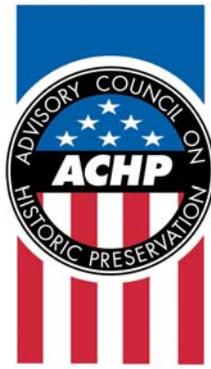


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Preserving America's Heritage

Preserve America Expert Panel Submits Recommendations to Improve the Structure of the Federal Historic Preservation Program

WASHINGTON D.C.-- The Expert Panel to Explore Improvements to the National Historic Preservation Program has submitted its list of seven recommendations and an executive summary of its findings aimed at taking on challenges and successes in America's historic preservation program and outlining goals for the future.

As a result of a national Preserve America Summit in 2006, the expert panel was created in May 2008 to evaluate the current federal historic preservation program and make recommendations toward its continuous improvement. Ten experts and stakeholders in the field of historic preservation were selected by Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) Chairman John L. Nau, III as an independent review panel. The panel was comprised of Susan Barnes of The Landmark Group of Companies; Philip Grone, former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment; Daniel P. Jordan of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation; Frank Matero, professor of architecture and chair of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania; Richard Moe of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; panel vice chairman David Morgan, former Kentucky State Historic Preservation Officer; Ellen O. Moyer, mayor of Annapolis, MD; Theresa Pasqual, director of the Acoma Pueblo Historic Preservation Office; panel chairman Doug Wheeler, partner at Hogan & Hartson; and Jay Vogt, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer and president of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

"The executive summary presented today is the culmination of a remarkable, collaborative effort. In addition to wide-ranging public input, the panel met four times in person and once via conference call. Thus, this executive summary contains recommendations from a broad swathe of the preservation community," Wheeler said. "These recommendations will indelibly strengthen and bolster federal preservation efforts as well as those in states and local communities. We look forward to presenting the full report to the ACHP in the future."

The panel solicited feedback from stakeholders through a national survey and received presentations from agency and other preservation experts. The stakeholder survey produced nearly 2,800 responses from a broad range of stakeholders across the country. The executive summary, with its seven recommendations, encompasses the discussions, challenges, and possible improvements and enhancements to today's national historic preservation program. The recommendations are as follows. The full executive summary can be found at www.achp.gov and www.preserveamerica.gov.

Issue 1: Federal Preservation Programs Lack Strong Leadership

Recommendation: The ACHP should be headed by a chairperson who is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The chairperson should lead the agency full-time. Additionally, to recognize the role historic preservation can play in addressing many national issues, the chairperson of the ACHP should be appointed as a member of the White House Domestic Policy Council.

Issue 2: Department of the Interior Preservation Programs Require Better Coordination, Greater

Visibility

Recommendation: Within the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, a new Office of Preservation Policy and Procedure (OPPP) should be established to oversee implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) throughout the entire Department of the Interior's bureaus and offices. The OPPP would provide leadership and direction in the coordination and achievement of historic preservation performance, evaluate achievement, secure appropriate levels of funding and provide for a coordinated and unified approach and response to historic preservation issues and compliance with the NHPA.

The office will also provide guidance for the Department's execution of the full range of existing historic preservation statutes, Executive Orders, regulations, and other requirements. The office would provide independent preservation advice to the Secretary; Deputy Secretary; the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget; and other senior Department officials. The office would operate in a capacity similar to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance within the Department of the Interior.

Issue 3: Natural Resource and Cultural Resource Programs Should be Better Integrated

Recommendation: The expert panel proposes the creation of an Associate Director for Cultural Resources within the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Issue 4: Federal Preservation Officers Are Not Fully Effective Within Their Agencies

Recommendation: The expert panel recommends ensuring the full implementation of Section 110 of the NHPA and Section 3(e) of Executive Order 13287 (Preserve America) concerning the appointment and visibility of Federal Preservation Officers.

Issue 5: Federal Funding is Inadequate to Meet the Mandates of the National Historic Preservation Act

Recommendation: The expert panel recommends fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund and allocating additional funds to Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs).

Issue 6: Funding and Technical Support to THPOs is Woefully Inadequate

Recommendation: The expert panel recommends greatly enhancing the visibility and capacity of tribal preservation efforts through comprehensive training for tribal leaders, through the creation of a dedicated position within the OPPP to address Native American issues, and through dispensing adequate funding to THPOs and to the Native American Advisory Group located in the ACHP.

Issue 7: The Section 106 Function is Lagging and Must Be Strengthened

Recommendation: The expert panel members strongly reaffirm that oversight of Section 106 of the NHPA is the most important function of the ACHP. ACHP involvement in individual Section 106 cases has a substantial and beneficial influence on the outcome of the consultation process and should be encouraged and expanded. Therefore, additional resources should be provided to support the ACHP's crucial role in Section 106 involvement, oversight and training.

Background: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created the national historic preservation infrastructure and established a partnership between the federal government and state, tribal and local governments that is supported by federal funding and technical assistance for preservation activities. Building upon this foundation, the federal government has developed additional policies, legislation and programs that promote preservation. More recently in 2003, President Bush signed Executive Order 13287 "Preserve America" which reaffirmed the importance of federal stewardship and the need to partner with non-federal parties to promote productive use of historic properties while encouraging efforts at the local level.