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Contact: Hugh Vickery, DOI 202-208-6416

David Barna, NPS 202-208-6843

Salazar Seeks to Commemorate Manhattan Project through New National Historical Park

*National Park Service Study Recommends New Mexico, Washington, and
Tennessee sites*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced today that he is recommending to Congress the establishment of a national historical park to commemorate the Manhattan Project, the top-secret effort to create an atomic bomb during World War II.

“The secret development of the atomic bomb in multiple locations across the United States is an important story and one of the most transformative events in our nation’s history,” Secretary Salazar said. “The Manhattan Project ushered in the atomic age, changed the role of the United States in the world community, and set the stage for the Cold War.”

The National Park Service, at the direction of Congress, conducted a special resource study on several Manhattan Project sites for possible inclusion in the National Park System. The study, released to Congress this week, recommends that the best way to preserve and interpret the Manhattan Project is for Congress to establish a national historical park at three sites where much of the critical scientific activity associated with the project occurred: Los Alamos, New Mexico; Hanford, Washington; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

“Once a tightly guarded secret, the story of the atomic bomb’s creation needs to be shared with this and future generations,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “There is no better place to tell a story than where it happened, and that’s what national parks do. The National Park Service will be proud to interpret these Manhattan Project sites and unlock their stories in the years ahead.”

Operating from December, 1942 until September, 1945 the Manhattan Project was a \$2.2

billion effort that employed 130,000 workers at its peak, but was kept largely secret and out of public view.

The study suggests that relevant resources in Dayton, Ohio, and other sites where activity contributing to the project occurred could be associated with the proposed national historical park, but would not be part of the actual park.

The recommendation has been endorsed by the Department of Energy, which would partner with the National Park Service in developing and managing the proposed park. The study calls for the Department of Energy to continue managing and operating the facilities associated with the Manhattan Project and for the National Park Service to provide interpretation and education in connection with these resources.

It is now up to Congress and the President to decide whether to designate a national historic park. If designated, the National Park Service would work with the Department of Energy and consult with the public and other stakeholders to develop a management plan.

In conducting the study, the National Park Service undertook an extensive public involvement process engaging state and local governments, private property owners, interested organizations, and others. Through this process, strong public support emerged for preserving resources associated with the Manhattan Project and making the story of this remarkable effort more broadly known.

For additional information, including the study documents transmitted to Congress, please visit the Manhattan Project Sites study website at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=14946>.

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