



**Statement of Marion Werkheiser,
Policy Director for the Coalition for American Heritage
Fiscal Year 2022 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
April 16, 2021**

Chairwoman Pingree, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer the Coalition for American Heritage's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) 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 350,000 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.

We appreciate the strong funding provided to historic preservation programs in the FY21 Interior Appropriations legislation. Investing in these programs will help ensure the continuance of our country's proud tradition of preservation. As you work to address funding levels for FY22, the Coalition requests 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 FY22:

- NPS Historic Preservation Fund: \$150 million
- NPS Office of International Affairs: \$2.1 million
- NPS National Heritage Areas and Heritage Partnership Program: \$32 million
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cultural Resources Management: \$21.131 million
- BLM National Conservation Lands: \$65.131 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): \$176 million
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): \$225 million

National Park Service

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 418 National Park System units. Over the past 20 years, more than 40 new parks have been added to the park system. Many recent additions preserve historic places and themes that have traditionally been underrepresented within the system.

Within the requested funds, we recommend robust funding for Resource Stewardship, including \$1 million for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, \$1 million for the African

American Civil Rights Network, and \$1 million for the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network. Funding for these popular initiatives provides the public with valuable educational resources that honor and preserve our country's rich African-American heritage and history for future generations.

NPS Historic Preservation Fund

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$150 million in FY22 for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), a vital program that, in partnership with states, local governments and tribes, is the cornerstone of our country's historic preservation initiatives.

Within the \$150 million request, we recommend the following funding breakdown:

- \$60 million for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) for heritage preservation and protection programs.
- \$24 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs).
- \$19 million for competitive grants to document, interpret, and preserve historic sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement.
- \$7 million for the competitive grants program to preserve the sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for all Americans, including women, Latinos, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives, and LGBTQ Americans.
- \$20 million for Save America's Treasures grants for the preservation of nationally significant sites, structures, and artifacts.
- \$10 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and repair historic buildings.
- \$9 million for Paul Bruhn preservation grants to revitalize historic properties of national, state, and local significance.
- \$1 million 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 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.

We recommend the following funding breakdown:

- \$140 million for Line-Item Construction projects
- \$150 million for Repair and Rehabilitation
- \$205 million for Cyclic Maintenance

Line-Item Construction projects: We support \$140 million toward addressing the needs of the highest priority non-transportation assets.

Repair and Rehabilitation: We recommend \$150 million, a \$14 million increase above the FY21 enacted level. The Committee's support for these programs has been very helpful in addressing the long-term maintenance needs at America's national parks over the past several years.

Cyclic Maintenance: We recommend \$205 for cyclic maintenance, a \$16.8 million increase above the FY20 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 \$2.1 million FY22 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. Communities throughout the country are pursuing nominations of sites in their area to the World Heritage List, including Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in Ohio and Mount Vernon in Virginia. The Office of International Affairs is critical to shepherding advocates through the nominations process.

NPS National Heritage Areas

We recommend \$32 million in funding for the Heritage Partnership Program and our National Heritage Areas (NHAs). Through the use of public-private partnerships, NHAs support historic preservation, heritage tourism, and recreation. These programs collaborate with communities to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

BLM Cultural Resources Management

We appreciate the Committee's ongoing oversight of the BLM reorganization and the impacts of the move on BLM's ability to oversee the largest, most diverse collection of historic and cultural resources on America's public lands. We remain very concerned about the staff reductions in the Cultural Resources Division. It is vital that BLM has sufficient staff to support Section 106 reviews, monitor compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and consult with tribes.

To assist staff with providing these key services, we respectfully request that the committee provide \$21.131 million for BLM Cultural Resources Management. We ask that the Committee support BLM efforts to fill key staff vacancies, especially those cultural resources positions stipulated in the BLM Tribal Relations Manual, including: National Curator/NAGPRA Coordinator, National Tribal Coordinator, and 10 of the 12 state office Tribal Coordinator positions.

This funding would also support ongoing collaboration with state historic preservation offices to standardize and integrate cultural resources data for BLM lands through the National Cultural Resources Information Management System. Strengthening BLM's ability to update predictive modeling and data analysis will enhance the agency's ability to address large-scale, cross-jurisdictional land-use projects.

BLM National Conservation Lands

We urge a \$65.131 million FY21 appropriation for the National Conservation Lands. 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 managed by BLM. Increased funding will help achieve President Biden's goal of conserving at least 30% of our lands and waters by 2030.

BLM Land Water Conservation Fund

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 \$20 million in FY22. 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.

Independent Agencies: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

We request \$8 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), to fund its work to administer the rulemaking process for historic preservation law, assist in resolving conflicts from historic resource reviews, and provide advice on historic preservation.

National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities

The Coalition urges the Committee to fund the NEA at \$176 million and the NEH at \$225 million each in FY22. Robust funding for the NEA and NEH is critical to communities across America. NEH Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions — such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, cultural organizations, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities — improve their ability to preserve and care for their significant humanities collections, which may include books and journals, archives and manuscripts, prints and photographs, architectural and cartographic records, decorative and fine art objects, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, furniture, historical objects, and digital materials.

The Coalition is grateful to the Committee for the opportunity to offer its perspective on FY22 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 FY22 funding levels that will support and enhance historic preservation.