

HERITAGE

Monthly news update from the Office of History and Archaeology

State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

February 2026

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Office of History and Archaeology News

Staff Updates: The State of Alaska currently has a hiring freeze in place and as of December 31, 2025, OHA has five vacancies. Until hiring waivers are approved and

positions are backfilled, current OHA staff are in acting status: Sarah Meitl, Acting Chief, and Amy Hellmich, Acting Review and Compliance Coordinator.

Save the Date! OHA will be holding our annual workshop on **Friday, April 24, 2026**. Stay tuned for more information on the workshop agenda and registration in future copies of Heritage and other office communications. We look forward to seeing you all!

Contact Information: OHA encourages sending inquiries and requests to the email addresses listed below.

To send by email:

Section 106: oha.revcomp@alaska.gov

State Permits: oha.permits@alaska.gov

AHRS: oha.ibs@alaska.gov

Grants: ohagrants@alaska.gov

Surveys and Research: adam.brinkman@alaska.gov

General Inquiries: dnr.oha@alaska.gov

To send by USPS or other courier:

Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
c/o Office of History and Archaeology
550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1310
Anchorage, AK 99501

America250 Program: The America250-Alaska planning team has accomplished the following tasks to encourage broad, statewide participation:

- Launched Website: <https://america250.alaska.gov/>, from which all Alaskans can submit organization activities to the [online calendar](#);
- Spotlight state and national activities via Facebook: [America250Alaska](#); Instagram: [alaskaamerica250](#); and YouTube: (coming soon);

- Set up Email: america250@alaska.gov

America250 Traveling Exhibit: The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology has created a traveling exhibit, *Alaska's Fields of Dreams: America's Pastime in the 49th State*, for the America250 Alaska project. The exhibit consists of nine free-standing, 80" x 33.5" banners. The banners tell the history of Alaska Baseball, from the Indigenous version of the game to the Alaska Baseball League. Reserving the exhibit is free, except for shipping. To learn more, contact OHA's exhibit coordinator, Katie Ringsmuth, at katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov.

Events

- February 26 – Anchorage Launch, Mountain View Library, 6:30 pm
- March 7 – Iditarod Sled Dog Race Ceremonial Start, Campbell Tract, 10 am – 2pm
- March 19 – Palmer Library, Time TBD
- March 26 – Cook Inlet Historical Society, Anchorage Museum, 7 pm

New Publications! Alaska's Field of Dreamers: America's Pastime in the Far North. To inquire about copies or learn more about America250-Alaska, please contact Katie Ringsmuth at katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov.

Federal Legislation

HPF Funding

On January 3rd, 2026, the *Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 6938)* was signed into law. The legislation outlines funding for several historic preservation priorities for FY 2026, including a top line amount of \$181 million for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and a one-year extension of the program authorization.

The FY 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), which is required before HPF funds can be accessed, is still under review and no information is available regarding the anticipated release date yet. Typically, a 30–60-day window following enactment has occurred, and hopefully the FY 2026 will avoid a repeat of the FY 2025 HPF delay.

Of note, the enacted text of H.R. 6938 still continued to reference the incorrect HPF funding level amount of \$205 million, a figure that Congress intended to correct going forward. To avoid delaying the enactment of the legislation, however, Congress proceeded with the incorrect number and instead having the correction to \$181 million reflect in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026* ([H.R. 7148](#)), which was enacted in the first week of February.

White House Ballroom Lawsuit Updates

A ruling has not yet been issued following the January 22nd preliminary injunction hearing in *National Trust for Historic Preservation v. National Park Service, et al.* However, the Department of Justice recently filed a Motion to Stay the preliminary injunction, prompting a Motion to Strike from the plaintiffs. The filing notes that seeking a stay of a not-yet-issued order, pending a not-yet-filed appeal, is premature. The court opinion is expected later in February. The project is still scheduled for review by the Commission of Fine Arts on February 19th, followed by a final vote by the National Capital Planning Commission on March 5th.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

ACHP's February Business Meeting Update

The ACHP had a business meeting on February 12, 2026, focusing on two issues: the ACHP's review of the current Section 106 regulations, with an eye towards updates, and discussion on the Army's recently proposed Program Comment.

Section 106 Regulations: Vice Chair Voyles detailed the ACHP's intent to move forward with a review of Section 106 regulations with a goal of improving and streamlining them as appropriate. They also expressed a desire for swift action over the next two weeks. Key themes of the discussion were: reinforcing federal agencies' obligations under NHPA; ensuring local voices are not "streamlined" out of the process; clarifying documentation standards to increase predictability; addressing the absence of timelines for federal agencies; and, grounding any potential changes in data.

Army Program Comment: Previously, the U.S. Department of the Army requested a program comment to consider the effects of its warfighting readiness activities and associated infrastructure undertakings on historic properties. At this meeting, ACHP Members approved a motion to request the Army provide Members an additional 45 days to review the proposed program comment.

The next business meeting will take place on June 4, 2026, in Washington, DC. More information can be found here: [ACHP Meets for February Business Meeting | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#) and here: [NCSHPO](#)

President Trump Appoints New ACHP Members

Two new ACHP Members were appointed to the ACHP by President Trump: Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry and Marik String of Washington, DC. Landry was sworn in as the Governor Member on January 20, and String as a General Public Member on January 16. They join seven additional members who were sworn in earlier in January. The ACHP news release can be found here: [President Trump Appoints Two New ACHP Members | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)

Nominations Being Accepted for Joint National Trust/ACHP Award for Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2026 National Trust/Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Award for Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation. This annual award honors outstanding partnerships that advance the preservation of important historic resources and have an impact on the community. It celebrates a project or program in which a federal agency and one or more non-federal partners have achieved an exemplary preservation outcome. The deadline to apply is March 20. More information can be found here: [Award for Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

eLearning

ACHP announces that three of their eLearning courses are now back online! These include “What is Section 106?”; “What Now? Protecting Historic Properties During Disaster Response”; and “Section 304 and Confidentiality”. Visit the eLearning course webpage ([e-Learning Courses | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)) to check out these updated courses.

Preserve the Past, Build for the Future Webinar Series

The ACHP is offering four free webinars this year as part of their “Preserve the Past, Build for the Future 2026” Webinar Series. More information and registration links can be found

here: [Preserve the Past, Build For the Future Webinar Series | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)

Public Project Alerts

Section 106 large project consultation in progress:

- Graphite One Mine near Nome, USACE
- Safer Seward Highway, MP 98.5-118, DOT&PF
- Seward to Glenn Connection PEL, DOT&PF
- Chilkoot National Historic Trail Comprehensive Trail Plan, NPS
- Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Trail Plan Revision, BLM
- Cook Inlet LNG, FERC
- AK LNG, FERC
- Ambler Mining District Access Road, AIDEA
- West Susitna Access Road, USACE

Review and compliance agreement development for large projects in progress:

- West Susitna Access Road, DOT&PF
 - Programmatic Agreement
- USFS Heritage Program
 - Programmatic Agreement Amendment
- USFS Sustainable Cabins
 - Programmatic Agreement
- NPS Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail
 - Programmatic Agreement

For information on how to participate in the process, or on how to review and comment on the above projects, contact Amy Hellmich, amy.hellmich@alaska.gov.

Heritage subscription information

Heritage is produced by the Office of History and Archaeology, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Please send your comments, suggestions, and information by e-mail to dnr.oha@alaska.gov, mail to 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565, or telephone 907.269.8700.

All issues are posted to our web site at dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/ and distributed to subscribers by e-mail. A paper copy can be sent to individuals and organizations that specifically request it.

To be added to the subscription list, please send an e-mail to dnr.oha@alaska.gov with “Heritage, subscribe” in the subject line.

If you do not wish to continue to subscribe to *Heritage*, please send an e-mail to dnr.oha@alaska.gov with “Heritage, unsubscribe” in the subject line.

Much like the OHA office, the Heritage Newsletter is entering a stage of transition. We are working on updating our mailing list and delivery system. We will have more information on the future of the newsletter and its delivery soon.

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Preservation calendar

2026

February 25 – ACHP Webinar: Preserving America’s Historic Music Venues at 2pm EST: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

March 2-5 – 2026 National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week: [National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week 2026](#)

March 7 – Iditarod Sled Dog Race Ceremonial Start, Anchorage – Campbell Tract, 10 am – 2pm

March 24 – ACHP Webinar: Preserving America’s Historic Main Streets at 2pm EST: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

March 25-28 – Joint Conference: Alaska Anthropological Association and Northwest Anthropological Conference, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

April 24 – OHA’s Annual Workshop, Anchorage, Alaska.

April 28 – ACHP Webinar: Preserving America’s Revolutionary-Era Sites at 2pm EST: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

May 27 – ACHP Webinar: Preserving America for the Next Generation: Involving Younger People in Preservation at 2pm EST: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

June 27 – July 4 – Alaska’s Week of Dreams. For a complete schedule of events and other America250-Alaska programs, visit: [Home - America250-Alaska](#).

September TBD – Alaska Historical Society Conference

October 7-10 – Museums Alaska Annual Conference

2027

March 3- 7 – Sharing Our Knowledge conference, Ketchikan. For more information and volunteer opportunities, contact Joaqlin Estus at jmestus50@gmail.com