National Heritage Areas (NHAs) expand on traditional conservation approaches by supporting large-scale, community-driven initiatives that engage communities in heritage preservation activities. NHA entities collaborate with stakeholders to determine how to make heritage relevant to local needs and interests. These entities serve as catalysts for community and economic development. Data presented here is from reports submitted by 53 of the 55 NHAs.

In 2021, despite unprecedented challenges of a global pandemic and closures, NHAs continued to serve communities and support their partners. In summary, NHAs:

- Leveraged $76 million in cash and in-kind support to carry out heritage projects and programs, greatly increasing the impact of the $22.8 million in federal Heritage Partnership Program funding received.
- Engaged 2,901 formal partners and 5,102 informal partners in heritage area activities.
- Benefited from 21,803 volunteers contributing over 281,649 hours for heritage area projects - a $7.6 million-dollar value.

Preserving our Heritage. Across the country, National Heritage Areas and their partners are reviving historic downtowns, preserving large landscapes and cultural practices, and sharing our nation’s history through the arts. In 2021:

- 64 historic sites and 8,639 acres of cultural landscapes preserved and maintained, including battlefields.
- 63 collections projects undertaken, including the conservation of artifacts and creation of oral histories.
- 74 historic preservation grants awarded totaling $972,188.85.

Recreation and Conservation. Through recreational projects such as access to land and water trails, National Heritage Areas are improving connectivity and accessibility, creating more vibrant and healthy communities. In 2021:

- 153 recreation projects undertaken.
- 574 miles of trails maintained and 30 new miles of trails developed.
- 71 recreation grants awarded totaling $729,210.81.

Conservation activities led by National Heritage Area entities and their partners improve air and water quality and support healthy ecosystems. In 2021:

- 23,471 acres of land restored and maintained via invasive species removal, replanting, and toxic site clean-ups.
- 46 conservation grants awarded totaling $1.5 million.

Educating Current and Future Leaders. Through programs such as Mountains to Sound Greenway NHA's Equitable Green Opportunities for Youth in Highline, National Heritage Areas and their partners are providing meaningful and inspirational connections to our nation’s heritage via educators and the (outdoor) classroom. In 2021:

- Capacity-building assistance provided to 1,306 organizations.
- 250 educational programs were offered.
- 308 grants to support educational programs were awarded totaling $1.4 million.
A Glance At 2021

Muscle Shoals NHA
Alabama

During FY21, the Muscle Shoals NHA (MSNHA) emphasized recreational programming. The MSNHA supported the development of the Rec & Trek, a student run organization at the University of North Alabama. The organization focuses on recreational programming and community service. Through Rec & Trek and other new recreation programs, the MSNHA has engaged with diverse student and community groups. One such engagement was with a West Florence (traditionally an African American community) non-profit, Common Ground and a minority owned outfitter, Beardo’s Outdoors. Rec & Trek and the MSNHA hosted a paddle event in August that took many of the children Common Ground serves out onto the Tennessee River in the Shoals RiverLine kayak fleet (pictured above).

Photo courtesy of MSNHA.

Cache la Poudre NHA
Colorado

In 2021, Poudre Heritage Alliance (Cache la Poudre NHA’s local coordinating entity), Mujeres de Colores, the City of Fort Collins Parks, Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority, Poudre Landmark Foundation, and the Bohemian Foundation collaborated on the public art project, with the NHA investing $5,000 to the total cost of $228,512. The Hand that Feeds sculpture created by artist, Frank Garza, was designed to preserve and honor the rich family history and significant contributions of the Mexican and Hispanic people who worked the beet fields of northern Colorado. Located in Fort Collins Sugar Beet Park on a city-designed plaza in the Tres Colonias neighborhoods, an interpretive storyboard and educational programs enable visitors and students to understand their impact on the community. The Short-Hoe: Represents the back-breaking work required by the sugar beet workers. The Hand: Represents the Hispanic and Mexican people who came to this area to work the beet fields and eventually settled in Fort Collins.

Betty Aragon-Mitotes, President and Founder of Mujeres de Colores, is pictured with The Hand that Feeds sculpture during the unveiling. Photo Credit: Joel Blocker/The Coloradoan.

MotorCities NHA
Michigan

In 2019, the MotorCities Board of Directors voted to move forward with the formation of a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee to examine how the organization can better tell the entire story of their region. In 2021, the organization focused on programming entitled “Many Voices, One Story,” which shared stories of how this region put the world on wheels across a diverse and inclusive range of people with a wide variety of backgrounds, languages and cultures. Along with the launch of a new website of the same name, each month MotorCities supported the special designation for that month with interviews or articles which amplified the voices of that partner. Some highlights included Rory Gamble providing an interview discussing his status as the first African-American President of United Auto Workers International; highlighting the ability community during Autism Awareness Month as Armani Williams shed light on his life as a NASCAR drive on the autistic spectrum; the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan sharing insights on the complex history of Jewish-Americans in the auto industry; during Pride Month, interviewing Sabin Blake who discussed being his whole self at work as a freeing experience; and the Japanese American Citizens League installing their “Exiled to Motown” exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum.

Photo courtesy of MotorCities NHA.

Upper Housatonic Valley NHA
Connecticut/Massachusetts

As part of the Upper Housatonic Valley NHA’s response to climate change mitigation, a water temperature monitoring project was implemented with three regional partner organizations in the headwaters of the Housatonic River. The Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Housatonic Valley Association, and Hoosic River Watershed Association teamed up with Housatonic Heritage’s support to gain new insights into the sources and causes of river water warming in the region. This county-wide temperature monitoring program is to confirm the locations of cold-water streams. Identifying and then protecting cold water streams in the face of climate change will help sustain a healthy ecosystem, as a ‘cold-water fish resource’ supports the greatest diversity of aquatic wildlife and the species that depend on them to survive. This project was funded with a $3,200 grant from the Upper Housatonic Valley NHA, and leveraged an additional contribution of $5,100 from project partners and also included a student-led video about the project that the NHA produced. Pictured is a historic covered bridge over the Housatonic River, the main river body that is hoping to be protected with the water temp monitoring project, at West Cornwall, CT.

Photo courtesy of Housatonic Heritage.
National Heritage Areas 2021

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For more information visit: www.nps.gov/heritageareas

ALABAMA – Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area
ALASKA – Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area
ARIZONA – Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area • Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area
CALIFORNIA – Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area
COLORADO – Cache La Poudre National Heritage Area • Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area • South Park National Heritage Area
CONNECTICUT – *Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor (CT, MA) • *Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (CT, MA)
FLORIDA – *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC)
GEORGIA – Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area • Augusta Canal National Heritage Area • *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC)
IOWA – Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area
ILLINOIS – Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area • Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor
KANSAS – * Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (KS, MO)
LOUISIANA – Atchafalaya National Heritage Area • Cane River National Heritage Area
MARYLAND – *Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (MD, WV) • Baltimore National Heritage Area • *Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV)
MASSACHUSETTS – Essex National Heritage Area • *Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (MA, NH) • *John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (MA, RI) • *Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor (CT, MA) • *Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (CT, MA)
MICHIGAN – MotorCities National Heritage Area
MISSISSIPPI – Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area • Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area • Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area
MISSOURI – *Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (KS, MO)
NEVADA – *Great Basin National Heritage Area (NV, UT)
NEW JERSEY – Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area
NEW HAMPSHIRE – *Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area (MA, NH)
NEW MEXICO – Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area
NEW YORK – *Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (NY, VT) • Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor • Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area • Niagara Falls National Heritage Area
NORTH CAROLINA – Blue Ridge National Heritage Area • *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC)
NORTH DAKOTA – Northern Plains National Heritage Area
OHIO – Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway • National Aviation Heritage Area
PENNSYLVANIA – Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor • *Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV) • Lackawanna Heritage Valley • Oil Region National Heritage Area • Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area • Schuylkill River National Heritage Area • Susquehanna National Heritage Area • **Path of Progress National Heritage Route
RHODE ISLAND – */**John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (MA, RI)
SOUTH CAROLINA – *Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (FL, GA, NC, SC) • South Carolina National Heritage Corridor
TENNESSEE – Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area
UTAH – *Great Basin National Heritage Area (NV, UT) • Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area
VERMONT – *Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (VT, NY)
VIRGINIA – *Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV) • Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District
WASHINGTON – Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area • Maritime Washington National Heritage Area
WEST VIRGINIA – *Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area (MD, WV) • *Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (MD, PA, VA, WV) • National Coal Heritage Area • Wheeling National Heritage Area

*Denotes NHA that spans multiple states.
** Does not provide data for this report.
April 2022