



Statement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Shaw Sprague, Vice President of Government Relations and Policy
Fiscal Year 2023 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
March 10, 2022

Chair Pingree, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittee,

I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for FY 2023 appropriations. My name is Shaw Sprague, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations. The National Trust is a privately funded nonprofit chartered by Congress in 1949. We work to save America's historic places to enrich our future.

While work continues for the FY 2022 omnibus bill, I offer deep gratitude for the robust funding this Subcommittee provided for all historic preservation priorities during the FY 2022 cycle. Thank you for considering recommendations made by the National Trust. We look forward to continuing our work 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. For the fourth year in a row, we have also produced "[The Preservation Budget: Select Preservation Priorities for FY 2023 Appropriations](#)," which includes more information on the programs identified below, including funding levels over time and multiple examples of program success stories.

National Park Service: Historic Preservation Fund. The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is the principal source of funding to implement the nation's preservation programs. The National Trust is enormously appreciative of the six successive historic funding levels the Subcommittee has provided to the HPF, including the just-released FY 2022 level of \$173 million, a remarkable \$29 million increase from enacted FY 2021 levels and \$23 million over the authorized level. We are hopeful this mark will persist through the omnibus process in the coming week.

HPF funding supports fundamental preservation activities such as survey, nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, public education, and project reviews required for federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) projects. Among many highlights, we would like to emphasize the Subcommittee's sustained support for the African American Civil Rights grants program and for the second year its expansion to preserve and highlight sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for All Americans, including women, American Latino, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and LGBTQ Americans. The competitive grant programs within the HPF have seen remarkable and important growth. We continue to recognize that state and Tribal historic preservation offices have significant unmet financial needs.

We respectfully request that Congress provide a total **FY 2023 HPF appropriation of \$200 million**. Within that funding we recommend:

- \$65 million for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs);
- \$34 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs);
- \$24 million for competitive grants to preserve the sites and stories of efforts to advance African American Civil Rights;
- \$5 million for the History of Equal Rights Grants program to preserve the sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for All Americans, including women, American Latino, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and LGBTQ Americans;
- \$12 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings;
- \$35 million for Save America’s Treasures grants;
- \$12 million for Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants; and
- \$3 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 NPS is responsible for 423 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, the Reconstruction Era National Monument, and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Over the past 25 years, more than 50 parks have been added to the System, many of which preserve historic places and themes that have been previously underrepresented.

We encourage the Committee to provide funding above the FY 2022 level of \$3.26 billion to maintain NPS operations, ensure 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, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, the African American Civil Rights Network, and the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network.

National Park Service: Deferred Maintenance. The NPS is responsible for maintaining a system comprised of more than 85 million acres that tell the stories of remarkable people and events in our country's history. Unfortunately, after over 100 years of operation and inconsistent public funding, the NPS faces a multi-million dollar deferred maintenance backlog. 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. We also recommend sustained increases for specific line items to ensure the maintenance backlog continues to decrease.

- **Construction.** We recommend sustained robust funding for Line-Item Construction projects that address the deferred maintenance for the NPS’ highest priority non-transportation assets with project costs 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. We recommend additional increases for Repair and Rehabilitation and for Cyclic Maintenance to adequately ensure routine and emerging needs.

We appreciate the Committee's longstanding and 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. While there has been some progress, we look forward to working with Congress and the NPS to address this ongoing opportunity to bring unused or underperforming buildings into greater public use.

National Park Service: Cultural Programs. Within its cultural programs, the NPS manages the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks, certifies federal HTC 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 greatly appreciates the increases Congress provided in the past three cycles for these programs. Additional increases in this account will enhance modernization of the National Register and support sustained demands to review and approve federal HTC projects.

National Park Service: International Park Affairs, Office of International Affairs. The National Trust recommends \$2.250 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 office 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).

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas. We recommend \$32 million for the Heritage Partnership Program and National Heritage Areas (NHAs). This funding would provide \$500,000 for each of the 55 individual NHAs in 34 states, as well as NPS administrative support for coordination, guidance, assistance, and training.

Bureau of Land Management: Cultural Resources Management. The Bureau of Land Management (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. We deeply appreciate the Committee's commitment to oversight of the Trump Administration's reorganization of the agency. The National Trust and many other organizations are profoundly concerned with the impact of the reorganization and loss of staff within the Cultural Resources Division.

The cultural resources program also supports 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. Moving forward, we recommend \$1 million in dedicated funds for the agency to enhance its National Cultural Resources Information Management System (NCRIMS). This collaboration with state historic preservation offices is one of the nation's most innovative programs to support

predictive modeling and data analysis to enhance planning for large-scale, cross-jurisdictional land-use projects. It is a significant and too-often overlooked preservation success story, and we recommend providing specific funding of \$1 million above enacted.

Bureau of Land Management: National Landscape Conservation System. The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) includes approximately 37 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.

We encourage the Committee to provide **\$78.145 million to the base program for the National Landscape Conservation System.** An increase in funding will allow for greater inventory and monitoring of cultural resources in this growing system, prevent damage to the resources found in these areas, ensure proper management, and provide for a quality visitor experience.

Department-Wide: Land and Water Conservation Fund. The National Trust has long supported robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and we look forward to the Committee's role in implementing full dedicated funding for the LWCF. Many of the nation's most significant historic and cultural places have been permanently protected through LWCF investments. 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 \$20 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 **at least \$201 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.

Independent Agencies: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. We recommend **\$10.5 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).** The increase would enhance the ACHP's performance of its essential roles in ensuring that the nation's historic and cultural resources are protected while also advancing timely delivery of major infrastructure projects and improving consultation with Indian Tribes. The increase would also support the ACHPs efforts to promote enhanced mapping and digitization of cultural resources.

We stand ready to assist the Committee in support of our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Shaw Sprague
Vice President of Government Relations
National Trust for Historic Preservation