

Calumet Region Goals and Priorities

A Brief Summary

We collected Goals and Priorities relevant to National Heritage Area designation, as identified in key regional planning documents (Millennium Reserve and Marquette Plans) and from ideas put forward at the Calumet Community Conversations and Calumet Summits

Common concerns emerged: How can the diverse and at times conflicting peoples and land uses become an asset? How can a “triple bottom line” where environment, economy, and community all prosper be achieved? What is the role of a heritage area designation in this effort?



ENVIRONMENT—The Calumet region has played an important role in conservation and ecological study. The area continues to possess ecologically significant sites. Priorities to enhance environmental treasures across the bi-state region are:

- Identify, connect and enhance important sub-geographies such as the Dune & Swale, Moraine Forest, and river corridors
- Coordinate land management, ecological restoration, land acquisition, and trail development activities in key habitat areas
- Improve existing ecosystem communities
- Provide improved access to existing natural areas
- Restore, manage, and promote healthy watershed systems
- Promote the protection of coastal and estuarine areas

CULTURAL HERITAGE/HISTORIC PRESERVATION—The communities of the Calumet region are sites of significant cultural history. But sites of significance are often unrecognized and unappreciated. Priorities are:

- Identify and showcase the industrial, natural, and community heritage of the bi-state region through education, festivals, and other cultural activities
- Protect, conserve, and restore significant landmark sites, including homes, commercial and religious structures, public buildings, and planned industrial communities
- Identify, protect, and preserve important archeological sites in the region
- Build a bi-state regional dialogue between the Pullman National Monument, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and the lands around and between them

RECREATION—The Calumet region historically has contained significant places to relax and to play. Priorities across the bi-state region are:

- Develop a regional wayfinding system
- Continue to develop the region’s system of trails and improve the connections between them
- Improve existing and develop new recreational sites
- Increase access to the Lake Michigan shoreline
- Promote tourism and ecotourism

THE ARTS—The region’s landscape and heritage are significant sources of artistic inspiration, especially with attention-grabbing proximity of nature and industry. There is a thriving arts community in the Calumet region but it is not well recognized. Priorities are:

- Promote and protect the existing folk and fine arts heritage of the region
- Support and promote existing artists and arts organizations
- Promote the role of the arts in regional-scale placemaking.

ECONOMY—Industry has been a key identifying factor and the backbone of the Calumet region. The region’s industries are in flux, making stability and redevelopment key goals. Conserving the industrial heritage of the Calumet region is important, but should be coupled with efforts to support existing industries and attract new investment, and build on environmental and community assets. Priorities are:

- Make the most of opportunities that meet the “triple bottom line” that enhance economy, build community, and protect environment.
- Improve the Lakeshore in ways that balance industrial development and water-based tourism and recreation
- Utilize brownfield sites for industrial development
- Increase tourism marketing at the bi-state regional scale
- Attract and retain a workforce that enjoys a high quality of life by residing in the region

