



Figure 1 - Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.

As Landscape Architects in Nevada, we are charged with protecting the public's **health, safety and welfare**. It is easy enough to define what the meaning of health and safety is, but what really is meant by the term **welfare**?

The Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB) re-defined welfare in a 2011 report as **"A fusion of the concepts of public realm and well being"**. The Nevada State Board members recently compared our individual definitions for welfare. The definition that came to my mind was related to a recent trip my wife and I took to the Redwoods National Park in California. The towering trees, trickling creeks and the total silence of the forest is a place we enjoy to cleanse our minds and souls. As we were hiking the Browns Creek Trail, there in the middle of a very large redwood grove in Prairie Creek State Park was a sign with the name Frederick Law Olmsted. As I found out later the grove was actually dedicated in 1953 to Olmsted Jr. for his 29 year effort in working with and leading the "Save the Redwoods League". Olmsted Jr's greatest strength was his ability to both restore and preserve public lands, including the Redwoods. His was a very long and tough battle with logging interests - of the original 2 million acres of old growth forest over 90% was cut by the time Redwoods National Park was dedicated in 1968. Like his father, Olmsted Jr. saw parks as having great potential to serve the public. He believed that "These wild, scenic places could be deep wells of **inspiration** and **well-being**, and that access to them would help all Americans realize our constitutional right to the **pursuit of happiness**".

What a **great definition of the public's welfare**, and one we can all relate to!

The parks and open spaces that most of us work to enhance, preserve and protect are not nearly as large as a national and state park, but even smaller public spaces can help transform thought, inspire and clear one's mind. The term **welfare** may be more difficult to define than **health or safety**, but it is certainly just as important in protecting the public and their interests.

Dale Doerr, Past President – Nevada State Board of Landscape Architects