

Charting a Future for
**National
Heritage Areas**

A Report by the National Park System Advisory Board

National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them. These regions are acknowledged by Congress for their capacity to tell nationally important stories about our nation.



QUINEBAUG AND SHETUCKET RIVERS VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR, LESLIE SWEETNAM; COVER PHOTO: BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, SARAH LEEN

Foreword

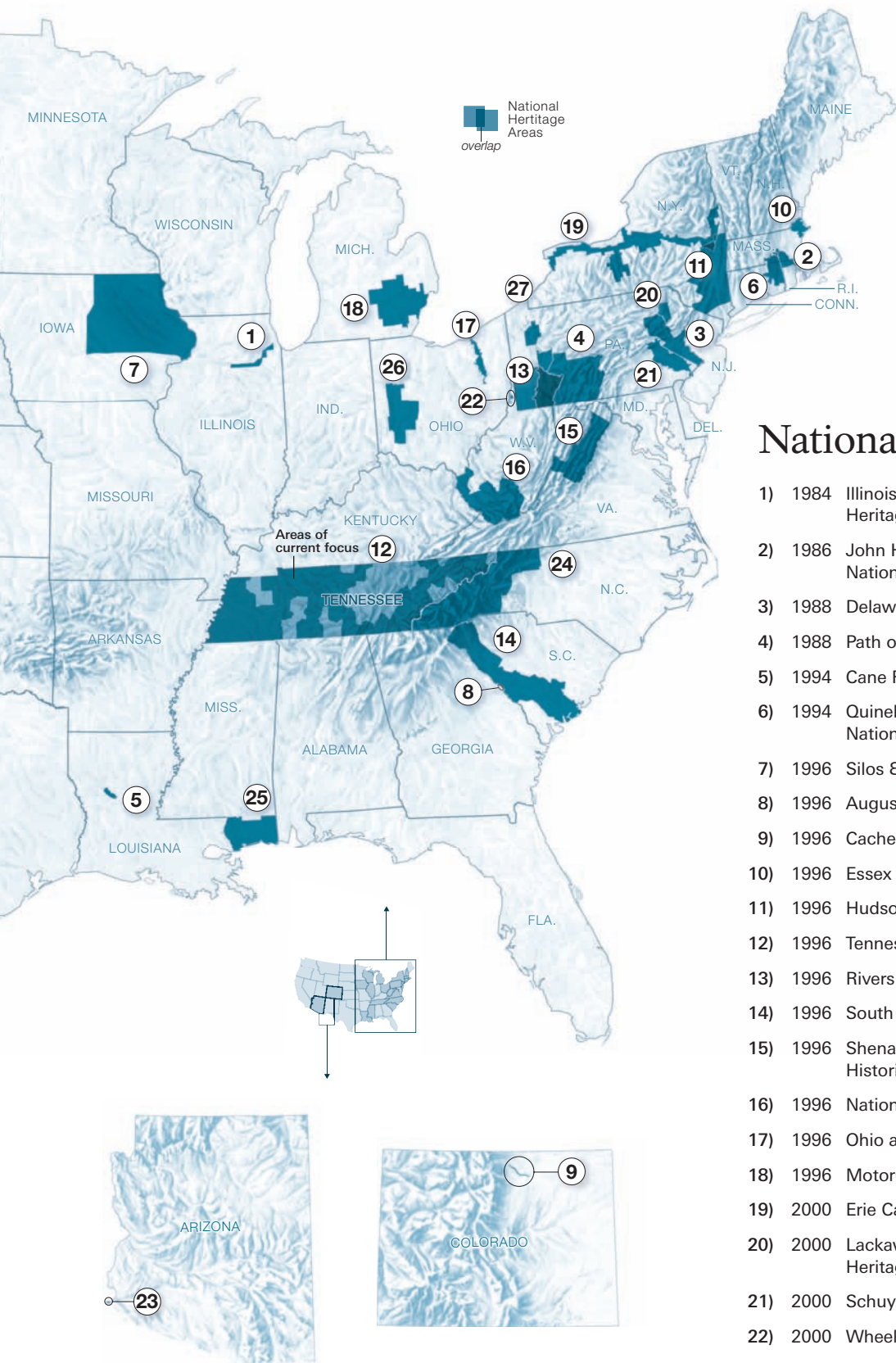
In 2004, the Director of the National Park Service asked the National Park System Advisory Board to review and report with recommendations on the appropriate role of the National Park Service in supporting National Heritage Areas. This is that report.

The Board is a congressionally chartered body of twelve citizens appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Established under the Historic Sites Act of 1935, it is charged to provide advice on matters relating to operations in the parks and administration of the National Park Service.

In preparing this report, the board sponsored meetings in four National Heritage Areas and consulted broadly with heritage area leaders, local and state-elected officials, community civic leaders and citizen groups, and National Park Service managers.

National Heritage Areas represent a significant advance in conservation and historic preservation: large-scale, community-centered initiatives collaborating across political jurisdictions to protect nationally-important landscapes and living cultures. Managed locally, National Heritage Areas play a vital role in preserving the physical character, memories, and stories of our country, reminding us of our national origins and destiny. This is a citizens' movement of high purpose and great benefit to the nation. We must act to ensure that it is vigorously encouraged by providing readily understood standards for the establishment of new National Heritage Areas and by better defining a mutually advantageous partnership with the National Park Service.

Douglas P. Wheeler, Chairman
National Park System Advisory Board



National Heritage Areas

- 1) 1984 Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor
- 2) 1986 John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor
- 3) 1988 Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
- 4) 1988 Path of Progress National Heritage Tour Route
- 5) 1994 Cane River National Heritage Area
- 6) 1994 Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor
- 7) 1996 Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area
- 8) 1996 Augusta Canal National Heritage Area
- 9) 1996 Cache La Poudre River Corridor, 1996
- 10) 1996 Essex National Heritage Area
- 11) 1996 Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area
- 12) 1996 Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area
- 13) 1996 Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area
- 14) 1996 South Carolina National Heritage Corridor
- 15) 1996 Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District
- 16) 1996 National Coal Heritage Area
- 17) 1996 Ohio and Erie National Heritage CanalWay
- 18) 1996 MotorCities National Heritage Area
- 19) 2000 Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
- 20) 2000 Lackawanna Heritage Valley National Heritage Area
- 21) 2000 Schuylkill River National Heritage Area
- 22) 2000 Wheeling National Heritage Area
- 23) 2000 Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area
- 24) 2003 Blue Ridge National Heritage Area
- 25) 2004 Mississippi Gulf National Heritage Area
- 26) 2004 National Aviation Heritage Area
- 27) 2004 Oil Region National Heritage Area

Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas

On August 24, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation establishing the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, a new kind of National Park Service designation. The corridor encompassed a living landscape of more than 450 square miles with thousands of residents, centered on a 120-mile-long historic canal system. The National Park Service was directed to support planning for the area and assist with its management. Since this first National Heritage Area was created, 26 additional heritage areas have been established. Today, almost two dozen proposals to create new heritage areas are under active consideration by Congress.

National Heritage Areas are places designated by Congress where the natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources are considered uniquely representative of the American experience. More than 500 National Historic Landmarks and over 12,800 National Register of Historic Places listings anchor and give rich definition to these areas. Almost 50 million people across 19 states live in a heritage area.

Though they are recognized as nationally important, National Heritage Areas are the management responsibility of the people who live there. The Federal government provides technical and limited financial assistance, but it does not assume ownership of land inside heritage areas or impose land use controls. Partnerships created to administer heritage areas cross political boundaries, coordinating the efforts of large numbers of organizations. These broad collaborative relationships have demonstrated a capacity to leverage significant funding

and support for large-scale preservation projects, which require long-term commitments to build an enduring stewardship ethic.

The National Park Service recognizes National Heritage Areas as significant partners in pursuing its stewardship and educational mission, including the identification and protection of nationally significant historic sites. To warrant National Park Service involvement, heritage areas should tell nationally important stories through a regionally distinctive combination of natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources, and they should provide outstanding opportunities for conservation. Where appropriate, they should also strengthen, complement, and support existing units of the National Park System. When a heritage area is adjacent to a national park or a national park is within a heritage area, both parties benefit from the expanded opportunity to interpret and protect resources over a larger landscape.

A variety of planning, funding, and management strategies support heritage area development. While existing designations often share similar strategies, no legislative foundation ensures a standard approach to how new areas should be studied, designated, administered, and funded. A formal policy framework is needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of partners in these efforts. The framework should specify criteria and standards for studying and establishing new areas, uniform timeframes, and funding and management strategies to accomplish the work. In this report, the National Park System Advisory Board recommends specific actions to accomplish these ends.



What we learned.

National Heritage Areas add a new dimension to the National Park Service, providing an opportunity to conserve nationally important living landscapes and cultures.

1. Tell Authentic American Stories

National Heritage Areas are a powerful way for the diverse people of this nation to tell their stories with integrity and authenticity.

NATCHITOCHESES PARISH, LOUISIANA

Cane River National Heritage Area

Along Louisiana's Cane River, American Indian, French, Spanish, and African cultures merged over three centuries to create a culturally vibrant society with intimate ties to the landscape. Over time, man-made alterations to the Red River changed

its course, isolating the region from the outside world and preserving the integrity of the landscape, buildings, and local culture.

In the early 1990s, the National Park Service undertook a study of the region and recommended an unusual approach to preserving this nationally significant landscape: designating two historic plantations

"We believe that it's our responsibility to take care of our people. This culture is too rich for other folk not to know about it."

—Terrel Delphin
CANE RIVER CREOLE

as a national park and the cultural landscape around them as a National Heritage Area. The 1994 designation set off reverberations in the Cane River's Creole community. Says Terrel Delphin, whose Creole heritage dates to the mid-1700s, "[the designation inspired] a cultural renaissance, to document our history, to tell our own stories, to give credit to the descendants and the ancestors for the accomplishments of generations of the past. We believe that it's our responsibility to take care of our people. This culture is too rich for other folk not to know about it."

The establishment of the national park and National Heritage Area catalyzed the founding of the Creole Heritage Center, which reconnects Creole communities across the nation to the land, their past, and one another. Today, visitors to the National Heritage Area can participate in first-person historical interpretation of this special place.

EASTERN CONNECTICUT AND
SOUTH-CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor

Along the congested Boston-to-Washington corridor, a well-preserved and relatively undeveloped rural landscape in Massachusetts and Connecticut is known locally



CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, PHILIP GOULD

2. Weave Together Nature and Culture

National Heritage Areas knit together the whole landscape and provide an integrated approach to conserving the natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources that define sense of place and shared heritage values, and encourage compatible economic growth.



CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, PHILIP GOULD

3. Work Beyond Park Boundaries

National Heritage Areas offer the National Park Service and national parks a new strategy to meet their stewardship mission by engaging the public outside of park boundaries while recognizing the people who live there.

“Collaboration on [merchant ship] Friendship has allowed us to provide a deeper, more tangible experience of this country’s rich maritime history... for future generations.”

—Patty Trap

SUPERINTENDENT, SALEM MARITIME NHS

as the Last Green Valley. The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor works to integrate and protect the woods, towns, farmlands, and waterways that have shaped the region’s character and still so clearly echo the region’s 17th-century agrarian settlement patterns.

Residents play an integral role in the conservation of the valley’s landscape through their involvement with the Green Valley Institute, coordinated by the heritage area in partnership with the agricultural extension services at the University of Connecticut and the University of Massachusetts. The institute addresses critical educational needs while providing a regional vision to preserve resources and foster compatible growth. Tools include digital maps of the valley’s assets, technical assistance, and consultation with local communities on land use planning approaches that support preservation.

Communities, landowners, realtors, and developers have taken full advantage of the institute’s workshops and consultation services (provided at low or no cost to municipal boards, committees, and commissions), and their activism has in turn generated a spirit of volunteerism throughout the region. The institute owes its success to the reputation

of the states’ agricultural extension programs, the collaboration and enthusiasm of participating communities, and the new sense of regionalism that the National Heritage Corridor has fostered.

ESSEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

Essex National Heritage Area

From its dramatic coastline and quaint seaports to its high-style federal architecture and 19th-century industrial mills, the 550-square-mile Essex National Heritage Area in Massachusetts is a cultural landscape that

commemorates 400 years of maritime history and tradition, reflecting the region’s seafaring past. The heritage area has enabled Salem Maritime National Historic Site, which is 9 acres in size, to play a far more prominent role in the region by harnessing the power of volunteers and professionals to take on preservation challenges and interpretation opportunities.

Salem Maritime National Historical Site, the heritage area, and local partners have built a visitor center in downtown Salem that orients tourists and residents to the region’s history,



ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, TRIP MASON

4. Conserve Landscapes and Traditions

National Heritage Areas reflect the evolution of our nation's thinking about how to best conserve revered and valued landscapes and cultures and make them available for the enjoyment of future generations.

illuminating central themes including colonial settlement, maritime trade, and early industrialization and providing a rich historical context for the park. The park and heritage area have also worked together to construct the full-rigged merchant sailing ship *Friendship of Salem*. Superintendent Patty Trap reflects that, "Collaboration on *Friendship* is a perfect example of what can be accomplished with a collective vision. This magnificent tall ship now allows us to provide a deeper, more tangible experience of this country's rich maritime history, not only to our current community and visitors, but for the future generations that follow."

Friendship brings the park's once-empty Derby Wharf to life, and her annual ambassadorial sailing tours and port visits link the resources along the coast of the National Heritage Area.

SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area

Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area celebrates the region's industrial legacy and the rich folklife traditions that have continued throughout a century of immigration and migration. To better conserve and interpret the living traditions that persist in community halls, small



ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, TRIP MASON

businesses, and the hearts and minds of the workers' descendants, the heritage area draws on more than 15 years of ethnographic fieldwork.

Doris Dyen, director of cultural conservation, relates that these studies "paint a portrait of the people . . . with a focus on cultural arts, customs, beliefs, practices and places that are most important." The research also addresses residents' concerns about the future of the heritage area and the region. Documenting these traditions means working with small, close-knit groups in pri-

vate venues. Word of mouth is often the only way for outsiders to learn about the region's cultural traditions, and a respect for local knowledge is paramount.

This painstaking research has led to a number of products. *Routes to Roots*, a driving guide to the seven counties within the heritage area, showcases industrial and cultural sites and tells the stories of the region. *Shaped by Steel*, an audio CD, presents music and stories reflecting the region's ethnic and industrial traditions. *Tradition Bearers*, a local radio series, features ongoing efforts

5. Engage Youth in Our Future

National Heritage Areas provide people of all ages with outstanding opportunities for place-based education and a forum for public engagement.

“National Heritage Areas extend the breadth of the National Park Service mission, and broaden the public’s understanding of their responsibility and commitment to our nation’s heritage.”

—August R. Carlino

RIVERS OF STEEL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

to preserve regional culture. The heritage area’s archives provide partners with ethnographic information and cultural and industrial artifacts for exhibits, publications, and interpretive programs.

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area

In the 19th century, thousands of European immigrants streamed into Pennsylvania’s Lackawanna Valley, drawn by jobs in the coal mines and factories of an industrializing nation.

They brought cherished traditions from their homelands and the desire to build a new life in a new country. A century later, this formerly scarred industrial region is being reclaimed, reseeded, and enriched by these immigrants’ descendants, who have been given a voice with which to tell the region’s stories.

As part of its mission to conserve the history and culture of what was once the world’s most productive anthracite field, the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority illuminates the past through interactive learning experiences, including the Heritage

Express, in which students visit historic sites via a period steam locomotive, and the Environmental Fair, held each autumn for 1,000 sixth-graders, with hands-on exhibits and activities that foster environmental stewardship principles. *Living Legacies* has enabled students in grades 3 through 12 to relive the past by producing old-time radio shows, which are broadcast throughout the valley. The young producers have discovered that their own grandparents and family members are often the best source for stories about the past.

The heritage area has developed a curriculum guide for use in conjunction with the award-winning documentary *Stories from the Mines*, which has aired nationally on PBS, and, in partnership with the National Geographic Society and the local Educational Intermediate Unit, a place-based K–12 curriculum framework called “Putting All the Pieces Together.”

WESTERN AND SOUTHERN SOUTH CAROLINA • NORTHEASTERN IOWA

South Carolina National Heritage Corridor Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area

Rural American life is changing rapidly. But in South Carolina and northeastern Iowa, heritage

6. Build New Constituencies

National Heritage Areas assist the National Park Service in building new constituencies and staying relevant by looking not just to the past or present, but also to the future.

“True preservation comes through educating future generations about their unique heritage in a way that they can see, feel, and experience.”

—Tom McHugh
PROFESSOR, LUZERNE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

areas, tours, educational programs, and special events make America’s agricultural heritage come alive. Visitors experience a rural way of life that thrives in spite of the threats that a global economy presents.

In Iowa’s Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area—the very heart of American agriculture—the stories of pioneers, cultures shaped by the prairies, and changing farming technology are captured in the landscape, providing opportunities for tourism and a promising economic future for the area.

Silos & Smokestacks works with communities to provide itineraries and signs that help visitors navigate the area’s back roads and discover the overarching themes of farm life, agribusiness, and the evolution of rural communities. The heritage area also provides itineraries and facilitates access for motor coach tour operators to nearly 100 working farms and agribusinesses. Domestic and international visitors experience firsthand the region’s history and agriculture, and create results in economic benefits for local residents.

Similar optimism reigns in South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, where 40 farmers have banded together to create the Heritage Corridor Farmers Association. Annual events such as *Falling for Farms* promote and preserve the region’s agricultural traditions. Executive Director Michelle McCollum believes that “agri-tourism provides family farms a wonderful opportunity for diversification...which has a positive economic impact but also provides fun and educational family experiences.”



SILOS & SMOKESTACKS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

NORTHEASTERN OHIO

Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area

The nation’s first inland water route between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, the Ohio & Erie Canal opened the American frontier. Once an isolated outpost, Ohio was suddenly connected to the thriving markets of the East. Communities, ecosystems, and an entire way of life grew up around the canal, but then faded into the past as time moved on. Today, that heritage is preserved in the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway, established in 1996. This 110-mile corridor has been described as a “biological mosaic” of forests,



LACKAWANNA VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, KENNY GANZ

7. Benefit from National Park Service Expertise

The National Park Service is one of many heritage area partners; however, the National Park Service has an important role as an expert, convener, and catalyst, providing credibility, planning, and interpretation expertise to emerging and designated heritage areas.

“By engaging the people whose story you intend to tell...they are learning the story so that it is better understood, so that it is more valued, so that it will be protected.”

—John Cosgrove

ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

marshes, streams, and lakes, interspersed with cities, towns, orchards, and croplands.

The heritage area is managed by the Ohio & Erie Canalway Association, a private, nonprofit organization that works with regional partners to facilitate projects and produce educational programs, events, and publications. Cuyahoga Valley National Park, which encompasses 22 miles of the Canalway, has played a critical role in the heritage area’s development, providing expertise, influence, and technical assistance on dozens of projects. Through this cooperation, the park has become a regional asset with an impact well beyond its boundaries. Says Superintendent John Debo, “The national park idea has been exported out . . . into the Canalway.”

While the Ohio & Erie Canalway has no doubt benefited from National Park Service expertise, the park has been rewarded as well. “The heritage area allows this park to fulfill its potential,” says Debo. Canalway Association President and CEO Dan Rice adds, “The Ohio & Erie Canalway provides a framework for regional collaboration. Working together, we are creating a legacy for future generations.”



TENNESSEE CIVIL WAR NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, CARROLL VAN WEST

8. Demonstrate Community Partnerships

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas plays a major role in promoting heritage-based partnerships and can assist the National Park Service in extending the heritage area approach as a component of the National Park System.



THEMATIC CORRIDORS
THROUGHOUT TENNESSEE

Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

As one of the primary battlegrounds of the Civil War, Tennessee suffered more than its share of upheaval and destruction. The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area tells the powerful stories of the war and Reconstruction, and exemplifies how heritage areas can provide resources for both local residents and the National Heritage Area movement.

At the local level, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area has worked with African-American communities to recognize and preserve places that relate powerful stories of emancipation and reconstruction. Places like Barr's Chapel Rural Historic District in Henry County, where local people founded important community institutions including a school, chapel and cemetery prior to the end of the Civil War, have been documented and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In the national arena, the heritage area has played a prominent role in fostering the Heritage Development Institute, a training initiative that provides instruction on heritage

development. The Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, which manages both the heritage area and the institute, partners with the National Park Service and the Alliance of National Heritage Areas to share best practices and offer workshops in heritage area management, education, marketing, and economic sustainability.

To extend its approach to an international audience, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area hosted the 2005 International Heritage Development Conference, which convened hundreds of individuals from around the world to share best practices in heritage conservation. Participants witnessed how local communities, through collaboration with the heritage area, have become living laboratories for heritage development. Keynote speaker John Nau, chairman of the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, was so impressed by the heritage area's contributions to local communities and the national movement that he returned to Nashville with First Lady Laura Bush to announce the expansion of the White House's *Preserve America* initiative to include the designation of historic urban neighborhoods.

CASE STUDY I

SOUTHWESTERN ARIZONA

Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

Quenching a Thirsty Land

Wetlands restoration continues at the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

In the southwestern corner of Arizona, not far from the Mexican border, lay a forlorn stretch of the Colorado River. Although one would never know it by looking, these were once thriving wetlands. Now they are starved of freshwater and choked by nonnative vegetation, creating a place to avoid, not enjoy. Past efforts to restore the area have failed as a patchwork of landownership and conflicting viewpoints made finding common ground difficult.

That has all changed, thanks to a groundbreaking public-private partnership effort. Established in 2000, the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area commemorates Yuma's role in the history of American transportation and trade as a key crossing point over the Colorado River. The heritage area brings together farmers and other landowners, private citizens, members of the Quechan and Cocopah Indian nations, state and federal agencies, and municipal officials to promote heritage preservation and environmental conservation. The partnership has drawn on the strengths of its various

cultures to achieve far-reaching goals.

The heritage area's interpretive themes include Yuma's importance as a cultural crossroads, emphasizing the region's intersection of three major cultures: Anglo, Hispanic, and Native American. The heritage area recognizes that this rich blend of traditions can best be sustained by their continued expression through architecture, music, food, and other folkways.

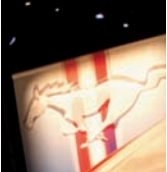
Recently, the heritage area championed a multiyear, multimillion-dollar endeavor to restore habitat and water flow to the East Wetlands. In 2004, heritage area partners secured a Clean Water Act permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin restoration work. More than 200 acres of nonnative vegetation have since been cleared, and more than 130 acres have been replanted with cottonwoods, willows, mesquites, native grasses, and palo verde trees. A 1-mile length of back channel has also been excavated, and some 20,000 new trees are expected to be planted in 2006. To date, 10 different funding sources have provided almost \$6 million towards the eventual goal of \$18 to \$20 million to complete the project.

A forgotten backwater is now a special place to paddle a canoe and enjoy the view of the recently restored historic Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge. The citizens of Yuma and the tribal nations are once again reconnected to an integral piece of their heritage, the Colorado River.



FRED PHILLIPS (BOTH)





What should be done.

The National Park Service can benefit from welcoming the National Heritage Area approach to conserving nationally important living landscapes and cultures.

1. Create a Home for National Heritage Areas in the National Park System

National Heritage Areas contribute to the mission of the National Park Service and need a defined place in the National Park System's policy framework and budget.

“The thought of losing an important part of this community and our nation’s history was inconceivable... protecting the Widow Pence Farm with a conservation easement opened a world of opportunities.

—Irvin E. Hess, MD

VICE-CHAIR, SHENANDOAH VALLEY BATTLEFIELDS FOUNDATION

NORTHWESTERN VIRGINIA

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District

Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley witnessed more than 325 clashes during the Civil War as both sides battled to control this strategic north-south corridor. More recently, proponents of preservation and

economic development have waged a new war. In 1992 the National Park Service studied Civil War sites in eight Shenandoah Valley counties and identified 15 battlefields of national significance, most of which were threatened by encroaching development.

Given the sheer scale of the landscape and number of Civil War

sites, their preservation presented a challenge. Valley residents rejected the national park concept as too intrusive, and the National Park Service found it too expensive. The establishment of Shenandoah Battlefields National Historic District in 1996 created a locally driven vehicle for preserving the valley’s historic character, protecting battlefields and increasing public awareness, and enabled the National Park Service to provide critical planning and interpretation expertise economically and nonintrusively. In 2002, the creation of Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park anchored interpretation and preservation efforts in the northern portion of the district.

In developing community-based preservation plans tailored for each battlefield, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, the management entity for the historic district, has worked with landowners and local governments to preserve open space and adopt design guidelines for new construction. During the development of the Cross Keys and Port Republic Battlefield preservation plan, six property owners entered into negotiations to conserve 10-to-220-acre parcels. Executive Director Howard Kittell has observed that the foundation’s mission of preserving the valley can be best achieved “by



DELAWARE & LEHIGH NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR, BLAIR SEITZ

2. Commit to National Heritage Areas for the Long-term

National Heritage Areas are founded on consensus-based planning, local commitments, and a network of long-term partnerships, which require a long-term commitment to achieve meaningful progress.

“The improvements we’ve made along the Augusta Canal bring alive 160 years of history, and allow people to experience and enjoy it in ways that they otherwise couldn’t.”

—Dayton Sherrouse

AUGUSTA CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

keeping stewardship of the resources in local hands.”

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor

The Delaware and Lehigh Canals once formed a 165-mile transportation system delivering anthracite coal throughout the eastern seaboard. Following the designation of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor in 1988, the National Park Service, state and local agencies, and nonprofits collaborated on a management plan to create consensus around reconnecting and maintaining the fragmented transportation network and revitalizing adjacent communities.

Over the past 17 years, the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and its partners have spearheaded a trail initiative and helped communities left reeling from the demise of local industry to revitalize their economies. At Two Rivers Landing, the corridor partnered with Binney & Smith (manufacturer of Crayola crayons) and the National Canal Museum to open a museum and visitor center complex in downtown Easton. The site attracts over 300,000 visitors a year and is credited with the start-up of more than 50 businesses.

Through its Corridor Market



AUGUSTA CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, DANIELLE SEWARD

Towns Initiative, the corridor also provides financial and technical assistance to small towns, enabling them to attract tourists and new businesses. Such initiatives to help the region retain its sense of place and generate economic well-being have succeeded thanks to a committed, engaged, and diverse network of partners. Says one partner of his relationship with the Delaware & Lehigh, “as we have gotten to know them...our trust level has increased dramatically and with that we’ve got better communication and great interpersonal relationships. When you

start building on that, it extends...to the other organizations in the area.”

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

Augusta Canal National Heritage Area

In 1845, workers began digging the Augusta Canal, an 8-mile waterway designed to harness the water power and bypass the rapids of the Savannah River. Augusta prospered, fueled by increased transportation traffic and a reliable source of water-power to run the textile mills built along the canal’s banks.

Though by the late 1980s the

3. Provide for Unique Legislative Authorities

Each National Heritage Area is unique and needs legislative authority specifically tailored to meet the needs of its region and its resources.



BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, CEDRIC CHATTERLY

waterway had been designated as a National Historic Landmark, few factories remained open, and maintaining the Augusta Canal was becoming increasingly difficult. In 1989 the state of Georgia established the Augusta Canal Authority to preserve the canal and turn it into a catalyst for revitalizing the region. In 1996, when Congress designated the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, the authority was directed to balance preservation with compatible development.

Today, the Augusta Canal's heritage remains intact, and the surround-

ing community is rebounding. The Enterprise Mill, one of the area's most important historic properties, has been adapted for mixed office and residential use and contains the award-winning Augusta Canal Interpretive Center. Reconditioned hydro-turbines serve as an exhibit and generate more than enough electricity to power the entire building. The excess is sold to Georgia Power to generate revenue for the authority. According to Executive Director Dayton Sherrouse, "the unique financing tools granted to the Authority by the State Legislature

have enabled us to undertake projects that otherwise would have been unattainable." Recently, when another mill dating from the 1880s was threatened with foreclosure, the authority rescued it, saving 300 jobs.

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

The mountains of western North Carolina are a patchwork of public lands, including two national parks and three national forests, studded with vibrant communities enriched by the cultural influences of Scotch-Irish settlers and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. The creation of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, an area of 10,000 square miles and 25 counties, created the opportunity to weave together public and private domains in ways that preserve and sustain the region's scenic values and cultural heritage.

Following designation, the heritage area facilitated the creation of Heritage Councils in each county and worked with the National Endowment for the Arts to involve arts and crafts communities in the management planning process. To provide further training for Heritage Council leaders, the Conservation Fund adapted its Gateway Communities Leadership program to the region. Two workshops gathered artists,

4. Recognize New Opportunities for Resource Stewardship

Emerging and designated National Heritage Areas benefit from the National Park Service's expertise and provide a stronger vehicle for Congress to effectively utilize the National Park Service to achieve publicly supported conservation and preservation.

“We never would have made this investment without the National Heritage Area designation, which made us realize that [telling our story] was important.”

—Tim O'Brien
VICE PRESIDENT FOR CORPORATE RELATIONS,
FORD MOTOR CO.



NATIONAL AVIATION HERITAGE AREA, DOUG KNAPP

5. Support Research on Partnership Networks

The National Heritage Area approach, with its networks of relationships and ability to leverage resources, can serve as a model for achieving National Park Service conservation goals. The process, key elements, outcomes, and impacts need to be identified and better understood.

elected officials, businesspeople, and land managers from each county to identify common issues and realize the benefits of a regional approach to federal lands management that addresses the needs of gateway communities.

According to the Fund's Program Manager Kristen Poppel, the workshops "generated momentum, enthusiasm, and a sense of cohesiveness among leaders and communities in the region." The heritage area has continued to foster the Heritage Council network because "follow-through is critical if these efforts are to be successful. A heritage area offers an ideal structure to provide such support."

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Schuylkill River National Heritage Area

When paddlers launch their boats for the annual Schuylkill River Sojourn, they are having fun with a purpose. Also known as the River of Revolutions, the Schuylkill flows through Valley Forge and into the heart of Philadelphia. When the Industrial Revolution reached this region, it left the river polluted and later forgotten. For the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area, the weeklong river sojourn is a journey of rediscovery, reflecting the area's vision of reclaiming the river and

reconnecting communities to its legacy.

The heritage area envisions reestablishing the historic connections between the 130-mile-long waterway and nearby communities. This process is well under way, with a growing network of partners that has established gateway visitor centers in Valley Forge, a restored train station in the community of Tamaqua and in the entryway to a Cabela's retail showroom. The area is capitalizing on its natural and historical assets in creative ways, such as the development of a land and water trail

system, which is attracting residents and visitors to the water and into adjacent communities.

Research indicates that such complex initiatives succeed. Montgomery County Community College is collaborating with the heritage area to fully renovate a local former power plant into an interpretive center with classroom space. The college has adopted the heritage area's mission as part of its curriculum, offering courses to educate residents (and future stewards) about the Schuylkill River's assets.



BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, CHEROKEE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

CASE STUDY II

SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

MotorCities National Heritage Area

Driving Forces

MotorCities National Heritage Area Preserves Michigan's Rich Automobile and Labor Heritage

Look at any busy highway in America today, with cars boasting the latest navigation technology or fuel-efficient engines, and it is difficult to believe America's automobile culture began on a humble farm west of Detroit. There, in Dearborn, Michigan, a young entrepreneur named Henry Ford tinkered with a "quadracycle" a precursor for later models like the iconic Model T. Twenty years later the region was the center of innovation for a preeminent American story, the rise of the automobile industry.

That history is now being commemorated and preserved by the MotorCities National Heritage Area. Established in 1998 by the founding partners Ford, Daimler Chrysler, General Motors, the National Park Service, and the United Auto Workers, the heritage area raises awareness about the impact of the automobile on the region and the nation at-large. It is focused on increasing tourism, expanding education, and encouraging revitalization. Nearly 1,200 auto-related resources have been included in the heritage area, which represents the largest concentra-

tion of auto-related sites in the world.

Prominent among these stands the Ford Rouge Plant, a 1,200-acre complex that was once the largest manufacturing complex in the world. Designed by architect Albert Kahn between 1917 and 1925, the plant fostered vertical integration in manufacturing and, at its peak, employed nearly 75,000 people. The Rouge plant was also the site of two important labor events—the 1932 Hunger March and the 1937 Battle of the Overpass—that helped pave the way for the unionization of the company in 1941. All of these factors lead to the designation of the property as a National Historic landmark in 1978.

Fast-forward to 2006 and see the impact of MotorCities National Heritage Area. Visitors can board a bus for a tour of the Rouge Plant as they watch a video by Bill Ford, Jr. celebrating the "National Historic Landmark Rouge Plant." A centerpiece of the experience is the new \$25 million visitor center that features high-energy media experiences to tell the story of the Ford Motor Company, a tour of the plant's 454,000 square feet "living roof," and a state-of-the-art, environmentally and ergonomically-friendly F-150 final assembly line. In its first year of operations 180,000 visitors toured the facility. Says Tim O'Brien, Vice President for Corporate Relations, "We never would have made this investment without the National Heritage Area designation, which made us realize that [telling our story] was important."



THE HENRY FORD





What we recommend.

A legislative framework and policies can maximize the benefits of the relationship between the National Park Service and the National Heritage Areas.

1. Establish a legislative foundation for a system of National Heritage Areas in the National Park Service that includes the following concepts:

- Creates a system of National Heritage Areas as a component of the greater National Park System, but not as units of the National Park System.
- Requires a feasibility study to demonstrate that future proposed heritage areas meet the following criteria:
 - There is a nationally important story,
 - The area's heritage resources contribute to telling the story,
 - There is strong public interest and support, and
 - There is the capacity for heritage area leadership and management.
- Sets standards for management planning that include a business plan and close coordination with local communities, and ensure that the plan is reviewed and approved by the Secretary of the Interior in a timely way.
- Recognizes the two-way partnership between National Heritage Areas and adjacent or thematically related national parks and authorizes technical and operational assistance as appropriate.
- Protects the rights of private property owners.
- Requires that for each National Heritage Area, 3 years prior to cessation of federal funding authority, a study be conducted to recommend the appropriate level of future National Park Service involvement in that National Heritage Area, including but not limited to future federal funding.

2. Develop policies, including performance measures, and a process for partnership peer review of National Heritage Areas by practitioners in the National Park Service and the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, and prepare well-documented budget requests.

3. Partner with the Alliance of National Heritage Areas to provide educational opportunities on partnership practices in heritage areas and outside park boundaries, and coordinate with other partnership initiatives in the National Park Service.

4. Share the lessons learned by the National Park Service in its role as listener and convener in National Heritage Areas with related National Park System Advisory Board initiatives.

5. Invest in Research on National Heritage Areas to better understand the process of collaborative conservation and partnership networks, and to better evaluate the outcomes of designation and partnership on resource conservation and community and economic development over time.

CASE STUDY III

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS AND NORTHEASTERN RHODE ISLAND

John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Reviving a Riverway

Research Charts a Future Course for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

A generation ago, the Blackstone River Valley in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, once a thriving pillar of American industry, had degenerated into a forgotten collection of silent textile mills, depressed mill towns, and polluted waterways. In 1972, fed-up residents initiated “Zap the Blackstone,” a movement to clean the Blackstone River, and advocated for a linear park to boost tourism to the region. Following a study of conservation options by the National Park Service, Congress designated the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in 1986.

After 18 years of fostering partnerships and resource protection, the Corridor Commission asked the National Park Service’s Conservation Study Institute to evaluate the corridor’s progress and provide options for managing its assets and partnerships into the future.

The study approach involved the commission and its partners in looking objectively at the corridor’s progress and the impacts of their work in the region. In addition to documenting progress towards achieving management

plan objectives, the study team gathered partners and outside experts for a one-day interactive workshop and interviewed dozens of key partners, resource managers, and experts. A collaborative research and evaluation process was used to synthesize findings and observations, identify critical ingredients for the corridor’s success, and provide a toolbox of management options and opportunities for the commission to consider.

The study found that the corridor has fostered restoration of dozens of historic buildings for private and public use, annual cleanup efforts, regular water-quality testing, and improved water access. The commission’s work has generated thousands of volunteers and new recreation enthusiasts. Residents, businesses, and local governments are reconnecting with the Blackstone River, generating new economic vitality, valued at 22 times the National Park Service investment of \$24 million over the past 18 years. The commission has inspired federal, state, and local governments; historical, recreational, and environmental organizations; businesses; and private landowners to collaborate on projects based on shared ideals and goals.

In the wake of the study report, the commission determined to seek congressional reauthorization to address several options proposed in the study. The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and Cane River National Heritage Area are undertaking similar evaluations to assess their progress and unique management challenges. These studies will provide the National Park Service, heritage areas, Congress, and myriad partners with a clearer understanding of the roles of each stakeholder, similarities and differences in heritage area management, and how partnerships evolve over time.



BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR



CHERYL THOMPSON CAMERON

What We Envision *The National Park System Advisory Board envisions a future in which the National Park Service welcomes National Heritage Areas for their role in expanding the conservation stewardship of nationally important historic resources, landscapes, and cultures; redefining how traditional and contemporary cultures tell their stories; and enhancing understanding of partnership and heritage development, so that the full scope of the American experience is revealed. This new future should be built on a legislative foundation that frames and supports the value of this approach.*



CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, ART: CLEMENTINE HUNTER, AFRICAN HOUSE MURAL, MELROSE PLANTATION; PHOTO: JAMES ROSENTHAL (HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY)

“Clementine Hunter's artwork celebrates the people and everyday life of a special place. It is our responsibility to nurture the spirit of this place for the next generation.” —Nancy Morgan CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA





JUNE 2006

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The National Park System Advisory Board thanks the Alliance of National Heritage Areas for sharing their stories, hosting our meetings, and cosponsoring this report.

ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

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Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Area	Meeting host, September 2004
Cane River National Heritage Area	Meeting host, December 2004
MotorCities National Heritage Area	Meeting host, April 2005

FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Heritage Areas, National Park Service	www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas
Alliance of National Heritage Areas	www.nationalheritageareas.org



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www.nps.gov/policy/NHAreport.htm



*“...National Heritage Areas play
a vital role in preserving the
physical character, memories,
and stories of our country...”*



National Park System Advisory Board

