Ensuring the Future for our National Heritage Areas

With the passage of the National Heritage Area Act, we welcome seven new NHAs to our family, further expanding our ability to preserve and share the full story of our nation and to engage in even more communities. But with these additions — so important as we strive to be more and inclusive in our telling of American History as our Sesquicentennial approaches — comes a need for a modest increase in funding for the program.

As demonstrated by this chart, federal funding for heritage areas has not kept pace with the number of new NHAs designations. The goal is now to authorize appropriations at a level that will allow all NHAs to meet the goals of their management plans.

To join the Congressional caucus on National Heritage Areas, please contact:
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Landmark Heritage Area Legislation Becomes Law

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT PASSES CONGRESS WITH OVERWHHELMING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Our history, complicated as it may be, serves as a rallying point for Americans of different backgrounds and ideologies. This piece of legislation exemplifies what our country can do when we stand together to protect our shared legacy.

Alan Spears, National Parks Conservation Association

“The National Heritage Area Act is a testament to the tireless work National Heritage Areas do within communities across America. It is a direct reflection of the determination and resilience of National Heritage Areas and the people and places we represent. The Alliance of National Heritage Areas is profoundly grateful for the tireless leadership and support we have received on a bipartisan basis within Congress and look forward to serving our communities for an additional 15 years.”

Sara Cogen, Alliance of National Heritage Areas

Support of this Act has been a long-time focus of the Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks and we are thrilled by the bill’s passage. National Heritage Areas help protect our nation’s cultural and natural resources through local conservation efforts, while also supporting recreation, education, and economic development opportunities in communities across the country.”

Mike Murray, Chair of the Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks

—Matthew D. Chase, CEO and Executive Director, National Association of Counties

“NHAs serve as economic catalysts for communities across the country, collectively supporting tens of thousands of jobs and contributing billions of dollars to local economies.

Miranda Miller, Legislative Assistant, Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY)
The Long, Winding Road to Program Legislation


1990s 11 new NHAs designated

Late 1980s 2 new National Heritage Areas added

2000-2009 30 new NHAs designated, including many in the West

Feb. 13, 2017 Representatives Dent and Tonko introduce the National Heritage Area Act, H.R. 1002

Feb. 7, 2019 Reps. Dent and McKinley reintroduce the NHA Act as H.R. 1002

Mar. 12, 2019 The Dingell Act creates 6 new NHAs

Apr. 20, 2019 House Committee on Natural Resources holds hearings on H.R. 1049

Jan. 26, 2020 H.R. 1049 Reported clears House Committee

Jan. 29, 2020 H.R. 1049 passes House with 221 bi-partisan co-sponsors

Dec. 3, 2020 H.R. 1049 passes House with 221 bi-partisan co-sponsors

Dec. 22, 2022 H.R. 1049 passed House on floor vote, 326 to 95

May 27, 2021 Senators Stabenow and Blunt introduce the NHA Act, S. 1942

June 15, 2021 Additional Hearings on H.R. 1049

Dec. 20, 2022 S. 1942 passes Senate on Unanimous Consent

July 20, 2023 S. 1942 clears Senate Natural Resources Committee

Dec. 21, 2022 S. 1942 granted individual floor debate and vote by House Rules Committee

Jan. 5, 2023 Signed by the president, BECOMES LAW

Our heritage areas help preserve and protect sites of cultural, historical, and natural significance, shining a light on local communities across the country... My National Heritage Area Act secures a stable foundation of federal support for these partnerships, streamlines bureaucracy, and puts the sites themselves on the strongest possible footing for the future.”

— Congressman Paul Tonko

“National Heritage Areas not only commemorate our nation’s history, but also create jobs and boost tourism for communities across the country. This legislation ensures that Michigan’s own MotorCities National Heritage Area can continue to preserve and share our rich automotive history for years to come.”

— Senator Debbie Stabenow
ABRAHAM LINCOLN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (IL) • ALABAMA BLACK BELT NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (AL)
APPIALACHIAN FOREST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MD, WV) • ARABIA MOUNTAIN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (GA) • ATCHATAYA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (LA) • AUGUSTA CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (GA)
BALTIMORE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MD) • BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (NC) •
BRONZEVILLE-BLACK METROPOLIS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (IL) • CACHE LA Poudre River NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA (CO) • CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (LA) • CHAMPLAIN VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP (NY, VT) • CROSSROADS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (NJ) • DELAWARE AND LEHIGH NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (PA) • DOWNEAST MAINE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (ME) • ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (NY) • ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (CT) • FREDOM'S FRONTIER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (KS, MO) • FREDOM'S WAY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MA, NH) • GREAT GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (FL, GA, NC, SC) • ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (IL) • JOHN H. CHAFEE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (MA, RI) • JOURNEY THROUGH HALLOWED GROUND NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MD, PA, VA, WV) • KENAI MOUNTAINS-TURNAGAIN ARM NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA • LACKAWANNA VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (PA) • MAURICE D. HINCEY HUDSON RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (NY) • MISSISSIPPI DELTA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA • NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (NY) • MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (UT) • MOTORCITIES NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MI) • MOUNTAINS TO SOUND GREENWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (WA) • MUSCLE SHOALS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (AL) • NAVAL AERONAUTICAL HERITAGE AREA (OH) • NATIONAL AERONAUTICAL HERITAGE AREA (OK) • NATIONAL CANAL HERITAGE AREA (PA) • NATIONAL COAL HERITAGE AREA (WV) • NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (NY) • NORTHERN NECK NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (VA) • NORTHERN PLAINS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (ND) • NORTHERN RIO GRANDE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (NM) • OHIO & ERIE NATIONAL HERITAGE CANALWAY (OH) • OIL REGION NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (PA) • RIVERS OF STEEL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (PA) • SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (CA) • SANGRE DE CRISTO NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (CO) • SANTA CRUZ VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (AZ) • SCHUYLKILL RIVER GREENWAYS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (PA) • SILOS & SMOKESSTACKS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (IA) • SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (SC) • SOUTH PARK NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (CO) • SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN OF THE REVOLUTION NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (NC, SC) • SOUTHERN MARYLAND NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MD) • ST. CROIX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS) • SUSQUEHANNA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (PA) • TENNESSEE CIVIL WAR NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (TN) • THE LAST GREEN VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR (CT, MA) • UPPER HOUSATONIC VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (CT, MA) • WHEELING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (WV) • YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (AZ)

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT
S.1942 • PL 117-339 • JANUARY 5, 2023

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
—Margaret Mead

Alliance of National Heritage Areas