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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wed, May 1st, 2024

Embargoed announcement lifted TODAY:

**THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DESIGNATES MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, WALDEN AND
NEARBY LANDMARKS AS ONE OF
AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES
DUE TO THREAT OF PRIVATE LUXURY JET EXPANSION AT HANSCOM AIRPORT**

Announcement Ceremony

with Speaker Ashley Judd

Wed, May 1st, 11am at the Old Manse, Concord, near the Old North Bridge

[Online event details here](#)

Ashley Judd, UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador, Actor, Author and Activist --

"Against the dire backdrop of our warming climate and the climate disasters that result, causing so much suffering for millions, it is utterly appalling to consider a massive development for luxury private jets in the midst of the landscape that inspired the founding of our democracy and the American environmental movement. We must take responsibility for protecting both our historic sites and our planet by firmly opposing this completely senseless development"

Massive private jet hangar expansion proposed at Hanscom Airport is indefensible --

- on the eve of the 250th 2025 Anniversary of the birthplace of the American Revolution -- *Minute Man National Historical Park*, and
- next to the cradle of the American Environmental Movement -- *Thoreau's Walden*

THE ENDANGERED PLACE AND THE THREAT

Minute Man National Historical Park, Walden and Nearby Landmarks are located in the Towns of Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and Bedford. The historic towns include the birthplace of the ***American Revolution***, the cradle of the ***American Environmental Movement***, and the home of the ***American Literary Renaissance***.

At the intersection of the four towns lies **Hanscom Field Airport** (not the Air Force Base) operated by the Massachusetts Port Authority. Plans for a massive private jet hangar expansion at Hanscom's North Airfield would double the private jet infrastructure and dramatically increase flights, noise and greenhouse gas emissions. The jets would use **the runway that directly overflies Minute Man Park**,

Walden, Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and the historic homes. Hanscom is the only airport in the country that abuts a national historic park and a national wildlife refuge.

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Minute Man Park hosts one million visitors' annually. The four historic towns and [Minute Man National Historical Park](#) include

- 1,000 sites listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and
- 5,657 properties listed by the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Commission.

Among these sites are places associated with --

- the first battle of the American Revolution on April 19th, 1775, memorialized in the 19th century by Ralph Waldo Emerson as “the shot heard ‘round the world”
- the legacy of Henry David Thoreau: Walden Pond and Walden Woods,
- the homesteads of the authors Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne and Alcott
- properties connected with the Underground Railroad and Brister Freeman and Caesar Robbins, two enslaved men of African descent who were emancipated after their service in the Revolutionary War.

WALDEN POND AND WALDEN WOODS

Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond and the 2,680 acres of woods surrounding it are the birthplace of the environmental movement and a National Historic Landmark visited by 600,000 people a year from throughout the world. Walden Pond and Walden Woods were the inspiration for the seminal literature of author/philosopher Henry David Thoreau. His environmental and social reform writings are more relevant today than ever before, as we struggle with global issues related to climate change and social reform. Efforts to protect the land of legacy of Thoreau have become symbolic of similar challenges to protect the countless other “Waldens” around the world. Go to walden.org for further information

NEARBY HISTORIC SITES

- **Orchard House**, also a National Historic Landmark, is the home of Louisa May Alcott author of *Little Women* and annually draws 100,000 visitors.
- **The Old Manse** and the homes of Emerson, Hawthorne and Thoreau attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the world annually.
- In 1990, **Bear Garden Hill and Brister's Hill**, landscapes associated with Thoreau and Brister Freeman, were saved from development, placed in permanent conservation and are visited by thousands of teachers, school groups, historians and recreational enthusiasts annually.
- **The Robbins House**, commemorating the life of enslaved Caesar Robbins, was moved to Minute Man Park in 2010 and shares stories, provides educational resources, raises awareness of Concord's African American history, and connects the early fights for freedom with modern social justice movements.

HOW IS THE ENDANGERED PLACE THREATENED?

If the proposed [private jet hangar expansion at Hanscom Airport](#) goes ahead, it would:

- develop 500,000 square feet (two-thirds of a mile) of private luxury jet hangar space on 50 acres
- clearcut and pave forested land
- build 17 hangars that would double the current private jet infrastructure at the airport
- house up to 80 additional private jets

Hanscom is already the second busiest airport in New England after Logan. [An independent study](#) found that the proposed development would add more than 6,000 additional new private jet flights to the airport, an increase that would be felt by Logan as well. If the proposed development goes forward, private jet emissions from Hanscom alone would reach levels high enough to cancel out nearly 70% of all the solar PV installed in the state of Massachusetts.

As visitors from around the world come to visit the Park, Walden, Orchard House, Lexington Green, and the other historic sites to experience the preserved landscapes and to hear the stories associated with these American icons -- the interpreters, the reenactors, and the “echoes” are all too frequently drowned out by the deafening noise of jet overflights. The site stewards agree: state and federal elected representatives should be instituting mitigation of the impacts that presently exist -- as opposed to irresponsibly and indefensibly increasing the negative impacts by allowing the expansion to go forward.

[Sign the petition](#) to Gov. Healey of Massachusetts and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg **urging them to stop expansion of Hanscom Field and preserve these irreplaceable American treasures** (on National Trust’s website).

QUOTATIONS:

- **Douglas Brinkley**, *CNN Presidential Historian; Professor of History at Rice University; and best-selling author, from video interview:*

“Today is a call to action for all of us, private citizens, and public officials alike.... The dignity of our sanctified landscape must not be maligned. By designating Minute Man Park, Walden Pond, and the area’s other historic sites among “America’s 11 Most Endangered”, the National Trust has fired a 21st-century “shot heard round the world.” If We The People allow this odious jetport enlargement to forge forward, we will be sending a solemn message to future generations that our treasured historic places of today will be tomorrow’s runways for the privileged few.”

COMPLETE VIDEO CAN BE VIEWED AT WWW.WALDEN.ORG

- **Don Henley**, *recording artist and Board Chair of The Walden Woods Project:*

“Today’s announcement reminds us of the enduring responsibilities we bear - to preserve our national treasures, like Walden Pond and Walden Woods, through vigilant advocacy and devoted stewardship. Without both, we face the very real possibility that these national treasures could be lost for future generations. Critical choices lie ahead. We must choose wisely by prioritizing what is essential for the preservation of the special places that inspire us, embody our history, reflect our values and define us as Americans.”

- **Annie Leibovitz**, *American portrait photographer*

“Orchard House is truly a living house. I’ve never seen a museum like this that has so much character & life. These places that transport us to the past - and their environs - must be protected.”

Continued

- **David Duncan**, *President, American Battlefield Trust* --

“There are few historic landscapes more iconic and layered than Minute Man National Historical Park and its vicinity, truly a formative location to the evolution of our nation. The hallowed nature of this ground and the solemn purposes for which millions of Americans visit it must be considered fully for any intrusive development scheme proposed in the area. The American Battlefield Trust is proud to stand with so many allied entities in cautioning that the expansion of Hanscom Field would cause in unavoidable and cumulative harm to one of the most important battlefields in our history.”

- **Ed Begley, Jr.** *actor, author, and environmentalist:*

“As the global community seeks solutions to address the existential threat of climate change, we must make every effort to oppose initiatives that increase carbon emissions. For this reason, and for its noise and pollution impacts on surrounding historic sites, like Walden, the proposed private jet infrastructure expansion at Hanscom Airport must be stopped.”

- **Congresswoman Lori Trahan:**

“For generations, Massachusetts families have cherished the tremendous recreational and educational benefits of Minute Man National Historic Park and Walden Pond... These historic sites are so much more than just landmarks – they’re treasures that must be protected at all costs. As someone who grew up regularly visiting Walden Pond and Minute Man National Historical Park, this designation from the National Trust is deeply alarming. It’s clear that as proposed, the expansion of Hanscom North Airfield poses serious threats to these sites that are living testaments to some of the most important moments in our nation’s history. I’m committed to protecting these sites from harmful and unnecessary pollution so our grandchildren and great-grandchildren walk the same roads that paved the way to the American Revolution and relive the creation of some of the greatest literary works written by American authors.”

- *The late **David McCullough**, who opposed any further development of Hanscom Airport as far back as 2003, challenged us to take extra care to thoughtfully and avidly protect and preserve our historic past so that it may wisely inform the present and the future. He warned,*

“Once the spell, the spirit, of these treasured places is violated or destroyed, they’re never the same again. You can’t bring them back.” McCullough further stated, “Let the commitment of the people at the bridge in Concord in 1775, the commitment of people like Thoreau and Emerson...be the calling of our time.”