



Preserving America's Heritage

Preserve America Summit Recommendations Implementation August 2013

The Preserve America Summit, held in October 2006, marked the 40th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. In August 2007, the ACHP issued recommendations based on the issues raised at the Summit. The 13 recommendations focused on actions the federal government should take to enhance the effectiveness of the national historic preservation program as it moved toward 2016, the 50th anniversary of the NHPA. (For details on the recommendations, see the [Executive Summary](#) or the [Full Report](#).)

The ACHP created an implementation strategy and chaired a Summit implementation steering committee to monitor progress by federal agencies and their partners in implementing the recommendations of the Preserve America Summit. Here (as of August 2013) is a summary of efforts that were undertaken.

Comprehensive Inventory: *Create a comprehensive inventory of historic properties through a multi-year plan that expands current inventories and makes them more compatible and accessible.*

A report entitled [National Historic Property Inventory Initiative: Building Capacity to Preserve and Protect Our Cultural Heritage](#) was completed in May 2009. Using the information provided in the report, the National Park Service (NPS) developed a proposed Historic Preservation Fund-based grant-in-aid framework designed to offer additional federal funding assistance to State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices for the specific purpose of improving cultural resource data collection and management systems. Initial implementation funding to assist the states and tribes in this work was requested of Congress but was not appropriated.

Cultural Diversity: *Promote cultural diversity in the identification of historic properties by evaluating the National Register of Historic Places for its inclusiveness and encouraging local, state, and tribal governments to evaluate their own inventories.*

The NPS in partnership with the states initiated a number of documentation projects to identify and nominate properties associated with diverse cultural groups. Staff created a plan for developing African American documentation projects for National Register and National Historic Landmark nomination. More recently, NPS initiatives on American Latino Heritage and Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage have been launched as well. Information on such initiatives is available [at NPS's Cultural Resources Relevancy, Diversity & Inclusion Web page](#). NPS is seeking funds in the FY 2014 budget request for a modest (\$3 million) [competitive grants program](#) to support these sorts of survey and registration efforts. Over the last two years there have been several new National Monument and National Historic Landmark designations (e.g., the [César E. Chávez National Monument](#) and the [Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument](#)) reflecting diverse cultural interests.

Disasters: *Respond to disasters by forming a technical advisory committee to develop guidance, a plan for dissemination and training, and emergency and mitigation strategies consistent with the Department of Homeland Security's National Response Plan.*

The Department of the Interior, working with the Department of Homeland Security and others, produced [Preparing to Preserve: an Action Plan to Integrate Historic Preservation into Tribal, State and Local Emergency Plans](#) and two companion products, a [1-2-3 Guide to Building Relationships with Emergency Officials](#) and [Emergency Planning: Model Checklist for Historic Preservation](#). Materials were posted on the respective agency websites, and disseminated through State Historic Preservation Offices and the [Heritage Emergency National Task Force](#).

Security: *Address security needs by developing guidance, including guidance on all-hazards risk assessments.*

The team addressing this recommendation developed and implemented a method for keeping and sharing existing guidance, information, and best practices for the integration of historic preservation and security requirements for buildings, cultural sites, and physical property. The agencies worked with the Historic Preservation Learning Portal maintained by the National Park Service to house the Addressing Security Needs Clearinghouse.

Cultural Collections: *Conserve cultural collections by pursuing cost-effective collaboration between the historic preservation community and the broader cultural heritage community, including support for the Institute of Museum and Library Services' 'Connecting to Collections' Initiative.*

Led by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an initiative called "Connecting to Collections" was launched to raise institutional and public awareness of the importance of caring for the collections held by the nation's small and medium-sized museums and libraries, and to provide resources to these institutions so they may better care for their collections. The initiative stemmed both from the Preserve America Summit and from the findings and recommendations of the IMLS-funded report, the [Heritage Health Index](#), published in December 2005. This comprehensive survey of the condition and preservation needs of American collections ended with the recommendation for a public/private partnership to provide immediate attention to caring for the public trust contained in the collections of American museums, libraries, and archives. The [Connecting to Collections](#) Web site serves as a clearinghouse for information as well as technical and financial assistance to address the needs of collections conservation.

Innovation Clearinghouse: *Promote innovation by creating a clearinghouse through the National Park Service National Center for Preservation Technology and Training to disseminate information on innovative technologies and encourage their use.*

The [National Center for Preservation Technology and Training \(NCPTT\)](#) has enhanced its clearinghouse function by migrating its extensive web content to the WordPress platform. This has improved access to NCPTT's preservation research product catalog, lists of educational and professional opportunities, and a calendar of preservation training events and conferences, as well as providing RSS feeds for the syndication of content. A more fully-developed national clearinghouse will require additional staffing and funding.

Economic Benefits of Preservation: *Measure and share preservation's benefits by developing consistent ways to measure direct and indirect impacts (particularly economic) and by pursuing and promoting necessary research.*

A baseline study, [Measuring Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation](#), was completed in 2011 by Place Economics under contract to the ACHP with funding assistance from the Department of Commerce. An edited and illustrated version of the report along with other related materials is now in preparation and will be made available by the start of FY 2014.

Community Assistance: *Provide more technical assistance to local communities to promote historic preservation and heritage tourism, and explore the concept of a Preserve America Community agent or similar mechanism to work more effectively with local communities.*

The Preserve America Program, particularly the Preserve America Grants, helped move implementation of this recommendation forward by supporting different approaches in many different states, including:

Arkansas – Creation of a pilot Preserve America Community Agent
 California – Los Angeles Asian Pacific Islander Neighborhoods Cultural Heritage and Hospitality Education and Training
 Colorado – Southeast Colorado Heritage Tourism Program
 Louisiana – Louisiana Main to Main
 Michigan – Prototype heritage tourism program
 Rhode Island - Community Preservation Planning Summits
 Vermont- Digital Downtowns: Creating GIS Databases for Historic Downtowns
 Wyoming - Local Preservation & Tourism Training
 The Department of Housing and Urban Development also championed use of Community Development Block Grant funds for these and related purposes.

Tax Incentives: *Increase synergy between the development community and public sector partners by implementing the recommendations of the National Park System Advisory Board Committee on the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit and by seeking ways to expand use of federal financial assistance programs for historic preservation.*

The National Park Service (NPS) completed implementation of the National Park System Advisory Board recommendations on the federal historic preservation tax credit. A report was issued in late 2007, [Making a Good Program Better: Final Guidance and Implementation of National Park System Advisory Board Recommendations for the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program](#). Since that time, a [35-year anniversary report on the Tax Act program](#) has been produced along with many studies and other materials for better implementation, which are available on the [NPS tax incentives Web page](#).

Heritage Education: *Enhance heritage education by developing a communication strategy for providing information to the educational community about Web sites, curriculum guides, and other outreach products that promote heritage education.*

The Department of Education worked with partners to establish the [National History Education Clearinghouse](#), which serves as a comprehensive center for resources that will enhance the teaching of American history in the Nation's classrooms. The site is operated and maintained by George Mason University.

Engaging Youth: *Engage youth in historic preservation by promoting programs that involve them in hands-on preservation activities and through the possible establishment of an ongoing youth summit as part of the Preserve America Initiative.*

The ACHP has worked with partners to develop several service-learning and youth engagement model projects, including the successful [“Of the Student, By the Student, For the Student”](#) program in Harpers Ferry and other National Park units within the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area corridor. The ACHP in cooperation with the Institute of Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience of Rutgers University and many other organizations is now developing a similar program on the theme of “Civil War to Civil Rights.” In the meantime, the [Youth Summit model](#) was successfully developed in Colorado over a number of years and is now being expanded to other states (Washington State, Washington, DC) and regions with the involvement and support of the National Park Service.

International Preservation: *Optimize U.S. participation in the international preservation arena by improving information exchange and facilitating U.S. participation in international preservation activities.*

Working with their non-federal partner, the [U.S. National Committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites \(US/ICOMOS\)](#), the ACHP and the Department of the Interior have promoted U.S. participation and leadership in international preservation activities. The National Park Service (NPS) entered into a partnership agreement with US/ICOMOS, providing financial support and defining a number of cooperative activities in the international preservation arena. A major action has been using the US/ICOMOS annual symposium, which brings together U.S. preservation practitioners with an interest in international preservation, to focus on specific steps that can advance the Summit recommendation. Resulting proposed actions were reviewed and adopted by the US/ICOMOS Board of Trustees, which set out an action plan that was shared with the Department of State and other Executive Branch recipients to inform their policies. US/ICOMOS also completed a major upgrade of the US/ICOMOS website, and obtained direct financial support from the State Department in addition to the NPS cooperative agreement. In a related area, US/ICOMOS successfully advanced a U.S. candidate for the position of international president of ICOMOS. This was the first time an American has filled this prestigious and influential position in the international preservation community. More recently, efforts have been underway to ensure U.S. payment of dues to UNESCO in order to maintain its voting status, and to advance U.S. participation in the [World Heritage Program](#) by developing promotion ideas for U.S. World Heritage Sites as part of the National Travel and Tourism Strategy and also advancing new World Heritage nominations.

Improve Preservation Program Infrastructure: *Explore improvements to the program structure of the federal preservation program through creation of an independent review panel.*

As recommended, an independent review panel was convened, and the ACHP accepted the [panel’s report](#) in February 2009. A series of similar and related recommendations were included in the report of a coalition of preservation organizations released in 2011, in part as a response to proposed preservation program budget cuts. Since these reports were issued, the Department of the Interior (DOI) has taken steps to enhance its preservation program leadership, and the Council on Environmental Quality of the Executive Office of the President has installed the first senior officer for cultural and historic resources with DOI funding assistance. The recommendation that the ACHP have a full-time chair has been endorsed by the ACHP, DOI, and others, and is being pursued through a legislative package being developed jointly by DOI and the ACHP (along with the addition of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers as a full ACHP member).