

FREEDOM'S WAY

National Heritage Area | Nature • Culture • History

SPRING 2016

Ticket to Ride

Being involved with the Ticket to Ride program enables our teachers and students to engage in a tangible relationship with the long shadows of history that are just beyond our school doors. In a time of greater focus on testing and standardization, authentic learning opportunities like those promoted by Freedom's Way are fundamentally valuable to connect our students with the unique and lived history of individual experience and civic responsibility in our region.

—Nicholas Kain, Medford High School

With generous funding from the National Park Foundation's Ticket to Ride program, Minute Man National Historical Park and Freedom's Way Heritage Association are partnering with five teachers from McGill Middle School and Medford High School to bring 250 students to the Park in April and May 2016. While Medford is located 18 miles (30 minutes) from the storied North Bridge in Concord, MA, students have been unable to come due to the barriers of transportation and field trip expenses. Ticket to Ride funds will support these expenses, teaching resources and curriculum materials.

In preparation for their visit, Park Ranger James Hollister provided a training workshop to prepare teachers and students for their Park investigations. Teachers received NPS curriculum guides: Who Shot First and Honored Places. On-line primary sources provided connections between the Park's historic landscapes and introduced students to the complexities of patriotism, liberty, resistance and democracy.

FWHA Board member and high school history teacher Tim Castner shared how to use local documents and places to engage students in lively discussions on what revolution means—then and today.



Above: FWHA board member Tim Castner offers direction on engaging participating Ticket to Ride students in discussions about the meaning of revolution.

At left: Teaching resources and curriculum materials provided with Ticket to Ride Funds.



Freedom's Way National Heritage Area works in partnership with the National Park Service



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Let *the*
PARTY
Begin

The Bulfinch Church— The Fifth Meetinghouse

Two hundred years ago this July, construction began on Lancaster's fifth meeting house also known as The Bulfinch Church. Designed by Charles Bulfinch, who is considered America's first architect, the building is recognized as one of his greatest works.

Sited on the town green, "The Bulfinch Church" was built with local materials including bricks manufactured by the Burbank family and roof slate from the Flagg Quarry, the first in the nation. Its bell, which is still rung by hand today, was cast in Boston by Paul Revere and installed in September of 1816.

During the past two centuries, Bulfinch's original vision for the building, one of the few remaining meetinghouses that he designed, has remained unchanged. Celebrated as one of the finest and most untouched of his religious structures, the meeting house is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a designated National Historic Landmark.

The Bulfinch Fund, Inc., a non-profit organization, remains dedicated to the restoration and preservation of this magnificent building and promotes the work of its architect, Charles Bulfinch. For information about tours and educational programs visit their website: <http://www.thebulfinchfund.org>.

Longfellow's Wayside Inn

2016 marks the 300th anniversary of Longfellow's Wayside Inn, the centerpiece of the Wayside Inn Historic District in Sudbury, MA. The oldest operating Inn in the United States, it is sited on the oldest commissioned road (and one of the country's earliest mail routes), The Boston Post Road.

Established as a 'hous' of entertainment by David Howe in 1716, the inn was used as the setting of Henry Wadsworth's Longfellow's 1863 book, *Tales of a Wayside Inn* enhancing its popularity as a colonial landmark for generations of readers, poets, and artists.

In 1923, philanthropist Henry Ford purchased the inn and 3,000 surrounding acres to establish a living museum of Americana that would be the first of its kind in the country. Eight new buildings were added to the property including a fully-operating grist mill.

Today Longfellow's Wayside Inn is operated as a non-profit organization overseen by an independent board of trustees. Its three hundred year history of hospitality continues, providing a setting for historic meetings and gatherings, the stories of which have been handed down from innkeeper to innkeeper and from neighbors to guests.

For more information and to view a list of events visit: <http://www.wayside.org/events>.



Top: The Bulfinch Church in Lancaster, MA
Bottom: Longfellow's Wayside Inn in Sudbury, MA

UMass Extern Desiree Hamelin

Desiree Demski-Hamelin is a first-year graduate student in the dual-masters program for Regional Planning and Public Policy and Administration at UMass Amherst. She is also pursuing a graduate certificate in Cultural Landscape Management, which is supported by her experience interning at Freedom's Way. Desiree first became involved with the Freedom's Way Connecting Communities—Along Our Trails program in late 2014 through her service as an AmeriCorps volunteer with the Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT).

Since beginning her internship with Freedom's Way last fall, Desiree has coordinated the 2016 Connecting Communities Along Our Trails program, designed the Hidden Treasures 2016 website, and is developing content for an overhaul of the current Freedom's Way website.

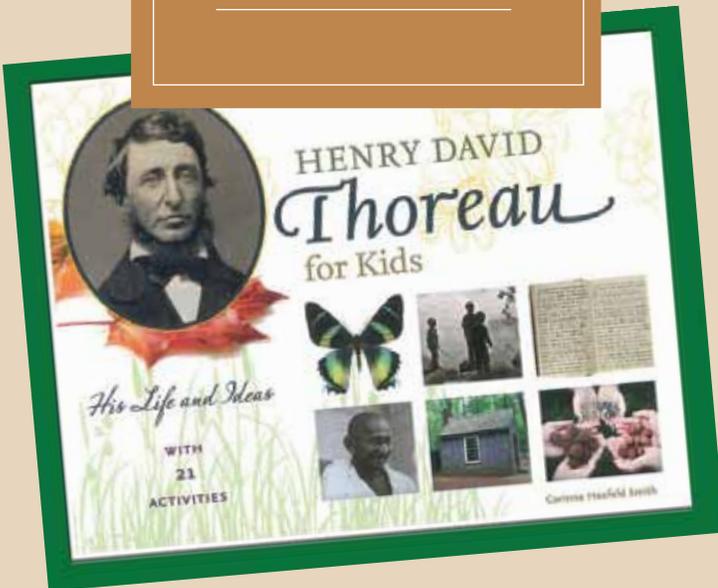
Before moving to Turners Falls, MA, Desiree was a life-long resident of Ashburnham, MA, where she serves as the Clerk for the Board of Directors of the Ashburnham Conservation Trust.

Her appreciation for the heritage and landscapes of small-town New England blossomed at an early age from her experience growing up and working on her parents' forty-acre wild blueberry farm. Desiree is grateful for the opportunity to work with Freedom's Way and meet many of the people who work to honor the history and character of the region she grew up in and holds dear.

Desiree atop Mount Cardigan in Orange, NH on New Year's Day 2015



THOREAU FOR KIDS



New book by Thoreau historian Corinne H. Smith engages kids in learning about his life and ideas, and provides activities to deepen their understanding.

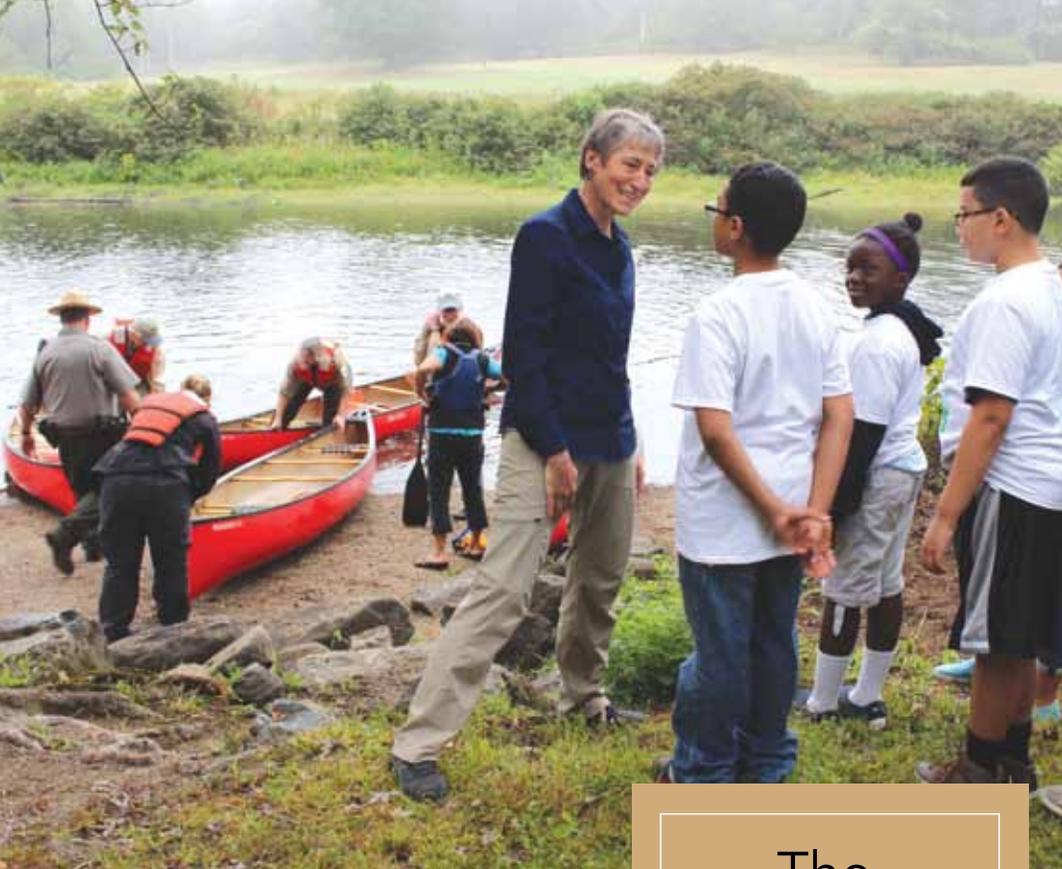
Henry David Thoreau for Kids: His Life and Ideas, With 21 Activities, a biography and activity book aimed at middle school readers, was recently published by Chicago Review Press.

Thoreau is best known for living two years along the shores of Walden Pond in Concord and writing about his experiences in *Walden*; or *Life in the Woods*, as well as spending a night in jail for nonpayment of taxes, which he discussed in the influential essay *Civil Disobedience*. More than 150 years later, people are still inspired by his thoughtful words about individual rights, social justice, and nature. His detailed plant observations have even proven to be a useful record for 21st-century botanists.

In *Henry David Thoreau for Kids*, in addition to learning about Thoreau's contributions to our culture, young people will participate in engaging, hands-on projects that bring his ideas to life. Activities include building a model of the Walden cabin, keeping a daily journal, planting a garden, baking trail-bread cakes, going on a half-day hike, and starting a rock collection. The book also includes a time line and list of resources—books, websites, and places to visit that offer even more opportunities to connect with this fascinating man that adults will also find useful.

Author Corinne H. Smith has collaborated with Freedom's Way for many years and has provided both research and area programs about Henry David Thoreau. She helped to track his "Walk to Wachusett" trail along current roads from Concord to Mount Wachusett. The resulting trail guide remains available on the Freedom's Way website as part of *In Thoreau's Footsteps*.

Henry David Thoreau for Kids is available for purchase at the Shop at Walden Pond, in other area bookstores, and from online vendors.



The
YEAR
in
REVIEW



Join Us on an Adventure

Thanks to all our great community partners—more than 60 of them!—Hidden Treasures 2016 is on track to be a fun and educational adventure for the many residents in Freedom's Way National Heritage Area. This year's 9-day event will be held **Saturday May 14 through Sunday May 22** and features over 100 events in 39 of our Heritage Area's 45 communities. From hikes, museum tours, meet the artist events and more, the regional celebration showcases the many cultural, historical and natural "Hidden Treasures" in our region.

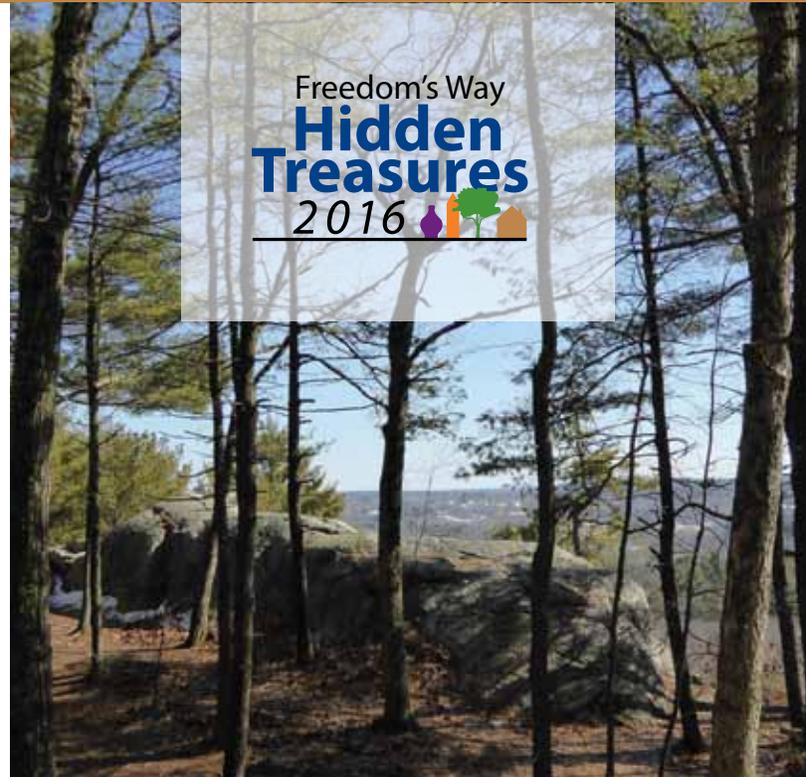
New this year, is a wonderful website that will help you plan your adventure—www.discoverhiddentreasures.org. Please share this website widely to help promote the hard work of all our partners! As you peruse the website, consider attending one (or more!) of the many activities that feature our natural treasures and get to know the stewardship efforts in your area.

Walk through the wildflower and butterfly gardens at Acton Arboretum, hike one of the state's longest eskers in Boxborough and discover Horn Pond—a peaceful gem in the middle of Woburn. Learn more about the Blanding's Turtle, a state threatened species, and the work done by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Friends of the Oxbow in Devens to protect their habitat.

In Gardner, you can learn about the land use and geological history of the Otter River Conservation Area and in Littleton you'll marvel at the 100 foot Tophet Chasm. And don't forget—it's bird migration season so consider checking out bird walks with the Sudbury Valley Trustees or a bird-nesting hike at Beaver Brook Association in Hollis, NH. These and many more activities will help you explore our area's natural hidden treasures and may inspire you to join the stewardship effort. So check out the website to learn what's going on near you!

Plan your adventure at www.discoverhiddentreasures.org

Top: Hike Littleton's Oak Hill conservation trails and marvel at the view from Lookout Rock at Tophet Chasm. Bottom: Sudbury Valley Trustees staff birdwatching.



◀ *Preceding page top left: NPS Secretary Sally Jewell arrives by canoe at Minute Man National Historical Park for Rivers Day in June 2015. © 2015PTodisco*

Top right: Historian William Fowler, Jr., Northeastern University Public History Program, gave the Opening Address at the March 2015 Community Character & Common Themes conference.

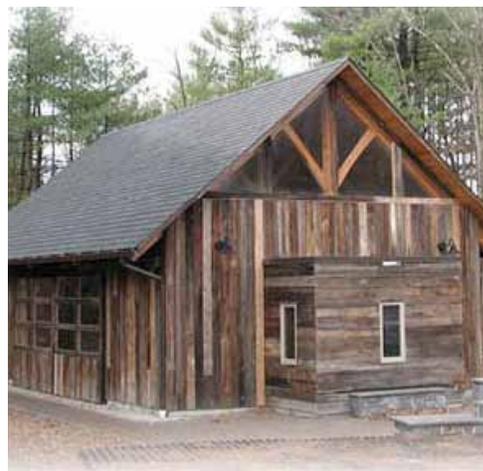
Center left: Historical interpreter for Ellen Garrison, Concord's Rosa Park, shared her story with humor and honesty at the Robbins House. © 2015LBowie

Center right: Danielle Allen, director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, during the Hands On History Workshop at the American Antiquarian Society.

Bottom: Celebrating the approval of Freedom's Way's Management Plan at Annual Meeting were from left to right: Maud Ayson, Consulting Program Director; Margaret Bagdonas, President FWHA; Marge Darby, founder of FWHA and Marion Stoddart, NWRA founder © 2015 PTodisco

US Fish & Wildlife Dedicates the Bill Ashe Visitor Facility

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be hosting a dedication ceremony for the Bill Ashe Visitor Facility at OxBow National Wildlife Refuge. This new facility will provide a venue for environmental education and interpretation programs, and will be the home of the Friends of the Oxbow NWR. In addition, it will provide new opportunities for the public to access parts of the Oxbow refuge for hiking, fishing, wildlife observation, and river access.



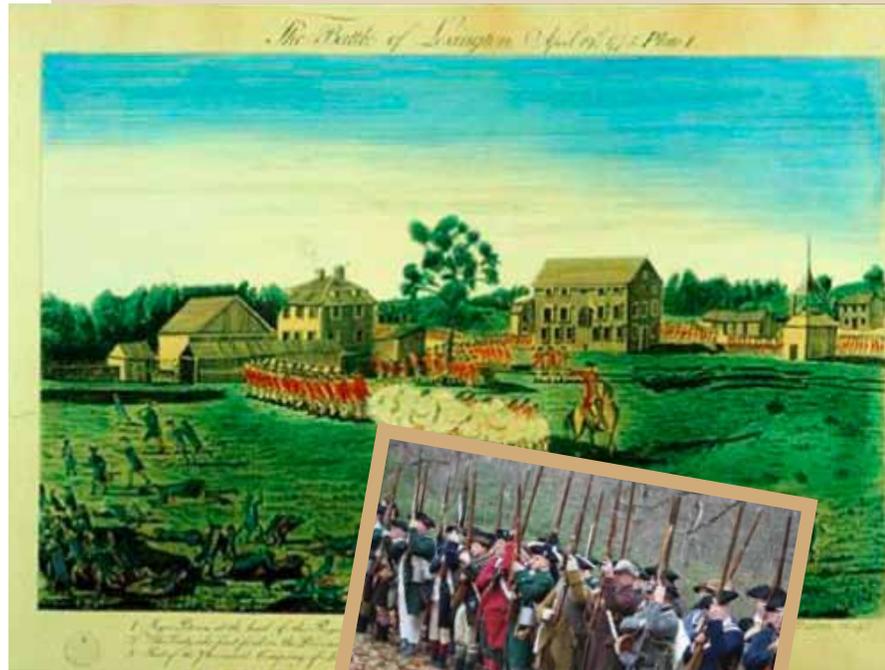
The dedication will take place on Friday, **May 27, 2016** at 11:00 am at the new Facility located at 80 Hospital Road, Devens, MA. The event will feature a brief ceremony, refreshments and a guided trail walk. We hope to see you there!

Bill Ashe Visitor Facility at the OxBow NWR, Devens, MA. Photo courtesy of US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Ongoing Work with Our Partners

- Working in partnership with the **Nashua River Watershed Association**, “**Farms, Fields and Forests: Stories from the Land in the Nashua River Watershed**” has completed four oral histories of farmers and land conservationists within the region to preserve a record of the rapidly changing landscape. Six more are planned in the coming months and will be available on both organization’s websites.
- **Connecting Communities Along Our Trails** continues to offer free trail-based events monthly in communities throughout the Heritage Area. Hosted by local organizations, including historical societies, land trusts, conservation commissions, trail stewards, naturalists and community volunteers, the program provides an opportunity to learn about the region’s recreational trails and greenways and is offered in partnership with the **Montachusett Regional Trails Committee**.
- Political theorist and professor Danielle Allen, director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University and public historian, scholar and Patriot’s Path advisor Mary Fuhrer, led the Hands-On History Workshop, **Declaring Independence—Then and Now**, sponsored by Freedom’s Way in partnership with the **American Antiquarian Society**. Throughout the coming year communities within the heritage area will research the ways in which the Declaration of Independence was debated and celebrated using primary source materials.
- In celebration of the **Centennial of the National Park Service**, FWHA is partnering with **Fruitlands Museum** on a photographic exhibition exploring National Parks within the Northeast Region. The exhibit will run from September 2nd through November 6th and include information about our Heritage Area.
- Planning continues for the **Thoreau 2017 Bicentennial** and FWHA is partnering with regional organizations to coordinate celebratory events and programs throughout the year. With our support a dedicated website is being developed to provide a comprehensive overview of Bicentennial activities throughout the world.

Top: *Revolutionary Choices, Revolutionary Towns: Patriot’s Paths Road to Revolution presentation in Leominster, MA in 2015.* Inset: *Amos Doolittle, Battle of Lexington 1775.* From collections of the Clements Library.



Patriot’s Paths: The Untold Stories

Ongoing research continues to reveal the untold stories of how ordinary people within the heritage area responded to the events preceding, during and following the American Revolution through our Patriot’s Paths, citizen-led, history program.

This past year focused on the tumultuous decade preceding April 19th, 1775, a period of debate, protests, boycotts and defensive preparation as struggles between Britain and the colony escalated. To understand what people were thinking and doing during this pivotal period in our history, citizen historians have been exploring church, tax and court records, diaries, almanacs and account books and creating dramatic scripts based upon their findings. These have been shared through public presentations, on cable tv, in classrooms and exhibits.

To date the communities of Lunenburg, Sudbury, Leominster and Lexington have completed scripts. A multi-community presentation, “The Untold Stories: Along the Road to Revolution” premiered in 2014 and has been used in area high schools.

During 2015, in recognition of the 250th anniversary of the Stamp Act, a Hands-On History workshop and special program was held in partnership with the American Antiquarian Society to reveal how critically the Act was received and the tumult it created within our region. Individual responses were researched and shared in local newspapers this past November on the Act’s anniversary.

Twenty communities are currently participating in Patriot’s Paths activities, guided by historian Mary Fuhrer. While they continue to uncover more community stories this year they are also focusing on individual responses to the declaring of independence. Look for upcoming opportunities to celebrate your community’s role in locally affirming and proclaiming the Declaration of Independence and consider how you, too, can become involved.

Farmers, widows, Loyalists, spies, local merchants, youth—all had a view and voice in the revolutionary struggle. Every story is part of a shared community narrative that reveals the excitement, anguish, doubt and passions of a people who did not know how their story would end. Every story is unique and embedded with each is the inspiration of everyday people making history.



Management Plan UPDATE

In July of 2016 the **Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Management Plan** was approved by the office of the Secretary of the Interior capping two years of community planning and outreach. This plan, the product of a collaboration with more than 125 partner organizations from throughout the heritage area, provides a framework for our shared work in the coming decade.

Goals established through the planning process include to foster a culture of stewardship within the heritage area to preserve its natural, historic and cultural resources as a legacy for future generations; to engage and collaborate with organizations, interests and individuals to create a shared regional vision as a living link across landscapes, history and time; to promote sustainable communities throughout the heritage area that reinforce its character and sense of place, and to inspire generations of lifelong learners through innovative educational and interpretive initiatives that connect stories—past and present—to all who live, work and visit the region.

Three themes will guide interpretation for the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area and each will be reinforced through programs and regionally developed initiatives. During the coming year we plan to focus on the first theme, **A Mosaic of Natural Beauty**.

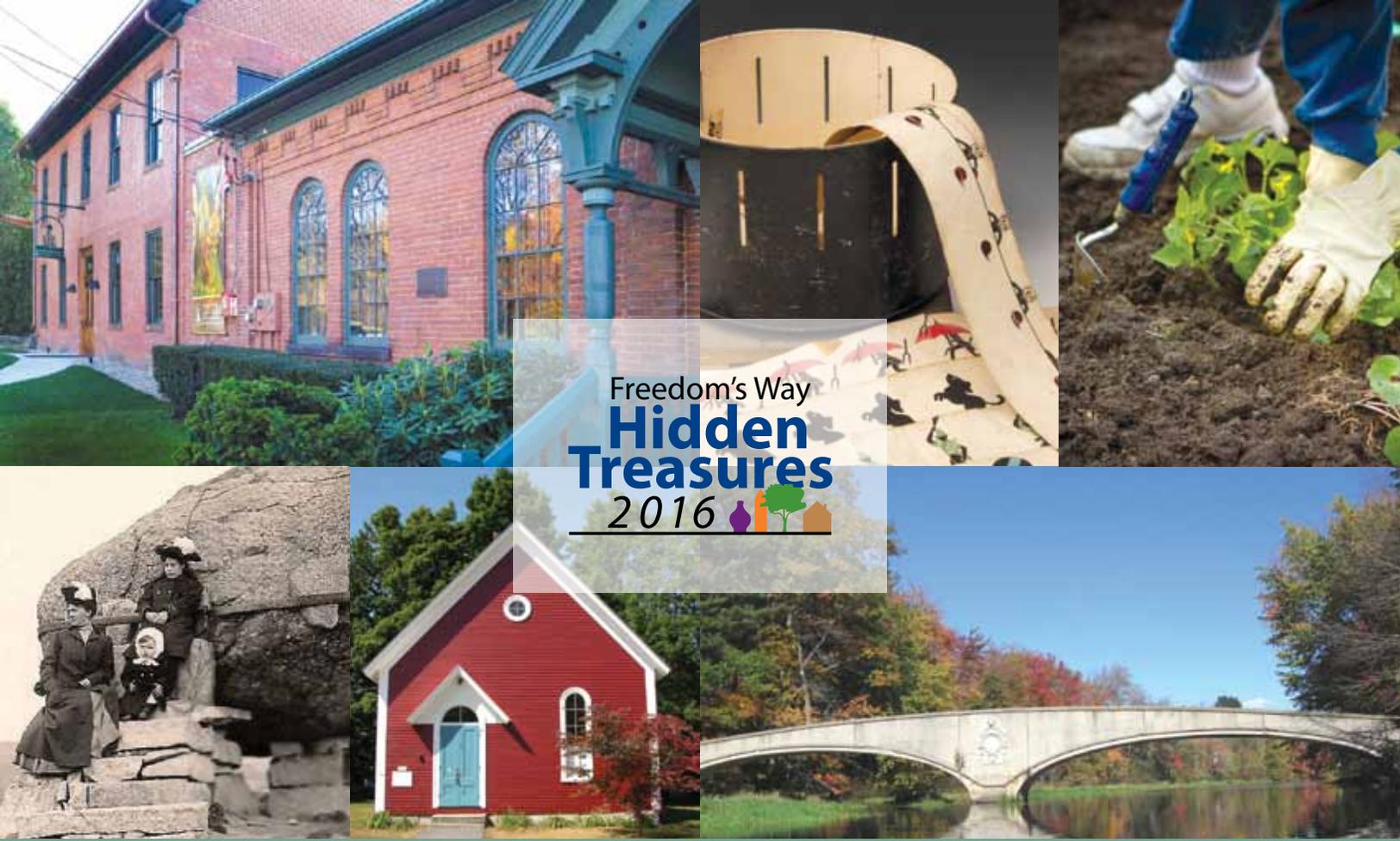
Many of us know we live in a region of great natural beauty. From forests and meadows to lakes and eskers, the landscape of our Heritage Area is subtle and intricate, forming the basis for the great diversity of plant and animal life that exists here.

But this beauty and diversity is threatened every day through development pressures that result in habitat loss and the loss of geographic identity. The Heritage Area benefits from a strong conservation ethic that encompasses Thoreau, Emerson and Benton MacKaye, a pioneer regionalist who originated the idea for the Appalachian Trail. Their voices, combined with the Native American voice highlighting the spiritual and social value of the land, has blessed our region with dedicated environmental and conservation stewards that continue their legacy.

As a large landscape encompassing 994 square miles (636,160 acres), **Freedom's Way National Heritage Area contains an astonishing 24.72 percent permanently protected conservation lands** (easements, public ownership, and conservation trust ownership). We look forward to working with our many partners as we explore the heritage area's conservation legacy and develop a shared vision for interpreting, protecting and promoting it as a key attribute of the region.



Top: Mary Rowlandson capture site in Lancaster, MA. At left: Peter Samuel, NPS National Heritage Area Program Manager, NER. Center: The North Bridge in Concord, MA. At right: The Mill in Milford, NH.



Freedom's Way
Hidden Treasures
 2016 

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