

National Heritage Areas

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 American 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 important stories about our nation. Continued use of National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscape enhances their significance.



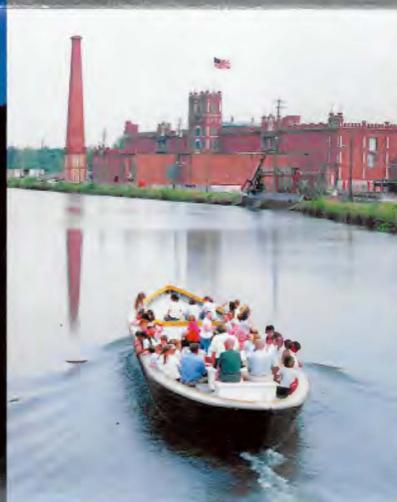
Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area



Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area



Blue Ridge National Heritage Area
Vicki Dameron



Augusta Canal National Heritage Area
Rebecca Rogers



Lackawanna Heritage Valley National Heritage Area

How National Heritage Areas Work

National Heritage Areas expand on traditional approaches to resource stewardship by supporting large-scale, community centered initiatives that connect local citizens to the preservation and planning process. Inaugurated in 1984, with the designation of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, the National Heritage Areas movement now encompasses 40 areas, ranging from factory towns and city neighborhoods to farmland and battlefields. By embracing large landscapes, National Heritage Areas have the ability to join together diverse interests such as education, recreation, heritage tourism and historic preservation. Committed to protecting and promoting the historic, cultural and natural assets of a region, National Heritage Areas play a vital role in maintaining both the physical character and cultural legacy of the United States.

In National Heritage Areas, residents, businesses, governments and non-profit organizations collaborate to promote conservation, community revitalization and economic development projects. Through



Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District
Elizabeth Paradis Stern

the facilitation of a local coordinating entity, such as a private non-profit corporation or a public commission, residents come together to improve regional quality of life through the protection of shared cultural and natural resources. This cooperative approach allows National Heritage Areas to achieve both conservation and economic growth in ways that do not compromise local land use controls. Long-term National Heritage Area success depends upon the willing support and activities of partner organizations and residents, who collaborate from the very beginning to develop and implement an area's mission and goals. Participation in projects and programs is always voluntary with zoning and land-use decisions remaining under the jurisdiction of local governments.

A Partnership with the National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) provides technical, planning and limited financial assistance to National Heritage Areas. The NPS is a partner and advisor, leaving decision-making authority in the hands of local people and organizations.

This partnership allows the NPS to further its core mission of natural and historic resource protection, while also leveraging financial and non-financial resources for all parties involved. Additionally, while a National Heritage Area designation is permanent, the role of the NPS can vary over time in response to the needs of the region and its residents.

Essex National Heritage Area
Trip Mason



Essex National Heritage Area

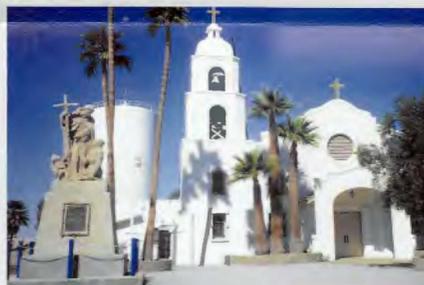


Great Basin National Heritage Route
Kristi Fillman

Becoming a National Heritage Area

National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress. Each National Heritage Area is governed by separate authorizing legislation and operates under provisions unique to its resources and desired goals. For an area to be considered for designation, certain key elements must be present. First and foremost, the landscape must have nationally distinctive natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources that, when linked together, tell a unique story about our country. A strong base of local, grassroots support is also essential, with the visible involvement and commitment of residents, government, community groups, non-profits and businesses. A feasibility study, conducted with extensive public involvement, is also strongly recommended. This document defines the region's story, identifies significant assets and shows local support for the initiative. Interested communities can learn more about the feasibility study process at www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas or contact a National Park Service office in their region of the country. The Alliance of National Heritage Areas also offers information on heritage development at www.nationalheritageareas.com.

Newly designated National Heritage Areas have three years to develop a management plan, which, upon completion, must be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The plan defines the mission, vision and goals of the National Heritage Area and outlines the strategies that the coordinating entity, partners and residents will use to achieve these objectives. Implementation of the plan rests in the hands of local citizens, officials, organizations and businesses, not the federal government.



Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area



Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area



Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
Tim Ester

The National Heritage Area Experience

As part of a living, working landscape, National Heritage Areas are not governed by the same policies as traditional National Park Service units; rather, they reflect the diverse and evolving histories and cultures of the people who call the region home. Sometimes, you will see a "Welcome" sign when you enter a National Heritage Area; other times, you may have to look a bit closer to know that you have arrived. Above all, listen, for as you meet residents who live in these special places, you will hear stories about the region and its place in our national history.

National Heritage Areas offer recreational activities and cultural events for all ages and interests. These may include hiking, biking and paddling or trips to museums and festivals. Take a stroll through a historic downtown or visit a wildlife reserve, there is always something to do or to see in these unique places. Many National Heritage Areas also participate in the "Passport to your National Parks" program, which encourages visitors to collect cancellation stamps every time they enter a unit of the National Park System, National Trail, Affiliated Area or National Heritage Area. A list of National Heritage Area stamping locations is available at www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas.

Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor
G. Leslie Sweetnam



Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor

National Heritage Areas



Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area
Samuel Delgado



Atchafalaya National Heritage Area



Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area



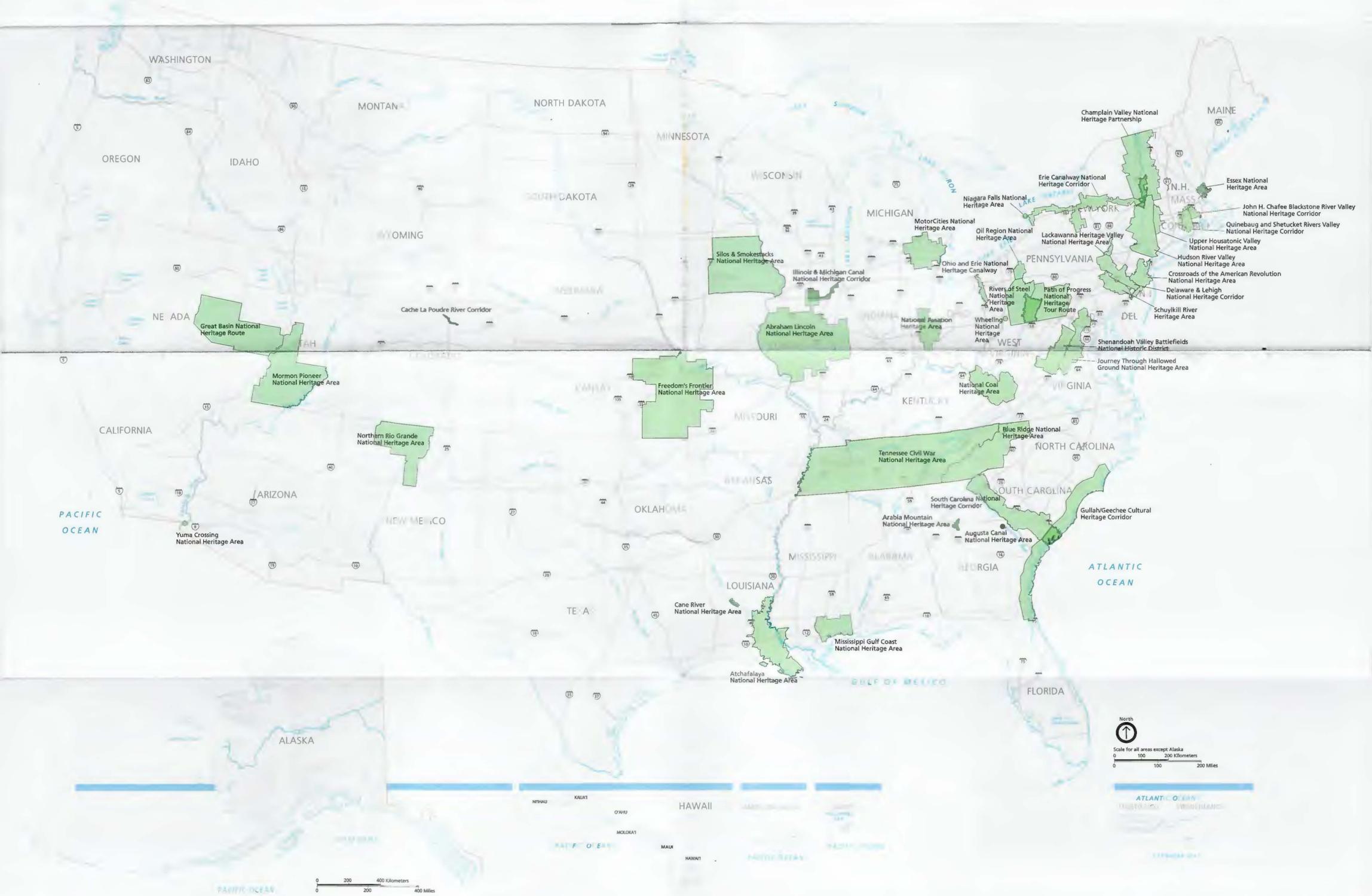
Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area



Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership
Local Motion



National Aviation Heritage Area
Neil Raymond



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Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor
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