



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

**Statement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Fiscal Year 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
March 18, 2015**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations. My name is Shaw Sprague and I am the Director of 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.

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, project review required by the National Historic Preservation Act and for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC). The HTC is the largest federal investment in historic preservation. It has catalyzed the rehabilitation of more than 40,300 buildings. Since its creation more than 30 years ago, the HTC has created 2.49 million jobs and leveraged nearly \$117.6 billion in private investment.

The National Trust applauds the Administration's request of \$89.9M for the HPF. Most of the \$33.5M increase is associated with the Civil Rights Initiative, including a new \$30M competitive grants program to document, interpret, and preserve the stories and sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement and the African-American experience, and \$2.5M in grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The request would continue for a third year the \$500,000 competitive grants program 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.

The request also includes a much needed increase of \$1M over FY15 enacted for THPOs. This modest increase in funding would address an increase in participation among THPOs from 154 tribes in FY15 to potentially 160 tribes in FY16. We were disappointed that the Administration

did not request any funding increase to the SHPOs. We urge the Committee to provide the much needed increases for SHPOs and THPOs to provide their essential preservation services.

National Park Service: Civil Rights Initiative. The National Trust strongly supports President Obama's \$50 million Civil Rights Initiative in this 50th anniversary year of the Voting Rights Act. In addition to the new competitive grant programs funded through the HPF, the request includes \$17.5M in funding for sites within the National Park System, including the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.

National Park Service: Operation of the National Park System and Cultural Resources Stewardship. The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for 407 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 20 years, more than 40 new parks have been added to the park system, many of which preserve historic places and themes that have been underrepresented within the system.

We support the President's Budget proposal of \$239 million above the FY15 enacted level for National Park Service Operations. The increase includes several Centennial Initiative requests of great importance to the preservation community, including increases of \$66.7M for repair and rehabilitation projects, \$64M for cyclic maintenance, \$13.5M for new responsibilities and critical needs, \$5.5M for the documentation and preservation of Civil Rights history in the National Park System and \$3M for the Cultural Resource Challenge.

Repair and Rehabilitation. The Repair and Rehabilitation Program is a part of the overall service wide deferred maintenance strategy that directs funds to high priority mission critical and mission dependent assets with deferred maintenance projects less than \$1 million. Approximately \$4.5 billion of the overall deferred maintenance backlog is for the 27,000 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places within National Park units. The deferred maintenance backlog on these properties is the result of cyclic maintenance not being performed in a timely manner.

Cyclic Maintenance. Investing in cyclic maintenance required to maintain historic structures is essential to abate the continued growth of the deferred maintenance backlog. The kind of projects addressed by cyclic maintenance funding includes roofing of buildings, re-pointing masonry walls, painting, sealing and stabilizing archaeological sites.

Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks. In recent years, the Committee has repeatedly included report language encouraging the NPS to utilize leases as a means to mitigate the maintenance backlog of historic structures. The Service is slow to implement the policy changes necessary to facilitate more leasing and catalyze even broader use of this important authority. We recommend that the Committee request the NPS to report on its actions to expand this public-private approach to bring private investment into the parks.

Visitor Services: New Responsibilities and Critical Needs. We support the requested \$13.5 million increase to support the operations of newly established units of the National Park System including the recently established Pullman National Monument in Illinois and Honouliuli National Monument in Hawaii. The requested increase would also support the

critical operating needs of parks with Civil Rights stories, including the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site.

Visitor Services: Increase Volunteer Capacity and Engaging the Next Generation

We support the Administration's \$2M request to increase increased volunteer capacity through partner organizations. In conjunction with funding enacted in the FY15, this would fund increased partnership opportunities with conservation corps to support an additional 70 volunteer coordinator positions, for a total of 140 positions.

As part of our commitment to advancing the goals of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, and assist the NPS reduce the maintenance backlog of historic properties, the National Trust launched the HOPE (Hands-On Preservation Experience) Crew initiative in 2014 to train young adults in preservation skills while helping protect and restore historic sites. Youth and veterans are trained in the preservation skills necessary to perform preservation work in the parks and other federal lands through a cooperative agreement between the NPS, other federal land management agencies, and several NGOs including the Student Conservation Association and The Corps Network. In the first year, nearly 100 Corpsmembers spent 20,000 hours completing 15 projects, including rehabilitation of properties at Shenandoah National Park, LBJ National Historical Park, FDR National Historical Site and Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument. Projects like this can reduce the maintenance backlog while also providing job skills and education for the next generation of stewards of America's most important historic sites.

National Park Service: Construction. We support the requested increase of \$91M over FY15 enacted for the Line Item Construction program. This account addresses the deferred maintenance for the NPS' highest priority non-transportation assets with projects larger than \$1M. 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. Of the 6,735 highest priority non-transportation assets approximately 4,000 have deferred maintenance needs. Examples of these needs include critical health and safety issues in the lobby of the Many Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park; the rehabilitation of historic cottages, and reroofing Ebenezer Church and seven historic houses at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site; and the rehabilitation of the Lincoln Memorial to provide accessible spaces, restrooms and pathways.

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas. We recommend funding for National Heritage Areas (NHAs) at the FY15 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 most likely have the exact opposite effect by rendering many NHAs not self-sufficient, but rather unable to function. National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis has described National Heritage Areas as "places where small investments pay huge dividends." We agree.

National Park Service: Centennial Challenge

We support the \$10M Centennial Challenge to provide dedicated federal funding to match donations for signature National Park Service projects and programs. This funding will allow the NPS to leverage private contributions to enhance visitor services and improve cultural and natural resources across the parks in the Service.

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 as well as the museum collections and data

associated with them, including 10 million artifacts and specimens, 366,232 documented cultural sites, 3,965 monitored archaeological sites, 431 maintained historic structures and 108 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This program funds National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 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. Since FY03 this program has lost 19 FTEs while the demand for Section 106 compliance has remained even or increased. The loss of personnel has diminished the BLM's ability to review land proposals like transmission lines, energy development and recreation permits.

We support the Administration's FY16 request of \$17.2M, a modest increase of \$2.075M above FY15 enacted. The increased support is necessary to fulfill BLM's statutory requirements for Section 106 reviews of land use proposals, and NHPA's Section 110 requirements for inventory and protection cultural resources. The increase would support 60 on-the-ground surveys of sensitive areas, site protection and stabilization projects for priority sites vulnerable to unauthorized activities and damage due to fire, erosion and changing water levels. Projects will also update predictive modeling and data analysis to enhance the BLM's ability to address large-scale, cross jurisdictional land-use projects.

Bureau of Land Management: National Landscape Conservation System. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) includes 30 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 FY16 request of \$81.079 million, a \$11.181 million increase over FY15 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.

Land and Water Conservation Fund. 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 Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. Culturally significant projects in the FY16 request include Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park (VA), Pecos National Historical Park (NM), Gettysburg National Military Park (PA) and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (DC/DE/MD/VA). We strongly support the Administration's request for the American Battlefield Protection Program Grants.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the National Trust's recommendations for the FY 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.