



**Statement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Fiscal Year 2013 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation  
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives  
March 22, 2012**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2013 appropriations. My name is Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr. 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. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., 12 field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust protects significant historic sites and advocates for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

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 also generate the economic vitality of 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 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, inventory, public education, and project review for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC), State and Tribal Historic Preservation Plans, and the National Register of Historic Places. The HTC is the most significant federal investment in historic preservation. It has catalyzed the rehabilitation of more than 38,000 buildings throughout the nation. Since its creation 30 years ago, the HTC has created 2 million jobs and leveraged nearly \$100 billion in private investment.

The President proposes level funding for the Historic Preservation Fund at the FY12 enacted level of \$55.9 million. While we appreciate there is not a cut to this program, we recommend that the Committee provide a modest increase for this program reflecting ongoing demands for preservation services and the increasing number of Tribes who qualify for HPF THPO funding.

We also look forward to working with the Committee to restore a program of competitive grant funding, such as formerly provided by Save America's Treasures, to provide matching grants to restore and preserve significant historic resources such as the Star Spangled Banner, the World Trade Center's Vesey Street Stairway, Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial Park in Alexandria, Virginia and the Chesterfield Schoolhouse in Bancroft, Idaho.

#### **National Park Service: Operation of the National Park System, Cultural Resources Stewardship**

Two-thirds of our National Parks were created to protect our most important historic and cultural resources. Over the past two decades, the National Park Service (NPS) has added over 30 new parks, which are predominantly cultural and historical in value. However, funding for cultural resources stewardship has not receiving support commensurate with natural resources stewardship. During the FY10 budget hearings, then Acting National Park Service Director Dan Wenk stated that NPS had been neglectful of cultural resources. A report of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) found that during the FY99 – FY06 period the NPS bolstered stewardship of natural resources by an additional \$77.5 million. However, during this same period, funding for park cultural programs *decreased* by 28 percent. Since the release of the NAPA report we have seen no significant effort by NPS to create funding parity between natural and cultural resources in the Park Base Operations Funding. And, although the FY13 budget requests an increase in natural resources stewardship, there is a reduction proposed for cultural resources. We urge the Committee to at least restore the cultural resources stewardship account to its FY12 enacted levels.

#### **National Park Service: Facility Operations & Maintenance**

Of the nearly \$11 billion deferred maintenance needed for NPS, \$3 billion is for the 27,000 properties in National Park units listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to a report issued by the National Academy of Public Administration, *Saving Our History: A Review of National Park Cultural Resource Program (2008)*, more than 40 percent of historic buildings and structures in our national parks are in fair or poor condition. Without funding, the condition of these properties will continue to deteriorate and become more expensive to repair and preserve in the future. Therefore, we recommend that the Committee restore the proposed \$15 million cut from the repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance accounts and provide funding at the FY12 enacted level. The National Trust is conducting fundraising efforts to address the gap – most recently and successfully at White Grass Dude Ranch in Grand Teton National Park – but private money must be matched by federal money. Continued loss of federal maintenance money will reduce the opportunity to raise private funds for the preservation of these important structures.

The Administration is proposing a significant reduction in the line-item Construction account, most of which funds new construction. We are concerned, however, that the proposed reduction not adversely impact important rehabilitation of historic structures.

#### **National Park Service: Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks**

We appreciate the Committee's inclusion of language in the FY12 Conference report recognizing that historic leases provide a cost-effective and innovative solution to mitigate the maintenance backlog of historic structures. We are working with the NPS and private partners to successfully implement such leases and bring private investment to rehabilitation expenses.

One promising new and cost-effective opportunity for the NPS to address the backlog of historic maintenance in the parks is through the recently signed MOU establishing "Historicorps," a new

cooperative among NPS, the other federal land agencies, and several NGOs, including the Student Conservation Association and The Corps Network.

#### **National Park Service: National Heritage Areas**

We are disappointed that the Administration has proposed a nearly 50 percent decrease in funding for the National Heritage Areas (NHAs). The proposed reduction, justified as “encouraging self-sufficiency,” would severely impair the sustainability of the program and the individual NHAs that Congress has established. A recent NPS study found “without funding to replace the NPS investment, few NHAs are expected to survive longer than a few years.” NPS Northeast Region, *Report of Impacts and Operation Strategy for Sunsetting National Heritage Areas (2012)*.

During these challenging economic times, every program that receives federal funding needs to justify its worth and deliver substantial benefits to the American public. NHAs more than meet this test. They are congressionally designated places where community driven partnerships advance heritage conservation and economic development. Heritage areas have a proven record of fostering job creation and advancing economic, cultural, historic, environmental, and community development through their leverage of each federal dollar by \$5.50 of non-federal investments. We urge the Committee to maintain funding for NHAs at the FY12 enacted level.

#### **Bureau of Land Management: National Landscape Conservation System**

The Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) includes 27 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.

The National Conservation Lands protect some of our country’s most significant historical and cultural resources, yet the BLM’s ability to steward these resources is undermined by insufficient funding averaging \$59.6 million, or just \$2.20 per acre. The National Conservation Lands are just one-tenth of BLM managed lands but they host one-third of all BLM’s visitors. This high visitation rate has resulted in increased needs to protect and steward historic and archaeological sites from looting and reckless off-road vehicle use. Without sufficient funding, the BLM also struggles to complete essential resource protection, such as signing trails, closing illegal and unnecessary routes, and inventorying and protecting cultural sites.

We support the Administration’s FY13 request of \$69.549 million, a proposed increase of \$4.58 million over the FY12 enacted level, 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 fragment fragile ecosystems, and undertake needed ecosystem and species restoration projects.

#### **Bureau of Land Management: Cultural Resources Management**

The BLM oversees the largest, most diverse, and scientifically most important body of cultural resources of any federal land managing agency, including 21 National Historical Landmarks, 5 World Heritage Sites, and more than 263,000 documented cultural properties. However, yet BLM receives the least amount of cultural resources money per acre of any federal agency. In the 34 years since the enactment of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) only 8 percent of the land managed by the BLM has been surveyed for cultural resources. Understanding the location and significance of cultural resources on BLM land creates greater

certainty in decision making about land uses including energy development, recreation, and resource protection. Proactive survey for cultural resources is also required under the National Historic Preservation Act. A long term goal of surveying 20 percent of BLM land would be a significant step towards helping our nation efficiently and cost effectively develop energy resources on our public lands. We strongly support the President's FY13 request of \$17.325 million for Cultural Resources Management, an increase of \$1.22 million over FY12 enacted.

#### **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**

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 the Flight 93 National Memorial, Minidoka National Historic Site, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Gettysburg National Military Park, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. We strongly support the Administration's FY13 request for NPS Civil War Sesquicentennial Units and American Battlefield Protection Program Grants.

#### **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**

We are concerned that the Administration proposes a 6.2 percent reduction for the operating budget of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Although the overall request for the ACHP is an increase over FY12 enacted, this is solely because of an increase of \$1.3 million included specifically for the agency's move from its headquarters in the Old Post Office.

The National Trust recommends a continuation of FY12 enacted funding, plus the \$1.3 million for the required move requested by the President. In addition, we suggest the Committee include report language recommending the President appoint a full-time Chairman. Such a recommendation was made by the ACHP membership at its November, 2011 meeting, as did a task force of historic preservation organizations, including the National Trust. We believe a full-time Chairman would enhance the effectiveness of the ACHP.

#### **Environmental Protection Agency: Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC)**

The National Trust supports the President's FY13 request for funding EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC). OSC is helping America's communities become more sustainable by encouraging the renovation of historic buildings and the revitalization of older neighborhoods. Repurposing older buildings—particularly those that are vacant—reduces the need for construction of new buildings and the consumption of land, energy, materials, and financial resources that they require.

The FY13 funding request would enable OSC to continue its technical assistance to tribal, state, regional and local governments and to remain a strong partner with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. It will also support such programs as *Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities*, *Greening America's Capitals*, *Smart Growth Implementation Assistance*, and *Smart Growth Implementation Assistance for Coastal Communities*. For example, in Concord, New Hampshire, OSC helped identify ways to support redevelopment of historic properties in the downtown core that comply with new energy-efficiency and green building standards while also conforming to historic preservation codes.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the National Trust's recommendations for the FY 2013 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.