



January 2007

**Request for Proposal
Management Plan Facilitation and Final Report
For
Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA)**

INTRODUCTION

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) is a "story ecosystem," a region defined by the story that unifies the places together. The primary story surrounds settlement of Kansas Territory and the battles that took place between Missouri and Kansas residents over whether Kansas would be brought into the Union as a free or slave state. The balance of power in the US Congress was in question. Residents of the area routinely gather to define strategies for maintaining a sustainable living landscape including recognition of the layers of stories those same landscapes hold.

The defining document that captures the decision-making tools, coordination of efforts, commitments of resources, prioritizing of efforts, the foundation from which all agreed upon actions grow and other guidance is known nationwide as the Management Plan. It is the *Roberts Rules of Order* for a nationally important landscape but only those who choose to define and/or follow it will keep it moving forward.

This Request for Proposal is seeking organizations and firms that understand the grassroots process, understand that the heart of any unifying region is a place that encourages diversity of people, opinion and dialog in a respectful and accepting way and will facilitate strengthening the process that forges forward with even more impressive goals than initially imagined.

The outcome is a Management Plan that frames how the region preserves, conserves and commemorates a sustainable landscape around the nationally important stories. The Plan integrates economic development, preservation, conservation, education and interpretation.

The uniqueness of each region provides the motivation to capture the story's landscape, develop new ways of doing business, break down political boundaries and empower the residents to become engaged in their own future. Every decision is based on extended dialogue, making the road to success longer while empowering more residents to make a difference themselves.

The heritage area boundary may change as the Management Plan develops. As the dialogues gain more public exposure, more residents and communities may choose to participate. Thus, definition of the story and its place in U.S. history and the criteria for measuring “contributing sites and communities” will define the final boundary without regard to political boundaries.

BACKGROUND OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA PROGRAM

A National Heritage Area is a place designated by the U.S. Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.

Heritage development is a strategy that encourages citizens, government agencies, non-profit groups and private partners to collaboratively plan and implement programs and projects that recognize, preserve and celebrate many of America’s defining landscapes.

The first heritage area was created in 1984, setting the stage for a movement that has gone international – looking at a region as a whole instead of individually by specific – and sometimes competing – interests. The region looks and acts cohesively around certain decision-making for any and all residents who wish to join in.

BACKGROUND OF FREEDOM’S FRONTIER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA), originally known as Bleeding Kansas National Heritage Area (BKNHA), was established with the signature of George W. Bush, President of the United States, on October 12, 2006 after four years of work, with full support from the Kansas/Missouri Congressional delegation, by a dedicated grassroots group representing 29 counties in Kansas including Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Clay, Coffey, Crawford, Douglas, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Johnson, Labette, Leavenworth, Linn, Miami, Neosho, Pottawatomie, Riley, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Wilson, Woodson, Jefferson, Montgomery, Osage, and Wyandotte and 12 counties in Missouri including Buchanan, Platte, Clay, Ray, Lafayette, Jackson, Cass, Johnson, Bates, Vernon, Barton, and St. Clair. The region, based on a divisive history still powerfully remembered, many times refers to the state boundary as a “border” yet today citizens work together to provide differing points of view without judgment or other types of boundaries.

HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

As the process for regionalizing landscapes around a “big story” instead of political boundaries spread across the world, the term “heritage development” became synonymous with economic development, tourism, sustainability and other buzz words. It is now a buzz word of its own.

This movement, continuing to grow in popularity, requires like-minded people to share ideas, success stories, lessons learned and spontaneous idea development. Informal dialogues forged a formal alliance. The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) is a membership organization comprised of national heritage areas and partners that support and practice sustainable heritage development. The ANHA's activities enhance the efforts of individual areas designated by Congress and promote the heritage development movement in America.

The Alliance advocates, facilitates and celebrates excellence in cooperative initiatives that enhance quality of life for citizens and their communities, attract cultural heritage tourists to communities and provide distinguished examples of sustainable heritage development for the nation.

In 2005, a study by ANHA focused on the impact of heritage tourism on the local economy. Based on surveys of five National Heritage Areas it was estimated that:

- Visitors to the entire NHA network generated \$8.5 billion in direct and indirect sales in 2005.
- These sales were enough to support more than 152,324 jobs, which paid nearly \$3.2 billion in wages and salaries.
- Total direct and indirect value-added to the community from the heritage tourism related activity in the form of personal income to workers, profits and rents to businesses, and indirect business taxes paid to government, is estimated to have reached \$5 billion in 2005.

The following information is from a Kansas Cultural and Heritage Research Study conducted by Randall Travel Marketing, a firm hired by the Kansas Department of Commerce, Travel & Tourism Division in 2006. Cultural Tourism is:

- Defined as “traveling to experience the places, activities and artifacts that tell the stories of the people, past and present,” cultural heritage tourism is increasingly recognized as an important economic driver for destinations around the world.
- Globally, one of the fastest growing industry segments in travel & tourism predicted to increase by 30% by 2010
- In America, historic and cultural travel volume grew 13% from 1996 to 2002
- 81% of all traveling American adults – 118 million – engaged in a cultural or heritage activity in 2003
- Cultural heritage travelers want:
 - Facility open when they travel (including weekends, evenings)
 - Facility easy to locate: good signage, well-marked and inviting entrances
 - Safe place to eat, shop, tour, sleep
 - Nostalgia, patriotism, education
 - Authentic quality experiences shared by/with knowledgeable, friendly
 - LOCAL hosts
 - A unique perspective - your “point of difference”
 - Past related to the present
- Profile of cultural travelers in Kansas:

- average daily spending = \$261.66
- average total nights for entire trip = 6.19
- average total nights in Kansas = 1.83
- repeat visitors to Kansas = 82.57%
- first-time visitors to Kansas = 17.43%
- adults traveling without children = 79%

CURRENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The grassroots *Partnership Team*, consisting of willing partners from each of the 41 counties in the designated area, meets monthly at locations throughout the area. The Lawrence Convention & Visitors Bureau currently serves as the lead organization for this heritage area work and its Director acts as chair of the Partnership Team.

The current FFNHA Advisory Board is in the process of bringing the 501c3 status up to date with a redefined Board of Directors and updated charter and bylaws. This board will oversee hiring of staff, set policy and have fiduciary responsibility.

STATEMENT OF NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IN MANAGEMENT PLAN

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area has been established to address the following needs as written in the enabling legislation:

- To strengthen, complement and support the existing National Park Sites in the area
- To further collaboration and partnerships among Federal, State, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, or combinations thereof, to conserve and manage the resources and opportunities in the Heritage Area through grants, technical assistance, training and other means
- To assist in conservation and interpretation of the heritage area
- To empower communities and organizations in the heritage area to preserve the special historic identity of Freedom's Frontier
- To provide for the management, preservation, protection and interpretation of the natural, historical, and cultural resources within the region for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations
- To provide greater community capacity through inter-local cooperation
- To provide a vehicle, particularly in the counties with out-migration of population, to recognize that self-reliance and resilience will be the keys to their economic future
- To build upon the rural development policies, agritourism initiatives and the Homestead Act to recognize inherent strengths of small towns and rural communities—close-knit communities, strong local business networks, and a tradition of entrepreneurial creativity
- To educate and cultivate among its citizens, particularly its youth, the stories and cultural resources of the region's legacy that:

- interpret the conflict over slavery that became nationally prominent in the area just before and during the American Civil War;
- reflect the commitment of American settlers who first fought and killed to uphold their different and irreconcilable principles of freedom and equality;
- reflect the struggle for freedom, experienced during the pre-Civil War era, that continues to be a vital and pressing issue associated with the real problem of democratic nation building; and
- interpret the physical environment revealing its impact on agriculture, transportation, trade and business, and social and cultural patterns in urban and rural settings
- To interpret the effect of the era’s democratic ethos on the development of America’s distinctive political culture.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The expectation is that within ten years residents and visitors alike will instinctively know the importance of this place and its nationally distinctive landscape. This will be accomplished through working together toward a sustainable future that includes conservation of the region’s important heritage assets, management of authentic and quality sites, interpretation of all perspectives of our shared stories, offerings of tours using the latest technology connecting our stories and events that emphasize and encourage dialogue about the importance of the conflicts over American values. Topics to be identified should include freedoms gained and lost as the territory was settled and the landscape that invited and took away freedoms.

The Plan shall encompass the following and include definition and measurement of success as well as an action plan in each category:

- **Statement of National Significance** of FFNHA - This statement was developed in the Feasibility/Suitability Study process; however, it will need to be updated honoring the variety of perspectives now at the table.
- **Planning Series** to include:
 - 1) *Resource Management Plan*
 - Historic Resources Study
 - Natural Resources Study
 - Living/Contributing Landscape Study
 - Environmental Assessment and 106 Compliance
 - Recreation Plan
 - Establish resource sharing listserv through the FFNHA website for resource management, including “how-to” manual
 - 2) *Heritage Development Plan*
 - Role of preservation, conservation, adaptive reuse, commemoration, celebration, sharing of lifeways, improving

quality of life for residents, sustainability, et al.

- Tourism readiness
- Regional economic development
- Establish resource sharing listserv through the FFNHA for Heritage Development, including “how-to” manual

3) *Interpretive/Education Plan*:

- Integrate multiple perspectives and approaches
- Find the specific and unique places for each story
- Define the differences between interpretation and information
- Identify interpretive methods, their strengths and weaknesses, when to use them and when not to, how to evaluate success for each application
- Establish resource sharing listserv through the FFNHA for Interpretation and Education, including “how-to” manual

4) *Marketing/Communication Plan* including but not limited to:

- Themed navigation systems
- Role of trails, rail lines, and landscapes
- Graphics environment (consistent look to all signs, brochures, etc.
- Clarify accessibility issues
- Establish resource sharing listserv through the FFNHA for Marketing/Communications, including “how-to” manual

5) *Business Plan*

- Definition of responsibilities of and interaction between Partners, Board and Staff
- Criteria and standards from which all decisions are made
- How will all this happen, be coordinated, unfold?
- Include recommendations for role of regional economic development
- Evaluate opportunities for a management team to become self-sufficient and make final recommendations on how this would happen
- Evaluate integration of NHA process into individual planning efforts throughout the region
- Identify how NHA could permanently integrate into statewide efforts

6) *Civic Engagement Plan*, a commitment to public process in all heritage work including:

- Who can participate and how
- The role of the completed Plan in the region
- How various communications options can be utilized effectively

- How to evaluate effectiveness of current public engagement

***Final Management Plan** will hold the stories in the highest regard while defining criteria for decision making and providing a framework for how Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area will develop and maintain sustainability.

- Integrates the individual plans from the planning series into one cohesive plan
- Establishes “base criteria” that are always part of sustainable decision-making in each discipline, specialty or special interest for all willing partners
- Defines “heritage development ‘jargon’” to attain successful yet diverse dialogs

The Plan will include an “action matrix” including a projected timeline, estimated budgets and other resources needed. This 10-year investment strategy will be built on actions defined in the components listed above. These actions establish the framework for categorizing specific activities each year and how they will be prioritized.

PUBLIC PROCESS

The entire dialog for cohesively moving forward is to be publicly transparent. The firm will develop engaging and attention-getting drafts of press releases for each of the partners to distribute as each step is completed or begun.

Each public meeting will celebrate progress and clarify the importance and impact of the next steps. Ideally, each public meeting is also networked through a video-conferencing process through public libraries, universities and school systems – a process that will be developed with sustainability in mind for future public NHA dialogues when sponsors’ roles are seen as vital to their own mission as well.

There is to be a website section designed for www.freedomsfrontier.org intended for public feedback and updates as well as a method to send E-grams for those interested in being involved during the planning stages. Both the management planning section of the website and the look of the E-gram are to carry the “look” of Freedom’s Frontier. This will require working with the firm that created www.freedomsfrontier.org, a firm chosen through FFNHA selection process.

A monthly “report to the partnership” that gives the “insider’s perspective,” a tip or tidbit not included in the more public E-grams will be expected. This will be read at the monthly partnership meeting.

DELIVERABLES & PROCESS

Every official report or communication will be formally available online for public review

with a power point for each. Management will expect a review of the draft two weeks prior to its going “public” to assure quality, submission completeness, and the proper spirit/approach/tone – there may be minor adjustments made prior to public release. If this early review demonstrates that the submission is unacceptable and requires serious revision, the entire timeline will shift that amount of time for the rest of the schedule and a public notification of the timeline shift will include the website, e-grams, press releases and perhaps even an announcement in three papers within Freedom’s Frontier all at the consultant’s expense. The definition of “unacceptable” will be defined in the contract stage.

All formal submissions, drafts and finals will be expected in the following format::

- 1 PC compatible digital file (the review begins when the digital copy is received by each official reviewer and the web posting and feedback process are in place)
- 2 Graphics, charts and other non-text items needed for the final drafts and/or final reports are to be agreed upon a month prior to final submission deadline
- 3 PDF format placed on the website
- 4 Measurable feedback process placed on the website
- 5 Access-based database management of feedback and feedback reports

RESPONSE TO RFP PACKAGE TO INCLUDE:

- 1) Provide a definition of the consulting team with description & resume for each member.
- 2) Explain the percentage of work to be done by each of the principles and assistants for the team.
- 3) Define and provide background for projects worked on by this team individually and collectively with contact names for every project.
- 4) Explain how you would deal with divergent opinions and how you would resolve the situation.
- 5) Identify what you think we have omitted from this RFP.
- 6) Looking at Management Plans of other heritage areas, identify what you believe they missed in their plan.
- 7) Provide examples of your work online for us to review.
- 8) Provide a sample Table of Contents for the final Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area Management Plan.
- 9) Provide an example of glossary of terms to be used in MP process.
- 10) If you wish, recommend an adjustment of the process and/or timeline acknowledging the length of time for NPS and DOI approval and deadline for final approval by the Secretary of Interior. .

The individuals you meet during the interview will be part of the review team. Because this is a grassroots project, there may ultimately be others involved based on need and expertise.

Planning Series. There will be one public meeting for each and a draft review posted on the website and digitally furnished to the review team. Each one of the *Planning Series* that makes up the management plan will require a different set of eyes. We expect to have six partner reviewers (three from each state), one to three National Park Service Planners, two to six state office reviewers, a board member and a staff member for review of each document. The submissions are to be digital in nature, preferably PDF format and also posted on the website for anyone who wishes to make a public comment – not downloadable until finalized and integrated into the final Management Plan.

Management Plan. The *six-week* review of the *draft* management plan (incorporating all of the planning documents identified in the Project Description section) will require a formal public process that includes capturing and documenting all comments and feedback into a PDF document, substantial public notification of its availability, one public meeting, a user-friendly downloadable review form, an easily manipulated database that delivers a series of feedback reports and a section of the planning section of the website will feature a series of comments every two weeks that demonstrate the full spectrum of comments.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Review of the development of the Management Plan will be the responsibility of the Partnership Team working in partnership with the Board of Directors.

Timeline:

May 1, 2007: Deadline for submission of proposals

Submitted to:

Judy Billings, Executive Vice President
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
Convention & Visitors Bureau
734 Vermont St.
Lawrence, Kansas 66044
785-865-4494

Or electronically to:

director@visitlawrence.com

May 10, 2007 Initial interview of all principles of consulting team by Partnership Team via video conference, make no more than three recommendations to Board of Trustees

May 22, 2007: Board of Trustees receives recommendations & schedules personal interview with finalists

June, 2007	Personal interview with all principals of each finalist consulting team and offer made
July 12, 2007	Consultants meet with Partnership Team to set stage for process
September, 2007	Schedule & facilitate a first series of public meetings in video conference with power point to emphasize to address topics in the Planning Series, each within a one-hour drive of the defined area, to begin to accomplish the mission of the Management Plan
October, 2007	Schedule & facilitate the second series of public meetings as described above.
November 30, 2007	Progress report and draft outline of Planning Series documents to management
January/February, 2008	Schedule & facilitate third & fourth facilitated series of public meetings as described above
April/May, 2008	Schedule & facilitate fifth & sixth facilitated series of public meetings as described above.
June 30, 2008	Initial draft of Management Plan to Partnership Team & Board of Trustees
September 11, 2008	Public meeting to review final draft (to be posted on website) of Management Plan incorporating all documents identified in the Project Description.
November 13, 2008	Final document with Power Point (to be posted on website) describing highlights of plan to Partnership Team & Board of Trustees ³
November 2008	FINAL plan approval
January, 2009	Submit to National Park Service
October 12, 2009	Deadline for Department of Interior approval