

## ***HERITAGE***

Monthly news update from the Office of History and Archaeology

State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

May 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 six 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.

OHA wants to give a big thank you and wish Abby Charles, our former Survey Unit Historian, the best of luck in her future endeavors! We will miss you Abby!

We want to thank everyone who was able to attend our workshop on April 24, 2026! Thank you for coming (in-person and virtually) and for the great conversations we had! If you missed it or would like copies of the presentation slides, please visit OHA's webpage at [2026 Annual Workshop](#).

**Alaska Historic Commission:** There was an Alaska Historic Commission meeting on May 14, 2026. The agenda included State Historic Preservation updates, a briefing on America250–Alaska, and review of Certified Local Government grant applications. The meeting agenda can be found here: [Alaska Historical Commission](#).

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

To send by email:

Section 106: [oha.revcomp@alaska.gov](mailto:oha.revcomp@alaska.gov)

State Permits: [oha.permits@alaska.gov](mailto:oha.permits@alaska.gov)

AHRS: [oha.ibs@alaska.gov](mailto:oha.ibs@alaska.gov)

Grants: [ohagrants@alaska.gov](mailto:ohagrants@alaska.gov)

Surveys and Research: [adam.brinkman@alaska.gov](mailto:adam.brinkman@alaska.gov)

General Inquiries: [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto: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 7<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 49<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov)

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](mailto:katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov).

## Alaska Legislation

### State Historic Preservation Officer Update

Governor Dunleavy, effective July 1, 2025, appointed the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources as the Interim State Historic Preservation Officer. On May 14, 2026, the Alaska Legislature confirmed John Crowther as Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, and as such, he will also serve as the Interim SHPO.

## **State Funding for OHA**

On April 14, the Alaska House of Representatives advanced a draft budget (HB 263) for the state's operations next year with a \$1,500 Permanent Fund dividend. This budget also includes a nearly \$158 million one-time funding boost for public schools and tens of millions for disaster relief, transportation, and public assistance programs. This bill would allocate \$6,656,800 for OHA in the *operating* budget, which was retained by the Alaska Senate (May 7, 2026). The Operating Budget is currently under consideration by Conference committee. More information on this bill can be found here: [Alaska State Legislature](#).

On April 2, Governor Dunleavy signed the nearly \$450 million supplemental budget (SB 231) for additional state spending this year. This budget bill covers additional costs incurred by the state this fiscal year, ending in June, including funds for disaster relief, education, corrections, and transportation. This bill allocates \$1,325,500 for OHA.

## **Federal Legislation**

### **2027 Federal Funding**

The FY27 budget process in Congress continues with Interior appropriations legislation from the house subcommittee scheduled for markups over the next few weeks:

- House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee Markup, FY27 Interior Bill – scheduled for May 21, 8 am ET: [Subcommittee Markup of FY27 Interior and Environment and THUD Bills](#)
- House Appropriations Full Committee Markup, FY27 Interior Bill – Scheduled for June 3, 10 am ET: [Full Committee Markup of Fiscal Year 2027 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Bill | House Committee on Appropriations - Republicans](#)

## **Permitting Reform**

In Congressional hearings in late April, Department of the Interior Secretary Doug Burgum voiced support for the recent Congressional efforts to streamline review processes. Bipartisan negotiations have been active in both changes with potentially significant implications for Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The bipartisan CERTAIN Act (H.R. 8308) provides some insight into

Congressional priorities, specifically by focusing on accelerating large-scale energy transmission project by limiting project review and aligning it more closely with the NEPA process. More information on the CERTAIN Act and the actual text can be found here: [Text - H.R.8308 - 119th Congress \(2025-2026\): CERTAIN Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

Other House proposals concerning permitting and project review are [H.R. 2289](#) and [H.R. 5587](#), which seek exemptions for certain broadband projects and certain geothermal energy projects, respectively, from Section 106 review under NHPA.

These conversations about the permitting and review process are ongoing and the outcomes remain to be seen in Congress and further down the law-making and implementation processes.

### **White House Ballroom Project Update**

Following the security breach at the White House Correspondents Dinner, the Defendants in the lawsuit over the proposed construction have moved to dismiss the case brought by the National Trust. More information on the lawsuit and its recent motions can be found on the court docket: [NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE UNITED STATES v. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, 1:25-cv-04316 – CourtListener.com](#).

### **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**

#### **ACHP Business Meeting is Scheduled for June 4 in Washington, DC**

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Summer Business Meeting will take place 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. EST, on Thursday, June 4 at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. The meeting is open to the public and will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube and the recording will be made available following proceedings on the ACHP's YouTube channel. More information, including the provisional agenda, can be found here: [ACHP Business Meeting Scheduled for June 4 in Washington, DC | Advisory Council on 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](#)

### **National Park Service**

#### **Tribal Heritage Grant ([P25AS00501](#))**

The Department of the Interior (DOI) in cooperation with the National Park Service’s (NPS) Tribal Heritage Grants Program (THG) is now accepting applications for competitive grants. The Tribal Heritage Grants Program focuses on protecting oral histories, traditional cultural practices, sacred and historic places, and enabling the establishment of tribal historic preservation offices. The THG Program is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and is administered by the DOI/NPS. Congress has appropriated approximately \$900,000 for the Tribal Heritage Grants Program (THG) for FY2025. **Applications are due July 27, 2026.**

More information on the THG and applying can be found here: [Tribal Heritage Grants - Historic Preservation Fund \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

#### **Semiquincentennial Grant Program ([P25AS00503](#))**

The National Park Service is accepting applications for the fourth round of funding for the Semiquincentennial Grant Program. This was created by Congress in 2020 to support the preservation of sites and structures listed on the NRHP that commemorate the founding of the nation. For the purposes of this grant program, the “founding of the nation” is defined as the period ending in 1815. **Applications are due June 30, 2026.**

More information can be found here: [Semiquincentennial Grant Opportunity \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation**

## **May is Historic Preservation Month!**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has compiled a digital marketing kit for use in outreach. It can be found here: [Preservation Month 2026: All People Are Created Equal | National Trust for 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
- Nikolai Nickel, USACE
- Cold Bay – King Cove 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](mailto: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](mailto:dnr.oha.@alaska.gov), mail to 550 West 7<sup>th</sup> 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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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**

**May is Historic Preservation Month!** - The National Trust for Historic Preservation has compiled a digital marketing kit for use in outreach. It can be found here: [Preservation Month 2026: All People Are Created Equal | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

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

**June 4** – ACHP Summer Business Meeting: 9am – 11:30am EST: [ACHP Business Meeting Scheduled for June 4 in Washington, DC | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)

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

**June 30** – Deadline to apply for the NPS’s Semiquincentennial Grant  
Program: [Semiquincentennial Grant Opportunity \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

**July 27** – Deadline to apply for Tribal Heritage Grant through NPS’s Tribal Heritage Grants  
Program: [Tribal Heritage Grants - Historic Preservation Fund \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

**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](mailto:jmestus50@gmail.com)