



**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 2021 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
February 6, 2020**

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 2021 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.

Thank you for the FY 2020 Interior Appropriations bill -- it was the most preservation friendly appropriations bill in the history of the Republic. 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.

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 historic funding levels the Committee has provided in recent years, including the FY 2020 level of \$118.66 million, a 46% increase from FY 2017 levels. 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 Committee's \$15.5 million appropriation for the successful African American Civil Rights grants program and the new \$2.5 million program 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. And, of course, increased funding for Save America's Treasures.

We request that Congress provide a total FY 2021 HPF appropriation of \$150 million. Within that funding we recommend:

- \$61 million for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs);
- \$22 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs);
- \$20 million for competitive grants to preserve the sites and stories of efforts to advance African American Civil Rights;
- \$8 million for the newly established competitive 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;
- \$10 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings;
- \$18 million for Save America's Treasures grants;
- \$10 million for Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants;
- \$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.

We also recommend the Committee encourage the NPS to work with states and tribes to improve what has become a burdensome apportionment process so that SHPOs and THPOs can more readily and efficiently access funding Congress has allocated for their work.

National Park Service: Operation of the National Park System. The NPS is responsible for 419 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 funding above the \$2.576 billion from FY 2020 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 African American Civil Rights Network, and \$2 million for the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network. We recommend the Committee make some of these funds available for grants to Network sites.

National Park Service: Deferred Maintenance. The 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 over 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 sustained robust funding of at least \$283 million 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 an increase to \$150 million for Repair and Rehabilitation, an increase of \$14 million above FY 2020 enacted and \$166 million for Cyclic Maintenance, an increase of \$12.4 million above FY 2020 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 and Public Lands Act (H.R. 1225) introduced in the House and the Senate's Restore Our Parks Act (S. 500). We are grateful for the introduction of H.R. 1225 by Representatives Kilmer and Bishop, and the co-sponsorship of 39 members of the Appropriations committee.
- **Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks.** We appreciate the Committee's 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. However, the NPS has been slow to advance a successful national leasing program. We would like to work with the Committee to address this ongoing lost opportunity to bring more abandoned buildings to public use.

- **Volunteerism:** As part of our commitment to assist the NPS with reducing its maintenance backlog, the National Trust launched the HOPE (Hands-On Preservation Experience) Crew initiative in 2014. The program has trained over 750 young people and veterans and engaged 3,700 volunteers at over 175 projects nationwide, helping to support more than \$18 million in preservation work. This work has included projects at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Projects like these help to reduce the maintenance backlog while providing job skills and education for the next generation of stewards of America's historic sites.

National Park Service: Cultural Programs. Within its cultural programs, the NPS manages the National Register of Historic Places, 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 recommends \$32.627 million in FY 2021, an increase of \$1.5 million from FY 2020. We greatly appreciate the increase Congress provided in FY 2020 for grant programs and for grants administration, recognizing the need for additional staffing to effectively administer these programs. A further modest increase 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 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). We appreciate the Committee's rejection of last year's budget proposal to shift the Southwest Border Resource Protection Program into the Office of International Affairs, which would have drastically reduced 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 55 individual NHAs, as well as administrative support for coordination, guidance, assistance, and training.

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. We appreciate the Committee's commitment to ongoing oversight of the Department's reorganization. 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 are very appreciative of last year's dedicated increase of \$1.5 million 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 once again providing specific funding of \$1.5 million above

enacted.

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. In 2019, new congressional designations added approximately 1.25 million acres to our National Conservation Lands. We encourage the Committee to provide \$49.5 million to the base program for the National Landscape Conservation System, an increase of \$5.681 million above the FY 2020 enacted level. 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. We also support at least level funding for wilderness 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 places have been permanently protected through LWCF investments, including Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Dayton Aviation National Historical Park. Recent LWCF funding will benefit historic parks including Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and El Malpais National Monument. 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 \$170 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 \$7.878 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), an increase of \$500,000 over enacted. 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.

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