



## National Trust Names Colorado's Pinon Canyon Area One of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places

### ***Area Known for Ranches, Prehistoric Sites and Santa Fe Trail Threatened by U.S. Army's Plans to Expand Maneuver Training Grounds***

**Washington, D.C. (June 14, 2007)** – Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named the area surrounding Colorado's Pinon Canyon Army Maneuver Site to its **2007 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**.

In Southeastern Colorado, under uninterrupted blue skies, lies the Purgatoire River region, a land of unequalled beauty and history. Before it was crossed by the Mountain Route of the famed Santa Fe Trail, this area was tracked by generations of indigenous people following migratory food sources. Spanish conquistadors, mountain men, traders, Mexican settlers and gold seekers all made their way through the area and many left their mark. A treasure trove of history, the Purgatoire River region is a crossroads where the saga of America's westward expansion is intertwined with its prehistoric past. In this expanse of prairie, scenic buttes and river valleys, artifacts – including rock paintings and tools -- and archeological sites span 11,500 years. Part of the area includes the Comanche National Grassland, a 435,000 acre area managed by the U.S. Forest Service, where the largest known trackway of dinosaur footprints in North America can be found, along with numerous historic and archeological sites.

Surrounding the Grassland are dozens of farms and ranches, including many that have been in the same family for generations. Adjacent to this serene backdrop of archeological sites and historic ranches, the U.S. Army currently operates the 240,000-acre Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. Now the Army has announced plans to expand the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site by as much as 418,000 acres across four counties, a move that will bring military exercises and live ammunition to the region, and could lead to forced condemnation of private lands. Historic Santa Fe Trail monuments, prehistoric archeological sites, historic places associated with Native American, Hispanic and Anglo cultures – all could be damaged or destroyed by expanded military exercises. In addition to compromising the continued operation of the historic working ranches and grasslands that are important to the economy of southeast Colorado, the expansion could stunt the growth of heritage tourism and birding, which have recently emerged as new economic growth engines in the area.

“Colorado's farms, ranchlands and historic places are among the state's most valuable assets. The loss of this pristine, scenic open space threatens those who make their living here and those who love this state and the unspoiled natural and cultural resources that make it one of a kind,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “We must take action to protect Colorado's working landscapes or risk the agricultural, environmental and economic consequences of a decision that can't be undone.”

**History:** The Santa Fe Trail, in continual use for 60 years starting in 1821, was America's first great international commercial highway and a prominent route of exploration and western expansion. The Trail winds 1,200 miles across five states from Missouri to New Mexico. In western Kansas the Santa Fe Trail splits into two routes, with the northerly Mountain Route following the Arkansas River Valley into Colorado. Major segments of the original Mountain Route are visible in the Comanche National Grassland, located in Southeast Colorado, and on adjacent private lands. Not far from the Santa Fe Trail is the Purgatoire River valley, a rugged and scenic area that contains hundreds of documented historic and prehistoric archeological sites, most of which have remained almost completely undisturbed. The excellent preservation and high density of sites — with features such as domestic architecture, rock art, discarded tools and food refuse items — make this an ideal area for future research. Human inhabitants, however,



were not the first to call this area home. One hundred-fifty million years ago, brontosaurus and allosaurus roamed the area. Evidence of their time in the valley is found through tracks preserved in limestone, the largest such tracksite in North America.

**Threat:** In 1983, U.S. Department of Defense established the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS), a move which displaced numerous family farms and ranches. The current proposal to expand the Maneuver Site by as much as 418,000 acres threatens to close off a scenic and culturally rich landscape from public access, damage valuable historic sites and harm the regional agricultural and tourism economy. This expansion would accelerate an already alarming rate of loss of grazing and croplands in Colorado. Since 1992, the state has lost 2.89 million acres of agricultural land. Increased rural large-lot development and weakening agricultural economies contribute to the rapid loss of agricultural land, now nearly 690 acres per day, threatening the future of rural Colorado, the statewide economy, and key natural resources.

**Solution:** The community surrounding the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site is actively opposing the planned expansion and has been joined in their effort by Colorado Preservation, Inc. and other groups who hope that concerned citizens, elected officials and the U.S. Army will agree on a solution that ensures that these irreplaceable resources are not lost forever. On the larger issue of agricultural land loss, planners, preservation advocates, land conservation groups and agricultural landowners must work together to craft effective land conservation programs and support the development of markets for local agricultural products. In early 2007, The Colorado General Assembly passed a resolution to oppose the expansion, echoed by Governor Bill Ritter through his signature of the measure.

**Sites on the 2007 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places are:**

**Brooklyn's Industrial Waterfront, N.Y.** -- Once a booming 19th-century industrial waterfront supported by generations of immigrants, Brooklyn's heritage is at risk as historic dockyards and factories are being demolished by developers anxious to cash in on the area's newly hip status.

**El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, N. Mex.** -- The earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States, the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, known for its austere physical beauty, rural solitude and remote isolation, is threatened by a \$225 million commercial Spaceport, a venture planned adjacent to one of the most pristine and sacred segments of the Trail.

**H.H. Richardson House, Brookline, Mass.** -- The last home and studio of famed 19th-century American architect Henry Hobson (H.H.) Richardson – the creator of Boston's much loved landmark Trinity Church – is vacant and vulnerable to demolition unless a preservation-minded buyer comes forth to rescue the legacy of the man who created the "Richardsonian Romanesque" style.

**Hialeah Park Race Course, Hialeah, Fl.** – The drop dead gorgeous 1925 racetrack known for its stunning Mediterranean architecture and pink flamingos, Hialeah Park – frequented by celebrities such as Winston Churchill, Harry Truman and Seabiscuit – is threatened with a planned 3,760-unit condo and apartment complex with nearly one-million-square feet of retail and 200,000-square-feet of office space, which would destroy much of the storied park.

**Historic Places in Transmission line Corridors, Va., W. Va., Md., Pa., N.Y., N.J. Del.** – Seven states – many of them in the Mid- Atlantic region -- are waging battles to protect everything that's irreplaceable about their communities as massive 150-foot tall, 75-foot wide high voltage transmission lines are planned that will blight historic landscapes and usurp private property rights. Proposed lines would cut through private land, publicly held open space, neighborhoods, historic sites, historic districts and magnificent viewsheds.



**Historic Structures in Mark Twain National Forest, Mo.** -- Established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939, the 1.5-million-acre Mark Twain National Forest is known for rocky bluffs, pastoral views and historical sites which speak to the region's rich heritage – from intact 19th-century frontier farmsteads to New Deal-era fire lookouts and ranger stations. Today, due to U.S. Forest Service budget limitations, many properties are vacant, unsecured, deteriorating and threatened with demolition.

**Historic Route 66 Motels, Ill. To Calif.** -- Affectionately called “The Mother Road,” Route 66 is known for quirky roadside attractions and unique mom-and-pop motels, constructed between the late 1920 and late 1950s and often clad in neon. In recent years, Route 66 motels in hot real-estate markets have been torn down at record rates, while in cold real-estate markets, motels languish and are being reclaimed by the forces of nature.

**Minidoka Internment National Monument, Jerome County, Idaho** -- From 1942 to 1945, thousands of Nisei (Japanese American citizens and immigrants of Japanese ancestry) were sent to south central Idaho to live in camps under armed guard at the Minidoka Relocation Center. Today a National Monument, the site, which once contained more than 600 buildings, offers scant visitor services or interpretive information, and is threatened by insensitive local land-use planning, including the proposed siting of a massive animal feed operation just over a mile away.

**Philip Simmons' Workshop and Home, Charleston, S.C.** -- Beloved master blacksmith Philip Simmons has spent the better part of 80 years adorning his hometown with intricate ornamental ironwork – gates, fences, stair rails and window grills -- but with no plans to preserve his home and studio, the legacy of this 95-year-old artisan is in jeopardy.

**Pinon Canyon, Colo.** -- In Southeastern Colorado, under uninterrupted blue skies, the Pinon Canyon area includes scenic buttes, river valleys, family ranches and historic and archeological sites that span 11,500 years. The area is threatened by the U.S. Army's plans to expand its Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site by as much as 408,000 acres, a move that could lead to forced condemnation of private lands and damage or destroy historic Santa Fe Trail monuments, ranches, and historic and prehistoric archeological sites.

**Stewart's Point Rancheria, Sonoma County, Calif.** -- The Kashia Pomo Native American tribe has inhabited this Northern California land for thousands of years. But because a federal program to protect tribal historic resources is seriously under-funded, the Kashia, like many tribes, is losing its sacred and historic sites to looters, vandals and the elements.

### **2007 Marks the 20th Listing of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**

Since 1988, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has used its list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places as a powerful alarm to raise awareness of the serious threats facing the nation's greatest treasures. This year, the Trust celebrates the list as one of the most effective tools in the fight to save the country's irreplaceable architectural, cultural and natural heritage. The list, which has identified 189 sites through 2007, has been so successful in galvanizing preservation efforts across the country and rallying resources to save one-of-a-kind landmarks that in just two decades, an astounding 52 percent of the sites have been saved and rehabilitated. While the fight is not over for many of these historic places, only 6 sites have been lost since the Trust launched the 11 Most Endangered program. For more information, visit [www.nationaltrust.org/11most/20th](http://www.nationaltrust.org/11most/20th).

**America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places** has identified 189 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. For more information, visit [www.nationaltrust.org/11most](http://www.nationaltrust.org/11most).

[High resolution digital images of the sites are available on this site.](#)

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 was founded in 1949 and provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and 28 historic sites work with the Trust's 270,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the Trust's web site at [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).