

Preserving Historic Wisconsin



**Division of Historic Preservation-Public History
Wisconsin Historical Society**

www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp

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Historic preservation adds value to Wisconsin. It improves the quality of life, reinvigorates neighborhoods, and prevents sprawl. Preservation makes good economic sense by leveraging local investment, promoting heritage tourism, and creating new jobs. It is environmentally sound, relieving landfills of construction and demolition debris, and saves the energy needed to produce new materials. It adds to the body of knowledge being compiled by historians and archaeologists.

These are the logical reasons why we must preserve. Together, these reasons make a strong argument for preservation. There is also the immeasurable but equally important emotional side. We'd miss these resources if they were gone.

Too often, we fail to value a resource until it is too late—when the resource is threatened or lost. The sooner we start to preserve, the more options there will be, and the better chance we will have for success.

The Wisconsin Historical Society has developed a plan for historic preservation in Wisconsin from 2006 through 2015. Through the participation of many individuals across the state through questionnaires, stakeholder meetings, telephone interviews, focus groups, and planning retreats, we heard people tell us that Wisconsin needed expanded preservation networks, additional education, increased promotion of preservation, and more financial stability.

The previous ten years have seen some remarkable accomplishments in Wisconsin. More properties have received the benefits associated with listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Wisconsin property owners have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the rehabilitation of historic properties as a result of state and federal tax credits. Information on historic buildings and archaeological sites that once was available only on-site at the Wisconsin Historical Society can now be consulted anywhere in the world online. Wisconsin's Smart Growth legislation has spurred preservation planning for many local governments.

In spite of this progress, inadequate financial resources, lack of awareness of the value of historic preservation, and competing demands for citizens' attention have taken their toll. Over the past decade, historic properties have been lost and inappropriate "restorations" have taken place because property owners lacked information. Deep cuts in state funding have limited the ability of the Wisconsin Historical Society to assist the people of Wisconsin in preserving the state's cultural assets.

To be successful, preservation must be the work of many. Thousands of citizens, property owners, and volunteers have helped preserve historic resources in Wisconsin. We hope to grow that number in the coming decade.

One of the themes that emerged consistently throughout the planning process is the need to spread the preservation message and to make preservation values universally held in our state. Just as there is consensus that clean air and clean water are essential components for a high quality of life, we hope that by the end of this planning period all citizens will agree that the heritage of the state is among the most important assets of Wisconsin. As with environmental issues, this does not mean that there won't be public debate over how to reach those ends or that there will be universal agreement over standards. But for the debate to take place there must first be a public consensus about goals.

The challenge for all who value preservation in Wisconsin is to find ways to both strengthen and expand the circle of people who care about our historic resources.

Michael E. Stevens
State Historic Preservation Officer
Administrator
Division of Historic Preservation-Public History
Wisconsin Historical Society



Wisconsin Historic Preservation Plan

January 2006–December 2015

Mission

We connect people to the past by helping preserve places of enduring value.

Vision

The people of Wisconsin embrace the value of historic preservation.

Goals and Objectives

1. **Wisconsin must build a strong network of parties interested in historic preservation.**
 - ◆ Strengthen and expand partnerships between federal, state, local, and tribal governments through training and formal agreements.
 - ◆ Develop a coalition of preservation-minded individuals and organizations that can effectively advocate for preservation policies and work on common projects.
 - ◆ Identify potential partners whose missions affect historic properties and initiate collaborative projects.
2. **Wisconsin must have a strong educational structure for historic preservation.**
 - ◆ Develop and implement basic instructional information for property owners.
 - ◆ Develop and implement specialized training for members of associations and professional groups.
 - ◆ Develop targeted content to be presented at events sponsored by partners.
3. **Preservation must become a core value for Wisconsinites.**
 - ◆ Develop a public relations strategy that speaks to the emotional core of preservation and celebrates preservation successes.
 - ◆ Develop and publicize data that demonstrate the economic benefit of historic preservation.
 - ◆ Partner with educators to develop preservation message for schools.
4. **Wisconsin needs financial stability for preservation activities, ranging from the State Historic Preservation Office to property owners.**
 - ◆ Provide ongoing information to state and federal officials about preservation accomplishments in their districts and identify ways to involve them.
 - ◆ Implement marketing efforts for existing earned revenue activities and develop new grant and earned revenue activities.
 - ◆ Publicize information about resources available to preserve historic properties and link interested parties to relevant sources.
5. **Citizens and local governments need tools to preserve the state's most threatened cultural resources.**
 - ◆ Work with the state legislature to develop tax and other incentives to protect historically significant agricultural properties.
 - ◆ Through assistance and training programs, provide tools to Wisconsin's local historic preservation commissions and local nonprofit preservation groups in identifying and protecting cultural resources.
 - ◆ Assist property owners through training in preservation practices and promotion of existing financial incentives.

Wisconsin's full 2006–2015 historic preservation plan
is available online at

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/plan.asp>.

Individuals without Internet access

can obtain a hard copy of the report by writing the

Division of Historic Preservation–Public History, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

To learn more about Historic Preservation in Wisconsin please call—

Historic Buildings

For information on nominating a building or district to the National and State Registers of Historic Places, or on how to research a historic building, community, or district. Also information regarding the statewide survey of historical and architectural resources, federal sub-grants to conduct surveys, and the Certified Local Government Program
(608) 264-6498



Tax Credits and Architectural Treatment of Historic Buildings

For information on income-tax credits for rehabilitation of eligible properties
(608) 264-6490

Field Services

For assistance to local nonprofit preservation and historical groups and to local preservation commissions
Madison Office **(608) 264-6583**
Eau Claire Office **(715) 836-2250**



State Archaeology and Maritime Preservation

For general information on Wisconsin's archaeological sites, site reporting, preservation, stewardship, and public education

Archaeology **(608) 264-6496**
Maritime **(608) 221-5909**

Burial Sites Preservation

For information on protecting prehistoric and historic cemeteries, family plots, and Native-American mounds or to report disturbances of burial sites
(608) 264-6503 or toll free (in Wisconsin only) (800) 342-7834



Governmental Services

For information about conforming with state and federal laws relating to historic and archaeological properties; determining whether the Wisconsin Historical Society should become involved when a building or site of historic or archaeological importance is threatened
(608) 264-6508

Or visit us on the Web at www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp

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