



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**

Save the past. Enrich the future.

**Statement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Fiscal Year 2015 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
April 10, 2014**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2015 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 Outer 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, nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, public education, and project review for undertakings under the National Historic Preservation Act and for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC). The HTC is the most significant federal investment in historic preservation. It has catalyzed the rehabilitation of more than 39,600 buildings throughout the nation. Since its creation more than 30 years ago, the HTC has created 2.4 million jobs and leveraged nearly \$109 billion in private investment.

The National Trust recommends at least \$50 million for the SHPOs and at least \$11 million for the THPOs. Such a modest increase in funding would recognize the continuing demand upon these agencies for preservation services, and addresses an increase in participation among THPOs from 131 tribes in FY12 to potentially 156 tribes in FY15.

We thank the Committee for including \$500,000 in the FY14 Omnibus bill to launch an important new program of competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties associated with communities currently underrepresented in the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks. Recent studies have documented that less than 8% of

such listings identify culturally diverse properties. We urge the Committee to provide up to \$5 million to expand this important new program that promises to identify and protect the places that tell the stories of all Americans.

We also want to call attention to the importance of the Administration's request for \$6 million to provide grants to SHPOs and THPOs to digitize legacy survey data into an online National Inventory. This investment would improve access to historic property records and help expedite federal permitting of important infrastructure projects. We encourage the committee to support this program included in the President's Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative.

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

The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for 401 units of the National Park System ranging from the battlefields where our ancestors fought and died to places that stir the soul like the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, the gateway for millions of new Americans. Three-quarters of our parks were created to protect our most important historic and cultural resources. Over the past two decades, more than 35 new parks have been added to our system of national parks. Many of these new parks preserve historic places and themes that are underrepresented within the National Park System.

We support the President's Budget proposal of \$47 million above the FY14 enacted level for National Park Service Operations. Of that increase, \$30 million is for the Administration's Centennial Initiative which includes \$16 million for repair and rehabilitation projects, \$8 million for a new program to hire youth and veterans at parks, \$4 million to engage youth in service and conservation projects and \$2 million to support expanded volunteer opportunities at parks. The increase would fund the staff, rangers and interpretation vital to the public who visit and enjoy our ever-growing national park system including new units like Fort Monroe National Monument (VA), Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument (MD) and Cesar E. Chavez National Monument (CA).

Construction: Of the nearly \$12.311 billion in deferred maintenance needed for the NPS, \$4.5 billion is for the maintenance backlog on 27,000 properties in National Park units listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to a report issued in 2008 by the National Academy of Public Administration, 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. The National Park Service Construction account has been significantly reduced over the last few years. We support the President's FY15 request of \$138 million, a slight increase over FY14. We also support the President's request that this fund be used for the repair and stabilization of important historic structures as opposed to new construction.

We are also supportive of the President's proposed mandatory appropriation of \$200 million for the Second Century Infrastructure Investment and \$100 million for the Centennial Challenge. These proposals would provide funds for the maintenance and rehabilitation of significant cultural and historic resources within our national parks.

One promising new opportunity that will help the NPS and other federal agencies with historic preservation responsibilities address the maintenance backlog of historic buildings is through a cooperative agreement between NPS, the other federal land agencies, and several NGOs, including the Student Conservation Association and The Corps Network. Through this agreement, 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. While learning these hands-on skills, participants will also perform cost-effective preservation work to support historic resources.

Engaging the Next Generation

The National Trust supports the Administration's FY15 request of \$50.6 million for the Department's youth programs, a significant increase of \$13.6 million in programs over 2014 enacted funding levels. Of these funds, \$8 million is proposed to expand opportunities for youth education and employment across NPS parks and programs. As part of our commitment to advancing the goals of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, and interest in helping the federal government reduce the maintenance backlog of historic properties, the National Trust recently launched the HOPE (Hands-On Preservation Experience) Crew initiative where we will train youth in preservation skills while helping protect historic sites within NPS units. The first HOPE Crew project, in the Shenandoah National Park in collaboration with concessionaire Delaware North Companies, is rehabilitating the historic Skyland Stable in the Skyline Drive National Historic Landmark District. The National Trust hopes to launch 100 HOPE Crew projects by the NPS Centennial in 2016. Volunteer projects like this can reduce the maintenance backlog while also providing job skills and education for young people.

National Park Service: Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks

We appreciate the Committee's inclusion of report language in the FY14 Conference report applaud the efforts of NPS and private partners to successfully implement such leases and encouraging the broader use of this authority to mitigate the maintenance backlog of historic structures. Continued encouragement and oversight of the Service's actions to implement policy changes that would facilitate more leasing could catalyze even broader use of this important authority and increase the amount of non-federal funding to abate the maintenance backlog.

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas

We recommend funding for National Heritage Areas (NHAs) at the FY14 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. National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis has described National Heritage Areas as "places where small investments pay huge dividends." We agree.

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. A recent report documents that since the program was created in 1984, the economic activity generated through NHAs 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.

As the nation's newest system of protected lands, the National Conservation Lands encompass some of our country's most significant historic and cultural resources, yet the BLM's ability to steward these resources is undermined by insufficient funding. The National Conservation

Lands are just one-tenth of BLM managed lands but they host one-third of all BLM's visitors. Without sufficient funding, the BLM struggles to complete essential resource protection, such as signing trails, inventorying and protecting cultural sites from looting and vandalism.

We support the Administration's FY15 request of \$66.534 million, a \$2 million increase over FY14 enacted, 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 damage fragile cultural sites and undertake needed ecosystem and species restoration projects.

Bureau of Land Management: Cultural Resources Management

The BLM oversees the largest, most diverse and scientifically important collection of historic and cultural resources on our nation's public lands, including 10 million artifacts, 358,000 documented cultural sites, 421 maintained historic structures and 87 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The program provides for the review of 13,000 land use proposals each year, compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and Government-to-Government consultation with Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Governments. In the last decade, this program has lost 19% of its FTEs due to the stagnant budget, yet it is challenged with even greater processing reviews for increased energy use, transmission lines and public recreation. If the funding for this program had kept pace with inflation since FY03 it would receive funding of \$19.1 million instead of the FY14 enacted \$15.1 million. We support the Administration's FY15 request of \$16 million, a modest increase of \$.87 million over FY14 enacted levels of \$15.1 million. The increase provides for \$.13 million for fixed costs and \$.74 million to support efforts to fulfill BLM's statutory requirements for the inventory and protection of cultural resources. The increase would support 40 on-the-ground surveys, site protection and stabilization projects, and regional cultural resource inventory overviews that are necessary for planning large scale infrastructure projects across broad landscapes

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 Gettysburg National Military Park, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. Culturally significant projects in the FY15 request include Ala Kahakai NHT (HI), Rappahannock River NWR (VA), Agua Fria National Historic Trail (AZ) and several other national trails project. We strongly support the Administration's request for Civil War land acquisition projects and American Battlefield Protection Program Grants.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

The National Trust supports the Administration's funding request of \$6.204 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). 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 2015 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.