urban and regional planning, to create livable communities connecting to each other and nature through a network of parks, playgrounds and transportation corridors. Access to public parks is especially important in high-density urban areas to provide residents with essential free, safe opportunities for physical activity. Yet, today equitable access still remains out of reach for many.
- **ECONOMIC IMPACT:** 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 opportunities for local vendors. Further, parks can help take the pressure off aging stormwater infrastructure, saving local governments much needed dollars.
- **CONSERVATION + SUSTAINABILITY:** Designs by Olmsted and the Olmsted Firm heralded modern principles of conservation and sustainability. Thriving parks and landscapes are essential to the ecological health of the planet since they address stormwater, help moderate temperatures and make urban areas more livable. With growing natural and man-made threats like climate change, development, water shortages and aging infrastructure, protecting America's high-quality green spaces is vital.

How will the Bicentennial be celebrated?

The Bicentennial will include national and local events, advocacy and education about Olmsted's life, legacy and values in order to build public and policy support for America's natural and historic spaces.

The Olmsted 200 campaign will educate wide and diverse audiences about the enduring influence of Olmsted's democratic values and designs. It will explore his commitment to public parks, comprehensive system-wide planning and the mental and physical health benefits of access to nature.

Through education and advocacy at the local and national level, the campaign seeks to ensure that Olmsted's legacy lives on for the next 200 years by renewing public and policy commitment to our natural and historical heritage.

Can you give some examples of some celebrations?

Our calendar of events offers a complete listing of upcoming celebration events and activities planned around the nation. Check out our [Events page](#) for a few examples of what our partners and friends are doing to explore and commemorate FLO's legacy and values.

Where can I find out more about FLO?

You can meet Mr. Olmsted and learn more about his life and legacy [here](#).