



# National Heritage Areas Program

PLACE-BASED, COMMUNITY-DRIVEN  
CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## A Year in Review: 2021 By the Numbers

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) expand on traditional conservation approaches by supporting large-scale, community-driven initiatives that engage communities in heritage preservation activities. NHA entities collaborate with stakeholders to determine how to make heritage relevant to local needs and interests. These entities serve as catalysts for community and economic development. Data presented here is from reports submitted by 53 of the 55 NHAs.

In 2021, despite unprecedented challenges of a global pandemic and closures, NHAs continued to serve communities and support their partners. In summary, NHAs:

- Leveraged **\$76 million** in cash and in-kind support to carry out heritage projects and programs, greatly increasing the impact of the **\$22.8 million** in federal Heritage Partnership Program funding received.
- Engaged **2,901 formal partners** and **5,102 informal partners** in heritage area activities.
- Benefited from **21,803 volunteers** contributing over **281,649 hours** for heritage area projects - a **\$7.6 million-dollar** value.

**Preserving our Heritage.** Across the country, National Heritage Areas and their partners are reviving historic downtowns, preserving large landscapes and cultural practices, and sharing our nation's history through the arts. In 2021:

- **64 historic sites** and **8,639 acres of cultural landscapes** preserved and maintained, including battlefields.
- **63 collections projects** undertaken, including the conservation of artifacts and creation of oral histories.
- **74 historic preservation grants** awarded totaling **\$972,188.85**.

**Recreation and Conservation.** Through recreational projects such as access to land and water trails, National Heritage Areas are improving connectivity and accessibility, creating more vibrant and healthy communities. In 2021:

- **153 recreation projects** undertaken.
- **574 miles of trails** maintained and **30 new miles of trails** developed.
- **71 recreation grants** awarded totaling **\$729,210.81**.

Conservation activities led by National Heritage Area entities and their partners improve air and water quality and support healthy ecosystems. In 2021:

- **23,471 acres of land restored and maintained** via invasive species removal, replanting, and toxic site clean-ups.
- **46 conservation grants** awarded totaling **\$1.5 million**.

**Educating Current and Future Leaders.** Through programs such as **Mountains to Sound Greenway NHA's Equitable Green Opportunities for Youth in Highline**, National Heritage Areas and their partners are providing meaningful and inspirational connections to our nation's heritage via educators and the (outdoor) classroom. In 2021:

- Capacity-building assistance provided to **1,306 organizations**.
- **250 educational programs** were offered.
- **308 grants** to support educational programs were awarded totaling **\$1.4 million**.



Silos & Smokestacks staff, trustees and Waterloo ambassadors at the organization's official ribbon cutting in June 2021.

### **NHA Spotlight:** **NHAs Celebrating 25th Anniversary**

In 2021, eleven NHAs celebrated their 25th Anniversary. The Silos & Smokestacks NHA in Iowa celebrated by opening a new visitor center and headquarters in Waterloo. They also renewed their commitment with heritage area sites through Regional Partnership Signing Ceremonies, hosted a public picnic, put out a commemorative Visitor Guide, and offered a personalized 25th stamp to partner sites. Photos courtesy of Silos & Smokestacks NHA.

# A Glance At 2021



## Muscle Shoals NHA Alabama

During FY21, the Muscle Shoals NHA (MSNHA) emphasized recreational programming. The MSNHA supported the development of the Rec & Trek, a student run organization at the University of North Alabama. The organization focuses on recreational programming and community service. Through Rec & Trek and other new recreation programs, the MSNHA has engaged with diverse student and community groups. One such engagement was with a West Florence (traditionally an African American community) non-profit, Common Ground and a minority owned outfitter, Beardo's Outdoors. Rec & Trek and the MSNHA hosted a paddle event in August that took many of the children Common Ground serves out onto the Tennessee River in the Shoals RiverLine kayak fleet (pictured above).

Photo courtesy of MSNHA.



## Cache la Poudre NHA Colorado

In 2021, Poudre Heritage Alliance (Cache la Poudre NHA's local coordinating entity), Mujeres de Colores, the City of Fort Collins Parks, Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority, Poudre Landmark Foundation, and the Bohemian Foundation collaborated on *The Hand that Feeds* public art project, with the NHA investing \$5,000 to the total cost of \$228,512. *The Hand that Feeds* sculpture created by artist, Frank Garza, was designed to preserve and honor the rich family history and significant contributions of the Mexican and Hispanic people who worked the beet fields of northern Colorado. Located in Fort Collins Sugar Beet Park on a city-designed plaza in the Tres Colonias neighborhoods, an interpretive storyboard and educational programs enable visitors and students to understand their impact on the community. The Short-Hoe: Represents the back-breaking work required by the sugar beet workers. The Hand: Represents the Hispanic and Mexican people who came to this area to work the beet fields and eventually settled in Fort Collins.

Betty Aragon-Mitotes, President and Founder of Mujeres de Colores, is pictured with *The Hand that Feeds* sculpture during the unveiling. Photo Credit: Joel Blocker/The Coloradoan.



## MotorCities NHA Michigan

In 2019, the MotorCities Board of Directors voted to move forward with the formation of a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee to examine how the organization can better tell the entire story of their region. In 2021, the organization focused on programming entitled "Many Voices, One Story," which shared stories of how this region put the world on wheels across a diverse and inclusive range of people with a wide variety of backgrounds, languages and cultures. Along with the launch of a new website of the same name, each month MotorCities supported the special designation for that month with interviews or articles which amplified the voices of that partner. Some highlights included Rory Gamble providing an interview discussing his status as the first African-American President of United Auto Workers International; highlighting the ableness community during Autism Awareness Month as Armani Williams shed light on his life as a NASCAR driver on the autistic spectrum; the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan sharing insights on the complex history of Jewish-Americans in the auto industry; during Pride Month, interviewing Sabin Blake who discussed being his whole self at work as a freeing experience; and the Japanese American Citizens League installing their "Exiled to Motown" exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum.

Photo courtesy of MotorCities NHA.



## Upper Housatonic Valley NHA Connecticut/Massachusetts

As part of the Upper Housatonic Valley NHA's response to climate change mitigation, a water temperature monitoring project was implemented with three regional partner organizations in the headwaters of the Housatonic River. The Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Housatonic Valley Association, and Hoosic River Watershed Association teamed up with Housatonic Heritage's support to gain new insights into the sources and causes of river water warming in the region. This county-wide temperature monitoring program is to confirm the locations of cold-water streams. Identifying and then protecting cold water streams in the face of climate change will help sustain a healthy ecosystem, as a 'cold-water fish resource' supports the greatest diversity of aquatic wildlife and the species that depend on them to survive. This project was funded with a \$3,200 grant from the Upper Housatonic Valley NHA, and leveraged an additional contribution of \$5,100 from project partners and also included a student-led video about the project that the NHA produced. Pictured is a historic covered bridge over the Housatonic River, the main river body that is hoping to be protected with the water temp monitoring project, at West Cornwall, CT.

Photo courtesy of Housatonic Heritage.



# National Heritage Areas 2021

**ALABAMA** – Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

**ALASKA** – Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area

**ARIZONA** – Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area • Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

**CALIFORNIA** – Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

**COLORADO** – Cache La Poudre National Heritage Area • Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area • South Park National Heritage Area

**CONNECTICUT** – \*Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor (CT, MA) • \*Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (CT, MA)

**FLORIDA** – \*Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC)

**GEORGIA** – Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area • Augusta Canal National Heritage Area • \*Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC)

**IOWA** – Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area

**ILLINOIS** – Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area • Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor

**KANSAS** – \*Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (KS, MO)

**LOUISIANA** – Atchafalaya National Heritage Area • Cane River National Heritage Area

**MARYLAND** – \*Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (MD, WV) • Baltimore National Heritage Area • \*Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV)

**MASSACHUSETTS** – Essex National Heritage Area • \*Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (MA, NH) • \*/\*\*John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (MA, RI) • \*Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor (CT, MA) • \*Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (CT, MA)

**MICHIGAN** – MotorCities National Heritage Area

**MISSISSIPPI** – Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area • Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area • Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area

**MISSOURI** – \*Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (KS, MO)

**NEVADA** – \*Great Basin National Heritage Area (NV, UT)

**NEW JERSEY** – Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area

**NEW HAMPSHIRE** – \*Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (MA, NH)

**NEW MEXICO** – Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area

**NEW YORK** – \*Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (NY, VT) • Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor • Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area • Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

**NORTH CAROLINA** – Blue Ridge National Heritage Area • \*Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC)

**NORTH DAKOTA** – Northern Plains National Heritage Area

**OHIO** – Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway • National Aviation Heritage Area

**PENNSYLVANIA** – Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor • \*Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV) • Lackawanna Heritage Valley • Oil Region National Heritage Area • Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area • Schuylkill River National Heritage Area • Susquehanna National Heritage Area • \*\*Path of Progress National Heritage Route

**RHODE ISLAND** – \*/\*\*John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (MA, RI)

**SOUTH CAROLINA** – \*Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC) • South Carolina National Heritage Corridor

**TENNESSEE** – Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

**UTAH** – \*Great Basin National Heritage Area (NV, UT) • Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area

**VERMONT** – \*Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (VT, NY)

**VIRGINIA** – \*Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV) • Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District

**WASHINGTON** – Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area • Maritime Washington National Heritage Area

**WEST VIRGINIA** – \*Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (MD, WV) • \*Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV) • National Coal Heritage Area • Wheeling National Heritage Area



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For more information visit:  
[www.nps.gov/heritageareas](http://www.nps.gov/heritageareas)

\*Denotes NHA that spans multiple states.

\*\* Does not provide data for this report.

April 2022