

# Statement

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## National Trust for Historic Preservation Wins Major Victory in Protecting Guam's Historic Pãgat Village

*Statement by President Stephanie Meeks*

Washington, D.C (November 16, 2011) - Yesterday, the U.S. Navy publicly announced its intent to consider alternative locations for firing ranges that were originally to be built adjacent to an ancient settlement and important cultural site in Guam, Pãgat Village. The following is a statement by Stephanie Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

"Pãgat Village is a rare and extraordinary site, filled with history and culture. It would be a travesty to lose this treasure not only for the indigenous Chamorro people, who revere Pãgat Village as a place for the souls of their ancestors, but also for the general public. The ranges would have caused significant harm to Pãgat's historic setting, and placed Pãgat Village within the "Surface Danger Zone" of the firing ranges, leaving the site vulnerable to damage, and dramatically curtailing the public's ability to access and experience this sacred place.

"The work of the community to protect the island's 4,000-year history has been overwhelming. The Navy made the right decision to re-open the public review process and we would like to thank them for reconsidering the location of these firing ranges. This decision further acknowledges the importance of protecting what is special and irreplaceable. We look forward to working with the Navy to identify more appropriate locations for weapons training away from sensitive cultural resources."

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### **BACKGROUND ON PAGAT VILLAGE**

Pãgat Village, the last remaining and best preserved pre-colonial site owned by the Government of Guam, is revered by Guam's indigenous Chamorro people and was the first site listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Guam. It is one of the small island's most tangible links to its ancient past, frequented by educators, traditional healers, fishermen and the public at large. The Chamorro, who comprise almost half of Guam's population, believe Pãgat is a dwelling place for the souls of their ancestors and they visit Pãgat often to seek advice and engage in traditional cultural and religious activities.

### **About the National Trust for Historic Preservation**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately-funded nonprofit organization, works to save America's historic places to enrich our future. [PreservationNation.org](http://PreservationNation.org)