

Background Information on National Heritage Areas and Proposed Washington National Maritime Heritage Area

What is Washington National Maritime Heritage Area?

Diverse groups representing heritage societies, ports, tribes and intertribal organizations in Western Washington have come together to propose a new designation for Washington's maritime resources in order to help protect and honor the state's living maritime heritage. The Washington National Maritime Heritage Area would be the first National Heritage Area (NHA) established in the Pacific Northwest, and the first in the country to be focused on maritime heritage. Currently there are 49 NHAs designated by Congress, such as Hudson River Valley NHA, Cane River NHA, and Ohio and Erie Canalway NHA. Designation as a National Maritime Heritage Area is intended to support five primary goals:

- Share Washington State's unique and nationally distinctive maritime heritage resources and stories with a broader audience.
- Support local communities by promoting heritage tourism. Designation as a National Heritage Area would attract new visitors, improve marketing, and encourage local economic development.
- Support local heritage organizations. Museums, interpretive centers, historical societies, and other heritage organizations would attract more paying visitors, be more competitive for grant funding, be more effective in growing their membership, and could possibly receive direct funding through the Heritage Areas program for capital improvements or operations.
- Support contemporary working waterfronts. Today's working waterfronts are as much a part of our maritime heritage as historic ships or lighthouses. Designation as a National Heritage Area would raise awareness of the value of our maritime industry, and the role it plays in shaping our communities and building our economy.
- Support healthy marine waters. Large segments of our maritime economy rely on healthy marine waters. Maintaining and restoring the health of Washington's marine ecosystems is an important part of the story of our maritime heritage and an ongoing goal."

National Heritage Areas are partnerships between the National Park Service, states, and local communities through which the National Park Service supports local and state efforts to preserve natural resources and promote tourism. They are operated by local boards that are established by legislation. National Heritage areas are not part of the National Park system, which are lands that are federally-owned and managed. **There is no increased federal regulation associated with National Heritage Areas and no private land is affected or acquired.** Instead, the designation supports local citizens to preserve, share and promote our own heritage, with full local control.

National Heritage Area designations are eligible for federal grants, and can help draw contributions from state, local and private sources. A recent economic impact study indicates National Heritage Areas contribute \$12.9 billion annually to the national economy and support 148,000 jobs, according to the

National Park Service. NHA designations also help coordinate marketing and tourism promotion, such as developing websites, posting highway signs to advertise sites, sponsoring festivals, and publishing brochures and tour maps. They can also assist in the operation of museums and visitor centers.

The proposed Washington National Maritime Heritage Area would create a heritage area that consists of lighthouses, historic vessels, parks, and other landmarks located within one-quarter mile landward and one-quarter mile seaward of the median shoreline in 13 counties, including 19 Native American tribes, 32 cities and 30 port districts. Local or tribal government must support any land or facility within their jurisdiction being proposed as part of the National Heritage Area designations.

(See map)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(from Appendices of Washington State National Maritime Heritage Area Feasibility Study
www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/NationalMaritimeHeritageAreaStudy.pdf)

How do communities benefit from National Heritage Area designation?

National Heritage Areas provide a range of benefits to local communities:

- Designation as a National Heritage Area can raise awareness of the quality and importance of local history, helping communities preserve their historic resources and share the story of their past.
- Increased heritage tourism provides economic benefits to heritage organizations, as well as restaurants, lodging, and other community businesses.
- Better coordination between heritage groups strengthens the ability to compete for grant funding.
- National Heritage Areas receive technical assistance from the National Parks Service to support development and operations.
- In the past, National Heritage Areas have received some federal funding, although future funding of the program is uncertain.

How are National Heritage Areas managed?

First, it's important to emphasize that "management" does not imply that the National Heritage Area has any authority over land use, public lands policy or privately owned resources. Management is focused on coordinating the activities of voluntarily participants in the National Heritage Area. Typical management activities might include:

- Maintaining communication between museums, ports, owners of historic vessels and other heritage-type organizations ;
- Developing marketing programs to encourage heritage tourism;
- Applying for and managing grant funds;
- Sponsoring events, festivals, or other heritage-oriented activities.

National Heritage Areas have a range of options for management organizations. Around the country National Heritage Areas are managed by non-profit organizations, state or local agencies, or a specially appointed commission.

At this time, the study team expects that a private non-profit organization is the most likely type of management group for a National Heritage Area in Washington State. Designation does not provide the management organization or any federal agency with the authority to regulate land. The management entity is also prohibited from using any federal funds it may receive through enabling legislation to acquire property.

Who lead the feasibility study?

The feasibility study was managed by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and was completed in 2010. The study was conducted with guidance by a steering committee assembled for this project, including representatives from tribes, local and state government, heritage organizations, and other interested stakeholders. The steering committee recommended to the Director of National Park Service that a Washington State National Maritime Heritage be considered. Governor Inslee has written a support letter for this legislation, which was sponsored by Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray and Representatives Derek Kilmer, Suzan DelBene, Denny Heck, Rick Larsen and Adam Smith.

What happens next?

Currently the state is requesting our federal congressional delegation to introduce legislation authorizing the development of the new National Heritage Area.

If this legislation is successful, the management organization for the National Heritage Area would then create a management plan for the heritage area, and would be authorized to receive federal funds if funding is available. The management plan would typically include an education plan, the rehabilitation of historic sites or vessels, a tourism enhancement strategy, a strategy for improvement of local museums, and similar activities.

The authority to implement the management plan would be local, resting in the hands of willing local officials and the actions of local organizations.

Sources/ Resources:

DAHP website “Maritime Preservation” page: www.dahp.wa.gov/maritime-preservation

National Maritime Heritage Area Feasibility Study:

www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/NationalMaritimeHeritageAreaStudy.pdf

National Maritime Heritage Area Feasibility Study Appendices:

www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/National%20Maritime%20Heritage%20Area%20Appendices.pdf

Maritime Washington National Heritage Bill:

www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113s2576is/pdf/BILLS-113s2576is.pdf

Maritime Resources Survey of WA State Saltwater Shore:

www.dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/MaritimeResourcesSurvey.pdf

Proposed Boundary Maps:

kilmer.house.gov/sites/kilmer.house.gov/files/MaritimeHeritageAreaMaps_comp.pdf

DAHP Presentation (powerpoint):

kitsapregionalcouncil.org/library/C%20-%20KRCC%20Board/Current%20Board%202010/07%2006%2010%20WA%20Nat%20Maritime%20Heritage%20Area.pdf

WHAT IS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA?

Beginning with the first designations in the mid-1980's, National Heritage Areas have been designated to recognize and support the best examples of our nation's cultural and historic heritage. As of 2009, there are 49 designated National Heritage Areas, located throughout the country.

National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress to promote both economic development and preservation of our nation's heritage. By providing national recognition, funding, and technical assistance to local stakeholders, Heritage Areas are an incentive-based strategy for preserving heritage. Heritage Areas do not allow new federal regulatory authority over land use, historic preservation, or other local issues.

National Heritage Areas are operated by local groups and designated by Congress at the request of local citizens and governments. The National Park Service evaluates the eligibility of a region to become a National Heritage Area and, if designated, assists with implementation. The management of a Heritage Area is locally-based. While Heritage Areas receive technical assistance from the National Park Service, the agency does not have any authority to mandate changes to land use or local regulations.

The management of Heritage Areas may include programs to support local heritage groups, promote heritage tourism, and preserve heritage resources. Existing Heritage Areas sponsor festivals, assist in the operation of museums and visitor centers, develop tour routes, publish heritage maps, operate web sites, and take part in a other activities that encourage the recognition, enjoyment, and preservation of important heritage resources.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

The National Park Service recommends evaluating ten criteria to assess the potential eligibility and success of a proposed National Heritage Area:

1. The 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. The Area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the national story;
3. The Area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/ or scenic features;
4. The Area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
5. Resources that are 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 that 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 facilitating 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 facilitating entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.



HOW ARE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS FORMED?

Designation as a National Heritage Area begins with a local initiative to consider application, then follows a series of steps through evaluation of the potential Heritage Area, designation by Congress, and planning for the long-term management of the Heritage Area.

STEP 1—A LOCAL IDEA

Heritage groups, tourism groups, or jurisdictions decide to pursue designation as a National Heritage Area.

STEP 2—BUILD SUPPORT

The original supporters work to build support, reaching out to other groups, jurisdictions, and the public.

STEP 3 – FEASIBILITY STUDY

A formal feasibility study evaluates the quality of the heritage resources, potential sustainability, and local support for the proposed Heritage Area.

STEP 4 – NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REVIEW

The National Park Service reviews the feasibility study and advises Congress on the eligibility of the proposed Heritage Area.

STEP 5 – DESIGNATION BY CONGRESS

Congress passes legislation authorizing the Heritage Area.

STEP 6 – DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN

The new Heritage Area has three years to complete a management plan to meet the local goals of the Heritage Area.



Washington State Maritime Heritage Area Proposed Boundary



The proposed Maritime Heritage Area includes the area one-quarter mile landward and one-quarter mile seaward of the median shoreline.



Legend

- Maritime Heritage Area
- County Boundary

Overview Map

