



ROAD MAP FOR A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA FEASIBILITY STUDY

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

According to the National Park Service, National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are regions “designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape.” The Calumet region refers to the area of Illinois from the Southeast Side of Chicago and stretching along the northern lakeshore area of Indiana. It includes the historic watersheds of the Grand Calumet River and the Little Calumet River. The Calumet Region is a complex metropolitan area that brings together natural diversity with one of the nation’s most important industrial corridor. Its heritage and significance to the nation are unparalleled.

The National Park Service (NPS) has established 10 criteria that help in assessing the feasibility of National Heritage Area designation for a region.

Criteria for Evaluation of Potential National Heritage Areas

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 folklife 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 coordinating 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 coordinating entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.

The purpose of an NHA feasibility study is to consider whether Congressional designation is both a feasible and suitable undertaking for a region. In *National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines* (2003), NPS identified a series of activities that is useful in determining this. The outcomes of these activities align with the criteria by which NPS will make their recommendation to Congress concerning designation. This recommendation is not binding on Congress.



Task Summary

Together, the tasks below provide direction to carry out the planning process and report development for a Calumet National Heritage Area feasibility study. *Elements of these tasks have been accomplished through previous planning in the region or through ongoing activities, providing a savings of both time and money for the remainder of the project.* The outcome of each of the tasks above is a single component of the feasibility study. Collectively, these components can demonstrate whether the region has a nationally significant story, resources to tell that story, and the partnership and organizational capacity to carry the region through designation and successful implementation of a national heritage area. The tasks are not necessarily temporally consecutive. A broad study area has been defined, and work will begin shortly to complete tasks 2, 3, and 4, which will provide a framework for the completion of further tasks.

Task 1 — Define a study area.

Task 2 — Develop a public engagement strategy.

Task 3 — Determine region's contribution to national heritage and develop potential themes.

Task 4 — Create an inventory of the region's natural and cultural resources.

Task 5 — Consider a range of management alternatives and their respective impacts.

Task 6 — Delineate a boundary for the proposed National Heritage Area.

Task 7 — Identify a coordinating entity for the proposed National Heritage Area.

Task 8 — Develop a conceptual financial plan.

Task 9 — Demonstrate public support and local commitments.

Task 10 — Describe the Affected Environment.

Task 11 — Identify concurrent plans and studies that may have relevance for the proposed National Heritage Area.

For more information, visit:

The Calumet Heritage Partnership website <http://www.calumetheritage.org/>

The National Park Service website's feasibility study guidelines for a National Heritage Area <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/become/nhfeasguidelines.pdf>