

## WORLD MONUMENTS FUND AND LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT RECOVERY FOLLOWING WILDFIRES

**New York, NY—March 19, 2025:** [World Monuments Fund \(WMF\)](#) and the [Los Angeles Conservancy \(LAC\)](#) are launching a coordinated effort to document and assess heritage sites affected by the devastating wildfires that swept through Los Angeles County in January. This work represents a critical step towards ensuring that historic and cultural landmarks are recognized and considered in the county's long-term recovery and reconstruction efforts.

“Fire is one of the greatest threats to heritage sites, capable of erasing centuries of history in a matter of hours,” said **Bénédicte de Montlaur, President and CEO of World Monuments Fund**. “As climate change accelerates the frequency and severity of wildfires, we must act swiftly to ensure that cultural landmarks are not left out of disaster response and recovery. Through this initiative with the L.A. Conservancy, WMF builds on our past crisis response efforts, ensuring that cultural heritage is prioritized in post-disaster recovery.”

The fires, which burned over 50,000 acres and destroyed more than 16,000 structures, have inflicted a severe toll on the region's cultural heritage. Among the historic sites lost are the Will Rogers Ranch House, a 31-room property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center, a long-standing religious and cultural landmark in the region. Immediately after the fires, the County and City of Los Angeles documented all properties affected, categorizing their condition from minor damage to total loss. Since the fires occurred in areas with varying levels of pre-existing historic resource data, the documentation efforts undertaken did not always account for heritage sites. This initiative builds on the City's and County's efforts to ensure that both well-known landmarks and underrecognized heritage are accounted for, in all of the areas affected by the fires.

These efforts will play a vital role in the reconstruction process and help ensure that cultural heritage remains a cornerstone of recovery. Safeguarding these places help communities reclaim a sense of continuity and identity, both essential to long-term recovery.

“Protecting cultural heritage in the wake of a disaster is about more than just preserving buildings—it's about protecting the stories and people, cultural traditions and shared intangible heritage that shape our communities,” said **Adrian Scott Fine, President and CEO for the Los Angeles Conservancy**. “Los Angeles has always been defined by its rich and layered history, and we are proud to partner with WMF and our consultant team at Architectural Resources Group (ARG) on this vital initiative to ensure that L.A.'s diverse heritage is not lost in the aftermath of these devastating fires.”

WMF's [Crisis Response Program](#) was formally established in 2019 and built off the organization's prior work across the globe including [New Orleans and the Gulf Coast](#) following Hurricane Katrina, and in [Japan's Tohoku region](#) after the 2011 earthquake. Through this program, WMF has continued to lead recovery efforts in regions such as Mosul, Iraq, where efforts are underway to rehabilitate the [Mosul Cultural Museum](#) following years of conflict, and [Antakya, Türkiye](#), where preservation initiatives are addressing the devastation after the 2023 earthquakes.

Fires, both natural and human-caused, remain one of the most significant threats to heritage sites worldwide. Research by the US Congressional Research Service in 2022 found that humans are responsible for nearly 90% of wildfires in the United States, with causes ranging from unattended campfires to discarded cigarettes and equipment malfunctions. The increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires demand stronger climate resilience strategies for heritage sites, as well as collective cooperation in adhering to fire safety protocols.

Beyond this initial documentation phase, future project efforts will include in-depth structural assessments by architects and engineers, with the goal of providing guidance and resources for heritage-sensitive rebuilding. By integrating cultural heritage into Los Angeles' disaster response, this initiative will help safeguard the city's history and identity for generations to come.

To learn more about WMF's crisis response work, visit: [www.wmf.org/programs/crisis-response-program](http://www.wmf.org/programs/crisis-response-program).

To learn more about the Los Angeles Conservancy, visit: [www.laconservancy.org](http://www.laconservancy.org) and [www.laconservancy.org/la-fires](http://www.laconservancy.org/la-fires).

*World Monuments Fund's Crisis Response Program has been supported, in part, by the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, ALIPH, the Danny Kaye and Sylvia Fine Kaye Foundation, Denise Gwyn Ferguson, and other generous donors.*

---

## **About World Monuments Fund**

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich lives and build mutual understanding. For 60 years, working at more than 700 sites in 112 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through the World Monuments Watch—a biennial, nomination-based program—WMF uses cultural heritage conservation to empower communities and improve human well-being. In partnership with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide.

Visit [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org) for more information, or connect with us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

## **About the Los Angeles Conservancy**

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County. What began as a volunteer group in 1978 now has nearly 5,000 member households, the largest membership of any local preservation organization in the U.S.