

World Monuments Watch

2027 NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Deadline: March 20, 2026



A global call for heritage places requiring urgent action, where preservation can help communities thrive.



Table of Contents

The Watch Program.....4

What We’re Looking For.....7

Examples from Past Watch Cycles.....8

What Selected Sites Receive.....10

Who Can Nominate a Site.....12

How Sites are Selected.....14

How to Submit a Nomination.....15

Schedule.....16

FAQ.....17

The Watch Program

The World Monuments Watch identifies 25 heritage places worldwide in need of urgent attention, committing visibility, expert guidance, and access to funding opportunities to help communities promote and protect places that matter.

Every two years, through an open nomination process, World Monuments Fund (WMF) spotlights places where heritage action can spark meaningful change by responding to urgent threats, addressing community needs, or demonstrating innovative solutions to global challenges.

The 2027 Watch will spotlight a new group of 25 places, each representing an opportunity to act. Collectively, the sites of the Watch demonstrate how local champions can inspire change through preservation and raise global awareness.

SELECTED SITES WILL RECEIVE:

- International and local media coverage and publicity.
- Two years of strategic consultation with WMF heritage experts.
- \$2,500 for a community engagement event (Watch Day).
- Opportunities to develop preservation projects in partnership with WMF.
- Connection to a global network of heritage advocates (Watch Network) that offers a venue for professional exchange, learning, and competitive funding opportunities.



Mam Rasha Shrine, Iraq
2020 World Monuments Watch



What We're Looking For

WMF invites nominations from heritage places facing some sense of urgency, where preservation action can bring transformative change and promote creative solutions.

For the 2027 Watch, WMF is looking for local voices to speak on behalf of the heritage places that matter most in their communities: the challenges they face, the opportunities they present, and how preservation action can respond to today's most critical issues.

Successful nominations from past cycles reflect themes relevant to heritage sites around the world, including (but not limited to): the need for resilience in the face of natural disasters, the power of heritage to support recovery in the wake of human conflict, the double-edged impacts of tourism, and the broad imperative to adapt to a changing climate.

With the 2027 Watch, we seek to continue this global conversation, spotlighting the most pressing concerns confronting heritage and communities around the world today, and the powerful ways local action can build a more resilient, participatory, and sustainable future.

The strongest nominations will demonstrate both the deep significance of a place within its community and its wider relevance, highlighting how local action can inspire broader change.

Heritage places of all types and from any time period, ancient to modern, may be nominated. These may include

archaeological sites, civic buildings, residences, sacred sites, parks and gardens, cultural landscapes, commercial or leisure destinations, engineering or industrial structures, historic city centers, and more. Sites do not need to be monumental in the traditional sense. What matters most is their significance to our shared human story and their relevance to contemporary societal needs, whether cultural, economic, political, environmental, or otherwise.

Examples from Past Watch Cycles

Since 1996, the Watch has cast a global spotlight on nearly 900 heritage sites spanning 136 countries across all continents.



Koutammakou, Land of the Batammariba, Benin and Togo

The Corps de Volontaires Béninois nominated this cultural landscape, known for its distinctive earthen dwellings, to the 2020 Watch. Since then, WMF has collaborated with artisans and community members to conserve these structures and teach traditional construction techniques to a new generation. The project planted 5,000 trees for a sustainable wood supply and supported women's groups to link their traditional role in building with new opportunities for economic independence.



Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Chile

The Ma'u Henua Indigenous Community, the administrators of Rapa Nui National Park, nominated the site to the 2020 Watch seeking assistance to preserve the unique rock carvings of Orongo. Since the nomination, WMF and the community have worked with geologists and structural engineers to study the conservation issues impacting the island's rock carvings, identify preservation solutions, and facilitate community-based decision-making.



Chapel of the Sorbonne, France

The Chapel of the Sorbonne, a 17th-century architectural landmark in the heart of Paris, was included on the 2025 Watch to highlight the opportunity to restore and reopen a building that has remained closed for more than two decades following storm damage. Through the Watch, WMF has partnered with the Sorbonne (Chancellerie des Universités) and city authorities to advance restoration, return the chapel to public use, and reintegrate it into Paris's cultural and academic life.



Mam Rashan Shrine, Iraq

Destroyed in 2014 by Daesh (also known as ISIS), this Yazidi shrine was nominated to the 2020 Watch by the Eyzidi Organization for Documentation. Through the Watch, WMF worked with local partners to reconstruct Mam Rashan, restoring its role as a religious and ceremonial center for the returning Yazidi community and showcasing the power of cultural heritage in post-conflict recovery.



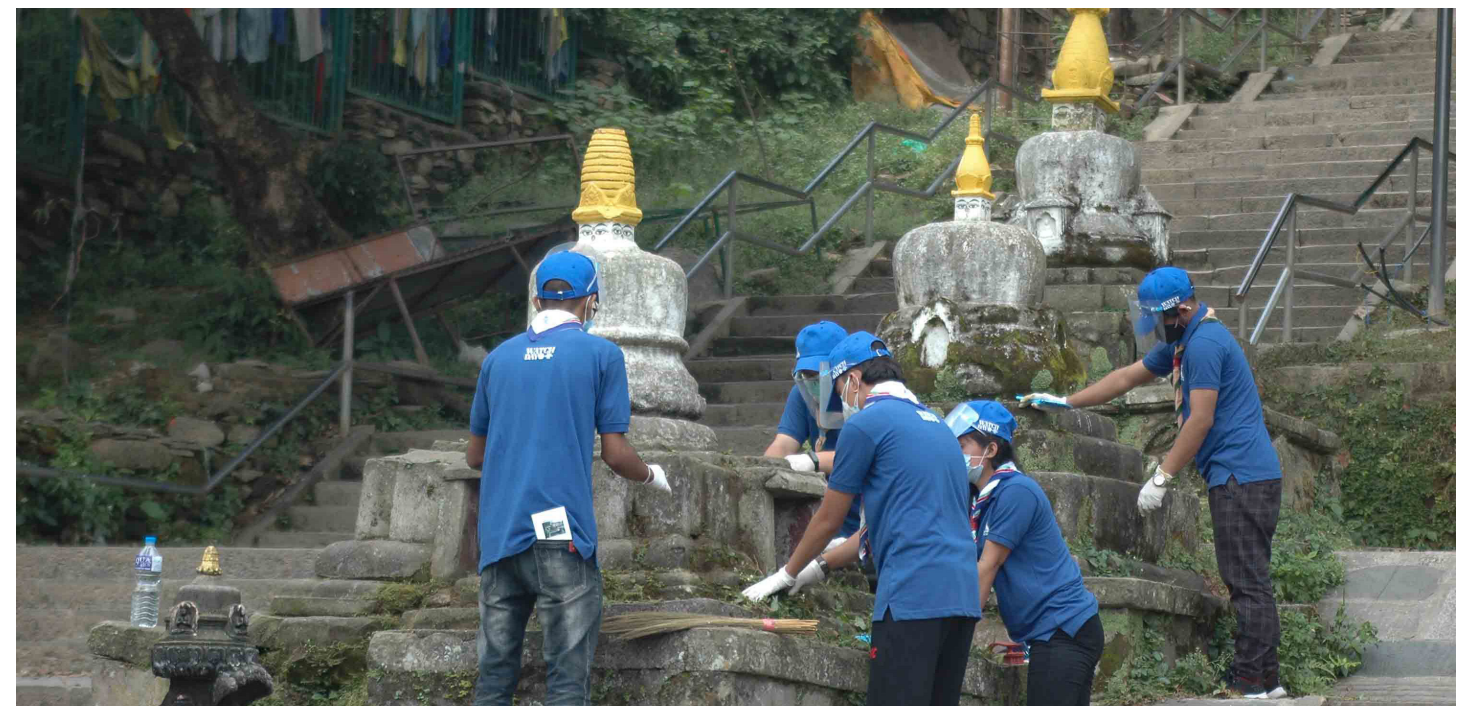
Hitis of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

Traditional water fountains, known as hitis, have provided water for Kathmandu Valley residents since the sixth century. The Chiva Chaitya Organization nominated the site to the 2022 Watch, highlighting how hitis, which continue to serve 20% of the area's population, can help address a water crisis exacerbated by climate change. WMF is working with local partners to study and rehabilitate select fountains, underscoring their value for present-day life.



Alabama Civil Rights Sites, United States

Nominated by the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, these 12 sites include churches, hotels, private homes, and other meeting spaces that played key roles in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. The 2018 Watch supported the creation of a consortium dedicated to identifying, preserving, and promoting the state's Civil Rights heritage. The collaboration also produced Voices of Alabama, an oral history project documenting the sites' stories and their contributions to the African American struggle for freedom and equality.



Chivas and Chaityas of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal
2020 World Monuments Watch

What Selected Sites Receive

The Watch is launched every two years. Sites selected and their nominators will benefit from:

- Visibility**

A global announcement spotlights all 25 Watch sites, supported by international media coverage and coordinated WMF communications, and followed by targeted WMF promotion for at least two years.
- Partnership & Fundraising**

WMF’s team of experts works with site nominators and local partners to assess and prioritize needs for each site, co-design fundraising strategies and action plans, and, when possible, implement preservation project.
- Community Engagement**

Each site receives \$2,500 in funding and guidance to host a Watch Day, a local event to build awareness, strengthen public engagement around heritage conservation, and celebrate participatory stewardship of historic places.
- Network & Exchange**

Successful nominators join WMF’s Watch Network, which connects past and present Watch sites, preservation experts, and heritage practitioners worldwide through exclusive events, trainings, and shared resources.



Inclusion on the Watch creates opportunities for WMF, nominators, and relevant local partners to raise funding for targeted preservation projects. Project activities may include advocacy campaigns, research, site planning, education, documentation, or physical conservation interventions. Where fundraising succeeds, funds will support joint work between WMF and local partners, with an emphasis on projects that deliver demonstrable social impact.

Since 1996, WMF has invested over \$125 million in nearly 350 projects at Watch sites. The Watch has also enabled local partners to leverage their newfound global platform to raise more than \$300 million from other sources.



Who Can Nominate a Site

Nominations are free to submit and open to all. We welcome submissions from groups, organizations, and individuals, including but not limited to:

- Stewards of community-owned heritage
- Civil society organizations
- Indigenous groups
- Heritage professionals
- Artists and creative practitioners
- Activists and private individuals
- Academics, students, and educational institutions
- Government agencies

In addition to groups with heritage as their mission, we encourage organizations or individuals from other fields to nominate sites and explain how their work or interests connect with the Watch.

Successful nominators will work closely with WMF. They should be prepared to communicate with us directly and serve as the official representative for the site's inclusion on the 2027 Watch. Nominators will also be expected to provide updates, help with media coverage, lead community engagement, and advise or work with us on project development.

Endorsement from the site's legal owner is encouraged but not required. In relevant cases, WMF will notify owners before the public announcement of the 2027 Watch.



Convents of Seville, Spain
2016 World Monuments Watch

How Sites Are Selected

Once a nomination is submitted, it goes through three stages of evaluation:

1. ASSESSMENT BY WMF STAFF

Submissions are reviewed by WMF staff around the world with expertise in heritage and related fields.

2. EXTERNAL REVIEW BY HERITAGE EXPERTS

Nominations are paired with professionals and preservation leaders from the Watch Network, enhancing regional and specialized insight.

3. FINAL SELECTION BY INDEPENDENT PANEL

An international panel of experts in heritage and related disciplines determines the final 25 sites.

Nominations are evaluated against four criteria, weighted equally:

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

How deeply does the place embody, reflect, or relate to the culture or history of a community, country, or region? Can its preservation inspire appreciation of the richness and diversity of our shared past?

RELEVANCE TO URGENT ISSUES

Does the nomination respond to imminent threats or time-sensitive opportunities? Does it connect clearly to pressing social, cultural, or environmental issues with global resonance?

POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT

How can preserving the site meaningfully benefit communities? Is there potential to enhance local social, cultural, economic, or environmental life or otherwise yield benefits through preservation?

FEASIBILITY OF IMPACT

Can WMF effectively support the nomination with its resources and expertise? Are there factors that will make it difficult for WMF to help?

How to Submit a Nomination

Nominations must be submitted online through our [nomination form](#).

TO BEGIN A NEW NOMINATION:

1. Review these guidelines carefully and keep a copy for reference.
2. Create user credentials for the nomination form online.
3. Complete the form by answering the questions. You may save your progress and return later.
4. Upload photographs and supplementary materials; optional letters of support are highly encouraged as supplementary materials.

THE FORM WILL ASK FOR SHORT WRITTEN RESPONSES ABOUT:

- The site's history and significance
- Its community and stakeholders
- Urgent challenges and opportunities
- Your vision for its future

Begin your nomination at:
wmf.org/watch-apply-now



Nominations will be accepted until
March 20, 2026, at 5 pm EDT

Nomination Schedule

January 8, 2026

Call for nominations opens

March 20, 2026

Nomination deadline – 5:00 pm EDT

March – September 2026

Evaluation period

February 3, 2027

Public announcement of the 2027 Watch

Early 2027 – Early 2029

Program cycle and activities underway

FAQ

How competitive is the selection process?

On average, Watch cycles receive 200-300 nominations. While the process is highly competitive, WMF encourages applicants who are not selected to reapply in future cycles.

Is the Watch a source of funding?

Inclusion on the Watch creates opportunities for WMF and local partners to pursue funding for projects and often results in successful fundraising to support project work. Since 1996, WMF has invested over \$125 million in nearly 350 projects at Watch sites. The Watch has also enabled local partners to leverage their newfound global platform to raise more than \$300 million from other sources. In addition, each selected site receives \$2,500 in support for a Watch Day, a community event proposed and designed by the nominator. Beyond funding, every site benefits from global visibility, expert engagement, and participation in the Watch Network.

Can a site be nominated again if it has been on the Watch before?

Yes. Sites nominated or included in previous Watch cycles are eligible for subsequent Watch inclusions. They undergo the same evaluation and selection process, with added emphasis on how circumstances have changed since earlier nominations.

Are places on the Watch considered endangered?

Not all Watch sites are endangered or at immediate risk, but all are places where preservation matters now. Some sites face urgent threats, while others demonstrate how preservation can deliver timely community benefits or respond to pressing global issues. Sometimes, the urgency is a timely opportunity to enhance site protection and/or management.

Are privately owned sites eligible?

Privately owned sites are eligible for nomination to the Watch, but private ownership may limit our potential for action. Only places that serve the public interest are eligible for financial support from WMF.

Does WMF assume ownership of the sites included in the Watch?

No. Inclusion does not imply or confer ownership, nor does WMF accept ownership of any site.

What happens after the two-year cycle ends?

The Watch program fosters relationships between WMF and new local partners. While most collaborations aim to achieve outcomes within two years, many extend beyond that timeline. All successful nominators have perpetual access to the Watch Network and are encouraged to maintain their connection to WMF's global community and additional opportunities for continued support.



wmf.org/nominate

Nomination Deadline: March 20, 2026

About World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich people's lives and build mutual understanding across cultures and communities. The organization is headquartered in New York City with offices and affiliates in Cambodia, China, France, India, Peru, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Since 1965, our global team of experts has preserved the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries.



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