

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/EG/1689/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 21 December 2022

Mr. Stephen Morris
Chief of Office of International Affairs
World Heritage Program Coordinator
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Room 2415
Washington, DC 20240

World Heritage List 2023

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (United States of America) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Mr. Morris,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2023. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to “Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks” was carried out by Mr. Andrew Mason (Canada) in September 2022. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 3 October 2022, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the boundaries and integrity of the property, the archaeological finds, ownership and protection, monitoring, research, and community involvement. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 31 October 2022 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2022, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2023. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with the mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2023.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation to attend the meeting held on 26 November 2022 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During the last part of its meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

Research

The additional information provided in October 2022 by the State Party already supplied important background information and bibliography on the cultural context of the Hopewell earthworks and the lifeways of the Hopewell people. The ICOMOS Panel is aware that research is an ongoing process and that many questions are still open, as can be appreciated in the research objectives that have been detailed in the nomination dossier and in the additional information submitted. Nevertheless, ICOMOS would be grateful if more information could be provided on the status of scientific research concerning the origins of the exotic artefacts and the astronomical orientations of the earthworks, both of which are integral parts of the attributes used to sustain the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Management

The State Party, through the National Park Service and the Ohio History Connection, has been managing the nominated sites for many years. It is clear that a common management structure for the component parts of the proposed property is being implemented (e.g. the World Heritage Ohio Executive Committee). ICOMOS would appreciate to receive information on any steps taken towards the development of an overarching management plan for the whole property or how the State Party intends to address common issues at management level for the property as a whole (research strategy, interpretation for ex.). A timeframe for the update of the out of date individual management plans as well would be appreciated.

Community involvement

The ICOMOS Panel notes that several groups of stakeholders, especially Native Americans, were involved in the elaboration of the nomination dossier and are involved in the management of the property component parts, mainly through consultation and collaboration. There are also several mentions of the support the American Indian tribal nations have given to the nomination of Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. However, the relationship with local communities seems more complicated, especially with the owners of the parcels located in the buffer zones that have not sold their land. ICOMOS would be interested to know how the State Party would characterise this relationship and what role important stakeholders, including Indigenous groups and the local communities, will play in the management and decision-making processes concerning the nominated property in the future.

Site interpretation

The very detailed history of the eight component parts presented in the nomination dossier recounts the different types of damage, investigation and restoration to which the sites have been subjected. ICOMOS would be interested to know how these alterations, such as the difference between the original elements and the restored parts, will be communicated to the visiting public.

Land use and integrity

ICOMOS welcomes the latest update information provided on 12 December 2022 on the positive outcome of the pending Supreme Court decision concerning the acquisition of the leasehold on the Octagon Earthworks from the Moundbuilders Country Club. ICOMOS also notes the announcement of the Ohio History Connection that it will take over the full management of the site and provide for significantly greater public access, once the last steps of the legal process are complete. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide further information on these steps and the anticipated timeline for their completion.

Furthermore, ICOMOS would be pleased to receive more details on the types of land-use regulations that are foreseen for the industrial / commercial lot located east of the Great Circle Earthworks. Could the State Party please clarify the kind of development that is allowed and the restrictions that will be enforced there?

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Hopewell Culture National Park Service
UNESCO World Heritage Centre