# Urban Park Restoration and the "Museumification" of Nature

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**ABSTRACT**

Ecological restoration is becoming an increasingly popular means of managing urban natural areas for human and environmental values. But although urban ecological restorations can foster unique, positive relationships between people and nature, the scope of these interactions is often restricted to particular activities and experiences, especially in city park settings. Drawing on personal experiences and research on urban park restorations in Chicago and San Francisco, I explore the phenomenon of this "museumification" in terms of its revision of landscape and land use history, how it presents nature through restoration design and implementation, and its potential impacts on the nature experiences of park users, particularly children. I conclude that although museum-type restorations might be necessary in some cases, alternative models for the management of urban natural areas may provide a better balance between goals of achieving authenticity in ecological restorations and authenticity of nature experiences.

**KEYWORDS**

urban parks, ecological restoration, nature experience, authenticity, children, landscape criticism

## Urban Nature: Between Paradise and a Parking Lot

*They took all the trees*
*Put 'em in a tree museum*
*And they charged the people*
*A dollar and a half just to see 'em*

Joni Mitchell, from "Big Yellow Taxi" (1970)

To some people, the phrase "urban nature" may sound like an oxymoron. Nature is the opposite of the city, something that we escape to rather than a part of the culture that is city life, and if nature and culture do come together their union is more a cerebral

one than a physical one. Yet as far back as the mid 19th century, landscape architects, medical doctors, and others began to advocate for nature *in* the city, and naturalistic public parks such as Birkenhead in Liverpool (1845) and Central Park in New York (1858) were created to present nature as a source of aesthetic appreciation and passive re-creation to city dwellers (Conway 1996; Rybczynski 1999). Ideas of urban nature have continued to evolve, and in recent decades we have come to see the creation of "ecological parks" within cities (Cranz and Boland 2004b). Here, in addition to providing pleasure and repose to humans, urban nature is managed for its own intrinsic value—to provide habitat for animals, conserve rare and endangered plant species, and restore entire ecological communities as they once existed before the city "paved paradise."

Although this century-and-a-half evolution of park design has gone far to bring nature back into the city, it is my contention that little headway has been made in exploiting the key role urban parks might have in strengthening the ties between nature and culture. To the contrary, some current attempts at ecological restoration in urban parks may distance people from the experience of nature even further than did earlier naturalistic designs, leading to a form of detached observation not unlike what one might experience in a museum. Instead of providing a bridge between nature and the city, between Joni Mitchell's paradise and parking lot, park restoration can lock nature inside the gates of paradise and leave people on the outside looking in.

In this article I explore this "museumification" of nature as it applies to urban park restoration. As a social scientist with a background in landscape architecture, my concern is that if ecological park design is to be successful within cities it must pay as much attention to human values related to the experience of nature as it does to ecological values such as ecosystem health and biodiversity. I begin with a brief review of the development of an appreciation for nature experiences and how it came to be manifested in urban park design. I then look more closely at ecological restoration within an urban park context and examine its effects on nature experience, drawing from my work on the phenomenology of landscape experience (Gobster 1999; Gobster forthcoming), research on stakeholder perceptions of urban natural areas programs in Chicago and San Francisco (Gobster 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006), and an attempt at landscape criticism (Carlson 1977; Gobster 1999).

I pay particular attention to children as park users, as their interactions and experiences with nature may be disproportionately affected by museumification. I close with some suggestions for how alternative models of restoration might help to maximize the diversity of nature experiences while minimizing ecological impacts to urban natural areas.

Readers should take caution that this is an exploratory essay and is based on my personal experience and a limited number of cases in my research that focus on small, highly urban city park natural areas in two U.S. cities. Thus my observations and conclusions may not generalize to larger urban restorations, wildland settings, or situations in other countries. My aim here is to highlight what may be an uncommon but significant phenomenon in the hope that it might generate further discussion and criticism.

## The Evolution of Nature Experience in Urban Parks

### *Romantic Nature and the Social Norms of Urban Park Use*

Naturalism as a design theory for urban parks is rooted in the Romantic Movement that began in eighteenth-century Europe. Before this time people held considerable apprehension toward wild nature, but as the landscape became more humanized and urban living more common, nature became a subject of aesthetic appreciation among the upper class. Landscape painting and scenic touring of the countryside led to aesthetic ideas of scenic, pastoral, sublime, and picturesque nature. These were given form in garden and estate design, and naturalistic landscapes carefully composed with harmonic proportions of trees, grass, and water features quickly replaced earlier formalistic designs (e.g., Crandell 1993).

As an interpretation of nature, naturalism focused largely on the passive appreciation of visual scenery, and when the public parks movement started in Europe and the United States a century later naturalism came to define not only how parks should look but how people should act in them. For example, Frederick Law Olmsted conceived his design for New York's Central Park as a "series of naturalistic pictures" and from its earliest stages of construction warned his park commissioners that substantial measures would be needed to prevent children and adults from "completely ravishing" the scenery: "A large part of the people of New

York are ignorant of a park, properly so-called. They will need to be trained to the proper use of it, to be restrained in the abuse of it, and this can be best done gradually, even while the Park is yet in process of construction" (Olmsted and Kimball [1922] 1970: 58).

Olmsted's worst fears about park use were quickly confirmed, not only in Central Park but in cities across the United States and elsewhere. In many places these reincarnations of nature in the city were instantly popular, and as use grew so did degradation of the turf, ornamental plantings, and park furnishings. Unlike the private estates that first launched naturalistic landscape design, public parks were a great experiment in democratic open space equity (Young 2004) and many urban park users were common people unaccustomed to relating to nature as a picture. Adults with recent agrarian and subsistence roots saw nature in a much more interactive and functional way, and to them collecting flowers, walking off paths, and using park space for more active uses seemed perfectly appropriate nature-related behavior. Children seemed especially out of place in this postcard view of nature, and climbing, digging, and other unstructured explorations of nature through play activity were instead construed as vandalism.

Mass use and limited space of urban parks necessitated different ways of relating to this naturalistic view of nature, and Olmsted and other urban park supervisors soon developed extensive rules of behavior for park goers, often enforcing them with deputized park keepers who patrolled the landscape, keeping a watchful eye on those who might willfully or ignorantly engage in improper park behavior. A neighborhood parks and playground movement also grew to accommodate more active kinds of recreation for adults and children, and over time successive waves of development tested new models for how urban parks might accommodate user needs and control behavior. But unlike naturalistic parks, for the most part these models—with their ball fields, paved courts, play structures, and indoor facilities—were less about providing a bridge between nature and culture than they were about social issues such as physical health, assimilation, and class equity (e.g., Cranz 1982). In contrast, while naturalistic parks helped to increase the equity of people's access to nature, the social controls put on use likely led to an inequitable distribution of desired nature experiences.

### *Ecological Nature and Urban Park Design*

Although the primary goal of naturalistic park design was for aesthetic appreciation, in many cases the park landscape also provided wildlife habitat and other environmental services such as flood control, wind protection, and moderation of the urban heat island. Landscape architects practicing in the midwestern United States such as Jens Jensen and O. C. Simonds were enamored with the regional prairie and savanna landscape, and at the turn of the last century began creating symbolic renditions of them in urban areas using a primarily native plant palette (Grese 1992; Simonds 2000). While concepts of biological diversity and ecological succession were not yet well understood, these designs could rightly be considered among the earliest attempts at urban ecological design.

Ecological restoration incorporates land management activities aimed at returning the structure, composition, and function of a damaged or degraded ecosystem back to a key historic trajectory in order to achieve goals of ecosystem health, integrity, and sustainability (Society for Ecological Restoration 2004). Explicit attempts at ecological restoration were started by ecologists such as Edith Roberts at Vassar College's arboretum and botanic garden in the 1920s, Aldo Leopold at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in the 1930s, and Ray Schulenberg at the Morton Arboretum in suburban Chicago in the 1960s (Egan 1997; Hall 2004; Jordan 2003). While the restoration movement started in earnest in the 1970s and '80s and quickly spread to management of more extensive lands at and beyond the urban fringe, I find it a curious coincidence that these earliest efforts were all located within arboretums and botanic gardens, which are commonly referred to as "outdoor museums" of plants. With missions of conservation, research, and education, these institutions may have set the stage for how ecological nature should be presented to the public and how in turn people should respond and interact with it, particularly in more confined, urban settings.

The transfer of ecological restoration principles and practices to urban public parks was just a matter of time. Urban park researchers Galen Cranz and Michael Boland (2004a, 2004b) have recently documented the emergence of the "ecological park" as a new model of urban park design in the United States and Europe. In

their analysis of 125 designs for urban parks published in landscape architectural journals between 1982 and 2002, the researchers found that ecological parks were the second most popular design for parks (24%) behind "open space" parks (42%). Ecological parks include parks where themes may embrace sustainable practices, the use of recyclable materials, and other "green technologies," but elements common to ecological restoration figure prominently in many designs: use of native plants; restoration of ecological plant communities and systems such as rivers; community-based stewardship; and restoration of wildlife habitat. Significantly, most of the ecological parks they identified had been established since 1991, and based on past park development trends the researchers predicted that the development of urban ecological parks will continue to increase over the next decade.

## Park Restoration and Museumification

Over the last decade I have been studying the social aspects of urban park restoration, first in Chicago and more recently in San Francisco (e.g., Gobster 2004). In both locations I have examined conflicts over natural areas restorations to understand the meanings and values that different stakeholder groups have toward urban nature, with the aim that using this knowledge can increase the success that restorations have in addressing human and ecological goals. In the course of my own experiences of sites and those of stakeholders I have studied, I have come across situations where the design and implementation of restoration projects seem to limit rather than increase the range of nature experiences provided by urban parks. Although the word "museumification" sounds somewhat awkward and jargony, it seems to fit my and others' impressions of these places and for lack of a better term I will use it to label the phenomenon I describe here.

Museumification is a process in which places or subjects of the everyday world are transformed in ways that can lead people to think and act toward them as if they had been placed in a museum. Museumification can be accidental or intentional and its aim might be to conserve or commodify, but the end result is a shift in the meanings, behaviors, and experiences people have in relation to a place or subject. While there has been at least one use of the term to refer to nature and landscape (Duane 1999),

museumification is increasingly being applied to areas such as architecture and historic preservation (e.g., Ashworth 1998; Huxtable 1997) and tourism and cultural preservation (e.g., Berdahl 1999; Wall and Xie 2005).

How does museumification happen in the context of urban park restorations? What does it look like? What are the effects of museumification on those who experience it? In the following sections I describe these three dimensions of museumification based on archival information about the landscape history and recent planning of sites (e.g., Chicago Park District and Lincoln Park Steering Committee 1995; San Francisco Recreation and Park Department 2006); personal observation of sites; and interviews and site visits with park professionals, restorationists, and restoration critics. These various types of cognitive, experiential, and evaluative information form a skill set needed by one adopting the role of what environmental aesthetics philosopher Allen Carlson (1977) proposed as the "environmental critic," one whose task, like an art or architecture critic, is to assess the merits of a landscape. While Carlson's environmental critique was focused on assessing landscape beauty, my attempt at landscape criticism here aims more broadly at assessing how restoration projects are planned, designed, and used by people for nature experiences. This includes aesthetics but may also include recreational, educational, safety, and stewardship goals (e.g., San Francisco Recreation and Park Department 2006). Finally, it is not my purpose here to provide a detailed assessment of the merits of individual projects, but rather to describe the phenomenon of museumification and illustrate it with examples from different urban restoration sites in Chicago and San Francisco.

### *Landscape and Land Use History*

Cranz and Boland (2004a, 2004b) do not identify how the recently developed ecological parks in their sample came into being, but in my own research I found sites originated in two ways: (1) designation of existing park space for ecological management; and (2) purchase or transfer of private or public land for use as new park space. The first type includes parks or portions of parks that may have retained natural characteristics by design or in some cases through neglect and are seen in a new light as having potential for ecological management. Many of the 50 nature areas in the Chicago

Park District fall into this category, and range from historic designed landscapes in the naturalistic style such as Montrose Point and the Lily Pool in Lincoln Park; to man-made lagoons such as Lincoln Park's North Pond and Gompers Park's lagoon and wetland; to small prairie gardens such as those in Indian Boundary and Winnemac Parks (Figure 1). Many of the 30 natural areas within the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's Natural Areas Program were designated within existing parks because of the natural features that still remain; these include lakes such as Pine Lake and Lake Merced and remnant plant communities such as Bayview Hill and Glen Canyon (Figure 2).

Parks of the second type may also have been purchased or transferred specifically because they contain natural remnants or characteristics worthy of protection and restoration in a more public setting. Others may be brownfields or have otherwise been significantly altered by previous uses, and ecological management is used as a strategy for rehabilitation as well as for environmental values as a long-term goal (e.g., DeSousa 2004). Examples of both of these types can be found at the Presidio of San Francisco, a former U.S. Army property in the northwestern corner of the city that in 1994 was transferred to the National Park Service as part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Sites with natural remnants include Lobos Creek and Baker Beach, while Crissy Field includes a major tidal marsh restoration on land that was filled beginning in the 1870s and used for the 1915 World's Fair and then as an army airfield (Boland 2004) (Figure 2).

As these examples show, urban parks often have a complex landscape history, and restorations that ignore or deny the multiple layers of cultural design and change that may have taken place can lead to a form of museumification that some have called Disneyfication. Here the complex and sometimes unpleasant storylines are edited from the landscape, leading to a portrayal that is one-dimensional and reinforces positive themes (Huxtable 1997). In many North American projects, restorationists attempt to turn landscapes back to the way they might have been prior to European settlement, even though a site may have since been farmed, filled in, or put to use for a variety of other purposes. Early proposals for ecological restoration of dune communities at the Presidio called for removal of the non-native forests planted by the U.S. Army during the 1880s, some of which were subsequently spared because of their functional and historic values (Baye 2001; Joseph McBride,

**Figure 1** ■ Chicago Restoration Sites (clockwise from top left): Montrose Point, Lily Pool, North Pond, Winnemac Park

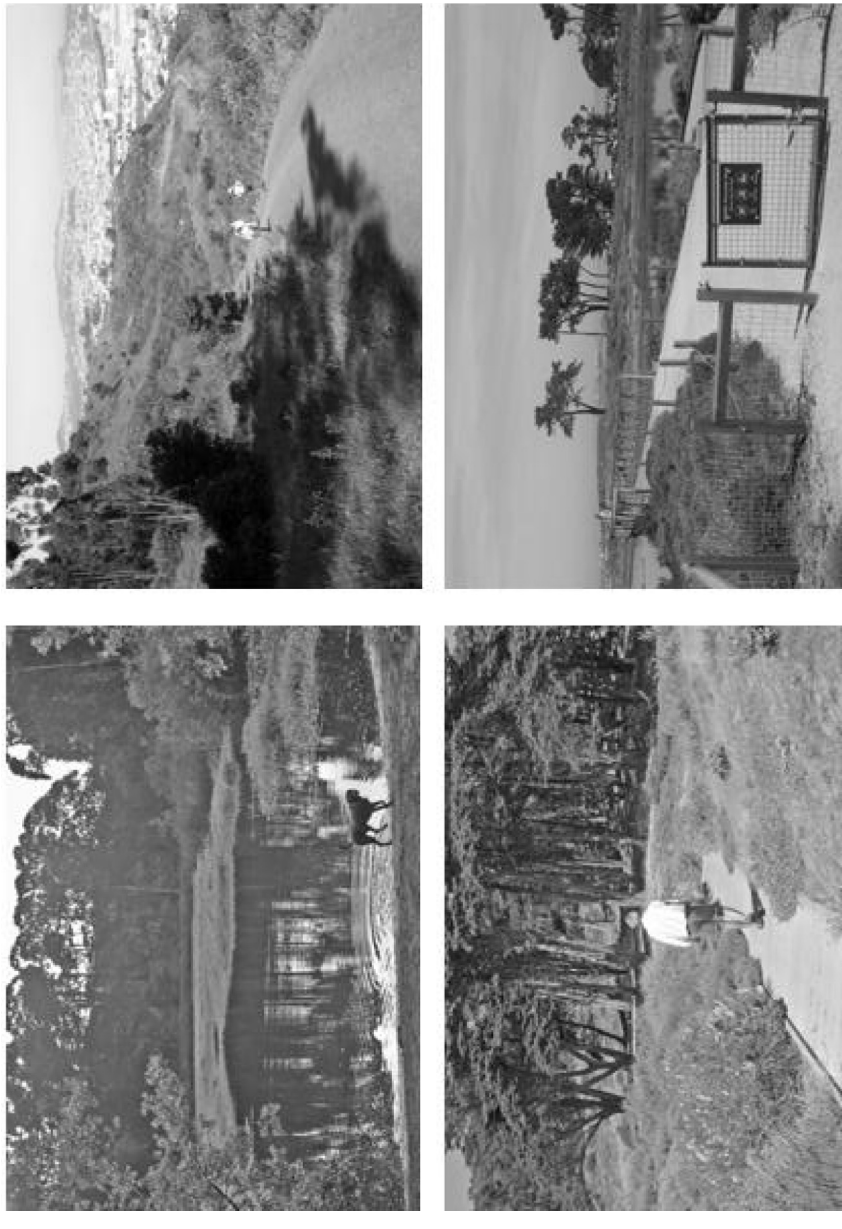

**Figure 2** ■ San Francisco Restoration Sites (clockwise from top left): Pine Lake, Bayview Hill, Crissy Field, Lobos Creek

personal communication, 25 February 2004). Not only can failure to acknowledge these cultural changes reduce the richness of landscape history, but ignoring the extensive landscape modifications of soils, microclimate, and other factors that may have occurred to a site can also limit the success of restorationists in bringing back earlier plant communities.

In addition to landscape history, the museumification of urban parks through restoration can also change the land use patterns of sites. Urban land, particularly parkland, rarely lies unused, and in the advent of restoration this frequently means that some current uses must now be restricted. Like many urban parks in the United States, parks in Chicago and San Francisco went through a period of neglect beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, and not only did less developed spaces become wilder looking, but there was less enforcement of what kinds of activities took place there. In Chicago's Lincoln Park, the remoteness of Montrose Point made it a popular place for gangs and drug activity, while the rocky gardens at the Lily Pool made an attractive climbing area for children. In San Francisco, open meadows and wooded paths such as those at Pine Lake became popular areas for walking dogs off-leash, and in some parks where crime and gangs had gained a stronghold, dog owners helped to reclaim the parks for themselves and other users. While restoration has gone far to bring deserved attention and resources back into urban parks and reduce socially undesirable uses, like the naturalistic park movement it has also pruned the spectrum of otherwise acceptable behaviors down to those passive appreciative activities that are deemed appropriate for this revised context to ensure minimal degradation of the now fragile environment.

### *Characteristics of Restoration Design*

Natural area restorations are sometimes criticized as looking too unkempt when placed in an urban context, and elements of design are often suggested to provide the public with visual cues to signal that these sites are in fact being cared for (e.g., Nassauer 1995). But these design conventions can be taken too far, making restorations into outdoor museum exhibits. At some of the restoration sites in the Presidio, boardwalks direct movement through a site, giving the visitor few choices to see what lies beyond the edge. In some places fencing provides a physical or symbolic barrier between the

visitor and the vegetation, adding a further element of separation and distance. At some locations, plants in the immediate foreground are labeled, and while this helps visitors know what they're seeing, it also objectifies them and gives the impression that the site is more a botanical collection than an ecosystem. Are the labeled plants representative of those that might appear on an average site or are they plants of particular interest, put there because of their rarity, beauty, or some other characteristic? Do they occur on site in an arrangement or distribution that might occur naturally, or are they planted there like a botanical collection so that visitors might see a range of them in the course of their walk through the site? The ambiguity in presenting nature this way is another aspect of how design can lead to museumification.

Beyond these design elements, how the restoration process itself is implemented in urban parks can also lead to museumification. Here there is a clear contrast between community-based restoration projects and those done by hired professionals, the latter of which are often treated like museum gallery installations. For a complex project like the North Pond restoration, the site is largely fenced off to public use and a team of park professionals and private subcontractors comes in to deal with the various aspects of developing the restoration. Working like any construction project, their sequence of activities includes demolishing existing nonnative species and other discordant elements; bringing the infrastructure of water quality, soil, drainage, pathways, and other human and environmental systems up to acceptable levels; planting and establishing the plant and animal collections; installing fencing, benches, and other site furnishings for visitor control and comfort; and developing signage, brochures, and other interpretive materials. Hopefully working on schedule and within budget, the restoration is declared "completed" and opened to the public under great fanfare. Restoration done in this fashion may fit within the constraints of an agency's capital projects procedures but tends to cast nature simply as an artifact under control by humans for humans (e.g., Katz 1992).

### *Impact on Nature Experience*

People experience nature on a variety of levels, from looking out the window to cultivating plants for food and pleasure. Each type of nature experience can yield a variety of benefits to people and

it would be wrong to call one better than another. Yet at the same time, urban park restoration has the potential to deliver a broader set of experiences beyond the passive appreciation of nature. In this respect, while some of the urban park restoration sites I looked at in Chicago and San Francisco are visually beautiful and contribute not only to the local environment but also educate people about ecological health and diversity, I feel they are experientially narrow. By truncating landscape history and restricting how the sites are used, and by treating nature as a museum object that is created and presented as a finished product, they limit the range of experiences that urban nature can provide.

Some restoration critics I interviewed in San Francisco spoke about how restoration efforts were reducing the types of nature experiences they once had. One person grew up in a neighborhood above what is now the Lobos Creek restoration and recalled how her everyday explorations in the meadow and forest areas led to her love of nature and desire to pursue a career in biological science. She may have not become so hooked if her interactions with the site were repetitions of the same boardwalk scenery. Another person enjoyed photographing plants and wildlife at Pine Lake near her home and was fearful that the new restoration plan for the site would fence off access to the edge of the lake where all the action was. Several others used their dogs as motivators to take regular walks through natural areas but are seeing that as sites are improved through restoration, access with dogs is being restricted.

My own observations of restoration projects in Lincoln Park conducted before and after their completion corroborate these sentiments, not only in terms of how they restrict people's type of nature experiences but also raising questions of equity in who gets to have a nature experience. Use of the Lily Pool is now highly regulated and supervised by site docents, and the rock climbing by children that I observed during a site reconnaissance 10 years ago is strictly forbidden. The shoreline of North Pond that had been mowed to the waterline and trampled down to dirt banks by fishermen and waterfowl is now covered in lush vegetation fenced off to access by both user groups. Access to the water's edge is provided at a few rocky ledges built along the shore but the pond has not been restocked with sport fish as fishing was deemed to be incompatible with the new goals for the restored site. Even if the pond is eventually restocked, the current design is unlikely to

facilitate fishing, for as a manager of a youth urban fishing program told me, similar shore access done for the lagoon restoration at Gompers Park doesn't work for fisherman because "the access areas aren't where the fish are" (Bob Long, personal communication, 18 August 2006). Finally, while the restoration of Montrose Point has eliminated gang use, the increased habitat of trees and shrubs has now made it a popular place for cruising and on-site sex. This has created an uncomfortable situation for restorationists and the birding community, and to deter what is perceived as an inappropriate use of park space much of the habitat has been fenced off and dozens of signs have been erected in the name of protecting the environment for migratory birds (Edwards 2005).

Children are a stakeholder group of particular importance when it comes to nature experience, and much attention has been given in recent years to how children in cities are suffering from a "nature-deficit disorder" (Louv 2005). Nature can provide an ideal setting for creative, unstructured play, both for individual imaginations to run free and as a focus for the negotiation of social roles and responsibilities. Digging holes, building forts, climbing trees, catching insects or fish, collecting rocks and flowers, and other activities that are motivated by natural environments can be highly creative endeavors for children and depend on an active interchange between them and the environment (e.g., Johnson and Hurley 2002; Miller 2005; Sobel 1993). The wild and weedy nature that existed in many of these urban park areas prior to restoration provided these sorts of opportunities, and if they weren't exactly sanctioned no one seemed to care because little effort was being put into managing them. Now displaced by a more ecologically diverse yet more fragile nature, these kinds of activities are discouraged just as they are in more manicured park settings. Children are much less likely to attain satisfying nature experiences through passive forms of interaction and thus may be disproportionately affected by such changes (Nabhan and Trimble 1994). The result of this museumification is that we are creating a significant gap in the spectrum of nature experiences available to urban children precisely at the nearby places where children stand the best chances for getting acquainted with nature. Thus while striving to achieve authenticity in the restoration of ecosystems we may be sacrificing the authenticity of children's nature experiences.

## Expanding the Spectrum of Nature Experiences

To me, one of the great ironies in these examples of urban park restoration is that while the *product* can be a restrictive and objectified nature for some people, the *process* of restoration as it is practiced by others through volunteer stewardship provides many opportunities for multidimensional, highly interactive nature experiences. Even restoration sites where the initial phases are treated as a construction project usually rely at least in part on a corps of volunteers for subsequent management. These restorationists tramp across natural areas collecting specimens for study and monitoring bird and butterfly populations; they cut and dig and even light fires to burn off invasives and recycle nutrients to the soil; and in doing so they often have profound nature experiences that cut across all dimensions of aesthetic, recreational, social, educational, and even spiritual values (e.g., Grese et al. 2000; Miles et al. 1999; Schroeder 2000).

Thus, if part of the disjunction between the design of nature and the experience of it lies in the difference between who is a visitor and who is a manager, then part of the solution might be to expand the contingent of managers, in effect letting more people inside the gates of paradise. This kind of outreach is happening in many restoration programs, where business groups, seniors, singles, and children are recruited into programs to work on restoration projects in the broader context of community service, improving physical health, meeting people, and learning about nature (e.g., Earth Wise Singles [www.EarthWiseSingles.com]; Mighty Acorns [www.mightyacorns.org]; also see Pretty 2004). The type of hands-on interaction with the environment can be geared to the desires and skills of the individual or group, with the goal of changing those seeking a nature experience from detached observer to active participant. Ecological restoration needn't even be at the forefront of an activity as long as it is compatible with restoration goals. For example, at the Lobos Creek restoration, the federally endangered San Francisco lessingia, a tiny sunflower, requires periodic disturbance to perpetuate itself. The current design and behavioral norms of the restoration project discourage the very kinds of human use needed, and recognizing this site designers have thought about scheduling fun activities like annual "dune dancing" (Terri Thomas and Michael Boland, personal communication, 5 May 2004).

These kinds of outreach programs can go far to build more interactivity into the experience of restored environments, but as most are directed toward specific activities and done on a schedule overseen by supervisory personnel they do not fit into everyone's nature experience needs or desires. Serving a broader range of individuals may require looking to alternative models of urban natural areas management, particularly ones that allow for more unstructured and perhaps more environmentally impacting activities (e.g., Gobster 2006, 2007). The effect here is to do away with the gates of paradise altogether. If the objective in managing a natural area is not to protect fragile remnant ecosystems, managers might consider allowing environments that may be weedier and more resilient to disturbance so a greater amount of unstructured nature interaction can take place. For example, in response to trends in the loss of nature experiences by children, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County in suburban Chicago has initiated an effort that supports and encourages youth to engage in unstructured nature exploration and play such as climbing trees, building forts, and catching and releasing frogs and other small animals (Strang 2006). The teaching of safe and ethical nature play-skills is also built into more structured environmental learning programs, and when time is given during a program to use them it proves to be the high point of the children's learning experience.

At other sites where the protection of a sensitive species or habitat is a particular concern, a natural area that provides the necessary conditions but does not require complete ecological restoration may allow for a greater variety of human uses. Spatial zoning has been applied to some natural areas in San Francisco, where outer areas allow greater use for people and their dogs but still provide a wild buffer for protection of the interior zone. Temporal zoning is another strategy that is being used in other locations, where some uses are restricted during seasonal periods such as bird nesting or migration but at other times are allowed (Ryan 2000).

In their early-twentieth-century park designs, Jensen and Simonds not only pushed the idea of naturalism toward a greater incorporation of regional biodiversity, they also struggled with how naturalistic urban parks might enable children and adults to have more hands-on contact with nature. Children's gardens, rustic play pools, and play spaces created in forest openings are a few examples of how these designers sought to make what they saw as the virtues

of the countryside more accessible to those who lived in cities (Grese 1992; Robert E. Grese, personal communication, 7 May 2007). This struggle continues with twenty-first-century ecological park design, and while our increased knowledge of ecological primacy, nature-deficit disorder, and environmental equity makes the balancing of nature protection and use issues more complicated, it also makes it more incumbent upon us that we try to achieve that balance.

Urban parks needn't be conceived as either paradises or parking lots, and many alternatives are possible that can creatively expand the spectrum of nature experiences available to adults and children. Is the museumification of nature inevitable at some restoration sites? In cases where species protection is a top priority, human use is very high, or the educational value of a collection outweighs more experiential considerations, such a restoration with its experiential limitations may be the only alternative. But in other cases natural areas managers might relax their assumptions on how restoration should proceed. As a guiding principle of urban park restoration, authenticity should be conceived as having both ecological and experiential dimensions, and management that considers both of these needs can help strengthen the role of urban parks as a bridge between nature and culture.

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