

**Wisconsin Historic Preservation Plan  
2006-2015**

Division of Historic Preservation-Public History  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
2005

## Historic Preservation Plan Steering Committee

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**CONTENTS**

Executive Summary	4
Introduction by the State Historic Preservation Officer	5
Wisconsin Historic Preservation Plan: Goals and Objectives	7
How This Plan Was Developed	9
Key Issues	11
Resources in Wisconsin	13
History of Historic Preservation in Wisconsin	16
Appendix A: Questionnaire Results	19
Appendix B: Historic Preservation Legislation in Wisconsin	26
Appendix C: Bibliography	30

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan sets goals and objectives for historic preservation in Wisconsin from 2006 through 2015. It was developed through the participation of many individuals across the state through questionnaires, stakeholder meetings, telephone interviews, focus groups, and planning retreats. People indicated that Wisconsin needed expanded networks, additional education, increased promotion of preservation, and more financial stability.

The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society will continue its core work of compliance review, survey and registration, tax credits, and working with certified local governments. Over the coming decade, it will place emphasis on partnerships, training, programs of public awareness, and efforts to develop financial resources.

### 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

1. Wisconsin must build a strong network of parties interested in historic preservation.
2. Wisconsin must have a strong educational structure for historic preservation.
3. Preservation must become a core value for Wisconsinites.
4. Wisconsin needs financial stability for preservation activities, ranging from the State Historic Preservation Office to property owners.
5. Citizens and local governments need tools to preserve the state's most threatened cultural resources.

## INTRODUCTION

This plan sets the course for historic preservation in Wisconsin over the next decade. 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. Certified Local Governments in Wisconsin have grown from twenty-two a decade ago to forty-eight today. The state archaeology program continues its critical preservation work both on land and in the two Great Lakes bordering Wisconsin.

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.

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 because it relieves 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; but more than this, there is an emotional side. 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.

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. The staff of the Historic Preservation-Public History Division has also played a critical role in this progress. I am proud of the work they have done and look forward to accomplishing greater things in the future.

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 nearly all Wisconsin citizens will agree that "the historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the state is among the most important assets of the state." (*Wis.*

*Stats. 44.30)* 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. This plan will guide our efforts to do just that.

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.



## HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

In November 2004, the State Historic Preservation Officer at the Wisconsin Historical Society appointed a steering committee to direct a planning process that would have broad public input. Committee members, made up of members of the Society's Historic Preservation-Public History Division, reviewed the work done by the Division for the 2001-2005 plan and developed reports on the ancient and historic resources of Wisconsin, the history of preservation, state preservation statutes, and the status of partners. Draft documents were shared with the committee and went through several rounds of revisions.

### *Public Input*

Following this background research, the committee identified and implemented various means for including public input. These included:

- questionnaires mailed to more than twenty-five hundred individuals and also made available on the Wisconsin Historical Society's Web site
- a stakeholders meeting
- detailed phone surveys of groups with related missions, such as realtors, architects, builders, environmentalists, planners, university extension staff, and local government association staff
- focus groups of history professionals who did not work in preservation-related activities, including librarians, archivists, museum curators, historic site managers, historians, educators, and editors

To identify and clarify the state's preservation goals and objectives, the Division mailed approximately twenty-five hundred questionnaires to interested parties and individuals to solicit their input on historic preservation issues and concerns. Groups included professional consultants; planners; federal, state and local officials; historic property owners; tribal officials; Main Street managers; members of local historical societies; and members of preservation and avocational organizations. The survey also was available for several weeks on the Wisconsin Historical Society's Web site. Exactly five hundred responses were received. The respondents were asked to classify their role in historic preservation, and 36.8 percent identified themselves as local government or organization officials or members; 33 percent as historic building owners; 11.4 percent as historic preservation professionals; 6.2 percent as state, federal or tribal officials or employees; and 12.6 percent as other.

On March 9, a stakeholders meeting held in Madison was attended by forty-five individuals who were selected to represent the preservation community. The group included preservation officers in federal and state agencies; State Historic Preservation Review Board members; college and university faculty; preservation and archaeological consultants; developers; architects; realtors; restoration specialists; historic property owners; and representatives of local historical societies, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions, planning

commissions, local preservation groups, and the Wisconsin Main Street program. The session was facilitated by Carol S. Wyant of Pathfinder Consulting of Chicago. Those in attendance were divided into small groups, and new groups were re-created four times during the day to allow for those in attendance to meet the maximum number of people.

The Division also hired Pathfinder Consulting to conduct detailed phone interviews with groups that the Division works with that do not define themselves as preservation-related. Nonetheless, the missions of each of these groups include areas that intersect with historic preservation goals. Each of these groups also has the potential to further historic preservation or to collaborate in productive ways with the Division. Because the Division works with these groups on a regular basis, it wanted to have an outside consultant conduct the interviews to provide an objective assessment.

Fifteen interviews were conducted with representatives of the American Institute of Architects-Wisconsin; American Planning Association-Wisconsin; Wisconsin Builders Association; Clean Wisconsin; Wisconsin Downtown Action Council; Wisconsin Alliance of Cities; Wisconsin Counties Association; League of Wisconsin Municipalities; Wisconsin Towns Association; UW Extension Local Government Center; and four regional planning councils.

John Broihahn, state archaeologist, conducted four focus groups with history professionals at the Wisconsin Historical Society who work outside the field of historic preservation, including archivists, librarians, editors, historic sites and museum curators, and educators.

The results of this information gathering is described in the section, "Key Issues," below.

#### *Processing of Public Input by Division Staff*

In April 2005, Division staff met and reviewed the public input in a meeting facilitated by Carol S. Wyant of Pathfinder Consulting. The group identified four broad sets of critical issues:

- education
- values
- networks
- financial issues

The group also identified key actions for each of these areas. Following the staff retreat, the steering committee reviewed and further refined this work. As with the previous plan, the Division wanted to ensure that the plan would not only serve the needs of the state's entire preservation community, but also mesh with the Wisconsin Historical Society's planning efforts. After approval by the State Historic Preservation Officer, the plan was reviewed by the Society's director and then presented to the Society's governing board at its June, 2005, meeting. The plan closely parallels the Society's direction. The mission statement in the plan--"We connect people to the past by helping preserve places of enduring value"--is built off of the Society's mission statement of "We connect people

to the past." Likewise, the plan's components mesh closely with Society strategic imperatives of achieving high visibility, becoming audience-focused, meeting stewardship responsibilities for historic buildings and collections, and realizing financial support.

## **KEY ISSUES**

### *Questionnaire Results*

Respondents to the questionnaire described, above, were asked to identify the resources they felt were most threatened and the major threats to historic resources. Nearly half of those answering the survey (47.8 percent) chose agricultural buildings as one of the three resources they perceived to be most threatened. Other categories with more than a 25 percent response rate were commercial buildings (31.4 percent), private residences (29.6 percent), and public buildings (26.4 percent). There were some variations among the different response groups. More than one-third of preservation professionals identified archaeological sites as a threatened resource. The group identifying themselves as "other" named agricultural buildings, archaeological sites, and ethnic buildings as the most threatened resources. State, federal and tribal officials varied the most from the overall response rates. They identified archaeological sites (64.2 percent), human burial sites (45.2 percent), and agricultural buildings (25.8 percent) as their areas of concern.

Lack of funding was cited as the major threat to historic resources. Half of all respondents marked this issue as one of the top three threats. This was followed closely by "lack of awareness of threats to historic properties" (42.8 percent). Several other choices had an approximate 25 percent response rate: lack of interest by the public, neglect by property owners, downtown redevelopment, lack of interest by units of government or public officials, and sprawl. All groups agreed that lack of funding and lack of awareness of threats were the top threats, but varied in their third choice. In most cases, the responding group was self-critical. Historic building owners identified neglect by property owners; state federal and tribal officials identified a lack of interest by units of government, as did the group identifying themselves as "other." Historic preservation professionals cited sprawl, while local governments and organizations felt that a lack of interest by the public was a major threat.

The second part of the survey asked about the work of the State Historic Preservation Office. All groups identified maintaining the inventory of architectural, historical, and archaeological resources as the most important duty of the Office in promoting historic preservation. Managing the Certified Local Government Program came in last for all groups, except for state, federal, and tribal officials, who felt that reviewing tax credits was the least important. The survey also asked how the Division can promote historic preservation. The top responses, identified by a third of all respondents, included: providing education and training programs, promoting tax credits, assisting governmental units and tribes with historic preservation planning, and educating the public. All groups were either satisfied or very satisfied with their interaction with Division staff and the level of service. When asked to comment, they responded with positive comments about the specific aspects of the program that addressed their particular concerns. Overall, all

groups commented on the timeliness of responses and good communication with our constituents.

The survey also asked what subjects respondents were interested in learning about and the method by which they would like to receive information. Respondents were allowed to check up to five subjects. The top five responses, all with more than a 33 percent response rate, were: historic preservation planning, protecting properties with state and federal laws, techniques for rehabilitating historic buildings, private fund raising, and rehabilitation tax credits. Again, the various groups were most interested in subjects that applied to their own roles. Property owners ranked techniques for rehabilitation and tax credits as their top choices, while both categories related to units of government gave preservation planning and private fund raising high rankings. When asked how they wanted to learn about preservation issues, respondents were allowed to check three items. The responses receiving more than a 30 percent response rate were: fact sheets and brochures, technical training workshops, lectures and presentations, and Web content. The survey asked respondents if they would be willing to pay for any of these services. There seemed to be a general willingness to pay for technical training workshops, lectures, and presentations and for preservation conferences.

The survey had a free response section asking about the biggest misconception that the public has about historic preservation. The responses mirror many of the arguments against historic preservation and the misunderstanding that individuals have about historic preservation. Top misconceptions identified were: preservation impedes progress, preservation restricts the rights of property owners, newer construction is better, and that "someone else will do it." These findings mirror comments received by the staff and the common misconceptions that need to be addressed by the preservation community in promoting the value of historic preservation in Wisconsin.

#### *Stakeholders Meeting Results*

The March 9, 2005, stakeholders in Madison focused on four topics: (1.) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the preservation movement in Wisconsin; (2.) What is the Division doing well and what could be improved; (3.) Where does the preservation movement in Wisconsin want to be in the future and how will we know when we are there; and (4.) What should be the major priorities for the preservation movement in the future.

The stakeholders meeting closely paralleled the findings of the written questionnaire, with three principal concerns emerging. First, there was a strong emphasis on the need to generate greater public awareness of the value of preservation, with a stress on creating public preservation values. This was often expressed as widening the circle of those interested in preservation. Second, at the same time, there was significant interest in providing training for those within the preservation community. Third, participants stressed the need for building strong networks among groups that normally don't work together but who share common interests.

One of the additional benefits of the meeting is that it allowed for networking among people in the preservation community who normally do not interact.

#### *Phone Interview Results*

The phone interviews with representatives of various organizations found a number of areas of commonalities among these nonpreservation groups. There was general agreement that historic preservation was good for Wisconsin and that Wisconsin's Smart Growth legislation has been important in raising the planning community's awareness of historic preservation. Some concerns were expressed about the impact of preservation on property owners' rights. Important knowledge gaps, even among the most knowledgeable, were identified, indicating the need for additional educational programs. Most of those interviewed also expressed a strong desire for the Division to provide training to its staff and membership. Other issues identified were the importance of working collaboratively and the need for additional planning funds.

#### *Focus Group Results*

Four focus group sessions that included archivists, librarians, editors, curators, and educators from the Wisconsin Historical Society began with a general question that elicited comments concerning their awareness of preservation activities. Responses varied significantly depending on professional responsibilities. Participants also completed an abbreviated questionnaire. Agricultural buildings and archaeological sites were listed as most threatened and lack of awareness and funding were chosen as major threats to preservation efforts. Increasing targeted public education efforts to increase awareness was most often cited as a remedy.

## **RESOURCES OF WISCONSIN**

Our lives are influenced by what we learn, by the events that shape the communities we live in, and by the institutions and organizations we encounter. Our history gives us a sense of place and a framework to understand the world. It provides continuity and meaning in our lives, and it can be a basis for economic development through preservation programs and heritage tourism.

Human beings have been shaping and changing their environment for millennia. Some of these changes are planned, such as the construction of homes, the development of garden beds associated with early corn agriculture, or the building of effigy mounds. Others are simply the result of people living their lives. People have acknowledged the role that place and the built environment play in knowing the past and planning for the future by returning to these spaces over hundreds of years and by preserving what they have built or what they have encountered. These landscapes are the focus of historic preservation activities.

Like many states, Wisconsin has a long history of identifying, tracking, and preserving archaeological sites, cemeteries, architectural features, and places. Much of the information about the early history of Wisconsin came from the reservoir of knowledge passed down through generations of Native American residents of the state. The Wisconsin Historical Society became the custodian for the archaeological site list in

1965, when it was charged with maintaining the inventory. The developments growing out of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and subsequent amendments resulted in initial entries into the architectural inventory and in the tracking of archaeological reports. The Division began the computerization of all of these inventories in the early 1980s. Spatial data continued to be tracked on paper maps until 2000, when the Division integrated the spatial data using GIS technology and the tabular data in the state-of-the-art Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD). This user-friendly suite of applications can be accessed on-site at the Society or over the Internet for a fee. The WHPD is widely used by archaeologists, architectural historians, planners, designers, and other interested professionals.

The integrated inventory of the WHPD now includes 110,000 architectural resources and historic properties, 30,000 archaeological sites—including 9,700 cemeteries—and nearly 10,000 archaeological reports. Approved users can research detailed tabular data as well as site locations overlaid on U.S.G.S. quadrangle maps. These inventoried resources range from 12,000-year-old mammoth butchering sites in southeastern Wisconsin to early twentieth-century vacation resorts along the lakeshores of Wisconsin's north woods. Enhancements that facilitate user access, provide a greater range of map layers, and incorporate images of the sites are in development.

Despite generations of archaeological research, there are still many gaps in what we know about Wisconsin's past. How long have people lived here? Where did the Oneota come from and who did they become? Through the years, survey and inventory grants have been awarded for archaeological surveys but, given the nature of archaeological fieldwork, typically these have been limited in scale. Notable exceptions include countywide surveys for mounds in Dane and Rock counties and a grant used to develop a regional historic context for Euroamerican archaeological sites in Wisconsin's Central Sands counties. More recently, grants have been awarded for topical research such as the archaeology of Great Lakes Native American maple sugaring, Native American agriculture, and the involvement of Native American fishing guides in the development of tourism in northern Wisconsin. In addition, work at one of Wisconsin's largest Paleo-Indian sites and the inventory and analysis of two deep cave rock art sites have provided significant new information on the peopling of the state and the nature and extent of the state's rock art resources. Most archaeological survey work in Wisconsin has been, and no doubt will continue to be, the result of legally mandated projects. In part, this reflects the current direction of archaeological research, and in part the impacts of continued reductions in state funding. Predominately, the mandated work has been concentrated in the southern two-thirds of the state, although large-scale highway corridor studies and the relicensing of dams along major riverways spurred survey work in the northern region of the state.

In July 2001, the Maritime Preservation and Archaeology Program launched the Maritime Trails initiative. Dividing Wisconsin's coastline into four management areas, the metaphorical "trails" recombine historic shipwrecks, lighthouses, historic waterfronts, historic vessels, museums, shore-side historical markers, and local attractions into Wisconsin's unified maritime cultural landscape. The initiative utilizes elements of education, public outreach, archaeology, historic preservation, and interpretive materials

to heighten greater appreciation and understanding of our maritime resources in one meaningful context. Since its inception, Maritime Trails has evolved to become the strategic plan for the investigation and public interpretation of Wisconsin's maritime landscape. The program is supported by partnerships with Wisconsin Department of Transportation, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, and Wisconsin Coastal Management and it has been successful in developing meaningful relationships between local governments, state agencies, and other organizations, and has directly reached over 16,000 people through public presentations.

Most of the properties in the Architecture and History Inventory are now recorded due to grant-funded intensive surveys or Section 106 compliance surveys. While the earliest surveys recorded properties of general architectural interest, more recent intensive surveys have been conducted in a more comprehensive and systematic fashion. These examine major historical, as well as architectural, themes within the community and record the buildings accordingly. This method documents buildings of historical and of architectural interest, providing a comprehensive examination of a community's built environment.

In the 1970s, architectural surveys were concentrated in small towns and rural areas. In the 1980s, most large-scale, intensive architectural surveys were completed in urban areas, including Milwaukee, Beloit, Madison, Janesville, Green Bay, and La Crosse. A relatively few examined rural resources, such as nineteenth-century mining communities in Lafayette and Grant counties. In recent years, the focus has shifted to smaller communities and resort areas. As a consequence of almost thirty years of work, the Division has solid, although in some cases dated, survey information for most of Wisconsin's larger cities and villages, as well as for a variety of specialty resources.

The notable survey gaps are in rural areas and in smaller communities in the northern third of the state. Some of the "rural gap" has been filled with surveys of "crossroad communities" in Door (1998), Oconto (2000), and Dane (2002) counties. Thematic surveys of state highway bridges, public libraries, and state facilities, as well as specialized surveys like Racine's Prairie School Architecture (1994), recreation-related properties of Iron County (1997), and a boathouse survey in Oneida County (1998) broaden our understanding of particular resource types.

The surveys funded through Certified Local Government program can help eliminate the knowledge gap in rural communities. For instance, surveys in La Crosse County, the only county CLG in Wisconsin, and in the Town of Perry, Dane County, the only town CLG, may become models for other rural local governments to follow.

To evaluate the significance of Wisconsin's diverse properties, the Division developed a series of "Historic Contexts" arranged around themes and time periods. They are described in the three-volume *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* (1986). These "contexts," the newly revised *Wisconsin Archeologist* (1998), and over thirty cultural study units, ranging from *The Archaic Period of Northwestern Wisconsin* to *Mississippian Cultures in Southeastern Wisconsin* provide valuable background information and references on Wisconsin's people, industries, resources, and architecture.

In addition to their use in determining the eligibility of sites for listing on the National Register, these succinct summaries have been used by countless individuals as resource guides and as the first step in their quest for information.

The Division also has developed reports that provide detailed histories and establish clear criteria for evaluating the importance of county courthouses, lighthouses, Paleo-Indian archaeological sites, Late Woodland mounds in southwest Wisconsin, Great Lakes shipwrecks, rock art sites, logging sites, and public libraries. To help place Wisconsin's many farmsteads in context, the Division has also compiled and published *The Farm Landscape* (1996), a bibliography of the architecture and archaeology of farming.

Wisconsin has approximately 2,000 listings on the National Register of Historic Places. These listings encompass roughly 22,000 individual resources. In addition, the state is home to thirty-eight National Historic Landmarks, recognizing the important national historical and architectural contributions of the state. These resources include nationally-significant archaeological sites, natural formations contributing to our knowledge of geology, as well as resources associated with major immigrant groups and political movements, and properties of unique architectural distinction.

Over the last forty years in Wisconsin, the national preservation program has permitted the division to identify, learn from, and preserve elements of the state's rich and varied history. The Society's long-standing commitment to partnerships and statewide use of the grants has enriched lives, preserved communities, and reminded us of the origin of the traditional values that guide us as we plan for the future.

### **HISTORY OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN WISCONSIN**

Interest in historic preservation began more than a century ago. In 1903, the Wisconsin Archeological Society was founded with a goal of "advancing the study and preservation of Wisconsin Indian Antiquities," with a particular focus on Indian mounds. By the 1920s, the Society had helped save 500 mounds throughout Wisconsin, typically through collaboration with local historical societies and other public service organizations. As just one example, in 1906, the Wisconsin Archeological Society and the Sauk County Historical Society raised enough money to purchase the man-shaped effigy mound near Baraboo.

Other early historic preservation efforts focused on buildings and historic period sites. In 1910, the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs bought the land where the first capitol of the Wisconsin Territory had once stood in Belmont. Seven years later the state legislature created a commission and appropriated special funding to purchase the capitol building and return it to its original site. In 1924, the land and building became the First Capitol State Park.

The state took a more active role in historic preservation when it enacted the Integrated Park Act in 1947. This legislation made it possible for the state to use monies from general funds to acquire, restore and develop properties of historic and archaeological significance. The first purchase was a portion of the 1,000-year-old site of Aztalan, the



heart of which had already been saved through private fund-raising efforts and a Jefferson County appropriation. Subsequent state actions led to the purchase of such properties as Villa Louis, a Victorian estate, and Old Wade House, a historic stage coach stop. The Wisconsin Historical Society now operates both of these historic sites.

Through the first half of the twentieth century, historic preservation in Wisconsin greatly benefited from private efforts as well as the efforts of local historical societies and governments. The projects typically involved the purchase of historically significant buildings, such as the Old Agency House and Fort Winnebago in Portage, the Little White Schoolhouse in Ripon, St. Augustine Church in New Diggings, and historic Hazelwood in Green Bay, the home of the principal author of Wisconsin's constitution. Historic preservation interests began to receive more systematic attention in the 1960s with the enactment of local preservation ordinances. Communities such as Milwaukee, Madison, Fond du Lac, and Mineral Point adopted historic preservation ordinances and began designating local landmarks and districts.

In 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act created the National Register of Historic Places and a program of matching grants to the states. In response, the governor of Wisconsin designated the director of the Wisconsin Historical Society as the official liaison to the National Park Service (NPS). The Wisconsin Historical Society hired its first permanent historic preservation staff in 1972, beginning with an architectural historian/planner and reassigning a sites historian to historic preservation duties. Their work focused on nominating sites to the National Register and conducting surveys of historic buildings. In the mid 1970s, the NPS mandated that state offices have a certain level of expertise in order to participate in the national historic preservation fund program and to receive grant dollars. The Society requested additional funding from the state legislature and hired an archaeologist and a registered architect, and formally established the Division of Historic Preservation (now the Division of Historic Preservation-Public History) in 1976. From these beginnings, the Division peaked with a staff of twenty-two permanent employees in 2000, implementing a wide array of both state and federal programs. While the state and federal programs still exist, budget cuts have left only fifteen permanent employees to facilitate them.

Initially, the Division carried out surveys, nominated sites to the National Register, offered matching grants for acquisition and development of historic properties, and reviewed the effects of federally-assisted projects on significant architectural and archaeological properties. Since then, its duties have grown to encompass a wide variety of programs and tasks that serve to protect our ancient and historic places. One of these duties, under the Certified Local Government program, is to certify cities, villages, counties, or towns that meet basic criteria on efforts to survey, inventory and protect historic properties. This program, enacted in a 1980 amendment to the National Historic Preservation Act, encourages historic preservation by local governments. By 1981, a program of matching grants to owners of historic properties ended and a new program of federal investment tax credits to owners of income-producing historic buildings was initiated. Also that year, the state established a historic-building code and gave the Division the responsibility for verifying a building's historic status. This code has been a

successful alternative to the stringent building codes designed for new construction.

In 1985, the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation was founded in Stevens Point. This statewide membership organization has dedicated itself to historic preservation and focuses on statewide issues and legislative action. The year 1985 also saw the creation of the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Task Force. This group, comprised of state legislators, the director of the Wisconsin Historical Society, archaeologists, historic preservationists, developers, architects, and attorneys, developed a comprehensive historic preservation legislative packet, much of which was subsequently enacted. These initiatives included:

- establishment of a Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places
- a 5 percent state tax credit for rehabilitating income-producing historic buildings
- a 25 percent state tax credit for rehabilitating owner-occupied historic buildings
- expansion of the field archaeology act, including the protection of underwater sites
- property tax exemptions for archaeological sites placed under protective covenants
- regulation of publicly owned historic properties
- local zoning changes that favor historic preservation
- funding for a regional archaeology program
- funding and position authority for the state archaeology and maritime archaeology and preservation program

In 1986, the state legislature enacted a burial sites law protecting all human remains on private and public property. To implement this law, the burial sites preservation program was added to the Division in 1987.

In 1987, the state legislature also took action to help preserve Wisconsin's historic downtowns by enacting the Main Street Act. This act directed the Department of Development (later the Department of Commerce) to establish a statewide Main Street program. Since 1988, the Department of Commerce has selected many communities to join the Main Street program through a competitive process. The program has stimulated millions of dollars of public and private investment.

Through the 1990s, preservation interests across Wisconsin were advanced by state legislation. In 1994, the governor signed into law a provision requiring cities and villages to adopt historic preservation ordinances if they have a National Register-listed property within their jurisdiction. After years of work spearheaded by a coalition of statewide organizations, the Wisconsin legislature enacted "Smart Growth" legislation in 1999. This legislation requires most of Wisconsin's counties, cities, villages, and towns to adopt a plan by January 1, 2010, that addresses the preservation of cultural resources. The Division has prepared two booklets and a page on the Division Web site addressing "Smart Growth."

A list of state historic preservation laws appears in Appendix B.

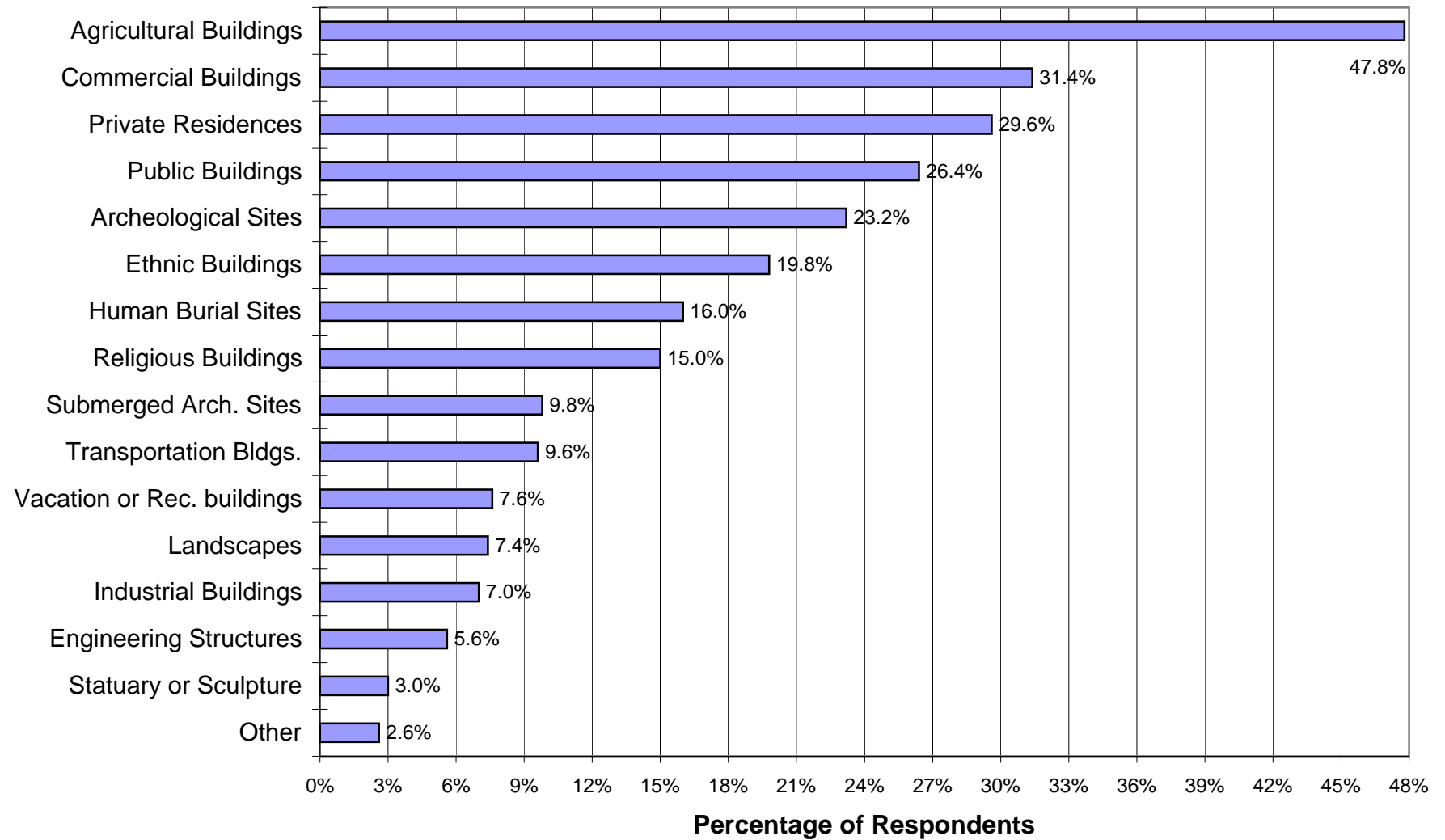
**APPENDIX A**  
**Questionnaire Results**

The following three tables are results from the questionnaire described on page 9 of this report.

Q2. Which resources are the most threatened? Check no more than three responses.

- Agricultural buildings (such as barns, farmsteads or silos)
- Archaeological sites (such as rock art, habitation sites or lime kilns)
- Commercial buildings
- Designed or significant landscapes (such as parks or gardens)
- Engineering structures (such as bridges or tunnels)
- Human burial sites (such as cemeteries or mounds)
- Industrial buildings
- Private residences
- Publicly owned buildings (such as city halls, courthouses or schools)
- Religious buildings (such as churches, synagogues or convents)
- Statuary or outdoor sculpture (including folk art sites)
- Submerged (underwater) archaeological sites
- Traditional ethnic buildings (such as log, half-timber or stone buildings)
- Transportation buildings (such as depots)
- Vacation or recreation buildings (such as lodges, resorts, motels, park buildings, or boathouses)
- Other

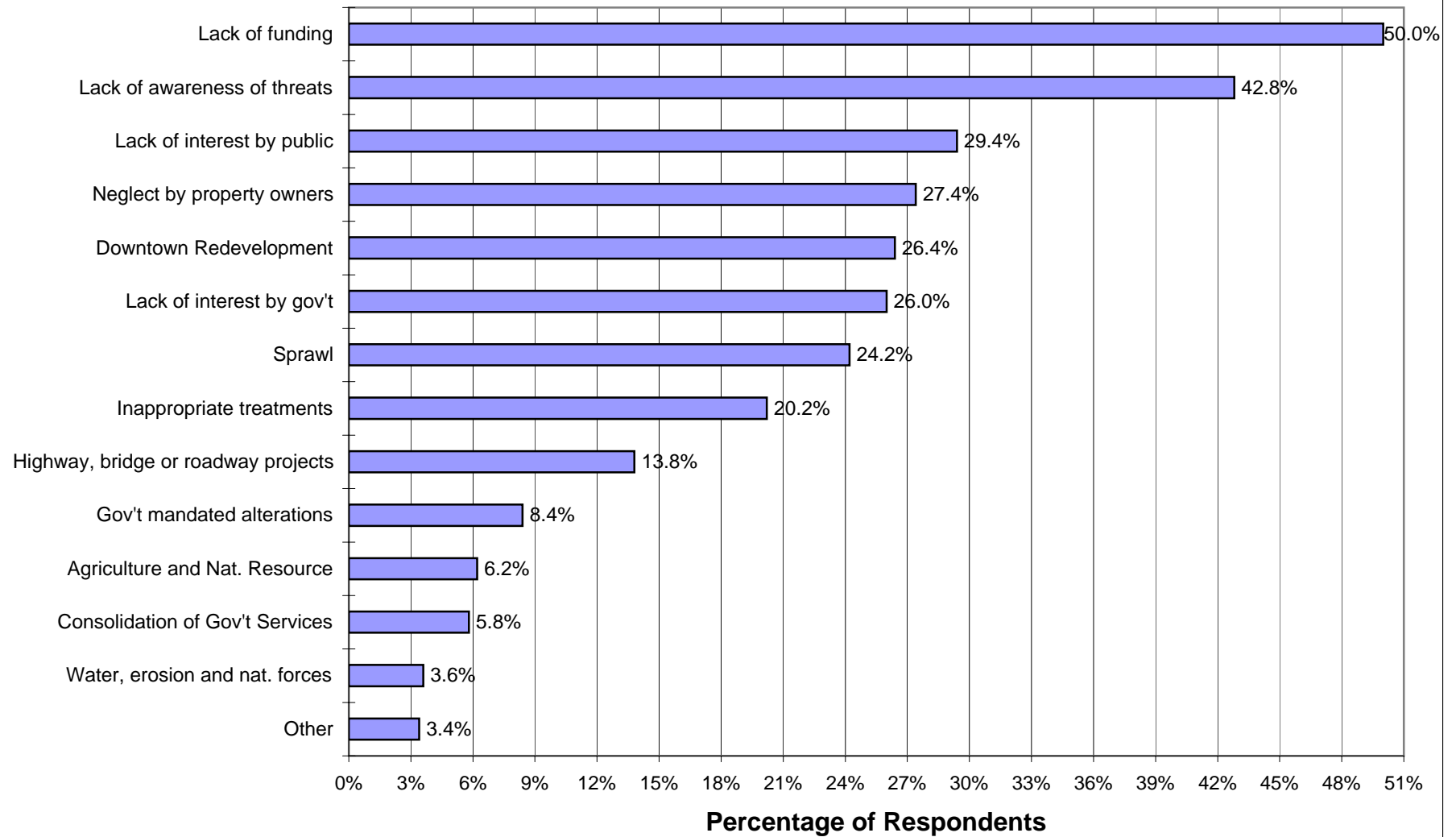
**Resources Most Threatened**  
**Aggregate Results of Question 2--500 Surveys**



Q3. What are the major threats to historic resources? Check no more than three responses.

- Agricultural and natural resource use
- Consolidation of government services, congregations or schools
- Downtown redevelopment, including the construction of parking lots
- Government mandated or funded building alterations (such as ADA, lead abatements, energy conservation)
- Highway, bridge or roadway widening projects
- Inappropriate treatments
- Lack of awareness of threats to historic properties
- Lack of funding
- Lack of interest by public
- Lack of interest by units of government or public officials
- Neglect by property owners
- Sprawl
- Water, erosion and natural forces
- Other

### Major Threats to Historic Resources Aggregate Results of Question 3--500 Surveys

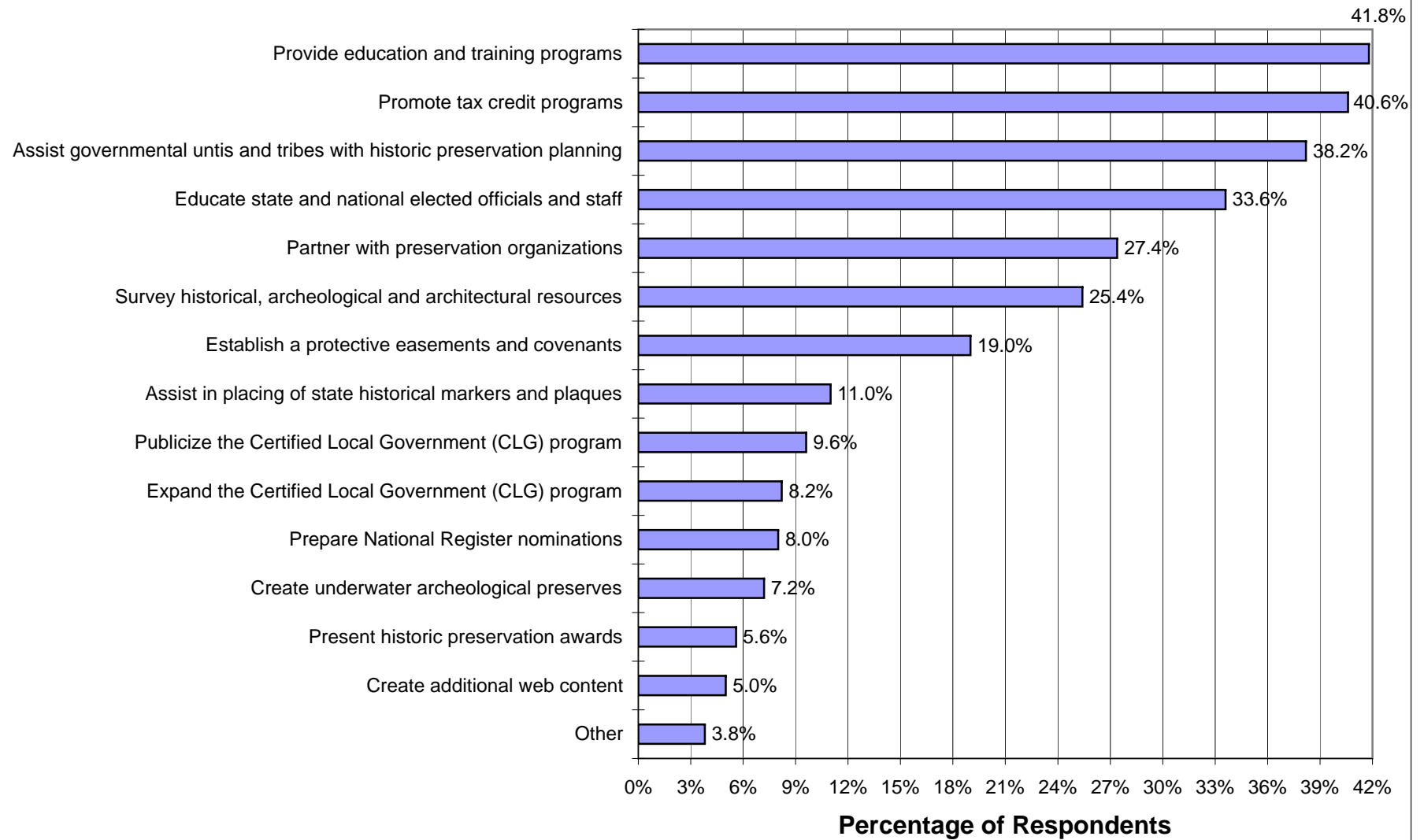


Q5. The following list contains other means by which the State Historic Preservation Office can promote historic preservation. Check the three most important.

- Assist governmental units and tribes with historic preservation planning
- Assist in placing of state historical markers and plaques
- Create additional web content
- Create underwater archaeological preserves
- Educate state and national elected officials and staff
- Establish a protective easements and covenants program
- Expand the Certified Local Government (CLG) program
- Partner with preservation organizations
- Prepare National Register nominations
- Present historic preservation awards
- Promote tax credit programs
- provide education and training programs
- publicize the Certified Local Government (CLG) program
- Survey historical archaeological and architectural resources
- Other



### Means to Promote Historic Preservation Aggregate Results of Question 5--500 Surveys



## **Appendix B**

### **Historic Preservation Legislation in Wisconsin**

#### **1967**

Original “State Liaison Officer” (later “State Historic Preservation Officer”) designated by Gov. Warren P. Knowles in response to enactment in October 1966 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

#### **1969**

Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) received first federal historic preservation grant (\$1,892) under the 1966 act.

#### **1972**

WHS hired first full-time historic preservation staff member with federal historic preservation grant funds.

#### **1975**

Wisconsin legislature, in budget bill, authorized funding for the first time specifically for historic preservation program.

#### **1976**

The historic preservation program added four new permanent staff members. In May 1976 the former State Historic Preservation Office was restructured as the Division of Historic Preservation.

#### **1977**

Chapter 29, Laws of 1977, created Wisconsin Statutes § 44.22 establishing the basic historic preservation program in the WHS, provided some state funding for historic preservation, and created the Historic Preservation Review Board and the State Historic Preservation Officer. Also, § 13.48 Stats. was amended to include historic preservation responsibilities. Effective date: June 22, 1977.

#### **1981**

Chapter 341, Laws of 1981, created Wisconsin Statutes § 101.121 establishing framework for historic-building code, and created a historic-building code council in Dept. of Industry, Labor, and Human Relations.

Wis. Stats. § 66.037 created, establishing a thirty-day delay in issuing demolition permits for buildings listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places in Wisconsin to enable the WHS to create a record of the buildings.

#### **1983**

Wis. Stats. § 44.22 revised in State Budget Bill, appointing the Administrator of the Division of Historic Preservation title and responsibilities of State Historic Preservation Officer.

**1985**

1985 Wisconsin Act 316 created Wis. Stats. § 157.70, establishing a burial sites preservation program to protect human remains on private and public property; and amended Wis. Stats. § 15.705, creating the Burial Sites Preservation Board. Effective date: April 29, 1986.

**1987**

1987 Wisconsin Act 395 created comprehensive historic preservation legislation including: establishing the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places (Wis. Stats. § 44.36); creating a 5 percent state tax credit for rehabilitating income-producing historic buildings (Wis. Stats. § 71.07 (9m)); expansion of field archaeology act, property tax exemption for archaeological properties (Wis. Stats. § 44.47); regulation of historic properties owned by local governments (Wis. Stats. § 66.05); regulation of state-owned historic properties (Wis. Stats. § 44.41); establishing the regional archaeology program (Wis. Stats. § 44.48); and providing funding for the above and for the general historic preservation program of the WHS. Effective date: April 23, 1988.

1987 Wisconsin Act 399 (budget bill) modified Wis. Stats. § 71.07, creating a 25 percent state tax credit for rehabilitating nondepreciable historic properties, with a two-year sunset provision. Effective date: May 13, 1988.

**1989**

1989 Wisconsin Act 31 (budget bill) provided new funding and positions for the state historic preservation program, especially bolstering the state archeology program; instituted new state agency review procedures covering state property, licenses, permits, and grants (Wis. Stats. § 44.40); repealed the sunset provision on the 25 percent state tax credit (Wis. Stats. § 71.07); corrected problems identified with the state 5 percent and 25 percent tax credits (Wis. Stats. § 71.07); and defined “sufficient contiguous lands” to protect a burial site to be whatever is necessary to protect the burial site, but a minimum of five feet (Wis. Stats. § 157.70). Effective date: August 3, 1989.

**1990**

1989 Wisconsin Act 237 established a state heritage tourism program and appropriated funding for staff in the Department of Development and prescribed a contract with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to become one of four pilot heritage tourism states in the nation [along with Tennessee, Indiana, and Texas]. Effective date: April 27, 1990.

**1991**

1991 Wisconsin Act 39 expanded Membership of Historical Markers Council; established local building inspector rule for repairs of historic buildings—up to 85 percent of assessed value deemed reasonable (50 percent on nonhistoric buildings); modified state 25 percent tax credit provisions: threshold reduced to \$10,000 while nonstructural interior costs made ineligible, and covenant requirement eliminated and replaced with cost-recovery period; established that historic property in floodplains were

eligible for municipal variances to allow rehabilitation; provided that State Register-listed properties were eligible for state historic-building code; established historic preservation covenant provision for archaeological site property tax exemption; mandated WHS to create and distribute a model community historic preservation ordinance; and created Wis. Stats. § 120.12 (21), establishing a review process to assess effects to historic properties owned by school districts. Effective date: August 14, 1991.

### **1992**

1992 Wisconsin Act 269 expanded the historical markers program to include properties of local significance in addition to the previously eligible properties of state and national significance and provided \$20,000 annually to purchase and install plaques and markers; authorized municipalities to create Wis. Stats. § 66.1007, establishing architectural conservancy districts that contain historic properties (the statute provided for enhancement of and self-government by these districts); and modified Wis. Stats. § 44.47, creating a submerged cultural resources program and a new Submerged Cultural Resources Council. Effective date: May 1, 1992.

### **1994**

1993 Wisconsin Act 471 provided project staff for the historical markers program and directed the Society to prepare text for a book listing the location and texts of all markers (Wis. Stats. § 44.15); required cities containing National Register or State Register properties to enact local historic preservation ordinances (Wis. Stats. § 66.23 (7)(em)); made nomination preparation and architectural fees eligible for state 25 percent tax credits; made eligible for the 25 percent credit buildings *determined eligible* for the State Register as well as those listed; restored provision that plans for 25 percent credit projects must be approved *before* work is undertaken; permitted owners who used the 25 percent credit to use it again in fewer than five years; and allowed owners to prorate any tax credit refund owed when selling a building in which the credit was used fewer than five years after its use (Wis. Stats. § 71.07); made eligible for the historic-building code buildings nominated to the State Register or the National Register or *determined eligible* for listing in the State Register or National Register; and created Wis. Stats. § 101.1215, banning the abrasive cleaning of historic buildings *unless* the method is approved in rules promulgated by DILHR with the advice of the Society. Effective date: May 12, 1994.

### **1996**

1995 Wisconsin Act 208 created Wis. Stats. § 943.01, criminalizing damage to rock art sites as a Class D property crime felony. Effective date: April 10, 1996.

1995 Wisconsin Act 391 modified Department of Natural Resource statutes to include protection of archaeological features, providing substantial penalties for their damage (Wis. Stats. § 23.095, 29.921, 29.927, and 29.931). Effective date: June 6, 1996.

1995 Wisconsin Act 466 created Wis. Stat. § 943.014, criminalizing the demolition of historic buildings without an appropriate local wrecking permit as a Class A misdemeanor. Effective date: June 27, 1996.

**1997**

1997 Wisconsin Act 27 (Budget Bill) eliminated the Historical Markers and the Submerged Cultural Resources Councils. All authorities previously vested in those councils were transferred to the Wisconsin Historical Society Historic Preservation Division. Effective date: October 13, 1997.

**1999**

1999 Wisconsin Act 9 required most communities to adopt comprehensive plans that include consideration of historic and archaeological resources by January 1, 2010 (Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" legislation). Effective date: October 27, 1999.

**2002**

2001 Act 109 created Wis. Stats. § 44.015, granting the Wisconsin Historical Society authority to generate fees for services or products or admission to venues. Effective date: July 29, 2002.

**2003**

2003 Wisconsin Act 91 established mechanism for Wisconsin Historical Society to enter into relationships with private nonprofit entities to maximize entrepreneurial opportunities and other income-generating projects and programs (Wis. Stat. §§ 13.48 and 44.20). Effective date: December 13, 2003.

**2004**

The governor approved the merger of the former Historic Preservation Division and the Public History Division to create a new Historic Preservation-Public History Division.

**APPENDIX C  
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