



## The Preserve America Initiative

Preserve America is an Administration initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities. Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States, is the Honorary Chair of Preserve America. Detailed information on all aspects of this initiative can be found at [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov). Major components of the Preserve America initiative include the following:

### Preserve America Presidential Awards

Four awards are given annually to organizations, businesses, and government entities for exemplary accomplishments in the sustainable use and preservation of cultural or natural heritage assets; demonstrated commitment to the protection and interpretation of America's cultural or natural heritage assets; and integration of these assets into contemporary community life, combining innovative, creative, and responsible approaches to showcasing historic local resources.

The winners of the 2008 Preserve America Presidential Awards were announced at a White House ceremony May 12, 2008. The awardees were the African Burial Ground Project, New York; Corinth and Alcorn County Mississippi Heritage Tourism Initiative, Mississippi; Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York; and Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, Texas. The call for 2009 Preserve America Award nominations ended November 1, 2008. Awards will be given in May 2009 during Preservation Month.

### Preserve America Communities

This program recognizes and designates communities, including neighborhoods in large cities, which protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs. Since the program began, Mrs. Bush has designated 696 communities (including 17 neighborhoods and two tribal communities) in all 50 states and one U.S. territory.



*Jonesborough, Tennessee, became a Preserve America Community in August 2005 and showcases its history as the oldest town in the state.*

Benefits of designation include White House recognition; eligibility to apply for Preserve America Grants; a certificate of recognition; a Preserve America Community road sign; authorization to use the Preserve America logo on signs, flags, banners, and promotional materials; listing in a Web-based Preserve America Community directory; inclusion in national and regional press releases; official notification of designation to state tourism offices and visitors bureaus; and enhanced community visibility and pride. Preserve America Communities are also featured in National Register Travel Itineraries and in "Teaching with Historic Places" curricular material created by the National Park Service. There are four quarterly deadlines to apply for designation annually on March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. Application forms are available at [www.preserveamerica.gov/communities.html](http://www.preserveamerica.gov/communities.html).

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### **Preserve America Grants**

Nearly \$17 million in matching grants have been awarded since 2006 to support community efforts to demonstrate sustainable uses of their historic and cultural sites, focusing on the economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism. Grants for 44 recipients in 24 states totaling more than \$4.3 million were announced on September 29, 2008. The application period for the first round of 2009 Preserve America Grants opened on October 1, 2008, and will close on November 18. Maximum grant amounts have been raised so that grants may now range from \$20,000 to \$250,000. Grant awards are expected in January 2009, pending availability of FY 2009 funds.

This program does not fund bricks-and-mortar projects, but rather complements the Save America's Treasures grant program by helping local communities develop sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices for the continued preservation and use of heritage assets. State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, designated Preserve America Communities, and Certified Local Governments that have applied for Preserve America Community designation are eligible to apply for Preserve America Grants. Further information, including 2009 grant applications, is available at [www.nps.gov/history/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica).

### **Preserve America Stewards**

Applications are now being accepted in a new recognition program of the Preserve America initiative—Preserve America Stewards—which will honor exemplary volunteer efforts at historic resources around the country. First Lady Laura Bush announced the new program at the 2008 Preserve America Presidential Awards ceremony. The program will recognize stewardship programs that have demonstrated a successful use of volunteer time and commitment in order to help care for our cultural heritage. Government entities (federal, tribal, state, or local), non-profit organizations, and businesses are eligible to apply to have their programs recognized. The application form and further information is available at [www.preserveamerica.gov/stewards.html](http://www.preserveamerica.gov/stewards.html).

### **Preserve America History Teacher of the Year Award**

Mrs. Bush presented the fifth annual Preserve America History Teacher of the Year award on October 24, 2008, to David B. Mitchell of Masconomet Regional High School, Topsfield, Massachusetts, at a ceremony at the Union League Club in New York City. Mr. Mitchell was selected from a group of finalists from each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, who each received \$1,000 and a core archive of history materials for his or her school library. The next recognition ceremony will be held in the fall of 2008. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History facilitates this award program.

### **Educational Outreach**

Preserve America has worked with the History Channel's Save Our History initiative to create a teacher's manual with lesson plans and volunteer ideas to involve students in preserving historic sites in their communities. In addition, Mrs. Bush has prepared three public service announcements on the importance of preserving America's heritage that first appeared in 2004 and have continued to air.

### **Executive Order 13287: "Preserve America"**

Signed by President Bush on March 3, 2003, this Executive Order complements the Preserve America initiative. The order establishes federal policy to provide leadership in preserving America's heritage by actively advancing the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of the historic properties owned by the federal government. The order also encourages agencies to seek partnerships with state, tribal, and local governments and the private sector to make more efficient and informed use of these resources for economic development and other recognized public benefits. In addition, it directs the secretary of commerce, working with other agencies, to use existing authorities and resources to assist in the development of local and regional heritage tourism programs that are a significant feature of many state and local economies. As required by the order, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation delivered the first report on implementation of Section 3 to the President on February 15, 2006; agency reports of progress were due September 30, 2008. The next ACHP report is due in February 2009. See [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov) for the 2006 full report.

**The White House is working with** the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Transportation; the General Services Administration; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the President's Council on Environmental Quality; and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to implement Preserve America. For more information about the initiative and its programs, visit [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov).