

June 2, 2005

HEMINGWAY HOME ON ENDANGERED PLACES LIST

by **Mary Clare Jalonick**

For the first time, a site outside the United States – novelist Ernest Hemingway's Cuban hideaway – has won a place on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of most endangered places.

Hemingway spent more than 20 years at the home near Havana, where he wrote "The Old Man and the Sea." Time and the elements have severely damaged the hacienda, called Finca Vigia, or Lookout Farm.

"Ernest Hemingway is one of the world's most celebrated authors, and Finca Vigia is the home he loved best," said Richard Moe, the trust's president. "Even though it stands on foreign soil, this house is part of the shared cultural heritage that defines us as Americans."

The list of 11 endangered sites released Thursday includes the Catholic churches of Boston, historic buildings in downtown Detroit and Alaska's King Island, once home to the Inupiat Eskimos.

The Washington-based trust was chartered by Congress in 1949. Since 1998, it has been privately funded. The organization has published an annual list of endangered sites for 18 years.

The Hemingway Preservation Foundation in Concord, Mass., was denied a government license last year to travel to Cuba. The Bush administration has taken a tough stance on visits to the communist-run island.

The trust, working with the foundation, obtained a license this year and plans to send architects and engineers to figure out what needs to be done to save the house.

"But unless significant restoration funding can be raised and used to restore the property, these preliminary efforts will come to nothing," the trust said in a statement.

According to the trust, the house's roof is leaking, the foundation is crumbling and plaster is falling off the walls. But evidence of the author remains, including a daily record of his weight and blood pressure penciled on the bathroom wall.

Also on the list of endangered places is the National Landscape Conservation System, 26 million acres of federal land in the West that the Bureau of Land Management controls. Moe said the agency does not have enough money to manage the lands, many of which have been damaged by off-road vehicles and vandalism.