

# Environmental Acts

ANNA THURMAYR, University of Manitoba  
**Call Before You Cut! The Importance of Tree Protection**

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URSULA EMERY MCCLURE, Louisiana State University  
**Digital Surrogacy in Ephemeral Sites**

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Paper Presentations

## Call Before You Cut! The Importance of Tree Protection

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Though Winnipeg is a city located in the Canadian Prairies, it is surprisingly home to 8 millions trees. Arriving by plane you clearly can see that Winnipeg is a city under a huge canopy! Winnipeg's urban forest is famous due to the largest urban population of elm trees in North America and this dates back to the early 1900's. It has become public knowledge that Winnipeg's canopy is threatened by Dutch Elm Disease. The City's Urban Forestry does everything to fight against it, namely surveying, pruning, and removing diseased trees, and with some success replanting them. But there is further need to call for action. A large part of Winnipeg's trees is privately owned, but there is no regulation to avoid the destruction or injury of significant and healthy trees on private properties. The Urban Forestry Department pushed for the protection of privately owned trees many years ago, but, stopped by council, there is still nothing that controls the legal sound of a chainsaw.

Winnipeg is in need to enact a Private Tree Protection Bylaw otherwise this city will end up like it started: covered by grass. We do not want to imagine Winnipeg without those magnificent trees, but the reality and the condition of trees forces us to deal with this dramatic change and to act. World wide there are cities with cutting-edge models for how to protect trees and it could be so easy to learn from them if the will exists. This presentation will refer to relevant precedents and discuss possible actions as well as their assets and drawbacks. The topic is politically very delicate since votes cannot be won with it, but at the end of the day the general welfare should prevail over private gain. Let's tackle it before it is too late.

## Digital Surrogacy in Ephemeral Sites

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The ephemerality of the built environment exists through a multitude of lenses and questions the presumed need for traditional trajectories of preservation and longevity. Established processes tend to focus on ephemerality in terms of growth and decay, responsiveness and interaction, or as visual or phenomenological qualities. The concept of ephemerality is directly confronted in the duality of two mediums decaying or evolving at varied rates within the environment. These dualities are particularly evident in the Louisiana Gulf Coast as land loss, settlement, and culture overlap in a continuous *tête-à-tête* between biotic processes and the built environment. New methodologies of representation, analysis, and construction must be developed to address issues of ephemerality within sites of cultural heritage and/or ecological significance.

To investigate these methodologies, we selected Fort Proctor, a National Register of Historic Places site at extreme environmental risk. Fort Proctor is one of several forts built along Lake Borgne in Southeastern Louisiana following the War of 1812. The fort was designed and construction commenced in 1856 but was halted in 1859 because of a hurricane and events associated with the beginning of the US Civil War. Since then, Fort Proctor has remained in a fluctuating landscape as a static marker or datum, recording major ecological changes within the dynamic coastal environment.

The research has generated a new procedural methodology for preservation of ephemeral sites at extreme environmental risk. In the test site of Fort Proctor, both the building and site exist in a state of decay. To preserve the architecture requires the preservation of the environment and that is not only cost prohibitive but also disproportionately scalar. The innovation of this research lies in the combination of addressing the sustainability of building cultural heritage in conjunction with the sustainability of a coastal ecosystem.

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