

The preservation of historic sites for the public benefit, together with their proper interpretation, tends to enhance the respect and love of the citizen for the institutions of his country, as well as strengthen his resolution to defend unselfishly the hallowed traditions and high ideals of America.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Foreword

Our stewardship at the Interior Department touches the lives of Americans in many ways. We preserve places that give us a proud sense of our history—from the Statute of Liberty and Independence Hall, to Gettysburg Battlefield and the Washington Monument. We protect breathtaking landscapes of natural beauty, from the depths of the Grand Canyon to the peaks of Mount Rainier. We provide environmentally sound production of oil, gas, and mineral resources found on America's public lands. We honor this nation's obligations to Native Americans and Alaska Natives. We protect and restore critical habitats for the nation's fish and wildlife. We manage water for millions of people in the West. We provide useful scientific and technical information for sound land management and natural resources decisionmaking.

Our stewardship extends beyond preserving for future generations those spectacular sites and historic structures that pay tribute to America's past and the principles upon which our great nation was founded. America is a melting pot of many ethnic groups whose cultures, traditions, and experiences create the freedom and diversity that are basic to our way of life.

On the verge of the next millennium and celebrating its 150th anniversary, the Department is prepared to meet the challenge ahead with new approaches and innovative solutions. We are a proud Department with a clearly defined mission, numerous success stories and a rich 150-year history. As we celebrate Interior's sesquicentennial, it is fitting and appropriate that we highlight the Department's involvement with cultural resources in this special anniversary issue of *CRM*.

Our cultural heritage is the gift of our forbears which carries a responsibility for us to share this inheritance with our children for future generations to understand and enjoy. By nurturing our cultural heritage, respecting what has been created, and passing it on, we give future generations the tools to find meaning and answers to questions in years ahead.

*Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior*