

2012 Montana Historic Preservation Plan Stakeholder Questionnaire



Running Eagle Falls, Glacier National Park

GENERAL:

1. 145 responses to the questionnaire were received
2. Support and effectiveness of preservation depends not only on the interests of, but also the resources available to, private citizens and local governments, i.e. funding is important.
3. Increased proactive visibility and education is needed with private parties and government agencies to:
 - a. Increase public awareness of preservation efforts.
 - b. Direct resources and funding to localities for preservation goals.
 - c. Correct misinformation about the program, especially regarding property rights and the review and compliance process.
 - d. Collaborate with interested parties to pool funds and support projects that promote economic development and strategic planning.
 - e. Align the community's values with the resources they hold to promote preservation.

1. Frequencies of respondent locations:

Many respondents did not provide their location (14.48%). However, 26 different counties were represented in the survey at least once. The counties of Lewis and Clark (13.79%), Yellowstone (9.66%), and Gallatin (7.59%) yielded the most respondents, but were not the majority of respondents.

County of residence	Number	%
0	21	14.48
Lewis&Clark	20	13.79
Yellowstone	14	9.66
Gallatin	11	7.59
Missoula	10	6.90
Hill	8	5.52
Carbon	7	4.83
Silver Bow	6	4.14
Cascade	6	4.14
Fergus	5	3.45
Ravalli	5	3.45
Madison	5	3.45
Flathead	4	2.76
Custer	4	2.76

County of residence	Number	%
Park	3	2.07
Lake	2	1.38
Big Horn	2	1.38
Stillwater	2	1.38
Beaverhead	1	0.69
Choteau	1	0.69
Blaine	1	0.69
Richland	1	0.69
Powell	1	0.69
Deer Lodge	1	0.69
Judith Basin	1	0.69
Broadwater	1	0.69
Meagher	1	0.69
Out of State	1	0.69

2. Respondent occupations:

The majority of respondents were employed in the field of preservation (51%). About 1/3 (34%) were preservation volunteers and about 1/6 (15%) were neither a professional nor a volunteer, but were interested in preservation.

- Preservation job: 51%
- Preservation volunteer: 34%
- Other: 15%

3. To what extent do you find the following statement to be currently true?: “Montana is a place that knows, respects, and celebrates its heritage, openly encouraging and supporting the preservation of its significant historic, pre-contact, and traditional cultural properties.”

Right on the money: 13.7%

Some truth, but not across the board: 82.2%

More fiction than reality: 4.1%

Not true at all: 0%

1. This statement is the Vision statement for the 2008-2012 State Preservation Plan.
2. The overwhelming majority of respondents found this statement to have “some truth but not across the board” (82.2%). 13.7% found it to be “right on the money.”
3. In comments, respondents noted a number of factors that prevented this statement from being perceived as currently true. These factors included financial and economic issues, different mindsets in local communities and agencies, the prevalence of miscommunication and misinformation about preservation, and the prioritization of other political and economic interests, such as energy development.
4. Proactive solutions were offered to combat the factors listed above, including more education and outreach about blending preservation with alternative political and economic interests and promoting history and preservation in schools.
5. Only a small percentage (4.1%) indicated this statement was “more fiction than reality” and no respondents indicated this vision statement was “not true at all.”

4. In your experience, how effective are current efforts to preserve the significant historic, archaeological, and traditional cultural places of Montana?

Very effective: 4.1%

Usually effective: 49%

Sometimes effective: 43.4%

Not very effective: 3.4%

1. Respondents were not willing to take a strong stance either way, in stating that Montana has been “very effective” (4.1%) or “not very effective” (3.4%) in preserving the significant historic, archaeological, and traditional cultural places.
2. There was a middle ground perspective – respondents stated Montana was “sometimes effective” (43.4%) or “usually effective” (49%) in preserving these places.
3. From comments, the difference between these two preferences was a matter of scope. State and nonprofit agencies were viewed to be effective, but the effectiveness of private, federal, and local activities varied depending on special interests.
4. Respondents noted that improving program visibility and education were possible solutions to increase the effectiveness of preservation efforts. Specific topics noted as needing more clarification included the compliance and review and National Register nomination processes, and preservation laws as they relate to private and business interests.

5. Is historic preservation currently a substantive consideration in your community as it develops plans for growth, economic development, housing, etc.?

Yes: 46.8%

No: 53.2%

1. Slightly fewer respondents considered historic preservation as a substantive consideration in their communities as it develops plans for growth, economic development, housing, etc. (46.8%) than those who did not (53.2%).
2. Many respondents indicated they “weren’t sure” about their answer or that it depended on the scope of government or the specific resource under review.
3. Citizens of local communities were viewed as spearheading efforts to publicize preservation and integrate preservation goals in growth plans in most cases.
4. Comments indicated that local governments generally did not consider historic preservation over development and economic interests. However, if the funds and time were available, these economic interests may drive preservation efforts and compliance.

6. Which three of the following do you feel are the biggest challenges for historic preservation in Montana?

12%	Growth/sprawl
6.5%	Energy development
14%	Neglect/abandonment
3%	Vandalism/looting
0.5%	Natural disasters
17%	Lack of financial incentives
5.1%	Preservation perceived as private property taking
0.7%	Historic places perceived as not “green”
8.2%	Inappropriate upgrades and treatments to historic buildings
8.6%	Inadequate local historic preservation laws/law enforcement
2.6%	Lack of adequately trained trades/craft people
3.7%	Lack of information
12%	Lack of understanding
5.8%	Lack of interest

1. Respondents indicated that the main challenge for historic preservation in Montana was a lack of financial incentives (17%). Other challenges included neglect and abandonment (14%), growth and sprawl (12%), and a lack of understanding (12%).
2. Lack of understanding was perceived as a significantly greater challenge than lack of interest (5.8%) or lack of information (3.7%).
3. Natural disasters (0.5%) and the perception as historic places not being ‘green’ (0.7%) were not noted as significant challenges for historic preservation.
4. Many respondents viewed new development, especially energy development, as prioritized over preservation efforts due to the perception that it is more cost effective.

5. Respondents commented that a lack of technical assistance and misinformation and a lack of understanding of economic incentives of preservation contributed to their community's resistance to historic preservation.

7. Which three of the following historic and cultural resource types do you feel are most threatened in Montana:

7.8%	Residences/neighborhoods
17%	Downtowns
5.5%	Government/public buildings
6.9%	Schools
1.8%	Churches
3.2%	Industrial Sites
16%	Rural communities/properties
11%	Pre-contact Archaeological Sites
11%	Historic archaeological sites
17%	Cultural/Historic landscapes
3.4%	Post WWII buildings

1. Respondents indicated that the most threatened historic and cultural resource types were Downtown (17%) areas, Cultural and Historic landscapes (17%), and rural properties. (Arguably, these three general property types may also encompass the other property types on the list).
2. Respondents noted oil and gas development as a particular threat to cultural landscapes, especially in rural communities.
3. Churches (1.8%), Industrial Sites (3.2%), and post-WWII buildings were considered some of the least threatened resource types.
4. However, many also commented that all property types are threatened and all are in need of community and funding support.

8. Which three of the following preservation tools do you feel are the most effective and realistic approaches for preserving Montana historic places?

12%	Local historic preservation ordinances and commissions
7.7%	State-level historic preservation laws
6.3%	Federal historic preservation regulations
14%	Brick & Mortar Grants
3.3%	Planning Grants
12%	Tax credit incentives
4.4%	Low-interest loans
0.5%	Easements
7.7%	Training for government decision-makers
5.1%	Community/Property Surveys & National Register nominations
17%	Public outreach and education
6.5%	Heritage tourism programs
2.6%	Preservation workshops/conferences
1.9%	Public meeting advocacy

1. Respondents indicated Public Outreach and Education (17%) and Brick and Mortar Grants (14%) were the two most effective and realistic approaches for preserving historic places. Tax credit incentives (12%) and local preservation ordinances and commissions (12%) tied for third most effective.
2. Specifically, respondents commented that education and training of decision makers who are misinformed, and thereby hinder preservation efforts, is a valuable approach to preservation.
3. Easements (0.5%) and public meeting advocacy (1.9%) were considered the least effective and realistic approaches for preserving historic places. Respondents also noted that more government regulations and laws would be counterproductive in promoting preservation efforts.
4. Respondents also commented that all could be effective and realistic, and funding opportunities would give preservation more attention.

9. If resources allowed, which three of the following programs of the State Historic Preservation Office should be prioritized to receive greater funding and/or attention?

11%	Preservation planning
9.2%	CLG-Local Preservation Office program
6.1%	Archaeology
9%	Historic Surveys
8.3%	State Antiquities Database/Information Management
7.1%	National Register of Historic Places (nominations)
16%	Brick & Mortar sub-grants
13%	Preservation Rehabilitation Tax Incentives program
5%	Review and Compliance program (Section 106)
16%	Outreach & Education

1. In line with the above, SHPO Outreach and Education (16%) and SHPO Brick and Mortar (16%) sub-grants were noted as those programs that should be prioritized to receive greater funding and/or attention.
2. Specifically, respondents noted that education that promotes understanding of archeology and preservation needed more attention to make it relevant to non-preservationists. Outreach initiatives should also include accessible public databases and websites.
3. Respondents felt that the SHPO Review and Compliance (Section 106) (5%) and SHPO Archaeology (6%) programs were not priorities for to receive greater funding and/or attention. However, respondents commented that funding and attention should not be taken away from the SHPO Review and Compliance program and regulations should still be enforced.

10. What preservation topics do you want more information or guidance about?

Respondents indicated they wanted more information and guidance to help them strategically plan and raise funds for preservation efforts. Respondents requested access to publications to help support their arguments for preservation in local governments. Specific requests included more information on successful preservation activities around the state and country on the economic benefits to preservation. Respondents also requested more information on developing local preservation ordinances, the compliance and review process, and how to interpret preservation-related laws and technical reports.

To support the momentum of a strategic plan, respondents requested information on nearly every aspect of fund raising. Included in the requests were information on the identification of potential partners and new funding sources, and grant writing assistance.

Respondents also requested more public information to be posted online, such as technical assistance guides and research reports, and through specialized workshops in conducting local research and developing heritage tourism projects.

11. What do you believe should be the number one priority activity for historic preservationists in Montana for the next 5 years?

Many respondents stated that outreach and education should be the priority of historic preservationists.

Specific focus should be directed to public, political, and business developer entities. Outreach to public entities included more pro-active involvement in school programs, and more collaborative program developments and fund raising efforts with like-minded partners in the community, and accessible databases of cultural resources. The goal of public outreach should be to raise support and build momentum for local programs that connect the community's values to traditional and cultural resources.

Recommended outreach to political and business developers included efforts to educate to dispel misconceptions about historic preservation and economic benefits. Specifically, efforts should focus on educating decision makers about the National Register process and economic incentives, such as tax credit information, and the benefits of historic preservation investments, such as comparable "success stories" in heritage tourism initiatives. The goal of these outreach programs should root preservation activities into economically beneficial outcomes.

On the state level, respondents indicated that a system of triage should be in place for directing our attention to the most vulnerable and endangered resources in the state. Many respondents were concerned about recent economic booms in Eastern Montana fostering "irresponsible development" in areas of undocumented historic and cultural resources. Specific areas mentioned included archeological sites, downtowns, and public lands as those that should be prioritized state-wide.