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National Park Service Press Release

For Immediate Release: February 11, 2013**Contact(s):** Blake Androff (DOI), 202 208-6416
Mike Litterst (NPS), 202-208-6843**Secretary Salazar Launches Asian American Pacific Islander Theme Study, Designates Wing Luke Museum Affiliation with National Park Service***Supports Broad Initiative to Recognize and Interpret**Nation's Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Heritage*

SEATTLE – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced that he has directed the National Park Service to undertake an Asian American Pacific Islander Theme Study to investigate the stories, places and people of Asian American and Pacific Island heritage.

The new study is part of a broader effort under President Obama's America's Great Outdoors program to commemorate and tell the story of minorities and women who have made significant contributions to our nation's history and culture.

"Each of the 398 national parks represents a thread in the great tapestry that tells the story of our beautiful land, our diverse culture and our nation's rich heritage, but too often lost is the story of women and minorities who have helped build our great nation," Salazar said. "From Angel Island where more than one million Asian immigrants arrived on these shores to the Chinese immigrants who built the railroads across the country to the Japanese American internment camps of World War II, these are stories that will be part of the next chapter in our continued efforts to better tell the story of all of America and her people."

Salazar made today's announcement at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle where he was joined by Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget Rhea Suh, National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis, Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray and Congressmen Jim McDermott and Adam Smith.

Salazar also announced that he has designated the museum an "affiliated area" of the National Park Service – a designation to recognize the national significance of properties that are privately owned and operated but encompass important aspects of our nation's heritage for which an official association with the Service would be mutually beneficial.

Wing Luke's designation as an affiliated area will link the museum with other nationally significant Asian Pacific American sites within the National Park System and allow the museum to tap into technical assistance from the National Park Service.

"Asian Americans have played a significant role in the history of the United States, including participating in the early settlement of the country, contributing to the economic development of the American West, and playing a role in the desegregation of public schools in the 20th century," Jarvis said. "Their accomplishments and struggles are an important part of the American story, worthy of preservation in America's national parks and deserving of the recognition that our historic preservation programs offer."

"As a first-generation Asian American and a senior appointee of the Obama Administration, I am humbled and inspired by the public service legacy of Wing Luke," said Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Budget and Management Rhea Suh. "I am grateful to the Wing Luke Museum for sharing the stories of the Asian Pacific American experience and the contributions of our community to this country's social and economic fabric. This designation and the launch of the Asian American Pacific Islander theme study by the National Park Service represent the ongoing leadership that this Administration has had in honoring and in representing the diversity of America."

The National Register of Historic Places includes more than 88,000 entries, incorporating more than 1.7 million individual buildings and sites representing local, state or nationally significant people, places and

events. Just over 2,500 of these properties are National Historic Landmarks, designated by the Secretary as representing the highest level of national significance. Less than eight percent of these properties can be identified as representing the stories associated with African Americans, American Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiians, or women.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, the National Park Service will work with the Wing Luke Museum and the Japanese American National Museum and scholars representing the Asian American and Pacific Islander-American communities to explore ways to celebrate and interpret their heritage. The Service's National Historic Landmark program will develop a theme study to guide future nominations of National Historic Landmarks and National Register properties.

In 2011, Salazar announced a Latino Heritage Theme Study to explore the places and stories of the American Latino heritage. Last month, the National Park Service launched a new partnership with the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites to support efforts to better document women's history through the National Historic Landmark and National Register programs at one of the most historic houses associated with women's rights – the Sewall Belmont House, home of the National Women's Party.

Founded in 1967, the Wing Luke Museum is located in the heart of Seattle's Chinatown-International District, a National Register-listed historic district. It offers a uniquely American story of Asian Pacific people and how they came to thrive in the United States. Named after Wing Luke, the first Asian Pacific American elected to public office in the Pacific Northwest, it is the only museum devoted to the multicultural Asian Pacific American experience – the history and heritage of Americans of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, South Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 398 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov

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