



*Waves crashing at Cape Disappointment*

Photographer: Sandy Alves

# 7

## Evaluation According to NHA Criteria

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the proposed NHA designation according to the eight criteria included in Public Law 110-229, the law authorizing this feasibility study. These criteria were developed by the NPS in the late 1990s, and Congress has included them in most national heritage area study bills.

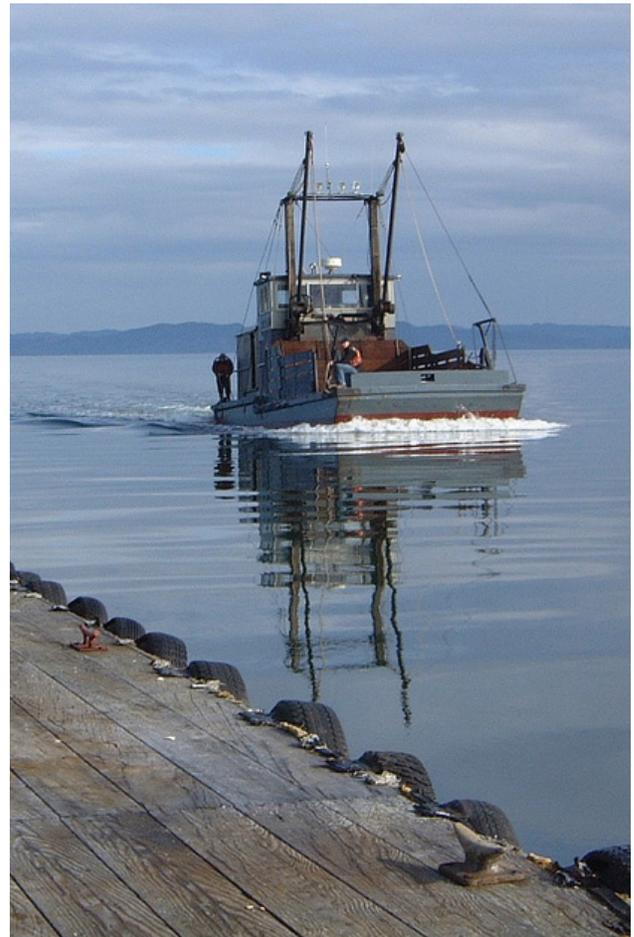
### CRITERION 1.

**The study shall include analysis, documentation, and determinations on whether the proposed NHA has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.**

Criterion 1 asks whether the proposed NHA, taken as a whole, is nationally distinctive. Are its places and cultural traditions best protected and perpetuated through partnership efforts such as those promoted by NHA designation and an NHA program?

As noted in Chapter 3, the mouth of the Columbia River is one of the nation's most distinctive geographic features. Within the study area, the largest river draining western North America empties into the Pacific Ocean. The broad estuary and its bays and islands, the surrounding wet coastal hills, rocky headlands, and mountains, and the long, narrow coastal plain of dunes and lakes formed by Columbia

River sediments all create a distinctive place. In addition to the Columbia River estuary, the study area contains the drowned estuary of Willapa Bay, the second largest bay on the west coast of the United States after San Francisco Bay. The study area was once the gateway to the continent's largest salmon runs. The big river, ocean, and estuaries also made the region one of the richest places on the continent for sturgeon, oysters, and other animals from the sea.



*Oyster dredge on Willapa Bay*

### *The Character of This Place*

Not only is the mouth of the river distinctive due to its ecological and geographic influences, it also has a character like no other place on earth. Here, where huge tidal estuary and dozens of smaller tidal rivers come together, there are thousands of acres of lowland marshes and surrounding hills covered in hemlock, alder, spruce and cedar. The coastal moisture of the river and ocean ascends the surrounding uplands, and fog floats at low levels across the water and in the valleys creating enchanting scenery.

The historic, still-working waterfronts at Astoria, Warrenton, Chinook, Ilwaco, and the Port of Peninsula hustle and bustle with activity: fishing boats come in and go out; trucks load equipment and product at the fish packing plants and canneries; and various other goods are made ready for transport. Large freighters push through the waves at the bar. Logging trucks still bump along on the roads to mills near the river. River pilings suggest stories about buildings and past lives, including canneries and packing plants from centuries ago.

Much of the area is managed as private timberland and farm land, giving the landscape an undeveloped appearance that makes it easy to imagine Chinookan plank houses and canoes, log rafts, steam donkeys, and sail-powered gillnet boats. These are just some of the distinctive images of the people, cultures, and built places of this landscape.



*Woody debris at Waikiki Beach  
(Cape Disappointment State Park)*



*Canoes helped the Chinookan people control the river mouth and waterways.*

### *The First People of This Place*

The Chinookan people are the first distinctive culture known to have occupied the study area, although it is certain that either their ancestors or other tribal peoples lived in the area for millennia before them. The Chinook controlled the river mouth and traffic between the inland waterways of the Columbia-Snake River basin and the Pacific coast. The study area's strategic location and natural bounty helped to make Chinookan-speaking people along the lower Columbia one of the most powerful, sophisticated and influential cultural groups in pre-contact North America. Their plank houses and expertly-made canoes dominated the lower river until well into the nineteenth century.

Evidence of their reach and influence is preserved in language. In the 19th century, Chinook Jargon was the name given to the trade pigeon used in villages along the coast from California to Alaska. The Chinook salmon, prized as an item of trade

and later as a commercial canned fish, is the name given to the large species of fish (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) that the tribes caught at the mouth of the river. . Chinook wind was the name given to the unseasonably warm air masses that come from the Pacific to the interior of the continent. Chinook canoe was the name given by later Euro-Americans to the high-powered tribal canoes along the entire Pacific coast, regardless of the canoes' tribe of origin.

The Chinook's sacred places, their canoes and culture are still a part of life on the lower Columbia. They have entered into partnership with federal, state, and local governments to preserve their history for the education of their nation.

Events of national significance that occurred on this land and waterscape are still protected and commemorated by residents. Chief among these is the critical period in United States history between 1792 and 1813. During this period, the United States vied with Britain and other European nations to establish claim to western North America. In 1792, Robert Gray became the first Euro-American to cross the Columbia bar and trade with the Chinook. Dozens of trading ships followed Gray, establishing trade with the Chinook enriching both the tribe and the trade ships.

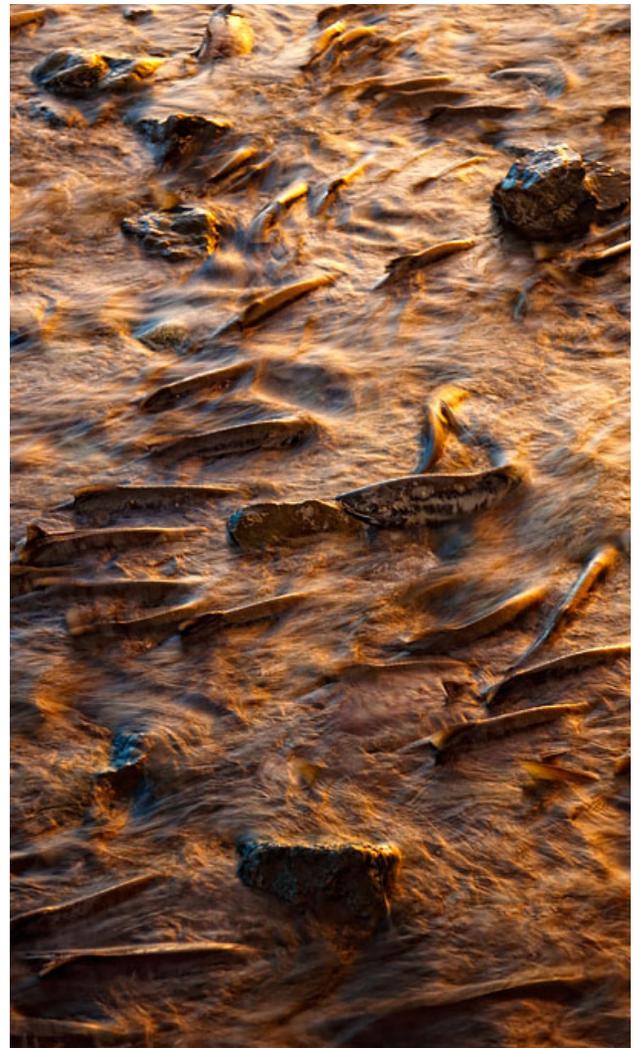
In 1805-6, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, having traveled overland across North America, spent the winter with the Chinook, Clatsops, and Tillamook at the mouth of the river. In 1811, a fur trading party funded by John Jacob Astor established the first U.S. settlement west of the Rockies on land occupied by the Chinookan Cathlamets. These three efforts were used by the U.S. to justify claim to Pacific Northwest in the decades that followed and were pivotal events in the earliest history of the United States on the west coast of North America.

The region's resources still retain a degree of integrity that allows interpretation of these early stories. Chinook Point and Chinook Middle Village, sites associated with Chinook power in the lower Columbia, and with Chinook contact with American Robert

Gray and the Astorians, are protected as national and state parks. Lewis and Clark's encampments are also protected by parks. Fort Astoria, the first United States settlement west of the Rockies, is protected as a National Historic Landmark.

### *Here, Where the Great River Meets the Sea*

Distinctive and frightening, the Columbia River bar is the most dangerous river entrance in North America and one of the three most dangerous in the world. Visitors can overlook the bar from elevated viewpoints at Cape Disappointment and Fort Stevens State Parks. More than 2,000 large vessels have sunk on or near the bar since 1792. But, it is a hazard that must be risked. Traffic on



*Salmon swimming upstream*

the Columbia was considered so important to the region that the Oregon Territorial Legislature took on the hazards of the bar during the first year of its existence in 1846. The legislature created a Board of Pilot Commissioners, a body for licensing bar pilots. The bar pilots, a unique and elite corps in America's heritage, are still working today 164 years later. Every ship that crosses the bar must do so under the guidance of a bar pilot. Their boat and helicopter can be seen daily ferrying pilots to waiting ships. The dangerous waters have also made the Columbia-Pacific region the world's most popular place to train U.S. Coast Guard and others in rough water rescue. At Cape Disappointment State Park people can see the Coast Guard's small boats and rescue swimmers practicing in the waters near the bar.

After the establishment of the international boundary at the 49th parallel, the study area birthed industries

that would become pillars of a distinctive northwest coastal economy: commercial fishing and processing, logging, dairy and cranberry farming, and tourism. The Columbia-Pacific region was first in these industries because of its location at the mouth of the big river with easy access to water transport, the Pacific, and the Willamette Valley. The industries and technical innovations that were first used on a large scale here would go on to influence the development of these industries throughout the northwest.

For example, the study area was the early center of the west coast salmon canning and fish packing industry. The Columbia canneries, fish processing companies, and commercial fishers would provide the capital that expanded these endeavors into Alaska. The era of "big timber" in the northwest, the large-scale mechanization of timber industry, started on the lower Columbia. The lower Columbia was the first



*Promenade in Seaside, Oregon*

region to be intensively logged in the northwest. The history of early private ownership and private logging is the reason that so little of the region is part of public forests. Innovations such as the steam donkey, steam-powered rail line, and ocean-going log raft were all brought into large scale use in the lower Columbia and eventually spread throughout the region.

Finally, the area is home to two of the oldest beach resort communities on the west coast. Visitors to Seaside, Oregon or Long Beach, Washington can see old beach cottages and attractions, such as the Seaside Aquarium and Promenade that have been in place for 90 years. Since the 1870s, the area has been the premier coastal destination for residents of the Willamette Valley and Puget Sound.

#### *Distinctive Historic Resources*

As noted in the discussion for Criterion 5, the assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent these distinctive parts of the coastal economy are still vibrantly present in this region. The study area contains five national historic districts and more than 80 individual buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Dozens more are listed on state historic registries. They include working waterfronts and nearby neighborhoods, cannery and mill sites, buildings associated with logging, with bar piloting, with agriculture, and early resorts and guest houses. They also include places and buildings associated with the distinctive cultures that arose from these economic activities.

#### *A Unique Heritage of Diversity*

The fishing and logging industries attracted immigrants from the British Isles, China, and especially Scandinavia. At one time Scandinavian immigrants, largely Finns, and their children constituted almost half of all residents in the lower Columbia. This Scandinavian heritage can be seen in communities – many of their meeting places, businesses and labor halls are still in existence and listed on historic registries. Scandinavian culture is still celebrated in annual festivals and at places such as the Appelo Center and Archives in Naselle, Washington.



*Cannon Beach, Oregon*

#### *Premier Coastal Access Opportunities*

As noted in Chapter 3, the study area was also the site of landmark efforts to protect public access to the Oregon coast. Today Oregon possesses what some have described as a 370-mile long state park running from the Columbia River to the California border. The beaches belong to the public. The effort to protect public access started in 1899 when the beaches of Clatsop County were declared public roads. In 1913, Governor Oswald West, influenced by his coastal home in Cannon Beach, declared all tidelands from the Washington to California state lines a “public highway.” However, West’s law never defined where tidelands started and stopped or if the public could use the tidelands for recreation too. In the 1960s, a hotel owner in Cannon Beach tried to fence off part of the beach for his guests only. Standing in front of Haystack Rock, Governor Tom McCall called for passage of a Beach Bill to protect public access. In 1967, this bill passed the Oregon legislature. As a consequence, the Oregon coast has remained the coastal playground for the entire American Northwest. Places associated with this public access movement are within the study area. They include the site of Oswald West’s Cannon Beach house, listed on the national register; remains of automobile routes over rocky outcrops between beaches Hug Point State Park; and Haystack Rock, a protected feature along the coast.

## CRITERION 2.

**The study shall document that the proposed NHA reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story.**

Criterion 2 asks if the aspects of history and heritage that make the study area nationally distinctive are still alive in the region. Is heritage a living thing in the study area? Are residents and others keeping traditions, customs, and folk life vibrant?

Many of the enterprises and people that make the Columbia-Pacific region distinctive have enjoyed a long, continuous history. Though people and livelihoods have enjoyed periods of success and decline, they can trace an almost uninterrupted history from pre-contact times to the present.

Chinookan culture has enjoyed a renaissance along the lower Columbia River. The people have organized themselves as the Chinook Nation with several hundred enrolled members, and the Clatsop-Nehalem, a group that includes inter-related descendants of the Chinookan Clatsop and the Salish-speaking Nehalem-Tillamook.

The Chinook have kept their culture and family ties alive through more than 170 years of tragedy, including disease, efforts to take their land, forced assimilation and the whole suite of injustices perpetrated against native peoples. Today the Chinook Nation plays an active role in the area's civic life, natural resources policy and estuary restoration. Tribal members serve on the Boards of several non-profit organizations concerned with restoring salmon, including American Rivers and Sea Resources. In addition, they have re-instituted old ceremonies and cultural traditions, such as the First Salmon ceremony, Winter Gathering, and the creation and piloting of their peerless canoes.

Events of the critical period 1792-1813 are kept alive by re-enactments and living history. The Pacific Northwest Living Historians regularly interpret the Lewis and Clark Expedition at state and national



*The Lewis & Clark Expedition's winter encampment at Fort Clatsop; Astoria, Oregon*

park units including Fort Clatsop, the Salt Works in Seaside, Cape Disappointment, and the Dismal Nitch. Each spring the Lady Washington, a replica of one of the ships on Captain Robert Gray's voyage to the West Coast, is greeted by members of the Chinook Tribe in traditional canoes near Gray's historic anchorage at Chinook Point.

Astoria is preparing to celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2011 with festivals, re-enactments,



*The Lady Washington*



*Columbia River Maritime Museum*

and celebrations. When it was established in 1811, Astoria was the first United States settlement west of the Rockies and one of three key American claims for primacy and control of the Pacific Northwest.

The Columbia River bar and ship traffic are still a defining feature of life in the Columbia-Pacific region. The Columbia River bar pilots are located in downtown Astoria. Every day, viewers can see their boats or helicopters heading towards the bar to board and pilot incoming ships as they have been doing for 164 years. The U.S. Coast Guard stations at Air Station Astoria and Cape Disappointment remind residents and visitors that the bar has sunk more than 2,000 large vessels and is still a danger at the mouth of the river.

The shipping channel passes within a few hundred yards of the Oregon shore. Each day a regular traffic of bulk carriers, container ships, car carriers, and other large vessels bearing flags and names from countries all over the world pass under the Astoria-Megler Bridge and along the Astoria waterfront. Each day, ships are anchored in the Astoria Anchorage between the Astoria-Megler Bridge and Tongue Point awaiting inspections, orders, and berth space at upriver ports. All of this traffic is catalogued and brought to life by the popular Columbia River Ship Report, a program broadcast daily on public

radio stations KMUN and KCPB funded by the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

As mentioned above, the coastal economy got its start at the mouth of the Columbia. Four sectors of this coastal economy can trace from 130 to over 200 years of continuous history at the river's mouth. This history is preserved not only in places and structures but in heritage livelihoods still practiced in the study area.

The first of these sectors is commercial fishing. Large scale fishing on the river began well before the arrival of Europeans and Americans. Historians believe that the pre-contact First American fishery in the Columbia-Snake River basin was the largest in the world and that pre-contact harvests nearly equaled later commercial take. The choicest fish were the fat salmon taken in woven gillnets at the river's mouth, that bear the name of the tribe that caught and traded them, the Chinook.

The first salmon salteries, established by Europeans and Americans in the 1830s to the 1850s, bought fish from Chinook gillnetters and fishers. Starting in the 1860s, the thriving cannery industry, the largest concentration of canneries in North America, took off on the river. This industry was supplied by more than 1,000 gillnet boats operated largely by Scandinavian immigrants.

Though the fisheries industry has contracted, commercial fishing and packing industries are still alive at the mouth of the river. The fourth generation descendents of some of the original Scandinavian gillnetters still run bowpickers in season, though gillnetting is rarely able to pay the bills on its own. Astoria still ranks 15th in the United States in terms of commercial landings. The waterfronts in Astoria, Ilwaco, Chinook, and Warrenton are still working. In addition to boats, fish processing, and marine industries, there are fish markets and restaurants.

While the industry has contracted, many of the unused buildings have been kept as meeting places and businesses. The Astoria net shed has been converted into a restaurant and conference facility. The Hanthorn Cannery has also been adaptively reused. Every year it hosts hundreds of people who worked at the plant between the 1940s and 1980s.

The commercial fishing culture is also perpetuated in festivals and events, including the Pacific Commercial Fisherman’s Festival and the Fisher Poets Gathering. The Fisher Poets event gathers between 60 and 70 maritime industry people from around the nation and the globe, from Oregon, Washington, Florida, Texas, Hawaii, Alaska, British Columbia, and Japan. These people share their writing and songs about

the industry from a network of performance venues in downtown Astoria. Performances are simulcast on the local public radio station. The gathering has been featured in national media such as the *Today Show*, *National Public Radio*, *the New York Times*, and *Smithsonian Magazine* and other media outlets.

Fishermen from Astoria and the lower Columbia have also been featured in modern-day storytelling on the Discovery Channel’s reality TV program *“Deadliest Catch.”* In this program, commercial boats and crews from the lower Columbia, Washington, and Alaska work the dangerous Bering Sea crab fishery.

The logging and wood-products industry is also still alive. The study area is home to one of six logging operations included in the History Channel’s popular reality show, *“Axe Men.”* (Two of the other six operations are from Oregon coast range communities just outside the study area.)

These two programs are often called the “real men in danger” genre and are among the most popular prime-time television programs, ranking first within some demographic groups. Their popularity is an indication of the American public’s fascination with authentic, hardworking heritage livelihoods such as logging and fishing. The Columbia-Pacific region is



*Fishing Boats in Astoria during the Fisher Poets Gathering*

one of the last places in the nation where producers can find these livelihoods.

Perhaps the most exciting activities within the study area are those that preserve living cultures associated with commercial fishing and wood products. Industries at the mouth of the Columbia are evolving, adapting, and exploring new ways to keep heritage livelihoods alive in the 21st century, not as exhibits or demonstrations but as viable jobs.

Several companies are making a profit from the woods in a greener way. Trail's End Recycling, owned by a fourth generation logger, employs a few dozen people to provide a range of green services, including materials recycling, road decommissioning and restoration forestry. Willapa Land and Dendrology and two Smartwood sawmills in Raymond and South Bend sustainably grow and harvest certified wood products. Investors have proposed a biofuel plant on the Columbia that would be sited at an historic military anchorage employing 70 people to collect material that is now burned as part of timber "waste" and using recycled wastewater from the City of Astoria.

Bornstein's Seafood Company, with a recent investment in a new \$11 million commercial fish packing plant, has developed a proposal to build the Fish Factory, an interpretive facility similar to the popular Tillamook Cheese Factory that would allow visitors to tour the plant and learn about commercial fishing and processing.

Tourism has been a mainstay of the region's economy and culture since rail baron Ben Holladay built Seaside House in 1870, one of the first two coastal resorts in the Pacific Northwest. Since that time the northwest coast of Oregon and the southwest coast of Washington have been the most popular coastal destinations for residents of Puget Sound and the Willamette Valley. Some vacationers are fourth and fifth generation second-home owners. Some of the tourist attractions in these towns are more than 80 years old, including the Seaside Aquarium and Seaside Promenade. Visitors to Seaside, Cannon Beach,



*Seaside Aquarium along the Seaside Promenade*

Seaview, and Long Beach can see historic cottages and resorts on the national register. The entire village of Oysterville on the Long Beach Peninsula, once the Pacific County seat, is a registered historic area.

Immigration is alive and well in the region. The Hispanic population constitutes 12 percent of the population and is growing rapidly. Like the Finns, Swedes, Chinese and those that preceded them, these newcomers are most often employed in the resource industries of fish processing, wood products and forestry. Like the Scandinavians before them, they are putting their own mark on the social life of the region, with restaurants, soccer fields, and other gathering places and new traditions.

Finally, the landscape and waterscape of the region remains remarkably undeveloped. Most of the region is managed as commercial timber land or agricultural land. Thousands of acres are tidal and freshwater wetlands unsuitable for development. As a consequence, the region's rural character is almost everywhere on view.

### CRITERION 3.

**The study shall demonstrate that the proposed NHA provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, or scenic features.**

Criterion 3 asks for a catalog of the outstanding features and characteristics that are already protected in the study area. It also asks if there are still opportunities for private and public entities to work together to conserve places, culture, and heritage livelihood.

The study area boasts a coherent network of protected areas, designated historic sites, and private conservation lands. (These areas and places are listed in Appendix B). Publicly owned lands are shown in the map in Figure 7.1.

Nationally designated lands within the study area include Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, an area that protects tidelands in Willapa Bay and some of the best remaining examples of old-growth temperate rainforest.



*Willapa Bay sunset*



*Peter Iredale ship wreckage at Fort Stevens State Park*

The Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge protects 27 islands and adjacent tidelands in the Columbia River. The NPS's Lewis and Clark National Historic Park protects seven sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Chinookan peoples, and early United States history in the region. State sites include a robust network of natural and cultural parks in Washington and Oregon, including the "flagships" of both state park systems: Fort Stevens State Park in Oregon and Cape Disappointment State Park in Washington. Together, these two parks host more than three million visitors and offer more than 700 camping spaces. Also protected are the historic military installations of Tillamook Head (as Ecola State Park) and the iconic Saddle Mountain, birthplace of the Chinook people (as Saddle Mountain State Park).

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) protects several critical habitat types in the region. TNC's Ellsworth Creek Preserve, in conjunction with adjacent Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, contains some of the largest sections of old growth in Pacific County. At Ellsworth, TNC practices cutting-edge restoration forestry. Blind Slough Preserve in Oregon is the best example of Sitka spruce wetland in the lower Columbia.

Conservation efforts in the region have been locally driven and have involved collaborations between private enterprise, non-profits, individuals and public parties. The non-profit North Coast Land Conservancy has

worked with the timber industry, dairy farmers, and developers to protect key places in the Necanicum watershed and on the Clatsop Plains. Due to their collaborative work, salmon streams are protected as part of housing developments, and elk and butterfly habitat is protected alongside agricultural lands.

The City of Warrenton has tasked the non-profit Warrenton Trails Association with the development of the city's trail system. The trail plan has been incorporated into the city's master plan and is more than 75 percent complete. Citizens in Chinook are working to renovate and adaptively reuse the historic Chinook School and have successfully raised several hundred thousand dollars towards this end. The Liberty Theater in Astoria was revitalized by the non-profit Liberty Restoration, Inc. The theater now anchors a revitalized downtown. In Seaside, the community has hired a consulting firm and assembled a volunteer committee to develop a master plan for the city's 450 acres of public lands on the Necanicum estuary.



*Liberty Theatre in Astoria, Oregon*

Private enterprise plays a major role in conservation at the mouth of the Columbia. Astoria's Floyd Holcomb has restored Pier 39, converting the historic J.O. Hanthorn Cannery to a place of commercial business and learning. Private parties have also restored National Register buildings such as the Astoria Red Building and diversified and revitalized economic activity at the Port of Ilwaco.

These private enterprise efforts, as well as the Liberty Theater and other non-profit efforts, were made possible with a revolving fund of non-bank capital. This revolving loan fund is administered by the proposed coordinating entity, ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia. This non-bank capital has also been used to preserve heritage livelihoods which means connecting traditional work and the 21st century economy. This approach puts the "work" into working waterfronts, farms, and forests. It leads to authenticity, builds a real community and relies upon entrepreneurship, partnerships between private and public entities, smart business choices. The approach is adaptable and relevant and helps protect places.

Perhaps the most exciting undertakings in the study area are efforts to preserve heritage livelihoods. Infusions of non-bank capital have helped local people hold on to traditional livelihoods by keeping these trades relevant and adaptable in the 21st century (see sidebar, heritage livelihoods). This innovation involves combining traditional resources with new markets (e.g. mills that process sustainably harvested timber; builders that recover and use timbers from derelict canneries in new construction).

One exciting endeavor is the newly created Historic Preservation Economic Cluster. The cluster brings together educators, trades people, and businesses focused on historic preservation. During Fall 2009, Clatsop Community College began offering classes in historic preservation to support the cluster. Additionally, the Columbia River Maritime Museum is proposing a ship building school as part of their educational and interpretive mission.

#### CRITERION 4.

**The study shall document that the proposed NHA provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.**

The study area provides outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and education relevant to the eight themes proposed for the national heritage area. Figure 7.1 shows all public lands within the study area. Visitors can experience and explore undeveloped seashore, rocky headlands, working waterfronts, and tidal marshes, as well as the sites important to the nation’s history. The number of visitors at these recreational sites is very high. The state and national park units alone receive in excess of four million visitors each year.

The study area provides many opportunities to explore on foot or bicycle. Figure 7.2 shows a map of public trails within the study area. These trails allow visitors to explore the historic Astoria and Ilwaco waterfronts, 40 miles of beaches, historic military forts, shipwrecks, treaty sites, as well as many other places. The trail map and guide was produced as a free publication by a partnership including parks and public groups. Appendix F lists the museums and publicly accessible historic sites within the study area. The most-visited is the Columbia River Maritime Museum in downtown Astoria. This museum showcases river traffic, lifesaving, and history of the river’s mouth and bar. Other popular private, non-profit museums include the Flavel House, Clatsop County Historical Society, and the Columbia-Pacific Heritage Museum.

The study area hosts many festivals and events commemorating the culture and traditions of the region. (These are listed in Appendix G.)

Finally, the region is served by a number of local radio stations and newspapers (see Appendix H). Local programming serves to knit together the community and to educate residents and visitors alike.

#### CRITERION 5.

**The study shall confirm that the study area contains resources important to the identified theme or themes of the proposed NHA that retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.**

Criterion 5 asks simply, “Is the heritage and culture still present in the place?” Are the places, traditions and people that have made the study area a distinctive part of the American story still there or have they been lost or overshadowed?

One of the study area’s greatest strengths is its degree of integrity. As noted previously in this chapter, the study area contains five historic districts and over 80 individual places already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. State historic registers in Oregon and Washington contain dozens of additional places that might be eligible for listing on the national register. In addition to these resources, the study area



*Flavel House in Astoria, Oregon*

FIGURE 7.1: PUBLIC LANDS MAP

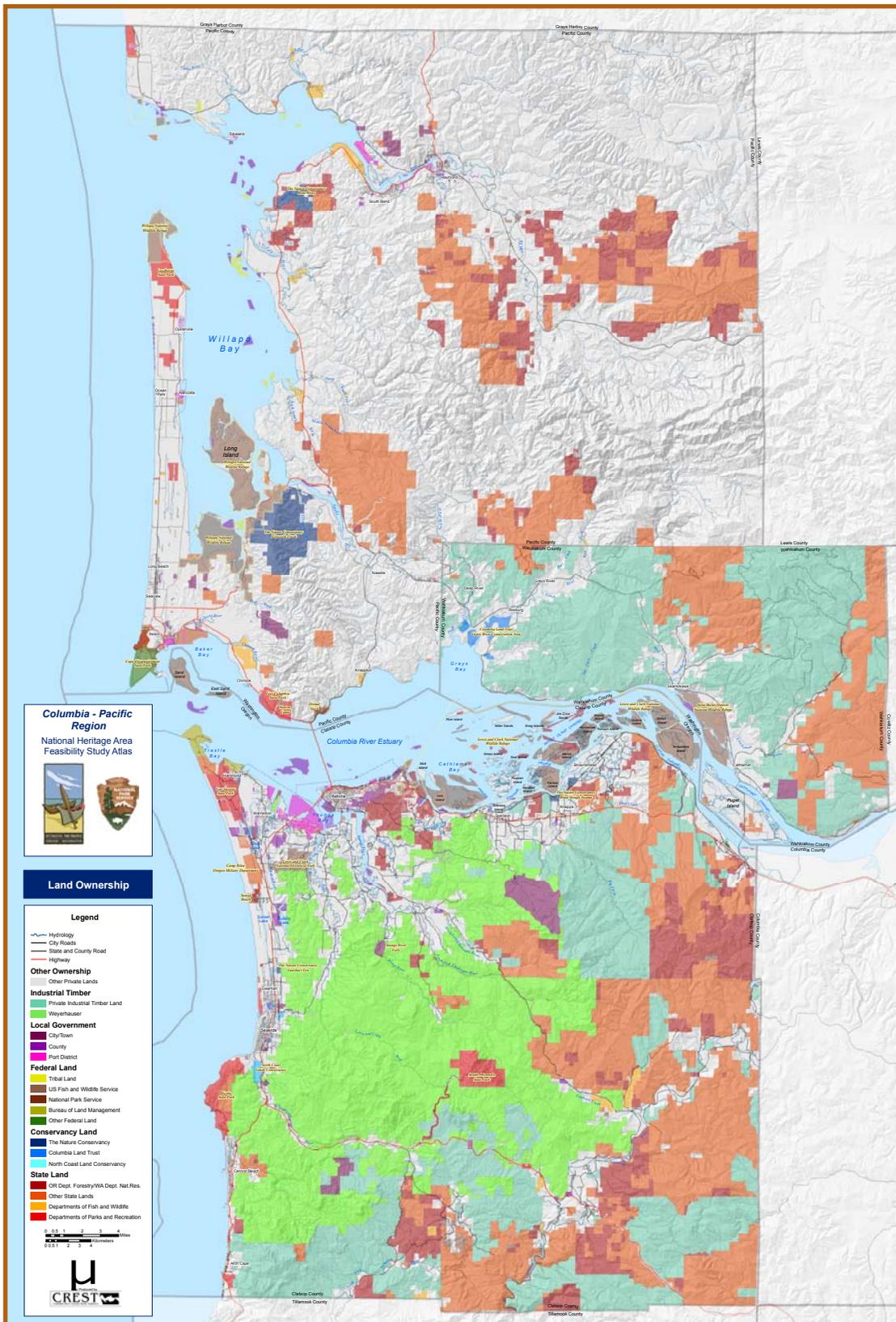


FIGURE 7.2: REGIONAL TRAILS MAP





*Locally harvested and processed seafood sold from the CrabPot in Seaview, Washington*

contains three national wildlife refuges, a unit of the national park system, four fully staffed state park units and more than a dozen other state park areas, and several county parks and local trails.

One reason for the study area's integrity is its small population. Most private lands are managed for timber production or agriculture, both of which help to retain the area's rural integrity. Much of the study area is literally underwater including the broad Columbia River estuary, Willapa Bay, and thousands of acres of tidelands and freshwater wetlands.

Communities have made choices to hold on to heritage sites and make them part of their economy and civic life. Heritage resources are not overshadowed or obscured by more recent developments, rather the two blend well together.

## CRITERION 6.

**Residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments shall be involved in the planning; and a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants, including the federal government shall be developed; and the study shall document that there is demonstrated support for the concept of a national heritage area.**

Proponents for NHA designation have undertaken a comprehensive and inclusive approach to engaging partners and the public in planning for the proposed NHA. The approach to public and stakeholder involvement was presented in detail in Chapter 6. (Appendix K lists all parties that were involved in the planning for this NHA.)



Existing Interpretive Wayside along the Columbia River

## CRITERION 7.

The study shall identify a potential local coordinating entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments to develop a national heritage area consistent with continued local and state economic activity.

### What Does the Law Require?

The Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-229), requires the NPS to evaluate and document whether the proposed Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area has the commitment of “...a potential local coordinating entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and State governments to develop a national heritage area consistent with continued local and State economic activity...”

### Congress’ Concerns About Self-Sufficiency

In addition to the evaluation criteria in this proposed NHA’s study bill, Congress has instructed NPS to develop ways to ensure that NHA programs eventually become independent of Federal NHA appropriations. In the conference committee report for the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 111-8), Congress expressed these concerns:

*“The House and Senate Committees on Appropriations are concerned that the number of authorized heritage partnership programs has expanded rapidly in recent years and many more proposals are pending action by the authorizing committees. The Committees are in agreement that the amount of funding available for this program is limited; and that expanded funding for new heritage areas should be funded principally by savings which occur when mature programs are graduated from Federal support. The National Park Service is directed to develop new guidelines for this program which require self-sufficiency plans for all heritage areas within a reasonable period of time. The adoption of a credible self-sufficiency plan, or satisfactory work towards development of such a plan, should be a condition of continued funding for all plans after fiscal year 2009.”*



Sorting on Kemmer oyster barge

To date, no NHA program has been able to sustain itself after the termination of Federal appropriations. NHA programs have either ceased operation or asked their members of Congress to extend their eligibility for Federal funds.

The NPS believes that ensuring the eventual self-sufficiency of NHA programs should start with the feasibility study. Proposed coordinating entities should be rigorously evaluated to determine whether they have the capacity to create a self-sufficient program. In this study, we have evaluated and confirmed SBEC's capacity to become self-sustaining.

### The Importance of Measurable Performance

Congress has acknowledged that there may be a role for federal support for an NHA program after it reaches the end of its eligibility for federal funds but that this role should be based upon the NHA's performance.

In the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-229), Congress directed the NPS to evaluate nine NHA programs whose eligibility for federal funds would expire in 2011. Specifically, Congress asked NPS to comply with the following:

*"...assess the progress of the local management entity with respect to—*

*(A) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the National Heritage Area; and*

*(B) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area;"*

In addition, NPS has been working with NHAs to develop a proper way to allocate funds among NHA programs. Performance measures may become part of this discussion.

The study is too early to evaluate whether a coordinating entity could accomplish its authorized purpose or goals and objectives since these purposes and goals have not yet been defined. However, NPS feels that the study is an appropriate place to determine whether the coordinating entity has the

capacity to demonstrate measurable performance. The NPS's evaluation of SBEC's ability to measure performance is summarized below.

### Evaluation

To satisfy the requirements of the study bill and other Congressional direction regarding NHA programs, the NPS evaluated SBEC to determine whether the organization can accomplish the following:

- Work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments
- Develop a heritage program in a manner consistent with continued economic activity and opportunity
- Demonstrate measurable performance
- Achieve self-sufficiency

During the evaluation, the NPS reviewed SBEC reports, projects summaries, and conducted interviews with SBEC staff, partners, elected officials, and clients.

### Partnership Building Capacity

NHA programs are local efforts. It is clear from Congressional records, testimony, and bill language that Congress, the NPS, and NHA proponents all believe that NHAs should engage a broad a range of regional and local partners.

#### *What the NPS Found*

During these interviews, SBEC stated that partnership and collaboration are critical to its work. SBEC accomplishes its work largely through the strategic investment of non-bank capital in other entities and organizations. SBEC empowers its partners to accomplish good, positive work. While SBEC's investments have created jobs, restored historic places, or restored critical ecosystems, it is not an employment agency. Nor does it restore historic places, streams or lands. Instead, SBEC makes these things possible by investing in other non-profit organizations, public entities, and private citizens with the means to do positive, community enhancing work.



*National Guard work detail after building a portion of The Discovery Trail in partnership with Washington State Parks and the City of Long Beach*

### ***Three Partnerships Deserve Special Mention***

SBEC's Indian Country Initiative, which allows staff to work directly with tribal governments and their members, is meant to increase transactions and partnerships with individual entrepreneurs and tribal nations in a manner consistent with their stated beliefs, sovereignty, and community goals. These activities help tribes to maintain their identities and cultures and choose their own destinies at the same time it offers a framework for collaboration.

The Hispanic Community Services Initiative allows SBEC to provide financial education and training, community services and financial products to the Hispanic community of the Lower Columbia Region in partnership with the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council. Hispanic people, mostly recent immigrants from Mexico, make up a fast-growing part of the coastal population. Like other immigrants before them, they work mostly in the region's heritage industries – fish and shellfish processing, wood products, and the hospitality industry. Within a generation, they will assume leadership positions in the community, just like the peoples that preceded them.

The Consumer Seafood Initiative is a partnership program involving SBEC, Oregon State University, Sea Grant, and the Seafood Consumer Center. The program is designed to bring Oregon and Washington fishermen, shellfish growers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and chefs together to develop new approaches

to management and harvesting practices, develop new value-added seafood products, and access new markets. This is accomplished through research, education and product development services. SBEC provides both support in the management of this program as well as financial services that facilitate the transfer of innovative process technology and the development of new products and business models. Most recently, this partnership is in discussion with a local community college to expand impact on workforce training, job creation and retention.

### **SBEC's Role**

As coordinating entity of the Columbia-Pacific NHA, SBEC's role would be to collaborate and facilitate rather than execute programs.

The NPS believes that this approach is a sound one that would involve partners from the private, public, and non-profit sectors in a designated NHA program. The NPS also believes that SBEC's ability to reach out to partners in heritage industries would make the Columbia-Pacific NHA a more broadly based effort than some current NHAs. Furthermore, SBEC's work with tribal communities, recent immigrants, and the economically disadvantaged would help to guarantee that the proposed national heritage area serves all members of the region.



*1925 Logging truck*

## DEVELOP HERITAGE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH CONTINUED ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND OPPORTUNITY

The NPS interprets this criterion in the study bill in this way: Heritage areas are living, breathing communities that have arrived in the 21st century with their identities and heritage intact. The work of an NHA program should be to support vibrant communities with distinctive American stories and active social and economic life. Preserving heritage means preserving peoples' ties to the land, water, and to each other, their histories and their traditions.

As mentioned in the section above, NHA programs rely on partnerships and innovations, rather than regulations or substantial federal investment. To consider the conservation of culture, historic places, or the environment in a vacuum is to ask communities to choose between two values: An historic building or new development? Open space or development? NHAs

can be places where communities move beyond either/or and find solutions that respond to a range of needs.

### Economic Opportunity as the Key to Sustainability

SBEC believes that economic opportunity is the key to sustainability and the key to keeping heritage alive. Rather than being at odds, economic opportunity and heritage can support one another. There are many examples of this at the mouth of the Columbia. At Pier 39 in Astoria, the adaptive reuse of the Hanthorn Cannery as a place for a restaurant, offices, coffee shop, lodging, and place for maritime business has preserved this landmark's place in the community. Each year hundreds of people who worked at the cannery between the 1940s and 1980s return for a reunion. The coffee shop is located in the old cafeteria. The maritime businesses help preserve the working waterfront aspect. This endeavor, because it involves economic opportunity, is self-sustaining. Massive public or philanthropic investment would be



*Astoria, Oregon in 1940*

needed to sustain this piece of community heritage without the economic opportunity involved.

Another example of heritage preservation through economic activity is the Willapa Demonstration Land Bank near Long Beach, Washington. This project restored a portion of Willapa Bay’s original shoreline, 65 acres of saltwater marshes, providing salmon habitat, flood-holding capacity, and hydrological recharge. It also provided badly needed public works jobs and a wetland bank that will offset future development activities in the region.

### MEASURING PERFORMANCE

SBEC works hard to achieve measurable performance in all its activities and the same would be true in its role as the coordinating entity of the Columbia-Pacific NHA. One of the difficulties in measuring the performance of NHAs is separating their effects on the communities within them from the effects of outside factors. Most national heritage areas are located within areas that are in transition. Some of these areas have undergone rapid revitalization, leading some to ask whether the NHA designation was the cause or the effect of revitalization.

Most coordinating entities support their communities through indirect means, such as tours and programs,



*Historic officers quarters at Fort Columbia State Park*

publications, branding and promotion. While many of these activities have positive results, it is difficult if not impossible to measure the effects of their efforts.

SBEC operates under the philosophy that what gets measured, gets done. The organization maintains a comprehensive operational scorecard, and it is rigorous in its self-measurement practices. To date, SBEC has developed measurements for several ongoing activities illustrated in the following scorecard.

**TABLE 7.1: SBEC TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE IMPACTS**

ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	EQUITY
Jobs Created and/or Retained	Riparian Zone	Minority/Women Owners
Leveraged Investment	Sustainable/Certified Land	Low Income Families Assisted
Secondary Value Added Business	Water Diverted from Waste Stream	Local Land Tenure

The NPS is currently working with the Center for Park Management to develop similar performance measures for NHAs. Since each NHA is unique, every new NHA is an opportunity to build upon the lessons learned from other NHAs.

### ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Chapter 5 provides more detailed information on a conceptual financial plan for the proposed NHA. In this section, we have evaluated SBEC’s ability to create a self-sufficient NHA program.

SBEC has an annual operating budget of four million dollars. 80 percent of this budget is generated through earned income and the additional 20 percent is raised from grants and philanthropic sources.

SBEC’s strategy for building an NHA program would be to use federal appropriation as seed money during the first years of the program. During this time, SBEC

would begin building an eight to ten million-dollar-revolving capital fund for investments in heritage activities while also exploring income generating activities. Eventually, earned income would provide sufficient funds to maintain the program.

NPS believes that SBEC's past performance indicates that the organization has the capacity to heavily leverage any federal investment in the national heritage area.

## CRITERION 8.

### **The study shall include a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.**

The conceptual boundary was a part of every discussion during the public and stakeholder involvement and outreach activities described in Chapter 6. The NPS, Destination: The Pacific and SBEC actively sought suggestions and public comment.

As noted in Chapter 2, the proposed boundary in Oregon was easily developed using historic, cultural, and geographic information. In Oregon the proposed boundary is formed by the divide between the

Columbia River and Nehalem River watersheds. The boundary follows patterns of settlement from prehistoric times to the present and includes every incorporated government and population center in north and west Clatsop County. The boundary in Oregon enjoys wide support.

Although it was a frequent and active topic of discussion, the boundary in Washington was not developed until near the completion of the draft study. As Chapter 2 notes, cultural and topographic divides are not as clear in Washington. Instead, the determination of the boundary was influenced much more heavily by present-day cultural affiliations and relationships.

It became clear from discussions and research during public scoping meetings in March 2008 that north Pacific County did not demonstrate the same historic and present-day connections to the mouth of the Columbia River as other parts of the study area. Residents in North Pacific County felt a strong bond with Grays Harbor to the north as they did to the Columbia River. These people have economic and social ties with Olympia and Aberdeen as frequently as with Long Beach or Astoria.



*Port of Ilwaco, Washington*



*Cathlamet in Wahkiakum County, Washington*

More importantly the residents of north Pacific County were ambivalent about potential NHA designation. While some residents in north Pacific County were strongly in favor of it, others were vehemently against it. In fact, several landowners in north Pacific County banded together to form a group called Property Owners Against National Heritage Areas to speak out against NHA designation. This group has proposed a smaller boundary in Washington, one that would include only part of the Long Beach Peninsula and the town of Ilwaco.

After meetings with residents and elected officials from north Pacific County, the NPS decided to include only the area south of the Naselle River watershed in the proposed boundary. Though this is disappointing to many residents in north Pacific County, the NPS judged that south of the Naselle River, support was unqualifiedly strong. North of the Naselle watershed, residents were divided.

NPS considered the boundary proposed by the property rights group, a boundary that excludes the north Long Beach Peninsula and areas east of Ilwaco. After public discussion of this proposal, NPS concluded that it was not supported by the residents

east of Ilwaco and north of Long Beach that would be excluded by it. These residents preferred the proposed boundary depicted in Chapter 2.

Boundary definition related to Wahkiakum County also posed a challenge. Historical accounts indicate a strong relationship between the mouth of the Columbia River and towns and settlements on Wahkiakum's tidelands and sloughs. Wahkiakum County was host to the first Columbia River salmon cannery and the first steam-powered logging railroad in the Northwest. Its bays and rivers were the home of Chinookan peoples as recorded in early journals of European and American explorers.

Wahkiakum County has no natural boundaries that are culturally significant. KM Mountain clearly forms a small cultural and physical divide but not as strong as the divide in culture and commerce between the Columbia and Nehalem rivers to the north.

County commissioners, residents, and interest groups strongly recommended that the proposed boundary include Wahkiakum County in its entirety based on the area's strong cultural ties with the Columbia River. The NPS concurs with this suggestion.



*North Head Lighthouse at Cape Disappointment State Park*