Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is situated on the site of one of the most significant cultural events of the 1960s—the Woodstock Music and Art Fair. We take our responsibility as stewards of this historic place very seriously, and in 2014 we commissioned a report to document the site and to recommend steps that we could take to better preserve and interpret the site for our guests.

Landscape historians and architects Heritage Landscapes produced an enlightening and detailed Cultural Landscape Report, which was accepted by the Bethel Woods Board of Trustees at their summer 2015 meeting. This CLR describes the natural and human-made features of the landscape in 1969 and the present. The landscape today remains remarkably similar to its historic condition, and the report makes 21 concrete recommendations for how the site can be better preserved, better interpreted, and made more authentic.

This isn't about restoring the site to the way it looked during the Woodstock festival; we have no plans to reconstruct the stage and other elements of the festival. The recommendations ARE, however, aimed at making the landscape easier to "read" and providing modern means of communicating what happened here and improving the guest experience on the historic site.
The first phase of projects to address the recommendations of the Cultural Landscape Report have already begun. Our grounds staff is developing a plan to monitor and protect selected “witness trees” that were significant trees that already had stories to tell during the Woodstock festival and are still here to give context to the event. One tree in particular, which is known as the Information Tree, stands at the corner of West Shore Road and Hurd Road. It was a prominent landmark for attendees of Woodstock, and despite its old age and failing health is still a stately witness to the festival. Steps are being taken to see that an offspring of that old tree will one day grow in its place, continuing the stories it has to tell.

Another immediate step we are taking as a result of the Cultural Landscape Report is to determine specific Zones of Protection on the site. These areas, ranked at three levels of significance, will guide Bethel Woods well into the future, identifying areas of the site where future construction or development should or should not take place for the sake of preserving our irreplaceable historic resource.

In Fall 2016, a number of additional phase one projects are planned to commence, pending adequate grant and donor-supported funding. These projects include developing geo-located, hand-held interpretation of locations on the site, improving sight lines at the Monument, developing trails in the Bindy Bazaar woods, marking the locations of historic stage, towers, and other structures, and seeking official historic designation for the site.

Join us in creating a world-class historic destination that is worthy of the legacy of the Woodstock festival. Ask at the Box Office for information on how you can support these important preservation projects.