



National Trust *for*
Historic Preservation

Save the past. Enrich the future.

**Statement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Tom Cassidy, Vice President for Government Relations and Policy
Fiscal Year 2020 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
February 26, 2019**

Chair McCollum, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations. My name is Tom Cassidy and I am the Vice President 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.

We look forward to working with this Subcommittee as you address the ongoing needs for investments to sustain our nation's rich heritage of cultural and historic resources that also generate lasting economic and civic vitality for communities throughout the nation.

National Park Service: Historic Preservation Fund. The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is the principal source of funding to implement the nation's historic preservation programs. The National Trust is enormously appreciative of the strong funding levels the Committee has provided in recent years, including FY 2019's \$102.66 million, the highest level of HPF funding in history. HPF funding supports fundamental preservation activities such as survey, nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, public education, as well as project review required the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC) projects.

We request that Congress provide a total FY 2020 HPF appropriation of \$148.5 million. Within that funding we recommend:

- \$60 million for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs);
- \$20 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs);
- \$5 million for a competitive grant program for SHPOs and THPOs to invest in geographic information systems-based mapping and digitization of historic resources – this would bring 21st century technology to the identification of historic resources at the very earliest stages of project planning leading both to protection of historic sites and promoting more efficient delivery of infrastructure projects;
- \$30 million for competitive grants to preserve the sites and stories of efforts to advance civil rights of underrepresented communities, \$20 million of which is to preserve the sites and stories of the African American Civil Rights movement – this will ensure grants to preserve the sites and stories of civil rights for *all* Americans;
- \$10 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings;
- \$15 million for Save America's Treasures grants;
- \$7.5 million for preservation grants to revitalize historic properties of national, state, and local significance;
- \$1 million for competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties associated with communities currently underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks.

National Park Service: Operation of the National Park System. The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for 418 units of the National Park System ranging from the

battlefields where our ancestors fought and died to recent additions like the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and the Reconstruction Era National Monument. Over the past 25 years, more than 50 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 encourage the Committee to provide at least level funding of \$2.5 billion from FY 2019 to maintain stewardship of historic and cultural resources and prevent reductions in visitor services at a time when our national parks are more popular than ever. Within this funding, we recommend robust funding for Resource Stewardship, including \$1 million for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, \$2 million for the recently established African American Civil Rights Network, and \$2 million for the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network included in the Natural Resources Management Act (S. 47) currently pending in the House.

National Park Service: Deferred Maintenance. The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for maintaining a system comprised of more than 84 million acres that tells the stories of remarkable people and events in our country's history. Unfortunately, after 100 years of operation and inconsistent public funding, the National Park System faces a deferred maintenance backlog estimated at nearly \$12 billion, of which 47% is attributed to historic assets. Deferred maintenance in our national parks puts historic and cultural sites at risk of permanent damage or loss, and in the absence of funding, the condition of these assets will continue to deteriorate and become more expensive to repair and preserve in the future.

- **Construction.** We recommend at least \$160 million for Line Item Construction projects that address the deferred maintenance for the NPS' highest priority non-transportation assets with projects greater than \$1 million.
- **Repair and Rehabilitation; Cyclic Maintenance.** We are enormously appreciative of the Committee's commitment to enhancing these accounts with significant investments since FY 2016; it is making a significant impact on addressing the long-term maintenance needs of the parks. We recommend a continuation of these impactful investments with \$150 million for Repair and Rehabilitation, an increase of \$14 million above FY 2019 enacted and \$166 million for Cyclic Maintenance, an increase of \$15 million above FY 2019 enacted.
- **Dedicated Funding for Deferred Maintenance:** We strongly support the creation of a reliable, dedicated federal funding source distinct from annual appropriations to address the deferred maintenance backlog, as provided in the bipartisan Restore Our Parks Act (S. 500) introduced in the Senate and the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act (H.R. 1225) introduced in the House. We are grateful for the introduction of H.R. 1225 by Representatives Kilmer and Bishop, and the co-sponsorship of the Chair and Representatives Pingree, Simpson, Stewart and Amodei.
- **Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks.** We appreciate the Committees' strong support of expanded use of historic leasing authorities by the NPS. Leasing is a well-established tool that can bring non-federal resources to the rehabilitation and use of under-utilized or abandoned buildings within the parks. I testified at a Natural Resources Committee field hearing on this topic in Hot Springs, AR last September. We are hopeful that the Administration will give greater priority to this important issue this year.
- **Volunteerism:** The National Trust recognizes that direct federal funding is insufficient to provide all the resources necessary to maintain the parks. As part of our commitment to assist the NPS with reducing the maintenance backlog of historic properties, the National Trust launched the HOPE Crew (which stands for the Hands-On Preservation Experience)

initiative in 2014. The HOPE Crew program has trained over 700 young people and veterans and engaged 3,000 volunteers at over 150 projects nationwide, completing 120,000 hours and helping to support \$18 million in preservation work. This work includes rehabilitating structures at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Shenandoah National Park. Projects like these help to reduce the maintenance backlog while providing job skills and education for the next generation of stewards of America's most important historic sites.

National Park Service: Cultural Programs

Within its cultural programs, the NPS manages the National Register of Historic Places certifies federal Historic Tax Credit projects, coordinates federal archaeology programs, and provides funding through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Grants, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants, and American Battlefield Protection Program Assistance Grants. The National Trust recommends \$28 million in FY 2020, an increase of about \$2.5 million from FY 2019. Increased funding will enhance preservation of and access to the National Register, including modernizing its information system. It will also support sustained demands to review and approve federal historic tax credits.

National Park Service: International Park Affairs, Office of International Affairs.

The National Trust recommends \$1.5 million for the Office of International Affairs to ensure engagement in the World Heritage Program and support the dozens of communities and sites across the country seeking nomination to the World Heritage List. This would be a \$528,000 increase above the FY 2018 enacted level. The Office of International Affairs is responsible for selecting sites for the World Heritage Tentative List and shepherding them through the detailed nomination process. Examples of pending sites include Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (Ohio) and Civil Rights Movement Sites (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi). We oppose the Administration's past proposal to shift the Southwest Border Resource Protection Program into the Office of International Affairs, which would drastically reduce overall program funding.

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas. We recommend \$32 million for the Heritage Partnership Program and National Heritage Areas (NHAs). This funding supports commissions and grants to the 49 individual NHAs, as well as administrative support for coordination, guidance, assistance, and training. According to the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, enhanced funding of \$32 million will ensure that current areas can continue their work.

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. The cultural resources program also supports NHPA Section 106 review of land-use proposals, Section 110 inventory and protection of cultural resources, compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and consultation with Tribes and Alaska Native Governments. We recommend \$20 million, a modest increase of about \$3 million above the FY 2019 enacted level. Increased funding is necessary to fulfill BLM's statutory requirements for inventory and protection of cultural resources. Funding would also support updated predictive modeling and data analysis to enhance the BLM's ability to address large-scale, cross-jurisdictional land-use projects through the implementation and ongoing maintenance of BLM's National Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Data Standard. This collaboration with western SHPOs to manage cultural resource information is a significant and too-often overlooked preservation success story. The CRM Data Standard creates an interstate-level GIS database of historic and cultural resources that can be utilized during high-level planning, including Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements, Resource Management Plans, and

other large-scale analyses and permitting reviews to help avoid conflict and costly permitting delays.

Bureau of Land Management: National Landscape Conservation System. The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) includes 36 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. This includes new additions such as the Bears Ears National Monument. We encourage the Committee to provide \$45 million to the base program for the National Landscape Conservation System, an increase of \$3.6 million above the FY 2018 enacted level. An increase will allow for greater inventory and monitoring of cultural resources, prevent critical damage to the resources found in these areas, ensure proper management, and provide for a quality visitor experience. We also support providing at least level funding for wilderness management and national monument management on Oregon and California Grant Lands.

Department-Wide: Land and Water Conservation Fund. The National Trust supports robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and we encourage the Committee to continue increasing LWCF toward its authorized level of \$900 million. Many of the nation's most significant historic and cultural landscapes have been permanently protected through LWCF investments, including Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Hopewell Culture National Historic Park. In total, more than \$550 million has been invested to acquire historic sites and 137,000 acres in 162 NPS units. Within LWCF funding, we encourage the Committee to provide at least level funding of \$10 million for the American Battlefield Protection Program.

Independent Agencies: National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities. We urge the Committee to provide \$167.5 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). NEA and NEH funding is critical to communities around the country. It has also supported efforts by the National Trust's Historic Sites and others to tell a fuller American story and engage visitors with history in compelling ways. For example, support from the NEA has created programs like Art and Shadows at the Shadows-on-the-Teche in Louisiana, which put regionally-based artists in residence at the site, resulting in programming that attracted new audiences and brought people from around the country to the town's downtown commercial district. NEH support has brought teachers from around the country to learn about history in the places that it was made and to carry those experiences back to their classrooms, including exploring the Constitution at James Madison's Montpelier and discovering the rich, but largely unknown, African American history in the President's neighborhood at Decatur House.

Independent Agencies: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

We recommend \$7 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). In FY 2020, the ACHP will continue to play an important role in efforts to improve the delivery of major infrastructure projects and continue to focus on improving consultation with Indian Tribes to make environmental reviews more efficient and expeditious for infrastructure projects. An increase in funding would enable the ACHP to better address new requirements regarding information technology and cybersecurity and annual government mandated personnel cost increases, which put a strain on the ACHP's budget.

Thank you for considering our testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.