



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Monacan Indian Nation Site Named one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**

*-- Rassawek, the historic capital and sacred site of the Monacan Indian Nation located at the confluence of the Rivanna River and James River in Fluvanna County, is included on a national list of threatened historic sites.*

RICHMOND, Va. (September 24, 2020) – Threatened by a local water intake and pump station, the historic capital of the Monacan Indian Nation is receiving national attention. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, based in Washington D.C., included Rassawek in its annual America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list.

The James River Water Authority, a joint venture of Louisa and Fluvanna Counties, proposes to build a pump station at Rassawek to deliver water to support development at Zion Crossroads, a nearby area slated for economic development. Researchers verified Rassawek's location in the 1880s, the 1930s and the 1980s. It is the Monacan equivalent of Werowocomoco, the Powhatan capital now planned to be a national park.

Preservation Virginia included Rassawek in their Virginia's Most Endangered Historic Places program earlier this year. To raise national awareness, the statewide historic preservation organization successfully nominated the Monacan capital site to the National Trust's list.

“Our capital city was a contemporary of Jamestown, but much larger and more complex, and it lasted as a community far longer,” said Tribal Chief Kenneth Branham. “It is for us a sacred place of great cultural significance, and it is for all Americans a place of historical importance.”

Preservation Virginia CEO Elizabeth S. Kostelny said “Our goal in this nomination is to ensure that the James River Water Authority carefully considers and chooses one of the several available alternatives for siting this project.”

“The history of more than 5,000 years of Monacan people is written in the soil and landscape of Rassawek, providing a tangible connection to ancestors, many of whom did not survive the arrival of the English and are buried there,” said Katherine Malone-France, Chief Preservation Officer of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In June, [more than 12,000 organizations and individuals expressed opposition to the project](#) to the Army Corps of Engineers, the agency considering the project permit. Greg Werkheiser of

Cultural Heritage Partners, legal counsel to the Monacan Indian Nation, stated “The 11 Most Endangered listing is final proof that the eyes of the nation are on the fate of Rassawek.”

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### **About the Monacan Indian Nation**

The Monacan Indian Nation is a federally recognized sovereign tribe and a state-recognized tribe in the Commonwealth of Virginia, headquartered on Bear Mountain in Amherst County. With approximately 2,400 citizens, the Monacan Indian Nation is today the largest federally recognized tribe in Virginia, and the Monacans once occupied half of the Commonwealth. The Monacans had hundreds of villages, but their historic capital, the community to which all other villages paid tribute, was Rassawek. Its archaeological remains are on a point of land where the James and Rivanna rivers meet called Point of Fork. Visit <http://www.culturalheritagepartners.com/saverassawek/> to learn more.

### **About Preservation Virginia**

Preservation Virginia is a private, nonprofit organization and statewide historic preservation leader that is dedicated to preserving, promoting and serving as an advocate for Virginia's cultural and architectural history. [PreservationVirginia.org](http://PreservationVirginia.org)

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

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately funded nonprofit organization that works to save America's historic places through preservation evaluation and analysis, grantmaking, advocacy, public engagement and litigation. It is the only organization of its kind in the country with a national mission to preserve places that are central to the heritage of the United States and receives no government funding. Its most visible work includes the 11 Most Endangered List, the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and the Main Street Project along with many other local and national initiatives. [SavingPlaces.org](http://SavingPlaces.org)

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