

Save America's Treasures

FISCAL YEAR 2000 FACTS AND FIGURES

In FY 2000 NEA
funding for Save
America's Treasures
totaled \$2,278,952.

Save America's Treasures was launched in 1998 as a program of the White House Millennium Council, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service to protect the nation's threatened cultural resources. Congressional appropriations for the program began in FY 2000, the same year that the National Endowment for the Arts joined the partnership. Congress appropriated \$15 million for Save America's Treasures grants to nonprofit organizations working on preservation or conservation of nationally significant cultural artifacts—such as documents, works of art, maps, and journals—and historic structures and sites that illuminate the history and culture of the United States. Forty-seven projects in 31 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, including six federal sites in various parts of the country, received grants.

Charter Murals at National Archives Undergo Comprehensive Conservation

The National Archives Rotunda with the Charter Murals, which will be conserved with the support of a Save America's Treasures grant during the renovation of the Rotunda. (Photo courtesy of the National Archives)

In 1936, artist Barry Faulkner completed work on the Charter Murals in the National Archives Rotunda. Located above the Charter Documents of Freedom—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—the murals depict the Declaration of Independence being presented to John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, and the final draft of the U.S. Constitution being presented by James Madison to George Washington. These two murals are viewed by millions of visitors each year, providing an inspiring visual representation of the origins of American democracy. A Save America's Treasures grant of \$500,000 was awarded to conserve the two murals, which have deteriorated over the years.

The large canvas paintings, measuring approximately 12 feet high by 35 feet in length, have separated from the Rotunda walls due to deteriorating plaster caused by humid air. Protruding bulges from fallen plaster marred the



murals, and years of dirt build-up have dulled the colors. The conservation of the murals will coincide with a complete renovation of the Archives Rotunda exhibit area—including new, easier-to-view encasement for the charter documents—which will be take place from 2001 to 2003. The mural conservation process, beginning in July 2001, will take place in three phases: first, the extremely delicate process of removing the canvasses from the circular walls; second, the examination, restoration, and cleaning of the murals; and third, the reinstallation in time for the reopening of the newly renovated Rotunda exhibit area.