



Statement of the Coalition for American Heritage
Marion Werkheiser, Policy Director
Fiscal Year 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
May 15, 2018

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer the Coalition for American Heritage's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations.

The Coalition for American Heritage ("the Coalition") is an organization comprised of heritage professionals, scholars, small businesses, non-profits and history-lovers across the country. Our 300,000 members work together to promote our nation's commitment to historic preservation. Preserving historic resources helps stabilize neighborhoods, attract investment, create jobs, generate tax revenues, support small businesses, and power America's heritage tourism industry.

To continue our country's proud tradition of preservation, the Coalition urges robust funding for all of the U.S. Department of the Interior's historic preservation and cultural management programs, and for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Respectfully, the Coalition urges the Committee to approve the following funding levels for FY19:

- National Park Service (NPS): \$2.47 billion
- NPS Historic Preservation Fund: \$110.5 million.
- NPS Deferred Maintenance: \$459 million
- NPS Office of International Affairs: \$1.5 million
- NPS Centennial Challenge Matching Grants: \$23 million
- NPS National Heritage Areas: \$20.321 million
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cultural Resources Management: \$19.131 million
- BLM National Landscape Conservation System: \$40.5 million
- Department of Interior Land and Conservation Fund (LWCF): continued increase toward the full \$900 million in dedicated funding from offshore mineral leasing revenues
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA): \$152.849 million
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): \$152.849 million

National Park Service

We urge the Committee to fund the NPS at the FY18 enacted level of \$2.47 billion and to reject the Administration's request of \$2.154 billion, a \$323 million cut from FY18. The Coalition strongly opposes this proposed budget cut.

The popularity of our national parks is at an all-time high. Our country cannot afford unwarranted reductions to visitor services and cuts to the responsible stewardship of our historic and cultural resources. The NPS is responsible for 417 National Park System units. Over the past 20 years, more than 40 new parks have been added to the park system, many of which preserve historic places and themes that have been underrepresented within the system.

Within the \$2.47 billion requested, we recommend robust funding for Resource Stewardship, including \$1 million in initial funding for the African American Civil Rights Network. In January 2018, Congress enacted, and the President signed, the African American Civil Rights Network Act. The historic network will preserve and protect the memory of the people and places that were significant in the struggle to secure equal rights for African Americans during the modern civil rights era (1939-1968). The network will open opportunities for all Americans to appreciate the contributions of those Americans who worked to ensure equality for all.

NPS Historic Preservation Fund

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$110.5 million in FY19 for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and to reject the Administration's proposed funding level of \$32.6 million for this vital program that, in partnership with states, local governments and tribes, is the cornerstone of our country's historic preservation initiatives.

By appropriating \$96.9 million for FY18, and similarly robust funding levels in previous fiscal years, Congress has recognized the HPF's enormous value to communities across America. The Administration's \$32.6 million request would substantially harm historic preservation efforts by, among other things, eliminating five grant programs, which would dramatically curtail states' and tribes' ability to perform project reviews that are required by the National Historic Preservation Act and the Federal Historic Tax Credit.

Within the \$110.5 million request, we recommend the following funding breakdown:

- \$55 million for State Historic Preservation Officers for heritage preservation and protection programs, including \$2 million for a new competitive grant program to digitize, map and survey historic and cultural resources.
- \$15 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, including \$2 million for a competitive grant program to digitize, map and survey tribal historic and cultural resources.
- \$15 million for competitive grants to document, interpret, and preserve historic sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement.
- \$15 million for Save America's Treasures grants for the preservation of nationally significant sites, structures and artifacts.
- \$5 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and repair historic buildings.
- \$5 million for preservation grants to revitalize historic properties of national, state, and local significance.
- \$500,000 for competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties associated with communities currently underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks.

NPS Deferred Maintenance

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$459 million in FY19 to address the deferred maintenance backlog at America's national parks. Almost half of the current backlog concern historic assets. Robust investments in this area will contribute to the successful preservation of historic sites and structures and other NPS cultural resources. Without critically needed funding for repair and rehabilitation, these critical sites, buildings and artifacts that draw visitors to our national parks assets risk further deterioration and potential loss.

Within the \$459 million request, we recommend the following funding breakdown:

- o \$149 million for Line Item Construction projects
- o \$150 million for Repair and Rehabilitation
- o \$160 million for Cyclic Maintenance

· Line Item Construction projects: We support the Administration's \$149 million FY19 request, a \$20 million increase from the FY18 enacted level. This is a positive step toward addressing the needs of the highest priority non-transportation assets.

· Repair and Rehabilitation: We recommend \$150 million, a \$16 million increase above the FY18 enacted level.

· Cyclic Maintenance: We recommend \$160 for cyclic maintenance, a \$19 million increase above the FY18 enacted level. These efforts are critical to preventing assets from degrading to the point of needing repair. Performing regular maintenance will help prevent an increase in the number of deferred maintenance projects.

National Park Service: Office of International Affairs

We urge a \$1.5 million FY19 appropriation for the NPS Office of International Affairs. This funding would ensure that the United States can robustly engage in and support the World Heritage Program. The Administration proposed to consolidate the Southwest Border Protection Program into the Office of International Affairs program while simultaneously reducing funding by almost \$680,000. We are very concerned that reduced funding will mean that the Office of International Affairs will not have the resources necessary to fulfill its mission effectively.

NPS Centennial Matching Grants

We urge the Committee to fund the Centennial Challenge at \$23 million, the same as the FY18 enacted level. This critical initiative provides funds to match private donations for signature NPS projects and programs. Through this funding, the NPS can leverage private contributions to enhance visitor services and improve cultural and natural resources at national parks.

NPS National Heritage Areas

We recommend funding for the Heritage Partnership Program and our National Heritage Areas (NHAs) at the FY18 enacted level of \$20.321 million. We urge the Committee to reject the Administration's proposal to eliminate NHA funding, which would severely impair the sustainability of the program and render many NHAs unable to fulfill their mission.

BLM Cultural Resources Management

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$19.131 million, a modest increase of \$2 million above the FY18 enacted level. The increase is necessary to fulfill the BLM's substantial workload requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act, for land use assessments (up to 13,000 per year) and inventory and protection of cultural resources. The increase would support surveys of sensitive areas, site protection and stabilization projects for sites vulnerable to unauthorized activities and damage due to fire, erosion and changing water levels. Increased funding would also support updated predictive modeling and data analysis to enhance the BLM's ability to address large-scale, cross-jurisdictional land-use projects. To support the effective implementation of the increased appropriation level, we further recommend that the Committee encourage the BLM to promote inventory information-sharing with state and tribal historic preservation officers.

BLM National Landscape Conservation System

We urge a \$40.5 million FY19 appropriation for the National Landscape Conservation System, a \$3.6 million increase over the FY18 enacted level. An increase in base funding will prevent critical damage to 36 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Wild Scenic Rivers. Increased funding will ensure proper management and provide for a quality visitor experience.

We urge the Committee to reject the Administration's proposed cuts to the Oregon and California Grants Lands programs, which would result in reduced visitor services, decreased maintenance and care of trails, and fewer educational and interpretive resources.

BLM Land Water Conservation Fund

We urge the Committee to reject the Administration's drastic cuts to the LWCF. Instead, we urge the Committee to continue increasing LWCF funding toward the full \$900 million from offshore mineral leasing revenues that is dedicated to the LWCF annually. Many of our country's most significant historic and cultural landscapes have been permanently protected through LWCF investments, including Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Park, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Hopewell Culture National Historic Park. In total, more than \$550 million has been invested to acquire historic sites and 137,000 acres in 162 NPS units.

Within LWCF funding, we urge the Committee to fund the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) at \$10 million in FY19. Through public-private partnerships, the ABPP has helped communities to preserve more than 100 historic battlefields in 42 states and territories. In protecting the hallowed ground upon which so many Americans fought and died, the ABPP preserves a valuable part of our shared history.

National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities

The Coalition urges the Committee to fund the NEA and the NEH at \$152.849 million in FY19, the same level of funding enacted for FY18. We strongly urge the Committee to reject the Administration's proposal to eliminate funding for both the NEA and the NEH.

Robust funding for the NEA and NEH is critical to communities across America. For example, support from the NEA has created programs like Arts and Shadows at the Shadows-on-the-Teche in Louisiana that put regionally-based artists in residence at the site, resulting in programming that attracted new audiences and served as a prototype for broader arts-focused programming that draws people to the town's commercial district. The NEA is also a collaborator in the Blue Star Museums program, which offers America's active duty military families free admission to more than 2,000 museums every summer. NEH support has brought teachers from around the country to learn about history in the places that it was made, and to carry those experiences back to their classrooms.

The Coalition is grateful to the Committee for the opportunity to offer its perspective on FY19 appropriations for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The Coalition stands ready to work with the Committee on finding common ground to achieve the FY19 funding levels that will support and enhance historic preservation.