



orange county great park

BENCHMARK report

A Publication of The Orange County Great Park Corporation

Orange Balloon Will Launch the Great Park

Rising five hundred feet above the flat surface of the El Toro runway, an enormous helium-filled orange balloon will announce the launch of the Great Park.

The five-story tall balloon will carry up to 30 people aloft in its gondola. Riders will be able to see the entire Great Park and surrounding communities.

"We created the Orange Balloon as an iconic symbol of the Great Park," said Great Park Master Designer Ken Smith. "The Orange Balloon pays tribute to the agricultural history of Orange County. It reminds us that balloons were the very first military aircraft and thus honors El Toro's history as a military airfield. It will create an observation platform and a signpost for visitors. And let's not forget, the kids will love it."

Ken Smith first proposed the balloon as a signature feature of the conceptual design he submitted in the international design competition last year.

"People just loved the idea of the big orange balloon as a symbol and as an attraction," says Marsha Burgess, Director of Public Relations for the Orange County Great Park Corporation.

"I believe the Great Park's Orange Balloon will quickly become one of the most popular attractions in Orange County."

Similar balloons are in operation in the Wild Animal Park in San Diego and in many parks and cities throughout Europe and North America, carrying thousands of passengers each year.

Children are extremely fond of the balloons and nearly one-third of all passengers worldwide are children under the age of twelve.

The balloon will take flight much earlier than anticipated thanks to a generous \$1.9 million gift by Lennar Corporation, developer of the community surrounding the Great Park.



Lennar's gift will pay for the infrastructure of the balloon and its "landing pad." The balloon is expected to be in operation at the end of the year.

Bob Santos, CEO of Heritage Fields, Lennar's development company for the El Toro property, said that the early development of the Orange Balloon will literally put the Great Park on the map, stating, "This balloon will rise over the site of the Great Park and be seen for miles, announcing to the surrounding communities and to visitors 'Here is the Great Park.'"

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A Conversation with Great Park Artist Mary Miss

Mary Miss is an artist who has worked on important public projects for the past thirty years. She has worked on waterfronts, city parks, and college campuses — even a thirty-acre water treatment facility. Her interest is to showcase ideas about our environment through collaborative projects and the artworks she builds within them.

As a child in a military family (her parents met at Camp Pendleton while they were both in the army) she grew up moving frequently but living often in Southern California. She graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara before moving to the East Coast.

Miss sat down recently to talk about ideas about a park for the 21st Century and how she works as an artist on a collaborative team.

Q. How will the Great Park be a park for the 21st Century?

We have the vision of a place where the citizens of Orange County can come to experience a new kind of relationship between the built environment and the natural world, between our resources and our ever expanding needs and between the multiple communities that make up this area with each other. Visitors to the Park will be key participants in making the connections that will help us redefine what it means to have a sustainable future in this remarkable Southern California landscape.

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Visit our new website at www.ocgp.org

Great Park Will Live Up to Its Name

With every passing day it becomes more clear that the Orange County Great Park will truly live up to its name. Ken Smith and his team of talented designers have moved into military building number 83 on the former base and have transformed it into the headquarters of the Great Park Design Studio.

Landscape architects, architects, artists, and engineers are working side-by-side to transform Smith's winning conceptual plan into a more detailed Master Plan for the Park.

Public involvement remains at the center of the Park design process. The design team is meeting with interested constituencies and organizations representing a wide range of interests, including the arts, accessibility for the disabled, environmental issues, trail systems for hiking, biking, and equestrians, and multi-cultural organizations.

The Design Studio and Corporation staff have also been meeting regularly with youth and amateur sports enthusiasts to help us design a sports park that will be second-to-none.

"Orange County has really come together to help plan and design the Orange County Great Park. We can be confident the Great Park will truly live up to its name."

Wally Kreutzen, Chief Executive Officer
Orange County Great Park Corporation

You will have the opportunity to comment on the Park design when we have a Community Open House, scheduled for this fall. Look for the date and location on our website, www.ocgp.org, and I strongly encourage you to participate.

There have been some other exciting developments since my last report. The National Archives has proposed locating its West Coast headquarters at the Great Park. This institution could house all of the important documents relating to the history of the Western United States. Needless to say, it would be an important addition to the cultural and educational opportunities being planned for the Park.

That's not all. Lennar Corporation, the developer of the El Toro property surrounding the Great Park, gave the gift of a five-story tall helium balloon which will carry passengers 500 feet above the Great Park.

Ken Smith included the orange balloon in his design as a signature feature of the Great Park, and through Lennar's generosity it is expected to be airborne by the end of this year. ■



Wally Kreutzen

Wally Kreutzen
Chief Executive Officer
Orange County Great Park Corporation



Mary Miss is an artist and a member of the Orange County Great Park Design Studio

(continued from page 1)

A Conversation with Great Park Artist Mary Miss

Q. These are complex issues. How will people understand them?

Above all the Park will be an Oasis, a place of pleasure, activity and reflection. It is where the senses — taste, touch, sound and smell — give people a visceral connection with their immediate environment. It will be a place of physical, mental and spiritual renewal. These are aspects of health that everyone can understand. If you understand health in terms of the individual it is not such a big step to understand it in terms of the health of the region or planet.

Q. Are these your ideas alone?

Oh no! One of the things that is most unique about this project is that it is a collaborative project. We have landscape architects, an artist, an ecologist, an architect and engineers working together as equals. Each of us has an area of expertise we bring to the project. Because of the complexity of today's issues, it is no longer possible for a single individual or field to understand all the problems or singularly envision solutions. Through our overlapping discussions we are able to come up with much more interesting ideas. Ken Smith is the leader of this team and is responsible for the difficult task of keeping us all moving forward toward our goal.

Q. How do you see your role?

One of the things I have done is take all the ideas that have been developed and help create the conceptual framework for the Park. As an artist working in the public realm, ideas and the process of presenting them are as important as the things I will build in the Park. My most pressing concern now is how to implement our vision so that people can experience it, participate in it, and get it.

Q. What ideas do you have about that?

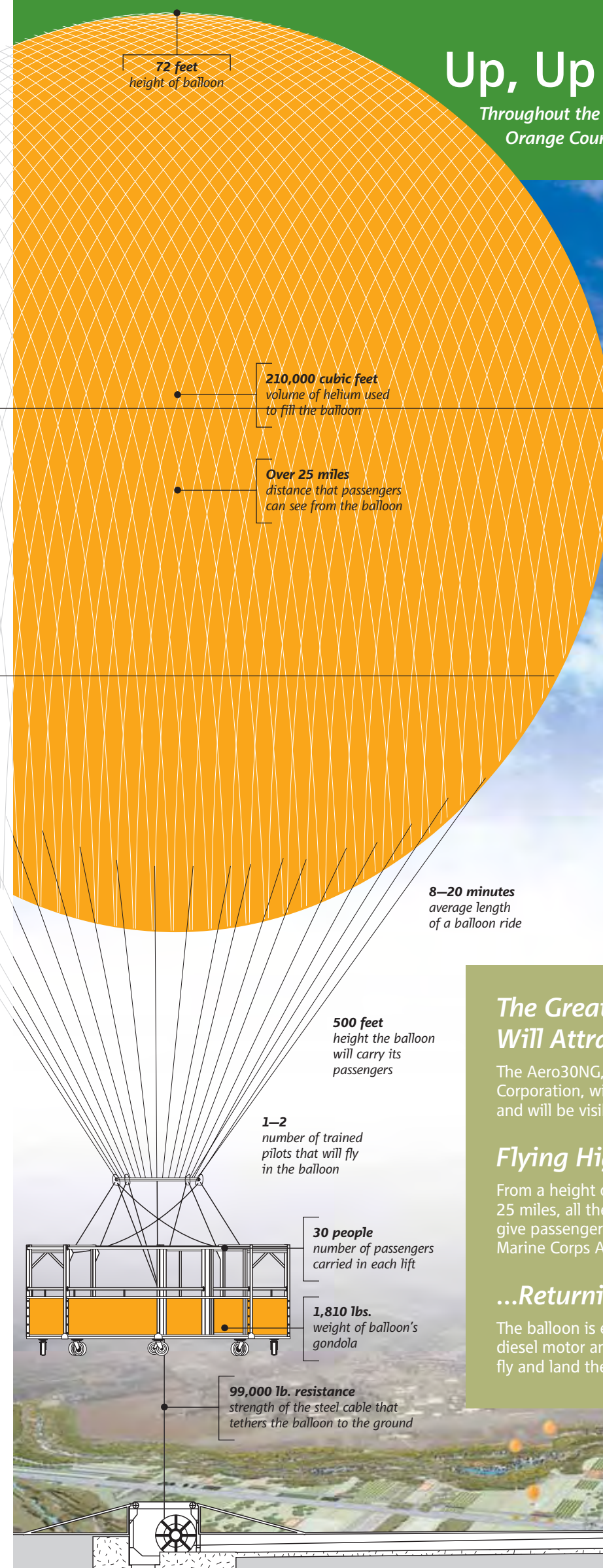
A primary concept in the Park is that it will be a place of change and experimentation over the next 5, 10, 50, 100 years as new ideas about environmental and social sustainability evolve. I am working to set up a program that will be at the core of the Park's vision: The Park as Living Laboratory. Artist and designers will collaborate with scientists, historians or hydrologists to make sustainability a tangible experience, to arouse the interest and curiosity of visitors and invite their participation. The desire is to make these pressing issues of the 21st Century apparent to everyone.

Q. What do you think about spending so much time in Southern California again?

It's great! I really feel like I am in familiar territory out here. I had almost forgotten what a pleasure it is to be so close to the ocean, the mountains and desert. And as well as making contact with old friends I am meeting a great array of new people in the process of working on the Park. ■

Up, Up and Away...

Throughout the world, large helium balloons delight visitors. Orange County will soon have its own...at the Great Park.



The Great Park Orange Balloon Will Attract Adults and Children Alike

The Aero30NC, manufactured by the Aerophile Corporation, will become a symbol of the Great Park and will be visible from miles away.

Flying High in the Sky...

From a height of 500 feet, passengers will be able to see for more than 25 miles, all the way to the northern edge of Orange County. It will give passengers a bird's eye view of the transformation of the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into the Orange County Great Park.

...Returning Safely to Earth

The balloon is equipped with many safety features, including a backup diesel motor and an emergency deflation system. A trained pilot will fly and land the balloon.

A powerful winch will return the balloon safely to earth after each flight.

The Great Picture: Unveiling the World's Largest Camera & Photograph

By Guest Columnist Jerry Burchfield

Anoon, on Wednesday, July 12, the world's largest photograph was unveiled at the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro in Irvine, California. This mammoth photograph, which is three stories high by eleven stories long, provides a panoramic view of an area of the former Marine Air Station that will become the heart of the Orange County Great Park. The Great Picture was produced on-site in a former airplane hanger converted by the six photographic artists of The Legacy Project into the world's largest camera.

This Guinness Book record-setting project was produced to celebrate the past while commemorating the beginning transition of MCAS El Toro into the Orange County Great Park and Heritage Fields. In an era when miniature cameras, digital photography and instant results prevail, this process has required many months to complete; requiring a lengthy exposure directly onto a 32' high by 111' long piece of specially coated light-sensitive fabric. The resulting one-of-a-kind photographic print features the former air control tower, the runways, and the open expanse that will become the center of the Orange County Great Park. The coastal hills and the buildings surrounding the Irvine Spectrum frame the view as a distant backdrop.

In addition to referencing the history of Orange County, The Legacy Project used a camera obscura with a pinhole rather than a lens and hand-coated the emulsion to pay tribute to the history and evolution of photography and its role in our visually oriented culture. The principles of the camera obscura (Latin for "dark room"), have been known for several



View from the hanger



Sizing coating crew



The Great Picture



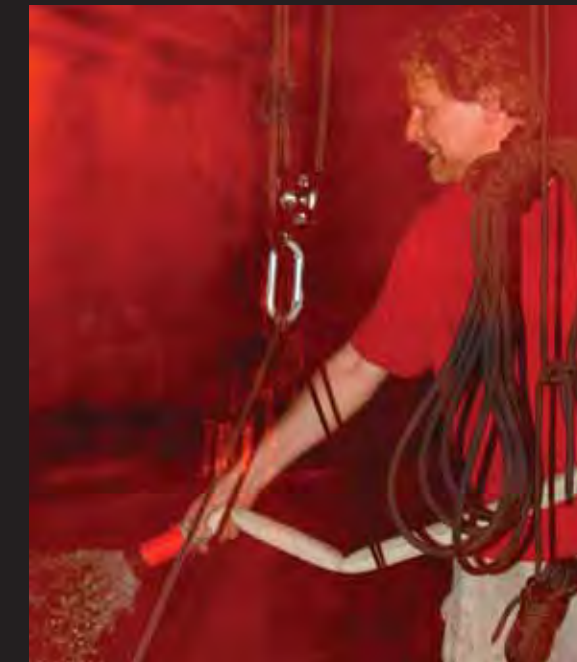
Fabric for image capture



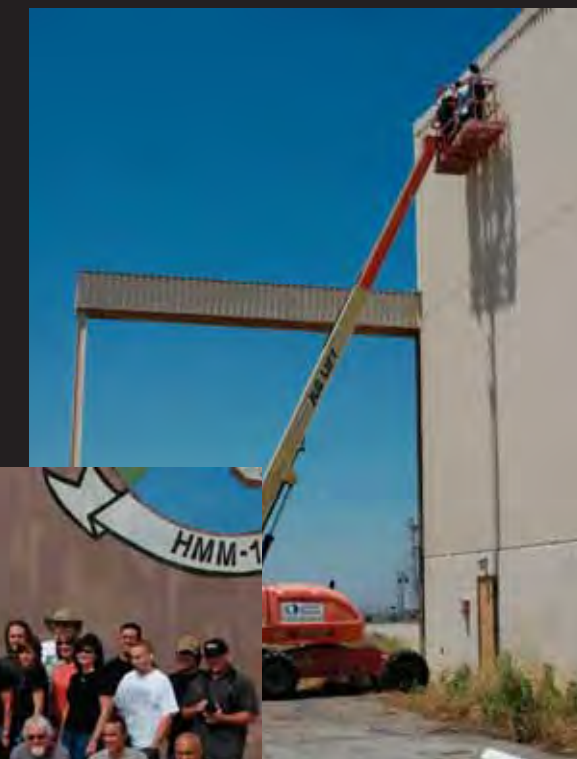
Reviewing the test prints



Checking the pinhole options



Washing the print in the "darkroom" hanger



Light tightening the building



Processing the Great Picture



Fixing the pinhole opening



The Great Photo Team

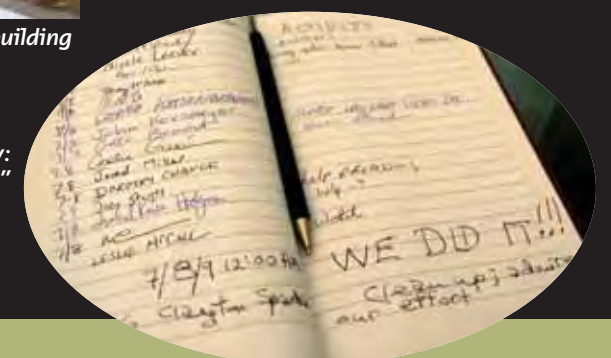
thousand years-long before light sensitive materials and glass lenses were discovered. It is, in fact, the original design from which all cameras have evolved. When light is controlled through a pinhole (or lens) as it enters a darkened chamber, an inverted image of what is outside appears on the opposite wall where it may be drawn on paper or captured by light-sensitive materials such as film.

The diameter of the camera obscura pinhole used to make The Great Picture was less than a 1/4 of an inch with a focal length of 56 ft. A 3,000 square foot piece of unbleached muslin was hand-coated with a liquid emulsion, which resulted in an impressionistic, painterly look. The exposure, which was originally expected to take many days, turned out to be less than one hour. To process the giant print, 60 people were needed and over 1800 gallons of black and white chemistry was used.

The Great Picture Project is part of an ongoing fifteen-year documentation of the creation of the Orange County Great Park by The Legacy Project, a non-profit organization started by six well-known regional photographic artists: Jerry Burchfield, Mark Chamberlain, Jacques Garnier, Robert Johnson, Douglas McCulloh, and Clayton Spada. Since its inception in April 2002, the members of The Legacy Project have recorded over 80,000 images of the shuttered Marine Air Station. ■

A public reception and unveiling of The Great Picture is planned for the fall, providing a space large enough can be found. Ultimately the piece will end up in a museum or a public institution.

Jerry Burchfield is a member of The Legacy Project & Professor at Cypress College



Log book entry: "WE DID IT!!!"

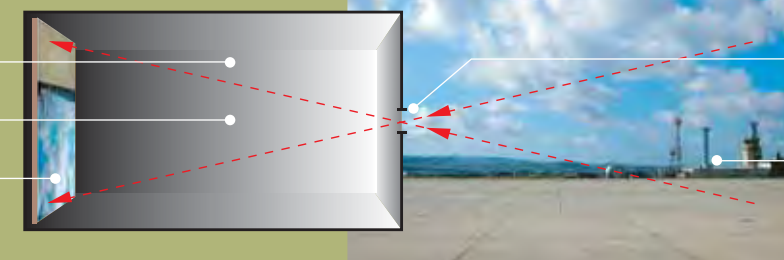
How it works...

The largest camera obscura in the world



The building used as the camera obscura was hangar #115. The interior of the hanger is 45 feet high, 160 feet wide, and 80 feet deep.

32' high by 111' long piece of specially coated light-sensitive fabric



The diameter of the camera obscura pinhole used to make The Great Picture was less than a 1/4 of an inch with a focal length of 56 ft.

The resulting one-of-a-kind photographic print features the former air control tower, the runways, and the open expanse that will become the center of the Orange County Great Park.

Designed to Serve the People of Orange County: Citizen groups presented some big ideas to the designers of the Great Park.

Citizens representing a wide range of constituencies and interests met with members of the Great Park Design Studio in two rounds of focus groups in July and August to offer comments on the Master Plan for the Orange County Great Park.

The first round of discussions consisted of six focus groups conducted between July 5 and 7. These discussions centered on accessibility, arts, veterans, trails systems, cross-cultural needs, and environmental issues.

Each group was presented with an overview of the Great Park planning process by Corporation staff and a brief presentation of the Preliminary Master Plan by key members of the Great Park Design Studio. An open forum discussion followed these presentations, with Design Studio members taking comments answering any questions asked by audience members.

A second series of focus groups were conducted between August 1 and 17 to further develop the ideas and comments gathered during the July focus groups.

Information gathered in these sessions will be used to refine the Great Park Master Plan and will help to ensure that the Great Park is truly great.



“Public involvement is an essential part of the design process. Ideas we receive in the public meetings will become part of the Master Plan for the Great Park.”

— Ken Smith, Master Designer

Accessibility



Advocates for the disabled offer suggestions on how to encourage everyone to enjoy the Great Park.

- Provide different ways of experiencing the Park. Make it possible for the blind to feel the Park through sculptures and plants they can touch. Create “listening posts” where people can hear information about Park features and enjoy the park environment.
- Design safe, multi-use trails with wheelchair access and call boxes.
- Design drinking fountains with spouts set at different heights for adults, people in wheelchairs, children, pets, and guide dogs.

Arts



Painters, sculptors, musicians and others envision the Great Park as a showcase for the arts.

- Create stages for large and small performances by all kinds of artists, from individuals to large symphonies and orchestras.
- Develop a plan for the Park at night. Create safe, well-lit areas for people to enjoy the Park and the arts after dark.
- Emphasize artistic designs that educate the public about environmental protection and other important issues.

Veterans



Representing thousands of men and women who served our country at El Toro, veterans spoke proudly about the need to remember El Toro’s military history.

- Create a space for permanent and revolving exhibits on military history. Use computer-generated images such as flight simulators to bring the history of El Toro to life.
- Use displays of military hardware such as aircraft to illustrate the history of El Toro as the West Coast’s air base.
- Focus on the personal stories and oral histories of those who served at El Toro. Remember the people, not just the artifacts of history.

Trail Systems



Hikers, bikers, and equestrians discuss their unique requirements for Great Park trails.

- Create a multi-use trail system that can be used by hikers, bikers, and people on horseback.
- Connect the Alton, Whiting Ranch, and Lake Forest trails to the Great Park trail system. Make the Great Park the link connecting regional trail systems.
- Build a state-of-the-art cross country course that will attract local, regional, and even national championship events.

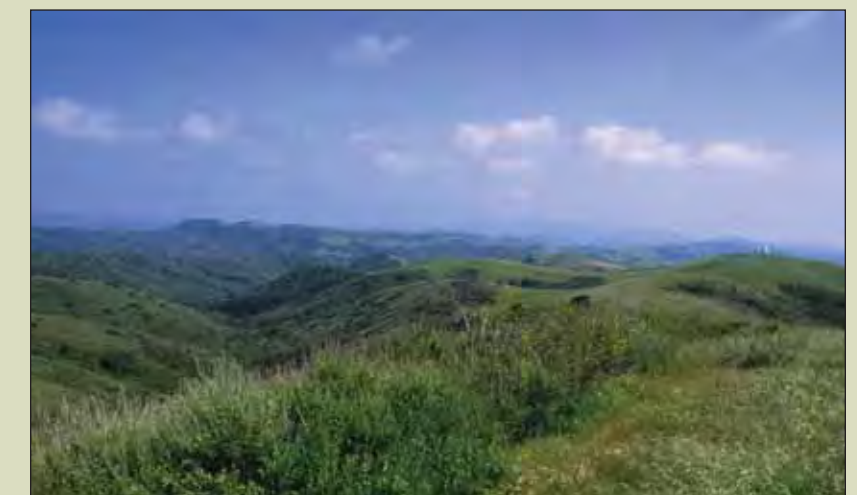
Cross-Cultural



People representing many different cultural groups from throughout Orange County discussed ways to bring people together in the Great Park.

- Plan for an outdoor International Film Festival.
- Build an international food court.
- Create a “walking timeline” with exhibits to show the progress of different cultural groups in Orange County over time.
- Build a multi-cultural center where individuals, organizations, and international companies can sponsor cultural exchanges and exhibitions.

Environmental



The Great Park Environmental Coalition has been meeting with the design team to integrate 21st Century concepts of sustainability into the Great Park Master Plan.

- The Park should adopt water management principles that conserve and recycle water whenever possible.
- The Park should strive for energy independence, creating the energy it uses on site through the use of solar, geothermal, and other forms of clean energy.
- Plant species that can exist in an arid southern California environment without intensive watering should be featured in the Park.

Looking Ahead *Fall 2006*

- **Great Park Design Community Workshop**
County residents will have the opportunity to attend a workshop, meet the Great Park designers, and comment on the Master Plan.
- **Preliminary Master Plan Completed**
The Preliminary Master Plan for the Great Park will be presented to the public and reviewed by the Great Park Corporation Board.
- **Business Plan for Great Park Presented**
An analysis of how much it will cost to build and operate the Great Park according to the Master Plan will be presented to the Board and the public.
- **Sports Park Plans Presented**
The Board will discuss options for the design and operation of the Sports Park.

Orange County residents will have many opportunities to help create the Master Plan for the Orange County Great Park. Keep informed about the design and development of the Orange County Great Park. Visit www.ocgp.org ■

Mia Lehrer and Ken Smith are finalists in prestigious competitions.

Congratulations to Great Park Design Studio Member Mia Lehrer, who is one of three finalists in the competition to develop Los Angeles State Historic Park, a new California State Park at a former railyard near downtown Los Angeles. Final plans will be unveiled in a public forum on October 14. ■



Congratulations also go out to Great Park Design Studio leader Ken Smith, who is a finalist for the Smithsonian Institution's prestigious Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award for design excellence. The awards program celebrates, "...design in various disciplines as a vital humanistic tool in shaping the world and seeks to increase national awareness of design by educating the public and promoting excellence, innovation, and lasting achievement." ■



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The Orange County Great Park Corporation is a non-profit corporation organized to plan, design, build, and maintain the Orange County Great Park.

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