



US/ICOMOS World Heritage Leadership Forum

GSU World Heritage Team attends the 2017 US/ICOMOS Leadership Forum

Last month, two members of the GSU World Heritage Team, **Glenn Eskew** and **Anne Farrisee**, attended the 2017 Leadership Forum hosted by US/ICOMOS, the United States' affiliate of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites. Held in the U. S. Department of the Interior's New Deal era headquarters in Washington, D.C., the two-day conference featured talks by leaders in the field of global heritage preservation.

Day 1: The World Heritage Program Today

Dr. Douglas C. Comer, President of US/ICOMOS opened the Leadership Forum at the first plenary session that featured a presentation by **Marie-Laure Lavenir**, the Director-General of ICOMOS, who spoke on the state of preservation in the world. She continued to contribute to sessions throughout the Leadership Forum. Although unable to travel to Washington, **Dr. Mechtild Rossler**, the Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Center sent a video welcome that recognized the important work undertaken by US/ICOMOS. The plenary also included remarks by **Kristen Walker** of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. In putting the program together with **Stephen Morris** of the National Park Service, Office of International Affairs, US/ICOMOS Executive Director **William J. Pencek** explained the objective of getting the participants to discuss the current and future role of US/ICOMOS at home and abroad in support of world heritage assets.



Director-General Lavenir addresses participants during the opening plenary session in the beautifully restored meeting hall of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Breakout sessions included:

- *Heritage as a Pillar of Sustainable Development* - a discussion of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, how they related to historic and cultural properties, how they can be quantified, and how they can be incorporated into community planning with talks by **Andrew Potts** of Nixon Peabody and **Donovan Rypkema** of Place Economics, and others.
- *Cultural Landscape Practice*, a discussion featuring **Brenda Barrett** of Living Landscape Observer,

Brenda Wyatt of the NPS, **Patricia M. O'Donnell** of Heritage Landscapes and others.

- *Sharing the Diversity of American Stories* – offered narratives about historic preservation by **John Franklin** of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, **Luis Hoyos** of the California State Polytechnic University, and **Bambi Kraus** of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers.
- *World Heritage Management* - a look at how current U.S. World Heritage sites use the designation to manage, protect and market their properties, featuring **Shanon Shea Miller** and **Colleen Swain** of the San Antonio Missions, **Brian Hogg** of the University of Virginia, and **Jan Balsom** of the Grand Canyon National Park.
- *Achieving World Heritage Designation* - presentations on three serial nominations at three different stages of the world heritage process, with talks by representatives from the current Frank Lloyd Wright effort, Hopewell Earthworks of Ohio, and the GSU World Heritage Initiative to propose U.S. Civil Rights Sites.

[A full list of topics and speakers can be found here.](#)



Day 2: Looking Ahead

The second day of the Leadership Forum challenged participants to help US/ICOMOS refine priorities and develop a strategic plan forward regarding the U.S. role in world heritage in this time of global transition. The morning plenary session featured a panel of American leaders in world heritage who all presented their thoughts: **Rachel Jacobson**, US/ICOMOS Vice-Chair; **Joy Beasley**, National Park Service's Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science; **Cari Enav**, Director of the Cultural Heritage Center at the U.S. Department of State; **John Fowler**, Executive Director of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; and **Tom Mayes**, National Trust for Historic Preservation Vice President and Senior Counsel.

Breakout groups then discussed how US/ICOMOS could be more effective in its mission supporting World Heritage nominations and in serving its members. The Closing Plenary reviewed the groups' reports.

Leadership Forum Takeaways

Some of the overall concepts and issues that were of particular interest in the Forum were:

- A shift in conservation efforts to include and meet the cultural needs of people who value that site

- The evolution of the concept of "heritage" to include the intangible cultural traditions associated with a site
- The increasing complexity and cost of World Heritage nominations

US/ICOMOS Reception and Gala



On Thursday, November 30, US/ICOMOS hosted its Benefit Gala and World Heritage Celebration at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC. The evening honored **Irina Bokova, the Immediate Past Director-General of UNESCO**. Bokova is both the first female and first Southeastern European to head the agency. During her eight years in office, she advocated for gender equality and improved education. She worked to prevent funding for terrorism, especially by enforcing the protection of intellectual goods. A firm opponent of racism and anti-Semitism, Director-General Bokova led UNESCO's activities on Holocaust remembrance.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Contact Anne Farrisee at afarrisee@gsu.edu or 404.413.6353.

Or go to our website at worldheritage.gsu.edu.