

Principle Five: Preserve and Protect Resources



Where to Begin

It can be challenging to know where to begin to preserve and protect your community's irreplaceable historic, cultural and natural resources. Fortunately there is a lot of assistance available. Working with groups dedicated to the same cause provides not only information, but also encouragement in your efforts and contact with others who are pursuing the same goals.

1) If you are trying to preserve a historic building...

Consider:

- ❖ Applying for listing on National Register of Historic Places.
- ❖ Creating a "Friends" organization to raise money and public awareness.
- ❖ Hosting a design charrette to explore the feasibility of potential uses.
- ❖ Hiring an architect, structural engineer or building inspector who specializes in historic buildings to evaluate the building, determine restoration needs and costs.
- ❖ Collecting information about similar buildings that were saved. Document the uses of the buildings and their economic impact on the community.
- ❖ Organizing a tour of the building for elected officials who can provide funding.
- ❖ Planning a special event showcasing the building (consider timing the event around national Preservation Week in May).
- ❖ Contacting local media and asking them to feature the building in a story.
- ❖ Writing letters to the editor of the local paper.
- ❖ Requesting a demolition delay ordinance.
- ❖ Researching historic documents and photographs and creating an exhibit about the building's history – place in the local library or other public building.
- ❖ Following the "Ten Basic Principles for Sensitive Rehabilitation" from the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Contact:

- ❖ Local – Contact the local historical commission, zoning board, city council, historical society, preservation organization or others who can support the cause of saving the building.
- ❖ State – Contact the state historic preservation office to see what assistance they can provide and what regulations may exist to protect the building.
- ❖ National – A variety of organizations and agencies exist to provide assistance and guidance in preserving historic buildings. These include the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service (which manages the National Historic Landmark Program and the National Register of Historic Places) and others.

2) If you are trying to preserve a museum collection...**Consider:**

- ❖ Writing a mission statement that outlines the purpose of the collection and the need for its preservation.
- ❖ Hosting a limited time exhibition to highlight the need for financial support.
- ❖ Seeking a donor to underwrite the purchase of materials needed for preservation such as acid-free boxes, cleaning supplies and climate control systems.
- ❖ Evaluating the facility where the collection is housed for its appropriateness for protecting the collection.
- ❖ Implementing an inventory of each artifact in the collection.
- ❖ Creating a catalog with a description of each object.
- ❖ Conducting historical research on objects to determine their original purpose, value and use.
- ❖ Arranging for staff from nearby museums to volunteer for a day to assist your museum in cleaning and cataloguing artifacts. Plan to return the favor at their museum.
- ❖ Building a library of books and articles with resource materials on preservation of collections.
- ❖ Hiring a specialist to evaluate and make recommendations about what needs to be done to preserve your collection.
- ❖ Researching available workshops and conferences and sending representatives to learn from the professionals.
- ❖ Developing a written maintenance schedule that outlines specific times for cleaning the collection.
- ❖ Developing a written plan for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or other disasters.
- ❖ Planning a schedule for rotating artifacts on display in order to protect them from light and other damaging elements.

Contact:

- ❖ Local – Museums and historic homes which may have similar collections or universities which have museum studies programs can provide guidance in collection preservation.

- ❖ State – Most states have a statewide museum association that offers annual conferences and technical assistance.
- ❖ National – The American Association of Museums and the American Association for State and Local History are the premiere organizations for setting museum standards and providing training in museum collection management.

3) If you are trying to preserve open space or a landscape...

Consider:

- ❖ Contacting a land trust which can offer assistance through purchase of the land, receiving a donation of land or establishing a conservation easement.
- ❖ Inviting expert speakers to your community to talk about the importance of open space preservation, sign control, growth management, etc.
- ❖ Reviewing your community's ordinances in regard to zoning, tree protection, signage, construction, etc. Determine which ordinances need to be strengthened.
- ❖ Developing a public relations campaign that encourages preservation of the landscape and supports stronger ordinances.
- ❖ Applying for Scenic Byways designation through the National Scenic Byways Program.
- ❖ Applying for Transportation Enhancement funding for corridor management planning, billboard removal, byway promotion, etc.
- ❖ Seeking corporate sponsors who can support your community's efforts in conservation.
- ❖ Gathering success stories from other communities and sharing these with local leaders, media and community residents.

Contact:

- ❖ Local and State – Check to see if there is a Land Trust in your community or state or local chapters of Scenic America.
- ❖ National – A number of organizations assist with open space and land preservation including the Land Trust Alliance, Scenic America, Nature Conservancy, Conservation Fund, America's Byways Resource Center and National Scenic Byways Program. Most have conferences, provide technical assistance and offer publications.

4) If you are trying to preserve an endangered tradition or folkway...

Consider:

- ❖ Working with a folklorist to create an inventory of artists and resources that emphasizes local traditions.
- ❖ Conducting an oral history project to collect stories from residents about growing up in the community.
- ❖ Developing an event or festival showcasing local art forms and folkways.
- ❖ Creating an exhibit highlighting local art forms and traditions.

- ❖ Developing a local arts and traditions tour for visitors including a directory and an audio guide.
- ❖ Involving local schoolchildren by bringing artists and craftspersons into the classroom to talk about their crafts and the traditions surrounding these crafts.
- ❖ Developing partnerships with churches, clubs, and other organizations that can assist in documenting folk traditions
- ❖ Talking with local residents to determine the extent to which the community wants to share its folk traditions with visitors.
- ❖ Asking your local newspaper or television station to feature local artists and local traditions.

Contact:

- ❖ Local and state – Arts agencies that can provide technical assistance, grants and volunteer support for creating folklife programs. Your statewide arts organization can tell you about local arts organizations near you.
- ❖ National – The National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities provide technical assistance and grants for arts and humanities programming; Americans for the Arts provides technical assistance, publications and conferences on making the arts accessible to communities.

