



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**A RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY FEDERAL AGENCY**



Every Federal agency, regardless of its mission, is responsible for protecting our Nation's historic places.



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION: A RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY FEDERAL AGENCY

## WHAT ARE MY AGENCY'S RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT?

- Consider the effects of Federal actions—including the assistance, grants, permits or licenses you give—on historic resources and, where feasible, take steps to avoid or reduce any adverse effects.
  - Show leadership by preserving and encouraging others to preserve historic resources.
  - Identify historic properties under your agency's control and administer them in a spirit of stewardship.
  - Make creative use of vacant and underutilized historic facilities to meet agency requirements—both those controlled by your agency and those available via lease, purchase, exchange, or cooperative use.
- Make surplus historic properties available for use by local governments, other agencies, Indian tribes, and non-governmental organizations.
  - Consider the impact of agency actions and decisions on historic resources that are not under agency jurisdiction or control.
  - Make sure that appropriate standards are followed in doing historic preservation work, and that qualified people are available to supervise and advise.
  - Plan and carry out historic preservation work—especially when considering project impacts and ways of reducing damage—in consultation with concerned parties, including State, tribal, and local officials, landowners, and interested citizens.

Some preservation-related laws—such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act—outline Federal agency responsibilities for additional kinds of cultural resources, such as ancestral American Indian and Native Hawaiian graves and cultural items, archeological artifact collections, traditional religious places and practices, and broad cultural values. Your Federal Preservation Officer can help make sure your agency complies wisely with these laws, as well as with the National Historic Preservation Act.



Shauna J. Holmes, ACHP

*The U. S. Coast Guard transferred ownership of the 1791 Portland Head Light to the town of Cape Elizabeth, ME, while retaining access to the light and fog signal, both active aids to navigation.*



*At Fort Leavenworth, KS, the Department of the Army turned an 1882 barracks located in the National Historic Landmark district into the National Simulation Center for simulation training, development, and conferences.*



Bob Nichols, NRCS

*Natural Resources Conservation Service's Resource Conservationist discusses conservation planning, which includes protection of the Blackfeet Tribe's traditional cultural places in Shelby, MT.*

## WHAT'S "HISTORIC?"

While many things are historic, the National Historic Preservation Act gives particular attention to "historic resources" or "historic properties," which are buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts with historic significance. Examples of these may include court houses and industrial plants, bridges and barns, ships and airplanes, archeological sites and Native American spiritual places, or neighborhoods and landscapes that are associated with local, tribal, state, or national history, prehistory, and culture.

The National Park Service maintains a National Register of Historic Places that includes properties nominated through State, Federal or Tribal preservation officers. Federal agencies are responsible for thoughtfully managing resources both included in and also eligible for the National Register.



*Chief Mountain Border Station (1938) in Babb, MT, is preserved by its continued use on the Canadian border by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Customs Service.*



*The Department of Veterans Affairs renovated its historic Bay Pines Medical Center, built in 1932 in St. Petersburg, FL, for use as an outpatient facility.*

## WHAT'S "PRESERVATION?"

The National Historic Preservation Act uses a flexible, inclusive definition. Identifying historic places, managing them in the course of carrying out agency mission responsibilities, re-using them, allowing others to use them, documenting them, and teaching people about them—all these are acts of "preservation" as defined in the law.

Preservation does not necessarily mean freezing places in time or restoring them as showpieces. Actually, the National Historic Preservation Act encourages active use of historic properties to meet the needs of the agency and of the public. Although maintaining historic properties in perpetuity is favored by the law, it's understood that this is not always feasible, so other forms of preservation—for example through study and documentation—are often acceptable. We decide how best to preserve historic places in consultation with concerned citizens, State and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, local governments, tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, Alaska Native groups, and others.



*The Department of Energy's Experimental Breeder Reactor, a National Historic Landmark at the Idaho National Engineering and Experimental Laboratory in Scoville, ID, was the world's first nuclear reactor to produce usable amounts of electricity in 1951.*



*The Department of Housing and Urban Development provides financial assistance to non-profit sponsors through its 811 program to rehabilitate properties like these rowhouses in Union Square Historic District, West Baltimore, MD, for use as group homes for persons with disabilities.*

*At right: The Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, CA, is steward of this spectacular pictorial record of prehistoric life in the Coso Rock Art District, a National Historic Landmark.*



## **WHERE CAN WE FIND HELP?**

Two Federal agencies, the *National Park Service* and the *Advisory Council on Historic Preservation*, provide printed and on-line guidance and can be consulted on many preservation issues and opportunities. Another Federal agency, the *General Services Administration*, helps locate historic facilities to meet agency needs for offices and other workspace. All States, as well as many Indian tribes, have *State Historic Preservation Officers* or *Tribal Historic Preservation Officers* who consult with and advise Federal agencies. *Local governments*, *historic preservation commissions*, and *architectural review boards* can be consulted about historic places in their communities. Non-profit historic *preservation organizations* and *colleges and universities* can offer important partnership opportunities. *For-profit firms* and private *property owners* can often help find creative and cost-effective ways of managing historic properties.



## **WHO COORDINATES PRESERVATION RESPONSIBILITIES IN MY AGENCY?**

Every agency has a Federal Preservation Officer (FPO). The National Historic Preservation Act charges the FPOs with coordinating agency preservation programs, including interactions with other agencies, States, Indian tribes, and others. It is up to each agency to designate the FPO and establish the FPO's specific responsibilities. Agencies with regional or field offices often designate regional or field FPOs as well. It is the responsibility of each agency to maintain qualified preservation staff and have the management systems needed to carry out its historic preservation program.

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## IS IT REALLY?

**Yes.** Every Federal agency, regardless of its mission, is responsible for protecting our Nation's historic places.

## WHAT IS THE AUTHORITY FOR THIS?

The National Historic Preservation Act and other Federal laws, executive orders, and regulations establish our historic preservation responsibilities. Every administration since the early 1960s has contributed to this mandate.

The National Historic Preservation Act directs each Federal agency to have a historic preservation program—that is, a program to manage historic resources and avoid or minimize possible harm that may result from agency decisions and actions. The Act does not prohibit change to historic properties, but it does require that alternatives be considered. Early consideration of historic places in agency planning and full consultation with all concerned citizens are the keys to effective historic preservation.



Ronald D. Anzalone, ACHP

*Travelers in Wyoming can see portions of the Oregon Trail, including parts of the Lander Cutoff, that are managed and interpreted by the Bureau of Land Management.*

## WHY ARE HISTORIC PLACES IMPORTANT TO US?

The National Historic Preservation Act begins by stating that “the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage.” Historic places are the tangible links to this heritage and teach us about our national, State, tribal, and local history. They may also have cultural or spiritual importance to Indian tribes and other indigenous groups. Our historic places contribute to our economy, our institutions, and our identity. If damaged or destroyed, they cannot be replaced.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR MY AGENCY?

Having a thoughtful agency historic preservation program is good public policy—it can save time and money in carrying out the government's responsibilities, preserve irreplaceable aspects of our heritage, and demonstrate government respect for places important to our citizens.



Kyle R. Brooks, AIA, GSA-R2

*The General Services Administration reconstructed the original 1914 roof overhang of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, San Juan, PR, as well as constructing new courtrooms and prisoner circulation space to enable the expanding U.S. District Court to remain in its historic location.*

## COVER PHOTOS

Clockwise from top:

*The National Park Service preserves Old Faithful Inn (1904), a National Historic Landmark in Yellowstone National Park, WY, by continuing to use it as a hotel.*

Credit: HABS, NPS

*Elderhostel participants work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore a 1940 gun emplacement at the Battle of Midway National Historic Landmark, Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.*

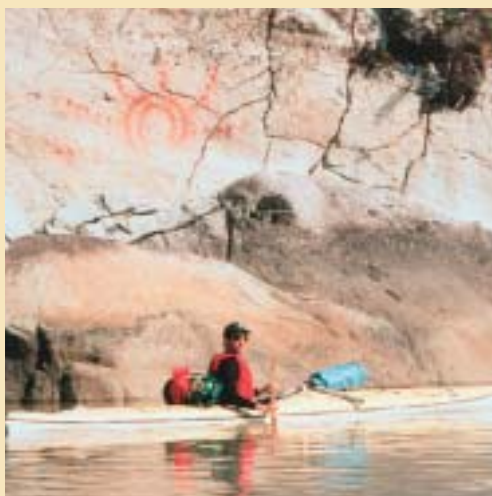
Credit: Don Corwin, The Oceanic Society

*The National Aeronautics and Space Administration nominated the 1965 Vehicle Assembly Building at the John F. Kennedy Space Center, FL, to the National Register of Historic Places and still uses it as the last stop for the Shuttle before rollout to the launch pad.*

*Archeologists record a prehistoric hearth within the right-of-way of a natural gas pipeline being constructed in Clinton County, PA, under a license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.*

*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has stabilized and preserved this 1863 covered bridge in the Stanislaus River Parks at Knights Ferry, CA.*

Credit: Shauna J. Holmes, ACHP



Martin Standard, USFS

*A volunteer in the U.S. Forest Service's Partners in Time (PIT) program monitors the condition of archeological sites and pictographs on Revillagigedo Island in the Tongass National Forest, AK.*

## WHAT ARE OUR MAJOR CHALLENGES?

*The challenge of numbers.* A large number of significant historic places have not yet been identified, and others become significant over time.

*The challenge of late discovery.* When historic resources are found late in planning for—or even during—a project that threatens them, this results in unnecessary destruction or in costly project delays. It can also alienate the very public we are trying to serve.

*The challenge of understanding and accommodating citizen concerns.* Property owners, local governments, Indian tribes and other indigenous groups, local governments, local and national preservation groups, minority groups, and many others are concerned about historic places.

*The challenge of using historic buildings.* We need to make creative and thoughtful use of vacant and underutilized historic buildings as good investments and contributions to the character of our communities.

*The challenge of awareness.* More managers and others whose actions can affect historic resources need to fully understand and appreciate their preservation responsibilities.

*And finally, the challenge of taking advantage of opportunities* for creative programs and projects that achieve both historic preservation and agency missions. For example, we need to look for opportunities for partnerships that preserve historic resources at little or no cost to the government.



*The Department of Transportation is providing TEA-21 transportation enhancement funds to help rehabilitate the Milledgeville, GA, railroad depot, originally constructed in 1854, for use by Georgia College and State University.*

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Learn about your agency's preservation program. Ask your FPO to brief you and give you a frank appraisal of your program's strengths and weaknesses.

Ensure that your historic preservation responsibilities are considered when planning projects and making decisions. Make sure this happens *early* in planning, and that all concerned parties are consulted.

Give priority to using appropriate historic properties to provide office space and other agency facilities. Encourage recipients of your agency's assistance, grants, permits, or licenses to do the same.

Remember historic preservation at budget time. Equip your agency staff with adequate funds, personnel, and training to meet your preservation responsibilities and take advantage of stewardship opportunities.

Establish policies and procedures to ensure that citizens concerned about historic preservation issues are identified and consulted early and often when planning for agency actions that could affect historic resources. Be sure to identify and respect the cultural interests and values of Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and Alaska Native groups.

Get well-qualified professional and technical advice about historic preservation to assist you and your agency.



*Navy staff consults with tribes on the effect of training range improvements on cultural sites at Naval Air Station, Fallon, NV.*

Thomas F. King

# MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION LAW

**2000**—Congress amends National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to incorporate Executive Order 13006, requiring agencies to give priority to using historic buildings in downtown historic districts to meet mission needs.

**1990s**—President issues Executive Orders 13006 and 13007, which directs agencies to respect and avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act is enacted, establishing Federal responsibilities for Native American graves, sacred items, and other artifacts. Congress amends NHPA, clarifying agency responsibilities and providing for increased participation by Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian groups.

**1980s**—Congress enacts major amendments to NHPA, clarifying the roles of State Historic Preservation Officers and giving Certified Local Governments a preservation role. Congress also enacts the Abandoned Shipwreck Act, providing for the management of historic shipwrecks.

**1970s**—Congress amends the Tax Code to provide tax incentives for rehabilitating historic buildings. Congress enacts the Archaeological Resources Protection Act to provide protection of archeological sites on public and Indian land, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act to provide for attention to be given to Indian spiritual places, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act, enhancing protection of places with archeological research value.

**1971**—President issues Executive Order 11593, directing agencies to identify and manage impacts on historic properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, including previously undiscovered properties.

**1969**—Congress enacts the National Environmental Policy Act, requiring that Federal planning consider impacts on the environment, including historic and cultural aspects of the Nation's heritage.

**1966**—Congress enacts the National Historic Preservation Act, creating the National Register of Historic Places and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, providing for Federal-State partnership in identifying and managing historic properties, and requiring agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic resources.

**1935**—Congress enacts the Historic Sites Act, making the National Park Service responsible for identifying, documenting, and promoting the preservation of historic resources.

**1906**—Congress enacts the Antiquities Act, prohibiting excavation of antiquities from public lands without a permit from the Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture, or War.

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