

Preface

The Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation hosted the combined summer meeting of the Committee on Roadside Maintenance and the Committee on Landscape and Environmental Design. The meeting was a unique symposium on Roadside Vegetation Management and Manipulation, held at the Marriott Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, with approximately 120 people in attendance.

Members of the joint committee sponsored a special award for outstanding achievement of beauty along the roadsides of highways in the United States. This award went to Mrs. Lyndon Baines Johnson. The presentation was made by Tom Taylor, Director of Travel and Information, Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation; Roy White, architect and builder, accepted the award on behalf of Mrs. Johnson at a special luncheon.

A field trip to view urban landscape projects in the San Antonio area included the McAllister Freeway, which received special recognition for achievement in this category. The field trip extended to rural areas and included a review of a rest area.

This publication of the proceedings does not include the full manuscript of the presentations. The abstracts presented were either presented by the authors or condensed by the Committee on Roadside Maintenance for purposes of publication. More details may be obtained from the authors.

I wish to thank all of the individuals who worked hard to formulate the program and the authors for their excellent product.

Charles T. Edson, Chairman
Committee on Roadside Maintenance

Notice: The Transportation Research Board does not endorse products or manufacturers. Trade and manufacturers' names appear in these proceedings because they are considered essential to its object.

Abstracts

PRESENTATION AND PROPAGATION OF NATIVE PLANT MATERIALS

Tom Allen

(Allen's presentation was not available for publication.)

RELICT BIOMES IN TEXAS

Joseph W. Tyson, Jr.

Transportation agencies are entering areas not entered before. Although there are several different changes that have been made in the East Texas piney wood region, the major agent of change has been forestry. In the coastal zone and extending up into the prairie area, it has been urbanization. Along the Rio Grande River in Texas, agriculture has been the major change. In the Central Texas region, urbanization is the key; in the high plains area,

range use and grazing have been inhibiting factors.

However, even in these areas where man has introduced himself to the greatest degree, areas still remain where no evidence exists of man's impact on the plant and animal environment. These are called relict areas--areas that have remained substantially unchanged since before the advent of modern man. The early native inhabitants altered the environment by cutting, slashing, burning, overgrazing, or over-harvesting. There is no tractless wilderness outside of the Arctic and Antarctic. Men have always been on the move and have made well-traveled pathways from one point to another. We are still making such paths either because of safety, convenience, or other social pressures. The earliest descriptions then formed the base for a determination of whether or not an area is a relict area. There are records of several kinds on first visitors to a whole host of different kinds of areas (in the full text of this presentation, there are many examples of how individuals or groups of individuals affected the environment in Texas).

What's happening in these relict areas? There is a food chain, and the plants that are found in relict areas are the bottom of this food chain. They are the food producers on whom primary consumers first feed. Those primary consumers are in turn eaten by secondary consumers, such as meat-eating animals, and they ultimately die. The materials of which their bodies are composed are either eaten by others or they return to the soil so they combine with the soil and reenter the food chain. This same thing is happening on our rights-of-way; except now as a general rule, we exclude the grazing population. As a consequence, our mowing programs and other roadside vegetation control programs fill that biological niche and we, in effect, are the grazing community.

Without this grazing activity, the plant community changes and can no longer be considered a climax community developed under optimum conditions. When creating a transportation corridor, we preempt further encroachment into that particular area and, as a consequence, we tend to preserve what was there. It is this preservation aspect that becomes very important.

Relict areas are of scientific interest and they are of some aesthetic interest. The transportation agency, as a general rule, has preserved a great number of these areas, and it requires no new policy or no new effort by such agencies to ensure that such relict areas continue to exist.

WILDFLOWER WORKS

Chapman Kelley

When discussing the arts, it is important to realize that, at their highest and most meaningful level, they are a language of philosophical communication through abstract means. The profundity of the idea/concept along with the uniqueness of the aesthetic eventually determines its ultimate value to future generations. Those few whose accomplishments survive their time and earn them the distinction of "artist," are those who define or substantially redefine what a work of art may be. As both Leonardo da Vinci and Robert Henri said, Art is invention.

The arts have to change from being elitist to populist in order to have relevance and meaning in today's world. We design paintings and sculptures. We also design buildings; furnishings; governmental, educational, and economic systems; assembly lines;