

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

TO CONDUCT OVERSIGHT ON THE DESIGNATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS, INCLUDING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR DESIGNATING HERITAGE AREAS, THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HERITAGE AREAS ON PRIVATE LANDS AND COMMUNITIES, FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL COSTS OF MANAGING HERITAGE AREAS, AND METHODS OF MONITORING AND MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF HERITAGE AREAS

MARCH 13, 2003



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NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2003

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m., in room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Craig Thomas presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CRAIG THOMAS, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator THOMAS. I think we will go ahead and begin. We are in a series of voting over there, so I do not suspect that we will have a huge number here, but that is fine.

We are going to be talking about National Heritage Areas, and so I welcome you all here today, witnesses particularly. The purpose is to conduct an oversight on the designation and management of National Heritage Areas. This is not designed to decide whether we have them, or opposed to them, or for them. It is just: We have had increasing numbers of heritage areas come before the Senate recently, before the Congress. And we really have not defined what they should be. We have no standardized ideas of what they are. We have no particular notion of what the Federal role is in these things, and the funding, and so on.

So I think what we are doing is saying if we are going to have more and more National Heritage Areas, if that is the direction we are going in, then I think we need to define it somewhat as to how we do it.

I have had some concerns about the goals; that they be shared goals that we all can work on and the structure; the criteria for the establishment of it; what generally are going to be the responsibilities of the Park Service. As you all know, we have 388 parks or something in this country, and so there comes a time when you begin to say, "All right. How do we define what really fits into the purpose here?"

Certainly, there are unique places in the country where it is appropriate to have Federal assistance where a State or local organization is not able to assume all of the responsibility. I have to say I am a little concerned about the numbers, and again, because there is no real consistent policy with regard to our standardization of it.

So that is really what we would like to hear your thoughts on: What you think about heritage areas; how you think they might be

defined; what do you think some of the issues ought to be that are discussed with respect to them as they come here; and, you know, very frankly so that they do not just become some political issue that someone brings in from their State to get Federal funding to do something that is really a local deal. Now I know that is kind of hard to define sometimes.

But at any rate, I am very pleased to have Deputy Assistant Secretary Paul Hoffman with us today.

I think what we will do, Mr. Secretary, is ask you to go first and have a few questions, and then we will ask the other three to come up following that. So if you would, come forward, sir.

I am particularly happy to have Mr. Hoffman since we both have interests in Cody, Wyoming.

Mr. HOFFMAN. We certainly do, Mr. Chairman.

Senator THOMAS. Yes.

[The prepared statements of Senators DeWine and Landrieu and a letter from Senators, Reed, Kennedy, Chafee, and Kerry follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE DEWINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM OHIO

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today regarding my support for National Heritage Areas. As you know, the idea behind heritage areas is that the sites and organizations, working together, can accomplish more than working separately. Because they are linked together by theme and geographical proximity, they can readily collaborate on preservation activities, promotional campaigns, and programming.

The real work of the heritage area is conducted by the individual sites and organizations. The minimal role of the federal government is to help coordinate and assist the management of the groups involved in the heritage area. It is clear from the outcome seen at the established heritage areas located throughout our nation that much benefit has come to those communities involved. With less interference from the federal government, key elements of our great heritage are being preserved and made available for all to enjoy.

It is for that reason that I have introduced a bill, along with my friend and colleague, Senator Voinovich, that would establish a National Aviation Heritage Area within our home state of Ohio, which is celebrating its bicentennial this year. The year 2003 also represents the 100th anniversary of manned flight. On December 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright, who are native Ohioans, invented controlled, heavier-than-air flight. This was the first step in the century-long progression of flight. The Wright Brothers' successful design and the science behind it were the forerunners to our modern airplanes and space vehicles.

There is obvious historical and cultural significance to the birth of aviation, and one of the unique educational aspects of aviation is the opportunity we can give children to interact with the subject outside of the classroom. Our bill seeks to foster strong public and private investments in aviation landmarks. Some of these landmarks include the Wright Brother's Wright Cycle Company, located in Dayton; the National Aviation Hall of Fame; the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center, where students of all ages can learn about the painstaking measures the Wright Brothers and many of their predecessors took to fly; and the Huffman Prairie Flying Field, where the Brothers perfected the design of the world's first airplane.

Mr. Chairman, flight has become another important square in the patchwork of our nation's history. We are reminded of this every time we look skyward and see the criss-cross of jet contrails. We are reminded of this every time we walk through the Rotunda of our very own U.S. Capitol and see the last frieze square that depicts the invention of flight by the Wright Brothers. And, we are reminded of this by one of the symbols of America, the eagle, and a flying bird that represents the freedom of a people.

It is vital that we protect the sites that have played such an important role in aviation and our nation's heritage. Doing so, we can enhance the education and enrichment of our children and our grandchildren for many years to come.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to express my support for National Aviation Heritage Areas.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARY L. LANDRIEU, U.S. SENATOR
FROM LOUISIANA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise today to express my strong support for National Heritage Areas. The idea behind heritage areas is that the sites and organizations, working together, can accomplish more than working separately. These partnerships that extend from the local to the national level, enable national heritage areas to conserve cultures and drive economic development through heritage tourism.

National heritage areas significantly help to extend the National Park Service's mission beyond the borders of existing parks by conserving regions that are significant to our nation's history. They do so in a cost-effective manner that also provides a large role for local participation.

National heritage areas are "living landscapes," special places inhabited by the people who have lived and worked in a region for generations. In national heritage areas, local people participate in preserving the places and traditions important to our communities and to our nation's history. In this way, national heritage areas broaden the relevance of the National Park Service, building ever-greater constituencies committed to the NPS mission.

Further, I want to make perfectly clear the fact that national heritage areas do not restrict private property owners' rights. Property owners' rights have not been stifled, indeed, they have been expanded. For example, property owners participate in the annual grants program, receiving awards to improve their property with preservation, research, and development projects of their own choosing.

NPS funding for national heritage areas is the catalyst to leverage private support, as well as other public funding (both state and local). The public/private partnerships in national heritage areas help preserve nationally significant regions, as well as foster sustainable economic development focused on heritage tourism. National heritage areas tell the story of our nation's history through regional interpretation, often giving greater context to the national parks in that region. And no state has a heritage as rich and diverse to show to the world than my state of Louisiana.

Louisiana currently has one national heritage area, the Cane River National Heritage Area in Natchitoches. Its success has prompted me to introduce legislation, along with Senator Breaux, that would create the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area in the southern part of my state. Both areas are closely associated with national park units. The residents of both areas share the history and culture that is interpreted at the national park units, providing a cultural and historical context for the parks. Both areas contribute to the development of infrastructure for heritage tourism in the regions in which they are situated.

Tourism and culture define Louisiana. This state long has been known for Creole and Cajun peoples, their music, their food, and the beauty of the landscape in which they live. Visitors come from all over the world to experience Louisiana's unique natural and cultural heritage.

Mr. Chairman, national heritage areas are a perfect fit for my state and I know other states can benefit from their many contributions as well.

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2003.

Hon. CRAIG THOMAS,
Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. DANIEL K. AKAKA,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on National Parks, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMAS AND SENATOR AKAKA: This afternoon, the Subcommittee on National Parks is scheduled to hold a hearing on the National Park Service's National Heritage Areas (NHAs). We write to you at this time to express our concern for changes to the NHA Program that may be proposed during this hearing, and ask that you consider the potential for negative impacts of these proposals on the future sustainability of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Over the years, it has been our experience that the success witnessed at the Blackstone has been due to the fact that the "framework" has been molded by the states and the people representing the region. A sustainable and locally driven decision-making process is vital to harnessing the energy needed for a heritage area to succeed.

In 1986, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor was established to recognize the national significance of the Blackstone region as the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. At the time, the NPS struggled to understand how to work outside of its familiar park boundaries and looked at the Blackstone as a challenge and an experiment. The communities that make up this bi-state region needed leadership and a mechanism for working together. Traditionally, Congress would have recognized the nationally significant resources of the Blackstone Valley by establishing a unit of the National Park System. However, the Blackstone Corridor's success can be attributed to the fact that the federal government does not own land, and the authorizing language specifically protects private property rights within the Corridor. This model partnership is being coordinated by a federally-sanctioned commission charged with carrying out a publicly supported and long-lasting management framework for the Blackstone Corridor. The Commission, working with the states and local partners, developed a common vision for the region, and provides limited federal seed money and technical assistance to implement their common goals.

Today, there are visible signs of change throughout the Blackstone Corridor. The water quality of a polluted river has been significantly improved; A greenway for bicyclists and hikers is underway; Historic mill buildings have been restored; and, NPS rangers and volunteers are educating local residents and visitors about the valley's rich history. The Blackstone Commission has become a national model for how federal government, with the leadership of the NPS, can work with state and local partners toward common goals of revitalized communities, historic and economic restoration, and an improved environment. All this has been accomplished with a relatively small amount of federal funding that has been leveraged many times over by state, local, and private sector dollars.

Last April, the National Park Service testified before this Subcommittee on the Blackstone Corridor and stated, "A multi-agency partnership with emphasis in the interpretation of a cultural landscape rather than federal ownership and regulation, was considered the more appropriate protection strategy for such a large area where people continue to live and work. The Blackstone Valley exemplifies a seamless system of local, state and federal efforts where people are working on a regional scale to maintain historical integrity by developing integrated protection and economic development strategies. As one of the first National Heritage Areas established, the Blackstone has become a model of how the National Park Service can work cooperatively with partners to achieve resource protection and public support."

The inspiration and dedication that led to the founding of this nation. The foresight of entrepreneurs in propelling America's early economy forward. The revitalization of a river and historic mill communities. These are the collective stories of the Blackstone Corridor. The Commission's continued partnership with the region's local stakeholders in sharing this rich cultural and historic past remains crucial to the future of the Blackstone Valley. As your Subcommittee reviews the current status of the NHA Program, we urge you to consider the benefits that the national heritage area designation provides to the local economy and sense of community pride in the Blackstone Valley Corridor.

We respectfully request that this letter be included as part of the hearing record for the NHA hearing. Thank you for the opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,

JACK REED, *United States Senator*
 TED KENNEDY, *United States Senator*
 LINCOLN CHAFEE, *United States Senator*
 JOHN F. KERRY, *United States Senator*

STATEMENT OF PAUL HOFFMAN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. HOFFMAN. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Department of the Interior regarding National Heritage Areas. We have submitted written testimony which I would like to be included as part of the record.

Senator THOMAS. Your total statement will be included.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Thank you. A little bit of my background, certainly not for your edification, but maybe for the record: You and

I first met about 17 years ago over a plate of buffalo wings, if I remember correctly.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HOFFMAN. And our lives have intersected several times since then. But most recently, I spent 12 years as the executive director of the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce in Cody, Wyoming, a little gateway community where your roots are, outside Yellowstone National Park.

It was really pleasing for me when I got to the Department of the Interior to learn of Secretary Norton's four "C"s: consultation, cooperation and communication, all in the service of conservation. It seemed to me that that was the appropriate way for the Federal Government to do business with gateway communities and parks, and other stakeholders. So that was very refreshing for me.

I also come with a strong belief that government at the lowest level is the best kind of government. I have a strong belief in the rights of private property owners. And I also have seen firsthand the benefits that Federal assistance can provide to communities in the area of promoting heritage tourism.

A little background on the National Heritage Area Program. The first heritage area was designated by Congress in 1984. The first few, I think the first five, were arguably experimental. I am not sure Congress exactly knew what they were doing. It was a new concept, and each one had a little bit of a different look. And those five included a Federal advisory board for the management of those heritage areas. Subsequent to that, the Park Service has developed a criteria and a model that seems to be working fairly well.

There are currently 23 National Heritage Areas. There are 11 that have been pending designation by Congress, and there are 9 that are in the study phase. There are 45 million people in 17 States who live in National Heritage Areas.

The Park Service has, as I mentioned, over time developed four criteria for designation of a National Heritage Area. One is the completion of a feasibility and suitability study. The second is significant public involvement in the preparation of that study. Three is demonstration of widespread public support among heritage area residents for the proposed designation. And four is commitment to the proposal from appropriate players which may include governments, industry, private nonprofit organizations, in addition to the local citizenry.

It is our view that a feasibility suitability study should be completed before a designation is considered by Congress. On occasion, we have been authorized and asked by Congress to conduct those suitability feasibility studies for heritage areas, but in most cases, now the local groups do their own study, and then come to Congress for the designation.

Suitability and feasibility study, part of its purpose besides the four criteria I mentioned, is to determine that an area contains resources of national importance. There are 10 components that should be included in feasibility and suitability study. And they are in the written record, so I will spare you reading those. But one of the nice things about those components though is that it includes a significant connection between the human landscape and the natural and cultural resources, a link between the culture and

the economies of the area and the National Heritage Area designation.

Why are heritage areas appropriate as a National Park Service program? I think some people wonder why we are in that business. The fact is, the National Park Service is responsible for preservation of cultural and historic resources under the Organic Act. We administer the National Register of Historic Places. We administer several grant programs, including Savings of America Treasures which helps in the preservation of cultural historic resources by the private sector.

The National Heritage Area program has proven to be a good alternative for those communities that want the prestige of the National Park Service arrowhead, but do not have a potential national park site. As you are well aware, we have 388 national park units, and there are always requests coming before Congress for designations.

Most communities perceive a national park as the Holy Grail of tourism promotion, if you will. And a National Heritage Area is a nice alternative to a national park designation which, of course, comes with greater restrictions, greater budget commitments, greater management authorities over the area, over the land area.

Oftentimes, National Heritage Areas can complement existing park units by providing an appropriate linkage between the gateway communities, their heritage, the role of humans in the landscape, history, and culture, and economies of the region, and how those link to the national park unit that is near those gateway communities. And the National Heritage Areas, I believe, are consistent with the Secretary's four "C"s because they do require significant local input into the planning process and significant concurrence from the local citizenry to the designation of a National Heritage Area.

What makes National Heritage Areas unique? Well, one is that there is no National Park Service land acquisition or management regime that is applied over a National Heritage Area. The NPS role in a National Heritage Area is one of a facilitator, not a manager. There is no direct Federal influence on zoning. Now, yes, a management plan for a heritage area may include recommendations for zone changes, but it is the local planning and zoning board that reviews those changes and makes those decisions. The Park Service has no role in that.

There are significant matching funds that leverage Park Service dollars in National Heritage Areas. We require at least a 50 percent match of any National Park Service dollars provided. But, in practice, over the years we have seen an average of 8.7 dollars matched to every dollar of National Park Service money put into a heritage area. To put it into real dollar terms, for \$107 million of National Park Service appropriated dollars, we have seen \$929 million expended to benefit those heritage areas.

There is limited funding of National Heritage Areas, and that is up to \$1 million per year, not to exceed \$10 million over 15 years. So there is a natural endgate to the Federal funding that would assist locals in the development or promotion of their National Heritage Area.

One of your questions is: Do National Heritage Areas need legislative criteria and standards? And our short answer is: Yes, we believe they do. We think that a broad framework that sets out the criteria and components of feasibility suitability studies would be very helpful to the Park Service administration of this program. Rigorous standards and criteria for future designations and clearly articulated components should be required.

Property rights and zoning disclaimers, which are usually included in the National Heritage Area establishing legislation, could be part of a generic National Heritage Area Act. But we believe it is important that we not make that property rights and zoning disclaimer a show stopper. You know, it has been suggested that we get the majority of the landowners to say that they approve of a heritage area. It has also been suggested that we require every landowner in a heritage area to say in writing that they approve of it. And that probably would be a show stopper for almost any heritage area. We seldom see 100 percent support of anything in this world today.

We would like to see whatever standards and criteria are developed not be artificially constraining on the ability of local communities to develop their own elaborate partnerships. That is one of the beauties of the National Heritage Area Program is that it allows the local communities to put together their own kind of a partnership. And if we put too much structure, too much flesh on those bones, I think we could dampen their creativity in terms of how they create their own heritage area.

We would like the opportunity to work with you and your staff on the development of generic National Heritage Area legislation and look forward to working with you on that.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to explain the National Heritage Area Program, the Department's position on codifying standards and guidelines for future heritage area designations. And I would be most happy to answer any questions.

Senator THOMAS. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hoffman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL HOFFMAN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to be here today to discuss the National Park Service's National Heritage Area Program, to update you on the accomplishments of the 23 existing areas, and to offer recommendations for improvements to the program.

A "National Heritage Area" is a place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive 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. Continued use of national heritage areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance.

A recent National Park Service survey shows that almost 45 million people across 17 states live within a national heritage area. Heritage areas are just one of a growing number of collaborative, community-based conservation strategies that have developed in recent years to identify, preserve, and interpret resources. By establishing a heritage area, communities work in partnership across jurisdictional boundaries to plan for their future, based on their shared heritage from the past.

It is important to clarify that the Federal Government does not assume ownership of land, impose zoning or land use controls in heritage areas, or take responsibility

for permanent funding. In most areas the authorizing legislation prohibits the management entity from acquiring property with funding appropriated for the heritage area. In addition, the authorizing legislation provides private property owners with specific protection. This guarantees that it will be the responsibility of the people living within a heritage area to ensure that the heritage area's resources are protected, interpreted and preserved.

Almost twenty years have passed since the designation of the first national heritage area, the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. Since that time, Congress has authorized a total of 23 national heritage areas, and absent generic criteria, the authorizing legislation has taken a variety of forms. While the earliest heritage area bills resulted in several different management and funding structures, the heritage areas created since 1996 have become more standardized in how they are studied, designated, managed, and funded. It is appropriate today to look at the 23 existing heritage areas and evaluate how this collaboration between local communities and the National Park Service is working. With the growing interest in additional national heritage area designations, it is also timely to look at the process by which new areas are evaluated for consideration.

The Department of the Interior supports the heritage area approach for preserving resources because it is based on locally driven partnerships that emphasize local control of land. We recognize that protection of parks and the conservation of special places is greatly enhanced when the people who live in the region and are uniquely qualified to care for them are involved. Heritage areas embody partnerships that blend education, cultural conservation, resource preservation, recreation, and community revitalization, which are all integral parts of the mission of the National Park Service. The Secretary has made partnerships integral to the Department's efforts to preserve and protect all of our natural, cultural and recreational programs. Recently First Lady Laura Bush announced "Preserve America", a new White House initiative that pursues ". . . partnerships with State and local governments, Indian tribes, and the private sector to promote the preservation of the unique cultural heritage of communities and of the Nation . . ."

Our experience over the past two decades has led us to make the following observations about the process for the study, designation, and management of national heritage areas. To be successful, all heritage area initiatives must be developed and shaped by local people and by local initiative. Some of these heritage proposals also seek the support and assistance of the National Park Service through designation as a national heritage area or corridor. To warrant our involvement, these areas should tell nationally important stories through a regionally distinctive combination of natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources and provide outstanding opportunities for resource conservation. When appropriate they should also strengthen, complement, and support existing units of the National Park System.

Criteria are needed to assist communities and the National Park Service in assessing the appropriate direction for national heritage area proposals. In past testimonies, we have identified the specific steps for national heritage designation and the components of a useful suitability and feasibility study. These have been field-tested and have shown themselves to be valuable, yet they have never been formalized. They are included as a possible starting point for any future efforts to set some criteria and standards for the establishment and management of national heritage areas.

The National Park Service has outlined four critical steps that need to be taken and documented prior to congressional designation of a national heritage area. These steps are:

- (1) completion of a suitability/feasibility study;
- (2) public involvement in the suitability/feasibility study;
- (3) demonstration of widespread public support among heritage area residents for the proposed designation; and
- (4) commitment to the proposal from the appropriate players, which may include governments, industry, and private, non-profit organizations, in addition to the local citizenry.

A suitability and feasibility study would determine that an area contains resources of national importance, and should include a number of the components we believe are helpful for public review. Our experience has also shown the importance of completing the suitability and feasibility study before a heritage area is designated. The most helpful components of a suitability and feasibility study include analysis and documentation that show:

1. An area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as

such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;

2. Reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the national story;

3. Provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features;

4. Provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;

5. The resources important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

6. Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area;

7. The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area;

8. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area;

9. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public; and

10. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.

We believe that only when an area has been studied and can satisfy these criteria, should it be designated as a national heritage area.

Upon designation, an area must develop a management plan to serve as a road map for all stakeholders that support the vision for the area. The plan must be developed within the timeframe specified in the legislation (usually 3-5 years) and approved by the Secretary of the Interior. For designated areas, the National Park Service's role is to work with the area on the management plan that will guide the heritage development of the region; to enter into a cooperative agreement that defines our partnership role and is amended each year to allocate appropriated funds for the identified projects that will be undertaken to further the plan; to monitor the expenditure of funds, to ensure that the funds are matched and meet all other requirements; and to review annual reports prepared by each management entity. The National Park Service, along with other Federal land managing agencies, can bring national recognition to the areas and provide other technical assistance on a case-by-case basis.

Funding for the national heritage areas has grown along with the program. The formula under which many areas were authorized provided funding of up to \$10 million over 15 years. In general, newly designated areas start with more modest funding as they develop their management plans and then receive increased support until they are well established. Ultimately, heritage areas are supposed to become self-sufficient, so that available National Park Service funding can be shifted toward more recently designated areas. In fiscal year 2003, the 23 areas are slated to receive \$14,374,000 through the National Park Service. We continue to recommend that each heritage area be capped at \$1 million per year, not to exceed \$10 million overall.

While the National Park Service and heritage area partners have tested the above criteria, have forged a role for the agency in the planning process and can demonstrate impressive leveraging and conservation successes for specific resources, we still have a lot to learn. More difficult to measure is the increase in residents and visitors participating in programs and activities supported by the heritage areas. At this time, the National Park Service, in partnership with the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, is working with Michigan State University to adapt the National Park Service's "Money Generation Model" used by park units to test impacts on a regional scale. The model will be tested on eight heritage areas this summer and fall. Even more difficult to measure is the effect the heritage area approach, working in partnership with so many organizations in a region, has on quality of life, community pride and civic engagement. As the partnership model becomes a way of business for all National Park Service programs, we would like to study these experiences as they relate to heritage areas to improve our ability to collaborate.

The National Park Service recognizes national heritage areas as important partners for adjacent park units who are assisted by giving the community a voice in telling the larger story of a region, by building a common understanding and a vision for the future, and by encouraging local stewardship of key resources. For example, the newly designated Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park tells a specific story of a crucial battle of the Civil War, yet is also part of the larger Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. Gateway communities in

particular can benefit from heritage planning that reinvigorates local tourist offerings with real and authentic experiences. The heritage area approach is one more link in a national network of parks and conservation areas between important natural resources and the people who live and work in gateway communities.

National heritage areas have significance and value in their own right. They encompass some of the most important cultural landscapes in the nation exemplified by the Hudson River Valley and the Shenandoah Valley. They also tell stories of national significance such as the rise of the automobile industry in the "Motor Cities" of Detroit, Flint, Lansing and Ypsilanti that "put the world on wheels." Or the story of big steel in the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania, an industry that made possible railroads, skyscrapers, and shipbuilding activities across the nation. It is noteworthy that over 20% of all the National Historic Landmarks in the nation are located in national heritage areas.

Of importance to everyone is the financial impact of heritage area designation. National heritage areas are cost-effective because they can facilitate the leveraging of funds and resources for the conservation of natural, cultural, and historic values. Since 1985, Congress has appropriated \$107,225,378 to the National Park Service under the Heritage Partnership Program to support heritage area projects and programs. This allocation has leveraged \$929,097,491 in non-National Park Service partnership funds, an impressive 1 to 8.7 match. A well-established heritage area will have a wide range of funding sources; for example, the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor in Pennsylvania recently issued a report that showed the following profile of partnership funding: 8% National Park Service (\$4,302,200), 22% U.S. Department of Transportation Enhancement Funds (\$13,051,794), 37% State (\$21,705,164), 17% Local Government (\$9,952,061), and 16% private (\$9,173,046). The partnership approach of national heritage areas attracts a flexible mix of funding that reflects both needs and opportunities.

In keeping with the regional scale of national heritage areas, they have been able to take a broader perspective and tackle projects in multiple jurisdictions. In the areas of education and interpretation, almost all heritage areas have strong programs that reach out to visitors and residents across the landscape. Silos & Smokestacks recently won a national award from the National Association for Interpretation for their educational web site on agriculture "Camp Silos", which reaches not just the 37 counties in Iowa, but users from around the world. Greenways and trail projects are also best done on a regional basis. Outstanding work has been done completing the Great Allegheny Passage trail from Washington to Pittsburgh by the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area; in adding over seventy miles of trail north and south of Cuyahoga National Park by the Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor; and in developing the Schuylkill River Water Trail recently designated as a National Recreation Trail.

To assist local partners, 14 of the national heritage areas administer grants programs for heritage and historic preservation planning and rehabilitation projects. Over 66 Save America's Treasures grants have been awarded through the assistance of national heritage areas, including two administered by the Cane River National Heritage Area for the Prufhome-Rouquierer House and Melrose Plantation. Heritage areas also work to sustain regional economies through heritage tourism initiatives, which illustrates that environmental protection and economic progress can be complementary goals. For instance, at the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, the management of waterpower along the canal maintains the area's traditional economy.

One of the trends in the growth of the heritage area movement is the increased interest in conservation, based on community collaboration. This is particularly true in the west where potential heritage areas in New Mexico, Nevada and Utah propose to tell the story of the peopling of the west in a multiple-use environment. Many of these new proposals include large swaths of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and other Federal land managing agencies. These agencies will be important partners in the coordination of these new western heritage areas.

Heritage area partnerships are also becoming more diverse. As they move west, tribal organizations are becoming partners as seen in Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area where the Quetchan Nation has contributed significant funding to rehabilitating a historic bridge over the Colorado River and is working with the heritage area on a major wetland restoration project. Finally, there has been a positive growth in state heritage programs including newcomers like Maryland, Louisiana, and Utah. In all, eight states across the country have state heritage programs.

Heritage areas are inclusive of diverse peoples and their cultures because they encompass living landscapes and the traditional uses of the land. For example, the National Park Service is conducting a study for a potential heritage area to recognize the Low County Gullah Geechee, a geographically isolated community of African

Americans who have retained a distinct Creole language and traditional practices with elements that are traceable to the rice coast of West Africa. A special resource study conducted in Louisiana has led to the designation of the multicultural Atchafalaya basin as a state heritage area.

After almost two decades of experience with the National Heritage Area Program, we support the development of criteria and standards for the establishment and management of these heritage areas. National heritage areas are not units of the National Park System and, as demonstrated by the examples above, a proscribed, narrowly defined strategy will not permit the flexibility we need to manage the program. A broad framework that emphasizes the overall goal of resource conservation, that is locally driven and shaped by communities in partnership with Department of the Interior agencies such as the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and that maintains rigorous standards for future national heritage areas should be the goal of any proposed generic heritage area legislation. We would welcome the opportunity to work with this committee on developing such a framework.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.

Senator THOMAS. I think that was a good insight into where we are. I was a little puzzled with the study phase. Now out of the 23, or now close to 30, how many of those have actually had a study before they were considered for final passage?

Mr. HOFFMAN. I am not certain that the first five had study, but I believe all the ones subsequent to those had studies completed before they were designated. Some of those cases, Congress authorized and directed the Park Service to conduct those studies. Others, the studies were developed and prepared by the local communities.

Senator THOMAS. That may be, but as I recall them coming before the Congress, you know, if it is a park, then usually the authority that comes before the committee is to do the study. And then we come back with the Park Service study and recommendation one way or the other. I do not think that that has normally been the case with heritage, but I think it should be. So maybe we can work on that some more.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Yes. The current model has been more often the local communities do the studies themselves with their own money.

Senator THOMAS. All right.

Mr. HOFFMAN. And one of the advantages of that is—I mean, we share the criteria with them so that they are sure to address all those criteria, but it has them buying into the process from the beginning and it reduces the Federal obligation financially.

Senator THOMAS. Yes. Well, I would not object to the locals doing it, but then the Park Service ought to go over the study and see whether or not they think it is an appropriate result of the study and so on.

How do you define “national importance”?

Mr. HOFFMAN. That is always a challenge. We apply pretty much the same standards or same formulas that we do for national parks. There are some areas that demonstrate cultural or historic significance that relates back to activities that occurred there that had a national impact. It is not an easy definition to come up with, but when you talk about, say, the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area and the role that steel played in the building of ships, bridges, buildings, clearly the industrial revolution of the United States was tied to the production of steel. That is just one example.

Senator THOMAS. Yes. Coal heritage, you can argue where the coal heritage comes from, as a matter of fact.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Yes.

Senator THOMAS. It is a little difficult. I guess here, again, you know, we are trying to maybe differentiate between what is more appropriately a local cultural thing and certainly worth saving, but is it a national responsibility?

I hate to see it simply become a political thing. There ought to be some kind of a definition to where it is not just there depending on who introduces and, you know, all that sort of thing. I think there are about 100 State heritage areas that exist without Federal funding. I guess you can make the argument that maybe that is where they ought to be.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Absolutely. Twenty-eight States have their own heritage programs, heritage area programs, and many of those heritage areas are most appropriately State heritage areas. They do not rise to the level of national significance.

Senator THOMAS. How do you define the level?

Mr. HOFFMAN. Well, that is a little bit of the art the Park Service practices. And ultimately, it would come to Congress to look on that determination and determine if indeed it is national.

Senator THOMAS. As I recall, the Park Service does not usually take a very strong position on those one way or the other, not like a park. And I understand that because it is a different thing.

I notice in some of the material here you said \$10 million was the max. I think that maybe the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission is quite more than that.

Mr. HOFFMAN. I am not familiar with that, but I would be glad to get you an answer to that.

Senator THOMAS. Yes, please. I think you will find it is closer to \$50 million.

So, is it the view of the Agency that \$10 million over 10 years is the limit?

Mr. HOFFMAN. Over 15 years, yes. No more than \$1 million per year, not to exceed \$10 million over 15 years.

Senator THOMAS. So that is pretty well defined?

Mr. HOFFMAN. That is pretty well defined. And, in fact, the average funding has been more on the order of \$250,000 a year. The current fiscal year 2003 budget for heritage areas is about \$14 million. Our request in the 2004 budget is about \$7 million. Our request in 2003 was \$7 million.

Senator THOMAS. What did we spend? Do you know?

Mr. HOFFMAN. We are spending \$14 million this year.

Senator THOMAS. We are spending \$14 million.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Yes.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. There is also, I suppose—and again there is Park Service funding, and then there is total Federal funding. And the total Federal funding is quite more than the other. You said it was about \$1 out of every \$6 was Park Service. It is about \$1 out of every \$2 that is Federal dollars, and when all the highway money, or whatever, goes into them; so that it is substantially more than just the Park Service when it is given the Federal designation now. I suppose those dollars could be spent whether it is designated as Federal or not, but those are some of the things.

Do you have Park Service employees that are in the field, regional headquarters, that work on heritage areas only?

Mr. HOFFMAN. Not exclusively. We have one full-time National Heritage Area program director at the national office, the Washington office, and there is at least—well, there is one person who has as part of their collateral duties National Heritage Areas in the region. It probably amounts to less than 25 percent of their time.

Senator THOMAS. I forgot what I was going to ask you. Oh, the management aspect: Are you saying that the only responsibility after these are approved from the Park Service is money?

Mr. HOFFMAN. To assure that the money is being spent appropriately under the guidelines that the Park Service has for matching funds with nonprofit organizations.

Senator THOMAS. And no management responsibilities at all?

Mr. HOFFMAN. No, there is no Park Service management policies overlay. It is strictly up to whatever the local communities developed in their development plan. They implement that on their own. Most heritage areas, since the first five were adopted, are now managed by private nonprofit organizations. In some cases, they are managed by States, and I think maybe on a limited basis local governments manage heritage areas.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. I think that may be all the questions I have. I think we do need to define a little more clearly what the criteria should be for the Federal involvement. Even though you say it is there, and it's national interest, somehow it ought to be a little more common standard, I believe. And maybe we can come up with something of that kind and see if it fits.

So we would like to work with you on it so that when they come up, why, it is not just sort of such an open field for us to think about and talk about here, and know a little bit more what would fit into the category.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Yes, it would be very beneficial to us to have legislative criteria and guidelines.

Senator THOMAS. Good. Well, if you could give us any ideas any more than you have in your statement, we would appreciate that.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator THOMAS. Thank you, Secretary. It is good to see you.

Okay. We have Kathryn Higgins, vice president for Public Policy for National Trust for Historic Preservation; Mr. Allen Sachse, executive director of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor; and Mr. Peyton Knight, legislative director for the American Policy Center, Warrenton, Virginia.

I guess we will just take them as I read them off here, if that is all right. Ms. Higgins.

STATEMENT OF KATHRYN HIGGINS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC POLICY, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Ms. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Kathryn Higgins. I am the vice president for Public Policy at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. And we are delighted to be here today and to talk with you about our role in working with heritage areas and our thoughts about how to shape the program going forward.

The Trust, as I am sure you know, is a 50-year-old national non-profit, concerned with helping people protect the Nation's historic resources. We believe that when historic buildings and neighborhoods are torn down or allowed to deteriorate, we lose not only part of our past forever, we also lose a chance to revitalize our communities.

The Trust works with heritage areas in a number of different ways, but principally through our Main Street program. And we are engaged now with 18 heritage areas, and 118 Main Street communities that are a part of those heritage areas. We also work with heritage areas through our rural programs, things like scenic byways and, very importantly, through heritage tourism. We also work through our Community Partners program which helps local communities work to get tax credits to help restore historic buildings in those communities and in those heritage areas.

We believe that the stewardship of the Nation's cultural and natural resources is as outlined in the President's recent executive order, Preserve America, that was just signed last week, makes a very compelling case for the continued designation of heritage areas and the Federal Government's strong role in the creation, designation, financial support, and oversight.

Preserve America sets forth the base from which these effective relationships may arise. These include building partnerships that work, promoting preservation through heritage tourism, encouraging stewardship of historic resources, and improving Federal agency planning and accountability.

The timing of the President's Executive order is excellent. Support for heritage areas, as you know, has been increasing over the years, and in particular, there has been a noticeable increase in the last couple of years in the aftermath of September 11. In the past 3 years, the number of designations has increased from 18 to 23 nationally. There are 11 pending designations before Congress, and there are several others in the pipeline awaiting completion of feasibility studies.

The local, regional, and Federal partnerships and private sector participation in heritage areas affect the very goals of Preserve America which include promoting strategic planning, economic development, community revitalization, and as I have mentioned before, tourism. Heritage areas achieve these goals with a fraction of the Federal costs associated with establishing and operating similar functions through national parks.

As you have already heard, heritage areas pool local and regional resources and get 20 percent of their funding directly from the Park Service. The remaining 90 percent comes from Federal grants through, particularly, transportation enhancement programs which promote preservation, through State and local and private funding.

One of the principal economic benefits for heritage areas is heritage tourism. As I have already mentioned, that is a major focus and a major goal of the President's new executive order. Tourism, as I am sure you have seen in your State of Wyoming, is big business. In the year 2000, travel and tourism contributed almost \$600 billion to the economy, and it is the country's third largest retail industry. And it has supported, either directly or indirectly, over 19 million jobs.

According to a 2001 report on cultural and historic tourism, visitors to historic sites stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of tourists. Visitors to historic and cultural attractions spend on average \$631 per trip compared to a little less than \$500 for all U.S. travelers. And they spend an average of four, almost five nights away from home as compared to not quite three and a half nights for all other travelers.

As a result, the travel and tourism industry, seeing these trends, are tailoring travel packages to the interest of the individual consumer. And a growing number of visitors are becoming special interest travelers who rank heritage and cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for travel. Heritage areas clearly respond to that trend, and that trend is only going to increase over the next decades.

Another way that we work with these areas is through our national Main Street center. As I have already mentioned, we are involved in 18 heritage areas and 118 communities. A good example is the work that we are doing with the first heritage area that was established in Illinois, the Illinois and Michigan National Canal Heritage Corridor. This is the first area designated by Congress.

Since then, as a result of what has happened in that area, and it is a Main Street program, almost \$10 million in public and private funds have been reinvested into the communities within that corridor. They have added 51 new businesses, and an additional 150 full-time jobs.

Based on our experience in working with heritage areas through Main Street, our rural programs, and our tourism programs, the Trust would like to offer the following observations for building on success to date.

Heritage areas have been locally and regionally created, and the leadership and management should continue at that level. Successful heritage areas enlist the support and participation of all interests in their creation, planning, and management. And that coalition building should continue.

Like most new enterprises, the beginning phases of establishing a heritage area is the most difficult, and there is value in seed money in the form of technical assistance to help these heritage areas get off the ground. We support continued grants for these start-ups, but recognize the overall budgetary constraints and think that that funding should not go on in perpetuity.

Heritage areas complement national parks and monuments, and recreation areas, but they are different. We believe they should be guided by legislation that would establish uniform procedures for the designation, establishment and management, but we also think that in tailoring that legislation, it should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. We need to recognize the unique local character within each State and within each one of these areas.

Heritage areas originally are sustained by regional and local efforts, but we also think that there is an important Federal Government role, as we have already said, in their designation and oversight. We think the National Park Service, with pretty limited resources, has done a very good job of working with these areas and modeling very closely what they have done with national parks.

We also think—and I would echo the statements of Mr. Hoffman—that the criteria that the Park Service uses for designating national parks is a model for designating heritage areas and getting them off the ground. After Congress approves a designation, it must carefully consider providing financial assistance for certain activities such as technical help, grants for preservation projects and exhibits, and related operational expenses. It should have maximum flexibility and provide each heritage area enough time to become self-supporting before limiting or reducing assistance.

While heritage areas must be locally driven, Congress should develop uniform guidelines that would reflect a common vision for the designation and a clear definition of what constitutes a heritage area. And we would look forward to working with you, and with the Park Service in establishing those criteria.

We think that this is a valuable initiative to help local communities tell their story. We have lots of stories in this country, and that is what makes us great. And they are all unique. We think heritage areas are a wonderful way to allow communities to understand their own history, to attract visitors there, and to revitalize communities that perhaps have lost their shine.

Again, we look forward to working with you, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Senator THOMAS. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Higgins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHRYN HIGGINS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC POLICY,
NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee for this opportunity to testify today on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation concerning the designation and management of national heritage areas. Since Congress approved the first heritage area designation some twenty years ago, the National Trust has been highly supportive of this initiative that fosters the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation across the country. We particularly encourage those partnerships among federal, state, and local governments along with the private sector that promote a greater understanding of America's heritage.

For more than 50 years, the National Trust has been helping people protect the nation's historic resources. As a private nonprofit organization with more than a quarter million members, the National Trust is the leader of a vigorous preservation movement that is saving the best of our past for the future. The need for the National Trust has increased since its founding in 1949 just as the need for heritage areas has grown. When historic buildings and neighborhoods are torn down or allowed to deteriorate, we not only lose a part of our past forever, we also lose a chance to revitalize our communities.

Since 1980, the National Trust's Main Street Center has been working with neighborhoods across the nation to revitalize their older or traditional commercial areas through historic preservation. The program was originally developed to save historic commercial architecture and the fabric of the built environment, but it has become a powerful economic development tool as well. The best example I can provide you comes directly from the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. There, an initiative modeled after the Main Street program was launched last year that is specifically designed to breathe new life into 6 of the area's historic business districts along the spine of the canal. Called the "Corridor Market Town Initiative," it is a blend of regional heritage preservation and main street revitalization for Slatington, Palmerton, Lehigh, Jim Thorpe, Lansford, and White Haven. The State of Pennsylvania provided funding for this project.

Similarly, the National Trust—as one of the partners with the National Park Service in the Save America's Treasures program (SAT)—is working to protect America's threatened cultural treasures along with Honorary Chair Laura Bush. In the Cane River National Heritage Area, SAT monies and private sector matching funds were used to restore the historic Prudhomme-Rouquier House, which was reopened to the public last year, and attracts many tourists annually. SAT monies are

also being used to restore Melrose Plantation nearby. These sites are significant to the history and the heritage tourism of the Cane River National Historic Area.

Through our Community Partners division, the National Trust assists preservation organizations, local governments, and community development corporations in revitalizing historic properties, central business districts, and urban neighborhoods. The link between older buildings, historic places, and economic development—one of the major byproducts of heritage areas—is crucial to our efforts. Among the tools our Community Partners division uses to leverage private re-investment in historic properties is the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit—an incentive that has widespread utility to restore buildings for commercial re-use in heritage areas across the county.

The National Trust believes that the stewardship of the nation's cultural and natural resources as outlined in the President's recent Executive Order "Preserve America" makes a most compelling case for the continued designation of heritage areas and the federal government's strong role in their creation, designation, financial support, and oversight. While such places originate from, and are sustained by, regional and local efforts, the federal government is their natural and necessary partner. Preserve America sets forth the base from which these effective relationships may arise, and highlights all the ingredients that the National Trust and local and regional organizations use in creating effective heritage areas. These include building partnerships that work, promoting preservation through heritage tourism, stewardship of historic resources, and improving federal agency planning and accountability.

The President's timing for the Executive Order is excellent. Support for heritage areas has been increasing over the years and has grown noticeably with the country's stronger connection to its history and culture in the aftermath of September 11th. In the past three years the number of designations has increased from 18 to 23 nationwide. So far, there are 11 pending designations before Congress and several other initiatives in the pipeline to study the feasibility of designation. Furthermore, the National Park Service has 3 feasibility studies underway related to the establishment of such areas.

Heritage areas are so popular because they work across several levels of government in conjunction with the private sector. So many of these partnerships effect the very goals of Preserve America in leveraging to communities economic development, tourism, strategic planning, redevelopment, and revitalization benefits through our national legacy. And heritage areas achieve these goals with a fraction of the federal costs associated with establishing and operating similar functions through a National Park. Heritage areas pool local and regional resources on a targeted basis to achieve their goals. Since the program began only 10 percent of the overall funding for heritage areas has come from the federal government. State and local governments have provided 36 percent and the private sector has contributed 26 percent. One of the main reasons why heritage partnerships are so popular is because of the economic development dividend it provides to localities and regions.

One of the principal economic benefits is tourism. The National Trust defines cultural heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present." Heritage tourism includes the very historic, cultural, and natural resources that heritage areas seek to protect and offer the American public. Two significant travel trends will dominate the tourism market in the next decade. Travel packages are being tailored to the interests of the individual consumer and a growing number of visitors are becoming special interest travelers who rank the arts, heritage and/or other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for traveling.

Let me provide you with a concrete example of the economic benefits that heritage areas leverage into states and local communities from the National Trust's perspective. In 1991, our National Main Street Center established a Main Street program in the Illinois and Michigan National Canal Heritage Corridor—the first heritage area designated by Congress. Since the program was established, almost \$10 million in public and private funds have been reinvested in the communities within the Corridor such as Lockport and the Upper Illinois Valley with a new gain of 51 businesses and 150 full-time jobs. The I&M Canal program is now part of the Illinois statewide Main Street program.

Based on our experience with heritage areas through the National Trust's Main Street, Rural Heritage, and Heritage Tourism Programs, I would like to offer the following observations for building on the successes of the twenty years of the national heritage area act.

1. Although heritage areas most often complement national parks, national monuments, and national recreation areas, heritage areas are different by their

very nature. They often include existing federal, state, and locally protected areas, communities, and jurisdictions, and embrace different combinations of resources. Since heritage areas begin at the local level, organizers seek to establish coalitions of governments, agencies, and private sector partners that are highly responsive to the unique characteristics of that particular designation, including economic development plans that highlight and enhance the rich historic qualities distinctive to that area. Heritage areas must be guided by strong legislation that would establish uniform procedures for their designation, establishment, and management—but at the same time Congress must recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach would be inappropriate for local historic and cultural resources.

2. Heritage areas have been locally or regionally created and the primary role should be at that level.

3. Heritage areas respond to the need to integrate natural and historic resource protection with sustainable economic activity. Successful heritage areas must enlist the support and participation of all interests in their creation, planning, and management.

4. Heritage areas respond to local or regional goals to maintain and promote individual character and identity, and to resist being overwhelmed by homogeneous sprawl. Restoring buildings and preserving natural and cultural resources sustains a community's special character, and enhances economic activity.

5. Like most new enterprises, the beginning is the most difficult period in the creation of viable heritage areas. Organizing and involving the many diverse public and private interests is extremely labor intensive. Seed support in the form of technical assistance is critical. The Trust supports grants for these start-ups, but recognizes the budgetary limitations in this area.

THE FEDERAL ROLE IN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

Heritage areas originate and are sustained by regional and local efforts, but the National Trust strongly supports the federal government's role in the creation, designation, oversight, and financial support of national heritage areas. The federal government is a natural and necessary partner and can serve as a clearinghouse for technical expertise and information to replicate best practices in the establishment of future heritage areas.

The National Trust recognizes the invaluable role of the National Park Service in the area of heritage conservation for many years and in managing heritage partnerships—with technical assistance—throughout the country. Furthermore, the Park Service's expertise in recommending to Congress the establishment of National Park units should guide its role in assisting—not leading—communities as they assess their resources and plan for their conservation and interpretation. The National Trust recommends that Congress consider a framework for heritage areas and a role for the NPS that would:

1. fund and evaluate Congressionally authorized feasibility studies;
2. require the completion and approval of a feasibility study before proposing an area for designation;
3. provide recommendations to Congress for designation of a heritage area after the review of feasibility studies;
4. approve the designation's management plan; and
5. provide financial assistance to designated areas for the development of a required management plan and other activities pursuant to that plan approved by the Secretary.

After Congress approves a designation, it must carefully consider providing federal assistance for certain heritage area activities such as technical help, grants for preservation projects and exhibits, and related operational expenses. The National Trust urges the committee to provide maximum flexibility for this funding to ensure that the responsible parties can fully implement their heritage area plans. These plans are developed locally and areas may need to use funds in different ways to implement their goals. In addition, Congress should provide each heritage area enough time to become self-supporting before limiting or reducing federal assistance. We recommend that the committee review the need for longer-term operations funding in its consultation with the coordinating entities from existing heritage areas.

Lastly, while heritage areas must be locally driven, Congress should develop uniform guidelines that would reflect a common vision for their designation and a clear definition of what constitutes a heritage area. The National Trust advises against guidelines that would place severe limitations on future designations or hamper the efforts already underway at existing areas, but a basic framework is necessary for

the future success of the program. The National Trust would be eager to work with you in setting forth such guidance.

Mr. Chairman, the heritage areas program is tremendously valuable to telling this great nation's story to present and future generations. It has another valuable story to tell as well that our historic and cultural resources are important assets to our sense of place. In providing that sense of place these resources also generate economic development and foster community revitalization. Heritage areas convey all these benefits with a comparatively small percentage of federal investment and utilize the combined resources of the local and regional support that underpins the program. With appropriate guidance and legislation from Congress, and a well-defined federal role, the heritage areas program will continue to be a most successful model for the future.

Senator THOMAS. Mr. Sachse.

**STATEMENT OF C. ALLEN SACHSE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DELAWARE AND LEHIGH NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR
COMMISSION**

Mr. SACHSE. Mr. Chairman. My name is Allen Sachse. I'm the executive director of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission. And I guess we are one of the experimental areas—oh, is this not on? Okay. I am sorry.

I guess we are one of the experimental areas because we were the third designated National Heritage Area. D&L, as we call it, is located in the eastern Pennsylvania, five counties, and it has long been known as an area with great opportunity. This is where America's anthracite coal, iron and steel, and transportation industries emerged and flourished for decades, and became giants in the American industrial revolution.

Following World War II, though, these significant industries and this transportation corridor started to decline. The mines closed. The railroads no longer were competitive, and the steel production started moving elsewhere.

Visionaries in the area searched for ways to protect this nationally historic story. And in the late seventies, the historic canal and overland railroads became the focal point and inspiration for the region. The designation as a National Heritage Corridor was the inspiration to lead us to the process of heritage development.

After the designation, an extensive public dialogue followed. And along the path of implementation, the Commission has funded over 110 projects, and we have formed many partnerships on the way. I am pleased to report for every dollar that Congress has appropriated to us through the Heritage Partnership Program, we have leveraged over \$10.

I would like to share with you a couple of our major accomplishments. The spine of the Delaware and Lehigh is this historic transportation system. And along this system, we are in the process of establishing a 160-mile trail.

At the time we were putting our management plan together in the early nineties, 75 percent of this land had public access. A big portion of it was owned by the State. I can report that we have received some funding through the ISTEPA Program, and we have been able to work with local governments and nonprofit groups to fill in the gaps where this right-of-way was missing.

We have right now underway 70 or 60 miles of this local government portion that is under design. And of that we have funding in place already for construction of trail along 30 miles of that. We

have helped the State park gather funding to refurbish some significant resources in the Delaware Canal such as locks and aqueducts.

As we move forward, we realize that there is a burden there with municipalities maintaining this trail as it is being built. So we have created a volunteer maintenance crew. We call it the D&L Tenders. In the first 4 years of the program, we have had 3,000 volunteers come forward, and they have provided 22,000 hours of time to the D&L Trail.

One of our most gratifying partnerships was a project called the Number 9 Mine and Wash Shanty in Lansford. This is a mine that closed in 1972. At the time, it was the longest continually operating anthracite coal mine in the world. In 1994, volunteers started the process of opening it, and creating a museum at the Wash Shanty. The commission helped them with assistance, and grant management, and interpretation in funding. And last summer, the museum was opened.

Our most notable partnership is Two Rivers Landing in Easton. It was led by the city of Easton, and it focused on the corner of public square. They had three out of four buildings abandoned. And today, on that square, is the national—our visitors center, the Crayola Discovery Center, the National Canal Museum, Crayola Store, McDonald's Express, City Hall. This particular project has brought 2 million visitors to the city of Easton since 1996, and has resulted in over 300 businesses being either opened or expanded, most of them expansions.

We recently started a project with the Pennsylvania Downtown Center. They give services to six small towns in our corridor along the spine. What we have done is put together a partnership that is going to give assistance to the communities in combining the Main Street approach and also our heritage development approach. I would like to say that often we are perceived as having—or our National Heritage Areas, as having regulatory power over land use. We do not. Our public law restricts us from that.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the commission serves as an enabler, a facilitator, a keeper of the vision. We are not managers of the resources, for we own none. We have no special authority or regulatory power. We really should not have any. Our initiative programs and actions are a result of local communities and the residents of that area. And we really have erased much traditional political boundaries and have inspired accomplishments beyond what we imagined at the beginning. Thank you.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. Very fine. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sachse follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF C. ALLEN SACHSE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DELAWARE AND LEHIGH NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, my name is Allen Sachse, and I am Executive Director of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission. The Commission is the administrator of the National Heritage Corridor (NHC) and PA Heritage Parks Program (PHPP) for the Delaware & Lehigh heritage area of eastern Pennsylvania. I also sit on the Board of Directors of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and serve as President of the Board of the PA Heritage Parks Association. Prior to my existing position, I was employed with the Commonwealth of PA and involved with the crafting and implementation of the PA Heritage Parks Program. I appreciate the opportunity to ap-

pear before the Subcommittee to offer my observations of the growing heritage movement and share with you some of the specific opportunities resulting in real accomplishments in the Delaware and Lehigh NHC.

The last two decades has seen the emergence of heritage area partnerships across the country, each attempting to tell its part of the American story. Today there may be 200 or more such projects. As you know, Congress has recognized 23 as being worthy to be designated as National Heritage Areas. Having had the opportunity to assist many of the PA Heritage Parks evolve from a vision to a reality, I believe there are some very common similarities among the more successful heritage partnerships:

- Foremost is the strong local pride of heritage, history, place and the belief that the region has a story to share;
- This pride is embraced by the broadest range of community leaders—representing the fields of conservation, preservation, education, economic development and government;
- The region exhibits a distinctive landscape, clearly reflecting its cultural and natural heritage; and
- Finally, there is a genuine consensus that the protection of heritage resources will improve the quality of life and enhance the region's economic base.

Heritage areas are driven by citizens, proud of their heritage and place, desiring a prosperous future for their grandchildren, while honoring and showcasing the sacrifices of their grandparents. Heritage area partnerships contribute significantly to the quality of life for a region. However, I think we all agree, not all heritage areas should be national heritage areas. The formulation of a credible process to determine whether a heritage area is to receive such a designation by Congress is a challenge. I would suggest the final designation should follow, not precede, a process to determine the significance of the story, the collection of resources supporting the determination of significance, the integrity of those resources, the complexity of the challenge, and the leadership capacity of the region to carry out the vision. Later, I will offer some suggestions as to a process that has worked in PA.

Congress designated the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor in November of 1988 by Public Law 100-692. The Act also established a 21-member federal Commission to develop a management action plan and to implement the plan. The Corridor was the third such designated area and had few models or examples to follow. The growing pains of being locally driven and managed but operating within a federal structure were sometimes confusing and often challenging. The Commission is very appreciative of tremendous support and assistance received from the Mid Atlantic Regional Office of the National Parks Service in the early days. Much of our success can be contributed to the guidance received from the NPS in crafting a regional vision for heritage preservation and development. We still call upon the same office of the NPS for guidance and assistance, only less frequently, and I am happy to report the assistance is always there.

In January 1993, the Management Action Plan (MAP) was completed and submitted to the Secretary for review and approval. Ironically, the MAP process consumed half of the Commission's initial authorization period. When the Commission was due to sunset in 1998, the Commission was still in the early stages of implementation. Thus, the Commission requested and received from Congress an extension of its authorization by Public Law 105-355.

The Delaware & Lehigh NHC is located within five counties of eastern PA and today is home to over 1.5 million Pennsylvanians. The Corridor has long been known as a land of great opportunity. Hard-working people, entrepreneurial leadership, and an abundance of natural resources lead to early and enduring innovations in transportation and industry. This is where America's anthracite coal, iron and steel, transportation, cement and other industries emerged and flourished for decades to become the giants of the American Industrial Revolution. It became home, and still is today, to a diversity of immigrants seeking opportunity and a new life for their families in America. The Corridor was often the platform for many social changes that are now taken for granted—including religious freedom, the separation of church and state, equality among people and workers rights.

In the years following World War II, this significant industrial and transportation corridor began to unravel. As the mines in the north closed, the railroads could no longer compete with the interstate highway system, and steel production started moving elsewhere. During the last half of the 20th Century, the Delaware, Lehigh, and Wyoming Valleys separately tackled the industrial decline, seeking new ways to grow and prosper into the 21st Century. However, visionaries in each of the Valleys toiled over ways to protect their part of this nationally significant story. In the late 70s, the historic canal and overland rail system provided a common focal point

and the Congressional designation of the Delaware & Lehigh NHC was truly the inspiration to nurture the concept of heritage preservation/development.

The Commission led an extensive public dialogue and a multi-faceted vision for the Corridor evolved from its residents and leaders:

- A region that becomes even more strongly defined by the remarkable remains of history—a greener region, with towns centered on clean rivers;
- The continuation of innovation that has always characterized the Corridor, with the capacity to sustain a healthy environment and visible heritage for our children;
- A robust economic future based on the desirability and rarity of our singular natural and cultural environment, a park-like living landscape; and
- Pride and an ethic of stewardship growing in the heart of every resident—to understand the meaning of what we have, and act to uphold it.

To achieve the vision, the Commission undertook an ambitious agenda. We are extremely proud of the many partnerships with conservation, preservation, and development agencies established along the way. Since the approval of the MAP, and the designation of the corridor as a PA Heritage Park the same year, the Commission has funded and managed over 110 projects supporting the mission of the Corridor. I am pleased to report for every dollar appropriated by Congress to the Delaware & Lehigh via the Heritage Partnership Program, the Commission and our partners have successfully leveraged over ten dollars in funding from other sources. (Through FY 02 the Commission has received a total of \$5,140,200 in Heritage Partnership funding.)

The MAP outlined a four-fold mission. To demonstrate the possibilities and exemplify the empowerment of heritage partnerships I would like to share with you a major accomplishment in each track:

To conserve the historic canals and amplify the recreation and educational opportunities based on them

D&L Trail—The 160 mile historic transportation system of overland railroads and canals is the “spine” of the corridor. The system was remarkable in its time for its engineering, innovation and vision. Today it is remarkable for its integrity and endurance. The Lehigh Canal was the nation’s longest operating towpath canal. (Over 100 years ceasing operations in 1932) The lift locks in the Upper Grand Section of the Lehigh Canal were twice the scale of anything built at that time. The Switchback Railroad was the first commercially successful railroad in the nation. The Delaware Canal remains the most intact towpath canal in the country and is recognized as a National Historic Landmark. This transportation system is the centerpiece of an extensive system of sites, facilities and tours that collectively will tell the Corridor’s stories.

When writing the MAP, approximately 75% of this historic system was in public ownership and two-thirds of it opened as a trail, with much of the it in need of upgrading. It was apparent very early in the planning process that completing a trail from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol was a high priority to the citizens. Recently a multi-year acquisition project involving 30 miles of abandoned railroad right-of-way was completed. The major gaps along the D&L Trail have been closed. The Commission obtained funding for this project through the ISTEA program and managed the project on behalf of several partners, who were the receivers of the rail-to-trail. Already one-third of this future portion of the trail is under design. The design for the remaining will be awarded this spring using TEA, state and local funding. In another portion of the D&L Trail, the Commission expects to complete the design for 25+ miles of the Lehigh Canal Towpath this summer with the project going out to bid shortly afterwards. This project was also worthy of a TEA grant.

Along the Delaware Canal State Park, the Commission has obtained TEA and other funding to assist with restoration and interpretation of major canal structures, allowing water to flow freely again—Tohickon Aqueduct, Ground Hog Lock, New Hope Lock #11 and Bristol Lock #4.

Support for the D&L Trail goes beyond the Corridor, as demonstrated by the fact that Commission has leveraged \$14.8m in Transportation Enhancement funding—a figure equaling 24% of our total funding. This would not have been possible without a compelling case set forward in the MAP, strong citizen support, and the demonstrated capacity of the Commission to complete multi-jurisdictional projects. When complete, the D&L Trail will offer a great recreational experience, but beyond that it will provide outstanding interpretation of one of the nation’s oldest transportation system from mine to market. The D&L Trail, a resource once thought of only as a dream, is well on its way to becoming a reality.

To broadly tell the story of the region by strengthening the infrastructure for interpretation and education

The Commission relied heavily on the expertise of the NPS to craft the framework for the interpretive part of our mission. As you can imagine the complexities were enormous. By way of an Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement, the Commission obtained the services of an Interpretative Planner, who skillfully managed the process. The Commission now has in place: *Visually Speaking*—a signage and graphic system; *Flexible Exhibit Guidelines*—for use at D&L Landings and exhibits at partner sites; and an *Interpretation and Education Plan*—to assist partners in defining and telling their part of the D&L story. Collectively they provide the “tool kit” necessary to connect the hundreds of communities, trails, cultural sites, interpretative facilities, as well as projecting a common image for the Corridor.

No. 9 Mine and Wash Shanty Museum—An extremely gratifying partnership is the No. 9 Mine and Wash Shanty Museum in the small community of Lansford. First open in 1855 as a part of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company’s holdings. When closed in 1972 the mine had the distinction of being the oldest continually operating anthracite mine in the world. For years there was a grassroots effort to save this part of the anthracite story. In 1994, volunteers begin the laborious process of re-opening the mine for tours and creating a museum at the abandoned wash shanty. The Commission provided assistance in grant management, interpretation, as well as, funding for planning and implementation. As volunteers unsealed the mine and removed decades of muck from the No. 9, while a parallel effort to establish a museum moved forward.

Today, they mine Dreams! The mine re-opened, in June 2002, giving 6,000 visitors the experience of going 1,600 feet in the side of a mountain, and a visit to the Wash Shanty is like a visit to the “town’s attic.”

Levee Trail—The best way to experience the D&L wayside signage system is join hundreds of Wyoming Valley residents walking the recently completed portions of the soon-to-be 12 mile levee trail and watch them pausing to read the history and stories of the Valley. This same type of interpretation will be part of the D&L Trail as construction proceeds.

To establish a framework for stewardship, which will preserve significant historical sites, enhance recreation, and conserve the natural and cultural environment

D&L Tenders—It was quite apparent as we worked with local partners to assume more responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the trail system that the capacity of local communities to care for the improvements needed to be addressed. A partnership between the Commission and the Wildlands Conservancy, a local non-profit, was formed to create a citizen volunteer group called the D&L Trail Tenders. Initially, working within the Lehigh Watershed, the Wildlands formed a core of volunteers to serve the Lehigh Canal portion of the D&L Trail. This is a region where much of the historic trail is owned and managed by small communities and non-profit groups. The pilot program was a huge success. Recently the Commission assumed the leadership of the program so that the program could extend beyond the boundary of the Lehigh reaching the Wyoming Valley to the north and the Delaware Valley to the south. In just four years there have been over 3,000 volunteers giving more that 22,000 hours of time to the D&L Trail. They have removed shrubs and trees from the locks of the Upper Grand Section of the Lehigh Canal, discovered and unearthed a hidden railroad roundhouse in Lehigh Gorge State Park, and removed tons of litter and debris from the Lehigh Canal, Trail and River.

Provide opportunities for capitalizing on Heritage Development

Two Rivers Landing—Upon the completion of the MAP, the City of Easton (pop. 30,000) stepped forward and invited the Commission to partner with the city on two initiatives recommended in the MAP—the creation of a Landing (visitor center) and the development of a “heritage attraction.” Seed funding from several of the partners led to a plan and revitalization strategy for downtown Easton drawing on the wealth of heritage resources in the city. The partnership included the City of Easton, Binney & Smith (Crayola), Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums (HMHPM), Easton Economic Development Corporation, Lafayette College, and the Commission. The focus was to design an investment strategy for a quarter section of the public square. This corner contained the largest department store in the city that was vacant for four years, an abandoned shoe store, and a nine-story office building vacated for several years. Two of the three buildings were architecturally important to downtown Easton. The only viable business on the corner was a jeweler. The plan evolved into a powerful concept known as Two Rivers Landing. With

significant funding commitments from the state, city and private sources, the concept moved forward. Today these same buildings house the National Heritage Corridor Visitor's Center, Crayola Factory (discovery center), the National Canal Museum, Crayola Store, McDonald's Express, City Hall, and office space.

Since the opening of the Landing in the summer of 1996 over two million visitors have passed through the door. Easton has experienced a dramatic restructuring of its economic base. In the spring of 2000 the Business Activity Report for the City listed 337 new or expanded businesses. In the first seven-year period after the 1993 announcement, employment increased 26% from 9,189 to 11,601, a gain of more than 340 jobs per year. During the same period the Business Privilege Tax receipts increased 57%. Probably the most telling statistic is the daily cars parking at the municipal garage increased—6,739 a year in 1995 to 67,333 a year in 1999.

The Corridor Market Towns Initiative (www.markettowns.net)—Each of proceeding examples focuses on a major part of our mission. In reality, most initiatives or projects cover a multitude of goals and I would like to offer one more initiative that demonstrates the power of heritage preservation and development that is still in its formative stage.

Market Towns is a cooperative effort between the PA Downtown Center, a state-wide non-profit, and the Commission. The partnership also includes six small towns (none over 5,000 in population) along the "spine" of the Corridor. The communities share a common history linked by the Lehigh Canal, railroads, industry, and natural resources. These communities also share a desire to improve their livability and economic health, but have limited resources.

The PA Department of Community and Economic Development granted four-year funding support to the partnership for a "pilot" community revitalization project that will embrace the heritage resources of the region. The Market Towns Initiative will combine the four point "Main Street" approach with our 'heritage development' approach. The Market Towns Manager is in place and the project has been up and running for a year. Already the Market Towns office has a full agenda with new historic districts, trails linking to the D&L Trail, façade and store-front improvements, investment strategies for historic properties, streets-scrapes, gateways and interpretation of key resources. The Market Towns has provided optimism and inspiration to a part of the Corridor that, more often than not, found it difficult to keep pace with its more aggressive and better-equipped metropolitan neighbors.

The Delaware & Lehigh NHC, unlike many National Heritage Areas, has the good fortune to also receive support from the PA Heritage Parks Program (PHPP), which is administered by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In fact, over the years, the Commission has received PHPP funding totaling \$5.7 million, which is slightly more than the NPS Heritage Partnership funding for the same period. The two programs have been very complementary and provided the Commission the flexibility needed to move the vision forward, especially in the early years. Most of the PHPP funds were extended to local partners to support local projects, which in turn leveraged additional local funding.

The Commission is particularly pleased with the amount of private funding forthcoming to support the initiatives of the Commission and our partners. Support from private sources amount to approximately 15% of all funds. However, most of the contributions have been to our partners in support of local share. As you might suspect, sometimes there is a reluctance to contribute directly to the federal government no matter the size of the Commission. It is still very gratifying and speaks of the broad support and types of partnerships the Commission has had.

Also, it is apparent that various programs, such as the D&L Tenders, will require continual private support. A parallel non-profit agency was recently created to assume the management of such activities.

You have asked me to address the issue of impact on private lands. Sometimes there is perception, not based on fact, that national heritage areas have some special regulatory authority. In addition to the NHC status, the Delaware & Lehigh is also a federal commission and a designated PA Heritage Park. The Public Law 100-692, designating the NHC and creating the Commission, gives us no power or authority to the Commission over local lands. The Commission is able to acquire lands only from willing sellers and must transfer any lands acquired to a local agency. Likewise, the PA Heritage Park designation provides no such authority and if it did so, the Commission is still governed by the Public Law 100-692.

I can report to you that although the Commission has assisted with land acquisition, we have never had the need to acquire land even for an interim period. For example, when acquiring the previously mentioned 30 miles of abandoned rail right-of-way, the Commission managed the ISTEA process and assisted with land negotiations on behalf of a county, a township and a non-profit agency. The land was owned by two railroads the Northern, Blue Mountain and Reading and the Norfolk South-

ern. The right-of-way was at one time the main line of the former Lehigh Valley RR. Historically, Lehigh Valley obtained full control of all their main lines. The land was acquired directly by the local agencies.

Additional issues relating to both private and public lands are already being addressed as design of the trail moves forward. These issues include the conflicts of use and respect for the rights of adjoining properties owners. The greatest concern by adjoining property owners is a pre-existing problem, and that is trespassing by users of off-road motorized vehicles. This is a valid concern to the Commission, and the local land managers have determined that this use will not be allowed. The D&L Tenders will be of great assistance to the local managers in monitoring this activity. Also, the Commission is working with various partners to find a suitable place for off-road motorized vehicles.

Finally, I would like to briefly revisit the designation process. The PA Heritage Parks program requires a two step process before designation is granted. First is the feasibility study, which determines the study area, the lead agency, the stakeholders, the public support, the appropriate theme(s) within the state framework, and supporting resources. If approved by a state interagency task force, the project area may go forward to the management action plan phase. If not, the applicant is offered assistance through the more traditional categorical and technical assistance programs. When completed, the management action plan will be reviewed by the same interagency task force, which, if appropriate, makes a recommendation for approval to the Governor. The Governor has final approval. The state provides funding assistance for the two-step planning process.

A comparison of the process as it relates to the Delaware & Lehigh and the Congressional designation would be as follows:

- November 1988 Delaware & Lehigh was designated a NHC
- In 1990 planning for both the NHC and the state heritage park commence
- The MAP was completed in January 1993 and submitted the Secretary of Interior and the Commonwealth of PA for review and approval
- In April 1993 the Governor of PA approved the Delaware & Lehigh as a PA Heritage Park eligible for management and implementation funding

The key is the PA process allows for public dialogue before the designation is approved.

In conclusion, I believe it is extremely important to note that the Commission serves as an enabler, facilitator and a "keeper of the vision." We are not managers of resources for we own no land. We have no special authority or regulatory power over local land use, nor should we have. Our initiatives, programs, actions and projects are in response to requests from local agencies and the residents of the corridor. Our heritage projects have erased traditional boundaries and our partnerships have inspired accomplishments beyond our imagination. A strong, locally driven heritage partnership is truly a powerful tool for balancing the past and the future.

Again, I thank you for the invitation to appear before the Subcommittee. I appreciate your interest in the heritage partnership movement. As you know, every heritage area is unique to local resources and leadership, and I do not presume to speak for all heritage areas. I am available to answer any questions you may have and I would like to extend an invitation to you or your staff to visit the Delaware & Lehigh NHC to see first hand the accomplishment of our partnership.

Senator THOMAS. Mr. Knight.

**STATEMENT OF PEYTON KNIGHT, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR,
AMERICAN POLICY CENTER**

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of property rights advocates across the country who are concerned with the impact of National Heritage Areas on land use, private property rights, and local communities.

One of the biggest fears that both residential and commercial property owners have about heritage areas is that they will effectively lead to restrictive Federal zoning and land-use planning. Why do they fear this? Because funding and technical assistance for heritage areas are currently administered through the National

Park Service, an agency that, unfortunately, has become synonymous with lost property rights.

Indeed, section 6.1.6 of the management plan for the National Coal Heritage Area in West Virginia, a management plan that was created with funding and technical assistance provided by the Park Service, states, "Southern West Virginia counties, like rural areas across the United States, lack land-use controls completely or else have controls that are weak or ineffective. The visual landscape that results is often cluttered and frequently unattractive."

This, of course, is a blatant move towards increased restrictions on development, and stringent zoning controls.

Furthermore, language of restricted land use is not unique to the National Coal Heritage Areas. Nearly every heritage area has a management plan or statement of purpose that calls for restrictive zoning regulations, under the auspices of more environmental protection, more open space and more historic preservation. This typically results in more infringements upon the property rights of landowners located within the boundaries of the heritage areas.

Now, proponents of National Heritage Areas have claimed that the Park Service merely provides technical assistance and innocently serves as a conduit by which funds are transferred from the Federal Government to the citizen planning boards and special interest groups entrusted with the crafting of the blueprints governing heritage areas. However, such an assertion is highly dubious, because if it were true, it may mark the first time in the history of Federal grantmaking, where the funding agency refused to get intimately involved in the program it was funding. It is just not realistic.

This trend was borne out when the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area in Georgia was in its developmental stages in 1994. The National Park Service refused to accept the management plan put forth by the Augusta Canal Authority until zoning regulations were made stricter.

Private property rights advocates are also worried that National Heritage Areas will effectively become part of the National Parks program. Despite attempts by proponents to assuage these fears, unfortunately these fears are well founded.

The Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, located in southwestern Pennsylvania, boldly states on its Web site, "Rivers of Steel is spearheading a drive to create a national park on 38 acres of original mill site. Bills have been introduced before the U.S. Congress to make this urban national park a reality."

Thus, here is an example of a National Heritage Area, funded and guided by the National Park Service, taking the initiative in lobbying Congress for land acquisition and the creation of yet another national park. It hardly appears that heritage areas and national parks are strictly dichotomous. It is also worthwhile to note that this is happening at a time when funding for Federal land acquisition is becoming more and more scarce.

If the Heritage Areas program is allowed to proliferate, experience shows that it will become not only a funding albatross, as more and more interest groups gather around the Federal trough, but also a program that quashes property rights and local economies through restrictive Federal zoning practices.

The real beneficiaries of a National Heritage Areas program are conservation groups, preservation societies, land trusts, and the National Park Service; essentially, organizations that are in constant pursuit of Federal dollars, land acquisition, and restrictions on development.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to testify on this very important issue. And I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. Thank you.

Well, thanks to all of you. I appreciate it very much.

Ms. Higgins, how many heritage areas are there that the National Trust is involved in?

Ms. HIGGINS. We have—by our calculation, there are 18 of the 23 where we have an active role, particularly through our Main Street program. There are 118 Main Street programs that we have an affiliation with that are a part of these heritage areas. And Main Street, as you may know, is a program that is run out of the National Trust. We work with local communities all across the country to revitalize their downtown commercial districts using historic preservation and working with business owners to help them attract new businesses to them.

Senator THOMAS. I understand the economics and attracting new business. What does that have to do with heritage areas?

Ms. HIGGINS. As I mentioned in my remarks, the people who are looking to travel want to come to places that are unique and—

Senator THOMAS. I understand that, but then if you are talking about economic development, that does not seem like it fits necessarily into heritage.

Ms. HIGGINS. I think one of the byproducts of a heritage area is defining an area that has a unique characteristic in it, and—

Senator THOMAS. I think that in some cases, do you not, that it is more than a byproduct? Do you not think that is the real drive for doing it in the first place?

Ms. HIGGINS. It may be. I mean, I think that when people—communities that have—for example, the Rivers of Steel in western Pennsylvania, communities that have lost the steel industry, the question is: What do they become now? And one of the strategies is to look at: What are the assets there? What makes them unique? Is that something where they can come together and think about how to take those assets, the physical assets, the buildings, mills, other things that are there, and use them in another way.

Senator THOMAS. Do you not suppose that there are more than 40 little towns in the United States that could use some Main Street activity?

Ms. HIGGINS. Main Street, from the Trust perspective, is engaged in over 1,300 communities.

Senator THOMAS. But whose responsibility is that, the Federal Government's?

Ms. HIGGINS. Well, not uniquely, no. I mean, we are a national nonprofit, and Main Street—

Senator THOMAS. I understand, but you are looking for money from the Federal Government. That is why you have a heritage area.

Ms. HIGGINS. We—the Trust is not.

Senator THOMAS. Well, somebody is. I mean, I do not say that is bad, but it seems like it is a little difficult when we go through this thing—and Mr. Sachse, you may want to comment on that—if it is economic development, is not that something different than heritage?

Mr. SACHSE. No, the two are connected very, very strongly. I think heritage areas deal with the belief and philosophy that if there is an economic alternative and if it is driven by private citizens or residents of the area, and they have a good viable use, they will act to preserve their particular resources.

Senator THOMAS. Absolutely. But why does it need to be called a National Heritage Area?

Mr. SACHSE. Well, it is designated a National Heritage Area because those resources in that area are significant—

Senator THOMAS. Oh, well—

Mr. SACHSE [continuing]. The level of significance to be a National Heritage Area.

Senator THOMAS. Well, then, we have to define it, do we not?

Mr. SACHSE. Yes. I agree with that, yes.

Senator THOMAS. You indicated that you had \$1 out of every \$6, was it not, that you said?

Mr. SACHSE. To every \$10 that we receive—

Senator THOMAS. So actually, the total Federal dollars is \$1 out of \$2.

Mr. SACHSE. Our total Federal is not quite that high, but it is probably \$1 out of every \$3.

Senator THOMAS. You spend \$42 million and the Federal spends \$20 million, according to my numbers.

Mr. SACHSE. That—

Senator THOMAS. That is all right, but it is more than what you said, and that is a significant contribution to it, which is fine. But there are a lot of little towns in other places that have businesses that have gone down. I guess what troubles me a little is that if that is going to be the criteria, why, I can sign up a few in Wyoming, quite a few probably in Montana.

Mr. SACHSE. One of the funding programs we have received, in fact our largest funding program, has been the ISTEPA Enhancement Program which was not available at the time the Delaware and Lehigh was created. We just happened to have the resource that is—you know, our Heritage Area is based around this, around the historic transportation system. And we probably have one of the most competitive projects in the State of Pennsylvania. We have actually leveraged about \$14.5 million from the TEA program over the years to support what we have been doing along this historic transportation system.

Senator THOMAS. What is the role of the Park Service in your heritage area?

Mr. SACHSE. The Park Service provides oversight as was stated earlier. At the very beginning, we were one of the experiments, and the Park Service helped us put together our management plan. They have a seat on the commission so they can attend our meetings. They do not always attend our meetings.

Senator THOMAS. What do you mean by oversight?

Mr. SACHSE. They have oversight on our—we work with them on administration of our budget and the appropriation process. When I say the appropriation process—

Senator THOMAS. Mr. Secretary, you said once that is done, that you do not have any responsibility for the management.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Not the management of the heritage area—I am sorry. Not the management of the heritage area itself. We do have the responsibility to ensure that the Federal dollars are spent for the purposes for which they were applied.

Senator THOMAS. How long does that go on?

Mr. HOFFMAN. For as long as they are spending Federal dollars, they are going to do it subject to Federal policies and regulations.

Senator THOMAS. So when the 15 years is over, you are out of it, is that right?

Mr. HOFFMAN. Yes.

Senator THOMAS. All right. How long have you had this going?

Mr. SACHSE. How long have we been designated? We are probably on our 15th year now. When we were designated in 1988, because we were one of these experimental areas, we did not have a feasibility plan and a management plan at that point in time. It actually took us 5 years to complete the management plan and have the management plan completed.

So we used up basically half of our first sort of 10-year designation in doing the planning process before it reached the Secretary of the Interior's desk. In 1998, we asked for a 10-year extension, and was granted such an extension to bring us in effect to a 15-year management—or implementation period.

Senator THOMAS. I see. Ms. Higgins, so you then—the National Trust does activities that are not national heritage activities.

Ms. HIGGINS. Absolutely. We work with communities all across the country including, Senator, in your State. But our services are also called on to work with heritage areas.

As I mentioned, through our Main Street program, we have a couple of—this very tiny staff in Denver who have expertise in the tourism area, working with communities who want to attract visitors because of their historic resources. We have worked with heritage areas on attracting visitors. We have one person in our national office who works with communities particularly in rural areas, on issues like scenic byways and, you know, historic agricultural resources. And those services are available to heritage areas or anybody who, yes, wants to work with us.

Senator THOMAS. If you were assigned to do something about a criteria or a standard for establishing heritage areas, what do you think would be most important?

Ms. HIGGINS. Well, I think this issue of national significance. I mean, I think that is an important question because there is a concern, I know, in many quarters about areas being designated, whether it is through a political process or some other way, where the site really is not that significant, but they develop political support or local support.

You know, there are criteria that are established through the National Historic Preservation Act about historic sites, landmark. I am not suggesting that those are exactly the right criteria, but

there is a pretty long established history of things that rise to the level of national significance.

Senator THOMAS. Not on heritage areas, however.

Ms. HIGGINS. To my knowledge, they have not been applied to heritage areas. There are certainly sites within heritage areas that would be landmark sites that would meet the criteria of historic significance.

Senator THOMAS. Sometimes. And that is a problem, and it is difficult to determine—

Ms. HIGGINS. Senator, the one thing I think that I find encouraging about this or really that makes it unique is that it really is a local initiative. And so many of the communities where these things have really taken off are areas where they really did not—the old industries die. They have the rust belt communities and—

Senator THOMAS. I have to tell you just from experience—and I do not mean it unkindly—but when you talk about local initiatives, the first thing you think of is “Where are we going to get the money? If we can get it as a heritage thing, we will get \$10 million.”

So local initiative is great, but one of the first things you look for is dollars, right?

Ms. HIGGINS. That is always a factor.

Senator THOMAS. Sure, and properly so. All we are saying, I think, is that there needs to be some criteria so that we do not end up with—I mean, you have got 40 Main Streets somewhere. There are lots of towns that would like to have a Main Street thing.

Ms. HIGGINS. I would tell you that the Main Street program has very strict criteria about what is involved in becoming a Main Street program. They have a very—some people would think too strict.

I think the concern is: Can you develop national criteria that are standards, but that you also—or that are also flexible enough to recognize the unique characteristics of local areas and regions?

Senator THOMAS. All right. Mr. Knight, as you prepared your comments, do you know of particular property owners who have been impacted by the lands within heritage areas?

Mr. KNIGHT. Yes, Senator, I do. One specific example that comes to mind: I traveled to the National Coal Heritage Area in West Virginia last spring, and visited with the citizen’s group who is essentially a group of property owners who stood to lose their homes along the New River because the West Virginia Department of Highways and the Park Service were planning on building a parkway along the river that—and I guess by definition of a parkway, it included certain view-shed requirements. And the notion was that the parkway was going to funnel tourists and tourism dollars.

Senator THOMAS. Is that a heritage area?

Mr. KNIGHT. Yes, it is.

Senator THOMAS. I see. Okay.

Mr. Sachse, what does your heritage area impact? I think you indicated it does not impact land use.

Mr. SACHSE. No, it does not. We have no authority over land use and no control over land use. And in Pennsylvania, land use is made at the lowest level, which is 2,600 local municipalities.

We have an impact on, you know, activities related to preservation and of this historic transportation system. And when I say “an impact,” we provide assistance to help the communities improve the trail. We provide assistance to communities on economic developmental issues. Our Main Street program is going to have impact on the market towns area.

We have had, as I mentioned, over 100 projects that we have given assistance to local groups, and they have been projects that have been requested of us by municipalities. They all fall under the management and—

Senator THOMAS. These are all historic items?

Mr. SACHSE. No. Some are—

Senator THOMAS. They are economic development, right?

Mr. SACHSE. No, they—some were historic preservation. Some would be conservation. Some would be economic development. There were a lot of interpretive projects that we were involved with. There really is a whole host of projects, or types of projects we have been involved with.

I would say, though, that almost every one of the projects when I have mentioned those areas, has hit a couple of those areas. You know, a lot of the economic developments are also preservation ones or conservation ones, or something like that. So they really hit several categories.

Senator THOMAS. Yes. Mr. Knight, I would guess that maintenance of historic areas and historic things are here to stay. What recommendation would you have as that is done for protecting private property rights?

Mr. KNIGHT. True, it is here to stay. And we do have several recommendations to protect private property rights. One of the first would be to require full notification to all landowners whose property would fall within the boundaries of a heritage area.

This is something that—I know that this is not a Senate issue, but there was a heritage areas bill in the House last year. And when this amendment was brought up, it was shot down by the committee working on the bill, and for unknown reasons. But full notification would be something that we would want landowners to have.

We would also want landowners within a heritage area to have to opt in to participating in a heritage area and all that comes along with it. Now, let me be clear about that: Not a letter that shows up on a door saying, “Hey, this is a heritage area and you are in it unless you send this piece of paper back to us saying you do not want to be into it.” We do not think that opt-out would be a very good option. They would have to opt in.

And we also would—if at some point down the road, a heritage area was targeted to become a National Park, or an Urban National Park like they are looking at in the Rivers Heritage Area, we would submit that the Park Service would have to redo the entire process over again and evaluate, go through the normal evaluation procedures for establishing a national park rather than taking a heritage area and merely converting it over to a national park.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. Well, obviously areas that are hoped to save—here is one for instance, the National Coal Heritage Area. It

is in their management plan. "Southern West Virginia counties, like rural areas across the United States, lack land use controls completely or else have controls that are weak or ineffective. Visual landscape that results is cluttered and frequently unattractive." That is in their management plan. That does not say what they are going to do, but obviously it is an issue, and one that we could go on.

Well, listen, I do not want to keep you much longer. Let me go down and ask very shortly—starting with you, Mr. Secretary—what would be your priority of what we might do to help more clearly define and give strength to this program?

Mr. HOFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I think a good set of criteria to help us determine what indeed is "national significance" is important. I do believe that heritage tourism is real, and the economic benefits are measurable. But your question, "Does that mean that every community needs to be a part of a heritage area," is a very good question. And that is where we have a difficult time drawing the line.

Senator THOMAS. Yes. It is not easy.

Mr. HOFFMAN. I also would suggest, though, that the opt-in recommendation that Mr. Knight recommends is a show stopper. We have people in every county in Wyoming who do not pay their property taxes every year which is the ultimate protection of their property rights, which is to pay their property taxes so the county does not come take their land from them. So I do not know how we could ever expect 100 percent of property owners in a heritage area to opt into a program.

Having said that, we believe it is very important that there be significant public involvement and significant public opportunity for people to comment about how they feel a National Heritage Area.

We have said no to designations in the past. There are heritage area organizations that are struggling along who have run into the brick wall of local opposition, and they are not going anywhere. And that is at it should be. If a local community as a whole thinks it is a good thing, then I think the democratic process prevails there and we should consider what the community, taken as a whole, wants to have done in their communities. But significant public support should certainly be part of it, but an opt-in program, I think, is a show stopper.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. Thank you. I think one of the things we ought to ensure, too, is that there is a study, a bona fide study as is the case with the parks.

Ms. Higgins, what would be your base recommendation to make this thing work better?

Ms. HIGGINS. Well, I think, or my understanding is that the criteria or the process that the Park Service now uses for designation of a park which is the study and evaluation and really working it through, is a place to start. We may want to make some adjustments in that, but there is a process that the Park Service follows before a park is actually recommended to the Congress to be funded. And I think that that criteria might be looked at as a way to—

Senator THOMAS. Could be. I think it would have to be a made a little bit more simple. As a matter of fact, the Park Service is substantially behind in doing the studies that have already been approved here. I think it is 15 of them—I cannot remember exactly—are still to be done because they are rather difficult. These could be done more easily perhaps, but some of the criteria might be the same.

Okay. Mr. Sachse.

Mr. SACHSE. Well, I would agree that there should be a process of determining criteria and reaching a certain level of national significance. I am not really sure what that level is.

Senator THOMAS. I know. That is hard.

Mr. SACHSE. That is always the fuzzy part.

Senator THOMAS. Yes.

Mr. SACHSE. The second thing is that I would agree that before there is a designation, there should be some type of public process or some type of study, feasibility study to deal with issues that make sure—that brings a consensus supporting the project forward.

Senator THOMAS. Yes.

Mr. SACHSE. And the other thing, I would just like to make a comment about the Delaware and Lehigh, for instance. I think a lot of the heritage areas are like this. We have a lot of local interest and support, but the scale of the project that we are doing is considerably beyond the level and scale of the project that could be done under normal circumstances in Pennsylvania.

I think that is part of the issue, too, is that we need that sort of recognition to help move this scale of project forward. Dealing with five counties where you have a hundred local governments dealing with, you know, decisionmaking is not an easy process.

Senator THOMAS. Pennsylvania, I think, is kind of leading the pack here, are they not, on heritage areas?

Mr. SACHSE. Yes. And probably the reason why is because the State has a rather strong State Heritage Parks program that has taken—there are 11 State Heritage Parks in Pennsylvania. And it has taken all of those State Heritage Parks through a public planning process. The Secretary made a comment that areas come with the plan. Many of those, you know, areas in Pennsylvania have gone through that process.

Senator THOMAS. Do they work well?

Mr. SACHSE. The Pennsylvania process works well, yes.

Senator THOMAS. Per your statement?

Mr. SACHSE. Yes.

Senator THOMAS. Sometimes it is a little hard to explain when we have the backlog in National Parks that everyone complains about, to be going on into new areas that could possibly be done by the States.

Mr. SACHSE. Well, I would venture to say that most National Heritage Areas, we are providing assistance of National Park and helping to protect and preserve resources beyond what their capacity would be. And it is a locally driven process.

Senator THOMAS. All right. Mr. Knight, what would be your suggestion?

Mr. KNIGHT. Well, if I could, Senator, just touch upon the issue of establishing legislation at the Federal level for National Heritage Areas: Proponents of this sort of legislation and criteria and process whereby the areas are established, are billing it as a process whereby we can kick out the bad, the unqualified areas, and let in the good and fund those. We strongly disagree with that. We think that by establishing a process, you essentially grease the skids of the program, whereby you will see an exponential growth in the number of interest groups and local communities, and local groups that are lining up at the door for Federal dollars.

If I could touch on the opt-in program really quickly, I just want to correct something, with all due respect to Mr. Hoffman. I never mentioned anything about 100 percent of landowners within a heritage area having to opt in before that heritage area went forth. I mentioned just any landowner having to opt in. If every single landowner in that heritage area wants to be a part of it and opts in except for one, then you should leave that one landowner out of it and leave him alone. I did not mention anything about—I just wanted to make that clear.

Senator THOMAS. In-holdings—so in something like this, so called in-holdings would not be the same as they would be in a park.

Mr. KNIGHT. Possibly.

Mr. HOFFMAN. Well, not at all since there is no land ownership associated with a National Heritage Area. Opt-in, opt-out; it makes no difference. The benefits either come to you or not, and whatever owner's restrictions come, come at the hands of the local planning and zoning board which you can not opt in or opt out of.

Senator THOMAS. I was going to say, I think those decisions generally with respect to zoning or whatever, would be local decisions, not Federal decisions.

Mr. KNIGHT. Ostensibly, yes.

Senator THOMAS. I understand your point.

Well, we would like to work with you, and I think there is a good reason to have these heritage things, and to save things, and so on. But we do need a criteria, I think, so that, number one, there is a limit on them so we kind of equally divide the responsibility between local and Federal Government, and so that we can do our main job which is Park Service, and we need to do that.

So I thank all of you for coming.

If anyone has any other questions or so one, we will have a couple of days to do all of that. Thank you all for being here. We appreciate it very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:38 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Subsequent to the hearing, the following was received for the record:]

FREEDOM'S WAY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.,
Devens, MA, March 13, 2002.

Senator CRAIG THOMAS,
*Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks of the Energy and Natural Resources
 Committee, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.*

Re: Testimony for oversight hearing on the designation and management of National Heritage Areas

DEAR SENATOR THOMAS: The Freedoms Way Heritage Association is pleased to provide written testimony for this hearing. We know that you will be looking at sev-

eral key Heritage Area issues. As a Heritage Area whose designation Bill, S. 577, is filed in this session of Congress, we believe our views on criteria will be particularly relevant. We believe that broad based national criteria and procedures are important requirements for effective heritage areas, and that the National Park Service criteria are fair and appropriate.

Since 1994, we have worked very hard in New Hampshire and Massachusetts to meet the National Park Service (NPS) criteria for National Heritage Area designation. We have completed the four NPS critical steps and our Feasibility Study supports how we meet the ten NPS criteria components. In order to demonstrate to you how a prospective Heritage Area goes about assuring that these criteria are met, we are attaching our Study and other documentation. We have also included a brief timeline showing our progress to date. At the Subcommittee hearing of June 18, 2002 the NPS testified that we do, in fact, meet their criteria. We hope that you will find our answers helpful in your oversight deliberations.

Since the terrorists attack of 9/11 there has been tremendous outpouring of American's interest in their roots of democracy and freedom. Our Heritage Area is helping to meet these current needs and will help to educate our children who will be future citizens. Their understanding of our fight for freedom is important. As Theodore Roosevelt said:

“Let us in our turn with equal courage, equal hardihood and manliness, carry on the task that our forefathers have entrusted to our hands; and let us resolve that we shall leave to our children and our children's children an even mightier heritage than we received in our time.”

Thank you for your efforts. We hope to be an important contributor to the discussion about Heritage Area monitoring or measuring procedures. You will have our full support.

Sincerely,

MARGE DARBY,
President.

CHRONOLOGY OF KEY FREEDOM'S WAY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, INC. ACTIVITIES

- 1994 Freedom's Way Heritage Association, Inc. files incorporation papers.
- 1995 Opened the Freedom's Way office, space, furniture and first computer provided by MassDevelopment.
- 1996 Received grant under auspices of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management to conduct feasibility study.
- 1997 Feasibility Study begins with tour of area to begin identifying sites. March, April, June and July four public participation forums held to discuss alternative plans and develop themes. Four themes were chosen.
- 1998 Congressman Olver proposes submitting legislation and charges FWHA with securing letters of support.
Freedom's Way receives the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Organization Award in recognition of "outstanding contribution [to the Nashoba Valley Communities] in service and leadership."
- 1999 Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism with matching funds from MassDevelopment support additional work to publish Freedom's Way Heritage Area Map. During this process four themes are reduced to three. Met with regional Park Service representatives to introduce to new map work. Minute Man National Park Superintendent mentions interest in Freedom's Way establishing a headquarters within the park.
- 1999 November National Park Service representatives held reconnaissance tour of Freedom's Way.
- 2000 December, the Addendum to Feasibility Study Completed with input from major partners: Chamber of Commerce, MassDevelopment, Museum of Our National Heritage and Fruitlands Museum. Circulated addendum to ensure broad support.
- 2001 January officers of Freedom's Way travel to Philadelphia to meet regional Park Service Representatives.
February, Freedom's Way National Heritage Area legislation filed by Congressman John W. Olver (H.R. 1027) with Bass, McGovern, Markey, Meehan, Tierney and Sununu as co-sponsors.
State Senator Pam Resor and State Representatives Hall and Walrath file appropriation bill for no less than \$250,000 to match federal appropriation of \$1 million.
July 13 National Park Service representatives perform a site tour of Freedom's Way.

- Held additional public participation meetings in Nashua and Brookline, New Hampshire to gather feedback from those communities on Freedom's Way.
- 2002 Freedom's Way officials brief Washington Congressional Aides, and House Resource Committee staffer on Freedom's Way progress in meeting NPS criteria.
- Boston Globe Regional Edition publishes front page story on Freedom's Way.
- Senators Kerry, Gregg, and Kennedy file Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Act Bill, S. 1925
- Officers of Freedom's Way received "Green Seal" award from the Secretary Robert Durand of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs for support for regional planning initiative.
- Received support from Governors of Massachusetts and New Hampshire for designation of a Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.
- Freedom's Way officials testify at hearings to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources, Parks Subcommittee.
- National Park Service testifies that Freedom's Way meets the Service's stated goals.
- Massachusetts State Ways and Means issues a Prior Account Continuance on the \$250,000 appropriation to match federal appropriation.
- U.S. Senate subcommittee marks up S. 1925 and send it to full Senate for consideration where it is bundled and becomes part of H.R. 695 S.
- Freedom's Way Heritage Area Act passed in Senate by Unanimous Consent. House unable to take up HR695AES before adjourning sine die.
- Boston-based Channel 5 Chronicle Program highlights Freedom's Way.
- 2003 February, Government Affairs committee confers with Mayor Streeter, Nashua, and New Hampshire Congressional delegation representatives.
- Feb. 11-13—Government Affairs committee attends the DC conference called by the Alliance Class of 2003 to discuss Heritage development.
- Feb. 11-13—Brief Congressmen, staffers, and aides on current Freedom's Way heritage development activities.
- Feb. 26—Stakeholders Meeting.
- March, H.R. 1069 filed by Olver, Bass, Markey, McGovern, Meehan, and Tierney. S. 577 filed by Kerry, Gregg, Kennedy and Sununu.

FREEDOM'S WAY HERITAGE AREA FEASIBILITY STUDY ADDENDUM SUMMARY

March, 2003

Prepared by:

Freedom's Way Heritage Association, 43 Buena Vista Street Devens, MA.

Freedom's Way has examined the National Park Service criteria and we believe they are well thought out and are directly related to the purpose of what basic standards should exist in all National Heritage Areas. We have strived to exceed these criteria, and we have continually evaluated Freedom's Way Heritage Area as a potential National Heritage Area against those criteria. Not only do we believe that we have ample documentation that we do meet them, the Department of the Interior Statement at the Senate Parks Subcommittee hearings last June confirmed this.

The concept of the Freedom's Way Heritage Area has been well defined by a feasibility study, a technical document, an addendum, a map, and the continuing refinement of the themes through additional, ongoing stakeholder meetings and newsletters.

Priorities speak to linkages through education and preservation of nationally significant resources. The focus of the entire effort will be the conservation of a nationally significant area. While preservation efforts will include bricks and mortar requests, paint eventually deteriorates: education is forever. One of our major goals is an educational effort to accomplish the following:

- To elevate the importance of nationally significant regional resources through a coordinated educational and preservation effort;
- To mobilize communities by assisting their public and private institutions to build partnerships to focus on furthering stewardship of the natural, cultural and historical connections of the region;
- To work with existing interpretive sites that have educational and interpretive programs in place to engage citizens in the understanding and celebration of their unique heritage using the Freedom's Way themes;
- To expand current National Park exposure through thematic linkages;
- To use existing facilities and sites without acquiring new land;

An objective is to use visitor sites that are already locally, or nationally recognized as interpretive centers. The goals of these institutions are: increased exposure through the national designation; the establishment of linkages through theme-related efforts; the creation of partnerships to further define each institution's focus to eliminate duplication and to tell a richer story through the expansion possibilities of shared themes.

Protecting precious resources requires developing a future constituency by providing theme-related educational and interpretive materials and activities.

Success will evolve through the recognition that a National Heritage Area designation will bring, standing and local pride, and encourage efforts toward further protection and preservation and increased local investment.

Each of the participating institutions already has interpretive programs relating to the Freedom's Way themes but they lack the cohesiveness necessary to tell the entire story. Local site managers recognize the potential of cooperative efforts connected to one over all endeavor that has been given national recognition.

The Minute Man National Park will play an important role in connecting the Freedom's Way themes. There are four main cores or areas of focus of cultural heritage sites. Each one has the combined resources of a solid open space component adjacent to or proximate to, a cultural/heritage visitor center. An example is the core of cultural heritage sites that are connected to the theme-related open space and recreational areas at Minute Man National Park and in the Concord/Lexington/Lincoln area. This combination is repeated in three other areas: the central area that includes Fruitlands and the Oxbow NWR, the western area that includes Wachusett Mountain and the Gardner Heritage State Park and the northern area including Nashua and Beaver Brook in New Hampshire.

The Freedom's Way Heritage Area sites represent the possibility of partnerships between all levels of government, especially local to local, as well as public and private non-profit organizations. Open space examples are: Minute Man National Park, U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Great Meadows and Oxbow Wildlife Complexes, Massachusetts State Parks, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Beaver Brook Association, and local Conservation Commission lands. Cultural heritage site examples are: Minute Man National Park, Concord Museum, Great Meadows Visitor Center, Massachusetts Audubon's Drumlin Farm, Fruitlands Museum, the National Heritage Museum and local historical society facilities.

Many other resources offer potential for recognition; some local resources with national importance are unrecognized. The inventory, at this point, is a work in progress. Designation will help to refine theme development.

FOUR CRITICAL STEPS

1. Completion of a Suitability/Feasibility Study

The Freedom's Way suitability/feasibility study (1997) was completed under the supervision of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management and conducted by ICON architecture, Inc.

The study resulted in two main documents:

- I. The Summary Report (and Summary Report brochure) and,
- II. The Technical Report, an initial data base of natural and cultural resources.

The study included hundreds of participants, public meetings and four monthly newsletters.

Freedom's Way has continued the public participation process through stakeholder meetings, and newsletters to refine the results of the feasibility study.

This refinement process has already led to a simplification of themes from four to three: Rediscovering the Native Landscape, Inventing the New England Landscape, and Shaping the Landscape of Democracy.

A descriptive map/brochure about Freedom's Way has been developed and is being distributed throughout the region.

As National Park Service Criteria have changed and matured, we completed an Addendum to our Feasibility Study to ensure all of the present criteria are fully addressed.

2. Public Involvement in the Suitability/Feasibility Study

The public participation during the feasibility study included four area-wide public meetings, which were well attended.

Participants were invited from the general public through published announcements in local papers and through a committee of liaison or contact people representing each town.

A steering committee representing a wide range of interests oversaw the study. The representatives were: Nancy Nelson, Superintendent of Minute Man National Park; James Baecker, Project Director, Mass Department of Environmental Management; Mildred Chandler, Marge Darby, Robert Farwell, Freedom's Way; Judith McDonough, Commissioner of Massachusetts Historic Commission; Judith Alland, Metropolitan Area Planning Commission/Minuteman Advisory Group; George Krusen III, Minute Man Historical Societies; George Kahale, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission; Thomas Leavitt, Museum of Our National Heritage; Robert Levite, Nashua River Watershed Association; Deborah LaPointe, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce; Elizabeth Tennessee, Nipmuc/African American History; Janet Kennedy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Public participation has continued through a series of stakeholder meetings, prospective partner breakfasts, a web site, and newsletters. Since the conclusion of the feasibility study Freedom's Way Heritage Association has given more than 25 public presentations and mailed out nine newsletter/updates.

3. *Demonstration of Widespread Public Support Among Heritage Area Residents for the Proposed Legislation*

- A current mailing list of 1500 receives important notices and newsletters
- Board representation of 22 organizations
- Forty town liaisons
- Commitments from Mayors, Town Selectmen, local Commissions and Boards
- Membership in Freedom's Way includes towns, museums, cultural and educational institutions
- Letters of support numbering more than a hundred

4. *Commitment to the Proposal From the Appropriate Players Which May Include Governments, Industry, and Private, Non-Profit Organizations, in Addition to the Local Citizenry*

FWHA has on file letters of support from legislators, mayors, selectmen, town committees and boards, over 50 cultural institutions, six Chambers of Commerce, 24 businesses, 16 legislators, 67 municipal boards, and can show an expanding membership.

The support from units of government includes: federal and state legislators; mayors and local town executives; MassDevelopment Finance Agency; Massachusetts Historical Commission, Massachusetts Historical Society, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Massachusetts Office of Environmental Management, and Dept. of Environmental Protection. The towns differ in their approach to membership.

Private non-profits such as: Massachusetts Audubon Society, Nashua River Watershed Association, Museum of Our National Heritage, Concord Museum, Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg Historical Society, Lunenburg Historical Society, Fruitlands Museum, Cyrus Dallin Museum, the Beaver Brook Association and many others.

COMPONENTS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY

1. *The Area HAS an Assemblage of Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources That Together Represent Distinctive Aspects of American Heritage Worthy of Recognition*

- The assemblage is evident in the Feasibility Study conclusions.
- Additional data has been compiled since the study.
- The proposal fills a need that is not currently being met by any other regional, state or federal agency. John Ott, Director of the Museum of Our National Heritage states clearly that, "No other organization is doing what Freedom's Way has plans to do." There are no entities available to take on the task of providing a regional network through a national heritage designation to enhance regional educational efforts.

2. *Reflects Traditions, Customs, Beliefs, and Folklife That Are a Valuable Part of the National Story*

Evidence and examples of early traditions, customs, beliefs and folklife still exist within the region.

- Evidence of Native American life still. Example: Eliot's Praying Village of Nashoba, and archaeological digs.
- Many towns were founded 100 years before the Revolutionary War.
- Village folklife focused around common property and interdependence as a process for town development.

- A citizenry accustomed to self-governance and independence is linked to Freedom. Town Meeting form of government is still actively practiced in its purest form.
- Shakers, Transcendentalists, Millerites, African American, Native American, early tri-racial and other ethnic communities experimented in ways of living.

Examples of the continuation of the earliest national efforts at conservation as well as the evolution of Democracy offer a unique educational opportunity to teach how old ideas can still stimulate new actions.

3. Provides Outstanding Opportunities

The three themes: Rediscovering the Native Landscape, Inventing the New England Landscape, Shaping the Landscape of Democracy will provide outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features.

The rediscovered landscape combines the concept of preserving the natural and native landscape with the conservation movement. It is still possible to walk from the town of Westford to Concord through a wild and natural landscape. Thoreau's "Walk to Wachusett" can still be accomplished with only a few present day interruptions.

By developing a network of educational opportunities through thematic connections, future stewards of the land will emerge.

Conservation Trusts, Municipal Conservation Commissions, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and local conservation commission land managers offer outdoor educational opportunities.

Cultural and historic sites offer unique opportunities to teach conservation and preservation: area museums, National Historic Landscapes, National Historic sites, Shaker villages, town centers, churches, and town commons are only a few.

The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act shows a strong desire on the part of the state to preserve the historical and political makeup of communities, e.g.: rural flavor, commons and the town meeting form of government. Through the implementation of Executive Order 418, the Commonwealth is providing each town with \$30,000 for "intralocal" community development planning. Nothing exists to help the communities pull together as a region. The Freedom's Way linkages will help them to recognize the value of a regional preservation effort.

4. Provides Outstanding Recreational and Educational Opportunities

The map shows there are existing recreational and educational opportunities. By thematic connections the opportunity for enhancing use of these sites is exponential.

Massachusetts sites begin 30 minutes from Boston, and the New Hampshire sites are one hour away. This indicates the strong potential for use by major city residents and foreign visitors.

The map/brochure shows how the sites can be integrated as part of the interpretation of the themes. There is at least one major recreational area paired with each cultural/heritage site.

5. The Resources Important to the Identified Themes of the Area Are Capable of Supporting Interpretation

The themes reinforce each other and provide a method for viewing the region to maintain integrity of place.

The proposed Interpretive Centers are stable, substantial, and well organized. Such centers already in existence give ample opportunity for establishing and enhancing mutually beneficial relationships.

This is an ideal place to teach democracy. The resources for such an effort are strong: museums, open land, interpretive centers.

Illustrating the ideas of freedom, resources show, for example, how democracy predated the Revolutionary War; the Revolutionary War and its consequences. The native landscape, geological formations that still remain undiminished by development, resources that show the birth and development of the conservation movement; attractive village centers once required by law; the farmlands and mills reveal the evolution of land use. Altogether, these can be used to maintain a setting, the integrity of place.

Designation will bring the cohesive force necessary to accomplish the work.

6. A Broad Range of Interest Groups Were Involved in the Planning

Over the years, Freedom's Way Heritage Association has been bringing together representatives of the public and private sector.

The Freedom's Way Board is comprised of representatives of the following entities: Chambers of Commerce, regional environmental organizations, area museums, two regional planning commissions, local Select boards, mayoral appointees, city

planners, town administrators, newspaper publishers, business owner, Native Americans and African Americans, Massachusetts Historical Society, local historians, federal land managers, farmers, local community non-profits, local planning boards, and trails advocates.

Having established working relationships with many public and private not-for-profit entities through the feasibility process, planning is underway through stakeholder meetings and partnership meetings to refine roles of all participants. The stated focus is for Freedom's Way to facilitate linkages and partnerships to strengthen the role of participants in educational efforts.

The legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts appropriated the funding for the Feasibility Study. Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, with a matching grant from MassDevelopment, helped produce the Freedom's Way Map. MassDevelopment also supplied facilities, resources and utilities. By state effort, \$250,000 in matching state funds was appropriated as matching funds for a federal appropriation.

The management plan will help to identify additional financial resources.

Freedom's Way has developed a list of major corporate entities. The association is actively seeking corporate support. Partnerships with these companies and many more will be explored in depth: Fleet Bank, Citizen's Bank, Fidelity Savings Bank, Middlesex Savings Bank, North Middlesex Savings Bank, Cisco Systems. MassDevelopment will offer assistance seeking funds.

Business partners express quality of life issues as a shared concern.

The Study Addendum shows projected budget and other financial details.

7. The Proposed Management Entity and Units of Government Supporting the Designation Are Willing To Commit To Working in Partnership To Develop the Heritage Area

A Minute Man National Park representative attended feasibility study meetings.

The heritage designation will permit further participation of the National Park Service and a working relationship with Minute Man National Park.

Mass Development Agency, Mass Department of Environmental Management, Wildlife, Regional Planning Commissions, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism are all committed to supporting the designation. Many municipalities have joined as members.

At least three levels of government have offered potential headquarters for Freedom's Way. MassDevelopment currently provides office space without fee.

The newly-formed Devens Historical Museum has also offered Freedom's Way headquarters space.

MassDevelopment has made a major contribution in addition to providing the office space for Freedom's Way: the donation of office furniture and utilities and a matching grant for the map/brochure. Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce provides office assistance.

8. The Proposal Is Consistent With Economic Activity in the Area

From the beginning, we have had the full support of MassDevelopment, a Commonwealth entity charged with overseeing the economic development of the Devens communities, their abutters and beyond. All of these communities are in Freedom's Way.

9. A Conceptual Boundary Map Is Supported by the Public

The Freedoms Way Map, the feasibility study workshops, subsequent meetings and stakeholder meetings, technical data and expanding library illustrate the public's participation and acknowledgement that this area is Freedom's Way.

10. The Management Entity Proposed To Plan and Implement the Project Is Described

Freedom's Way Heritage Association is described in the legislation and in the Feasibility Study. The public has access to material through the web site, the office and regular mailings.

The federal money will be used for this major regional effort by helping the communities to find ways to develop their own linkages through participation and cooperative partnerships. We will:

1. Focus on the three main themes in order to teach about and connect the major trails that will be marked.
2. Improve both the usage and meaning of significant sites within the trails through interpretation;
3. Develop an educational curriculum based within the community to benefit teachers, children, visitors, and residents;

4. Bring increased recognition to Minute Man National Park as well as the regional museums through the benefit of a broader based effort;

5. Connect to the National Park Service nation-wide heritage themes to gain additional linkages and exposure through the stories that relate to the Freedom's Way themes. It is an advantage to connect the telling of the entire story of American Democracy through each region's participation.

6. Link major federal land protection efforts with historic and cultural themes adding synergy and broader exposure to the efforts of two Department of the Interior services.

7. Act as a clearinghouse, or regional resource to help communities learn the methods for land preservation and conservation that are available to them through a regional educational program focused on town planning issues relating to sustainability.

8. Cultivate a working relationship with other educational institutions such as Harvard University and U. Mass.

CONCLUSION

The Department of the Interior's Senate testimony at last year's Parks Subcommittee Hearing is that Freedom's Way fully complies with all stated criteria. Following designation a cultural resource study and a detailed management plan will be developed and submitted to the Secretary. The purpose will be to support the work of regional educational and planning entities, focusing on a regional approach. Long term by products will be livable communities, growth of public transportation and sustainable development. Locally determined growth, including heritage tourism, will yield significant economic benefits as a byproduct of all the collaborative work.

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