

**NEWS RELEASE
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Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, consisting of 41 counties in western-Missouri and eastern-Kansas, is a grassroots effort to steward the cultural landscape and nationally significant stories about the struggle over freedom on the frontier.

After seven years of work by local citizens, Freedom's Frontier became an official National Heritage Area with President George W. Bush's signature on The National Heritage Act of 2006, on October 12, 2006.

Through this heritage area citizens will pool resources, set common goals, and encourage dialog to transform that story into a plan of action. Freedom's Frontier involves residents, public agencies, and private organizations working together to make the goals of preservation, conservation, education and interpretation a reality. Our area and its people played important roles in the history of our nation. While our history often divided us into groups that were at odds and carried out atrocities, today our citizens are learning to integrate their differing points of view into a shared story.

Since February 2008, citizens have been working together to create a management plan for the area. The purpose of this plan is to present a comprehensive program for the conservation, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the heritage area in order to tell the story about the struggle over freedom on the frontier.

Drafts of sections of the management plan will be posted online over the next two months for public comment at www.ffnha-hosting.com. A Welcome Packet and additional information about Freedom's Frontier can be found online at www.freedomfrontier.org.

The management plan will be submitted to the National Park Service for approval in the spring of 2009. Once the plan is approved, the heritage area will partner with the Park Service for technical assistance and will qualify for federal funding.

Fast Facts about Freedom's Frontier

Location: 41 counties in Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri, USA

Area: 31,021 square miles, approximately the size of South Carolina

Population: 2,811,295 (2007 estimate)

Established: October 12, 2006

Counties involved:

Kansas: Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Clay, Coffey, Crawford, Douglas, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Labette, Leavenworth, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Osage, Pottawatomie, Riley, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Wilson, Woodson, Wyandotte

Missouri: Barton, Bates, Buchanan, Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Platte, Ray, St. Clair, Vernon

What is a National Heritage Area?

A National Heritage Area is a nationally distinctive landscape shaped by natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources, recognized by the U.S. Congress. A heritage area tells a nationally important story through its geography, its man-made structures, and the traditions that have evolved within the landscape.

National Heritage Areas are managed by a local entity in partnership with various stakeholders. These stakeholders include individual citizens, local, state, and Federal governments, and nonprofit and private sector groups. Together these stakeholders work to preserve the integrity of their distinct landscape and local stories so that future generations will understand their relationship to the land. This collaborative approach does not compromise traditional local control over and use of the land.

Using this approach, National Heritage Areas are based on their constituents' pride in their history and traditions and interest and involvement in retaining and interpreting their special landscapes. Heritage areas work across traditional boundaries in order to collaboratively shape a plan and implementation strategy that preserves the area's unique and distinct qualities.

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