



**PATRONATO DE LA ALHAMBRA, AMERICAN EXPRESS & WORLD MONUMENTS FUND  
ANNOUNCE A JOINT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EFFORT  
AT THE ALHAMBRA IN GRANADA, SPAIN**

- *American Express donates \$200,000 to carry out the “The Hidden Alhambra,” a project that will open previously inaccessible areas and allow visitors access to closed parts of the site via a virtual guide*
- *This project is part of the philanthropic work of the Sustainable Tourism initiative of American Express in partnership with World Monuments Fund*
- *World Monuments Fund contributes \$300,000 for work with the Patronato de la Alhambra on the restoration of the Oratorio del Partal, a building that will be made accessible through the joint conservation program*

*For Immediate Release—Granada, Spain, June 16, 2011...* Patronato de la Alhambra, American Express, and World Monuments Fund (WMF) announced this afternoon, at the Palace of Charles V at the Alhambra, an institutional partnership for the conservation of the site through a new program called “The Hidden Alhambra.”

“The Hidden Alhambra” is a sustainable tourism project supported by American Express and World Monuments Fund in the form of a donation of \$200,000 through the American Express® Partners in Preservation program, in collaboration with World Monuments Fund.

The support will allow for a strategic reworking of the tourist route through the complex, reducing pressure on the most trafficked areas while also giving visitors the ability to see a number of places previously closed to the general public but of significant historical value. In addition, programs will be developed for mobile electronic devices to aid in the exploration and understanding of the complex, including virtual accessibility to fragile sections of the site closed to the public.

**Alfredo Garcia-Valdes, President and CEO of American Express in Spain,** stated: “This donation to the design of a virtual guide named ‘The Hidden Alhambra’ is one of the most interesting projects related to sustainable tourism undertaken by American Express in Europe.” Garcia-Valdes added that “since American Express has a long history in the tourism industry, we understand the importance of sites like the Alhambra to the community, its history and its future. It is fitting that our philanthropy helps promote projects related to sustainable tourism and historic preservation.”

“This project will promote the knowledge we have of the monument to national and international level. New cultural routes will be organized allowing for greater access to spaces that,

*(more)*

because of the fragility of their construction materials and ornamental decorations, do not support mass access. Ultimately, the initiative will promote and expand the recognition of the Alhambra, inspiring the curiosity of visitors and providing a better understanding of the monument.”

**Bonnie Burnham, President of World Monuments Fund**, stated: “Many of the major sites of the world struggle with tourism pressures—too many people wanting to visit celebrated sites. One of the strategies to offer a high-quality visitor experience and preserve the monuments is to develop alternative destinations—things that people can visit that add to their experience. ‘The Hidden Alhambra’ program will provide such an opportunity. WMF is pleased to support ‘The Hidden Alhambra’ program of special visits to formerly inaccessible parts of the monument, and also to help conserve one of these buildings, the Oratorio del Partal.”

World Monuments Fund announced that it will contribute an additional \$300,000 through its Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage toward the conservation of the Oratorio del Partal, an elaborate mid-fourteenth-century palatine chapel built during the reign of Yusuf I. These funds will be matched by the Patronato de la Alhambra. The joint project will make accessible a building that has previously been closed to the public.

### **Sustainable Tourism Initiative**

The American Express-World Monuments Fund Sustainable Tourism initiative was created in 2006 and represents one of the global philanthropic initiatives of American Express, to continue the commitment that the company acquired more than a decade ago with World Monuments Fund. In the last 15 years this partnership has contributed to conservation of over 125 monuments in 62 countries. It has participated in the conservation of several buildings in Spain, including a collection of Moorish houses of Granada, the windmills of Palma on Mallorca, the Pazo de San Miguel das Penas in Lugo, and the Aqueduct of Segovia.

### **The Alhambra**

The Alhambra was begun in the mid-thirteenth-century to serve as the palace and fortress complex of the Nasrid Emirs of Granada, the last Muslim rulers in Spain. Work began under the first sultan, Mohammad ibn al Ahmar, and was completed a century later during the reign of Yusuf I. Considered the most important surviving remnant from the period of Islamic rule on the Iberian Peninsula (711-1492), the Alhambra is also one of the most heavily visited historic sites in Spain, receiving millions of visitors annually. It is a Spanish Property of Cultural Interest that, in 1984, was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

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The signing of the agreement was attended by the Hon. Mr. Paulino Plata, Minister of Culture of the Andalusian Regional Government, the Hon. Ms. María del Mar Villafranca, Director of the Alhambra and the Generalife, Ms. Bonnie Burnham, President of World Monuments Fund, Mr. Bertrand du Vignaud, President of World Monuments Fund Europe, Mr. D. Juan Carlos Fierro, President of World Monuments Fund Spain, and Mr. D. Alfredo Garcia-Valdes, President and CEO of American Express Spain.

### **American Express**

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### **World Monuments Fund**

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's most treasured places. For over 45 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF inspires an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide, including WMF Spain, based in Madrid and headed by Juan Carlos Fierro. [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org), [www.twitter.com/worldmonuments](http://www.twitter.com/worldmonuments), and [www.facebook.com/worldmonuments](http://www.facebook.com/worldmonuments).

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### **Press Contacts**

American Express: Tarané Tahbaz, [tarane.b.tahbaz@aexp.com](mailto:tarane.b.tahbaz@aexp.com); José Herrero, [Jose.Herrero@porternovelli.es](mailto:Jose.Herrero@porternovelli.es), +34 912 044 217

World Monuments Fund: Pablo Longoria, [pablolongoria@hotmail.com](mailto:pablolongoria@hotmail.com), + 34 609 249 200; Ben Haley, [bhaley@wmf.org](mailto:bhaley@wmf.org); +1 646 424-9594