



**America's 11 Most
Endangered Historic Places**

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION®**

PRESS RELEASE

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Guam Preservation Trust (November 18, 2010). The Guam Preservation Trust and We Are Guåhan, joined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, would like to announce the filing of a legal action against the U.S. Department of Defense challenging its plans to construct a complex of five firing ranges in Guam that are immediately adjacent to and directed toward historic Pãgat Village. The firing ranges are a component of the Guam "Buildup," a multi-billion dollar effort to relocate 8,600 Marines from Okinawa to Guam. This action does not challenge the Buildup itself, but seeks to compel the Department of Defense to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act by giving adequate consideration to alternative locations for the firing ranges, as mandated by law.

Pãgat Village, the last remaining and best preserved Chamorro ancestral site owned by the Government of Guam, is revered by Guam's indigenous Chamorro people and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of Guam's most tangible links to its ancestors and 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.

The proposed firing range plan would require federal acquisition of over 1,000 acres of public and private land, including Pãgat's significant cultural sites. The ranges would cause significant harm to Pãgat's historic setting, and would place Pãgat 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 threat to Pãgat Village spurred the National Trust for Historic Preservation to place the site on its annual list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in May of this year.

The Guam Preservation Trust, We Are Guahan, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation repeatedly submitted extensive comments to military officials over the last year, urging that alternate sites for the firing ranges be considered. Those efforts have been bolstered by intense local opposition to the proposed plan. In September 2010, the Guam legislature passed a unanimous resolution stating that Pãgat Village should not be used for a firing range complex. Guam's Congressional delegate also has made repeated calls for changes to the military's plan. Despite the widespread opposition, the Department of Defense has been unwavering in its refusal to consider alternative locations for the firing ranges.

The lawsuit is filed in Honolulu, where the environmental review process was coordinated by the Navy. The plaintiffs are represented by pro bono counsel Nicholas C. Yost and Matthew Adams, both of SNR Denton US LLP's San Francisco office. As former general counsel of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, Yost was the lead drafter of the NEPA regulations and is widely recognized as one of the nation's top environmental lawyers. He was the recipient of the American Bar Association's 2010 Award for Distinguished Achievement in Environmental Law and Policy. SNR Denton is an international law firm with a longstanding commitment to pro bono activities to further the rule of law.

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The **Guam Preservation Trust** (GPT) was created in 1990 as a non-profit, public corporation governed by Board of Directors. It is dedicated to preserving Guam's historic sites and culture as well as educating the public about those issues. Although primarily tasked with restoring historic structures, which are listed in the Guam Register of Historic Places and/or the National Register of Historic Places, the GPT also funds various types of cultural preservation projects. To learn more, visit www.SavePagatVillage.com