



Fact Sheet: Historic Preservation

From parks and rivers to farmlands and forests, America's great outdoors fuel our national spirit of adventure and independence and help power our economy. Our lands and waters also are where our families go to unwind, to fish, hike, and hunt, and to spend valuable time together.

Today, however, much of America's great outdoors is under intense pressure. Open lands, farmlands and woodlands are disappearing, waterways are polluted, and a changing climate is threatening natural systems. At the same time, many Americans – especially young people – are losing touch with the outdoor places and traditions our country has always treasured. President Obama believes that for America to be at its strongest, we need healthy and accessible lands and waters and healthy and active youth who are connected to them. That is why he established the America's Great Outdoors Initiative in April, 2010, to work with the American people develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative turns the old ways upside down. Instead of dictating policies from Washington, it calls for supporting local, community-driven conservation ideas. Instead of growing bureaucracy, it calls for reworking inefficient policies and making the Federal Government a better partner with states, tribes, and local communities.

During the summer of 2010, senior Administration officials held 51 public listening sessions across the country, 21 of them specifically with youth. Some 10,000 Americans participated in the live sessions and more than 105,000 provided comments. The outcome of this national conversation is a report to the President, *America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations*. Prepared in consultation with the American people, the report reflects their ideas on how to reconnect with America's lands, waters, and natural and cultural treasures, and build on the conservation successes in communities across the nation.

Historic Preservation: What We Heard

During listening sessions, Americans spoke of the value of protecting our cultural and historic resources. These resources reinvigorate communities and economies, while instilling pride in local history and traditions. They also attract visitors who support local businesses, increase job opportunities, revitalize both urban and rural communities, and encourage the reuse of historic buildings. As economic pressures, development, the effects of climate change, and other factors mount to threaten the sustainability of heritage resources, locally led partnership initiatives can guide broader decision-making efforts to preserve these unique places for future generations.

To affirm and reinforce the connection between the American people and America's great outdoors in all its richness and diversity, we must build on the links between our natural and our cultural heritage. The federal government offers an extensive portfolio of community assistance programs to support tribal, state and local governments, and private-sector preservation efforts.

Historic Preservation: What We Are Doing

After listening to the priorities of Americans, the Obama Administration will take action to:

Protect America's historic and cultural resources.

- Increase funding for the Historic Preservation Fund to provide financial and technical support to states, communities, tribes, and private sector organizations dedicated to historic preservation and cultural resource protection.
- Expand support for community-driven capital projects, planning, interpretation, community-based surveying, and technical assistance programs that contribute to historic preservation.
- Continue supporting battlefield preservation and partner with historic preservation land trusts to fund acquisition of historically significant, threatened battlefields, as part of the Civil War Sesquicentennial.

Advance national, regional, and community-supported work to preserve and enhance unique landscapes, natural areas, historic sites, and cultural areas while ensuring openness and transparency in any land designations.

- Engage the public to identify and recommend potential sites on existing federal lands for protection under the 1906 Antiquities Act by implementing a transparent and open approach, tailored to engaging local, state, and national interests.

Harness education, recreation, jobs, and service opportunities to cultivate stewardship and appreciation of America's natural, cultural, and historic resources.

- Develop quality jobs and service opportunities in the areas of conservation and historic preservation. Coordinate and streamline hiring processes for these jobs, and advertise both jobs and service programs through a user-friendly web portal.
- Promote and support education and recreation programs that connect children to nature and teach them about their natural and cultural heritage.
- Work with the Bureau of Indian Education to develop curricula that incorporate traditional tribal practices, activities, and environmental literacy for both the classroom and outdoor activities.

For more detailed information and to learn how you can take action in your community, visit:

www.doi.gov/AmericasGreatOutdoors.