



Understanding and Using Landscape Character

A two-day residential training course

Monday 13th - Tuesday 14th September 2010

Landscape creates our sense of place and defines our relationship with the environment. Too often the importance of landscape is downplayed because it's seen as difficult and too subjective to deal with. This course shows why it doesn't have to be like that.

Who will benefit from this course?

This course will be of value to you if your work affects or is affected by landscape issues. This includes those directly responsible for land management, and well as people in related professions including planners, landscape architects, archaeologists, ecologists, architects and engineers. The training will be relevant for those who work in the public, private or voluntary sectors. It is likely that the different people who attend the course will perceive and value the landscape in very different ways, and one important outcome for those who attend will be a greater understanding of why different groups have these different perspectives.

Participants on previous courses have included countryside managers, planners, and others from local authorities (including AONB units and National Park Authorities). The course has also proved useful for people from the voluntary sector (FWAG, The National Trust, RSPB, CPRE) and to those working with government agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage). The training will also be of value to developers, helping to highlight the way landscape considerations can be seen as an opportunity rather than just as a constraint.

Course objectives

By attending this course you will have an opportunity to:

- Gain an understanding of the concepts underpinning Landscape Character Assessment
- Feel confident when dealing with landscape issues, developing some insight into what it is that makes every landscape distinctive, and of how 'land' becomes 'landscape'
- Carry out a local scale landscape assessment on the basis of both desk study and field work.
- Develop field skills, including the ability to write descriptive text and capture the essence of landscapes using annotated sketches
- See how you can use landscape assessments as a basis for making spatial planning decisions, for advising on land management options, and finding a balance between landscape and other environmental objectives such as biodiversity and historical considerations
- Learn more about the different ways LCA can be used, including its role in the planning system, as part of an Environmental Assessment, and as a tool for monitoring landscape change.
- Become aware of the different stake-holders who can become involved in landscape issues, and gain confidence in your ability to share an enthusiasm and understanding of landscape in an appropriate way with different audiences.

Nature of the course

The course starts from first principles, assuming at least some of our participants have little or no landscape background. Field-work is central to the course. Experience on previous events suggests this is the way people really get to grips with Landscape Character assessment.

Course leader: David Mount, Countryside Training Partnership

David has been delivering landscape-related training programmes for over ten years. In addition to training courses at Losehill Hall, he has worked with private sector land-agents, countryside staff working in and around the South Downs, and with Natural England staff helping them take landscape issues into account when responding to planning consultations. He works with the Heritage Lottery Fund on their Landscape Partnership Scheme, and is programme leader for an ongoing interdisciplinary landscape training initiative in the Republic of Ireland.

Provisional Programme

Actual timings / content of the different sessions will be subject to change in order best to meet the needs of the group.

Monday 13th September

10.00 a.m. onwards - arrival and coffee

10.30 a.m. **Welcome & Introduction to the course**

10.50 a.m. **Overview of the course and its content**

11.00 a.m. **What is landscape and why does it matter?**

Group exercise 1: Describing the landscape

12.00 noon **Landscape Character Assessment**

1.00 p.m. Lunch

2.00 p.m. **The LCA process**

3.00 p.m. **LCA in practice:**

Group exercise 2: Hands-on landscape characterisation

4.30 p.m. Tea

5.00 p.m. **Exercise review**

7.00 p.m. Dinner

8.00 p.m. **After dinner seminar** with Carys Swanwick, Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield. Carys is the author of 2002 Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, which she is currently updating.

Tuesday 14th September 2010

9.15 a.m. **Putting Landscape Characterisation to use**

10.15 a.m. **Coffee**

10.30 a.m. *Group exercise 3: Making judgements on the basis of landscape characterisation*

Desk study, field work, prepare presentations

1.00 p.m. Lunch

2.00 p.m. **Presentations and review**

3.00 p.m. Tea, course summary, course assessment

3.20 p.m. Finish

(course finish time will enable participants to catch the 15.34 train to Sheffield)