



October 11, 2007

Mr. David Gold
Ohio Legislative Service Commission
77 South High Street, Ninth Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6136

Re: Study of incentives for OHS sites

Dear David,

Enclosed is the information concerning the system of state memorials and museums under the care of the Ohio Historical Society (OHS) which the Commission has requested from us.

As you know, one of the provisions of House Bill 119 requires the Commission to study the feasibility and potential result of the state offering incentives for local entities, including municipal corporations, counties, townships, local historical societies, and regional authorities, to assume control of what are currently part of the state's system of historic sites and museums. The incentives to be studied are to include the establishment of tax credits, the contribution of capital dollars, and the creation of an endowment-matching program. The study is to focus on the cost and funding aspect of the incentives and is to attempt to determine the potential result of providing each incentive at varying levels. This study is one step that the legislature is taking to help correct the imbalance between the public functions of the Ohio Historical Society (OHS) in providing history related services for the state and the resources that the state provides to the Society to undertake those functions. The 60 sites under the Society's care have suffered due to lack of funds to operate and maintain them.

Ohio Revised Code Section 149.30 lists the public functions of the Society. Two paragraphs explain the responsibilities of the Society for historic sites and museums:

(A) Creating, supervising, operating, protecting, maintaining, and promoting for public use a system of state memorials as provided in and in conformity to appropriate acts and resolves of the general assembly . . . all of which shall be maintained and kept for public use at reasonable hours;

(B) Making alterations and improvements, marking, and constructing, reconstructing, protecting, or restoring structures, earthworks, and monuments in its care, and equipping such facilities with appropriate educational maintenance facilities;

As part of your study you have asked us to provide a list of sites that it currently administers under the state statute that would benefit from local control by other organizations. Almost all of the sites administered by OHS have been added to the network of historic sites and museums by actions of the legislature, and often with strong local support. Many of the sites came to the Society because there was no local organization or state agency with the resources, mandate, or expertise to properly manage the sites. Often sites were added without adequate resources being provided to carry out effectively the additional responsibilities that come with site management. Because of this, over the years for many sites much of the responsibility for day-to-day management has been assumed by the local community or other agencies.

In preparing the following information the Society carefully considered what the overall impact change of control would have on the site system and the individual sites. Clearly the future stewardship of the sites is of the utmost concern to OHS. Many of them suffer from deferred maintenance. However, there are sites that have the potential under local control to garner greater local support and be managed to maximize benefit to the communities and stakeholders. Many of these are currently managed by local organizations or other entities or are the beneficiaries of support by local communities or other advocates. Clearly, changing the control of these sites must be done with local consultation and there must be local support for any decision. This consultation has not yet occurred, and we strongly encourage that our local partners be involved early in your deliberative process. To assist in this effort, we are taking the initiative to provide a copy of this letter to the managers at all of our historic sites to make sure that they are kept informed and are ready to assist you. We are also providing this letter to many of our stakeholders at sites. Please let us know how we can help to facilitate contact with our historic sites and their communities throughout the course of this study.

In considering this issue, the Society also referred to the Site Establishment Policy that its Board of Trustees adopted in 2001. This policy sets standards and procedures for establishing new historic sites and museums. It also sets a general standard for the development of the site system:

The system of state memorials administered by the Society will be distinguished by the high quality of resources, facilities, services, maintenance, and image and not by the number of sites. It is the intention of the Society to limit the number of new sites added to the system in the future. It will add only sites that provide opportunities to interpret an important theme or period of Ohio history or allow the Society to provide programs and services in an area of the state where it is not represented.

It also sets nine (9) criteria for evaluating whether a property would be an appropriate addition to the system of state historic sites and museums:

1. **Significance**
The property must be eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places for statewide or national significance. National Historic Landmarks will receive preferential consideration.
It is the intention of the Society not to add natural sites to the system.
2. **Theme**
The site must be able to be used to interpret a major theme or period of Ohio history that is not being interpreted to the level thought appropriate by the Society.
3. **Integrity**
The property must have maximum integrity of location, design, material, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association.
4. **Appropriateness**
The property must be appropriate for use as a museum or historic site, accessible to travelers as well as to the local community. The property must further the mission and vision of the Society including its educational goals and must reflect the interests of the Society's audiences.
5. **Financial Support**
Evidence of adequate continuing financial support beyond the Society's current capabilities, including endowments where appropriate, must be demonstrated. It is the intention of the Society that new state memorials be operated by the Society itself and that there be sufficient resources available to do so. Establishment of a site as a state memorial

will constitute the state's intention to provide sufficient resources to provide for basic operation of the site.

6. **Support Group**
Recommendation for establishment of a site is contingent upon the existence of a support group established under the guidelines of the Society which will provide substantial resources for the development and ongoing maintenance and operation of the site.
7. **Title**
Clear title to the property must be available. It is the intention of the Society that sites be owned by the State of Ohio, unless terms of a gift or bequest require that the Society hold title.
8. **Collections**
Resource based sites that have collections that are integral to their significance will be given preferential consideration. To recommend establishment of a museum as a state memorial, the Society must own the majority of collections to be exhibited. It is also the intention of the Society that resource-based state memorials will primarily display collections owned by the Society.
9. **Geographic Balance**
How the site will enhance the geographic balance of the state memorial system must be considered.

Using these standards the Society has carefully reviewed the existing site system to determine which sites could possibly be more appropriately controlled by local organizations such as those described in House Bill 119 and other state and federal agencies. Twenty (20) sites were identified that may be appropriate. In FY07 OHS spent \$219,991 to manage and maintain those sites, including \$157,652 at the three sites managed by Society staff. Over \$5.7 million is needed for capital maintenance and site improvements at these sites.

Included below are four sites that are natural areas. Criterion 1 of the Site Establishment Policy states that OHS will not add any more natural areas. Because having natural areas in our site system is not central to our mission, the Society has determined that these sites probably would be better controlled by organizations or agencies whose mission includes management of natural areas. These sites are significant natural areas: three areas are dedicated state nature preserves and two are National Natural Landmarks.

Historical Sites	Site Type	Reason for Potential Transfer
Cooke House State Memorial	Historic House Museum	Although associated with Civil War financier Jay Cooke, the house today reflects its role in the community as the home of Randolph and Estelle Dorn, prominent Sandusky citizens in the last half of the twentieth century.
Hanby House State Memorial	Historic House Museum	Some of Hanby's songs were very important to the anti-slavery movement when composed and others remain in America's musical repertoire; this culturally themed site today has been used to focus on local history.

McCook House State Memorial	Historic House Museum	Associated with the Fighting McCooks of Civil War renown; the house has been used to focus on local history.
Our House State Memorial	Historic House Museum	This site focuses on early Gallipolis history.
Shaker Historical Museum	Museum	The facility is used as the headquarters for the Shaker Heights Historical Society and focuses on local history, including the Shaker community located there in the 19 th century. All collections exhibited there are owned locally.
Tallmadge Church State Memorial	Historic Church	Although the church has statewide significance for its architecture, it is primarily a local landmark.
Custer Monument State Memorial	Roadside Commemorative Park – Birthplace Site	Custer’s birthplace does not survive. Site features include a statue of Custer, the outline of the foundation of his birthplace, and interpretive kiosks.
Fallen Timbers State Memorial	Roadside Commemorative Park – Battle Site	Currently managed by Toledo Metro Parks which owns the adjacent preserved battle site
Fort Amanda State Memorial	Roadside Commemorative Park – Fort Site	OHS administers Fort Meigs, another War of 1812 site which is a National Historic Landmark
Fort Jefferson State Memorial	Roadside Commemorative Park – Fort Site	Currently being discussed for transfer with the Village of Wayne Lakes
Logan Elm State Memorial	Roadside Commemorative Park – Traditional site of Chief Logan’s speech	Chief Logan’s speech is interpreted at the museum at Fort Ancient. The ancient elm for which the site is named died a number of years ago and no actual historic resources are known to exist at the site.
Archaeological Sites	Type of Site	Reason for Potential Transfer
Inscription Rock State Memorial	Prehistoric Petroglyph	This site is currently managed by ODNR. OHS has other archaeological sites which convey these themes.
Leo Petroglyph State Memorial	Prehistoric Petroglyph	Society has other archaeological sites which convey these themes. Because of the scenic ravine located on this site, it is well suited to control by ODNR.
Seip Mound State Memorial	Hopewell Mound and Earthworks	National Park Service manages half of the associated earthworks as part of Hopewell Culture NHP.

Shrum Mound State Memorial (Campbell Park)	Adena Mound	Society has a larger, more significant Adena mound. The site is surrounded on three sides by land owned by the City of Columbus, which would be an appropriate steward.
Story Mound State Memorial	Adena Mound	Society has a larger, more significant Adena mound. The Ross County Historical Society or the City of Chillicothe would be appropriate stewards of the site.
Natural Areas	Type of Site	Reason for Potential Transfer
Cedar Bog Nature Preserve	Dedicated State Nature Preserve	Most of land is owned by the State of Ohio for the benefit of the Department of Natural Resources. OHS manages under the Articles of Dedication as a state nature preserve.
Davis Memorial Nature Preserve	Dedicated State Nature Preserve	Currently managed by ODNR in conjunction with land under their administrative control.
Glacial Grooves State Memorial	Glacial Formation	Currently managed by ODNR in conjunction with Kelleys Island State Park.
Wahkeena Nature Preserve	Dedicated State Nature Preserve	Natural area adjacent to ODNR land.

There are a number of sites where it may be appropriate to establish a new level of shared responsibility between the State of Ohio and the local community. OHS suggests creating incentives for greater local entity involvement to enhance OHS's continued operation of the site either with its own staff or by a local partner. In these cases, incentives could include expanded educational and programming support, marketing investment, and preservation and maintenance underwriting. We recommend that LSC include these concepts in its study, as well.

We trust that this information will help you continue to make progress with the study. Please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Dr. William K. Laidlaw, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO

- c: Board of Trustees
- Rachel Tooker
- George Kane
- Todd Kleismit