

International Hands-on Workshops for Architectural and Site Conservation



News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preservation Volunteers Rise to the Challenge, Saving the World's Architectural Heritage

Boulder, Colorado – January 8, 2007 – With inspiration from Bob the Builder, Rosie the Riveter, and the stories the buildings themselves have to tell, HCN's crews of preservation volunteers are making their mark in the quest to preserve architectural heritage across the world. In the past five years, Heritage Conservation Network has taken volunteers to 17 workshops in four countries, including the US, Italy, Slovenia and Mexico. By the end of 2008, HCN will have helped save the built heritage of nine countries.

Just this fall, two nine-member teams of volunteers fully restored a stone arch masonry bridge in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The workshop was initiated by historic masonry expert Andrew DeGruchy, who contacted HCN to find a way to save the beloved bridge. He donated his time and all necessary materials while HCN recruited volunteers and coordinated workshop logistics. People traveled from throughout the east coast and beyond to help. Some had a personal interest in historic masonry, some were motivated by the chance to save a historic structure, but all were inspired by DeGruchy's contagious enthusiasm and contributed greatly to the successful completion of the project.

Beginning in 2004, HCN brought volunteer work crews to Waynesville, North Carolina, for three consecutive summers to help the Francis Mill Preservation Society preserve one of the last remaining grist mills in the county. Amazingly, only six weeks of focused volunteer effort was needed to bring the mill from a state of near collapse to standing structurally sound and weather tight. The FMPS has entered the final phase of restoration, raising money to purchase a new water wheel and hoping to have the mill operational once again in 2007, 120 years after it was built.

Volunteers are not necessarily experienced preservationists, with about half having experience in the field. Instruction and supervision are provided by the technical expert leading the hands-on work, and participants – of all ages – quickly find themselves replastering walls, documenting decorative paintings, shaping adobe bricks, chiseling mortises and tenons, or chipping out old cement mortar to replace it with lime mortar. The focus is on the use of traditional techniques and materials – the prescription for keeping historic buildings sound for many generations to use and appreciate.

Workshops offer a chance to learn a building's past, uncover its secrets, and most importantly, contribute to its future. The goal of this year's project in Slovenia was to discover the original paint scheme of the decorative stucco in a 17th century chapel. To everyone's great surprise, under the polychrome 18th century colors was a sophisticated cream, gold and silver scheme created in 1631. Led by one of Slovenia's top building conservators, the workshop in Oplotnica generated national attention; work will continue under the guidance of a government restoration agency. HCN will return to Slovenia in 2008 to partner with a local non-profit organization in preserving a historic farmhouse.

In 2007, there are workshops in Serravalle, Italy; Virginia City, Montana; Accra, Ghana; Jonesboro, Illinois; and Port Robinson, Ontario. 2008 will take volunteers to Albania, Slovenia, Armenia and the UK.

- more-

Information about HCN and its innovative approach to saving the world's architectural heritage can be found on their website: www.heritageconservation.net. Donations may be made online to support these important heritage conservation projects.

About HCN

Heritage Conservation Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of architectural heritage around the world. HCN produces an annual series of hands-on building conservation workshops in association with local preservation partners in order to further the sites' preservation and provide an educational experience for participants.

####

Contact:

Judith Broeker

Heritage Conservation Network

1557 North Street, Boulder, CO 80304 USA

Tel: +1 303 444 0128; Fax: +1 775 320 6837

jbroeker@heritageconservation.net

www.heritageconservation.net