

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

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The following information is an extract from a document produced by the National Park Service. For the complete notebook, visit www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/

The Management Plan – What is it?

The management plan describes comprehensive policies, strategies, and recommendations for telling the story of the region's heritage and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management and development of the National Heritage Area. The plan specifies actions, policies, strategies, performance goals, and recommendations taken to meet the goals of the heritage area.

The plan identifies what the local coordinating entity and partners want to achieve over the initial period of the project (about 10-15 years) – it is an agreement between the parties – including the National Park Service, the public, elected officials, donors and other agencies – on what is going to be achieved over the life of the plan.

- **It is a guide for decision making** – both for the local coordinating entity and partners. It is a useful tool to explain the heritage area's goals and projects to potential partners, supporters, and the public. It conveys what the heritage area is all about and what the larger heritage area community intends to accomplish.
- The management plan also links the local coordinating entity to federal funding and broadly sets forth how federal and other monies are to be spent over time. The management planning process must be completed in three years, as stated in the authorizing legislation, and include National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) processes and documentation in order for the Secretary of the Interior to sign the plan. Without the Secretary's signature, a heritage area cannot receive further federal funding. (NEPA and NHPA outline planning and consultation processes which can be integrated into the management planning process and are explained below.)
- In legal terms, the management plan documents how the requirements of the authorizing legislation will be met.

Basic Components of a Management Plan

Throughout the planning process the goal is to build partnerships and understanding, but also to formalize ideas and produce outputs. In general, the management plan includes certain key components, including a vision and mission, comprehensive goals and actions to meet the requirements of the authorizing legislation, an implementation strategy, and a description of the roles and responsibilities of all the parties. The NPS lists eight interim requirements for the contents of a management plan:

1. A description of **comprehensive policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations** for telling the story of the region's heritage and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the National Heritage Area;
2. A description of the **actions and commitments** that governments, private organizations, and citizens will take to protect, enhance and interpret the natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources of the National Heritage Area;
3. Specification of existing and **potential sources of funding** or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the National Heritage Area;
4. An **inventory** of the natural, historic, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area related to the stories and themes of the region that should be protected, enhanced, managed or developed;

5. **Recommended policies and strategies** for resource management including, but not limited to, the development of intergovernmental and interagency agreements to protect the National Heritage Area's natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources;

6. A **program of implementation** for the management plan including:

- a. Performance goals
- b. Plans for resource protection, enhancement, and interpretation; and
- c. Specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any government, organization, business, or individual;

7. An analysis and recommendation for ways in which local, State, Tribal, and Federal programs may best be coordinated, including the role of the National Park Service and other Federal agencies associated with the National Heritage Area, to further the purposes of this Act; and

8. A **business plan** that –

- a. describes the role, operation, financing and functions of the local coordinating entity and of each of the major activities contained in the management plan; and
- b. provides adequate assurances that the local coordinating entity has the partnerships, and financial and other resources necessary to implement the management plan for the National Heritage Area.

While the feasibility study, the study conducted to determine whether an area is feasible and meets the criteria to be designated as a National Heritage Area by Congress, authorizing legislation or other existing information may already contain a resource inventory or the identification of themes and nationally important stories, the management plan builds upon previous work and compiles all relevant information into one document, capable of capturing the full vision and plan for the heritage area.