



*Larch Occasional Paper #22*

*April 6, 2017*

# **National Heritage Areas: Combining the Conservation of Nature, History, and Culture with Local Economic Development**

by Andy Kerr<sup>1</sup>

## ***Abstract***

*National heritage areas (NHAs) are a way to conserve and restore important natural, historical, and cultural resources for this and future generations while at the same time generating local economic activity through tourism. They are established by Congress but administered by local entities with the assistance of the National Park Service. In regard to federal public land, inclusion within an NHA confers no additional level of conservation but does confer important recognition. Legislation pending in Congress would establish a National Heritage Areas System and add units. The number of NHAs that Congress could designate in Oregon and other states is limited only by local imagination—and follow-through.*

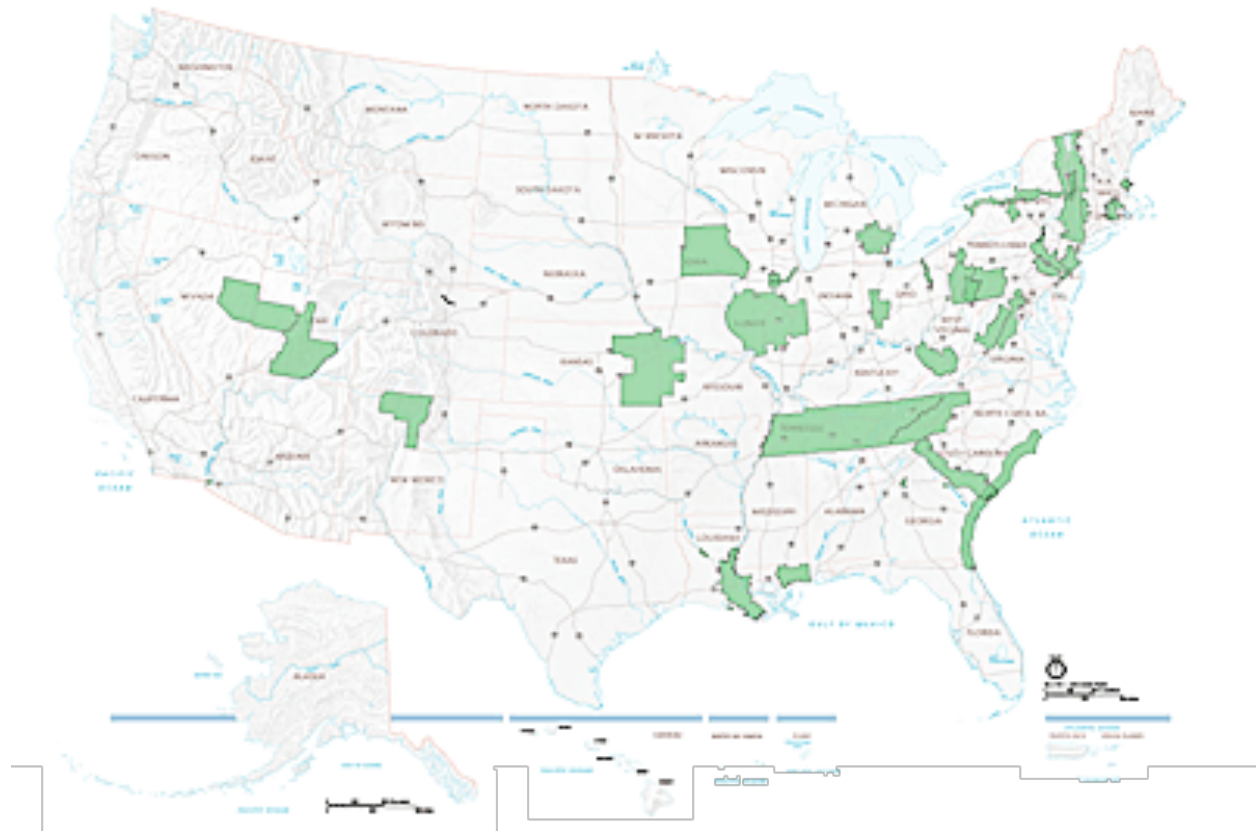
## **Introduction**

The National Park Service website tells us: “[National heritage areas](#) (NHAs) are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Through their resources, NHAs tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation’s diverse heritage. Unlike national parks, NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.” The National Park Service goes on to say that NHAs preserve places for people, provide

---

<sup>1</sup> Andy Kerr ([andykerr@andykerr.net](mailto:andykerr@andykerr.net)) is czar of the Larch Company ([www.andykerr.net](http://www.andykerr.net)), which has offices in Ashland, Oregon, and Washington, DC. 503.701.6298 voice/text.

for a healthy environment and healthy people, offer outdoor adventure and excitement, and educate future leaders.



An NHA is *not* a unit of the National Park System and does *not* affect private property rights. NHAs are administered by local entities with the assistance of the National Park Service. Many NHAs include federal public lands within their boundaries (more do not), and NHA status should be viewed as complementary to conservation of those lands. While it doesn't directly elevate the conservation status of those lands, NHA status does confer recognition of their importance. With recognition comes public understanding of the need to conserve those federal public lands for this and future generations.

The first national heritage area (NHA), the Illinois and Michigan National Canal NHA, was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1984. As of April 2017, Congress has designated [forty-nine NHAs](#). They vary greatly in size, from the immediate area of a single canal (the Augusta Canal NHA) to an entire state (the Tennessee Civil War NHA).

Appendix A lists the forty-nine current NHAs. Appendix B consists of National Park Service answers to frequently asked questions. Appendix C lists legislation pertaining to NHAs pending in the 115th Congress (2017–2018) as of April 2017.

## The Role of the National Park Service

The National Park Service has a critical role in the establishment and administration of each NHA, lending technical and financial assistance to aid the local administration and public interpretation of the NHA, but these areas are not units of the National Park System. Here's what the Park Service has to say about the program:

*[NHAs further the mission of the National Park Service \(NPS\)](#) by fostering community stewardship of our nation's heritage. The NHA program, which currently includes forty-nine heritage areas, is administered by NPS coordinators in Washington DC and six regional offices – Anchorage, San Francisco, Denver, Omaha, Philadelphia, and Atlanta – as well as park unit staff.*

*NHAs are not national park units. Rather, NPS partners with, provides technical assistance to, and distributes matching federal funds from Congress to NHA entities. NPS does not assume ownership of land inside heritage areas or impose land use controls.*

*Through annual congressional appropriations, NPS passes funds to NHA entities. Although most entities are authorized to receive up to \$1 million annually over a set period of time, actual annual appropriations range from \$150,000 to \$750,000. The financial assistance component of the program is secured with legal agreements, accountability measures, and performance requirements for NHA entities.*

## Conservation and Development

National heritage areas offer a little something for everyone: both conservation *and* development. As the National Park Service explains: “[National heritage areas](#) are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Through public-private partnerships, NHA entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects. Leveraging funds and long-term support for projects, NHA partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic.”

The National Park Service lists these long-term [benefits of NHAs](#):

***Sustainable economic development** – NHAs leverage federal funds (NHAs [receive and] average \$5.50 for every \$1.00 of federal investment) to create jobs, generate revenue for local governments, and sustain local communities through revitalization and heritage tourism.*

***Healthy environment and people*** – Many NHAs improve water and air quality in their regions through restoration projects, and encourage people to enjoy natural and cultural sites by providing new recreational opportunities.

***Improved quality of life*** – Through new or improved amenities, unique settings, and educational and volunteer opportunities, NHAs improve local quality of life.

***Education and stewardship*** – NHAs connect communities to natural, historic, and cultural sites through educational activities, which promote awareness and foster interest in and stewardship of heritage resources.

***Community engagement and pride*** – By engaging community members in heritage conservation activities, NHAs strengthen sense of place and community pride.

According to the [Alliance of National Heritage Areas](#) (ANHA), “NHAs support more than 148,000 jobs throughout the nation, mainly in tourism, heritage preservation, conservation or outdoor recreation. These jobs and volunteer opportunities are locally sourced and embedded in the communities they serve.”

The ANHA says this about [economic impact](#):

*National heritage areas support tens of thousands of jobs and contribute billions of dollars to local economies.*

*NHAs are catalysts for economic development in the communities in which they are located. NHAs are affiliated with the National Park Service and are managed by independent federal commissions, nonprofit groups, or state or municipal authorities. They implement projects through public/private partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, and collaborate with state and local governments to ensure that the regional goals of cultural, historical and natural resource protection are met. In the process, NHAs strive to improve the quality of life in their regions by fostering the development of sustainable economies.*

*An independent 2012 study by Tripp Umbach found that NHAs’ overall annual economic impact in the U.S. is \$12.9 billion, which significantly exceeds the amount of federal funding provided to NHAs by as much as 5:1. The economic impact is comprised of three main areas: tourism, operational expenditures, and grantmaking activities; the majority of impact (99 percent) is generated by tourism spending.*

*The economic impact is significant in two ways:*

- \$4.6 billion in direct impact, which includes tourist spending, NHA operational expenditures, and grantmaking activities.
- \$8.3 billion in indirect and induced impacts, which includes employee spending and businesses supporting the tourism industry.

### **Legislation to Establish a National Heritage Areas System and Additional Units**

While Congress has established forty-nine NHAs as of April 2017 (Appendix A), it has not enacted any organic act that would ensure consistency of congressional designation, local administration, and National Park Service assistance. Pending in the present 115th Congress is [H.R.1002](#), the National Heritage Area Act of 2017, introduced by Representative Charles W. Dent (R-15th-PA) and twenty-six cosponsors (sixteen Democrats and ten Republicans) from ten states. Here's the official summary of the legislation:

#### ***National Heritage Area Act of 2017***

*This bill establishes a National Heritage Areas System to recognize certain areas of the United States that tell nationally significant stories and to conserve, enhance, and interpret the areas' natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources that illustrate significant aspects of U.S. heritage. Through such system, the Department of the Interior may provide technical and financial assistance to local coordinating entities to support the establishment, development, and continuity of such areas.*

*The system shall be comprised of:*

- *such areas designated by Congress under this bill;*
- *such areas designated after enactment of this bill, unless the law designating the area exempts it from inclusion in the system; and*
- *49 specified areas; and*
- *any other national heritage areas designated before this bill's enactment.*

*National heritage areas shall not be considered to be units of the National Park System.*

*Interior shall: (1) undertake studies as directed by Congress to assess the feasibility of designating proposed national heritage areas, (2) approve or disapprove the management plan prepared by the local coordinating entity for an area, and (3) evaluate the accomplishments of an area every 10 years after its designation and submit a recommendation on whether federal funding for such area should be continued, reduced, or eliminated.*

*The bill: (1) specifies the criteria that Interior shall apply to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating proposed national heritage areas, and (2)*



*states that the designation of an area shall be by federal statute and contingent on the prior completion of a management plan and an affirmative determination by Interior that the area meets such criteria.*

Earlier versions of this “NHA system” bill were introduced by Rep. Dent into the 112<sup>th</sup> (2011-2012) 113<sup>th</sup> (2013-2014) and 114<sup>th</sup> (2015-2016) Congresses.

Appendix C summarizes legislation pending in the current Congress as of April 2017. A review of legislation in earlier Congresses suggests that additional bills will be introduced in this Congress.

### **Potential National Heritage Areas in Oregon**

The number of NHAs that Congress could designate in Oregon is limited only by local imagination—and follow-through. After you peruse the forty-nine listed in Appendix A, let your imagination go. Here are the first two that came to my mind:

- Redwoods–Wild Rivers Coast (southern Coos and Curry counties, and Del Norte County, CA)

Think coast redwoods, Port Orford cedars, wild rivers, old-growth forests, historic logging, cranberry bogs, Aleutian Canada geese, darlingtonia bogs, Easter lilies, covered and other historic bridges, microbreweries, wilderness areas, fresh seafood, rare and unique wildflowers, saltwater taffy, Oregon myrtle/California bay trees, rocky ocean views, Pacific salmon, Oregon Coast Trail, and the site of the only aerial bombardment of the U.S. mainland in World War II.

- Serpentine Siskiyou (the watershed of the Illinois Valley in Josephine County)

Think extraordinary biological diversity of trees and flowers, wineries, wilderness areas, historic mining areas (the northernmost extension of the California gold rush), salmon and steelhead, darlingtonia bogs, *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, historic smoke jumpers, local cron (sic) for sale, and historic Kirbyville.

And how about these:

- Mouth of the Columbia (Clatsop and Columbia counties, OR, and Wahkiakum and Pacific counties, WA)
- Basque Country (Jordan Valley in Malheur County)
- Heart of the Willamette Valley (Polk, Yamhill, Linn, and Benton counties)
- Sauvie Island (Multnomah and Columbia counties)
- South Umpqua Watershed (Douglas County)
- Blue Mountains (Wallowa, Umatilla, Grant, Union, Wheeler, and Baker counties)
- Oregon High Desert (Lake and Harney counties)
- Basin and Range (Harney and Lake counties)

*National Heritage Areas: Combining the Conservation of Nature, History, and Culture with Local Economic Development*

- Tillamook Valley (Tillamook County)
- Willamette Falls (Clackamas County)
- Fossils, Wheat, and Wind Towers (Wheeler, Gilliam, and Morrow counties)
- Willamette River (Lane, Benton, Linn, Polk, Yamhill, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties)
- Applegate Valley Water, Wildlife, Walks, and Wine (Jackson County)

## **Conclusion**

NHAs are a conservation tool—not just for the conservation of natural values but also for the conservation of history and culture. NHAs are managed cooperatively by local interests; no federal regulation is involved. Federal assistance is given through the National Park Service to help communities first study, then establish and eventually manage and market NHAs as tourist attractions. NHAs do not replace but rather complement conservation areas (such as wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, and national recreation areas) on federal public lands.

## *Appendix A*

### **National Heritage Areas Designated by Congress as of April 2017**

**Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area** (Illinois), the only heritage area named for a president, is home to a unique collection of Lincoln-related sites and stories. In this 42-county region of central Illinois, visitors will find courthouses, hotels, and homes that represent aspects of Lincoln's life and career. The cultural landscape provides insight into Lincoln's character and personal development, as he prepared to take office during our country's greatest challenge—the Civil War.

**Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area** (Georgia) is located in parts of three counties east of the city of Atlanta, Georgia, and comprises a region of active quarries, rolling topography, rural landscapes, unique granite outcrop ecosystems, and pine and oak forests. Arabia Mountain and Stone Mountain possess sites that display the history of granite mining as an industry and culture in Georgia and its impact on the United States.

**Atchafalaya National Heritage Area** (Louisiana) encompasses 14 parishes and the largest river swamp in the country. Best known for the Cajun descendants of French-speaking Acadians, the area's complex racial and ethnic mix is reflected in its distinctive architecture, music, language, food, and festivals.

**Augusta Canal National Heritage Area** (Georgia) is a nine-mile corridor that follows the full length of the best-preserved industrial canal of its kind remaining in the South. Built in 1845 to harness the water and power of the Savannah River, the Augusta Canal offers history, recreation, and unique experiences along miles of towpath trail and waterway. It is still being used for three of the original purposes for which it was built: water power, transportation, and water supply. The canal transformed Augusta from agrarian to an industrial area on the eve of the Civil War and was instrumental in the post-Civil War relocation of much of the nation's textile industry to the South.

**Baltimore National Heritage Area** (Maryland) includes Baltimore's oldest neighborhoods, downtown, and waterfront. At its center is the Inner Harbor, one of the nation's oldest seaports and today a vibrant destination for tourists and residents. Baltimore's dramatic role in the War of 1812 is demonstrated at historic sites, including Fort McHenry, where the nation defended independence. From its founding in 1729, Baltimore has stood as a center of commerce and culture for the Chesapeake Bay region and has seen the transformation of America, shaped by war, prosperity, and struggles for freedom and civil rights.

**Blue Ridge National Heritage Area** (North Carolina) encompasses 25 counties in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The rich cultural mosaic of the Blue Ridge Mountains and foothills of North Carolina has its origins in three separate continents—North America, Europe, and Africa. Here cultural traditions of the Cherokee, Scots-Irish, and Africans

*National Heritage Areas: Combining the Conservation of Nature, History, and Culture with Local Economic Development*

have blended into a culture unique to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The mountains themselves have helped to protect and nurture this cultural mosaic by providing a degree of relative isolation from the rest of the state and nation.

**Cane River National Heritage Area** (Louisiana) is largely a rural agricultural region encompassing Natchitoches, Louisiana—the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory. Historically, this region lies at the intersection of the French and Spanish realms in the New World, with the town of Natchitoches originating as an important 18th-century trade center. More than 300 years of history are etched into this region and expressed through colonial forts, historic plantations, distinctive Creole architecture, and unique multicultural traditions.

**Cache La Poudre River Corridor** (Colorado) was established to commemorate the story of water law and water development in the West. The primary emphasis of current programs is on interpretation and education. The area extends 45 miles and includes the lands within the floodplain of the Cache La Poudre River, beginning in Larimer County at the Roosevelt National Forest, and ends east of Greeley.

**Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership** (New York and Vermont) includes the linked navigable waterways and adjacent lands of Lake Champlain, Lake George, the Champlain Canal, and portions of the Upper Hudson River in Vermont and New York. This region was the homeland of native people of Algonquin and Iroquois descent and played an important role in the establishment of the United States and Canada. It has served as a route of exploration, military campaigns, and maritime commerce.

**Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area** (New Jersey) encompasses 213 municipalities and 14 counties from Bergen to Gloucester counties. General George Washington planned and led some of the most decisive military actions of the war across this landscape, including the crucial battles of Trenton, Princeton, and Monmouth, and spent two severe winters encamped in what is now Morristown National Historical Park. Preserved battlefields, national historic landmarks, and hundreds of National Register properties also commemorate this turning point in American history.

**Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor** (Delaware) is a 165-mile corridor that celebrates the region's industrial history. Canals and railroads transported lumber, anthracite coal, slate, iron, and steel from mountain to market, fueling America's Industrial Revolution. Successive waves of immigrants left their cultural imprints and ethnic identity along the streets of every town and city in the corridor. Rows of houses close to industrial buildings tell of company towns.

**Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor** (New York) stretches 524 miles across the full expanse of upstate New York, including four navigable waterways—the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals—showing our nation's great successes of engineering, vision, hard work, and sacrifice. The corridor also includes more than 200 municipalities adjacent to the canals with stories to tell, great works of architecture to see, history to be learned, and hundreds of miles of scenic and recreational waterway and trails to explore.

**Essex National Heritage Area** (Massachusetts and New Hampshire) preserves and interprets three themes of national significance to American history: early settlement and the first contact between native peoples and colonists; the Great Age of Sail and America's rise as an international trading power; and the Industrial Revolution, with an emphasis on textile and shoe manufacturing and the birth of the labor movement. Their work supports Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works National Historic Sites.

**Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area** (Kansas and Missouri) encompasses counties in eastern Kansas and western Missouri. Along this border, before and during the Civil War, a defining conflict took place between the forces of slavery and freedom. As abolitionists and others fought to keep Kansas a free state and pro-slavery forces gathered in Missouri, the Eastern press began referring to the region as "bleeding Kansas." This story and the continuing story of the struggle for freedom of other groups—Native Americans, African Americans, women, and free staters—are still reflected in the communities and landmarks of this region.

**Freedom's Way National Heritage Area** (Massachusetts and New Hampshire) includes 45 communities stretching across the two states. The area has a long history of social and intellectual innovation including the emergence of a democratic vision that led to the American Revolution; a tradition of religious freedom and experimentation; and nationally influential movements for conservation, social justice, abolitionism, and the American Renaissance of the nineteenth century.



[Great Basin National Heritage Route](#) (Nevada and Utah) is a classic western landscape. The history of westward expansion and heritage of Native Americans is represented by significant archaeological sites from the exploration era and by the modern Shoshone, Paiute, and Goshute tribes. Ethnic communities of Serbs, Greeks, Basques, and Italians, whose ancestors provided the labor for ranching, railroading, and mining enterprises, survive within the heritage area.

[Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor](#) (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina) recognizes the important contributions made to American culture and history by Africans and African Americans known as the Gullah and the Geechee who settled in the coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, the southeast coast of North Carolina, and the northeast coast of Florida. The distinctive culture is reflected in the stories, traditions, arts and crafts, culinary practices, and the Creole language of the people of the corridor. The corridor demonstrates the strongest continuities with the indigenous cultures of Africa of any region in the United States.

[Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area](#) (New York), stretching from Troy to New York City, contains a rich assemblage of natural features and nationally significant cultural and historical sites. The period from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War is well represented and complemented by individual sites such as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Springwood, Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill, Lyndhurst, and the Vanderbilt Mansion. The valley retains the scenic, rural character that inspired the Hudson Valley School of landscape painting and the Knickerbocker writers.

[Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor](#) (Illinois) is the first national heritage area, created along the 96-mile hand-dug canal completed in 1848 that stretches between LaSalle and Chicago, Illinois. The canal opened trade in the nation's most populous inland state and the American Heartland. The corridor is an 862-square-mile region encompassing five counties and 57 communities.

[John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor](#) (Rhode Island and Massachusetts) tells the story of the American Industrial Revolution, which began along the 46 miles of river and canals running from Worcester, Massachusetts, to Providence, Rhode Island. The mills (including Slater Mill), mill villages, and associated transportation networks in the Blackstone Valley together tell the story of industrialization.

[Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area](#) (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) stretches 180 miles along the Route 15 corridor from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia. Most significant is the region's role as a cradle of democracy and its key position in the Civil War. The journey encompasses a scenic and historically rich landscape, including the homes and birthplaces of nine U.S. presidents (including Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe). Here world leaders have often found respite and inspiration in the creation of some of the most important doctrines of our time—the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Monroe Doctrine, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address, and the Marshall Plan.

[Kenai Mountains Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area](#) (Alaska) highlights the experience of the Native Alaskans, Russians, explorers, gold miners, and settlers who traveled through the branching valleys and over the waters of this rugged mountain coordinator. Public land designations, most extensively the Chugach National Forest, but also state and national parks, have preserved this scenic landscape as viewed by early travelers. In the new heritage area, the isolated historic communities that developed around transportation and the Gold Rush are dwarfed by the sweeping landscapes, by the magnificence of the mountains and the strength and dominance of nature. The corridor communities share a sense that it is a special place.

[Lackawanna Heritage Valley National Heritage Area](#) (Pennsylvania) includes historic, cultural, and natural resources along the Lackawanna River. The architecture, ethnic traditions, and infrastructure of the Anthracite region tell the story of the Lackawanna Valley and its role in the industrial development of the United States.

[The Last Green Valley National Heritage Area](#) (Connecticut and Massachusetts) got its name because of the surprisingly rural character of the 1,085-square-mile area defined by the Quinebaug and Shetucket river systems and the rugged hills, forests, and agricultural fields that surround them in northeastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts. The area encompasses architecturally significant mill structures and villages that typify New England settlement in one of the last unspoiled and undeveloped areas in the northeastern United States.

[Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area](#) (Mississippi) includes counties in the alluvial floodplain of the Mississippi River. This area was cleared for cotton and plantation life, and peopled by sharecroppers and land owners, including

*National Heritage Areas: Combining the Conservation of Nature, History, and Culture with Local Economic Development*

immigrants from Europe and Asia. Many people from this region became the source of the Great Migration north, and thus the family home of many living today in northern cities, like Chicago and Detroit. It is an area known as the birthplace of the blues and gospel music as well as many sites that were pivotal in the early civil rights movement.

**Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area** (Louisiana) encompasses a distinctive six-county area of coastal Mississippi where many chapters in the national story have been written. The bounties of the coast's natural resources have brought people to this area from all over the world. The modern culture of the Gulf Coast consists of a multi-ethnic gumbo of people and traditions of Native American, Spanish, French, and African descent.

**Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area** (Mississippi) represents a distinctive cultural landscape shaped largely by the dynamic intersection of Appalachian and Delta cultures, an intersection which produced a powerful concentration of nationally significant cultural icons. Lasting contributions to our country's musical and literary legacies were forged by Hills natives Elvis Presley, Howlin' Wolf, and Tammy Wynette. The heritage area seeks to interpret and share the stories of these individuals, as well as the legacies of civil rights pioneers James Meredith and Ida B. Wells-Barnett.

**Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area** (Utah) encompasses six counties along Highway 89. The region is recognized for its dramatic landscapes, including Bryce Canyon, Capitol Reef, and Zion National Park. It is also known for a string of communities along the axis of the corridor that reflect the experience of Mormon colonization. Each community is marked by the town planning principles of the time and the distinctive buildings of the Mormon faith. This setting tells the story of the native peoples and the early settlers who farmed, ranched, logged, and mined in this part of the state.

**Motor-Cities National Heritage Area** (Michigan) preserves, interprets, and promotes Michigan's rich automotive and labor heritage through nearly 1,200 auto-related resources—the largest concentration of auto-related sites, attractions, and events in the world.

**Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area** (Alabama) spans six counties within the Tennessee River basin. The region celebrates the booming years of the Muscle Shoals recording studios in the 1960s and 1970s and the creation of the rich music heritage that helped shape today's music scene.

**National Aviation Heritage Area** (Ohio) is recognized as the birthplace of aviation and home of the Wright brothers. The area, centered in Dayton, encompasses an eight-county area in Ohio: Montgomery, Greene, Miami, Clark, Warren, Champaign, Shelby, and Auglaize counties.

**National Coal Heritage Area** (West Virginia) is a rugged industrial landscape that showcases the stories of miners of many ethnicities who labored to extract and transport coal, and their wives, who struggled to maintain homes under primitive conditions. Coalfield history and culture contains key elements of a unique social and economic history including the stories of industrial might, the struggle for labor unions, and the growth of distinctive cultural communities among different ethnic groups who worked side by side and lived together in the company towns of the region.

**Niagara Falls National Heritage Area** (New York) is home to the natural wonder of Niagara Falls, the rapids of the Niagara River gorge, and the communities of Niagara Falls, Youngstown, and Lewiston. The region includes nationally significant historical sites associated with the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, including Old Fort Niagara, which tells the story of international conflict between the French, the Iroquois Confederacy, the British, and the United States.

**Northern Plains National Heritage Area** (North Dakota) stretches almost the entire length of the free-flowing Missouri River, in the homeland of the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians. The area contains Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park's Custer House and on-a-slant Mandan Indian Village, Fort Mandan and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota Heritage Center and the state capitol grounds, Huff Indian Village National Landmark, and the tall cottonwoods of Cross Ranch State Park.

**Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area** (New Mexico) stretches from Santa Fe to Taos and includes the counties of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Taos. It encompasses a mosaic of cultures and history, including eight pueblos and the descendants of Spanish ancestors who settled in the area as early as 1598. Within its boundaries are many

***National Heritage Areas: Combining the Conservation of Nature, History, and Culture with Local Economic Development***

significant historic sites and a cultural landscape that reflects long settlement of the region, including the Taos Pueblo, a World Heritage Site.

**Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway** (Ohio) celebrates the canal that enabled shipping between Lake Erie and the Ohio River, opened up frontier settlement in Ohio, and vaulted Ohio into commercial prominence in the early 1830s. The canal and towpath trail pass through agricultural lands and rural villages into industrial communities such as Akron, Canton, and Cleveland that trace their prosperity to the coming of the canal.

**Oil Region National Heritage Area** (Pennsylvania) tells the story of Colonel Edwin Drake's drilling of the world's first successful oil well in 1859, which changed the course of industry, society, and politics in the modern world. The Oil Region contains a number of remnants of the oil industry, as well as historic valley settlements shaped by native and immigrant populations.

**Path of Progress National Heritage Route** (Pennsylvania) is a 500-mile route that winds through the hills and valleys of nine scenic southwestern Pennsylvania counties. The heritage route recognizes the cultural heritage of the nine-county region in southwestern Pennsylvania associated with the three basic industries of iron and steel, coal, and transportation.

**Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area** (Pennsylvania) preserves and interprets the legacy of big steel and its related industries. More than 270 heritage development projects are under way or have been completed in the Rivers of Steel eight-county region. Rivers of Steel is building on the area's remarkable transition from heavy industry to high technology as well as bolstering the new regional economy by promoting tourism and economic development based on the region's historic industrial saga, including the site of the 1892 Homestead Steel Strike.

**Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area** (Colorado) in San Luis Valley is the cradle of Colorado's earliest settlement and is recognized as a confluence of Hispano, Anglo, and American Indian cultures. Spanning more than 3,000 square miles, the area includes the counties of Conejos, Costilla, and Alamosa, the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, the Baca National Wildlife Refuge, the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge, and the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, containing the largest sand dunes in North America.

**Schuylkill River National Heritage Area** (Pennsylvania) celebrates the rich culture and history of the Schuylkill River watershed as one of America's most significant cultural and industrial regions. This region is nationally important for the role that its people, places, and events played in the American, Industrial, and environmental revolutions. Pre-Revolutionary mills and late-19th-century factories, rural villages, and the city of Philadelphia are all part of the fabric of the Schuylkill River Valley.

**Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District** (Virginia) tells the military and civilian stories of the Civil War from 1861 to 1864, when the Shenandoah Valley was caught in the crossfire between the North and the South because of its strategic location between the two capitals and a key transportation corridor. Today, 15 battlefields and more than 320 sites, towns, villages, and farms in the eight-county district attest to the struggle, courage, and perseverance of soldiers and civilians alike.

**Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area** (Iowa) encompasses a 37-county area in northeast Iowa. Its mission is to interpret farm life, agribusiness, and rural communities, past and present, for all age groups. Through partnership sites and activities, it preserves and celebrates the land, people, and communities of the area. Silos and Smokestacks celebrates American agriculture and its global impact in small towns and large cities, trails and county roads, and through farms, natural areas, local museums, and historical buildings.

**South Carolina National Heritage Corridor** (South Carolina) is bounded on one end by the port city of Charleston and on the other by the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The 240 miles and 14 counties that comprise the heritage corridor are divided into four distinct regions that tell the story of the Old South—a story of plantations and cotton fields, kindred spirits and conflict, and hardships and prosperity.

**South Park National Heritage Area** (Colorado) commemorates the rich mining and ranching history of the American West and includes 19 working ranches, some of which were founded as early as the 1860s along headwaters of the South Platte River. It also includes a number of mines, including the world's highest mine, at 14,157 feet, on Mt. Lincoln near Alma.

**Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area** (Tennessee) commemorates the powerful stories of vicious warfare, the demands of the home front and occupation, the freedom of emancipation, and the enduring legacies of Reconstruction. Geographic location, along with strategic river and rail routes, productive farmlands, and industrial sites made Tennessee a crucial prize fought for by both Union and Confederate armies.

**Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area** (Massachusetts) is located in northwestern Connecticut and western Massachusetts and is noted for its picturesque landscape, the meandering Housatonic River, and traditional New England towns. The early history of the area was marked by the Revolutionary War, early industrialization, and deforestation, followed by a long history of reclamation and conservation. Writers, artists, and vacationers have visited the region for 150 years to enjoy its scenic wonders and artistic festivals, making it one of the country's leading cultural resorts.

**Wheeling National Heritage Area** (West Virginia) celebrates 19th-century westward expansion and industrialization. Throughout the 19th century, Wheeling served as the “crossroads of America,” playing an important role in the settlement of the nation. It is also the site of many industries, including iron and steel, nails, textiles, boat building, glass manufacturing, and stogie and tobacco manufacturing. LaBelle Cut Nails, one of only two such manufacturers in the nation, continues to produce cut nails with equipment and a process that is more than 150 years old.

**Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area** (Arizona and California) commemorates the natural ford on the Colorado River that has been a gathering spot for people for more than 500 years and is an important landmark of the nation's westward expansion. Yuma celebrates its historic role in water management to produce abundant agriculture in the desert and now is an innovator in community-driven wetlands restoration along the Colorado River.

*Source:* National Park Service [Interactive Map](#) (click on particular area names to see more information).

## *Appendix B*

### National Heritage Areas FAQs

#### **How do National Heritage Areas work?**

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) expand on traditional approaches to resource stewardship by supporting large-scale, community-driven initiatives that connect local citizens to the preservation and planning process.

#### **What is the role of the National Park Service?**

The National Park Service (NPS) provides technical, planning, and limited financial assistance to National Heritage Areas. The NPS is a partner and advisor, leaving decision-making authority in the hands of local people and organizations. The NPS National Heritage Areas staff in the regional offices and Washington D.C. are available to help answer any questions about the program.

#### **How is it different from a national park?**

A National Heritage Area is not a unit of the National Park Service, nor is any land owned or managed by the NPS. National Park Service involvement is always advisory in nature.

#### **How does a region become a National Heritage Area?**

National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress. Each National Heritage Area is governed by separate authorizing legislation and operates under provisions unique to its resources and desired goals. For an area to be considered for designation, certain key elements must be present. First and foremost, the landscape must have nationally distinctive natural, cultural, and historic resources that, when linked together, tell a unique story about our country. It is strongly recommended that a feasibility study be conducted prior to any designation attempt. The feasibility study provides the U.S. Congress and the NPS with the information they need to determine if designation is suitable.

#### **How do communities benefit from the National Heritage Area designation?**

The designation has both tangible and intangible benefits. Heritage conservation efforts are grounded in a community's pride in its history and traditions, and in residents' interest and involvement in retaining and interpreting the landscape for future generations. It offers a collaborative approach to conservation that does not compromise traditional local control over and use of the landscape. Designation comes with limited financial and technical assistance from the National Park Service.

#### **Why utilize the heritage areas strategy?**

The heritage areas concept offers an innovative method for citizens, in partnership with local, state, and federal government, and nonprofit and private sector interests, to shape the long-term future of their communities. The partnership approach creates the opportunity for a diverse range of constituents to come together to voice a range of visions and perspectives. Partners collaborate to develop a management plan and implement a strategy that focuses on the distinct qualities that make their region special.

#### **What kinds of activities does a National Heritage Area offer to visitors?**

National Heritage Areas appeal to all ages and interests. Some have opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, and paddling. Some have festivals to attend and museums to visit. Many areas provide volunteer opportunities, group tours, and multiple-day excursions and can also be visited in combination with national park units.



## *Appendix C*

### **Legislation Pending in the 115th Congress Pertaining to National Heritage Areas**

Searching [www.Congress.gov](http://www.Congress.gov) for “national heritage area” yields a number of bills being considered by the 115th Congress (2017–2018) as of April 2017.

#### **Good Bills**

These bills establish additional or expand existing NHAs:

- [S.713](#)—To establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the state of Washington.
- [H.R.1791](#)—To establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the state of Washington, and for other purposes.
- [S.731](#)—To establish the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area.
- [H.R.1738](#)—To establish the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area.
- [S.627](#)—To establish the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area.
- [H.R.1518](#)—To establish the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area.
- [H.R.1161](#)—To amend the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area.
- [S.401](#)—To establish the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area.
- [S.400](#)—To establish the Susquehanna National Heritage Area.
- [H.R.1002](#)—To establish a National Heritage Area System.

#### **Bad Bill**

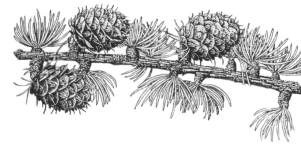
- [H.R.1768](#)—To prohibit making federal funding available for National Heritage Areas, and for other purposes.

#### **Mixed Bills**

While these two bills have good language to address invasive species, they would exempt activities for the National Environmental Policy Act, including in NHAs:

- [H.R.1330](#)—Federal Land Invasive Species Control, Prevention, and Management Act
- [S.509](#)—Federal Land Invasive Species Control, Prevention, and Management Act

# Larch Occasional Papers



DEDICATED TO THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF NATURE, THE LARCH COMPANY IS A NON-MEMBERSHIP FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS SPECIES THAT CANNOT TALK AND HUMANS NOT YET BORN. A DECIDUOUS CONIFER, THE WESTERN LARCH HAS A CONTRARY NATURE.

The Larch Company has occasionally issued papers on a variety of topics.

#	Year	Title
22	2017	<a href="#">National Heritage Areas: Combining the Conservation of Nature, History, and Culture with Local Economic Development</a>
21	2015	<a href="#">National <i>What-Have-You</i> Areas: Congressional Conservation of Our Public Lands</a>
20	2015	<a href="#">21st-Century National Recreation Areas for Oregon's National Forests and BLM Public Lands</a>
19	2013	<a href="#">Oregon Softwood Lumber Industry 1995-2012: Fewer Mills and Jobs, But Larger Timber-Processing Capacity</a>
18	2012	<a href="#">Oregon Private Timberland Owners Not Paying Fair Share of Federal Income Taxes</a>
17	2012	<a href="#">Oregon Private Timberland Owners Not Paying Enough State Timber Taxes</a>
16	2012	<a href="#">Oregon Private Timberland Owners Not Paying Fair Share of County Property Taxes</a>
15	2012	<a href="#">Native American Tribal Lands and Federal Public Forestlands in Oregon</a>
14	2012	<a href="#">An Overview of Land Management Categories for Oregon Federal Public Lands Under the Northwest Forest Plan</a>
13.1	2012	<a href="#">National Wild and Scenic Rivers and State Scenic Waterways in Oregon</a>
12	2012	<a href="#">Special Congressional Conservation Designations in Oregon</a>
11	2012	<a href="#">The National Wilderness Preservation System in Oregon: Making it Bigger and Better</a>
10	2012	<a href="#">Oregon and Washington Raw Log Exports: Exporting Jobs and a Subsidy to Domestic Mills</a>
9	2012	<a href="#">Pacific Northwest Offshore Oil and Gas Potential: At Best About A Month's National Supply; At Worse An Unnatural Disaster</a>
8	2011	<a href="#">"Small" Wilderness: No Big Deal</a>
7	2008	<a href="#">Overlapping Wilderness and Wild &amp; Scenic River Designations Provide Optimal Conservation Protection for Federal Public Lands</a>
6	2008	<a href="#">Establishing a System of and a Service for U.S. Deserts and Grasslands</a> (co authored w/ Mark Salvo)
5	2007	<a href="#">Eliminating Forest Service Regional Offices: Replacing Middle Management with More On-the-Ground Restoration</a>
4	2007	<a href="#">Forest Service Administrative Appeals: A Misallocation of Resources</a>
3	2007	<a href="#">Thinning Certain Oregon Forests to Restore Ecological Function</a>
2	2007	<a href="#">Transferring Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management Forests to the National Forest System</a>
1	2007	<a href="#">Persuading Congress to Establish a Wilderness and/or Wild &amp; Scenic River: A Checklist</a>

While these papers are provided without charge, production is not without cost. If you found this paper useful, please consider sending a check in the amount of what you think it was worth payable to The Larch Company, 7126 Highway 66, Ashland, OR 97520. Alternatively, there are apps for that. The necessary contact information can be found in footnote #1.