

U.S. Department of Commerce

Historic Property Management Preserve America Report

Pursuant to Executive Order 13287
Preserve America

September 30, 2008



Table of Contents

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Introduction.....	1
II. DOC Historic Preservation Program	1
III. Summary.....	7

I. Introduction

It is the goal of the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) to preserve, protect, and manage the Department's historic properties and promote federal stewardship for the preservation and use of historic properties. To accomplish this, DOC is committed to identifying and evaluating historic properties within the DOC real property asset portfolio and managing those properties in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Executive Order (EO) 13287, *Preserve America*, signed by President George W. Bush on March 3, 2003.

EO 13287 requires Federal agencies with real property responsibilities to, beginning September 30, 2005, and every three years thereafter, prepare a report on their progress in identifying, protecting, and using historic properties in their custody. In the preparation of this report, DOC followed guidance prepared by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, entitled *Updated Advisory Guidelines Implementing Executive Order 13287, Preserve America*, August 2007.

DOC is a diverse Federal agency organized by operating units that include 12 bureaus and various other offices supporting the DOC mission and operations. The majority of the DOC asset inventory belongs to two bureaus, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA currently maintains, operates or owns all of the listed historic properties within the DOC inventory and is responsible for the largest percentage of the DOC real property assets. In addition, the DOC headquarters is housed in the Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB), which is part of the Federal Triangle and therefore eligible for historic status.

II. DOC Historic Preservation Program

The DOC Historic Preservation Program is managed by the Office of Real Estate Policy and Major Programs (OREPMP), located within the Office of Administrative Services and under the Office of the Secretary. OREPMP has responsibility for issuing Department guidance and policies concerning compliance with the NHPA and EO 13287. With the exception of the HCHB, the historic properties owned, occupied, or administered by DOC have generally been the responsibility of NOAA. Finally, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides grants of Federal funding and must consider historic preservation policy in those transactions where it is relevant.

A. Policies and Directives

The DOC *Real Property Manual* currently provides the DOC policy for managing the historic preservation program. However, the historic preservation program is being incorporated into the DOC *Environmental Management Manual* (EMM), as it was determined that the Environmental Division was the more appropriate place for this program. The EMM is the primary tool for issuing environmental guidance within DOC and carries the authority of a Department Administrative Order. When the revision is implemented, the EMM will become the official source for DOC policy governing the historic preservation program. In addition, DOC operating

units, specifically NOAA and EDA, have supplemented the DOC policy with bureau policies.

It is NOAA's policy to work with experts in government, the private sector, and academia to develop comprehensive conservation plans for DOC or the Agency's resources of historical significance to the nation. NOAA's efforts to preserve heritage resources, from historic maps and charts to buildings and shipwrecks, and to make them accessible to the public through innovative programs and partnerships are reflective of NOAA's heritage stewardship commitment. NOAA's mission and the identification and use of historic properties and heritage assets are integrally related, as illustrated in the St. George Island restoration project, and the historic Fort Crockett, which serves as a NOAA Fisheries lab. As part of the long-range facility capital planning process, NOAA leverages opportunities to protect and restore historic properties, such as the adaptive restoration at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in developing the NOAA Pacific Regional Center.

Through museums, web sites, and other venues, NOAA also provides opportunities for the public to learn more about the agency's heritage resource conservation and preservation activities. For example, NOAA's Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary offers a web-based "shipwreck trail" that highlights the region's rich maritime history and encourages the public to visit the Keys and dive the trail's nine carefully chosen, mapped, and interpreted sites.

The NIST Museum and History Program preserves the history and heritage of NIST and its predecessor, the National Bureau of Standards, by collecting, recording, organizing and exhibiting achievements of NIST staff. It is NIST policy, through this program, to collect, conserve, document, research, catalog and display significant artifacts and copies of records to provide an institutional memory and to preserve them for future analyses and to contribute to the study of the history of technical development in the Nation. The management and staff of NIST are required (per NIST Administrative Manual, Subchapter 5.02, Appendix A) to identify and preserve unique, symbolic, or typical items, old and new, that are important to the past and present programs and personnel of NIST, and to make them available to the NIST Museum and History Program for evaluation as to appropriateness for preservation in the NIST Museum collection.

B. DOC Historic Property Inventory

The DOC Historic Preservation inventory is managed through the DOC real property asset management database. The system currently in use by DOC is the Federal Real Property Management (FRPM) database. Over the past three years, the inventory has improved and the number of properties that have been identified and evaluated for historic significance has increased. DOC, including the Department operating units such as NOAA and NIST, utilize the DOC FRPM database to record owned and leased historical properties as well as to provide the status of historic properties and whether they have been identified and evaluated.

The following matrix illustrates the change in the number of properties that have been identified and evaluated between the 2008 and the 2006 FRPM Historical Status;

Historical Status	2008	2006
National Register Listed	37	7
National Register Eligible	11	3
National Historical Landmark	15	2

This data represents a significant improvement, mainly as of the result of the improved data entry to the DOC FRPM and the inclusion of the Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the Pribilof Islands, St. Paul Island and St. George, Alaska properties. We continue to evaluate properties for inclusion in these categories. Overall, the condition of the Department's historical properties ranges from fair, to good, to excellent.

The NIST properties were evaluated in the late 1990's and none were pursued as historic at the time. An updated evaluation for historic properties will be conducted as part of updates to the campus master plans (planned in FY2009 for their Gaithersburg facility and FY 2010 for their Boulder campus).

C. Goals for identification and evaluation of historic properties

Although DOC has not established specific goals for the identification and evaluation of historic properties, DOC intends to pursue a systematic process with the use of the DOC real property data management system to ultimately identify and evaluate all DOC historic properties. In addition, NOAA intends to engage in a property verification process of all state nominated and registered historic facilities in the United States. This effort will include a search strategy to include the use of all current and past NOAA organizational names and initializations to ensure that all facilities are properly identified. NOAA will use existing state historic preservation office (SHPO) internet applications and written correspondence with each SHPO. The listing will be posted on the NOAA *Preserve America* web site.

D. Reporting

The primary method of reporting within DOC is through the Department's real property management system. Currently, the Department utilizes FRPM to manage real property assets. In addition, NOAA uses a facility assessment model, the Integrated Facilities Inspection Program, to collect and manage survey data for each facility and to identify the characteristics of the current inventory, the age and condition of the facility, and the historic status of the facility. The respondent identifies the property according to one of the five real property data management system historic categories. This data is useful to prioritize which property should be further investigated and evaluated for eligibility on the National Register List.

E. Partnerships

DOC encourages public-private partnerships. For example, NOAA works with a wide variety of groups to conserve natural resources, protect special places, and develop local communities. NOAA's partners include academia, businesses, community organizations, media outlets, and federal, state, and local government agencies. NOAA works closely with Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, certified local governments, private entities and organizations for the protection and management of information about historic properties. The benefits of this close working relationship are exemplified in several major projects. Two important examples are the development of a state-wide Programmatic Agreement between NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center and the State of Washington SHPO, and secondly, the Pacific Regional Center (PRC) on Pearl Harbor Naval Complex, Ford Island, Hawaii, in which close collaboration addressed and resolved preservation challenges and explored design opportunities. For the PRC, NOAA, in partnership with the US NAVY, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, National Park Service, the Hawaii SHPO, and multiple other partners, is adaptively reusing existing buildings and constructing several new buildings to house a consolidated facility that will become the PRC. A cooperative Memorandum of Agreement has brought the stakeholders into partnership allowing alternative use of historical properties.

F. Challenges, Successes, and Opportunities

The primary challenge that DOC faces in managing historic assets is the limited availability of resources to assess the current real property inventory and to implement a property verification program to improve historic property identification and recordation.

A second challenge exists in the actual use of an historic property. For example, one of the challenges is retrofitting the facility to house a totally new function and bringing it up to current buildings codes while maintaining the historical integrity of the building. The Old Coast Guard Building 1 at Lake Michigan Field Station (LMFS) in Muskegon, Michigan, part of NOAA's Ocean Air Research, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), provides such an example.



Old Coast Guard Building 1

This three-story building with an observation tower was constructed in 1900 as a Life Station and a former Coast Guard Station. The facility was renovated into research laboratories, offices, lecture center, dormitory and library, expanding the opportunities for multi-institutional collaboration and partnerships on a local, regional and national basis. It also accommodates visiting scientists from GLERL and other agencies, providing a place to work and live while at the LMFS. The LMFS hosts over 400 visiting scientists and visitors each year, with some

scientists staying over a month at a time. As a historical building and a high profile building in the community, the appearance of the facility required substantial restoration and refurbishment. Great care was taken to recreate the exterior architecture and maintain the historic details of its original design. While modern materials were utilized, this prominent building appears just as it did to the lumber schooners in the last days of sail. Although much of the interior space and mechanical and utility systems were upgraded, the property retains the color schemes and layout of its early days in the Life Saving Service.

G. Protection of Historic Properties

DOC fosters the recognition of historic properties and is proud to occupy, maintain, and protect historic buildings and sites. Three examples of DOC's stewardship efforts in protecting historical properties include the PRC on Ford Island, Pearl Harbor Naval Complex, Hawaii, St. Georges Island Sealing Plant restoration project in Alaska, and Fort Crockett, NOAA Fisheries Service Galveston Laboratory, Texas.

The Pacific Regional Center: NOAA is currently undertaking a major construction project that will consolidate NOAA's programs and operations on the island of O'ahu into a single facility on federally-owned property at Ford Island. A major part of this project involves the restoration and preservation of six buildings that are located within the boundary of the U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark and are contributing properties to the landmark. All of the buildings have been deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These buildings will be rehabilitated to accommodate NOAA's new mission while protecting and restoring the historic architectural value of the building.



The first phase of the multi-phase construction program involved the restoration of one of the five historic buildings (Building 184), and renovation of piers required to support NOAA's ship operations in the Pacific region. The modernization of Building 184 was accomplished using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. Due to historic preservation, work on Building 184 required retaining as much of the original facility as could be salvaged and reused. Although much of the wood panels and framing were deteriorated and damaged by termites and aging, most of the structural columns, beams, and roof frame were salvaged and reused. The building's new siding and roofing were selected as best matching the original materials (only the color was changed to comply with NOAA's general campus theme). Even new electrical substation buildings were designed using siding and roofing that matches the materials used on Building 184. The newly renovated facility, which supports warehouse and office spaces, was completed and occupied in October 2007. In April 2008, the NOAA PRC Ship Operations Facility project won the General Contractor Association of Hawaii Award of Excellence for Federal Construction.

future use. Working with the local Native Corporation, NOAA completed structural repairs and restoration of the St. George Sealing Plant building on St. George Island, Alaska. The agency makes these important resources available to the public through open houses, public events, exhibitions, and other outreach activities.

Fort Crockett, NOAA Fisheries Service Galveston Laboratory: In 1970, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service became the steward and primary occupant of historic Fort Crockett in Galveston, Texas. Established in the 1890s and named for Alamo defender Davy Crockett, the fort served as a U.S. Army garrison, World War II prisoner-of-war camp, and recreation center. In 1950, the fort became home to a Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Laboratory. Since then, it has become a hub of fisheries research in the Gulf of Mexico. Thousands of people visit the lab each year to learn about sea turtle recovery efforts, wetlands restoration, and essential fish habitat research and shrimp fishery management. Over the last few years NOAA has been executing a three- phase renovation program with the final phase of the renovation completing in 2008.

H. Uses of Historic Properties

DOC is proud to occupy and maintain a number of historic buildings and sites and makes every effort to adaptively reuse and renovate facilities to support ongoing DOC missions while preserving historic assets. The agency makes these important resources available to the public through open houses, public events, exhibitions, and other outreach activities.

DOC has several historic properties with an assigned mission and/or purpose that include: the PRC project, Ford Island, Pearl Harbor Hawaii; the NOAA Fisheries Service Galveston Laboratory, Texas; the Pribilof Islands, St. Paul Island and St. George Island, Alaska; and NOAA's Monitor Marine Sanctuary, to name a few.

NOAA supports preservation and economic development through heritage tourism, museums, Web sites, and other venues, NOAA provides opportunities for the public to learn more about the agency's heritage resource conservation and preservation activities. For example, NOAA's Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary offers a Web-based "[shipwreck trail](#)" that highlights the region's rich maritime history and encourages the public to visit the Keys and dive the trail's nine carefully chosen, mapped, and interpreted sites. NOAA has also initiated mini-grants within NOAA to develop heritage assets. NOAA employees applied for mini-grants to support projects that pursue *Preserve America* goals and tell the NOAA story. Other agencies and the public are encouraged to participate as partners.

I. Section 111 (16 U.S.C. § 470h-3) of NHPA


Although DOC is aware of the potential benefits of using Section 111, DOC has not used this authority in the management of historic properties.

III. Summary

The goal of DOC is to preserve, protect, and manage the historic properties in the DOC real property asset inventory. In addition to preserving and managing those sites already identified as having historical significance, the Department is committed to continuous improvements in our reporting and identification system. With improvements made to our Real Property Management Database, we have been able to List thirty new sites on the National Register since 2006, to identify eight new sites eligible for Listing, and to identify thirteen new National Historic Landmark Sites. The Department plans to continue the verification process with an effort by NOAA to search past organizational names and initializations to ensure all facilities are properly identified.

In addition to our work in identifying and preserving our nation's historic properties, we are extremely proud of our partnerships with local governments, academia, and the private sector. These partnerships enable us to better educate the public, not only about our resource conservation and preservation activities, but also about our nation's rich maritime and technical history. The Department continues to make great strides in the identification and evaluation of historic properties and through partnerships will continue to maintain, restore, conserve, and protect the historic resources of the Department and of the Nation.

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Date