

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION NAMES
SAUGATUCK DUNES IN SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN TO ITS 2010 LIST OF
AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES**

Washington, D.C. (May 19, 2010) – Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named the **Saugatuck Dunes in Saugatuck, Mich.** to its **2010** list of **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**. This annual list highlights important examples of the nation's architectural, cultural and natural heritage that are at risk for destruction or irreparable damage.

It is an area of striking beauty. Along the shores of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Kalamazoo River, the 2,500 acres that comprise the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Area boast a sparsely-developed landscape of spectacular beach, rare freshwater dunes, water, woods and wetlands; habitat to several endangered species and home to a large number of significant historic and archeological sites. Nestled into the rolling dunes are the 100-year old Ox-Bow School of Art (part of the Chicago Art Institute), several 19th century summer camps and cottage communities, America's oldest operational hand-cranked chain ferry, and one of only a handful of remaining dune rides. In addition to Native American grounds and trails, an old lighthouse cottage and century-old pilings from an early fishing village, the area contains "Michigan's Pompeii," the buried remains of Singapore, an early 19th century mill town and port. This cultural landscape and pristine viewshed is now threatened by a proposed 400-acre residential development, including marina, hotel, restaurant and retail complex -- all prohibited by local zoning laws. The development would have a devastating impact on Saugatuck's thriving downtown as well as forever mar the last relatively undeveloped harbor mouth on Lake Michigan and the many historic sites that punctuate its rare beauty. The land in question, acquired by the Singapore Dunes LLC development company in 2006 from a private owner, is the subject of a contentious legal battle involving the township of Saugatuck. For nearly five years, Singapore Dunes LLC has taken aim at current zoning laws, which prohibit commercial development on the site. Through a series of lawsuits, threatened lawsuits, tax appeals and depositions, Singapore Dunes LLC has tried to pressure the township to change its zoning laws. The financially strapped township is facing an increasingly expensive fight, one that citizens recently voted to support by passing a millage.

"Saugatuck Dunes is a remarkable, untouched, sustainable cultural landscape, one that has survived despite the aggressive development that has scarred other areas along Michigan's coastline," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "If this development project proceeds, Saugatuck's story will be sadly illustrative of many other resort communities that lost their heritage, their character and their distinctiveness in the face of deep-pocketed developers."

Saugatuck Township has worked hard to preserve its heritage and in 2006 established the Lakeshore Open Space Zoned District. The zoning allows for limited residential development but prohibits commercial development, marinas and retail and specifically calls for site protection of the community's numerous historic and natural areas. Despite this, Singapore Dunes LLC has been relentless in pushing for a massive development that few in the community support.

In 2009, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Saugatuck and the nearby town of Douglas to its annual list of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations. For 60 years State and Federal agencies have tried to link the area's parks into more expansive publicly-protected open space. The area is commonly referred to as the "Art Coast of Michigan" and the community's artistic heritage endures through the Ox-Bow School of the Arts, where students have been inspired by the surrounding historic and natural landscape for more than a century. Even with its many attractions, Saugatuck has managed to maintain an authentic small town feeling, rare among resort communities today.

The public is invited to learn more about what they can do to support these and hundreds of other endangered sites, experience first-hand accounts of these places, and share stories and photos of their own at www.PreservationNation.org/11Most.

The 2010 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places was made possible, in part, by a grant from History™. Local preservation groups across the nation submitted nominations for this year's list; the nomination for Saugatuck Dunes was submitted by the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance.

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

The 2010 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (in alphabetical order):

America's State Parks and State-Owned Historic Sites—This year, nearly 30 states have experienced cuts to parks' and sites' budgets, and a recent survey estimates as many as 400 state parks could close. These state park systems include places of national significance—from Native American historic sites to Revolutionary War forts to Civil War battlefields to country estates—and welcome an estimated 725 million visits every year.

Black Mountain, Harlan County, Ky. —Nestled at the base of Eastern Kentucky's rugged Black Mountain, the historic mining towns of Benham and Lynch are working hard to define a future beyond coal. The towns, which have created well-respected heritage tourism sites and are working to revitalize their main streets, now face the threat of multiple surface and deep mining permits on and around Black Mountain—a move that would be tremendously harmful to Black Mountain's natural beauty, fragile ecology and growing tourism industry.

Hinchliffe Stadium, Paterson, N.J. —Once the pride of Paterson, N.J., Hinchliffe Stadium is one of the last surviving ball parks of baseball's Negro League. Today, the 10,000-seat, poured-concrete Art Deco stadium that was home to the New York Black Yankees and legendary player Larry Doby, is closed and dangerously deteriorated.

Industrial Arts Building, Lincoln, Neb.—For nearly a century, this dramatic trapezoidal exposition space with natural skylights, intricate roof trusses and a four-story fountained interior, has showcased the best of Lincoln, Neb. Despite its long, proud history, the Industrial Arts Building will soon meet the wrecking ball unless a developer steps forward to rescue and reuse the building.

Juana Briones House, Palo Alto, Calif.—In the heart of Silicon Valley stands the oldest structure in Palo Alto, built by one of the original Hispanic residents of San Francisco, a pioneering woman who was a rancher, traditional healer and entrepreneur. The 1844 adobe home is a rare reminder of California's rich Spanish and Mexican history. Today this California State Historic Landmark sits abandoned, deteriorated, exposed to the elements and threatened by demolition.

Merritt Parkway, Fairfield County, Conn.—Spanning 37.5 distinctive miles and celebrated for its diverse collection of decorative bridges and lush, natural landscaping, Merritt Parkway remains, 70 years after it was constructed, one of America's most scenic roads. To accommodate increased traffic on the parkway, the cash-strapped Connecticut Department of Transportation is not performing necessary maintenance and has moved to realign roads, replace bridges and redesign interchanges, all at the cost of the parkway's unique character.

Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, Washington, D.C.—A major landmark of African American heritage and one of the most important religious institutions in the United States, Metropolitan A.M.E. Church’s red brick Victorian Gothic-style building, completed in 1886, hosted the funeral of congregant Frederick Douglass in 1895 and Rosa Parks a century later. Years of water infiltration and damage caused in part by adjacent construction projects have compromised the structure, prompting the dedicated congregation to launch a national capital campaign to rescue and restore this irreplaceable house of worship.

Pågat, Yigo, Guam—The island of Guam, the westernmost United States territory in the Pacific, is home to the Chamorro people who maintain a thriving culture dating back thousands of years. With the United States military’s announced plans for a massive buildup on the island, many residents are concerned about the potentially devastating impact on the island’s cultural resources, including one of Guam’s most treasured sites, the ancient Chamorro settlement of Pågat.

Saugatuck Dunes, Saugatuck, Mich.—Along the shores of Lake Michigan, the 2,500 acres that comprise the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Area boast a spectacular, sparsely-developed landscape of sand dunes, water, woods and wetlands. Home to several endangered species and a large number of significant historic and archeological sites, Saugatuck Dunes and its surrounding community are threatened by a proposed 400-acre, residential development, to include a marina, hotel, restaurant and retail complex.

Threefoot Building, Meridian, Miss.—For 80 years, this 16-story Art Deco, lavishly decorated, granite-clad skyscraper has been a mainstay of downtown Meridian, Miss. Although a developer expressed interest in rehabilitating the deteriorated building, the City of Meridian has been unable to provide gap financing or other incentives and locals fear that Threefoot’s bright future may end in demolition.

Wilderness Battlefield, Orange and Spotsylvania Counties, Va.—One of the most significant and bloodiest engagements of the Civil War, the Battle of the Wilderness marked the first time that legendary generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant faced off against one another. It is here—in an area known for its rolling landscapes and distant Blue Ridge Mountain views—that Walmart intends to trample on American heritage by constructing 240,000 square feet of “big box” commercial sprawl within the historic boundaries of Wilderness Battlefield and immediately adjacent to the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park.

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.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, eight regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America’s stories.