FAQ – 2013 Environmental Art Program: Residency & Biennale
(Rev. 1/11/13)

What is your definition of environmental art? What kinds of works are you looking for?
I-Park views environmental art as a multi-disciplinary field and also encourages inter-disciplinary collaborations. In addition to ‘traditional’ (our terminology) sculptural installations on the land using natural materials, this program supports works developed by artists/practitioners (hereinafter, ‘artists’) from among the following creative disciplines: architecture, performance art, sound sculpture/design, the language arts, landscape/garden design, moving image, photography and inter-disciplinary practice. A crucial element of a successful submission will be your success in convincing the selection panel, through your previous works and the power of your project proposal, as to your ability to intimately and engagingly respond to one or more of the key dimensions of the existing I-Park ‘environment,’ broadly construed: natural, built, narrative, multi-sensory, social – or, perhaps, to its past or its future. All works must be ephemeral in character. Projects for this program may include conceptual investigations, purely aesthetic interventions in the site, the imagining of new outdoor spaces and proposals that challenge or re-define our relationship to nature. The program does not, in fact, require the artist to physically alter the landscape in any way.

How would you expect architects and landscape/garden designers to participate in this program?
It is well understood that time, including seasonal, regulatory and budgetary constraints do not allow for ‘conventional,’ fully executed installations (e.g., gardens, structures) to be presented at the Biennale. Paper proposals, including drawings, digital emulations, maquettes, ‘laboratory’ experiments and written propositions will be considered – so long as they involve a direct engagement of the site. Examples might include proposals for future interventions (gardens or ephemeral architectural elements) or purely hypothetical inventions.

In terms of physical installations, what scale and intensity of intervention are you willing to consider?
We are most comfortable with relatively light footprint, temporary installations. It is not the intention of I-Park to create a sculpture park at this time – nor is it our interest to encourage projects that cannot be readily de-installed in response to evolving interests. That said, certain projects could very well serve to inspire more permanent installations in the future.

What kind of program and audience do you anticipate for the Biennale?
Promotion of the Biennale will be targeted primarily to the regional cultural and academic communities. Typically, the Biennale, which doubles as I-Park’s annual open house, will consist of a site walk highlighting the various installations – as well as music, and perhaps some other, project-related, performances and presentations. It is anticipated that there will also be a festive evening element.
How will scheduling work for those unable to participate fully in the September session? I-Park has allocated to the Environmental Art Program a few slots in the July and August General Residency Program sessions. Each of these sessions is approximately 4-weeks in length – and there could be special circumstances where the artist might be permitted to participate for just 2-weeks within one of these sessions (for specific dates, see the 2013 calendar). If you are absolutely unable to attend the September residency, you will need to assure I-Park that your installation will survive in good condition through the Biennale and at least a few weeks subsequent thereto. You will also need to describe what, if any, staff assistance will be needed during the Biennale in the event you are not able to return. In the final selection process, scheduling and durability factors will be taken into account, especially for artists requesting early (July, August) participation.

Are the artists required to be present for the Biennale and will they have any specific obligations on that day? Artists participating in the September residency session are required to be present during the exhibition and may be asked to participate in a group panel presentation or some similar arrangement that will be decided upon, in consultation with all program constituents, at the beginning of the residency. While we would sincerely appreciate it if the artists participating in the July or August sessions could be present as well – this is not required. Unfortunately, there is no separate funding available to reimburse travel costs for the return to I-Park.

How many artists will be involved in the program? We expect that there will be between 12 and 15 participants.

Are artists required to participate in the residency program or can they simply come in advance of the Biennale to install their pieces? The residency is an integral aspect of the Environmental Art Program. The residency was expanded to 3 from (previously) 2 weeks in order for the artists to have more time to study the site and to produce more intensely responsive pieces. It was also anticipated that by extending the shared experience, deeper inter-disciplinary exchanges, and perhaps even some collaborations, might be fostered. The residency aspect accrues to the benefit of the participants while enhancing the overall quality of the Biennale.

Will there be an approval process before work can begin on the installations? Approval is mainly an issue for site interventions. We will be looking at location/accessibility, the amount of land/space that will be disturbed, the extent of the proposed disturbance, any environmental or safety issues that might arise during installation or afterwards, conformance with applicable local ordinances and ease of disassembly, disposal and reclamation. We will not be looking to micro-manage your aesthetics or your creative process.

Will I be able to change my project after it’s been approved? You are free to change your initial concept even after it’s been approved. However, you will need to re-submit your plan to the Project Manager for approval prior to starting, or re-starting, work at your site.
What kind of staff support will be available during the Environmental Art residency? I-Park has an Executive Director, a Residency Program Manager and a groundskeeper. For part-time staff, we have a handy-man, a chef and housekeeping personnel. The Environmental Art Program will have a designated Project Manager. We plan to have extra staff on hand for the first week or so to help with orientation and coordination. There will be minimal staff support on the weekends, however, so participants will need to plan accordingly. Since there will be no other active programs during the September time frame, all staff will be focused on support for the Environmental Art Program.

What kinds of materials, tools, equipment and utilities will be available? There is, as you can imagine, an abundance of natural materials on the site that is available for your use. There is also a decent selection of metal and organic ‘junk,’ concrete masonry elements, odd lots of lumber and an array of construction/building materials that can generally be shared at no cost to the artist. As for tools, we have the basic ladders, wheelbarrows, chain saws, hand trucks and dollies as well as power, hand, gardening and maintenance tools. We will have a pickup and/or a small dump truck as well as an all-terrain vehicle reserved for the session, though the vehicles will need to be operated by I-Park personnel. Some sites presently have electrical power – some could have power extended to them. None of the sites on the land will have permanent access to 220-volt demand. I-Park has become known for its resourcefulness and generosity in terms of making specialized equipment available for artists’ needs. Please check with the office in advance if you have any unusual equipment requests.

Are tools purchases reimbursable? If you have a need for tools beyond what we have to offer, we will simply purchase them ourselves if they are common items that we should have thought to provide – or items that would likely be useful in the future. To the extent possible, you should anticipate and communicate your tool and equipment needs, in particular specialized items, well in advance of the residency so that these requests can be discussed/coordinated and the items, if approved, acquired. If your project requires the purchase of specialized tools, you would need to purchase them out of your $2,000 fee.

What sites will be available for the program? I-Park intends to mark out a looping trail on which the installations will be sited. The trail will offer a variety of environmental features and settings and will be designed to be reasonably accessible for visitors.

How will we get to view these sites? We plan to post some representative photos on the I-Park website prior to the application deadline. You may also be interested in viewing some of the videos posted on The Land page of the website, with the understanding that not all sites appearing here will be available. You are also welcome to visit I-Park, though you will need to call ahead to make arrangements. For program participants, there will also be an intensive site walk on the first full day of the residency that will involve a presentation of the full range of options.
How will it finally be decided which artists get assigned to which spaces? We will attempt to accommodate artists’ preferences to the fullest extent possible. You are welcome to indicate generic preferences in your application form and during the period before the residency session begins. However, no firm commitments will be made until after the initial site walk is done with all artists present. Final site assignments will be at the sole discretion of the Project Manager.

How long do you expect the installations to survive and do you intend to maintain them? When will they be removed? We are expecting that they will survive at least through the autumn of 2013, if not into the spring of 2014. However the only firm requirement is that they be in good presentation form for the Biennale. In any event, we are not looking to you to create permanent installations on the land and we have an internal guideline that in March, we do a major round of de-installations. Any post-Biennale maintenance will be performed only with the artist’s permission. In deference to the integrity of the artist’s vision, I-Park commits that it will not modify or re-locate any installation without the artist’s express permission.

Can we expect to be working in a raw, natural environment or will some preparation of the sites be done in advance? I-Park will mainly be responsible for delineating and preparing the trail(s). If there are fallen trees or major obstructions in your proposed location, we can remove them. Small scale, fussy-type grooming and cleanup is the artist’s responsibility. However, we may have volunteers available who would be willing to help with that sort of thing.

How much physical and mechanical assistance can I expect? What about running around for materials and supplies? We are prepared to offer occasional assistance at times when you need an extra pair of hands, a lift or technical advice. However, we do not provide long-term or ongoing support. It may be that, with advance discussion, we can coordinate with volunteers for longer-term assistance, but we would not want to be responsible for the quality or reliability of this type of labor. As for running around, we expect to be doing a fair amount of that in the first week of the residency, though we hope to get as much input as possible in advance so we can have things ready before your arrival. At that, we will want to coordinate and consolidate requests to minimize waste and inefficiency. After the first few days, we will likely be looking to venture off site, at most, every other day.

Are there any limitations on the types of materials that can be used? How extensively can we disturb the grounds (e.g., tree-cutting, excavations)? It would be difficult to predict all the possibilities but, in general, you may use whatever materials you choose, taking into account safety and environmental sensitivity. We would suggest that if you think you’re going to be proposing a project that will require a major disturbance of the land, or is otherwise unusual or physically risky in the execution, that you communicate with us as soon as possible so we can consider it carefully and give you a wise decision. The use of cut saplings, some brush and tree removal and minor excavations are generally permitted.
What are the living conditions like at I-Park?
You will be assigned sleeping quarters either in the main residency facility or in one of the private artists’ studios. This is the only way we can accommodate all the participants. We will use our best judgment in terms of making these arrangements. We provide bedding, towels, laundry facilities, internet access and a small library. If you would like more details on life at I-Park, you are welcome to read the FAQ for the General Residency Program (July and August participants in particular may find this information helpful). However, for the Environmental Art Program, the rules are somewhat relaxed, some of the artists’ support services are modified and there will be less emphasis on social functions. If there is a conflict between what is described in the FAQ for the General Residency Program and information provided here and on the website relating to the Environmental Art Program, it is the latter that will pertain.

Will there be workshop and/or studio spaces available?
Although artists will not, except in unusual circumstances, be assigned private studio spaces, we will set-up and make available some studios as shared workshop spaces. One of the barns will also be outfitted as a general workshop. If the need arises, we are prepared to set up one or more tents/canopies to create temporary work spaces on the land.

What is the situation with respect to meals?
On Monday through Friday, we will provide the ingredients for a continental breakfast and for a lunch that will generally consist of sandwiches, salads, soups or other light fare – available on a help-yourself basis. Artists are welcome to come in at their convenience and eat at the house or take their food out to the site. A sit down meal will be prepared at the end of the day. To the extent practical, we will take into consideration dietary restrictions and preferences. We are, for example, prepared to accommodate requests for vegetarian meals. However, if you have more exotic dietary restrictions, you may need to purchase and/or prepare your own dishes, though we will make reasonable efforts to assist you. Please make us aware of your health and dietary circumstances well in advance of the residency so we can discuss. For Saturdays and Sundays, you will be responsible for your own meal preparation and cleanup. We will stock the refrigerators and pantries with food supplies, including the week’s leftovers, so there will be an ample reserve. I-Park provides the above meal plan (common food) at no cost to the participants. Those who would prefer something different than, or in addition to, these offerings will need to purchase their own provisions at their own expense. We will make one weekly trip to the grocery store and you are welcome to come along and do personal shopping. Note that this is the meal program as we presently envision it. The plan will be reviewed and fine-tuned approximately 60 days prior to the start of the residency. If there are significant changes (not likely), you will be advised.

Am I permitted to invite guests during the residency?
Certainly guests are most welcome at the Biennale – the more the merrier. Short, day-time visits during the course of the residency are generally permitted. However, in that we are very protective of the privacy and security of our residents, and since the facility will be at full capacity, overnight guests are not allowed.
Are there any restrictions on previous residents of I-Park applying for this program? Artists who participated in the Environmental Art Program in 2011 are not eligible for the 2013 program. These artists will, however, presumably be eligible to participate in the next Biennale (tentatively, in 2015). Artists participating in the General Residency Program in 2013 are also not eligible for the Environmental Art Program. While you may apply to both programs in 2013, you can only participate in one. If you happen to be selected to participate in both programs, you will need to choose one or the other.

Am I able to apply as part of a collaborative group? You may submit a group application but be aware that the artist’s fee will need to be shared among all the participants – and only one travel reimbursement will be granted. The team leader will fill out the application form with his/her personal information as we will need to have a single point of contact and one person with whom to coordinate the financial arrangements. Note that, due to limited lodging facilities, collaborative team members might need to bunk together and/or accept ‘alternative’ lodging arrangements on or off site. Also, I-Park does not have the capacity to accommodate collaborating teams within the July and August residency sessions.

What are the financial arrangements for the participants? I-Park will remit $2,000 to each participant or, in the case of a collaborating team, to the team leader. This will serve as the artist’s fee – but you will also need to pay for any of the material needs for your project out of this sum. Transportation costs to and from the facility will be reimbursed up to a total of (not to exceed) $600 for those travelling from a destination in North America and up to $1,200 for those international artists travelling from elsewhere. These amounts are based on the most economical means of transport available and based on the artist’s primary home address or his or her most recent temporary address just prior to the residency. The travel reimbursement is meant to cover the cost of getting you to I-Park at the beginning of the residency and to return you to your original point of embarkation at the end. Any other travel costs are not reimbursable. All payments will be denominated in U.S. dollars.

When will the payments to the artists be made? I-Park will issue you a payment of $1,000 against your artist’s fee during the first week of the residency, subject to your completion of the tax form required by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The balance will be paid prior to departure. Reimbursement of travel expenditures will also be made during the first week of the residency to the extent that you have submitted verifiable receipts. If receipts are turned in late, any additional monies due will be transmitted to you post-residency by the most economical means. In the unlikely event that there are serious concerns about the viability or durability of your installation, a percentage of the artist’s fee may be retained pending completion of your piece. But if such ‘retainage’ is in fact required, it will discussed and mutually agreed to well in advance so there will be no surprises.
Will there be a written agreement associated with the program?
Yes, the agreement defines the artist’s obligations as well as the obligations of I-Park. The office can send you a copy of the agreement form from 2011 if you would like to review it prior to making your application. The 2013 agreement will be similar in nature.

Besides creating an original piece for the Biennale, what other responsibilities will I have?
Of course, the staff would appreciate your respect and cooperation, your adherence to our policies and as much advance planning and discussion as possible so that our support can be as organized, efficient and pleasantly delivered as possible. We will look to you for gentle treatment of the facility and considerate regard for the I-Park grounds. We will expect that you bring with you a mature and flexible frame of mind. Although we will do everything within reason to support you in executing your installation just as you imagine it, there may be the need, for any number of reasons (site/safety/environmental constraints, lack of time or resources, etc.) for you to reduce the scale, or otherwise modify the implementation, of your plan. You should, in other words, have a Plan B or maybe even a Plan C available to you. We do expect that you will cooperate and participate as requested in the documentation of the program (video, audio, photos). We will ask that you complete our short questionnaire at the end of your residency and that you share your photo, audio and video files with us (as we will share ours with you) at the end of the residency. Finally, we request that, whenever practical, you credit the I-Park Foundation in future presentations of the work product you created for the Biennale.

Will there be communications with the invited artists prior to the start of the residency?
Yes, several updates will be sent to the invitees and there will be at least one one-on-one phone conversation prior to the start of the residency session. Of course, the office will be available at all times to field inquiries. There will also be an in-depth orientation at the beginning of the residency.

Who at I-Park should I contact if I have questions about the program at this time?
You should direct your inquiries to Amanda Baker, Residency Program Manager (iparkapplications@gmail.com or 860-873-2468).