Thank you for your interest in the National Park Service’s LGBT Heritage Initiative. We welcome your comments.

Background:

On May 30, 2014, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell announced a new theme study, as part of the National Park Service Heritage Initiative that will identify places and events associated with the story of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans for inclusion in the parks and programs of the agency.

The National Park Service has ongoing heritage initiatives to commemorate minorities and women who have made significant contributions to our nation’s history and culture, including studies related to the history of Latinos, women, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Find out more about all the current initiatives here:<http://www.nps.gov/heritageinitiatives/>

The goals of the LGBT heritage initiative include:

· engaging scholars, preservationists and community members to identify, research, and tell the stories of LGBT associated properties;

· encouraging national parks, national heritage areas, and other affiliated areas to interpret LGBT stories associated with them;

· identifying, documenting, and nominating LGBT-associated sites as national historic landmarks;

· increasing the number of listings of LGBT-associated properties in the National Register of Historic Places.

While the National Park Service will be looking to identify a representative selection of LGBT sites associated with important events and people in our history as part of the initiative, we need the expertise of communities and individuals across the country to make the initiative a success. We know that gender, generation, geographic location, ethnicity and other factors play an important role in the histories of LGBT America, and it is important that all LGBT communities are represented. We want to hear from you about the places important in your communities; places that have local, state, or national importance in LGBT and American history.

We also encourage community members and organizations to nominate places to the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks. The nomination process involves identifying the significance of a place and evaluating it according to both specific historic criteria and physical integrity.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation’s inventory of properties deemed to be central to its history and worthy of recognition and preservation. It includes more than 89,000 entries, incorporating more than 1.7 million individual buildings and sites representing local, state or nationally significant people, places and events. Just over 2,500 of these properties are National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), designated by the Secretary as representing the highest level of national significance.

The National Register is central to the national preservation program, which is a grassroots program that relies on individuals and communities to identify, research and nominate historic places. States, Tribes, Local Governments and land-managing federal agencies all have roles in historic preservation. The National Park Service maintains the National Register of Historic Places, but we do not create it -- that’s up to the dedicated efforts of individuals and communities working with their State or Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

The LGBT theme study will provide both historic context and preservation roadmap for future site nominations for both the NHL’s and National Register of Historic Places. Owner approval for these sites is necessary before nominations can be prepared.

We have assembled an online toolkit that you may find helpful. It’s illustrated with Latino-associated examples and is relevant to everyone interested in the preservation process. You can find this online: <http://www.nps.gov/latino/toolkit.html>.

Questions

In your comments, please provide as much information as is feasible, including locations, names, supporting publications or other resources, and any other information you think we need to know.

Please consider the following questions.

Are you aware of LGBT-associated places in one or more National Parks? Please tell us about them. Find a list of national parks on<http://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm>

What locally recognized LGBT-associated historic places may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places? Please provide at least state, county, and city location with as much additional information as you like (and will fit).