The American Architectural Foundation (AAF) has long been committed to the field of historic preservation. Over the past two years, we have engaged in discussions with key stakeholders at the National Park Service and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities about how to advance our goals, and in 2014, we created the Center for Design & Cultural Heritage to reflect our commitment to preservation and promote its endeavors.

The contemporary moment is a critical one for cultural heritage. Many of our nation’s cultural and historic resources are at risk, and preservation positions and funding for programs are being cut while the needs of built structures and collections grow.

In December 2015, we created the Thought Leadership Forum Series to engage leaders in preservation in discussions about contemporary issues in preservation. The second forum, held Monday, July 20, 2015, examined storytelling and narrative’s role in advancing preservation. This brief report contains a summary of the key ideas, concerns, and goals of its 22 participants.

The Thought Leadership Forum Series was created to convene leaders in preservation to discuss how to build a relevant and progressive case for preservation and cultivate stewardship for generations to come.
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**American Architectural Foundation**

## Thought Leadership Forum

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Thought Leadership Forum Agenda

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2015

9:00 am   Coffee and Continental Breakfast
9:30 am   Introductions, Group Discussion
11:00 am  Breakout Sessions
11:45 am  Lunch and Continuing Breakout Discussions
12:30 pm  Breakout Group Presentations
2:00 pm   Break
2:15 pm   Group Discussion & Conclusion
3:00 pm   End of Program
Forum Discussion Questions

**Audience** - How can we best use storytelling to activate next generation stewards to demonstrate preservation’s role in community design and economic development?

**Narratives** – How can we expand perspectives and stories that might have been excluded from previous preservation-related narratives?

**Technology** - How might technology and new media be used to give voice to those narratives?

**Advocacy** - How can we use storytelling to reignite the enthusiasm for preservation evidenced 50 years ago when the Historic Preservation Act was created? Additionally, how might storytelling help to broaden funding opportunities for preservation projects?
PARTICIPANTS

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Forum Participants

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Office of Museum Services
Institute of Museum and Library Sciences

Megan Brown
Certified Local Government Program National Coordinator;
State, Tribal, Local Plans and Grants Division
National Park Service

L. Eden Burgess
Attorney at Law
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Senior Program Officer,
Division of Preservation and Access
National Endowment for the Humanities

Jeff Hardwick, Ph.D.
Acting Assistant Director, Division of Public Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities

Bill Harper
Chief of Staff
U.S. Representative Betty McCollum (MN-04)

Marjorie Hunt, Ph.D.
Folklorist and Curator
Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Ben Jeffs
Program Director
World Monuments Institute

Nathan Johnson
Park Ranger
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Ellen McCulloch Lovell
Marlboro College

Jonathan Marino
Director, Content & Strategy
The Map Story Foundation

Erin Carlson Mast
Executive Director
President Lincoln’s Cottage

Julia Rocchi
Director, Digital Content
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Talia Salem
Content and Social Media Manager
Brand USA

Courtney Spearman
Design Specialist, Visual Arts
National Endowment for the Arts

Monique VanLandingham
Cooperating Associations & Partnerships
Interpretation, Education & Volunteers
National Park Service

Kathryn Warnes
Grant Management Specialist; State, Tribal, Local Plans and Grants Division
National Park Service

Larry Wells
Independent Storyteller
PARTICIPANTS

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION

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REPORT
On Monday, July 20, 2015, the Center for Design & Cultural Heritage convened its second Thought Leadership Forum, entitled “Storytelling, Design, and Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century,” at 2101 L Street NW, Washington, DC. The forum was held to explore the role of storytelling as a tool toward greater preservation advocacy.

Drawing on AAF’s current partnership with the National Park Service and Save America’s Treasures, participants explored the following questions as a starting point to examine issues of technology, audience, narrative, and advocacy. During the forum, participants began by discussing the following themes as one group to provide an overview, then met in smaller groups to more fully explore each theme.

- How can we best use storytelling to activate next generation audiences to demonstrate preservation’s role in community design and economic development?
- How can we expand perspectives and stories that might have been excluded from previous preservation-related narratives?
- How can new technology and media be used to expand and give voice to those perspectives and stories that might have been excluded from previous narratives?
- How can we use storytelling to reignite the enthusiasm for preservation evidenced 50 years ago when the Historic Preservation Act was created? Additionally, how might storytelling help to broaden funding opportunities for preservation projects?

To best position preservation as a thriving field in the 21st century, participants agreed that utilizing new media technologies was key to growing interest. Along with the fast rise of the commercialization of the internet, new media technologies have emerged in the 21st century as the primary informational medium. New media, which refers to on-demand content available to internet users, includes websites, social media channels, blogs, wikis, and other online platforms. These technologies allow audiences ample opportunity to engage directly with stories. In addition, the information that can be collected on audience behaviors and interactions with new media can inform preservation stakeholders and help to collate data to assess creating targeted audiences, compelling narratives, and strategic advocacy campaigns.

Users may also utilize technologies that enable them to actively situate themselves into these stories and their historical and cultural contexts and futures. Courtney Spearman, Design Specialist, Visual Arts with the National Endowment for the Arts, mentioned the Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt Design Museum’s recent renovations, which include multimedia technologies such as touchscreen tables and stylus pens to engage its visitors. Technologies like this allow visitors to provide feedback to the museum on what they found interesting, and simultaneously allows the museum to track data on its most visited exhibits and how visitors are using the space.

Tracking and measuring data on audience behaviors is critical to successful implementation of new technologies. Julia Rocchi, Director of Digital Content for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, shared her organization’s experience with Pinterest as an example: “Our social media team finally did the metrics on it, and even with regular posting, there is no added traffic. Having that data has been really important to determine which social media channels to use.” Ben Jeffs, Program Director at the World Monuments Institute, pointed out that an additional benefit of social media is that it enables two-way communication, which allows organizations to more effectively track its users’ interests. He also noted that, despite the opportunities to reach new people that are created by new technology, the stories behind our content still need to be good and engaging in its own right in order for our audience to consume it.

Attendees agreed that the relationship between new technology/social media and audience is an intimate one. New media technologies can yield great insights about audience preferences, processes and interests.
through weblog comments and social media. Jonathan Marino of MapStory Foundation said of his organization’s experiences, “At its core, MapStory is just a global database of accruing when’s and where’s. But over time, you can see how the world is changing. It’s very evidence-based.” These examples served to clarify that while social media is often touted as the universal answer for greater exposure, **its usage must be strategic** depending on an organization’s purpose and audience. Indeed, determining which platforms a target audience uses – and then telling the story using that platform – can yield a broader impact, but quality narratives are necessary to generate interest from the audience.

The **narratives** that are used to uplift preservation’s efforts can also shape the impact and reach of the stories being told. Using Monticello as an example, one participant explained that as Thomas Jefferson’s legacy has become more complex by his relationship with Sally Hemings, an enslaved woman owned by Jefferson, the stories promoted by his estate have changed to accommodate these details.

Expanding the stories being told to **include a broader range of perspectives** and to remedy prior accounts of revisionist history broadens the potential for new interest in the field. Talia Salem, Content and Media Manager at Brand USA, shared her perspective on being more inclusive about audience demographics. Reiterating that audience and narrative are interwoven, she said, “People come to preservation from different things. For example, how do you get immigrant families to care about American history? People consume content on so many different platforms; Brand USA uses surveys to see which platforms are most used in which countries.”

Participants also agreed that expanding preservation’s meaning can further preservation **advocacy** in the coming decades. While “historic preservation” for many connotes strictly preserving the past rather than also looking to the future, attendees agreed that contextualizing preservation’s role in place-making and sustainable urbanism could solidify its relevance in the 21st century. Additionally it was pointed out that tailoring one’s advocacy toward a specific audience is generally more effective, as is having a very specific ask and very clear messaging. Erin Carlson Mast, the Executive Director at President Lincoln’s Cottage, noted that the interpreters there use a database in order to tailor a story to the specific tour group based on their particular interests.

Another point of discussion centered on the fact that, outside of the United States, the term “preservation” is not widely used; rather, when people discuss saving tangible links to the past it is referred to as heritage conservation or a similar term. At the same time, within the United States, the term “preservation” carries some negative connotations, so some attendees wondered if moving away from that term might make sense from an advocacy standpoint. Instead, it was suggested that the movement could be more fully tied to placemaking and urbanism.

The day’s discussion wrapped with a discussion about challenges, opportunities, ways to move forward, and take-aways from the day. Attendees identified challenges including the frequent tendency to **root the movement in past successes**.

**Challenges:**

Jeff Hardwick, Acting Assistant Director in the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities mentioned the pitfall of “hanging your hat on past successes” that can sometimes occur, and how that limits a preservation advocate’s audience.

**Creating and maintaining** lasting partnerships can also be a challenge, especially when funding is involved. Julia Rocchi identified the competition for dollars as one of the largest potential challenges, noting that when there’s a successful preservation outcome achieved via partnership, determining who gets to take credit and own the success can cause division, as each of the partners likely needs the exposure and potential funding that could be gained. Megan Brown, Certified Local Government Program National Coordinator in the State, Tribal, Local Plans and Grants Division of the National Park Service, seconded this point, and noted that sharing credit and telling your audience a story about your coalition is critical to maintaining successful partnerships.

Ben Jeffs noted a challenge related to **academics and competition for CV credits**, saying that “if you do a lit review on climate change and threats to heritage,
there are about 500 results, and they’re mostly the same because everyone wants to be seen as thought leaders in the industry.” He suggested something like a central academic resource for heritage conservation as a potential remedy to this problem.

L. Eden Burgess, an Attorney at Law with Cultural Heritage Partners, noted a lack of diversity in the preservation community, as a challenge. Like several of the other challenges, this too was seen simultaneously as an opportunity, if acted upon by engaging more diverse groups, via economic arguments, and other means.

**Ways to Move Forward:**

The group looked for ways to move forward and areas for opportunities to close the day’s discussion. Ellen McCulloch Lovell added to the earlier discussion about the challenges that can arise with partnerships, agreeing that “often we find ourselves fighting over the crumbs instead of making a bigger pie.” To remedy this challenge, she suggested the formation of a Preservation Partners group comprised of a loose coalition of people that meets every few months. She also noted an opportunity to move forward in the Save America’s Treasures (SAT) program, sharing that several organizational efforts remain underway in preservation and that she was struck that even though SAT funding hasn’t been around since 2010, the program still has a presence. She asked the group how we can use the stories of the approximately 1,300 grants and grantees—the lives that have been changed—and use them to educate the public about the value of preservation work.

Jonathan Marino, Director of Content and Strategy at The Map Story Foundation, noted that an often-un tapped opportunity exists in what sometimes is considered a failure in the preservation community—when a site is lost. As evidence, he discussed a new Map Story project on the East India Company based on information that exists in the British Museum. “The thing that resonated most was that loss is a resonant narrative. Stories of things that we’ve lost might be seen internally as failures, but the general public may find them very engaging.”

Attendees agreed that their participation in the forum yielded enlightening takeaways that will guide their future projects. Monique VanLandingham, from the Cooperating Associations and Partnerships unit of the National Park Service learned a lot about new
technological tools and noted the opportunities for more synergy within the Park Service and with other outside organizations and stressed the importance of interpretation, saying, “from interpretation, understanding; from understanding, caring; from caring, preservation.” Mr. Jeffs noted that “in the end, everything we do is a narrative” and pointed out that our ultimate challenge is to weave those narratives together into something an audience will be interested in.

Ms. Brown noted that in an room full of preservationists, an unprecedented opportunity for her, she realized that it is the stories that bring all of our different organizations and media together and that telling the story of the movement is probably equally important to the stories about what has been saved.

Nathan Johnson, a Park Ranger at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, mentioned how gatherings like the Thought Leadership Forum give legitimacy to storytelling and its role as an education tool.

**Conclusion**

The themes that emerged in the forum—using technology effectively to measure data on users’ interests and behaviors, crafting compelling narratives that address contemporary issues in preservation, and pinpointing and targeting specific audiences—all indicate that to position preservation as a compelling field in the 21st century, organizations and stakeholders must also incorporate current practices, technologies, and narratives.

While traditional notions of preservation anchor it as rooted in the past, preservationists must look to the future for it to continue to thrive. Stakeholders must engage leaders in the field across sectors and forge new partnerships to broaden the definition of preservation, and reevaluate how to adapt to new methods of preserving, new tools to preserve, and new definitions of what it means to preserve and to sustain in the 21st century. Conceptualizing investments in cultural, national and historic resources as an economic priority in the United States has the potential to build a lasting culture of stewardship.

The remaining forums in the Series will be held in 2016, and will explore the intersections of preservation, economics, and politics more thoroughly. AAF’s goal in creating the Series is to develop action items for stakeholders to utilize for years to come.
ACTION ITEMS

The following four action items reiterate ideas expressed during the Forum as steps with the potential to further the cause of historic preservation and cultural heritage in the United States:

- **Preservation Partners Coalition** - A voluntary coalition of interested preservation organizations meeting on a regular basis will help facilitate open lines of communication and the circulation of ideas and partnership opportunities.

- **Engage More Diverse Groups** - The discussions at the Forum clarified the ways in which classical historic preservation does not adequately address all Americans’ perspectives and histories. To better contextualize the wide range of diverse histories of all of our communities, preservationists must work tactically to become more inclusive.

- **Tell more stories of loss** – Preservationists must also tell stories of places that have been lost, even if they are not the traditional “win” stories that we are sometimes more comfortable telling in preservation. Loss is a resonant theme with many people, and recognizing shared heritage that has been lost can be a very engaging way to spark thinking about the importance of saving our shared heritage.

- **Creation of a Central Academic Resource for Preservation Research** - In order to help avoid mass-duplication of research, a central academic resource would provide a central repository for academics and the public to reference.

*Image 4* Group discussion regarding action items at the close of the Thought Leadership Forum.
PARTICIPANT BIOS

Connie Cox Bodner, Ph.D.
INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SCIENCES

Connie Bodner is a Supervisory Grants Management Specialist for the Institute of Museum and Library Services in Washington, DC. She co-leads a team of museum professionals who coordinate IMLS’s discretionary grant programs in conservation, preservation, collections management, community engagement, and learning for museums of every size and focus across the country.

Connie holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Missouri-Columbia as well as a B.A. and M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Her academic research interests have concentrated on the development of intensive agricultural systems in Southeast Asia and more broadly the coevolution of plants and humans through time and space. She has conducted fieldwork in the U.S. Midwest and Northeast, Europe, the Northern Philippines, and the Mariana Islands on sites ranging from Neolithic occupations and Archaic campsites to Gallo-Roman hillforts, Mississippian villages, Northern Luzon agricultural settlements, 19th-century industrial settings, and island World War II military installations. Her museum experience comprises 23 years in archaeological research and publishing, museum collections, exhibitions, public and school programs, and administration.

In her current position at IMLS, she especially enjoys the opportunity to connect museums to Federal resources that help them do even greater things with and for their communities. Her work includes speaking and writing about the agency’s funding opportunities, coordinating the peer review of applications, making recommendations for awards, and monitoring projects through successful completion. She greatly appreciates being able to use first-hand observations of the challenges and accomplishments of the nation’s museums to inform program and policy development at IMLS.

Megan Brown
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Megan works as the Certified Local Government National Coordinator within the State, Tribal, Local Plans and Grants Division of the National Park Service in Washington, DC. She works with over 1930 communities certified as having a commitment to preservation in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Offices in all 50 states. Through partnerships and the allocation of Historic Preservation Fund grants to local communities, Megan helps states and local preservationists take on projects to engage and save communities. In addition, she manages grants from the Historic Preservation Fund, including: Save America’s Treasures, Preserve America and annual funding to fifteen State Historic Preservation Offices.

Before joining NPS eleven years ago, Megan worked in the Southwest Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in Fort Worth, Texas, and the State Historic Preservation Office in South Carolina where she managed the State Grant and Federal Tax Incentive programs. Her education includes a Bachelor in Architecture from Auburn University and Master in Historic Preservation from the University of South Carolina. She is an avid equestrian and enjoys time with her family, horse, and friends.

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L. Eden Burgess  
CULTURAL HERITAGE PARTNERS, PLLC

Eden Burgess is an attorney and lobbyist with Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC. Her practice focuses on law and government relations in cultural heritage, historic preservation, art and museum, and intellectual property. She has represented nonprofits, tribes, foreign states, museums and auction houses, collectors, and other entities in a wide variety of matters. Eden helps clients manage and navigate the National Historic Preservation Act’s Section 106 process, supports historic preservation efforts on the state and federal levels, and provides advice and representation in Indian tribe-related disputes. She provides government affairs counsel to the American Cultural Resources Association, the trade association for the cultural resource management industry, and the Society for Historical Archaeology, the largest scholarly group concerned with the archaeology of the modern world. Eden recently worked with a foreign government on efforts to protect cultural heritage sites at risk of looting. She has also litigated and settled complex claims involving Nazi seizures, wartime looting, forced sales and thefts.

Eden writes and speaks about a broad range of cultural heritage, art and museum issues, including cultural heritage management, museum governance, and looting and restitution policies and practices. Eden obtained her Bachelor’s Degree with Distinction from the University of Virginia, where she was an Echols Scholar, and her Juris Doctor with Honors from George Washington University Law School. She is admitted to practice in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

Mary E. Downs  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Mary E. Downs is Senior Program Officer in the Division of Preservation and Access at the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), where she coordinates programs that document endangered languages and that support small cultural heritage institutions to preserve their humanities collections. She came to NEH from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and had previously worked at the National Park Service in Native American cultural heritage preservation. Prior to her federal service, Ms. Downs did archaeological field work on Roman sites in Italy, France, and Spain, taught Classical art and archaeology, Latin, and Italian, and was map editor of the Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World, published by Princeton University Press in 2000. She received a Fulbright fellowship for her research on cultural contact between Romans and Iberians in southern Spain and holds a B.A. from Wesleyan University and a Ph.D. in Classical archaeology from Indiana University.

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**Acting Assistant Director, Division of Public Programs**

Jeff Hardwick is Assistant Director in the National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Public Programs, which supports television and radio programming, museum exhibitions, historic site interpretations, library programs, and digital projects. His academic background is in American Studies with a doctorate from Yale University and an MA from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture.

Jeff’s undergraduate degree was in Anthropology from University of California, Berkeley. In 2003 he published a widely-reviewed biography of the émigré architect and “father of the shopping mall” Victor Gruen, *Mall Maker*, with the University of Pennsylvania Press. He has taught 20th-century American history, architectural history, and public history at Yale, Corcoran College, George Mason, and Temple University. Before NEH, Jeff worked as a non-fiction book editor for Smithsonian Books and Island Press.

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Bill Harper
U.S. House of Representatives

Bill Harper has served since 2001 as chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN), a member of the Appropriations Committee and the lead Democrat on the Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee. In 2000, Harper successfully ran McCollum’s first campaign for Congress. During the 1990’s Harper spent five years serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala and Malawi. Harper is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.

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Marjorie Hunt is a folklorist and curator with the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Folklore and Folk Culture from the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied with folklorist and material culture specialist Dr. Henry Glassie. Her extensive work in the area of intangible cultural heritage, occupational culture, and the building arts includes her Academy- and Emmy-Award-winning documentary film The Stone Carvers, directed and produced with Paul Wagner, and her book The Stone Carvers: Master Craftsmen of Washington National Cathedral, published by Smithsonian Institution Press. Her publications also include The Grand Generation: Memory, Mastery, Legacy (1987); “Masters of Traditional Arts,” an article for National Geographic magazine (1991); “Masters of the Building Arts” in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Program Book (2001); and “Delight in Skill: The Stone Carvers’ Art” in The Role of the Individual in Tradition (2011). Marjorie has curated numerous living exhibitions for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, including The Grand Generation: Memory, Mastery, Legacy (1984); Workers at the White House (1992); Masters of Traditional Arts: The National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowships (1994); Masters of the Building Arts (2001); Carriers of Culture: Living Native Basket Traditions (2006); and One World, Many Voices: Endangered Languages and Cultural Heritage (2013). Marjorie’s primary scholarship and public outreach efforts over the past thirty years have focused on craftsmanship in the building trades, and she has conducted extensive ethnographic research in this area. She is currently working to complete a new documentary film entitled Good Work: Masters of the Building Arts.

Ben Jeffs is Program Director for World Monuments Institute, World Monument Fund’s center for research, education, and training. Previously, Ben was in private practice as a cultural heritage expert and archaeologist specializing in the protection and management of fragile heritage in developing countries. He holds a degree in Archaeology from University College London and a Master’s Degree in Architectural Conservation, with field experience managing research, documentation, training, planning, and restoration projects in over a dozen countries representing national governments, private clients, and NGOs. Ben is a Consulting Scholar for the University of Pennsylvania Museum and an expert member of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM).
PARTICIPANT BIOS

Nathan Johnson
Park Ranger

Nate Johnson has worked with the National Park Service since 2005. Currently stationed at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, he has also served at Fort Sumter National Monument and the National Mall and Memorial Parks. He received his bachelor’s degree in History and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his master’s degree in Public History from the University of South Carolina-Columbia. Beginning this fall, he will pursue a graduate certificate from the Contexts of Environmental Policy program at George Washington University.

As a park ranger, Nate’s work has focused primarily on interpreting historical and cultural resources for diverse audiences. Besides guiding tours for the public and facilitating dialogues for educational groups, he writes content for park publications and digital media. At the sites where he has served, the history that he has interpreted involves sensitive topics, including race and slavery.

Ellen McCulloch Lovell
Marlboro College

Ms. McCulloch-Lovell has just completed eleven years as the eighth and first female president of Marlboro College in southeastern Vermont. There, she increased the endowment 250 percent, expanded the undergraduate campus, and created the college’s graduate and professional programs in nonprofit management.

She started her career as program director, then executive director, of the Vermont Arts Council, the state cultural agency, from 1970-83. She served as U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy’s chief of staff in Washington, D.C., from 1983-94, during which time she supervised the D.C. and Vermont offices and performed as his political designee.

In 1994, Ellen was appointed Executive Director of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. In 1997, she joined First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton’s staff, first as deputy chief of staff then as director of the White House Millennium Council, where she and Mrs. Clinton created Save America’s Treasures, the first major preservation program in twenty years. After the White House, Ellen went to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to found the Veterans History Project.

She received her BA in philosophy from Bennington College and her MFA in Creative Writing from Warren Wilson College. Her first book of poems, Gone, was published by Janus Press in 2010.

Ellen has participated on National Endowment for the Arts grants panels and testified before Congress on behalf of public funding for cultural life. She also served on the Board of Regents of the American Architecture Foundation, the National Science Foundation’s Biology Advisory Committee, and on the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges. She continues her civic engagement as chair of the Smithsonian’s Advisory Committee for the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and as a board member of Vermont Parks Forever, the Warren Wilson Friends of Writers, and the Robert Frost Place.

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Jonathan Marino  
**THE MAPSTORY FOUNDATION**

Jonathan Marino is currently the first Platform Director for MapStory.org, a new open educational resource that empowers a global user community to map geographic change over time. He also serves on the Board of Directors for BOSCO-Uganda, a non-governmental organization extending sustainable energy and digital connectivity services in northern Uganda. In 2012 he launched CityofWordsDC as a digital map and reference for quotations posted publically around Washington DC.

Previously he has served as a Senior Associate at the Council of Chief State Schools Officers, a service-learning manager in the Chicago Public Schools, a founding director of the Buffett Center for Global Engagement at Northwestern University, and a Fulbright Scholar to Uganda. He studied education and political science at Northwestern University as an undergraduate, and has a master’s degree in philosophy from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

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Erin Carlson Mast  
**PRESIDENT LINCOLN’S COTTAGE**

Erin Carlson Mast is the Executive Director of President Lincoln’s Cottage, a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where she is responsible for strategic development, stewardship, and interpretation of the site. A staff member since 2003, Erin played an integral role in developing the site experience for the 2008 grand opening. In her previous role as Curator, she spearheaded a number of projects and programs that won national awards from organizations such as the American Alliance of Museums and the U.S. Distance Learning Association. Since assuming the directorship in 2010, Erin has led the site through a new strategic plan, steady growth and unprecedented press and awards recognition. She was a contributing author to Museums of Ideas: Commitment and Conflict (MuseumsEtc, 2011) and has published pieces in *The Public Historian*, *History News*, and *Forum Journal*.

Erin received her MA in Museum Studies from The George Washington University in Washington, DC, and BA in History from the Ohio University Honors Tutorial College in Athens, Ohio.

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**Talia Salem**  
**Brand USA**

Talia Salem is Manager, Social Media for Brand USA, the nation’s public-private partnership dedicated to increasing international visitation to the United States through marketing and promotional efforts. In this role, Talia manages the organization’s 11-market social media presences. Talia is instrumental in driving Brand USA’s consumer content and messaging strategy across all owned channels.

During her time at Brand USA, Talia has grown Brand USA’s social presence and has expanded it into key markets including: Germany, Australia, India, China and Chile. Talia has also launched the Great American Road Trips campaign featuring over 39 states and supported the Great American Food Stories and Great Outdoors campaigns.

Prior to Brand USA, Talia worked as a travel journalist and consulted for various tourism associations. She is active in several networking organizations including: Millennials in Travel, Travel Massive, GW Tourism Alumni Network, Tourism Cares, Adventure Travel Trade Association’s Adventure Connect and DC Bruins.

Talia enjoys cooking, snowboarding, biking and photography. She loves to travel and experience a destination like a local, discovering the hidden gems and authentic eats. She is a California native and grew up in the San Francisco Bay area. Talia speaks English, French and Arabic and has family on five continents, none of which speak the same language in common, but all manage to communicate.

Talia holds a bachelor of arts from UCLA, as well as a masters in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management from The George Washington University.

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**Julia Rocchi**  
**National Trust for Historic Preservation**

Julia Rocchi is the director of digital content at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where for five years she’s been wrangling words, images, and pixels into rich content. A graduate of Syracuse University in Television/Radio/Film and Marketing, she is pursuing her master’s in writing at Johns Hopkins University.

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**Talia Salem**  
**Brand USA**

Talia Salem is Manager, Social Media for Brand USA, the nation’s public-private partnership dedicated to increasing international visitation to the United States through marketing and promotional efforts. In this role, Talia manages the organization’s 11-market social media presences. Talia is instrumental in driving Brand USA’s consumer content and messaging strategy across all owned channels.

During her time at Brand USA, Talia has grown Brand USA’s social presence and has expanded it into key markets including: Germany, Australia, India, China and Chile. Talia has also launched the Great American Road Trips campaign featuring over 39 states and supported the Great American Food Stories and Great Outdoors campaigns.

Prior to Brand USA, Talia worked as a travel journalist and consulted for various tourism associations. She is active in several networking organizations including: Millennials in Travel, Travel Massive, GW Tourism Alumni Network, Tourism Cares, Adventure Travel Trade Association’s Adventure Connect and DC Bruins.

Talia enjoys cooking, snowboarding, biking and photography. She loves to travel and experience a destination like a local, discovering the hidden gems and authentic eats. She is a California native and grew up in the San Francisco Bay area. Talia speaks English, French and Arabic and has family on five continents, none of which speak the same language in common, but all manage to communicate.

Talia holds a bachelor of arts from UCLA, as well as a masters in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management from The George Washington University.

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**Julia Rocchi**  
**National Trust for Historic Preservation**

Julia Rocchi is the director of digital content at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where for five years she’s been wrangling words, images, and pixels into rich content. A graduate of Syracuse University in Television/Radio/Film and Marketing, she is pursuing her master’s in writing at Johns Hopkins University.

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Courtney Spearman joined the National Endowment for the Arts as design specialist in May 2014, managing the Art Works grant program to support the field of design and design projects nationwide. Trained as a landscape architect and architectural historian, Courtney came to the NEA after working for The Cultural Landscape Foundation, a DC-based non-profit (and NEA grantee) focused on raising awareness about design landscapes. She has also worked in practice at EDAW/AECOM in Alexandria, Virginia. Before returning to graduate school, Courtney worked for a small tech start-up in Houston and London in project management and technical support, and for several Houston museums and art galleries. She has masters degrees in landscape architecture and architectural history from the University of Virginia, and bachelors degrees in history and art and art history from Rice University.

Monique VanLandingham is Cooperating Association and Partnerships Program Manager for the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. She works with more than 70 educational partners to fulfill the NPS interpretation and education mission. Monique develops collaborative partnerships with an array of partners, including organizations such as Sesame Workshop and Google, to make natural and cultural treasures accessible in innovative ways to new and expanded audiences.

In addition to her nine years of service with NPS, Monique has worked as a legislative aide on Capitol Hill and in the nonprofit sector as Director of Foundation Relations. She also lived and worked in Salzburg, Austria, as senior editor for the Salzburg Global Seminar, and she studied in Tuebingen, Germany, on a Rotary Foundation fellowship. She has a BA in journalism and German from Auburn University, and a Master in environmental and resource policy from the George Washington University.
Larry Wells has been telling other people’s stories for most of his professional career.

He spent 14 years with ABC News, reporting from the US and 16 other countries, 4 with NBC News as Supervising Producer for NBC Digital and Radio anchor, and more than 20 years helping clients as varied as the US Air Force Association and American Red Cross tell their stories. In addition to his writing and teaching, he is developing a new series for the Internet of cultural and historic stories called Off The Beaten Path.

His work has garnered 9 Telly Awards, 4 Emmy nominations, and a Gold International Tourism Marketing Award.

Larry Wells
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Kathryn Warnes
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

As Grant Management Specialist for the National Park Service, Kathryn Warnes currently works with states, tribes, local governments, and non-profits to assist communities with historic preservation, heritage tourism, and cultural education projects. Kathryn’s work helps to safeguard historic places and promote awareness of our unique heritage. Her goal is to contribute to the sustainability of our future by creating authentic places that tell our stories, form the basis for community, and act as economic drivers for local businesses serving both locals and tourists.

Kathryn’s career began on a very different path in the culinary arts, but after earning a BBA from the University of Georgia and taking part in cultural immersion exchange programs in Hungary and a sustainable agritourism project in San Giorgio, Italy, she wanted to make a broader impact. Seeing the connection between food, cultures, and the environment and how tourism can be a major economic supporter of these activities brought Kathryn to Washington, DC. After earning a master’s in Sustainable Destination Management from The George Washington University, she tied her many interests together with a variety of endeavors supporting authentic places through preservation, food, and connecting people.

Kathryn stays active in the community by engaging in storytelling and destination development as advisor to the Destination Stewardship Center, as a “solopreneur” with Taste of Place, a business to help people explore local food and culinary heritage, and volunteer work with projects such as the development of the H Street NE Heritage Trail with Cultural Tourism DC.

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Ron Bogle became the seventh President and CEO of the American Architectural Foundation (AAF) in July 2002. During his tenure, he has transformed AAF into one of the nation’s foremost advocates for leadership development in city design. He has helped to launch four national design initiatives, including AAF’s Design for Learning and Sustainable Cities Design Academy. He worked with leaders at the Chicago Architecture Foundation to cofound the Architecture + Design Education Network (A+DEN) and the Association of Architectural Organizations (AAO), and he has continued to provide leadership as a member of AAO’s Executive Committee.

In addition, Ron has guided AAF in its role as the managing partner of the Mayors’ Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and AAF. In 2007, he was selected for Honorary AIA membership in the American Institute of Architects.

With a background in education that includes nine years on the Oklahoma City Board of Education—several of which he served as president—Ron was a highly involved member of the Executive Committee for the U.S. Green Building Council’s Coalition for Green Schools. In 2010, he also served as an advisor to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the NYC Department of Education on the use of design as a tool for innovation and education reform.

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Thom Minner is the Director of the Center of Design & Cultural Heritage (CDCH) and the Senior Director for Strategic Relations of the American Architectural Foundation. As CDCH Director, he helped to facilitate AAF’s partnership agreement with the National Park Service to become the nonprofit partner of Save America’s Treasures. He has also spearheaded CDCH’s Thought Leadership Series and the creation of the Oculus Award for Leadership in Design & Cultural Heritage. As AAF’s Senior Director for Strategic Relations, Thom manages various AAF fundraising endeavors including the Accent on Architecture Gala.

Prior to joining AAF, Thom worked as an interior designer for Sunrise Senior Living. Additionally, he served as Deputy Director for the World Foundation for Environment and Development, an international nonprofit, managing biodiversity projects in Yellowstone and Bhutan and biological weapons projects in Russia. Thom was also a Program Coordinator with The Smithsonian Associates where he created more than 150 courses, symposia, public lectures, and special events working with top-level architects, corporate leaders, celebrities, chefs, politicians, and royalty for Smithsonian members and the general public.

Thom holds a B.A. in History from Northwestern University, a M.A. in Modern Art History, Theory & Criticism from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, and a M.F.A. in Interior Design from The George Washington University.

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Vanessa Ofwono is the Strategic Relations Integration Manager at the American Architectural Foundation. She provides marketing, development, and research support to the Center of Design & Cultural Heritage and Design for Learning. Vanessa is also responsible for managing AAF’s strategic relationships by maintaining and building our CRM database. She brings 7 years of experience from a variety of industries including Real Estate Development and Nonprofit.

Vanessa holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Marketing from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Daniel Tana, Program Manager, Center for Design & Cultural Heritage
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Daniel Tana is the Program Manager of the American Architectural Foundation’s Center for Design & the City and Center for Design & Cultural Heritage. In these roles, he supports these centers’ programming—including Sustainable Cities Design Academy, Civic Design Leadership Initiative, and the Thought Leadership Forum—under the leadership of the Directors of each center.

Daniel comes to AAF with experience in cultural resource management, field survey and documentation, tours and interpretation, preservation easement enforcement and management, digital photography, mapping, database creation, general technology solutions, and graphics creation. Daniel has previously worked for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service’s National Capital Region office, the L’Enfant Trust, and the University of Maryland.

Daniel holds a Master of Historic Preservation degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History and Archaeology from the University of Maryland, College Park.
Since its founding in 1943, the American Architectural Foundation (AAF) has served as a national steward of architectural history and the architecture profession. Headquartered in Washington, DC, AAF is dedicated to utilizing the power of architecture to improve lives and transform communities through its three Centers (the Center for Design & the City, the Center for the Advancement of Architecture, and the Center for Design & Cultural Heritage). Each Center provides design leadership programs to leaders in architecture, design, education, public policy, urban planning, and preservation.

AAF’s Center for Design & Cultural Heritage promotes the role of significant cultural and historic resources in creating more vibrant, sustainable, and economically robust communities. Through its programs (Save America’s Treasures, the Thought Leadership Forum Series, the Richard Morris Hunt Prize, and the Oculus Award for Leadership in Design & Cultural Heritage), the Center works to preserve, protect, and restore the United States’ most iconic structures, landscapes, artifacts, and traditions.

The American Architectural Foundation, as a nonprofit partner of Save America’s Treasures (SAT) since 2014, is on a mission to tell the stories behind the Save America’s Treasures grants. Working with the National Park Service and its Save America’s Treasures partner agencies, AAF is working to increase public understanding and visibility of this critical program and the role it plays in preserving our most significant cultural, intellectual and heritage resources.

The Thought Leadership Forum Series was developed in 2014 to discuss contemporary trends, opportunities, and challenges in preservation and to explore the linkages between design and cultural heritage. The Forum Series brings together preservationist, architects, policy makers, and other key stakeholders. The inaugural forum was held in December 2014, and explored the role between craftsmanship, design and preservation. The Thought Leadership Forum Series was created to act as a prelude to the larger issue of preservation stewardship and advocacy in the 21st century.

Created in 1990 by the AAF and the French Heritage Society, the Richard Morris Hunt Prize is an intensive six-month program that carries a $25,000 award to registered architects in France and the United States whose research explores contemporary challenges in historic preservation and urban design. The program was created to offer guidance and access to a network of the leading historic preservation professionals in the two host countries.

The annual Oculus Award Luncheon was initiated in 2014 to honor leadership in cultural heritage and highlight organizations whose preservation initiatives promote vibrant, sustainable communities. The inaugural Oculus Award recipients were the International Masonry Institute and the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, who received the award for their steadfast dedication to providing comprehensive training on historic craftsmanship and preservation.