



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION™

NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL TRUST NAMES MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND ENVIRONS, *CONCORD, LEXINGTON, LINCOLN AND BEDFORD, MASS.*, ONE OF AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES

Washington, D.C. (May 29, 2003) – On April 19, 1775, a series of bloody skirmishes along the road from Boston to Concord marked a momentous turning point in America's struggle for independence. More than two centuries later, a different kind of struggle has engulfed the ground where British soldiers and America militia – the famed Minute Men – met. The source of the trouble is Hanscom Field, a busy regional airport where heavy air traffic, unchecked noise and visual intrusions are taking a heavy toll on Minute Man National Historical Park, located right next door, and other historic places nearby. Concerned citizens want Hanscom Field transferred to a local authority that would limit the volume and type of aircraft operations. Until that happens, the cradle of the Revolution will remain embattled.

To highlight the threat of future expansion of the Massachusetts Port Authority's Hanscom Field to this vital piece of American heritage, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** today named Minute Man National Historical Park and its environs to its 2003 list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*.

"Minute Man National Historical Park and the towns surrounding it include more than 1,000 sites of enormous historic significance," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust. "This is not an urban area – in fact, most of the historic sites are located in undeveloped or sparsely developed areas. The natural quiet of this rural setting is an integral part of the visitor experience, an experience that is shattered by the constant sound of jets blaring overhead."

The History Channel® will feature the list on July 3, 2003 at 9 p.m. EDT/PDT in a one-hour documentary special entitled, "America's Most Endangered." The show, hosted by Roger Mudd, is part of the Save Our History™ campaign, The History Channel's award-winning national initiative dedicated to historic preservation and history education.

History: Minute Man National Historical Park was created in 1959 to protect historic sites and landscapes associated with the opening battles of the American Revolution. It includes the North Bridge, where "the shot heard round the world" was fired on April 19, 1775, and the historic Battle Road, scene of that day's bloody running battle from Concord to Boston, which marked the beginning of America's struggle for independence. Within the park and the four adjacent towns are more than 1,000 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, including Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond and the homes of many prominent literary figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Louisa May Alcott.

Threat: The noise, visual intrusions, and vehicular traffic generated by the Hanscom Field airport are already having a severe negative impact on these priceless, beloved historic sites, and on the experience of more than 1.6 million annual visitors from all over the world. Additional growth proposed by Massport would devastate them.

Solution: Potential solutions include federal legislation that would limit the number and type of operations at Hanscom; a binding agreement among Massport, the towns, and the Federal Aviation Administration to accomplish the same goal; and/or transferring the airport to an alternate authority whose mission statement would expressly include the preservation of historic sites. Without permanent, enforceable protection from the threat of unlimited

airport expansion, this area – the birthplace of the American Revolution, cradle of the American environmental movement, and home of the American literary renaissance – will remain embattled.

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places has identified nearly 150 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. While a listing does not ensure the protection of a site or guarantee funding, the designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. Whether these sites are urban districts or rural landscapes, Native American landmarks or 20th-century sports arenas, entire communities or single buildings, the list spotlights historic places across America that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy.

Recent 11 Most successes: Since the listing of Virginia's **Chancellorsville Battlefield** in 1998, the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously not to rezone an 800-acre parcel of core battlefield for 2,000 houses and 1.2 million square feet of commercial and retail space. The Board's decision followed a grassroots campaign led by the Coalition to Save Chancellorsville Battlefield, the Civil War Preservation Trust and the National Trust. However, while this battle is won, we cannot claim victory as another development proposal is already underway. Since appearing on the 2001 list because it was threatened with demolition, Oklahoma City's **Gold Dome** has been acquired by a new owner who will rehabilitate it for use as a business and international cultural center. And at the **Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center** in Leavenworth, Kans., 39 formerly imperiled buildings will be rehabbed for new uses. At the end of February, the Veterans Administration announced the property will be used to support current VA operations, including housing. The property was on the 2000 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Places.

Sites on the 2003 list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* are:

URBAN HOUSES OF WORSHIP, *Nationwide* – Whether churches, synagogues, meetinghouses or mosques, America's historic urban religious structures are among the nation's most significant cultural treasures. In addition to being irreplaceable architectural landmarks, they are vital community anchors – feeding the poor, providing meeting space for Girl Scouts and AA groups, and offering social services ranging from daycare to homeless shelters. Today, they are falling victim to changing demographics, limited capital budgets and soaring real-estate values.

OCMULGEE OLD FIELDS TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTY, *Macon, Ga.* – Embracing evidence of 12,000-year-old Ice Age settlements, numerous burial and ceremonial mounds, and valuable wildlife habitat, this one-time home of the Muscogee Creek Nation is threatened by a proposed multi-lane highway.

AMELIA EARHART MEMORIAL BRIDGE, *Atchison, Kans.* – Opened in 1938 and now a memorial to a world-famous hometown heroine, this Missouri River span is slated for demolition and replacement with a new bridge, even though it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

EAST SIDE AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS, *Decorah, Iowa* – A prominent local landmark and time-honored symbol of the hopes and dreams of generations of Decorah residents, the 1896 East Side School is empty, deteriorated and – along with the adjoining Middle School built in 1922 – facing an uncertain future.

ZUNI SALT LAKE AND SANCTUARY ZONE, *Catron and Cibola counties, N.Mex.* – Considered sacred by no less than six Native American tribes, this lake and its surrounding area are threatened by plans to strip-mine coal and build a 44-mile rail line that will destroy many burial and cultural sites and possibly drain the lake itself.

LITTLE MANILA, *Stockton, Calif.* – Three modest buildings are the last survivors of the once-bustling neighborhood that housed the largest Filipino community outside the Philippines – and now they could be demolished to make way for a strip-mall parking lot.

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND ENVIRONS, *Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and Bedford, Mass.* – Heavy air traffic, unchecked noise and visual intrusions from a busy regional airport are taking a devastating toll on many important landmarks – especially this national park on the site where the American Revolution began.

TWA TERMINAL AT JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, *New York, N.Y.* – The Port Authority plans to demolish portions of Eero Saarinen's 1962 curvilinear masterpiece and construct a hulking new building behind it, rendering the modernist icon useless for aviation purposes.

BATHHOUSE ROW, HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK, *Garland County, Ark.* – Known for their eclectic architecture and decorative flourishes, six of the eight surviving buildings along Bathhouse Row are vacant and deteriorated and in need of viable plans for preservation and reuse.

UNITED STATES MARINE HOSPITAL, *Louisville, Ky.* – Constructed in 1851 by an act of Congress, this 3-story Greek Revival landmark served the community and the nation faithfully for more than a century but is now unused and crumbling.

MICHIGAN BOULEVARD GARDEN APARTMENTS, *Chicago, Ill.* – One of the nation’s foremost examples of visionary workforce housing, this 1929 apartment complex, constructed by philanthropist Julius Rosenwald has been vacant for years, even though it has great reuse potential.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and 23 historic sites work with the Trust's quarter-million members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the Trust's web site at www.nationaltrust.org.

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