World Heritage in the United States of America

THE U.S. TENTATIVE LIST 2008

On behalf of the people of the United States, I am pleased to present this new U.S. World Heritage Tentative List.

These 14 cultural and natural sites represent special places worthy of recognition as World Heritage Sites, the United Nations' voluntary international program that recognizes and preserves our planet's most important places.

This new Tentative List was selected from among 35 worthy properties that voluntarily applied to be included on the list.

Application for or inclusion of any property in the U.S. Tentative List, or even the World Heritage List itself, does not affect the legal status of, or an owner's rights in, a property under U.S. jurisdiction. The United Nations only approves projects recommended by the project's host country and the participation on the part of the property owners is strictly voluntary.

A generation ago, the United States took a leadership role in the creation of the World Heritage Convention and has taken a major role in shaping its progress during the ensuing three decades. In September 1978, meeting in Washington, D.C., the World Heritage Committee inaugurated the World Heritage List by inscribing the very first sites. In addition to hosting the meeting as Chair of the World Heritage Committee, the United States was honored by having both Yellowstone National Park and Mesa Verde National Park included among the first 12 World Heritage Sites. At that time, there were only 39 nations participating in the World Heritage Convention. There are now 185 signatory countries to the Convention, and 851 sites in 140 countries have been listed.

The completion of this new U.S. World Heritage Tentative List, or list of candidate sites for the World Heritage List, marks a major step in reinvigorating the participation of the United States in the World Heritage Program. The United States has served as an elected member of the World Heritage Committee since 2005, our fourth term since the Convention was adopted.

In addition, the U.S. rejoined UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) as a full member in 2003. The World Heritage Program functions independently under the general auspices of UNESCO.

There are 20 World Heritage Sites already in the United States. However, the United States has not nominated any new sites to the World Heritage List since 1994.

Our list contains an impressive range of historic, cultural, and natural places of which the United States can justly be proud. These properties can well represent America's contributions to the world's heritage in the years just ahead.

Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of the Interior

Introduction

The 14 places or groups of sites featured here represent just a glimpse of the impressive variety of treasures in the United States of America that are outstandingly important works of both humanity and nature. This list is our opportunity, through the means of the World Heritage Convention, to invite the rest of the world to join in recognizing their value. From New York to American Samoa, from 200 million years ago to the 20th century, and from the bottom of the ocean to the western desert, these places tell about the richness and variety of human life, and the life of the earth, that we are fortunate to have within our national boundaries.

The UNESCO World Heritage List recognizes the most significant cultural and natural sites on the planet. The United States was the prime architect of the World Heritage Convention, an international treaty for the preservation of sites of global significance proposed by President Richard M. Nixon in 1972, and the U.S. was the first nation to ratify it. The impetus behind this effort was a desire to promote American conservation ideals in a way that would benefit the most important places around the world. Today, 185 countries are parties to the Convention, making it the most nearly universal treaty for cultural preservation and nature conservation in human history. Its purpose is to enhance worldwide understanding and appreciation and international cooperation for heritage conservation, and to recognize and preserve exceptional natural and cultural properties around the world that have "outstanding universal value" to humanity.

As of May 2008, the World Heritage List includes 851 sites in 140 countries. Of these, 660 are cultural sites and 166 are natural areas, with 25 mixed sites that demonstrate both natural and cultural values. The United States has 20 World Heritage Sites, eight of which are cultural and 12 of which are natural. There are more natural sites listed in the United States than in any other country except Australia.

The Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks of the U.S. Department of the Interior is responsible for U.S. nominations to the World Heritage List, which are submitted through the U.S. Department of State. The U.S. National Commission for UNESCO and the Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage have advisory roles. The National Park Service Office of International Affairs (NPS OIA) is the staff-level support office. Detailed information on the World Heritage program, the way this Tentative List was developed, and the process of submitting nominations, which must be approved by the 21-nation World Heritage Committee, can be found on the NPS OIA web site, http://www.nps.gov/oia.

A Tentative List is a national list of properties that appear to meet the eligibility criteria for nomination to the World Heritage List (see page 41 for the criteria). The World Heritage Committee has issued *Operational Guidelines* asking participating nations to provide Tentative Lists to help evaluate properties for World Heritage designation. These annotated lists describe the sites that countries are likely to nominate in the next few years. In order to be nominated to the World Heritage List, a property must already have been included on that country's Tentative List. All national Tentative Lists appear on the World Heritage Centre's web site, http://whc.unesco.org.

Inclusion on the U.S. Tentative List does not confer any official status on a site; it means only that the site appears to meet the World Heritage criteria and may be nominated by the United States in the future. It does not guarantee that any site will be nominated or, if nominated, that it will be accepted for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee makes the final decisions on which sites are designated as World Heritage Sites.

The World Heritage Committee's *Operational Guidelines* recommend that a nation review its Tentative List at least once every decade. The original 1982 U.S. Tentative List was outdated. Its preparation did not comply with current standards for owner support, notification of interested parties, or public participation. No U.S. nominations to the World Heritage List have been made since 1994. As the World Heritage Committee has requested that nations submit no more than two nominations per year, the new U.S. Tentative List could have included as many as 20 sites. As it stands, the new U.S. Tentative List includes 14 sites that have been selected from among 35 proposed for consideration by their owners.

Except for the initial nominations that will be chosen in 2008, no decisions have been made on the sequence in which the properties on the Tentative List will be considered for nomination. This is likely to be an annual consideration that will include an opportunity for owners and the public to comment. Decisions will take account of how readily nominations can be completed with all the necessary components, especially master plans and protective measures, and any further research that may be needed. All of the analyses and recommendations will be subject to further discussion, verification, and refinement as the Tentative List is used during the next decade and as nominations are prepared.

Rotunda, Virginia State Capitol (Thomas Jefferson Buildings)

The U.S. has three legal prerequisites for nomination of a site to the World Heritage List: a property must have been officially determined to be nationally significant; all of the property's owners must concur in writing; and the owners and the U.S. Department of the Interior must be able to agree on and present full evidence of legal protection for the property at the time it is nominated. Property owners were asked to express their interest by completing an application form for the Tentative List. Applicants were also asked to determine the support of relevant stakeholders, which, although not a legal requirement for inclusion in the Tentative List, is highly desirable.

The World Heritage Committee's *Operational Guidelines* ask countries to wait one year after submitting their Tentative Lists before sending forward any nominations for sites on the Lists. Therefore, because the U.S. submitted its new Tentative List in January 2008, the first nomination of a site could be submitted in early 2009 for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its annual session in the summer of 2010.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Application for or inclusion of any property in the U.S. Tentative List—or even the World Heritage List itself—does not affect the legal status of, or an owner's rights in, a property under U.S. jurisdiction. Participation on the part of the property owner is strictly voluntary. By the time of nomination, the U.S. Department of the Interior must have been able to document the protection of the property and, in cooperation with the owner, devise any additional measures that may be necessary to protect the property in perpetuity.

POSSIBLE FUTURE STEPS

Having fewer than 20 properties on the Tentative List makes it possible to consider adding properties to the List within the next ten years, and a variety of strategies for doing so might be considered. In addition to revisiting the properties already identified for future consideration (see page 38), such strategies might include targeting specific properties or types of properties (e.g., natural sites, thematic areas) to encourage proposals. Such an approach could also be used in the event that some of the 14 properties on the new Tentative List are not nominated or accepted for the World Heritage List.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Viable Nominations The NPS OIA priority in the review process was to recommend only properties that are likely to be successfully nominated. Reviewers were mindful of how the World Heritage Committee and its advisory bodies have applied the World Heritage criteria, particularly in recent years. Tracking both successful and unsuccessful nominations in the past, both by the U.S. and by other countries, has provided guidance as to which approaches are most likely to result in World Heritage listings.

Seip Mound (Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks)

Types of Applications The new U.S. Tentative List includes types of properties not represented among current U.S. World Heritage Sites, such as modern architecture and marine resources. However, there were no applications for a number of important and less-represented property types, including those representing certain achievements in science and technology, such as bridges, skyscrapers, and places of scientific observation and experimentation. This appears to reflect, in part, lack of interest on the part of private owners. On the other hand, some applications rested their main arguments on the outstanding universal value of ideas or events that were not always well associated with the intact physical properties that must be the basis for World Heritage nominations.

Nature of Applicants The applicants represented a diverse mix of federal agencies, state and local governments, and private organizations and property owners. As 17 of the 20 current U.S. World Heritage sites are national park units in whole or part, this should result in a wider variety of forms of ownership of nominated sites.

Balance between Nature and Culture There are more natural sites (12) than cultural sites (eight) among the current U.S. World Heritage listings, but the applications received for the new Tentative List were predominantly cultural (29, as opposed to six natural). Of those included in the 2008 Tentative List, four are natural, nine are cultural, and one is a mixed site. If all the sites included in the new Tentative List were successfully inscribed on the World Heritage List, the numbers of U.S. World Heritage Sites would be almost evenly balanced between nature and culture. In the World Heritage List as a whole, there are many more cultural sites than natural ones.

Possibilities of Joint International Nominations At least two of the new U.S. Tentative List sites appear to have some potential for eventual inclusion in joint nominations with other countries (Franciscan Missions of San Antonio and Fagatele Bay). Some sites that have been identified as meriting future consideration may also ultimately yield international nominations (e.g., Moravian Bethlehem and the Underground Railroad).

Comparison with Previous List Very few properties appear on both the 2008 Tentative List and the previous one from 1982, for several reasons. The principal one is that, in the present case, all properties were given close scrutiny as to their qualifications and the practicalities of actually nominating them, such as ensuring property owner support, as opposed to the hypothetical consideration properties were given a quarter-century ago when no application or other formal documentation was required. Also, changes in thinking about scientific and cultural values, and progress in identifying nationally significant sites have, since 1982, enlarged the pool from which potential candidates for the World Heritage List can be drawn and made some sites of greater interest now than in the past.

Obsolescence or Absence of Master Plans and Protective Measures The World Heritage Committee has been very scrupulous in recent years in insisting that sites have master plans and other protective measures in place (or at least well in progress) before it is willing to list them. Some properties on the new Tentative List are not well situated in regard to that requirement. Particularly for privately owned sites, master plans and protective measures will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, as specified in the U.S. World Heritage program regulations.

Limited Public Awareness The lack of widespread public knowledge, interest, or advocacy for the World Heritage program also appeared to contribute to the absence of applications for some well-known properties, particularly where it would have been necessary to organize groups of properties for application. It was also reflected in a number of inaccurate news reports related to applications.

Consequences of Requiring Owner Consent The federal requirement for owner concurrence necessarily limits which properties can be nominated. This requirement makes it quite difficult for the U.S. to construct viable nominations for historic districts with more than a small number of properties.

Quality of Documentation The quality of documentation in the applications was uneven: comparisons between sites, placement within a global context, and the preparation of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value seemed especially difficult for many volunteer preparers. Preparing World Heritage documentation is considerably different from preparing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. As the applicants were naturally acting as advocates for their sites, the objective comparative information needed by the reviewers was often lacking. These issues complicated the task of recommending sites for inclusion in the Tentative List.

Properties Not Recommended Some properties, though possessing national significance, were judged not likely to meet the stringent criteria and other requirements for inclusion in the World Heritage List. Others presented issues that the World Heritage Committee is unlikely to resolve in the short term or did not provide adequate information on which to base a recommendation for World Heritage nomination. They were not included.

Organization of this Book

The U.S. Tentative List sites, and those with potential for future consideration, are described in the following pages. Within the categories of cultural, mixed, and natural sites, the sites appear in alphabetical order. The official version submitted to UNESCO includes only the 14 properties on the Tentative List, and uses a more technical format required by the World Heritage Committee. The descriptions that follow are based primarily on the applications and addenda that were supplied by the property owners or their representatives. The full texts of the applications and addenda submitted by the owners of all 35 sites for which Tentative List applications were received can be consulted on the National Park Service's Office of International Affairs web site, www.nps.gov/oia.

THOMAS JEFFERSON BUILDINGS
VIRGINIA

Poplar Forest, *Bedford County*
State Capitol, *Richmond*

These two buildings are proposed as a joint extension to the World Heritage listing that includes Monticello and the University of Virginia, completing the group of Jefferson's primary surviving works. They reflect his familiarity with Classical, Renaissance, and contemporary French architecture. The Virginia State Capitol in Richmond (1785–98), as the first adaptation of the Roman temple form to a governmental building, has had enduring influence on the use of Classical models for such structures. Poplar Forest is Jefferson's rural retreat in Bedford County that was begun before he retired from the U.S. presidency in 1809. The two-story brick house is built in an octagon around a central cube and is surrounded by the landscape he designed.

World Heritage Criteria:

(i) *Thomas Jefferson's architectural works are masterpieces of his creative genius. Jefferson was one of the major figures in 18th and early 19th century Neoclassical architecture, adapting his designs specifically to an American context.*

(iv) *Jefferson's designs are outstanding examples of the international Neoclassical movement in architecture, drawing on traditions of Roman architecture, Renaissance interpretations of it by Palladio, and the French domestic architecture of his own day. His landscape work at Poplar Forest drew on English sources and reflected English and French concepts of the relationship of a building to its natural setting. The State Capitol pays clear homage to its Roman temple antecedent but adapts it to governmental purposes.*

(vi) *Jefferson's architecture gave tangible form to his ideals, especially as they derived from republican Rome, which he deemed an inspiration for the new United States. With the Virginia State Capitol, he created the precedent for a long era in which numerous public buildings were to be constructed on Classical models. All of his works reflect the Vitruvian "Man of Perfect Proportions," a figure that dominated European aesthetics from antiquity onward with a vision of a heroic mankind proportionately in accord with ideal geometric shapes.*

Virginia State Capitol: (opposite left) Governor's Conference Room; (opposite right) House Chamber; (above) exterior, showing the Roman temple form used by Jefferson

Poplar Forest: (below) Aerial view looking north toward the Blue Ridge Mountains; (right) two views of the exterior of the house

Criteria for Selection to the World Heritage List

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria. These criteria are explained in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* which, besides the text of the Convention, is the main working tool on World Heritage. The criteria are regularly revised by the World Heritage Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.

Selection Criteria:

i To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

ii To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning, or landscape design;

iii To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

iv To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

v To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land use, or sea use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

vi To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

vii To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

viii To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

ix To be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

x To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for *in-situ* conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.