

A training initiative of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas

Telling the Stories Through Resource Conservation

Many regions across the country have nationally important stories to tell. However, significant historical events that occurred in a region are not enough to support a National Heritage Area. While there are many aspects of our nation's heritage worthy of sharing, a successful National Heritage Area must also preserve and enhance the resources and landscapes that support and portray their stories.

The National Park Service's Criteria for National Heritage Area Designation states that a National Heritage Area must have "an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use." Areas that have great stories without the supporting historic, cultural and natural resources struggle to tell an authentic story. Without an effective conservation and preservation program, heritage areas and potential heritage areas are at risk of losing the very resources that support and justify their existence.

Often, heritage area management entities lose sight of the critical importance of maintaining resources, focusing instead on the other benefits that heritage areas offer.



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Some focus on advancing the heritage tourism and marketing benefits of NHAs, without placing an equal emphasis on the vital resources and landscapes that allow them to tell an authentic story and attract visitors.

The most effective national heritage areas support resource conservation through a variety of strategies, implementing aspects of historic preservation, conservation, and natural resource management. Merging these strategies also allows for enhanced recreational opportunities through the conservation of areas that allow for hiking, biking, water sports, and agritourism. A strong preservation ethic provides a variety of tools to assist property owners and local governments, including the National Register of Historic Places program and eligibility for grant funds. These programs allow national heritage areas to focus on maintaining the resources that make their areas unique and genuine as a means to enhance the benefits of tourism and economic development, rather than being eclipsed by them.

The Ohio and Erie CanalWay demonstrates an excellent blend of resource conservation and preservation to enhance its recreational and heritage tourism opportunities for both residents and visitors.

Located along much of the canal's path through Ohio, the CanalWay celebrates the canal and its contribution to the United States' westward expansion and development. After suffering severe neglect once the canal went out of service, the Ohio and Erie CanalWay NHA has worked with partners across organizations and industries to revitalize and preserve the canal's rich natural and historic resources.

The canal's preservation and enhancement has created outstanding recreational opportunities as well as an enhanced profile for the area's historic resources and cultural tourism initiatives. A region that once experienced neglect and industrial development has been reclaimed for residents and visitors through partnerships that unite conservation groups, businesses, and communities.

Both natural resource conservation and historic preservation are fundamental aspects of successful national heritage areas. Cultural and natural resources allow heritage areas to celebrate their unique and distinctive qualities, leading to increased conservation, heritage tourism, and recreational opportunities.

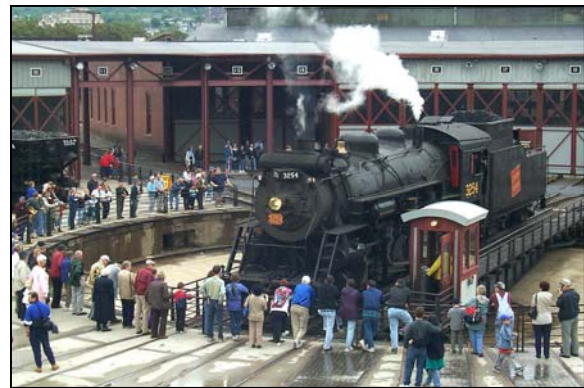
Spotlight on NHAs: Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority is based in Scranton, Pennsylvania and has the distinction of being a part of both the National Heritage Area program as well as Pennsylvania's state heritage areas program. This NHA tells the powerful story of the Industrial Revolution's coal industry boom and the stories of immigrants from many countries who flocked to this region to create a new life. Highlighting the city's authentic resources such as rail yards, coal mines, blast furnaces, churches, and architectural treasures, the LVHA forges strong partnerships to conserve and promote these resources and encourage economic development, interactive and unique heritage education experiences, and cultural tourism.

For more information on this heritage area,
visit
www.lhva.org



Educational program at the river



Steamtown turntable

Upcoming Events of Interest

2006 National Main Street Conference
June 4-7
New Orleans, LA
www.mainstreet.org

19th Annual Visitor Studies Association Conference
"Counting Visitors or Making Visitors Count?"
July 25-29
Grand Rapids, MI
[Www.visitorstudies.org](http://www.visitorstudies.org)

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

Additions to Your Heritage Development Reading List

- Beaumont, Constance. *State Policies and School Facilities*, available from www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schools.
- Morris, Douglas. *It's a Sprawl World After All: The Human Cost of Unplanned Growth and Visions of a Better Future*. New Society Publishers, 2005.

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

Future of the National Heritage Areas Program

A Partnerships Committee was formed earlier this year to make recommendations to the National Park Service Advisory Board regarding the future of the National Heritage Areas program within the National Park Service. The Advisory Board will use this report to make recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior.

For a copy of the report, visit <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/> and click on "Interim Report."

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas held their spring Board of Advisors meeting in Charleston, SC during April 25-28. The meeting was hosted by the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor.

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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.