



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

**Statement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Fiscal Year 2014 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
April 17, 2013**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2014 appropriations. My name is Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr. and I am the Vice President for Government Relations and Policy. The National Trust is a privately-funded nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949. We work to save America's historic places to enrich our future. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., 13 field offices, 27 historic sites, 746,000 members and supporters and partner organizations in 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust works to save America's historic places and advocates for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

The nation faces a challenging fiscal environment. The National Trust recognizes there is a need for fiscal restraint and cost-effective federal investments. However, we do not believe that preservation, conservation and recreation programs should suffer from disproportionate funding reductions. We look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, as you address the ongoing needs for investments to sustain our nation's rich heritage of cultural and historic resources that generate lasting economic vitality for communities throughout the nation.

Historic Preservation Fund

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is the principal source of funding to implement the nation's historic preservation programs. Like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, its dedicated revenues are generated from oil and gas development on the Continental Shelf.

The National Park Service distributes HPF grants that are matched by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs). Inadequate HPF funding limits support for preservation activities such as survey, inventory, public education, and project review for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC), State and Tribal Historic Preservation Plans, and the National Register of Historic Places. The HTC is the most significant federal investment in historic preservation. It has catalyzed the rehabilitation of more than 38,700 buildings throughout the nation. Since its creation more than 30 years ago, the HTC has created 2.3 million jobs and leveraged nearly \$106 billion in private investment.

The National Trust and its preservation partners recommend at least \$62.985 million for the Historic Preservation Fund, including \$50 million for the SHPOs and \$10 million for the THPOs. Such a modest increase in funding would recognize the continuing demand upon these agencies for preservation services, including an increase in participation among THPOs from 131 tribes in FY12 to an estimated 150 tribes in FY14.

We enthusiastically endorse the Administration's request for \$3,000,000 for competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks associated with communities currently underrepresented. Recent

studies have documented that fewer than 5% of such listings identify culturally diverse properties. This program would correct the underrepresentation of all the nation's stories.

We also look forward to working with the Committee to restore funding for competitive grant programs that protect our nation's most significant cultural artifacts and historic structures. The Save America's Treasures program, for example, had been one of the largest and most successful grant programs to preserve endangered and irreplaceable cultural heritage before funding was eliminated in the fiscal year 2011 budget.

National Park Service: Operation of the National Park System, Cultural Resources Stewardship

We appreciate the Administration's slight increase to this program over FY12 enacted levels. Three-quarters of the 401 units of the National Park System were created to protect our most important historic and cultural resources. Over the past two decades, the National Park Service (NPS) has added over 35 new parks, 8 of them during this Administration, which are predominantly cultural and historical in value. However, funding for cultural resources stewardship has not receiving support commensurate with natural resources stewardship. During the FY10 budget hearings, then Acting NPS Director Dan Wenk stated that NPS had been neglectful of cultural resources. A report of the National Academy of Public Administration found that during the FY99 – FY06 period the NPS bolstered stewardship of natural resources by an additional \$77.5 million. However, during this same period, funding for park cultural programs *decreased* by 28 percent. Since the release of the NAPA report we have seen no significant effort by NPS to create funding parity between natural and cultural resources in the Park Base Operations Funding. And, although the FY13 budget requested an increase in natural resources stewardship, there was a reduction proposed for cultural resources. We look forward to working with the Committee to sustain an increase in funding for this program.

National Park Service: Facility Operations & Maintenance

Of the nearly \$11 billion deferred maintenance needed for NPS, \$3 billion is for the 27,000 properties in National Park units listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to a report issued by the National Academy of Public Administration, *Saving Our History: A Review of National Park Cultural Resource Program (2008)*, more than 40 percent of historic buildings and structures in our national parks are in fair or poor condition. Without funding, the condition of these properties will continue to deteriorate and become more expensive to repair and preserve in the future. Therefore, we recommend the Committee provide funding at the FY12 enacted level. The National Trust is conducting fundraising efforts to address the gap – most recently and successfully at White Grass Dude Ranch in Grand Teton National Park – but private money must be matched by federal money. Continued loss of federal maintenance money will reduce the opportunity to raise private funds for the preservation of these important structures.

We are concerned that any reduction in the line-item Construction account, most of which funds new construction, not adversely impact important rehabilitation of historic structures.

National Park Service: Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks

We appreciate the Committee's inclusion of language in the FY12 Conference report recognizing that historic leases provide a cost-effective and innovative solution to mitigate the maintenance backlog of historic structures. We are working with the NPS and private partners to successfully implement such leases and bring private investment to rehabilitation expenses. Further encouragement by the Committee to expand the use of historic leases could help catalyze broader use of this important authority.

One promising new and cost-effective opportunity for the NPS and other federal agencies with historic preservation responsibilities to address the backlog of historic maintenance in the parks is through the recently signed MOU establishing a new cooperative among NPS, the other federal land agencies, and several NGOs, including the Student Conservation Association and The Corps Network. College interns, trade school students, and out of work youth and veterans would be trained in the preservation skills necessary to perform preservation work in the parks and other federal lands.

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas

We recommend funding for National Heritage Areas (NHAs) at the FY12 enacted level or higher. The Administration's repeated proposals to reduce NHA funding, justified as "encouraging self-sufficiency," would severely impair the sustainability of the program and the individual NHAs that Congress has established. A recent NPS study found "without funding to replace the NPS investment, few NHAs are expected to survive longer than a few years." NPS Northeast Region, *Report of Impacts and Operation Strategy for Sunsetting National Heritage Areas (2012)*.

During these challenging economic times, every program that receives federal funding needs to justify its worth and deliver substantial benefits to the American public. NHAs more than meet this test. In its 2013 report, the Alliance of National Heritage Areas noted that since the program was created in 1984, the economic activity generated through NHA's supports approximately 148,000 jobs and \$1.2 billion annually in federal taxes. The economic benefits of NHA's are realized through tourism and visitation, operational expenditures, and issuing grants and support. NHAs on average leverage every federal dollar into \$5.50 of additional public and private investment.

Bureau of Land Management: National Landscape Conservation System

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) includes 27 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated lands, including National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The National Conservation Lands protect some of our country's most significant historical and cultural resources, yet the BLM's ability to steward these resources is undermined by insufficient funding, averaging \$59.6 million, or just \$2.20 per acre. The National Conservation Lands are just one-tenth of BLM managed lands but they host one-third of all BLM's visitors. This high visitation rate has resulted in increased needs to protect and steward historic and archaeological sites from looting and reckless off-road vehicle use. Without sufficient funding, the BLM also struggles to complete essential resource protection, such as signing trails, closing illegal and unnecessary routes, and inventorying and protecting cultural sites.

We support the Administration's FY14 request, a \$6 million increase, in order to prevent critical damage to the resources found in these areas, ensure proper management and provide for a quality visitor experience. This funding level would enable BLM to hire essential management and law enforcement staff, monitor and protect natural and cultural resources, close unauthorized routes that fragment fragile ecosystems, and undertake needed ecosystem and species restoration projects.

Bureau of Land Management: Cultural Resources Management

We support the Administration's FY14 request of \$16.329 million for this account, a slight increase over FY12 enacted levels. The BLM oversees the largest, most diverse, and scientifically

most important body of cultural resources of any federal land managing agency, including 21 National Historical Landmarks, 5 World Heritage Sites, and more than 263,000 documented cultural properties. However, BLM receives the least amount of cultural resources money per acre of any federal agency. In the 34 years since the enactment of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act only 9 percent of the land managed by the BLM has been surveyed for cultural resources. Understanding the location and significance of cultural resources on BLM land creates greater certainty in decision making about land uses including energy development, recreation, and resource protection. Proactive survey for cultural resources is also required under the National Historic Preservation Act. A long term goal of surveying 20 percent of BLM land would be a significant step towards helping our nation efficiently and cost effectively develop energy resources on our public lands.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The National Trust supports robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Many of the nation's most significant historic and cultural landscapes have been permanently protected through LWCF investments, including the Flight 93 National Memorial, Minidoka National Historic Site, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Gettysburg National Military Park, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. We strongly support the Administration's FY13 request for NPS Civil War Sesquicentennial Units and American Battlefield Protection Program Grants.

U.S. Forest Service, Recreation Heritage and Wilderness: Heritage Program

Forest Service lands contain an estimated 2 million cultural resource sites, including 27 National Historic Landmarks, 325,000 identified cultural resource sites and its first national monument designated primarily for its world-class cultural resources. The Forest Service has updated their performance measures that will now track the management of the entire program through seven new indicators instead of tracking individual assets. This will standardize the program and ensure program staff are working toward a common goal of promoting efficient and effective management of all heritage resources. As these new standards are implemented, we request the Forest Service integrate a needs assessment for bringing their assets to standard. To further understand the successes and needs of the program we request an annual reporting to Congress of the allocations, expenditures and accomplishments of the program by Region and National Forest levels within 12 months of the close of the fiscal year. Providing Congress and the public with a clear understanding of the fiscal needs for USFS heritage assets will assist potential partners determine where they can best engage with federal managers for the benefit of these irreplaceable resources.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

The National Trust supports the Administration's requested increase of funding for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). In addition, we suggest the Committee include report language recommending the President appoint a full-time Chairman. Such a recommendation was made by the ACHP membership at its November, 2011 meeting, as did a task force of historic preservation organizations, including the National Trust. We believe a full-time Chairman would enhance the effectiveness of the ACHP.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the National Trust's recommendations for the FY 2014 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.