

*National Park System Advisory Board*



*Citizen advisors chartered by Congress to help the National Park Service care for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.*

## **Appendix D**

# **Large Landscape Conservation Case Studies**

## **National Park System Advisory Board**

### **Planning Committee**

**November 2012**



**National Park System Advisory Board  
Planning Committee  
Large Landscape Conservation Case Study  
Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area  
Gretchen Long**

**What It Is and Why It Started**

Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area was established in the mid nineties as an outgrowth of the clean up of Boston Harbor. Located one mile from downtown Boston, it is a mosaic of islands and peninsulas throughout the harbor which comprise the recreation area. Each of the 34 islands is quite distinctive and represents individual histories and differing resources. Only a partial number of the islands are open to the public, available by scheduled ferry transportation. The park service is evident primarily at Georges Island and Spectacle Island. The NPS owns only a small fraction of the property, specifically Long Island, with a light house. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation owns 16 of the islands. Other owners include the Trustees of Reservations and Outward Bound.

Managed by a variety of government, non profit and for profit entities, the BOHA is a unique national park, successful because of the sustained efforts of the partners who hold a shared vision, and influenced by the NPS. It is an urban park within marine resources.

**Its Goals and Purposes**

BOHA offers recreational, cultural and historical resources to the greater Boston area, and sets a standard for stewardship of these once overlooked islands. That it became a unit of the National park System in 1996 greatly increased the visibility and sense of inspiration of the resource.

The islands and the harbor waters are now considered a great amenity of Boston, and as such attract visitors from around the country and the world. Located closely to Quincy Market and the downtown Fanueil Hall historic district, near to the Boston Aquarium, it is part of the economic engine of a revitalized city of Boston.

BOHA is increasingly active in engaging urban youth, both through the educational program at Thompson Island, run by Outward Bound, and by the free services offered by the Island Alliance which over time has offered free admissions to 15,000.

**How It Is Structured or Organized**

BOHA is comprised of a standing partnership composed of twelve members representing DCR, MWRA, Mass Port, the Coast Guard, BRA, City of Boston, the Trustees of Reservations, Outward Bound, the Island Alliance and a two representatives of a 30 person Islands Advisory Council -- and NPS.

The DCR owns half of the islands and contributes approximately \$5 million operating costs per year to an annual budget of \$9-12 million.

Thompson Island Outward Bound has an annual Operating budget of \$4.7 million, and educates and serves 6,500 youth annually, many in its summer wilderness courses, but also in its Family Learning Center and its Connections program. Additionally, Outward Bound cosponsors a youth jobs program with the NPS. It correctly promotes itself as "Boston's Island Classroom."

The NPS contributes \$1 million annually, as well as its leadership role in management, stewardship, interpretation etc. BOHA is technically a NPS unit, but not treated so consistently for funding purposes. Consequently some programs say they are not eligible because there is no NPS ownership.

The Island Alliance has responsibility for contracts with the water transportation and food operations. Over the last 8 years it has contributed \$14-15 million in capital expenses, and approximately \$300-400,000 annually for marketing, kids for free, etc.

Among the partners there seems to be agreed recognition that the principle drivers are the DCR, the Island Alliance, and the NPS. Basic to their success has been a shared group vision and the continuity of the individual leaders. Their sense of commitment is highly evident, and as they have been working together for many years, there is a solid basis of trust and reliability among them. In addition to the principle drivers, the 12 member partnership is small enough that it encourages people to really communicate with each other.

Perhaps less effective is the Advisory Council composed of 30 representatives representing public involvement. Council members are appointed by the Secretary of Interior through the Director of NPS. The park superintendent is the federal official that oversees the Council's operation.

When there are differences of direction, the main drivers of the group go and "hammer it out" over time with the other entities. A particularly complex example of this was getting approval of a visitor pavilion at the entrance of the wharf that is the transportation site for the islands. This took five to six years and hundreds and hundreds of hours to accomplish. When everyone feels they have a special stake in an initiative, it is very time consuming and expensive to get a resolution.

### **Its Accomplishments**

BOHA is, fifteen years from its inception, a well regarded and accepted urban park. The stewardship level of management practices of the islands has been greatly enhanced, even though the NPS has had no direct authority. The shared goals of a recreational/ educational resource have been sustained. While once a neglected harbor, BOHA has transformed the area to a desirable destination. For a small amount of investment the NPS has been pivotal in bringing about this change.

## **Problems That Have Arisen or Limitations**

To a certain extent, you get what you pay for. NPS has leveraged a lot with it's relatively small share of the costs. It does, however, own little and has no clear authority over the entirety. It manages by influence. As the superintendent states, NPS leads from behind; as facilitator, catalyst, convener.

Because it is a partnership, the distinctive branding of NPS is in little evidence. While called a park, there is virtually no evidence that it is a national park per se. One does not feel "the national park experience." It is a branding dilemma.

Since BOHA works through the partners, much of the interpretation comes from beyond the park service, and seems to be of less quality that is typically expected from the park service.

Because of its unique partnership structure, most of the NPS attention goes to maintaining and assisting the partnership. There seems to be little connection with other park units or NHAs in the area, and no coordinated interpretation with them.

While there is recognition of the potential of BOHA to be part of the fabric of Boston city life, and its youth, with the exception of the Thompson Island effort, most of the visitation comes from the surrounding suburbs.

**National Park System Advisory Board  
Planning Committee  
Large Landscape Conservation Case Study  
Chesapeake Bay Watershed**  
Warren Brown, Jonathan Doherty and John Maounis

**What It is and Why It Started:**

A broad collaborative effort is taking place throughout the Chesapeake watershed to restore water quality, revive and sustain natural resources, protect cultural landscapes and provide more locations for water access and outdoor recreation. Federal, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations work together toward goals to protect treasured landscapes, expand public access, restore large areas of wetlands and riparian forests, restore fisheries and other wildlife species, and achieve major water pollution reductions, all by 2025. Large landscape conservation is vital to these comprehensive stewardship goals.

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in North America. Its shorelines extend more than 11,000 miles and its watershed encompasses 64,000 square miles in 6 states and the District of Columbia and is home to some 17 million people. The watershed – the Chesapeake Bay, the major tributaries, and the surrounding landscapes -- has long been regarded as an ecological, cultural, and recreational treasure of national and international importance.

Collaborative efforts to conserve the Chesapeake landscape have evolved over time, as has the role of the National Park Service. Two distinctive trends have influenced this:

- There is a long-standing public demand for protecting special regional landscapes for outdoor recreation and natural and cultural heritage; this has manifested in a mosaic of focused landscape conservation efforts within the watershed and exceptional state programs.
- Public concern over the ecological health of the Chesapeake Bay, originally focused exclusively on pollution reduction, has grown to recognize the importance of land conservation.

The Chesapeake region has been a hot spot of state-level innovations in landscape protection for decades. The [Virginia Outdoors Foundation](#), established as a public body in 1966, has protected more than 600,000 acres through conservation easements, many facilitated by the state's ground-breaking Land Preservation Tax Credit Program. [Maryland's Program Open Space](#) was founded in 1969 as a dedicated funding source for land conservation; it has protected over 350,000 acres. Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program, regarded as a national leader, has protected over 435,000 acres since 1989.

Pennsylvania and Maryland have also been leaders in focusing on distinctive large landscapes within the region, establishing state heritage area programs in [1989 \(PA\)](#) and [1996 \(MD\)](#). Pennsylvania also established a [Conservation Landscapes Initiative](#) in 2005. Other federal agencies have evolved toward a landscape focus as well, including the US Fish & Wildlife Service, most notably at the Rappahannock River Valley NWR, established in 1996.

The National Park Service began managing lands in the Chesapeake region in the 1920s and 1930s and now owns a total over 320,000 acres in the watershed, making it the second largest federal agency landholder (after the US Forest Service). Existing NPS units in the watershed generally represent individual sites or features of historical or cultural significance, most quite distant from the Bay proper. Arguably, only three of the existing units address or conserve large Chesapeake landscapes: Shenandoah, the C&O Canal and the Appalachian Trail.

National Park Service involvement in large landscape conservation in the Chesapeake has grown in the past two decades, driven by the continuing expansion of national heritage areas and an interest in having more Chesapeake parks and public access to the water. The [Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Heritage Area](#) was established in 1996 and the 3.4 million acre [Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area and Scenic Byway](#) in 2006, both entirely within the Chesapeake watershed.

Interest in a possible Chesapeake focused unit of the National Park System dates back some two decades. NPS conducted a special resource study in 1994 that highlighted opportunities for technical assistance and interpretation to connect people to the bay's natural and cultural history. In 1998 Congress authorized the [Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network](#), giving NPS authority to provide technical assistance and make matching grants to state and local governments and non-governmental organizations. Over a period of years, this resulted in a partnership network of over 170 designated sites and 3,000 miles of designated water trails. In 2004, at the request of Congress, NPS completed a second special resource study; it found Chesapeake Bay to be nationally significant and determined that one or more of several concepts could make significant contributions to the protection and public enjoyment of the Chesapeake and invited local recommendations for a specific location.

Since that time, two national historic trails have been designated on the Chesapeake; both are administered by the NPS. The 3,000 mile [Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT](#) (2006) traces the largely water routes of Smith's voyages exploring the Bay and its tributaries in 1607-1609. The 560 mile [Star-Spangled Banner NHT](#) commemorates the Chesapeake campaign of the War of 1812, including the invasion of Washington and Baltimore. The NPS also administers other national trails in the watershed, including the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route NHT. Most recently, the designation of Fort Monroe National Monument in 2011 creates a new NPS unit directly fronting on the Chesapeake Bay.

Concurrent with the growth and evolution of landscape conservation in the region, there has been a three decade effort to address water pollution led by the Environmental Protection Agency and the states through the [Chesapeake Bay Program](#). In this context, most attention has been placed on practices to reduce nutrient and sediment flows to the Bay. Only in 2000 did the program formally recognize the importance of land protection to water quality, setting a goal of protecting 20% of the watershed by 2010. That goal was reached, with an average of 125,000 acres being protected each year between 2000 and 2009, mostly through state and local land protection programs and non-profit land trusts. By 2010, 7.8 million acres in the watershed were permanently protected.

In 2009, President Obama signed [Executive Order 13508](#) declaring “The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure constituting the largest estuary in the United States and one of the largest and most biologically productive estuaries in the world. The Federal Government has nationally significant assets in the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed in the form of public lands, facilities, military installations, parks, forests, wildlife refuges, monuments, and museums.” The order called for development of a strategy for protecting and restoring the Chesapeake, as well as annual progress reports and action plans. This further stimulated efforts towards multiple conservation goals, including collaboration on large landscape conservation.

### **Goals and Purposes:**

The [Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#) was released in 2010 in response to EO 13508. It outlines a common vision of a watershed with swimmable, fishable waters; healthy populations of land and aquatic wildlife; habitats that are resilient to development and climate change; abundant forests and thriving farms; conserved lands that protect natural and cultural heritage; ample access to outdoor resources; and widespread citizen stewardship.

The National Park Service coordinated development of the strategies on land conservation and public access among a broad set of NGO, state and federal partners. They defined a goal to: “Conserve landscapes treasured by citizens to maintain water quality and habitat; sustain working forests, farms and maritime communities; and conserve lands of cultural, indigenous and community value. Expand public access to the Bay and its tributaries through existing and new local, state and federal parks, refuges, reserves, trails and partner sites.”

More specifically the strategy set an outcome of protecting an additional two million acres and adding 300 new public access sites, all by 2025. The strategy recognizes these goals will only be achieved through the collaborative efforts of local, state and federal government and non-governmental organizations.

### **How It is Structured or Organized:**

Within the Chesapeake Bay watershed are 54 national park units, 16 national wildlife refuges, 5 national trails, 2 national forests, 2 BLM management areas, dozens of state parks and wildlife management areas, 3,000 miles of designated water trails, substantial landholdings by non-governmental organizations, all or parts of 5 national heritage areas, 17 state heritage areas and 5 conservation landscape initiatives, and dozens of scenic byways.

In 2003, the NPS established a Chesapeake Bay Office to coordinate its engagement with the Bay and rivers and the many entities managing the units noted above, and to administer the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT, Star-Spangled Banner NHT and Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. NPS has formal memoranda of understanding regarding each of these with over 200 partners.

Since 2009, the NPS Chesapeake Bay Office has served as the co-convenor of a broad set of large landscape conservation partners who assemble and collaborate to achieve shared goals. Representing dozens of state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations, these



partners have gathered multiple times to define watershed-wide goals for land conservation and public access, develop recommendations for advancing efforts to achieve these goals, establish action teams to work on specific outcomes, and most recently – in August 2012 – to share information on initiatives, and identify continuing next steps.

Simultaneously, various combinations of partners, including NPS, collaborate regularly in multiple ongoing conservation partnerships aligned around specific focus areas – large landscapes within the broader Chesapeake watershed. Examples include the Nanticoke watershed, middle Potomac, tidal Rappahannock, James River, Lower Susquehanna and Journey Through Hallowed Ground.

The NPS Chesapeake Bay Office also coordinates information and reporting on land conservation and public access for action plans and progress reports required under EO 13508, as well as for the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Efforts to improve water quality and fisheries and habitat restoration are coordinated through the Chesapeake Bay Program, the regional partnership established in 1983. The Chesapeake Bay Program partners include the states of [Maryland](#), [Pennsylvania](#) and [Virginia](#); the [District of Columbia](#); the [Chesapeake Bay Commission](#), a tri-state legislative body; the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), representing the federal government; and participating citizen advisory groups.

#### **Accomplishments:**

The National Park Service, in partnership with other agencies, states and organizations, is convening select efforts to focus additional strategic approaches to large landscape conservation. This fits the aims of the *NPS Call to Action #22* (Scaling Up), as well as the goals of the *America's Great Outdoors Initiative* where NPS leads three landscape level priority projects (one each in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia). Moreover, it builds on the NPS role as a catalyst across a large landscape stemming from NPS's formal partnerships with well over 200 sites and trails in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network and national historic trails. These partner sites and trails are along the entire Bay and every major tributary from Cooperstown NY to Virginia Beach VA. A 2008 review of the Gateways program highlighted NPS strengths including:

- developing high quality promotional materials: maps, guides, and Web site
- bringing National Park Service prestige and expertise to the partners, which in turn reflects favorably on the participating sites
- leveraging resources by way of the matching requirement
- the expertise of NPS staff and conferences and workshops
- building the capacity and credibility of smaller, lesser known sites
- developing or strengthening connections among organizations in the region
- enhancing interpretation of Bay themes at participating sites due to interpretive planning and interpretive materials supported by NPS
- increasing access to the Bay via newly developed water trails, as well as guides for new and existing water trails

The subsequent designation, planning and implementation of the John Smith Trail and Star-Spangled Banner Trail have strengthened and expanded these capacities.

NPS is now engaged in several initiatives related to furthering large landscape conservation goals, including the following:

*Establishing a Focus for Landscape Conservation on the John Smith Trail:* The 3,000 mile trail traces virtually every major tidal tributary of the Bay. NPS, in partnership with the Chesapeake Conservancy and states and other federal agencies, is outlining a trail conservation strategy, the first such effort for any national historic trail. Its focus is on conserving landscapes along the trail key to maintaining or enhancing visitor experience and understanding. Due for completion in 2012, this strategy will set out a collaborative approach to conservation and detailed tools for NPS and partner use in strategically focusing protection. The states and land trusts are expected to be significant forces in conserving trail resources and values, especially the landscapes evocative of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that benefit communities and neighboring landowners. Here again, NPS is playing an important role as convener and catalyst for state and local efforts to protect lands and connect people with a resource they value.

*Identifying Indigenous Cultural Landscapes:* A new approach to understanding important Chesapeake resources is taking place simultaneously – the identification of Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICL). These landscapes generally encompass the cultural and natural resources that would have been associated with and supported the historic lifestyle and settlement patterns of American Indian peoples at the time of European contact. NPS is collaborating with multiple partners to further develop ICL criteria and pilot mapping efforts.

*Expanding Public Access:* To guide how to achieve the goal of adding 300 new public access sites, NPS has led a collaborative effort with watershed states to develop a public access plan. Developed with broad public input, the plan sets out public access development priorities and a strategy for implementing them. NPS is actively providing matching funding for access projects that leverage state, local, and NGO funds. Expanded access broadens the scope of landscape conservation efforts by enlarging and deepening the public interest.

*Fostering Strategic Conservation:* NatureServe, NPS and the U.S. Geological Survey are leading a collaborative effort with Chesapeake states and non-governmental organizations for a watershed-wide web-based tool to view and coordinate local, state and federal land conservation priorities. Building onto the existing LandScope America platform, “LandScope Chesapeake” launched in August 2012 and will be continually expanded. NPS will use the developing system as one part of efforts to facilitate collaboration among landscape conservation programs in the Chesapeake watershed. This will include identifying key focus areas where federal and state programs share mutual conservation priorities and can work together on specific projects.

*Furthering Large Landscape Collaboration:* NPS, the Chesapeake Conservancy, states, non-governmental organizations and other federal agencies convened in a workshop in August 2012 to consider how to strategically focus and advance conservation of the Chesapeake’s cultural and natural landscapes. The workshop allowed participants to collectively: discuss current high-level focus areas (fairly large geographies) for conservation in the Chesapeake watershed; develop the

basis for a focused rationale for large landscape conservation based on those focus areas; and identify next steps for further development of large landscape conservation in the Chesapeake.

These efforts are charting a course for large landscape conservation in the Chesapeake in general and in relation to the National Park Service in particular. For NPS, it is a course based on: Identification, protection, and interpretation of recreation corridors along the major rivers, and trails and byways – corridors that provide quality visitor experiences, increase public access, and protect viewsheds and associated land-based natural and cultural resources. These efforts recognize the layering of cultural, scenic, ecological, and other landscape values that can facilitate and leverage multiple interests in landscape conservation.

### **Problems That Have Arisen**

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is a very large landscape; so large it must be addressed in terms of many smaller—but still large—regional landscapes. Federal, state and regional partners must be able to collaborate at multiple levels (watershed-wide, regionally and locally) to advance conservation. This requires a commitment of time and resources to leverage maximum benefits.

Not all regional landscapes within the watershed have the local or regional capacity for landscape conservation efforts. This makes it difficult to achieve results in these areas regardless of the need or significance. Attention and progress often focuses on the landscapes where multiple partners values align with the capacity.

The heavy emphasis on reducing pollutant loads to the Bay can sometimes adversely impact land protection. Water quality improvement efforts through the Chesapeake Bay Program and a Bay-wide TMDL are substantially driven by the “Bay Model,” a sophisticated computer modeling program. The TMDL and model currently provide no credit for land protection, as it does not necessarily reduce pollutant loads, only averts potential future loads. This removes a key incentive for land protection, particularly in relation to possible market-based approaches. Further, it has caused some reallocations of land protection funding to pollution reduction.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is subject to substantial development pressures. Over 17 million people live in the watershed and growth is projected to continue. Conservationists know that funding for land acquisition and conservation easements will never be sufficient to protect all of the landscapes people value. A significant amount of conservation must occur through effective local, regional and state planning. However, differing public attitudes and state authorities make growth management a continuing challenge.

Still, the many layers of history in the Chesapeake region, the profound significance of the Bay and major rivers, and the potential role they play in the area’s quality of life are all deeply felt by many citizens. There are few regions in the nation with the combination of so many active land trusts, river groups, local transfer of development right programs, effective state programs and federal agencies all collaborating on landscape conservation.

**National Park System Advisory Board  
Planning Committee  
Large Landscape Conservation Case Study  
Crown of the Continent  
Gretchen Long and Mary Riddle**

**What It Is and Why it Started:**

The Crown of the Continent is an 18 million acre Rocky Mountain region bridging northern Montana, British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. It is known as one of the most intact and unique wildlife ecosystems, and distinguished by the presence in its hub of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, more familiarly known in the U.S. as Glacier National Park.

It is one of the most jurisdictionally complex landscapes in North America. The ecosystem spreads across two nations, one state and two provinces; and numerous aboriginal lands, municipal authorities, public land blocks, and private properties, and includes working and protected landscapes. It is generally defined by the Rocky Mountain eco-region from the Bob Marshall wilderness complex in Montana, to the Highwood River in Alberta and the Elk Valley in British Columbia.

Around the year 2000 a State of the Parks report documented the growing negative impacts to Glacier National Park from external sources, including climate change and new land use patterns. An early coal mine threat became a focus of an advocacy organization, which brought together various members of the community. The tone was that of a middle ground, stressing the sense of a shared sense of place. This State of the Parks report was also the beginning of science driven data becoming a basis of collaborative decision making in what is now termed the Crown. The 2000 report initiated an effort to develop an awareness of the need for landscape level conservation, especially in relation to climate change strategies. Special outreach was made to non environmental constituencies within the public, as well as to professional managers. Glacier National Park, much appreciated by the vast number of people who reside in the region, became the lynchpin for the discussion of the concept of the Crown. Emphasizing "this place where we live" changed attitudes.

At the same time the economic and demographic characteristics of the region were changing. Seeing a need to change the traditional political dialogue surrounding conservation, several NGO's partnered with NPS officials and launched a Healthy Parks/Healthy Communities campaign. Local community leaders spoke out on the economic prosperity and quality of life dependent on maintaining the Crown.

Glacier and the Peace Park were seen as core to a larger, interdependent and fully integrated eco-region. The unique descriptive quality of the region made branding the Crown easier. Its size, though large (and of lesser size in the early years), gave it a scale and coherency that fit people's sense of residency. (The LCC's are considerably larger.)

### **It's Goals or Purposes:**

The Crown of the Continent is an identified international landscape characterized as multi jurisdictional, multiple purposes, and multi stakeholders. With Glacier and Peace parks being the dramatic hub, the Crown is now viewed as an integrated eco-region worthy of conservation. The Crown of the Continent concept was created to articulate and advance a long term conservation vision for the region, while supporting sustainable and vibrant local communities. The vision is based on coordination and collaboration, and of developing a sense of a shared future. The NPS was fully involved in the discussions to develop this vision.

### **How It Is Structured or Organized:**

The Crown involves a myriad of organizations and partnerships, and includes all the various constituencies of the area. It's strength comes from a combination of broad local community support built over the years (bottom up) and a sophisticated public policy involvement of state, provincial and national leaders (top down.) Collaboration of all the land managers has been key. The role of science and the issue of climate change as a basis for discussion of issues has been a strong contributing factor for success. The leadership role of NPS in formulating the vision, in gaining cooperation within the Crown Managers Partnership, in reaching out to the public, has been instrumental. The strategic role of private land conservation (Montana Legacy Project) has significantly increased the scale and sense of commitment to the Crown.

The major groups working within the Crown include:

*America's Great Outdoors* has identified the Crown of the Continent as one of the five signature landscapes. An interagency group led by Region 1 of the US Forest Service is working on a range of projects including public and private land conservation efforts.

*US and Canada National Park Service.*

*The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium* which develops ecosystem focused curricula, workshops and educational projects.

*Flathead Basin Commission:* established with members appointed by the Montana State Legislature to protect and monitor the aquatic resources in the Flathead Basin.

*Crown Round Table:* an effort initiated by the Center for Natural Resources and Environment Policy at the University of Montana and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to provide a multi-stakeholder forum to exchange ideas, build relationships, identify shared values and interests and facilitate working relationships among all interests in the Crown.

*Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative (CCCI):* a group of non-governmental organizations that has developed a comprehensive conservation agenda and plan for the Crown.

*National conservation organizations* including The Nature Conservancy and the National Parks Conservation Association.

***International Joint Commission:*** established by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty. The Commissioners follow the treaty as they try to prevent or resolve disputes in waters that lie along or flow across the border between Canada and the US. Their intervention prevented development of the Cabin Creek Mine in the 1980's.

***Crown of the Continent Geotourism Project*** was a broad based partnership of local community and business leaders who worked with NPCA and National Geographic to create the Crown of the Continent MapGuide and interactive website. This project mapped the natural and cultural assets in the area and underscored a sense of shared values and residency.

***A number of governmental and non- governmental organizations and initiatives in British Columbia and Alberta*** too numerous to list.

Glacier NP is only one of many entities that make up the Crown, but it has truly been the catalyst for much of the progress. The role of the National Geographic Map, showing both natural and cultural assets of the area, underscored a sense of shared values and residency.

### **Its Accomplishments:**

The Crown articulates a vision and community values. There is majority buy in, a sense of shared understanding and awareness of this special place, a sense of residency.

The vision is comprehensive and collaborative.

Glacier National park has taken a leadership role in leading a landscape level awareness. This requires a long term commitment of time, effort, and resources. Glacier NP developed a comprehensive strategy, worked with NGO's and community interests, coordinated public events. When there was a clear threat (coal mine) to the integrity of the Crown and the park, NPS staff spoke out assertively. That was respected.

Within the Crown, Glacier NP has a clear cut and visible role, which makes it easier to rally around. The long history of parks for the people, i. e., their parks, makes the park central to public support for landscape level conservation. The park is the iconic core.

Some specific advances have occurred as a result of a landscape level effort:

The Ecological Health Project is the CMP's flagship project. The purpose of the project is to collectively define measures of ecological health and identify the adaptive capacity to meet them across border, amongst jurisdictions and with stakeholders by the end of the decade. The project entails defining what health means in the Crown context, describing the current state of the Crown, understanding the trajectories that have taken the region to this point and the likely future trajectories and their environmental implications, identifying with the broader community and stakeholders the desired state for the Crown, and collaborative and adaptive environmental and natural resource management actions.

Five themes to assess trans-boundary ecological health are being looked at: landscapes, biodiversity, water quantity and quality, air quality/climate change and invasive species. The project is exploring the extent to which changes in environmental quality related to these themes may be reflected in regional scale landscape metrics.

In 2009, the CMP formed a partnership with the University of Calgary Geography Department and the National Park Service Rocky Mountain Inventory and Monitoring Network to conduct a Landscape Analysis of the CCE. The Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative joined the partnership in 2010. Solid progress has been made on collecting landscape data and developing consistent measures of habitat, habitat connectivity and human-use footprint at the scale of the CCE, that ultimately will be used to inform management, measure trends and establish indicators; including assisting managers with developing strategies for adaptation and increasing resiliency in the face of climate change. Ultimately success would include establishment of trans-boundary management protocols and coordinated action.

In 2010 the CMP hosted a Climate Change Scenario Planning Workshop for agencies in the Crown. The CMP is on the verge of creating a Trans-boundary Aquatic Invasive Species Response Plan with the State of Montana and the Province of Alberta. A pocket guide describing AIS threats to the Crown is also being developed. The CMP completed a Crown of the Continent Invasive Plant Guide and formed the Crown Invasive Plant Network for invasive species agency professionals.

### **Problems That Have Arisen:**

While there has been much interagency progress and trans-boundary cooperation, there are still some intractable issues that come about because of the differing mandates of the agencies. It seems especially so in the differing outlooks of the state game and fish, which looks to its hunting and fishing constituency, rather than a broader ecological outlook. (A current example of that is non native fish in Flathead Lake.)

In so many regions (Greater Yellowstone), this dilemma has been so persistent over the years that it suggests there might be value in developing new tools, or requirements, for managers to consult during planning or project determinations, and sign off on an interagency coordination statement. The process is now working, for better or not, through informal collaboration. Securing science as a basis for decision making has facilitated inter-agency collaboration.

External threats still exist, and need constant attention. There is still resistance to broad scale legislation, such as the North Fork Protection Act, introduced twice, and failed.

Despite the signing of the MOU between BC and the State of Montana committing to work on trans-boundary issues and the MOU between the Province of Alberta and the State of Montana, the federal agencies have not signed these MOU's. As federal agencies manage the majority of lands in the US portion of the Crown, signing will indicate even greater political commitment to working together across this landscape and reduce the administrative difficulties that hinder collaboration.

The many and varied players and organizations listed above make for a rich basis of collaboration. Both within the public land arenas and in private negotiations, seeking a degree of compromise and taking middle ground positions appropriate to a shared future has made a substantial difference. However, much is dependent upon the individuals in these organizations, and many are dependent on political winds.

To fully realize the Crown's potential it will take institutional will and lasting commitment by individuals which under the reality of constantly changing political and social landscapes may be difficult. Yet if the sense of shared natural and cultural value is embedded within the communities, the Crown of the Continent will be one of the nation's best conserved major landscapes for years to come, adapting as necessary to the ecological changes that may be inevitable, but still essentially intact and crowned by its iconic core, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.



National Park System Advisory Board  
Planning Committee  
Case Study of the Essex National Heritage Area

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April 2012

Annie C. Harris

Executive Director, Essex National Heritage Commission

**What is the Essex National Heritage Area?** The Essex National Heritage Area encompasses the 500 square mile region located north of Boston, MA, along the Atlantic coast. The area is home to 743,000 residents, 9,968 historic structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 400 historic farms, 86 significant museums, 26 National Historic Landmarks, nine State Parks, two National Park units, and one National Wildlife Refuge. The region also has four distinctive landscapes – a great salt marsh with barrier islands, a rocky coast area interspersed with historic seaports, the Merrimack River which powered some of the greatest mill cities of the American industrial revolution, and an inland region of rural farms, woodlots, and small towns clustered around New England commons.

**How did it start?** In 1996, the United States Congress established the Essex National Heritage Area (Essex Heritage) by including its authorization in the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Act of 1996, but the effort to create the Essex Heritage began a decade earlier. The idea of the Essex National Heritage Area started with a NPS Special Resource Study called *The Salem Project: A Study of Alternatives* published in 1990. The study looked at 4 alternatives for interpreting the nationally significant themes of the National Park Service's Salem Maritime National Historic Site and recommended that the interpretation and visitor experience at Salem Maritime would be greatly enhanced if the numerous historic resources beyond the park's boundaries were linked to the 9 acre National Park unit. This concept was embraced by the community of Salem and especially by The Salem Partnership, a newly formed public-private economic development organization which included the city's business, cultural and elected leaders – including the superintendent of Salem Maritime, the president of the local college, presidents of the two major banks and the hospital, the mayor and other civic leaders. The Salem Partnership was based on the successful "Lowell model" and Lowell's champion, Senator Paul Tsongas, assisted in establishing the Partnership. The Partnership embraced the National Park Service from the beginning and was eager to have NPS play a larger role in the economic and cultural vitality of the city and the region. As a result of the study, the Essex Heritage Ad Hoc Commission was formed with leaders from around the region. The Ad Hoc Commission led the 6 year effort to secure the National Heritage Area designation.

To date, Congress has designated 49 National Heritages. The first was the Illinois & Michigan Canal Corridor created in 1984, and the most recent nine NHAs were designated in 2009. Each heritage area has been created through its own distinct local circumstances and each has its own unique legislation but all of the successful heritage areas grew out of very strong, grassroots citizen activism supported by the belief that communities that conserve their historic, cultural and natural assets are places that can build a stronger future for all of their citizens. Several NHAs such as Cane River are similar to Essex in that they are closely linked to a National Park unit but other NHAs have no park partner and work with NPS only at the regional level. While the lack of a strong affiliation with a park unit is unfortunate, many of these areas are successful in engaging their local citizens in large landscape conservation and cultural preservation efforts.

**What are its goals and purposes?** The mission of the Essex National Heritage Area is to preserve and enhance the historic, cultural and natural resources of Essex County (settled by Europeans in 1623). The legislation establishing Essex Heritage explicitly links the area to the themes and resources at Salem Maritime National Historic Site and also the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, the two NPS units located within the NHA. These themes/resources are defined as: early European settlement, maritime history in the great age of sail, and the early industrial revolution. The purpose of the heritage area is to engage the area's residents in conservation, preservation, education, and interpretation of the numerous heritage resources related to these three themes. The communities view the long term benefits of the NHA as fostering economic development, community revitalization, improvement of the quality of life, and regional cooperation by assisting in the careful utilization of the heritage (historic, cultural and natural) assets in the region.

**How is it structured and organized?** The Essex National Heritage Area is managed by the Essex National Heritage Commission, a non-profit 501-c3 corporation that promotes public-private partnerships. The commission operates with a 25 member Board of Trustees, 125 Essex Heritage Commissioners, 85+ Ex-Officio Members, and a staff of 10 full time and part time employees. Commissioners are elected at semi-annual meetings of the commission, and they are recruited around the region from leaders in business, civic, non-profit, educational and cultural institutions. The Board of Trustees is elected from the commissioners.

The Commission seeks to accomplish its work through partnerships. It has no regulatory powers and it doesn't own property or hold any other resources except a few preservation/conservation easements. The Commission performs its work by building coalitions and developing consensus for its conservation, preservation and educational programs and projects.

Funding for the NHAs comes from several sources including the Heritage Area line item in the NPS budget. All NHAs are authorized by Congress to receive up to \$1.0m/year for a fixed period, usually 15 years, but no NHAs currently receive the full authorized amount. Most receive between \$150,000 to \$700,000 annually from the NPS budget. (There are a few exceptions such as Blackstone Valley and Shenandoah which receive additional funds from other NPS line items because of special provisions in their legislation). In recent years, most NHAs have seen a steady decrease in the amount of federal funds they annually receive as congress has approved new NHAs but has not increased the Heritage Area line item. Almost all of the NHAs are required to match these federal funds dollar for dollar with non-federal funds. Most NHAs achieve much higher rates of matching with some as high as 5 to 1 (non-federal to federal dollars). NHAs achieve their matches by fundraising, from grants, by charging fees for programs, and by other means.

**What are some of its accomplishments?** Essex Heritage has successfully created “a regional identity organized around the natural, cultural, and historic resources of Essex County” and “has enabled Salem Maritime NHS and Saugus Iron Works NHS to connect more deeply to local communities” according to the key findings identified in the *Evaluation of The Essex National Heritage Commission Findings Report* prepared by the Center for Park Management (CPM) for the National Park Service (September 2010). This independent report is one of nine evaluations of NHAs currently being performed by CPM for the National Park Service as required in PL 110-229. Other CPM findings identify that Essex Heritage has been successful in accomplishing the following:

- Increasing the NPS Salem Maritime National Historic Site and Saugus Ironworks National Historic Site’s capacity to interpret their resources and deliver education to the public;
- Providing NPS with more direct access to local leaders, community organizations and youth;
- Providing support to NPS in marketing, fundraising, and business planning, and procuring financial and other types of resources and support for key NPS initiatives.
- Engaging ordinary residents, local organizations and communities in heritage conservation;
- Fostering intra-regional relationships, projects, and activities that preserve resources across the geographic landscapes of the heritage area;
- Supporting the three core NPS themes;
- Providing experiences that have encouraged both residents and visitors to enjoy, learn about and protect the unique resources and opportunities in the area;
- Developing educational programs that highlight the significance of the area;

- Identifying needs and priorities for preservation and conservation of the area's resources;
- Establishing a constituency for preservation and conservation;
- Enhancing and expanding the existing network of regional routes, trails, and signage.

Some of the ways in which Essex Heritage has accomplished these goals has been through on-the-ground, community focused programs such as:

- *Border to Boston Trail* – (undertaken in partnership with NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservations Assistance (RTCA) program) - supports community-based efforts to provide new, non-motorized access to schools, town centers, parks, and historic sites along long dormant rights-of-way;
- *Coastal Trail Coalition* – (undertaken with NPS RTCA program) - creates recreational opportunities for walking, hiking, and biking by connecting local trails and greenways;
- *Youth Job Corps* – (undertaken with NPS Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works NHS) - provides summer jobs for at-risk, urban youth at heritage resources while assisting them to develop work skills and an appreciation for the region where they live;
- *Friendship Sails!* – (undertaken with NPS Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works NHS) - brings maritime history alive with unique experiences for students, families, and visitors-of-all kinds aboard the tall ship *Friendship*, a replica of an East Indiaman that once sailed the oceans of the world before her capture in the War of 1812.
- *Essex Coastal Scenic Byway* – (in partnership with 13 coastal communities) - *a 85 mile patchwork of coastal roads and byways that is organized as a cultural tourism "artery,"* to highlight *the significant* historic sites, natural resources, and recreational opportunities in the area;
- *Essex LINC's (Local History in a National Context)* – (in partnership with the National Archives and local educational institutions) - trains teachers to use the area's primary resources and sites by helping them infuse their lessons with the stories, places, and artifacts that engage student in the rich heritage surrounding them.
- *Partnership Grants Program* – *invests funds in the conservation of nationally significant resources and related educational programs and uses these investments to leverage addition funds often at a leverage rate of 1:5 or more;*
- *Trails & Sails* – (in partnership with 125+ organizations and resource sites) - an annual, 6 day event that celebrates and familiarizes the public with the area's significant historic and natural resources by coordinating *free* access to family friendly programs throughout the region;
- *Essex Heritage Area Visitor Centers* – (undertaken with NPS Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works NHS) – *promotes a network of visitor centers that support regional tourism and provide local jobs and volunteer opportunities.*

- *The Caribbean Connection – (undertaken with the support of the National Park Foundation) - engages under-served, urban youth in learning about their Latino heritage.*

Accomplishments like these can be found in most of the National Heritage Areas. NHAs have an excellent track record in land conservation and environmental reclamation, education and interpretation, community partnerships and visitor services, recreation development and historic preservation. Some, such as America's Agricultural Heritage (IA), are located in large rural landscapes while others, like Rivers of Steel (PA), are in gritty urban environments. There are NHAs that are only a few miles long (Augusta Canal NHA) and others that are hundreds of square miles (South Carolina NHA). Whatever the size and make up, most heritage areas are deeply connected throughout their communities, and they provide valuable strategies for regional revitalization, conservation and engagement.

**What problems have arisen?** The heritage areas are a new experiment in public-private collaboration. Most of them are less than 15 years old, but their future hangs in the balance. Twenty-five percent of the NHAs are scheduled to lose their authorization for federal support on September 30, 2012, and another fifteen percent are scheduled to "sunset" by 2015. The debate over NHA sunsets and re-authorization reflect the larger challenges and problems that the program is facing:

- **Legitimacy of the program:** The most difficult hurdle for the National Heritage Areas continues to be their uncertain place in the National Park Service "family." Like the earliest national parks, the National Heritage Area program lacks "organic" legislation. Each NHA was created by an individual piece of legislation. This has made the NHA program a favorite target of the budget office and of some members of congress. Director Jarvis recently issued a Director's Memorandum strongly endorsing the NHA program, but this will not head-off the upcoming sunsets. H.R. 4099, the bi-partisan bill to "Authorize a National Heritage Area Program," was recently filed in the House. If enacted, this bill will create a national program within NPS, will standardize the creation of new areas and eliminate the immediate sunsets.
- **Short-term funding and "self-sufficiency":** As discussed earlier, most NHAs work on long term projects that require complex partnerships. There is a mismatch between the length of time required to implement successful projects and the short term, year to year funding made available through NPS. The National Park Foundation has identified "short term" funding as a problem as well for the Park Service, but NPS units at least have certain base funding, while the NHAs do not. OMB and some members of congress insist that NHAs must be "self-sufficient" in ten to fifteen years. They misunderstand

the nature of the NHAs work and its value to the Park Service. This misunderstanding has led several NHAs to seek to create a park unit within their heritage area as a means of keeping NPS involvement (and funding). Many believe that this is a much more costly and less effective strategy for working in large, lived-in landscapes (see the case study of Blackstone Valley) because park units concentrate the federal investment in a much smaller area and do not have the benefit of leveraging local matching funds.

- **Confusion about public and private roles:** The National Heritage Areas were first created during the Reagan administration and later were embraced by both the Clinton and Bush administrations as effective vehicles for a limited government in locally driven conservation. However, some groups confuse “national” with “federal ownership and/or influence.” Private property rights advocates have criticized the NHAs since their inception despite numerous impartial studies including the GAO’s *Report on the National Heritage Areas* (March 20, 2004) that stated it could not find “a single example of property rights infringement.” There is also some confusion with private funders and philanthropists who mistakenly think that NHAs are “federal entities” and therefore do not need their support.
- **Local Capacity:** The success of any NHA depends on its ability to build grassroots support, its capacity to run local programs, and its skill at leveraging matching funds. Most, but not all, of the areas have been created after years of local grass-roots advocacy. For the few NHAs that were created “top-down” by a strong political advocate, it is too early to tell if they will be successful but, at least initially, the lack of ready and able local partners is holding them back.
- **Relationship with the National Park Service:** The Director of the National Park Service has stated his staunch support of the NHAs and the value the program brings to NPS. So too have the Northeast Region and Southeast Regions of the Park Service (see *Strategic Plan for the National Heritage Areas Program*, December 2011), but within the ranks of the service there is some confusion about the program and how to work with its untraditional, non-federal partners. The entrepreneurial culture required of the NHAs can be at odds with the regulatory environment in which the Park Service operates.

**What does the future hold?** The National Heritage Area initiative is twenty-eight years old. It has been the subject of numerous independent reports and evaluations which overwhelmingly confirm the success of its public-private, collaborative methods. In many respects, the NHAs are already achieving many of NPS Director Jarvis’s goals set forth succinctly in “A Call to Action.” The NHAs are *connecting people to parks* and to larger landscapes with significant

natural and historic value, are *advancing education on core American values* and interpreting the diversity of the American experience, and are *preserving America's special places* in parks, communities and in broader landscapes. The immediate challenge facing the future of the NHAs is how do we sustain all that has been accomplished by this movement and incorporate it into an "official" program within the National Park Service. For those involved in the work of the NHAs, we believe to achieve the Second-Century vision for the National Park Service to "fully represent our nation's ethnically and culturally diverse communities .... to honor ...America's complex heritage ...(and) extend the benefits of conservation to (all) " (*A Call To Action, NPS, August 25, 2011*) that Congress must enable the Service to fully embrace and include the National Heritage Areas in the National Park Service's family of parks and programs.