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US/ICOMOS at Work

April 2020 E-News



Welcome to "US/ICOMOS at Work," a monthly update on what US/ICOMOS is doing to preserve and promote world heritage and international knowledge exchange on preservation topics. We share these brief communications monthly with our members and supporters. Image: In honor of World Heritage Day 2020, trustee Brenda Barrett shared this image of Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1978.

— LATEST NEWS & EVENTS —

Restructuring US/ICOMOS for Resilience in Uncertain Times

By **Douglas C. Comer, Ph.D.**
US/ICOMOS President

The global pandemic has introduced a time of uncertainty for each of us as individuals, and no less for US/ICOMOS. We will over the next few months restructure in ways intended to provide the resilience that we need to adapt to the unexpected. Some of the ways in which this will be done are unprecedented, while others are consistent with changes that were discussed at our last Board of Trustees meeting on February 7, 2020.

This is to ask all of you to stand ready to assist US/ICOMOS in the coming year as we transition to an organization fitted to the new realities of the world that we live in.

US/ICOMOS committees will take a leading role in this, and in coming weeks some will be

forming work groups that committee chairs might contact you to participate in. I ask that you retain your membership and seek out new members for US/ICOMOS. Also, if you have any connection with organizations that might provide support to US/ICOMOS in the coming year, I ask that you contact me.

We can anticipate no revenue from our annual Celebration of World Heritage or Conference and Symposium and, as organizations and individuals feel increasing economic pressure, the likelihood of donations and even increasing membership without support and participation from our members is low. For the foreseeable future, ICOMOS has stopped printing ICOMOS membership cards.

US/ICOMOS Treasurer Ellen Delage and I have submitted a number of loan and grant proposals as these have opened up. They include the D.C. Small Business Recovery Grant Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Disaster Loan Assistance with the Small Business Administration, and the CARES Paycheck Protection Program. We have also submitted a request for rent deferral to the management company of our L Street office.

It is important to understand that any relief we might receive through the well-publicized loan and grant programs, even if we receive some relief from all of them, will not resolve the threats to our financial wellbeing. Although these programs may have been presented as a panacea for the economic ills of small businesses and nonprofits, they are far from that. They will not yield nearly enough to make up for the projected shortfall we faced in 2020 had we retained our previous administrative structure. Also, it should be borne in mind that there is enormous confusion and delay associated with all of these programs.

It is with regret that the officers and Board members of US/ICOMOS have voted in the majority to concede to the reality that we simply will not have the funds in 2020 to employ an Executive Director. The position represents more than half of our employee and contracted administrative costs. The current Executive Director, Jane Seiter, left our organization on April 15, 2020. We sincerely thank her for her service to US/ICOMOS and for her efforts to ensure a smooth transition in these difficult times.



Two functions will be essential in the coming year: communications and membership. We will rely upon an ever-expanding capacity to communicate via virtual technology: conference calls, conferences, and webinars, among other digital means. This will make it possible to pursue and ultimately increase our ability to network; receive and convey information relevant to heritage threats and best practices; to train; to develop spaces where we can view and discuss presentations of interest to practitioners, academics, and an informed and interested public; to more effectively advocate; and to pursue advancement by means of donations, grants and the membership. Jenny Spreitzer will continue her work as US/ICOMOS communications lead. Communication and membership efforts overlap: Nicole Ursin will continue as membership lead and is putting in place the NEON software package that will not only manage membership more effectively and with reduced effort but will also facilitate the great variety of digital capacities mentioned above.

While we continue to restructure, communication that has been directed to the Executive Director should be sent to me, using the email address president@usicomos.org. What we have done as we begin to restructure has been difficult and painful, but if we work together as we move ahead we will emerge as an organization that will be able to advance the goals of the World Heritage Convention, from preservation and conservation to the economic and social benefits that can flow from World Heritage in the world today and in 2021.



Update on the US/ICOMOS International Exchange Program (IEP)

The threat of COVID-19 and its impact also extends to our IEP. Stay-at-home orders and travel restrictions in the U.S. and around the world mean that we will not have enough time to plan and implement the 2020 IEP as scheduled. We are currently exploring a delayed start for the program, looking at late Summer and early Autumn dates and coordinating with IEP host organizations and those individuals selected for internship placements to see what is possible. We are also monitoring the decisions of the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program: currently they have suspended all new applications for exchange visas (including the J-1, a crucial part of the IEP) until at least mid-May.

In the coming month we will continue to work with hosts and those selected for an internship to propose alternatives, and in mid-May we will await an update from the State Department concerning exchange visas. In 36 years the IEP has yet to be cancelled. We on the IEP Committee remain committed to holding the IEP this year if feasible, but will only do so if the health, safety and welfare of all participants can be assured.

Please look for another update on the IEP in our May newsletter. Questions on the program can be directed to the IEP Committee Chair, Brian Michael Lione, at IEP@usicomos.org.

Pamela Jerome, US/ICOMOS Candidate for ICOMOS Board Treasurer



Former US/ICOMOS Trustee and current ICOMOS Board member Pamela Jerome is running for ICOMOS Treasurer in the October 2020 ICOMOS General Assembly elections. Pamela has 39 years' experience as a preservation architect. She is President of Architectural Preservation Studio, DPC, a New York City-based 17-person architecture and preservation firm that is also a certified WBE (Women Business Enterprise). Consulting on projects both in the U.S. and internationally, Pamela has won numerous prestigious awards for her work, and is a fellow of US/ICOMOS, APT (Association for Preservation Technology International) and AIA (American Institute of Architects). She has shared her expertise with countries that have limited capacity, for instance with her work in Yemen over a 15-year period as a cultural heritage advisor, director of a documentation-training program, and capacity-building for local NGOs, architects, government employees and craftsmen. Pamela has consulted on projects worldwide including in the U.S., Mediterranean, Black Sea, Middle East and Far East. In the U.S., Pamela is probably best-known for her award-winning work on the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Fallingwater, now both part of the World Heritage site commemorating Frank Lloyd Wright's 20th-century architecture.

Read the entire statement about Pamela's candidacy on our website:

<https://usicomos.org/pamela-jerome-us-icomos-candidate-for-icomos-board-treasurer/>

World Heritage Day 2020 Celebration Review



On Saturday, 18 April, US/ICOMOS celebrated World Heritage Day (aka the [International Day for Monuments and Sites](#)) virtually due to Covid-19 site closures and nationwide "stay at home" orders.

This year's theme was a timely one since all of our sharing was done online via social media: ***Shared Cultures, Shared Heritage, Shared Responsibility***. We posted photos submitted by members and followers along with virtual tours, webcam links and other online materials providing remote access to sites in a time of pandemic.

The best place to see our posts is by visiting the US/ICOMOS Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/USICOMOS/>, where you can like and follow us if you haven't already done so.

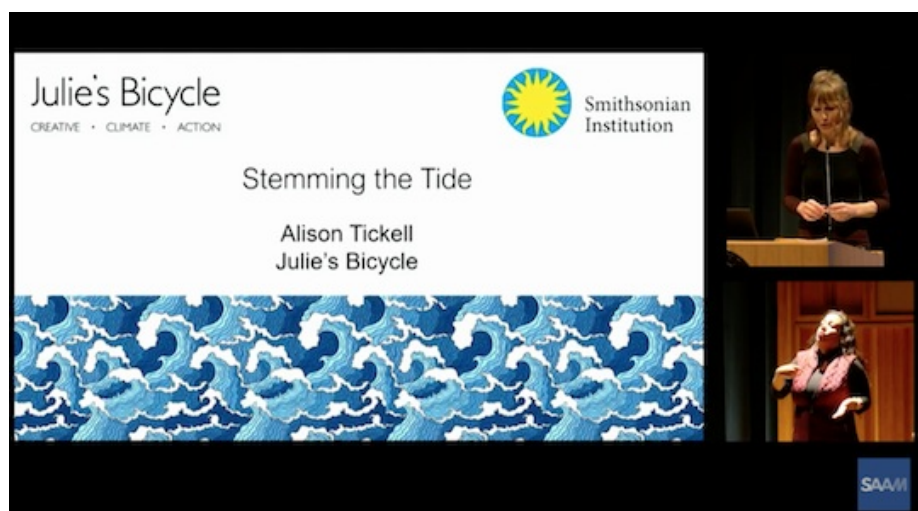


In addition to the photo of Mesa Verde at the top of this email by trustee Brenda Barrett, above are photos by Barbara Cellarius of Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve (part of a bi-national World Heritage Site comprised of 4 parks in the United States and Canada), and The Frederick C. Robie

House by Melanie Jattuso Ford, one of 8 sites designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2019.

"Stemming the Tide" Symposium Presentations Now Available Online

For those unable to attend "[Stemming the Tide: Global Strategies for Sustaining Cultural Heritage Through Climate Change](#)" at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art in February, we're very pleased to share a link to the presentations of the wonderful first day of the symposium: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7gn_68Hr4h-flGqC-xRM6GnZTkqajDHL



Symposium speakers such

as Alison Tickell (pictured above) of Julie's Bicycle, a non-profit working with cultural organizations in the United Kingdom to combat climate change, presented both data about what needs to be done to adapt to and combat climate change and concrete actions that their organizations are implementing. A publication based on the symposium's presentations and breakout session results will be published by the Smithsonian in October.

— OF NOTE —

Calling Institutional Members!

Is your organization or firm an Institutional member of US/ICOMOS? If so, would you like your organization to be featured on the US/ICOMOS website, in an upcoming newsletter and via social media? Write jspreitzer@usicomos.org to let Jenny Spreitzer know and she will contact you with more information.

If you are NOT a member currently, but would like to join, please do so here: <https://membership.usicomos.org/>

Institutional membership is a cost-effective way to promote US/ICOMOS membership within your organization or firm, allowing you to designate up to four staff, faculty, trustees or other individuals associated with your organization for the International membership. Standard Institutional Membership costs \$700 and underwrites the many programs of US/ICOMOS.

NPS Civil Rights Grants Awarded

The National Park Service has announced the recipients of its 2020 African American Civil Rights Historic Preservation Fund Grants: 51 projects in 20 states will receive more than \$14 million dollars in support. Alabama will have thirteen projects funded including the restoration of the interior of Foster Hall at Talladega College,



pictured above behind the Talladega Marching Band, in a photo by Tomiko Franklin.

Alabama is followed by Georgia and North Carolina with five sites each, South Carolina and Michigan with three each, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, New Jersey, Ohio, and West Virginia with two each, and the remaining states with one project funded being California, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia. Financed through the Historic Preservation Fund with monies derived from federal oil leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, the NPS and U.S. Congress has allocated moneys specifically for civil rights sites restorations since 2019.

The full list of sites can be found here: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/04-06-2020-nps-announces-african-american-civil-rights-grants.htm>

Cancelled: ICOMOS Interpretation (ICIP) 2020 Conference

It is with great sadness that the Board of the ICOMOS International Committee for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (ICIP), has decided that the ICOMOS Interpretation 2020 Conference in Angkor must be cancelled. We are facing extraordinary challenges around the world, including uncertainty about how long COVID-19 quarantine in different countries will last. The virus has also had severe economic effects. The health and welfare of conference participants is our top concern and we wish everyone who expressed interest in the conference well.

Join the Conversation on Social Media



*and Please Forward this Newsletter to
Friends and Colleagues!*

US/ICOMOS is a US historic preservation nonprofit whose mission includes both supporting the UNESCO World Heritage program and promoting international exchange in the cultural heritage field. You can learn more about us at usicomos.org.

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