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THE UNESCO INSCRIPTION OF THE LOIRE VALLEY: THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF LIVING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

ABSTRACT

The proposed site for the project exercise of the 5th EUSS edition falls within the limits of “The Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes” UNESCO designated area, a complex landscape that includes the river Loire but also much of its valley, and countless interrelationships between man and river that contributed to its prosperity and its heritage density. In addition to its royal châteaux and gardens, its historic urban centers and troglodyte dwellings, this landscape also bears witness to the continuation of a river culture in which human activity and *‘savoir-vivre’* have evolved alongside of the river.

According to the UNESCO criteria, it represents an “organically evolved” and “continuing” cultural landscape, heavily populated. The Management Plan results from a cultural process based on knowledge and the appropriation of the World Heritage values, by both its public and private stakeholders. It has been approved in November 2012 by the State after the validation by the 197 local councils concerned by the UNESCO site. The challenge is now to guide its implementation in the necessary development of the Loire Valley and to promote the World Heritage resources as added-values of the innovative development which guarantee the sustainability of the UNESCO World heritage property and the right transmission to future generations.

INTRODUCTION

On November 30th, 2000, the middle section of the Loire River Valley, situated in northwest France – known as the “*Val de Loire*” – was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list as a living and evolving cultural landscape. Encompassing a 280 km long segment of the Loire River and covering a surface area of 800 sq. km., it is one of the largest UNESCO sites in France. It involves 197 local authorities including 6 urban areas, 2 administrative regions: *Centre* and *Pays de la Loire*, and a population of 1.2 million inhabitants.

The UNESCO Management Plan was approved in November 2012 after a seven-year long process headed by the representative of the State and the Mission Val de Loire, a public engineering entity established by the two Regional Councils of the *Centre* and the *Pays de la Loire*. Some 82% of the site's local authorities approved of it and they agreed to integrate the O.U.V. concept and the Management Plan into their own urban planning documents and development projects.

This Plan defines the Loire Valley heritage management strategy based on knowledge and on the appropriation of the Outstanding Universal Value (O.U.V.) by the site's stakeholders.



1. UNESCO Val de Loire site: median 280km-long section of the Loire River in northwest France.

Source: Christophe Bonte

1 THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF VAL DE LOIRE.

The inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list is the recognition that the Loire Valley is a “natural and cultural monument”. The decision to inscribe such a large area as an evolving and living cultural landscape represents a radical development in terms of the protection and enhancement of UNESCO sites: it is no longer just a question of acknowledging the outstanding qualities of a heritage site, but also of incorporating the entirety of an area into the inscription, i.e. the way people actually

interact with the physical, cultural, economic and social environment of the sites and monuments. The Outstanding Universal Value of the cultural landscape of *Val de Loire* pertains to three UNESCO criteria: (i), (ii) and (iv).

1.1. Criteri (I), a master piece of the “human creative genius”

The exception of the *Val de Loire* under criterion (i)¹ lies in the density and the quality of the architectural heritage of its historical towns, including Blois, Amboise, Chinon, Saumur, Orléans and Tours, and of its world renowned châteaux, the most famous being Chambord. But the scope of the heritage that characterizes the UNESCO inscription goes beyond this monumental dimension by encompassing the entire valley and its distinguished scenic representations.



2. The Chinon example: the monumental site of the fortress of King Charles VII of France (1403-1461) with its formerly fortified Medieval town and tree-lined mall on top of the port's embankment.

Source: Jean Bourgeois



3. The monumental site seen in its contemporary urban context.

Source: DREAL Centre

1.1.2 The evidence of a fluvial civilization

The many facets of the O.U.V. associated with criterion (ii)^h are characterized by the economic activity of a river that was the major trade artery in the Kingdom of France. The memory of this multi-secular occupation of the Loire's riverbanks is ever-present: in flood-control works (600 km of levees and spillways), engineering works for navigation (ports, slipways, quays, and river channeling embankments), the vestiges of fisheries established in the riverbed, the ancient bridges with suspended mills, in the Loire river fleet and, more broadly, in the agricultural, market-gardening, arboreal, and wine-growing economy that owes its development to the rich alluvial soils and to its proximity to the river as a means of transportation.



4. The memory of the river fleet, carved into the tufa walls, is now a living archive as new shipyards open.

Source: Jean Bourgeois



5. The duit Saint-Charles, port of Orléans: the maintenance problems posed by channeling work on the Loire (lowest water level).

Source: Dreal Centre

1.3 The memory of Renaissance ideals and the Age of Enlightenment

Criterion *viii* of the O.U.V. concerns the memory of the aesthetic ideals and good governance of the Renaissance and of the Age of Enlightenment.

From Charles VII, Duke of Touraine, anointed King of France in 1429, to Francois I of France, five kings were to succeed one another in the Loire Valley for one and a half centuries of intellectual, artistic, and economic rebirth inspired by the 15th century 'Quattro Cento' revolution in Italy. Italian scholars, architects and landscape artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, were invited to the French court: they accompanied the transformation of Medieval fortresses into prestigious châteaux surrounded by their pleasure gardens and belvederes overlooking the Loire. The kings encouraged the modernization of the towns by pushing back their walls, establishing the first housing allotments and supporting the fluvial economy. The quality of the landscape became the symbol of the good governance of a territory and the demonstration of the aptitude of the Prince to guarantee the prosperity of his kingdom.

The art of urban architecture during the Age of Enlightenment was to consolidate and enhance this development. The Loire Valley became the laboratory for major royal construction works whose stone bridges, main road arteries and urban port frontages are still the infrastructural mainstay of the Loire cities today.



6, 7. From the Medieval fortress of Sully-sur-Loire to the Renaissance Château of Blois.

Source: Laurent Massillon



8, 9. he prestigious pleasure gardens, e.g. the châteaux of Rigny-Ussé and of Villandry.

Source: Laurent Massillon



10. The prestigious royal waterfront in Blois is an example of the art of urban architecture during the 18th century along with the Pont Jacques V. Gabriel built in 1735.

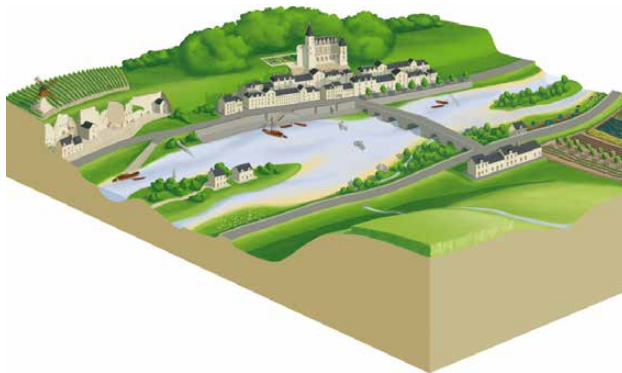
Source: Laurent Massillon

1.4 An “Architecture on a grand scale”^{iv}

The cultural landscape of the Loire Valley reflects the legacy of a royal culture that introduced the concept of aesthetic landscapes during the Renaissance, thus serving as the key principle underlying spatial organization.

The Age of Enlightenment supported this quest for mastery over landscapes as much by the development of top quality hydraulic and civil engineering techniques as in respect of architecture and town planning. The Loire Valley is truly “architecture on a grand scale” built upon ‘anthropization’ and the human influences accumulated over two millennia of interactive history between human beings and their river.

It is a clever meshwork between economic uses and the representations of the enlightened political authorities. The ‘Loire of port cities’ juxtaposes the ‘Loire of châteaux and of gardens,’ i.e. the living landscapes juxtapose the representational landscapes.



11. Outstanding Universal Value: the Loire of Châteaux and gardens, the riverscapes shaped by economic activities, and the river whose natural conformation constitutes its beauty.

Source: Christophe Bonté

1.5 The three scapes of perception of the Outstanding Universal Value



12. The scale of the River, Sully-sur-Loire.

Source: Pierre Aucante



13. The scale of the heritage waterfront, the urban front of Saumur.

Source: Jean-Michel Gabillé

2. THE THREATS AND RISKS THAT MAY ALTER THE O.U.V.

This large territory is a thriving area that welcomes 10 million visitors each year and new inhabitants hailing from the Paris Basin and from Northern Europe. The regional territorial development plans for the *Centre* and the *Pays de la Loire* Regions, drawn up in 2010 and 2011 confirm the economic and residential attractiveness of the Loire Valley^v.

Ever since navigation stopped at the end of the 19th century, the modernization of the *Val de Loire* has been viewed in relation to the main rail, road, and highway links. The



14. The scale of the Broad Landscape, transversal view looking upstream from the south hillside towards the north hillside in Tours (37) where the levee constitutes a horizontal line that echoes the riverscape’s linear composition.

Source: mission val de loire

cities on the Loire now focus away from the river and spread out across the plateaux. Urban sprawl, the scattering of farmlands, the standardization of commercial and residential architectural designs, the absence of activity zone integration, and oversized infrastructures testify to the globalized economy and to a brutal shift in the scale of development. All too frequently, contemporary uses are entirely at odds with the landscape heritage.

The identification of the impacts of these current forms of development on the cultural landscape was undertaken from three different scales of perception: from the standpoint of the river, the waterfront, and the broad landscape.

2.1 The river, its islands, and its banks have resumed their natural contours and are sanctuaries for fauna and flora that have made the Loire Valley an essential European wildlife area that fosters biodiversity and the migration of species. The ports and Loire River meadows, abandoned for lack of use, have deteriorated: the first, now covered with vegetation or colonized by cars, are seriously threatened, while the second are either wilderness areas or converted into poplar groves that make the banks of the Loire inaccessible and block off the expansive views from one riverbank to the other.

2.2 The Loire waterfronts

are elegant linear compositions that offset the city and its châteaux along the banks of the river. These are gradually losing their fundamental attributes as buildings become denser and new neighborhoods are built: the standardization of constructions, whose planning and architectural styles are dissociated from the location and from its history, along with an uncontrolled use of space, contribute to the loss of structuring of these Loire façades.

2.3 The broad landscape of the Loire, with its panoramic vistas, as seen from the levee and/or from the hillside, and often marked by a forest on the horizon, is being altered. Urban sprawl is responsible for the disappearance of the green buffer zones between the towns and villages and this is jeopardizing the future of unbuilt areas, which are most frequently farmlands. This fragmentation of the landscape is accompanied by the construction of huge facilities whose magnitude dwarfs the heritage compositions.



15. The threats and risks that may impact the O.U.V.
Source: Christophe Bonté

2.4 The scales of perception and urban planning tools

The threats were broken down according to three regulatory development scales: at the scale of the broad landscape, which corresponds to the SCOT (territorial coherence plan), at the scale of the Loire waterfront, which thus becomes the 'medium scale' and corresponds to the Local Urban Development Plan and its protective easements, and at the scale of the river, the 'proximity scale,' which corresponds to that of the development and building permit.

A risk grid was drawn up prior to the implementation of an evaluation system to assess new projects from the standpoint of these various landscape scales. This principle, initiated when the Management Plan was drafted, is currently being perfected within the framework of the first impact studies.

The breakdown of the threats for each scale of perception is the following:

The large scale (scale of the broad landscape): damage to the landscape structures, the construction of outsized development projects or those with a substantial visual impact, the destruction of vantage points, and the obstruction of distant views over the river.

The medium scale (scale of the waterfront): the loss of visibility from one riverbank to the other, the alteration of agricultural landscapes, the destruction of the edges of forests and of terraces, linear urbanization, particular when established high up on hillsides, the increasingly banal designs used in urban development and public spaces, as well as the excessive presence of signage and exterior advertising,

The proximity Scale (scale of the river): loss of the integrity of the architectural and urban heritage (radically at odds in terms of scale, form, size, and materials), the deterioration of the building heritage due to lack of upkeep or because of inappropriate restoration work, the alteration of the natural heritage and the depletion of biodiversity.

2.5 The Determination to Conserve the Landscape Heritage

A guideline project referred to as '*Métropole Jardin*' was drawn up by the State together with the local authorities between 1970 and 1977. It was based on networking among Loire cities in order to establish a 'metropolitanization model' founded on the equilibrium between urban development

and enhancement of the building heritage and natural landscapes, using a linear system relying on discontinuous urban development, interspersed with green buffer zones.

Serge Thibault, University Professor and research director at Tours University - François Rabelais has shown how the decentralization laws (2 January and 22 July 1983) put a halt to the adoption of this very promising project. Twenty years later, the UNESCO inscription of the *Val de Loire* is confronting the same challenge: that of guaranteeing coherent development that is compatible with the prestigious landscape heritage.

The characterization of the O.U.V. as presented in the inscription brief was above all the work of experts and, in particular, that of Louis-Marie Coyaud, an historian and geographer as well as a university professor, and also that of Alain Mazas, a consulting landscaper to the State; it was formulated together with the Regional Councils and with the State. This international attention is the consecration of a new representation, one that recognizes the universality of the Loire Valley landscape. Is the prestige of this acknowledgment sufficient to reconcile such 'representational landscapes' with contemporary inhabited landscapes?

3 . THE INITIATIVES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES SINCE THE UNESCO INSCRIPTION

The UNESCO inscription had a powerful impact on the inhabitants: beyond a feeling of great pride, it has occasioned and accelerated their reconciliation with the river. An analysis of the territorial initiatives of the local authorities as of the inscription in 2000 reveals a re-appropriation of the Loire's riverbanks, their transformation into public spaces and investments by local districts to redevelop the Loire waterfronts.



16. The restoration of the Possonière Port, with its discrete quay extension, has been adapted to the Loire's low-water periods.

Source: Laurent Massillon



17. Two ferries transport cycling tourists across the Loire.

Source: Jean-Michel Gabillé



18. Some 700,000 visitors attend the Loire Festival organized by the Orléans conurbation every two years

Source: Laurent Massillon

3.1. Re-appropriation of the Loire Riverbanks

We note many restoration, maintenance and enhancement initiatives to rehabilitate the riverbanks: rehabilitation of the alluvial water meadows of the low-flow channel, restoration and maintenance of the Loire's natural areas, especially under the "Habitats and Wild Birds Directives" of the European 'Natura 2000' network, creation of discovery trails, footpaths, and cycling tracks, and most particularly of the 'Loire à Velo' ('The Loire by Bike') cycling route, an initiative backed by the *Centre* and *Pays de la Loire* Regions.

Since 2005, nearly a dozen Loire ports have been restored and adapted for recreational and tourism purposes after having limited, if not banned, access by motor vehicles. The local authorities back the construction of boats inspired by traditional vessels. The '*Marines et Ports de Loire*'^{vi} (Loire ports and fleets) guidelines, established in 2007 by the *Mission Val de Loire*, provided a framework for the State and for the site's local authorities through which to support and develop this trend.

This reconciliation did not occur without conflicts, including usage conflicts between riverside residents, fishermen and strollers, or property conflicts between local authorities and private owners living next to the public fluvial domain. The reiterated requests from the local authorities to obtain financing for pre-emptive acquisitions in order to ensure free access to the banks of the Loire testifies to this appropriation.

3.2 The Loire's New Public Spaces

Proximity to the Loire is considered to be an asset and one that is synonymous with urban harmony and a gracious lifestyle. Tours has 'staged' the river within the city setting: as early as 2004, the town district invested in a vast heritage restoration plan, with footpaths

along the banks and recreational activities: cycling track, *guinguette*, (beer garden/dance hall), leisure park, and traditional navigation.

The river is resuming its role as the central thread in the expansion of towns and cities. As early as 2002, urban planner François Grether suggested the idea of a 'Loire public Park,' as a central element designed to help resolve urban fragmentation and the lack of urban homogeneity in the Orléans Metropolis. New large public riverside parks are now being established in all of the major Loire urban districts.

These new public spaces do not simply involve urban districts, as is evident from the "*Grande Levée d'Anjou*" ('Great Anjou Levee'), a heritage flood-protection embankment that was continually raised, from 3.5m to 7m between the 12th and the 18th centuries. Transformed into a tourism route, it has become a genuine public space – a belvedere overlooking the Loire. This change has also led to a harmonization in village entrances and main thoroughfares for a stretch of some one hundred kilometers.



19. The "Grande levée d'Anjou" and the port of Saint Mathurin-sur-Loire.

Source: Mission Val de Loire

3.3 The Renewal of Heritage Waterfronts

This reconciliation of the Valley with its river goes well beyond the Loire's riverbanks. The cities of Saumur, Tours, Amboise, Blois, Chinon, and Orléans have set out to reconquer the Loire's prestigious image by investing in projects to renovate their historical centers with facings on the Loire.

Tours reinvented its 'river accesses' to coincide with the establishment of a tramway line that follows the main north-south urban artery, dating from the 18th c. This urban project reinterprets the city's key access points inherited from the 18th c. and later reconfigured during its post-war reconstruction. Blois is updating its tree-lined mall, rehabilitating its quays and 'requalifying' the totality of its 18th c. urban artery on either side of the Jacques V. Gabriel Bridge.

This renovation of the Loire waterfronts is accompanied by a major investment in the rehabilitation of the historical urban centers. The city of Chinon is one of the most spectacular examples in this respect.

The transformation of a Loire waterfront:

20. Orléans commissioned a renowned landscaper, Michel Corajou, to redevelop its quays with just the right balance between heritage renovation and the insertion of new facilities: a new pedestrian area, a belvedere square that overlooks the Loire, vista lookouts, and a harbor master's office.

Source: Gilles Walusinski, Didier Depoorter



3.4 The O.U.V., a flood-risk management tool ?

What is the situation as concerns the appropriation of flood risk? Flooding is a recurrent phenomenon along the Loire River, one of the last European rivers to have kept its natural hydraulic dynamics.

Flooding prevention constitutes a major theme in the State's intervention along the entire Loire Basin. Management of flood risk is dealt with at the Loire Basin level in a framework document known as the "*Plan Loire Grandeur Nature*": all of the *communes* within the UNESCO site have Flood Risk Prevention Plans that limit, if not ban, any new construction in the Loire's low-flow channel.

The multi-secular memory of river practices and uses serves as a major knowledge and experience resource from which to consider risk management, as well as the adaptations of such risk assessments to the consequences of the coming climate change. This area of expertise has been extensively examined since the '90s by the *Etablissement Public Loire* together with the concerned State service departments and the *Agence de l'Eau Loire - Bretagne*.

The quality of the Loire River heritage as highlighted by UNESCO has broadened this approach, although appropriation of this knowledge by the inhabitants remains limited and preventive measures are often misunderstood.

Thus, despite the keen interest of the local authorities in the river, we can but observe the limited consideration for the issues at stake, as set out in the UNESCO inscription, within the PLUs (local urban development plans) and in the SCOTs (territorial coherence plans). Mobilization of the UNESCO site's local authorities requires a strategy that goes beyond appropriation of the riverbanks and the restoration of emblematic features along the Loire waterfronts. It calls for a necessary

awareness-raising process regarding the cultural and landscape challenges involved, and particularly at the inter-communal levels.



21. Valley landscapes during flooding: e.g. the Loire – Vienne confluence, with the Avoine–Chinon nuclear plant in the distance.

Source: Laurent Massillon



22. A farm, in the low-flow bed, that is only accessible by boat during heavy flooding.

Source: Mission Val de Loire

4 . THE UNESCO MANAGEMENT PLAN: A LONG CONSTRUCTION PROCESS FOR BROAD APPROVAL

A seven-year long process – including the acknowledgment of the Val de Loire's Outstanding Universal Value, the identification of its risks of alteration, expertise gleaned from pilot sites, and a two-year awareness raising campaign aimed at public and private stakeholders – was required prior to defining and gaining approval for the Management Plan.

4.1 Drawing Up the Plan and awareness campaign

As a signatory to the International World Heritage Convention, the State is the guarantor in respect of UNESCO regarding the inscription of the lands listed in the French territory. It intervenes based on legislative and regulatory mechanisms.

The drawing up of the Management Plan was initiated in 2008 by the Centre Region Prefect, who coordinates the Loire-Bretagne Basin. The DREAL (regional department for the environment, development and housing) Centre headed the procedure, together with the other regional and departmental managements in charge of the environment and urban planning, as well as the entities responsible for culture. The Mission Val de Loire was also involved in this approach, together with the service departments of the Centre and Pays de la Loire Regional Councils.



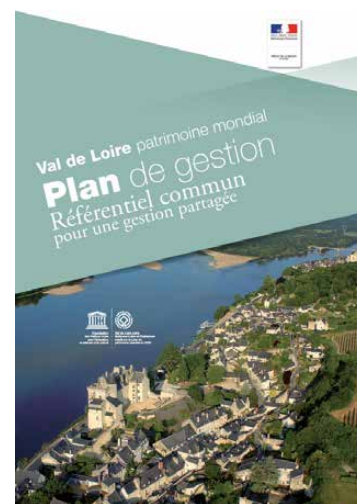
24. The tools of the awareness-raising campaign: General Public Brochure, DVD, Technical Brochure.

Source: Mission Val de Loire



25.

Source: Mission Val de Loire



23. The UNESCO Site Management Plan, approved and distributed in July 2012.

Source: Mission Val de Loire



26, 27. The awareness-raising campaigns (2010, 2011) contributed to the inhabitants' better understanding of the inscription values and the objectives of the Management Plan. There were many meetings with the general public and professional workshops that ultimately involved about 15,000 people.

Source: Mission Val de Loire, Jean Bourgeois

4.2 The Plan Guidelines

The Management Plan provides non-prescriptive guidelines that are founded on the division of responsibilities between the State and the local authorities in respect of territorial policy.

4.2.1 A shared civic responsibility

The concepts of ‘World Heritage,’ ‘O.U.V.’ and of this Management Plan do not exist under constitutional French law. The Plan must thus make use of existing protective measures and/or urban planning tools without any other additional specific regulatory frameworks.

This Plan is based on a pooling of responsibilities between the French State (protection strategy, riverbank management, awareness-raising, and evaluation of planning documents) and the local authorities (issuing building permits, drawing up regional coherence plans and local urban development plans). The role of the Centre and Pays de la Loire Regional Councils is, above all, one of support to the site’s local authorities in their development initiatives by drawing up project contracts based on their environmental, heritage-related, and territorial development policies.

Finally, the involvement of citizens in the political decisions and in working towards improving the ‘Common Good’ has been reinforced by a provision establishing developmental councils and neighborhood councils (Law of June 1999). This requirement is compulsory for urban districts of over 80,000 inhabitants and elective for other territories.

The management of this ‘Common Good’ is not reserved for heritage and landscape specialists alone but also concerns all the inhabitants in this territory, as much in their capacity as citizens as in that of being elected officials, administrative and economic stakeholders, and/or association volunteers.

4.2.2 A non-prescriptive orientation framework

The Management Plan’s nine guidelines are aimed at the State and at the local authorities as well as at the contracting authorities for important projects (infrastructures, major public facilities, new city districts, etc.) and the managers of remarkable sites.

Seven of them concern the territorial priorities to be addressed by the State and by the local authorities within the framework of their reciprocal competencies, i.e.:

- the conservation of remarkable heritage and public areas as well as the views and perspectives that account for the monumental grandeur of the broad landscape.
- the regulation of urban development by requiring top-quality architectural designs and landscaping for new projects, as well as control over the ‘consumption’ of open lands and also retaining green buffer zones between two urban continuums.
- the integration of new facilities, the enhancement of Val de Loire via ‘discovery itineraries’ and the development of sustainable tourism based on the quality of the landscapes.

The two other guidelines cover the Plan’s implementation and hinge on two principles: the appropriation of the inscription values by the inhabitants, and project accompaniment thanks to advice and expertise from the site’s local authorities and stakeholders. These two involve the Mission Val de Loire more specifically.

4.3 The results of the Approval

The Management Plan was approved in November 2012 by the State and by the Regional authorities, after 82% of the local authorities concerned by the site’s territorial management had re-iterated their assent. They agreed to improve their strategies by taking the O.U.V. into account and by incorporating the nine guidelines in their planning documents and development projects.

The 8% of local authorities that did not wish to deliberate or that deliberated unfavorably generally lacked the engineering facilities and financing to implement the guidelines. The other 10% corresponded to conurbations that expressed reservations to retain greater planning freedom and to highlight the problems inherent in the conservation measures.

The vast majority in favor reflects genuine progress: the fact that urban planning is compelled to take landscape protection and heritage conservation into account is an encouraging factor in ensuring developmental quality and sustainability. The key question then becomes that of the partnerships to establish in order to guarantee the technical and financial accompaniment needed to realize the Plan.

5. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

5.1 The Governance

Coordination of heritage land management is ensured by devolved State service departments and by the two Centre and Pays de la Loire Regions. The 'Mission Val de Loire - World Heritage' is a cross-regional organization administered by the Centre and Pays de la Loire Regional Councils, and it serves as the operational entity.

Approval of the Management Plan in 2012 was accompanied by a reinforcement of the site's governance to ensure harmonization among the various interventions of the State's service departments and, above all, to coordinate and reconcile the objectives of contractual regional policies with those of the State. Beyond such an institutional framework, the characterization of the O.U.V. and its conservation must now be placed at the heart of territorial policies and development projects. The participation of the stakeholders and of the residents is becoming essential in order

to arrive at a common culture that goes well beyond the protection of remarkable areas and the oversight of urban planning documents.

To guarantee the sustainability of the O.U.V., engineering excellence must be ensured for the maintenance, development and renewal of the landscapes. This presupposes a certain level of appropriation and a way of pooling the cultural values of the inscription. A 'co-production strategy' is currently being implemented by the Mission Val de Loire, together with all of the stakeholders as a whole, as a complement to the role of the State's service departments.

5.2 An international landscape laboratory

New methodological issues are coming to light: How should the O.U.V. be characterized in each territory so as to list the initiatives to be conducted by the local authority? How should the compatibility of new projects be evaluated in relation to the O.U.V.?

These two research themes are the object of experimentation by the Mission Val de Loire:

- the initial O.U.V. diagnoses cross-compared the conclusions of an historical and landscape analysis to determine the relevant components under the three inscription criteria. This approach elicits questions about the exhaustiveness of the established inventories, the objectivity of the selection, as well as that of the appropriation of the results by the inhabitants.
- the initial impact studies attempt to qualify the extent of the consideration given to the O.U.V. in the projects and to measure the degree of enrichment or of alteration, whether direct or indirect, affecting the components of the O.U.V. and, in particular, thanks to the threat grid established in the Management Plan.

The Val de Loire is now more than ever a landscape laboratory, a tool for critical

reflection, a methodological framework, and a long-range territorial planning model, that is founded upon experimentation.

The next stage calls for implementing pilot studies, at the scale of the site, based on innovative partnerships between local authorities, associations, universities and businesses covering:

- the restoration and upkeep of emblematic landscapes,
- the adaptation of landscapes to new uses,
- the integration of new facilities,
- design concepts that integrate input from inhabitants.

These ‘project dynamics’ hinge on collecting and pooling the best experiences, with the site’s local authorities, as well as between the Val de Loire UNESCO site and the other UNESCO sites that also have a river valley cultural landscape.

The UNESCO listing and the territorial mobilization that it has successfully brought about allows the Val de Loire to reassert its vocation as an international laboratory and think tank designed to ascertain the appropriate management and future of a river landscape that holds substantial heritage value. It is a vocation shared by many other major valleys throughout the world, very ancient valleys, faceted by ‘anthropization’: the natural cradles of Humanity.

The aim is to create an international and local resource platform from which to learn from one another via networking between capable individuals and via research partnerships, as well as by disseminating the findings of the World Heritage assessments and by implementing pilot-projects. The intention is to exchange benchmark references to assist in the renewal of UNESCO’s cultural river landscapes to ensure their proper maintenance and their transmission to future generations.

Some instances of interventions compatible with the O.U.V.



28, 29. At the scale of the river : The maintenance of the alluvial water meadows is achieved by encouraging the raising of cattle, sheep and horses and the quality of quay rehabilitations: e.g. Chouze-sur-Loire.

Source: Mission Val de Loire

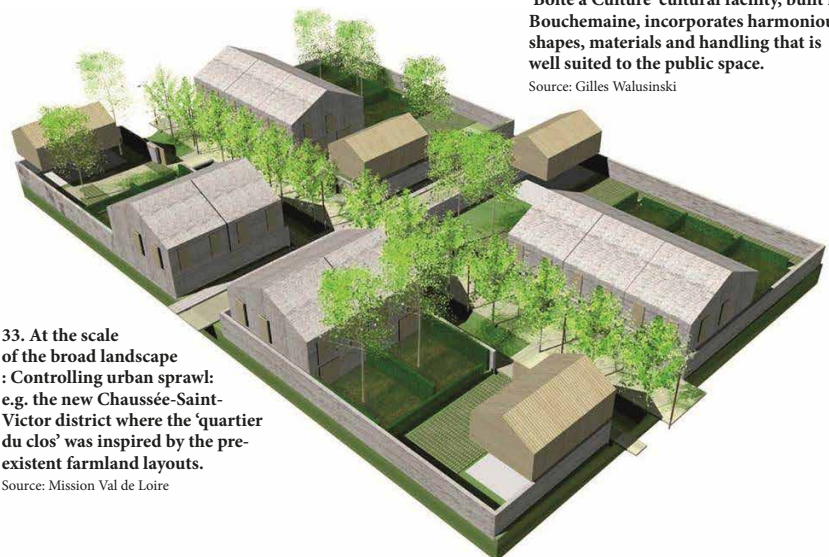


30. At the scale of the waterfront : Burying power lines in historical town centers, e.g. in Langeais.

Source: Mission Val de Loire

31, 32. At the scale of the waterfront : the integration of contemporary buildings in ancient town centers: e.g. the ‘Boîte à Culture’ cultural facility, built in Bouchemaine, incorporates harmonious shapes, materials and handling that is well suited to the public space.

Source: Gilles Walusinski



33. At the scale of the broad landscape : Controlling urban sprawl: e.g. the new Chaussée-Saint-Victor district where the ‘quartier du clos’ was inspired by the pre-existent farmland layouts.

Source: Mission Val de Loire

AVENUES FOR FURTHER REFLECTION IN CONCLUSION

We believe that such an initiative can only guarantee the sustainability of the landscape's quality on condition it takes into account, and all at once, the four following points:

Knowledge and protection of the structuring elements of the landscape, and in particular of the geomorphological and anthropological characteristics that shaped the representations of the landscape as recognized in the UNESCO inscription.

- The appropriation of such characteristics by the inhabitants and decision-makers to extend the understanding of what accounts for the site's landscape and its heritage quality from the individual to the entire community in order to establish a common public culture.
- A sustainable development strategy for the territory that defines the compatibility conditions of new projects in order to integrate them into the structuring elements that comprise the heritage landscape.
- The implementation of projects that involve the inhabitants because they are the 'end-users' of the landscape, and they are the main stakeholders who ensure its maintenance and its transmission to future generations.

This form of governance can only result from public action impelled by institutional provisions that emphasize the solidarity underlying the common values borne by the landscape's aesthetic qualities.



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Criterion (i): The site represents a masterpiece of human creative genius.

Criterion (ii): The site exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design.

Criterion (iv): "The site is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant state(s) in human history."

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