

A training initiative of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas

Developing Summer Programs to Involve Stakeholders

Memorial Day weekend is typically viewed as the official beginning of summer. The summer months bring sun, warm weather, and the promise of outdoor fun. Summer also provides a great time for vacations and weekend excursions, and many national heritage areas capitalize on this by planning, sponsoring, and promoting special events in their regions. These signature events highlight the unique environmental and recreational features that distinguish each heritage area, and provide another opportunity to foster collaborative partnerships with local heritage area partners.

It's critical to make these events reflective of the region's most distinctive and intact resources. Several national heritage areas have designed and implemented excellent outdoor events that reflect their region's heritage by using natural resources for recreation. Essex National Heritage Area utilizes its close proximity to the ocean to promote a host of outdoor water activities and unique bird watching opportunities, as well as offering walking tours through some of the heritage area's renowned historic towns. The Schuylkill River NHA highlights its most valuable asset, the river itself, through the Schuylkill River Sojourn. The sojourn is an annual week-long canoe and kayak trip that provides recreation, programs, gear, and lodging while also celebrating the river and the towns along its banks.

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Great Summer Programs that Involve Stakeholders

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A number of NHAs offer summer volunteer experiences that allow residents and stakeholders to get involved in the heritage area and experience a true feeling of ownership for the heritage area's success. To help maintain the Delaware and Lehigh canal corridor in Pennsylvania, staff created a "Trail Tenders" program to clean up and stabilize the towpath along the canal; volunteers provide thousands of hours of time toward maintaining the state of the canal. Similarly, the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor provides similar opportunities for volunteers to spend time cleaning up an unspoiled section of Massachusetts and Connecticut known as the Last Green Valley, while the Ohio and Erie Canalway in Ohio organizes frequent "Canal Clean-up" days. These opportunities provide a way to assist in resource conservation while also meeting other stakeholders and residents.

Many of the recreational and conservation activities in the National Heritage Areas provide great options for children to experience these distinctive regions. Capitalizing on the water resources of their canal, the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area has created a summer kids camp. The camp includes nature and history lessons through exciting boating opportunities, hiking, and museum events.

The warm spring and summer months provide a great opportunity for existing and potential NHAs to rethink their programs and design special summer events. By evaluating their resources and capitalizing on their individual strengths, many heritage areas have provided model programs for unique and beneficial resident and visitor experiences.



Spotlight on NHAs: Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

Located near a natural ford in the Colorado River, The Yuma Crossing NHA in Yuma, AZ, represents an important landmark in our country's westward migration. With a rich history that spans Native American settlement, European exploration, and westward expansion, the region developed as a railroad and commercial center during the 19th and 20th centuries. After years of environmental degradation due to farming, irrigation and use as a power source, the area is being revitalized with the help of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. The Yuma Crossing NHA works for environmental rehabilitation through reforestation and wetlands restoration. The Heritage Area also supports historic preservation as a means to generate sustainable tourism and economic development in the region.



Photo courtesy of Yuma Crossing NHA website.

For more information on this heritage area, visit
www.yumaheritage.com

Upcoming Events of Interest

AASLH 2006 Annual Meeting
"History's Enduring Voices"
September 13-16
Phoenix, AZ
www.aaslh.org

Mark Your Calendars!
2007 International Heritage Development Conference
"Your Passport to Crossing Boundaries in Heritage Development"
Sponsored by the Alliance of National Heritage Areas
June 18-21, 2007
Detroit, MI
http://www.nationalheritageareas.com/2007_conference.htm

Additions to Your Heritage Development Reading List

- *Building Sustainable Businesses: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses.* Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education, 2003. Available at <http://www.sare.org/publications/business.htm>
- McKercher, Bob and Hilary Du Crops McKercher. *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management.* Hawthorn Hospitality Press: Binghamton, NY, 2002.

For a comprehensive list of sources related to heritage development, visit www.heritagedevelopmentinstitute.org/research.

IHDC 2007 CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2007 International Heritage Development Conference, “*Your Passport to Crossing Boundaries in Heritage Development*,” will be held in Detroit, MI from June 18-21, 2007.

The IHDC Steering Committee is now soliciting sessions for presentations at the conference. To view the conference themes, selection criteria, and submission forms, go to:

http://www.nationalheritageareas.com/2007_conference.htm

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Heritage Development Institute as part of the annual National Trust for Historic Preservation conference in Pittsburgh in November 2006! Additional information will be available soon.

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The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) established the Heritage Development Institute (HDI) as a way of providing leadership to the heritage development field as well as creating training and analysis of the best practices in our heritage areas across the country. The HDI Newsletter is sponsored by the ANHA, Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. To submit information and update e-mail addresses, please e-mail us at hdi@mtsu.edu.