



FROM:
Preservation League of New York State
44 Central Avenue
Albany NY 12206
www.preservenys.org

CONTACT:
Colleen M. Ryan, Director of Communications
518.462.5658, ext. 17

NATIONAL
TRUST
FOR
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION®

EMBARGOED UNTIL May 19, 2010 at 3:00 a.m. ET

**National Trust for Historic Preservation Names
America's State Parks & State-Owned Historic Sites to its
2010 List of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places
*New York Spotlited as Prime Example***

ALBANY, NY – May 19, 2010 – The Preservation League of New York State, Parks & Trails New York, not-for-profit advocacy groups and members of the New York State Senate and Assembly joined officials from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in announcing that America's State Parks and State-Owned Historic Sites have been named to the Trust's annual list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

“Across the nation, state parks and state-owned historic sites are on the chopping block,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “Our state parks preserve priceless landscapes and cultural heritage and provide critical opportunities for outdoor recreation, not to mention their important role in generating revenue and creating jobs for local and regional economies through heritage tourism. We recognize that states are experiencing significant fiscal challenges, but park systems and sites are a legacy created and maintained by states even through the leanest times, for the enjoyment, wellness, and enlightenment of the public. In the current troubled economy, Americans are foregoing more lavish vacations and using their state parks and sites more than ever. We cannot afford to abandon these treasures now.”

The Preservation League and Parks & Trails New York jointly nominated the New York State Park system to the 11 Most list earlier this year.

(more)

“In February, some 55 State Parks and Historic Sites were threatened with closure, and in March, the Senate and Assembly responded to public outcry and proposed full restoration of funding to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “Now, on May 19, there is still no enacted State Budget, and the possibility of park and historic site closure has become reality, marked by locked gates and loss of services. The League has long believed that chronic underfunding of OPRHP endangered the Empire State’s irreplaceable natural and historic resources. This designation from the National Trust illustrates not only that the threat is real, but that New York is not alone in facing this challenge.”

“New York’s remarkable system of parks and historic sites has long been endangered due to chronic underfunding. Now, it seems they may be threatened with extinction as sites remain shuttered for the season,” said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York. “The willingness to close parks and historic sites demonstrates a blatant disregard for the needs of the system’s 56 million annual visitors, plus a disregard for the nearly \$2 billion annual economic impact that the park system delivers. Recognition of this crisis by the National Trust is a critical step towards the restoration of state parks and historic sites to their rightful place among our essential public services and treasures.”

According to Assemblymember Steven Englebright, Chair of the Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development (D-Setauket), “We, as members of the legislature, fully understand the economic situation our State and Nation is currently struggling with. Yet, we also fully understand the vital role Parks and Historic Sites play in our collective psyche. Parks, with their natural beauty and open space, give our citizens from urban and rural areas alike the opportunity to experience spiritual refreshment; refreshment that is desperately needed during these times of stress and fear. And our Historic Sites give citizens of our State and visitors alike the opportunity to understand and experience first hand the people and events that shaped the very creation and evolution of our Nation. That is why I stand firm with my colleagues in urging the Governor to do his due diligence and allow our Parks and Historic Sites to open.”

“New York’s State Parks are one of our greatest treasures,” said New York State Senator José M. Serrano, Chair of Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation (D-Manhattan/Bronx). “Aside from improving our quality of life through enriching programs and recreational opportunities, they serve as an economic engine, generating \$5 for every \$1 invested by the

(more)

state. However, due to the state's current turbulent fiscal environment, parks have become endangered, and are suffering from abandonment, neglect and deferred maintenance. I am proud to stand beside the National Trust for Historic Preservation on the crusade to protect our State Parks and to alert New Yorkers to the importance of safeguarding these irreplaceable public spaces.”

“The closure of our State Parks and Historic Sites would prove a potentially unrecoverable blow to our already struggling economy,” said Heidi Meka, President of Friends of Johnson Hall in Fulton County. “The short-term gain that our State is looking for would be outweighed by the dramatic long-term effects on our Main Streets. These closures could create an entire generation of children who would not understand what historic preservation is or State Parks are, nor why they are important to our communities.”

For more information about the Preservation League of New York State, please call 518-462-5658 or visit www.preservenys.org. For more information about Parks & Trails New York, please call 518-434-1583 or visit www.ptny.org.

###

To download high resolution images of this year's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places on or after May 19th, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/about-us/press-center/> to register and download high resolution images and video.

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places has identified more than 200 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. 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. The designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. At times, that attention has garnered public support to quickly rescue a treasured landmark; while in other instances, it has been the impetus of a long battle to save an important piece of our history. The list has been so successful in galvanizing preservation efforts across the country and rallying resources to save endangered places that, in just two decades, only seven sites have been lost.