



**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 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate
April 27, 2018**

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019 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.

The nation faces a challenging fiscal environment. The National Trust recognizes there is a need for fiscal restraint and cost-effective federal investments. However, funding levels proposed in the Administration's budget request threaten to sharply curtail the ability of federal agencies to fulfill their responsibilities to manage preservation, conservation, and recreation programs on federal lands. 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 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 last year's \$96.9 million, the highest level of HPF funding in history. We urge you to again reject the Administration's proposed funding level of just \$32.6 million, which would result in the lowest funding level for State Historic Preservation Officers since FY 1990, the lowest funding level for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers since FY 2007, and eliminate five separate competitive grant programs funded in FY 2018. Inadequate HPF funding limits support for preservation activities such as survey, nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, public education, as well as project review required by the National Historic Preservation Act and for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC), which Congress retained in the recent tax bill.

We request that Congress provide a total FY 2019 HPF appropriation of \$110.5 million. Within that funding, we recommend:

- \$55 million for State Historic Preservation Officers for heritage preservation and protection programs, including \$2 million for a new competitive grant program to digitize, map, and survey historic and cultural resources.
- \$15 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to carry out requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act, including \$2 million for a new competitive grant program to digitize, map, and survey tribal historic and cultural resources.
- \$15 million for competitive grants to document, interpret, and preserve historical sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement.
- \$15 million for Save America's Treasures grants for the preservation of nationally significant sites, structures, and artifacts.
- \$5 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and repair historic buildings.

- \$5 million for preservation grants to revitalize historic properties of national, state, and local significance.
- \$500,000 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 417 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 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 strongly oppose the President’s proposed budget cuts for National Park Service Operations. The Administration’s request of \$2.154 billion—a cut of more than \$323 million from FY 2018—would result in decreased stewardship of historic and cultural resources and reductions in visitor services at a time when our national parks are more popular than ever. We encourage the Committee to provide at least level funding from FY 2018 of \$2.47 billion. Within this funding, we recommend robust funding for Resource Stewardship, including \$1 million to provide the initial funding for the newly established African American Civil Rights Network.

National Park Service: Deferred Maintenance. The National Park Service 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 \$11.6 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 support the Administration’s budget request of \$149 million for Line Item Construction projects, which addresses the deferred maintenance for the NPS’ highest priority non-transportation assets with projects greater than \$1 million. This amount is a \$20 million increase above the FY 2018 enacted level of \$129 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 real impact on addressing the long-term maintenance needs of the parks. We recommend \$150 million for Repair and Rehabilitation, an increase of \$16 million above the FY 2018 enacted level of \$134 million. We also recommend \$160 million for Cyclic Maintenance, an increase of \$19 million above FY 2018. These investments support a service-wide deferred maintenance strategy that directs funds to high priority mission critical and mission dependent assets required to maintain historic structures and that are essential to abate growth of the deferred maintenance backlog. Additional investments will contribute to the successful preservation of historic sites and other resources in the National Park System.
- **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 National Park Service Legacy Act (S. 751 / H.R. 2584) introduced in both the Senate and House.

- **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.
- **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 to train young adults in preservation skills while helping protect and restore historic sites. Youth and veterans are trained in the 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. Funds for these projects come from different sources, including Repair and Rehabilitation, Cyclic Maintenance, the Recreational Fee program, concessionaires, historic leasing funds, and Section 106 mitigation. Since 2014, HOPE Crew 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 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: Centennial Challenge matching grants. The National Trust supports the Centennial Challenge, which provides federal funding to match donations for signature National Park Service projects and programs, and urges the Committee to consider funding this initiative at least at the FY 2018 enacted level of \$23 million. 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.

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas. We recommend funding for the Heritage Partnership Program and our National Heritage Areas (NHAs) at the FY 2018 enacted level of \$20.321 million. The Administration's proposal to eliminate NHA funding would severely impair the sustainability of the program and render many NHAs unable to function.

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 recommend \$19.131 million, a modest increase of \$2 million above the FY 2018 enacted level. Increased funding is necessary to fulfill BLM's statutory requirements for Section 106 reviews of land use proposals and National Historic Preservation Act's (NHPA) Section 110 requirements for inventory and protection cultural resources. The increase would support surveys of sensitive areas, site protection and stabilization projects for sites vulnerable to unauthorized activities and damage due to fire, erosion and changing water levels. 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. We recommend that the Committee encourage the BLM to promote inventory information sharing with State Historic Preservation Officers and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. The cultural resources program also funds 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.

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 Bears Ears National Monument. We encourage the Committee to provide \$40.5 million to the base program for the National Landscape Conservation System, an increase of \$3.6 million above the Fiscal Year 2018 enacted level. An increase in base funding will 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. We urge you to reject the Administration's proposed cuts to these programs, which would result in reduced visitor services, decreased maintenance and care of trails, and fewer educational and interpretive resources.

Department-Wide: Land and Water Conservation Fund. The National Trust supports robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and we urge the Committee to reject the drastic cut proposed for the program in the Administration's budget request. We encourage the Committee to instead continue increasing LWCF toward the full \$900 million from offshore mineral leasing revenues that is dedicated to LWCF annually. 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 Historical 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 reject the Administration's proposed elimination of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and instead maintain the FY 2018 enacted level of \$152.849 million for each program. NEA and NEH funding is critical to communities around the country. It supports 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 that put regionally-based artists in residence at the site, resulting in programming that attracted new audiences and served as a prototype for broader arts-focused programming that now draws 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, such as exploring the intellectual underpinnings of the Constitution at James Madison's Montpelier or discovering the rich, but largely unknown, African American history in the President's neighborhood at Decatur House.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the National Trust's recommendations for the FY 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill. I can be reached at 202-588-6078 or by email at tcassidy@savingplaces.org. The mailing address for the National Trust is 2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20037.