

**Historic Preservation Fund Grants, Cultural Partnership Programs, Pacific West Region
National Park Service, Department of the Interior
2012 Senior Plenary Session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas**

Key Points:

- FY 2012 -- Award grants to three Pacific Area Territories totaling \$1,216,215.
- FY 2012 -- Award grants to the Freely Associated States of Micronesia (Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (including Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae) totaling \$889,893.
- Request for Technical Assistance -- Peleliu U.S. National Historic Landmark, Republic of Palau

Background:

The Pacific Area Territories and the Freely Associated States (FAS) of Micronesia Historic Preservation Offices (HPO) are annually appropriated Historic Preservation Fund grants pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for protection and preservation of National Register eligible historic properties and National Historic Landmarks (NHL).

- Sections 106 and 110 of the NHPA, PL 89-665, amended 1992 (16 USC 470), specify processes to be followed in the management of historic properties by Federal agencies in order to take into account the effects of planned projects on historic properties.
- Federal Agencies grant millions of dollars annually to entities in the Micronesia region and American Samoa for construction of buildings, roads, sewers, water systems, and other infrastructure. Federal agencies and entities throughout Micronesia have responsibilities to take into account the effects of an undertaking on National Register eligible properties. If a National Historic Landmark is directly or adversely affected by an undertaking, Federal agencies or entities must to the maximum extent possible minimize harm (Sec 110(f)).

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) provides grants to the Pacific Area Territories and Freely Associated States of Micronesia Historic Preservation Offices (HPO) for the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties by funding activities such as, planning, survey and inventory, registration, local and federal project review, acquisition, development, and public education. Additionally, the HPO's provide project grants to nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and private individuals in carrying out historic preservation activities to preserve their cultural heritage.

The HPF appropriation is derived from the proceeds of the sale of leases of Outer Continental Shelf lands.

Financial assistance provided to the Territories and the Freely Associated States does not require matching share.

Current Challenges:

(1) The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Historic Preservation Office (HPO) continues to face challenges in complying with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, Public Law 89-665, amended 1992 (16 USC 470) requirements, and coping with austerity measures pursuant to CNMI Public Law 17-21.

- CNMI HPO archaeological field surveyors are non-critical employees and are operating on reduced hours.
- The CNMI HPO staff provides an essential role by reviewing and commenting on all development permits issued in the CNMI. As a result of the austerity measure, CNMI HPO may impede locally and federally funded construction projects because the CNMI HPO has not been exempted as a regulatory agency.
- The CNMI Division of Environmental Quality is the environmental arm of the CNMI

Government and cannot legally issue construction permits (earthmoving permit) without HPO comment and approval pursuant to CR Vol. 15, No. 10, October 15, 1993 (CNMI Environmental Protection Act, Public Law 3-23, 2 CMC §§ 3101 to 3134, and 1 CMC §§ 2601 to 2605).

- This causes delays and/or disruptions of U.S. Federal undertakings and local infrastructure projects, and the potential loss of local revenue generated from construction projects.

(2) The National Park Service HPF grant program oversight team instituted a Corrective Action Plan for the Guam Historic Preservation Office (HPO) to improve program compliance in the areas of inventory, grant, and project management.

- The Guam HPO is currently obtaining public comment for the proposed Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Cultural Resource Surveys on Guam to address the Guam historic property inventory.

(3) Technical Assistance has been requested by the Governor of Peleliu, Republic of Palau for preservation and protection of the special heritage that both countries share with the Peleliu World War II U.S. National Historic Landmark (NHL).

- The 1944 battle for Peleliu was one of the bloodiest in the Central Pacific campaign; the U.S. suffered over 10,000 casualties and almost 1,800 Marines and soldiers killed in action.
- Because of the significance and integrity of the battlefield site, it was designated Peleliu Battlefield National Historic Landmark in 1985 by the Secretary of the Interior and encompasses historic landing beaches, buildings, pill boxes, nearly 100 Japanese defensive cave sites, and large military equipment still remaining on the landscape.
- Peleliu State passed legislation in 1988 to protect and preserve its historic properties. The Palau Historic Preservation Office, partially supported by grants from the U.S. Historic Preservation Fund administered by the NPS, provides assistance for historical, archeological, and ethnographic studies to further these preservation efforts.
- A Special Resources Study was conducted by the National Park Service (NPS) in 2003 in response to an official request from the Government of Palau to establish an operational Peleliu Historical Park. The study concluded that:
 - Peleliu had the best-preserved examples of the island-by-island fighting that characterized U.S. naval operations in the Central Pacific during World War II;
 - the area fully met suitability criteria for inclusion in the National Park System; but designation as an NPS site was not feasible due to possible incompatible future land uses that would limit the area available for designation of historical park.
- The Governor of Peleliu believes circumstances have changed and in 2010 requested an updated study to determine options for park designation to achieve a lasting preservation legacy for the battlefield. The NPS tentatively supports this position, pending new information on land uses and community interest in a park designation.
- On behalf of the Peleliu State Historical and Cultural Preservation Commission, the Peleliu Governor and State Legislature requested technical assistance through the NPS Director and the Secretary of the Interior to preserve Peleliu Battlefield National Historic Landmark.
- The Superintendent of War in the Pacific National Historical Park visited Peleliu in January 2012, to meet with officials and interested parties to clarify technical assistance needs, land use changes, and community interest in park designation for the battlefield. Information gathered will form the basis of Technical Assistance between the NPS and Peleliu.

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