



Here's the 2025 list of most endangered historic places in the U.S.

May 7, 2025 8:00 AM ET

Heard on [All Things Considered](#)



[Neda Ulaby](#)



The Mystery Castle in Phoenix, Ariz.

Robert Graham

Back in the 1930s, an untrained architect in Phoenix, Ariz., built a ramshackle structure resembling a sandcastle from found materials. The Mystery Castle, which became a funky roadside attraction, fell into disrepair over the years and is now at risk of demolition.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation announced Wednesday that the Mystery Castle is one of America's 11 most endangered historic places in 2025. "Across the United States, compelling, meaningful historic sites are at risk, whether from natural disasters, underutilization, neglect, or lack of awareness," a statement from the National Trust said. The group has been issuing an annual list of U.S. sites at risk since 1988.

Sponsor Message

"We're a nation with global roots, and our individual stories matter," the organization's CEO, Carol Quillen, told NPR. "And when you find a story about a man who — without plans, without

training, without any kind of guidance or permits — built this amazing castle for his wife and daughter, you just want that story to be told."

This year, the list includes not only buildings, but entire communities, such as a smattering of islands off Florida's northwest coast. Cedar Key was renowned for its Old Florida charm. A historic fishing village that bears its name was devastated by Hurricane Helene in 2024.



Cedar Key after Hurricane Helene, October 2024

Timothy Macy/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"This is one of the worst hurricanes I've ever been through," one longtime resident, Pamela Sikes, [told member station WUSF](#) earlier this year. "The total destruction. So many businesses aren't coming back, and it's just really sad."

Hurricane Helene also led to the French Broad and Swannanoa river corridors' inclusion on the 2025 most endangered list. The western North Carolina region includes Asheville and numerous other towns. Climate scientists in the area [have long warned about the dangers of extreme rain](#); buildings wiped out by the hurricane included, ironically, [a data center monitoring environmental disruption](#).



The River Arts District in Asheville, N.C., during the flooding from Tropical Storm Helene in 2024. The French Broad River crested high enough to breach the first floor of the buildings.

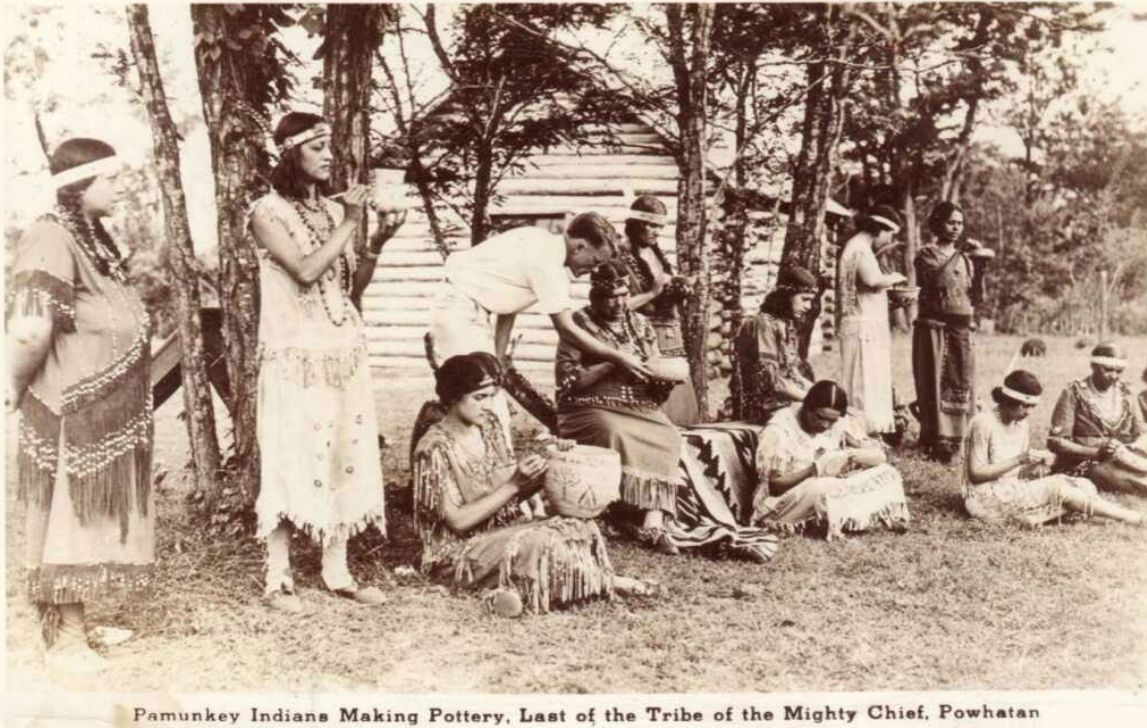
Drew Wallace/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"Our work invites these communities both to rebuild and develop a plan to rebuild that supports their communities and also to plan for the future," Quillen said. "These sites have brought together local residents, governments, local governments, colleges and universities to produce research and studies on how to enable resiliency and rebuilding in these communities. Those kinds of coalitions, I think, are really important for helping us remember that rebuilding a community is more than just the built environment. Rebuilding a community also means the soft social infrastructure that supports it and the cultural practices that have developed in that particular region."

Sponsor Message

Increasing storm frequency and severity also threaten the Pamunkey Indian Reservation, of King William County, Va. A federally recognized sovereign Tribal nation, the Pamunkey people and their ancestors have lived on and around the peninsula in the Pamunkey River for at least

15,000 years. But rising storm severity and sea level rise could make most of the reservation inaccessible within this century.



Pamunkey women making pottery at the Pottery School on the reservation in the early 20th century.

Pamunkey Indian Tribe/National Trust for Historic Preservation

This year's list did not include any of the hundreds of historic government buildings that President Trump had targeted for sale earlier this year — some of which do not meet the criteria for federal architecture that he outlined in a [January executive order](#).

"I would say the process started before that," Quillen said. "It takes a long time for this process to work itself out and the criteria that we use are pretty consistent, year over year. We want a variety of sites. We want this to be locally driven. We want sites that are experiencing some kind of threat and have a plan to address that threat. And we want sites that, when preserved, can offer something to their community."

"You have to meet your needs now," she added. "The constraint of that makes us more creative. It connects to the past. It keeps alive these incredible, incredibly powerful stories."

Here are the other places on the list this year (with explanations from the National Trust):

Oregon Caves Chateau, Cave Junction, Ore.

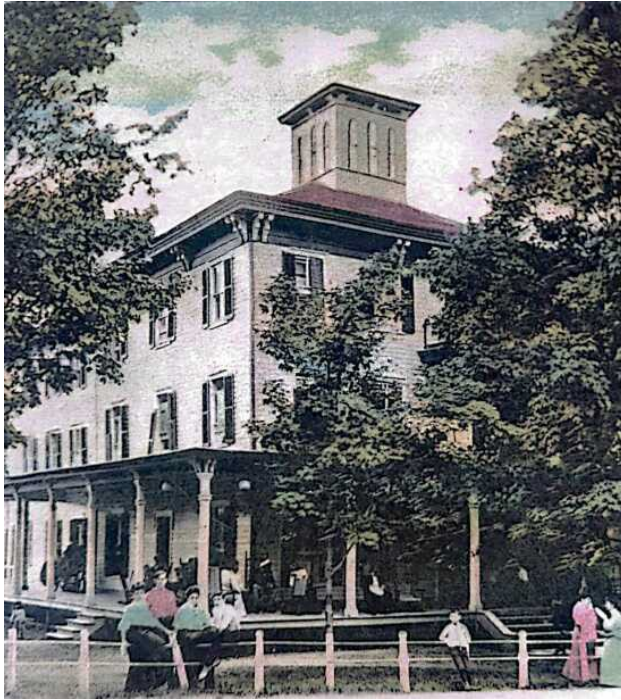


Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"The Oregon Caves Chateau, located within the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, has significantly benefited the rural economy of nearby Cave Junction and surrounding communities for 91 years. Since its construction in 1934, the Chateau has offered overnight lodging and concessions, but the need for extensive repair and restoration necessitated closure in 2018. Since that time, additional unplanned structural and seismic upgrades have dramatically increased project costs. Significant funding is necessary to reopen the Oregon Caves Chateau, allowing it to once again serve visitors and support essential economic revitalization in its rural region."

Sponsor Message

The Wellington, Pine Hill, N.Y.



Shandaken Historical Museum; Shelley Smith/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"The Wellington Hotel is one of few surviving examples of the large-scale wood-frame resorts built in the Catskills region of New York in the late 1800s. After years of deterioration, the Wellington's foundation was in danger of collapse. However, a group of community members have purchased the building to save and reactivate it to serve the historic Pine Hill community as a food market, cafe, and affordable housing, but additional partnerships and funding are needed to realize this vision."

San Juan Hotel, San Juan, Texas



Gabriel Ozuna/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"The San Juan Hotel, built in 1920, has a long and complicated history in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and is one of the area's most recognizable landmarks. Local advocates hope to work with the City of San Juan to rehabilitate the building to serve the community."

Terminal Island Japanese American Tuna Street Buildings, Los Angeles, Calif.



A. Nakamura Co., prior to World War II, c1930-40

Tim Yuji Yamamoto/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"Only two buildings remain on Tuna Street, once the vibrant main street of the Japanese American fishing village on Terminal Island, a community that was forcibly removed and incarcerated during World War II. The buildings are now owned by the Port of Los Angeles, which is considering demolition. The Japanese American community of descendants and survivors are advocating for protection and reuse of the buildings in a way that honors their ancestors and commemorates this dark chapter of American history."

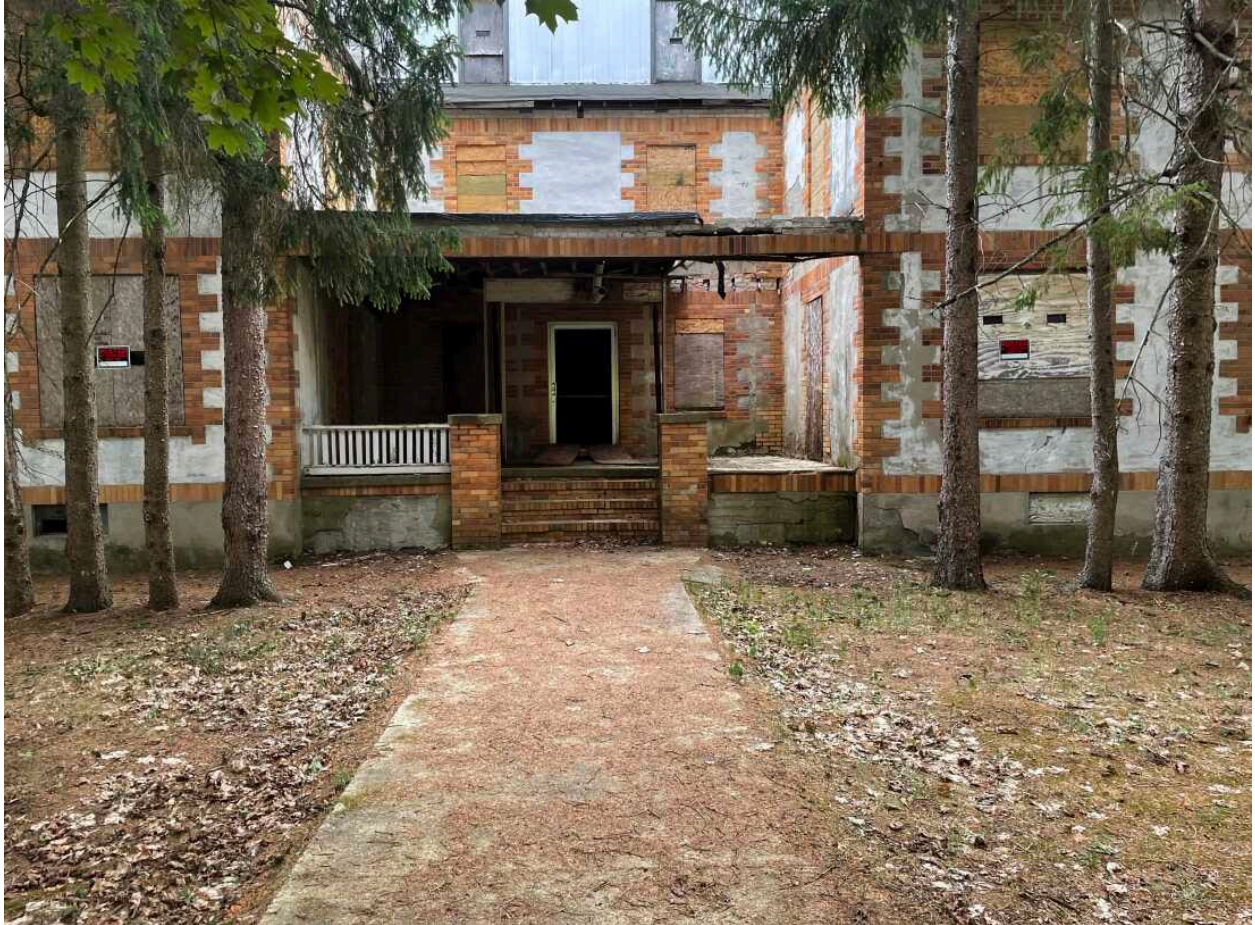
The Turtle, Niagara Falls, N.Y.



Cherrish Beals/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"The Turtle, also known as the Native American Center for the Living Arts, was completed in 1981 and designed by Arapaho architect Dennis Sun Rhodes as a powerful symbol of Indigenous heritage. Unfortunately, the building has been vacant for almost 30 years, and the owner previously shared plans for demolition. A coalition has formed in hopes of 'reawakening' the Turtle once again."

Hotel Casa Blanca, Idlewild, Mich.



Ronella McGregory/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"Located in the historic Black resort community of Idlewild, Michigan, Hotel Casa Blanca served as a premier lodging site for African American travelers, entertainers, and thought leaders during segregation. However, after integration, like many formerly segregated Black resorts, Idlewild experienced lower visitation and economic disinvestment, and Hotel Casa Blanca has now been vacant for over 30 years. Support and funding are needed to rehabilitate the hotel so it can once again serve the Idlewild community."

Sponsor Message

May Hicks Curtis House, Flagstaff, Ariz.



Joshua S. Edwards, Cornerstone Environmental Consulting, LLC/National Trust for Historic Preservation

"Known as the 'Betsy Ross' of Arizona, May Hicks Curtis sewed the first Arizona state flag in 1911. The May Hicks Curtis House where she lived and worked for decades must be moved from its current location due to new construction, but the City of Flagstaff is working to save, relocate, and rehabilitate the house for community use while commemorating the important women's history story of this site, which is located less than one block from the earliest alignment of Route 66."