



# Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Evaluation Findings

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**September 2012**

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Executive Summary.....	S-1
Section 1: Introduction.....	16
Section 2: Overview of the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway.....	27
Section 3: OECA Fulfillment of the Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan .....	38
Section 4: Public/Private Investments in OENHC and their Impact.....	74
Section 5: OENHC Sustainability .....	84

## Tables

Table 1	Crosswalk of Heritage Area Purpose, Goals, and Current Strategy Areas .....	3
Table 3.1	Crosswalk of Heritage Area Purposes, Goals, and Current Strategy Areas.....	39
Table 3.2	Planning Efforts for Projects within the OECA .....	44
Table 3.3	OECA Estimated Planning Meetings with the Public and Yearly Attendance.....	48
Table 3.4	Resource Conservation Accomplishments .....	55
Table 3.5	OECA Estimated Partner Planning Meetings on Project Development and Implementation.....	57
Table 3.6	Number of Participants in OECA Events.....	64
Table 3.7	Yearly Visitors to the Farmer’s Market .....	65
Table 3.8	Yearly Participation in the Bike Aboard Program .....	65
Table 4.1	Direct Financial Investments in OECA, Total and by Year in US Dollars .....	76
Table 4.2	Overview of Federal Funds, Matching Funds and External Matching Contributions.....	77
Table 4.3	OECA Match Results and Match Ratio by Year in US Dollars .....	78
Table 4.4	Coordinating Entity Spending by Year .....	80
Table 4.5	OECA Program Expenditures by Year, 1998-2010 .....	81
Table 4.6	OECA Programmatic Spending by Activity, 1998-2010 .....	82
Table 5.1	OENHC Committee/Task Force Structure .....	86
Table 5.1	Federal Revenue, Matching Funds, Total Revenue and Total Expenses by Year .....	92
TableA4.1	Domain and Source Crosswalk: Ohio and Erie Canalway Heritage Area .....	A4-136
Table A4.1	Timeline of Events for The Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area .....	A4-144
Table A5.1	Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Partner List .....	A5-145

## Figures

Figure 2.1	Map of OENHC.....	29
Figure 2.2.	Organizational Chart for the OENHC Management Structure .....	34
Figure 3.1	Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway .....	42
Figure 4.1	OECA Match Results by Year.....	78
Figure 4.2	OECA Expenditures by Strategy Area, 1998-2010 .....	82
Figure A31	NHA Logic Model .....	106

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Evaluation Legislation.....	A1-94
Appendix 2	Authorizing Legislation .....	A2-96
Appendix 3	Evaluation Methodology .....	A3-104
Appendix 4	Ohio and Erie Canal NHA Management/ Staff Topic-Centered Interview .....	A4-116
Appendix 5	Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Partner List and Board Roster .....	A5-145

# Executive Summary

## Purpose of the Report

In 1996, the United States Congress through Public Law 110-229 officially designated nine National Heritage Areas (NHAs). An NHA can be any size and is intended to encourage historic preservation and appreciation of the unique natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that represent a nationally important American story. The Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC) in Ohio is one of the nine designated areas. The coordinating entity for the OENHC is the Ohio and Erie Canalway Association (OECA). The Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC) and the Ohio Canal Corridor (OCC) are the two nonprofit organizations that founded and now administer the OECA. The OECA, as the OENHC coordinating entity and the recipient of NPS Heritage Partnership Program Funds (HPP), is the central focus of this evaluation.

In May 2008, Congress mandated that an evaluation, under the auspices of the Secretary of the Interior be conducted of each of the nine NHAs to review accomplishments made over the approximately fifteen year period in which they operated. Based on the findings from each evaluation, the Secretary of the Interior would prepare a report to Congress that included recommendations regarding the future role of NHAs with respect to NPS.

## Key Evaluation Questions

The key findings from the OENHC evaluation are organized by the three questions introduced in Section 1 and derived from the legislation, Public Law 110-229, (Appendix 2) that serve as a framework for this evaluation:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?
3. How do the heritage area's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

## Key Findings

**Evaluation Question 1: Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?**

The Evaluation has determined that over the last 15 years, the Ohio & Erie Canalway Association (OECA), as the coordinating entity, has fulfilled its legislated purposes and goals outlined in the Management Plan through the federal resources provided. The legislated purposes for OENHC and the goals of the management plan were mapped onto four strategy areas of activities. This mapping, seen in Table 1, framed our inquiry. Its efforts have centered on the following four strategy areas:

- Regional Planning for Development and Investment;
- Resource Conservation;
- Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience; and
- Community and Economic Development.

The accomplishments and impacts in each of these areas are briefly described below. A more complete assessment of each of the areas is provided in Section 3.

**Table 1 Crosswalk of Heritage Area Purpose, Goals, and Current Strategy Areas**

<b>Purpose Specified in Legislation</b>	<b>OENHC Management Plan Goals</b>	<b>Current OECA Strategy Areas</b>
<p>To preserve and interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio &amp; Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Preserve significant historic structures and other resources associated with the Ohio &amp; Erie Canal;</li> <li>■ Build upon and strengthen the Corridor constituency for preservation and enhancement of key manmade, natural, and cultural resources</li> <li>■ Protect waterways, wetlands, and other natural resources.</li> <li>■ Promote the preservation of natural and scenic vistas for future generations.</li> <li>■ Promote sound environmental practices in project design and implementation</li> <li>■ Communicate the story of the Canal and its influence to enable people throughout the Corridor to understand its impact on the region, state, and nation.</li> <li>■ Develop an interpretive program that combines existing resources and new initiatives to convey a coherent story</li> <li>■ Develop educational opportunities and activities to enable people of all ages to learn about and appreciate the Canal Corridor and its significance, using both traditional methods and contemporary technology and systems</li> </ul>	<p>Resource Conservation</p> <p>Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience</p>
<p>To encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop strategies and actions to provide a high quality and safe visitor experience in the Corridor, which will encourage repeat use by Corridor residents and visitors</li> <li>■ Promote creation of a continuous multi-use trail along the entire length of the Corridor</li> <li>■ Encourage creation of additional active and passive recreation and open spaces along the Corridor by public and private entities</li> <li>■ Advocate and facilitate trail, roadway, and greenway linkages between the Canal Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods and park systems</li> <li>■ Promote the use of economic incentives to encourage compatible development that will enhance the resources of the Canal Corridor</li> </ul>	<p>Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience</p> <p>Community and Economic Development</p>

Purpose Specified in Legislation	OENHC Management Plan Goals	Current OECA Strategy Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encourage communities and jurisdictions along the Corridor to adopt measures to support appropriate uses and compatible development adjacent to the Canal and its associate resources</li> <li>■ Unify and strengthen connections between communities and neighborhoods and promote regional collaboration</li> <li>■ Take advantage of the unique economic potentials that will be created through the Corridor's extensive trail and transportation systems, including developing means and methods to support visitor use through state-of-the-art information systems</li> </ul>	
<p>To provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify opportunities and develop mechanisms to facilitate local and grassroots involvement in Corridor planning and other future activities</li> <li>■ Establish the fiscal needs of the Corridor Plan and identify a strategy to meet such needs over the long term</li> </ul>	<p>Regional Plans for Development and Investment</p>
<p>To authorize the Secretary to provide financial and technical assistance to the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing a Corridor Management Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Coordinate closely with the National Park Service, the State of Ohio, Ohio Canal Corridor, the Ohio &amp; Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, regional entities, and localities to develop a cooperative approach to implementation of the Plan and its element</li> </ul>	<p>Regional Plans for Development and Investment</p>

## Regional Plans for Development and Investment

**The OECA fulfills the regional plans for development and investment requirements of the authorizing legislation.** This strategy area relates to the goals established within the initial legislative mandate: “To provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor.”

Activities that fall under this strategy area reflect the major planning efforts that support the OECA’s implementation of goals in the authorizing legislation.

The key OECA activities within the regional planning for development and investment area include:

- Development of the Management Plan;
- Development of the Canalway Communication Plan; and
- Development of the Canalway Signage Plan.

In addition to these plans, it is notable that the OECA has assisted in multiple ongoing strategic planning activities with partners along the Canalway and its surrounding communities. Table 3.2 includes a sample of planning efforts with OECA involvement.

Public participation was noted in the designating legislation as a critical component of planning efforts for the OENHC. The OECA fulfilled the goal of ensuring public participation in local, county, regional and NHA-wide planning efforts. The OECA coordinated community meetings, workshops, and other public gatherings to collect community feedback about canalway planning efforts for the OENHC, as well as to obtain public participation for the Management, Communications, Signage and Marketing Plans. Interviewees reported they believe that without OECA facilitation and public meetings organized by the OECA, development of the Canalway and the Towpath Trail as a destination would likely not have occurred in their regions, as no other organization was present to promote these efforts.

While the topics of regular planning meetings have evolved over time as the focus of OENHC activity has shifted, planning meetings have been held at regular bi-monthly intervals over the fifteen



years since designation. See Table 3.3 for more detail on planning meetings and participant attendance.

The partner planning processes resulted in the successful completion of the Management, Communications and Canal Signage Plans discussed above. Stakeholders interviewed cited that the Management Plan and the Communications Plan were guides for communities in promoting the Canal and the Towpath Trail across the four counties in the OENHC. The final Management Plan also defined the formal boundaries of the OENHC, extending its southern boundary beyond Zoar to New Philadelphia. In addition, the OECA has played a role in the development of trail and greenway or green space plans for each of the four counties in the OENHC. Partner interview respondents in each county referenced how plan development assisted in creating a shared vision for trail development in the county. Respondents noted a need to develop plans at the county level, as the political and community players varied by county. Respondents noted that trail and greenway and green space plans have served as models through which each of the four counties have developed the Towpath Trail to conserve Canal resources and improve the visitor experience. For example, in Tuscarawas County, representatives of the Farm Bureau and the Tuscarawas County Commissioners reported that without the facilitation and planning expertise of the OECA there would likely not have been a consensus based plan for the development of the trail. Table 3.2 provides a sample list of major planning activities of the OECA.

Respondents noted that the OECA allows varying planning bodies to work toward an OENHC wide common goal, though each planning body may have only a local, or at most, a county level impact. For example, a Tuscarawas County Commissioner noted that his county did not have a Park planning body (such as Metro Parks in Cuyahoga, Summit and Stark Counties) until the OECA facilitated the discussion of trail development.

## **Resource Conservation**

**The OECA fulfills the resource conservation requirements of the authorizing legislation.**

This strategy area is related to the Corridor Management Plan goals of Preservation and Conservation, which include, “preserving significant historic structures and other resources associated with the Ohio & Erie Canal; building upon and strengthening the Corridor constituency for preservation and enhancement of key manmade, natural, and cultural resources; protecting waterways, wetlands, and other natural resources; promoting the preservation of natural and scenic vistas for future generations; and, promoting sound environmental practices in project design and

implementation.” In addition, this strategy area relates most closely to the legislated goal, “to preserve and interpret ... the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar.”

Resource Conservation activities account for 42% of OECA expenditures. Activities that fall under this strategy area are intended to support physical improvements for the Canal, its region, trails and historic structures and support the conservation of Canal resources. Since the Federal designation in 1996, the OECA has been involved in a number of activities intended to conserve the Canal and its adjacent properties and structures.

The key OECA activities within the resource conservation area include:

- Restoration of historic structures, canal locks and parks;
- Land acquisition for conservation and trail development; and,
- Development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and trail and green spaces in counties and regions.

Milestones in the OECA and partners’ completion of 81 miles of Towpath Trail through the OENHC are provided in Table 3.4. The trail is complete in Summit County and close to complete in Stark County. There are approximately 14 miles of trail in Tuscarawas County that remain to be completed, as well as six miles in the challenging post-industrial valley in Cuyahoga County. Outcomes achieved in resource conservation activities throughout the OENHC include:

- Preservation of historic structures and visitor trailheads;
- Land acquisition by the coordinating entity and partner organization for development of the Towpath Trail;
- Efforts that led to Canal/Trail construction and/or development; and
- Examples of matching and/or leveraging funds used for conservation activities.

Many partner interviews noted the development of physical changes to the Canal and the Towpath Trail that have occurred in the last decade. Respondents recognized improvements to structures, noting for example that the OECA provided resources and volunteers to assist in the restoration of Mustill Store in Cascade Locks Park, which was previously an undeveloped and neglected area. Several stakeholders spoke about the positive impact of the restoration efforts on the value and significance of historic properties along the Canal. Respondents also noted the importance of

OECA in bringing necessary resources to the table, such as helping to identify funding sources (see examples in Table 3.4) or providing access to their extensive volunteer network.

The OECA consulted with various partners related to trail development in their communities. Table 3.5 provides a summary of the types of consultation meetings that OECA held with partners about trail construction, permitting, planning, development and maintenance. The OECA has involved multiple partners in an effort to highlight Canal resources and expand Towpath Trail development. OECA conducts multiple meetings weekly with partners that involve tracking the progress of the trail and greenway development efforts across different regions of the OENHC.

In addition to facilitating ongoing meetings, the OECA helped establish initial partnerships for future planning. For example, in Canal Fulton, the current proprietor of the Visitors Center noted that the OECA brought the Historical Society (which had controlled resources at the site) and the City together to permit joint planning to move forward with restoration of the site. Similarly, in Cleveland, a development company called First Interstate donated a historic steel mill structure, industrial artifacts, and funding and worked cooperatively with a multi-agency committee representing Cleveland Metroparks, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the City of Cleveland, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, and Western Reserve Historical Society. This coalition of organizations to pursue OENHC goals is facilitated throughout the four county region.

## **Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience**

**The OECA fulfills the interpretation and education/visitor experience requirements of the authorizing legislation.** This strategy area, is intended to communicate the Canal’s influence and significance to others in the community and expand opportunities for recreation and community connection through transportation linkages in the OENHC. This strategy area corresponds to the OENHC Management Plan goal for Recreation and Visitor Experience to “develop strategies and actions to provide high quality and safe visitor experiences in the Corridor, which will encourage repeat use by Corridor residents and visitors; promote creation of a continuous multi-use trail along the entire length of the Corridor; encourage creation of additional active and passive recreation and open spaces along the Corridor by public and private entities; and, advocate and facilitate trail, roadway, and greenway linkages between the Canalway and adjacent neighborhoods and park systems.” The strategy area also corresponds to the management plan goals of Interpretation and Education, which include, “communicating the story of the Canal and its influence to enable people throughout the Corridor to understand its impact on the region, state, and nation; developing an

interpretive program that combines existing resources and new initiatives to convey a coherent story; and developing educational opportunities and activities to enable people of all ages to learn about and appreciate the Canalway and its significance, using both traditional methods and contemporary technology and systems.”

Several activities have been put into place over the last 12 years by the OECA to support the interpretation and education/visitor experience to the OENHC. The staff of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) are very involved in these activities, not only within the Park boundaries but outside as well. The CVNP Chief of Interpretation, Education and Visitor Services in particular is a regular participant in OECA Board meetings and works closely with the OECA. OECA coordinates educational events in different regions along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail that are combined with outdoor recreational activities so that participants can use the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and its related resources. Activities include:

- Restoration of trail heads, visitor centers and historic structures for educational, interpretation and recreational purposes;
- Organization of trail related activities, such as fishing derbies, farmers markets, and biking programs; and
- Hosting of annual outdoor events, such as the Towpath Marathon, Canalway Relay, Canal Classic, Tour du Towpath, Towpath Golf Classic, Cargill Canoe Adventure, the Healthy Steps Program, and Canal Cleanups.

These activities often generate revenue as well as promote the goals of the OECA. The OECA also engages visitors and promotes awareness of the OENHC through its website.

During our site visit, we collected data that suggest the area is attracting and engaging residents. Interviews with key stakeholders, as well as community members, indicated the popularity of the Canal as a destination for exercise and fitness. Several business leaders interviewed indicated that the Canal provided a good “quality of life” experience for their employees and that they encouraged their workers to use the Canal resources and Towpath Trail for wellness activities. Business leaders indicated that they used the positive outdoor recreational activities associated with the Canal as a way to recruit employees to their companies.

A frequent comment in interviews with individuals encountered on the Towpath Trail in Akron and the Canal Reservation in Cleveland was that the Canal and the Towpath Trail were accessible and enjoyable places to walk and socialize with others. Individuals in urban areas of Cuyahoga County

indicated that the Canal and the revitalization projects associated with the Canal provided residents with a sense of pride in the area. The decline of the steel mill industry in Cleveland resulted in a reduction both in population and community organizations in the area. Several interviewees noted the importance of the Canal as a resource and a unifying feature for communities.

It was also noted that residents in communities such as Canal Fulton, Bolivar, Akron and Cleveland may not have had much contact with one another before the development of the trail system; however, as one respondent noted, the Canal, the Towpath Trail and the Heritage Area designation served to “bring people together” because using the trail allows for a convenient way to travel between counties and towns in the OENHC. The trail also serves as a common point of reference and common goal for recreational and tourism planning for community and regional partners.

## **Community and Economic Development**

**The OECA fulfills the community and economic requirements of the authorizing legislation.** The Ohio and Erie Canalway Community and Economic Development activities fulfill the following Community and Economic Development goals in the Management Plan: “to promote the use of economic incentives to encourage compatible development that will enhance the resources of the Canal Corridor; encourage communities and jurisdictions along the Corridor to adopt measures to support appropriate uses and compatible development adjacent to the Canal and its associate resources; unify and strengthen connections between communities and neighborhoods and promote regional collaboration; and take advantage of the unique economic potential that will be created through the Corridor's extensive trail and transportation systems, including developing means and methods to support visitor use through state-of-the-art information systems.” In addition, the community and economic development activities are consistent with the Public Law 104-333 to “encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations.”

The OECA's economic development activities are consistent with many of the goals outlined in the Management Plan. These activities encompass those that have direct and indirect economic impact and include:

- Supporting the development and investment in improvements to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and other structures in communities surrounding the Canal; and
- Developing programs that promote the three transportation systems in the OENHC: the Towpath Trail, the Scenic Byway and the Scenic Railroad

Almost all stakeholder interviews indicated that the revitalization of the Canal, the construction of the Towpath Trail and related activities spurred economic development in communities. The OECA grant investments in partner communities leveraged financial resources from a diverse set of sources. For example, business leaders indicated that the development of the Ohio & Erie Canal and Towpath Trail contributed to economic revitalization of Canal cities, such as Akron and Cleveland, which were challenged by the decline of the steel industry. They indicated that the positive development of the Towpath Trail led to businesses starting in downtown areas and the revitalization of main streets. In rural areas of the OENHC, respondents noted that the Canal and the Towpath Trail brought visitors and regional tourism and enhanced the economic development of their towns. Local businesses also reportedly benefit from partnering with the OECA because their services are promoted through their work with OECA projects. For example, the Canal Fulton Livery is a small business that provides boating services for the OECA canoeing events. Respondents noted that the exposure and facilitation provided by the OECA increased opportunities for local business along the Canal.

**Evaluation Question 2:      What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?**

**This review documents that the OECA has expended Federal and matching funds for programmatic activities that address goals and objectives specified in the authorizing legislation and management plan, as addressed in evaluation question 1.** The evaluation assessed the investments made to OECA to support the goals and mission of the OENHC and the impacts of these investments in fulfilling the legislation. Based on our analysis, OECA has successfully met the 50 percent federal funding match requirements over the entire funding period and annually since 1998. OECA has been able to successfully leverage the NPS dollars to attract funding from other local sources and to generate its own revenue. Of the funds available to OECA since 1998, approximately 23% or \$10.3 million were from federal funds and 77% or \$36.5 million were from external matching contributions. The evaluation concludes that the OECA has been fiscally responsible in expending all funds for programmatic and operational activities as it pertains to the authorizing legislation and management goals.

The evaluation team reviewed annual audits and comprehensive documentation of programmatic spending, and concludes that the OECA expended funds in fulfillment of the OENHC goals and objectives specified in the legislation. For program expenditures, the largest expenditures have occurred in the areas of resource conservation (42% of funding) and interpretation and education/visitor experience (28%). Resource conservation activities include the acquisition of

property, the development and planning of the Towpath trail in four counties and the adoption of new parks over time. Activities such as the hosting of canal events are part of the interpretation and education/visitor experience strategy area. Other strategy areas include community and economic development which accounts for 21% and regional planning accounts for 9%. Community and economic development activities include the investment of Journey Gateways and other investment in trail development. Regional planning consists of the activities related to developing the management, communication and signage plans.

**Evaluation Question 3:      How do the heritage areas management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?**

To guide the assessment of sustainability, we have adopted the definition developed by NPS, with the assistance of stakeholders from a number of National Heritage Areas. Sustainability for an NHA is as follows:

“...the National Heritage Area coordinating entity’s continuing ability to work collaboratively and reciprocally with federal, state, community, and private partners through changing circumstances to meet its mission for resource conservation and stewardship, interpretation, education, recreation and economic development of nationally significant resources.”

The evaluation found that the OECA has a number of the components of sustainability in place. They have the necessary governance and business and administrative structures to support sustainability. The OECA also has a strong partnership with the NPS through both the regional office and especially the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) staff. As discussed in Section 3.4, CVNP has authority to pursue partnership opportunities outside the Park boundaries. As a result, the CVNP have been an active partner with OECA on activities within as well as outside the Park. This relationship was seen by many interviewees, in the Park service and in the community, as making a contribution to the past, present and future of the OENHC.

Although there is wide variability in the activities of the OECA and its partners throughout the region, a consistent partnership structure lies at the core of their activities and will contribute to sustainability. The key role of the OECA is to facilitate access to resources and bring partners to the planning table. As will be seen in Section 3, this model plays out across the four county areas, with OCC primarily occupying this role in Cuyahoga County, and the OECC in Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas Counties. There is a sense of a continuum from North to South, with existing and emerging partnerships and many involved players in the urban Cleveland area, to smaller and less

centralized sets of planning partners and organizations in the southern communities. Therefore, the OECC is the main facilitating entity in rural regions, such as Tuscarawas County. Moving north, OCC's role is as a member organization within a web of partners, each of which is either as a lead or as support depending on circumstance and opportunity. Many partners voiced the opinion that without the OECA at the table there would be no uniform approach to building the Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail, and perhaps no trail would be constructed at all. The OECA have an extensive network of partners that are engaged in their communities and have access to resources to become stewards of the project after OECA involvement is removed, which contributes to sustainability of the OENHC mission.

The OECA has been very effective in obtaining significant external matching funds. And while the OECA itself does not engage in fundraising activities, the two founding organizations, the OECC and the OCC, have strong fundraising capacities. The possibility remains that these resources could be used to continue OENHC programming if the federal funding were reduced or eliminated.

Both the NPS funding and the NHA designation have been of value to the OECA. The funding has provided flexibility, through a consistent source of discretionary funds, and the ability to leverage other resources. If NPS funding is reduced, the general view among those interviewed and close to the OECA is that activities related to starting new projects in the OENHC would likely be slowed, but the basic structure and activities of the organization would likely remain the same as long as other sources of funding (e.g., donations, foundation grants, fundraising) continue. If the NPS funding is discontinued, the general view is that this might reduce the incentive for other organizations to contribute funds to projects in the OENHC and significantly affect the OECA's ability to provide grant support to projects within the OENHC, particularly given local governments' limited financial capacities.

Many interviewees noted the importance of the NHA designation and its contribution to the OENHC's success and sustainability. The NHA designation was seen as a federal endorsement of the OENHC, and was cited by respondents as providing credibility and a sense of pride for communities within the OENHC. Respondents note that the NHA designation served to attract both government and private investors and brought credibility to joint ventures with partners in their efforts to further the goals of the OECA.



## Structure of the Report

The report is divided into 5 sections:

**Section 1** defines and describes the National Heritage Areas (NHA) and NHA coordinating entities in general as well as the evaluation methodology, its limitations, and the roles and functions of key stakeholders involved in the development of this report. A brief overview of the Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC) is presented in this section.

**Section 2** describes the area prior to the official designation as an NHA as well as the current heritage area and provides a map of Ohio's geographic boundaries. Section 2.2 describes the Ohio & Erie Canalway Association (OECA) coordinating entity's structure and organization. This introduction is followed by Section 2.3 which provides an overview of the relationships that exist between and among the coordinating entity, stakeholder/partners organizations, and the National Park Service (NPS).

**Section 3** explores the first evaluation question, "Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?" Section 3.1 describes the coordinating entity's goals and objectives as required by the authorizing legislation, and original and revised management plan. Section 3.2 describes the OECA's programs and activities and an analysis of the fulfillment of intent as stated in the authorizing legislation and the current management plan. Section 3.3 describes the coordinating entity's relationships with various entities within the NPS and how these relationships compare to what is outlined in the authorizing legislation and current management plan.

**Section 4** explores the second evaluation question, "What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?" Section 4.1 provides an overview of the investments made in the coordinating entity since its inception, broken down by major categories. Section 4.2 provides an analysis of how the coordinating entity has used the investments. Section 4.3 describes the impact of the OECA's investments

**Section 5** explores the third evaluation question, derived from legislation (P.L. 110-229), "How do the coordinating entity's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to the NHA's sustainability?" This section presents an analysis of the interrelationship of the coordinating entities founding organization staffing and ability to obtain resources, as well as the sustainability of the NHA.

## Section 1: Introduction

This section of the evaluation report defines and describes the National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and NHA coordinating entities in general as well as a short overview of the Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC), the focus of this evaluation report. The section also describes the evaluation methodology, its limitations, and the roles and functions of key stakeholders involved in the development of this report.

### 1.1 National Heritage Areas

An NHA is a designation given by the United States Congress to an area that has places and landscapes that collectively represent a unique, nationally important American story. An NHA can be any size and is intended to encourage historic preservation and an appreciation of the natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that have been shaped by the area's geography and history of human activity.

“...National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are places where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1996, Congress officially designated nine NHAs, to which federal funds were provided over subsequent years. Oversight of these NHAs was assigned to the National Park Service (NPS), with the exception of one NHA, Silos & Smokestacks, that was originally assigned to the United States Department of Agriculture in 1996 and then to NPS in 2000.

A coordinating entity or management entity is typically the organization within the NHA boundary that is tasked with bringing together diverse interests, goals and activities, resources, and efforts to define and work collectively toward common goals. The coordinating entity is charged with the responsibility for developing and implementing a management plan that will achieve the goals specified in the heritage area's enabling legislation. It also administers the federal funding provided to the heritage area. The coordinating entity may be a federal commission, state agency, local

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<sup>1</sup> National Park System Advisory Board. “Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas.” Available online at <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/NHAreport.pdf>

university, local government, or nonprofit organization. The coordinating entity usually creates working groups with balanced representation of diverse interests, disciplines, backgrounds, and ethnicities to plan and implement actions that meet the requirements of the heritage area legislation and plans. Members of the working groups may include elected officials, nonprofit practitioners, business representatives, librarians, historians, naturalists, landscape architects, educators, and civic organization leaders.

## 1.2 Report Purpose

“...National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.”<sup>2</sup> In May 2008, Congress mandated through Public Law 110-229 that an evaluation, under the auspices of the Secretary of the Interior, be conducted of each of the nine NHAs authorized in 1996 to review accomplishments made over the ten year period. Based on the findings from each evaluation, the Secretary of the Interior will prepare a report to Congress with recommendations regarding the future role of NHAs with respect to NPS.

The Center for Park Management (CPM) conducted the first of the nine evaluations in 2009 of the Essex National Heritage Commission in eastern Massachusetts. Westat, under contract to CPM, conducted two additional evaluations: Augusta Canal NHA (ACNHA) in Augusta, Georgia and the Silos and Smokestacks NHA (SSNHA) in the Northeastern section of Iowa that serve as models for this set of NHA evaluations.

Currently, Westat is contracted to conduct evaluations of the six remaining NHAs including the one that is the focus of this report: the Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC). The other sites include:

- Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area
- Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area
- South Carolina National Heritage Corridor
- National Coal Heritage Area

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<sup>2</sup> National Park System Advisory Board. “Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas.” Available online at <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/NHAreport.pdf>

- Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

### 1.2.1 Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC)

Designated in 1996 by Congress, the purpose of the Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC) was to assist local entities in protecting and using historic, cultural, and recreational resources as a benefit to the community and to raise awareness of their unique regional and national importance. The OENHC covers a diverse cultural and natural landscape that is a direct legacy of the Canal Era in Ohio during the 1800s. The OENHC boundaries encompass primary resources associated with the Ohio & Erie Canal and its regional legacy. The OENHC includes 110 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal between Lake Erie and Dover/New Philadelphia. Resources associated with the OENHC include the Canal but also include areas whose growth and development were prompted by the economic prosperity brought about by the Canal. The OENHC includes four counties in Northeast Ohio: Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, and Tuscarawas counties. See the map of the OENHC in Section 2.

The OENHC Management Plan articulates five Goals, based in the authorizing legislation:

**Preservation and Conservation:** Protect, promote and strengthen the Corridor constituency, waterways, wetlands and environmental resources associated with the Ohio & Erie Canal;

**Interpretation and Education:** Develop an interpretive program and educational opportunities that communicate the story of the Canal using existing resources and new initiatives to influence people in understanding the Corridor;

**Recreation and Visitor Experience:** Develop, promote, and advocate strategies to provide recreational spaces along the Corridor by public and private entities;

**Community and Economic Development:** Promote, encourage, and strengthen the economic incentives to enhance the Corridor resources between communities and neighborhoods to support regional collaboration; and

**Management and Implementation:** Identify, establish, and coordinate opportunities with the National Park Service, the State of Ohio, Ohio Canal Corridor, the Ohio and Erie Canalway Corridor Coalition, regional entities, and localities to facilitate the involvement in Corridor planning and future activities.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Evaluation

Public Law 110-229, which was enacted on May 8, 2008, directs the US Secretary of the Interior to evaluate each of the nine NHAs that were established in the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996<sup>3</sup> no later than three years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates. P.L. 110-229 describes the impetus for this evaluation, which is intended to inform the Secretary's report to Congress as follows:

- (a) In General.--For the nine National Heritage Areas authorized in Division II of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, not later than three years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for each National Heritage Area, the Secretary shall —
  - (1) Conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area; and
  - (2) Prepare a report in accordance with subsection (c).
- (b) Evaluation.--An evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1) shall—
  - (1) 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;
  - (2) Analyze the investments of Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities in each National Heritage Area to determine the impact of the investments; and
  - (3) Review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.
- (c) Report.--Based on the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the United States House of

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<sup>3</sup> See P.L. 104-333, 110 Statute 4093.

Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate. The report shall include recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the National Heritage Area.

### **1.3.1 Context**

This evaluation follows two major NHA evaluation projects. In 2005, the NPS Conservation Study Institute (CSI) began the process of developing an evaluation strategy for NHAs that culminated in a 2008 report titled *Development of a National Heritage Area Evaluation Strategy: Report on Phase 1*. This report was based on CSI's experience conducting evaluations of three Heritage Areas (Blackstone River Valley NHA, 2005; Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, 2006; and Cane River National Heritage Area, 2008), as well as substantial input from the Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) Peer-to-Peer Committee. The evaluation model articulated in the CSI report provides a comprehensive overview of the core ingredients, guiding strategies, implementation activities, and accomplishments of a generic heritage area.

In 2009, CPM undertook the evaluation of the Essex National Heritage Commission. This was the first congressionally mandated evaluation of the nine NHAs authorized in Division II of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 and built on the structure and content of the program models developed by CSI during its evaluations. CPM's evaluation of Essex National Heritage Commission differed from the CSI evaluations in its objectives and focus. CSI's evaluations were focused on the processes that heritage areas use to accomplish their goals. It concentrated primarily on the role and benefits of partnership and collaboration. CPM's evaluation, because of the Congressional mandate, focused on outcomes as they related to the authorizing legislation and general management plan, the impact of financial investments, and the role of partnerships in the sustainability of Essex National Heritage Area.

The CPM/Westat evaluations of ACNHA and SSNHA built on CPM's evaluation of the Essex National Heritage Commission. The focus of these two evaluations continued to be on outcomes as they relate to the authorizing legislation and general management plan, the impact of financial investments on accomplishing these outcomes, the role of partners helping the NHA to accomplish its goals, and the sustainability of the NHA. Unlike the first evaluation, however, these two evaluations did not include large-scale surveys due to cost and OMB Paperwork Reduction Act issues. Based on these two evaluations, a replicable model of evaluation was drafted and is currently being finalized. This model is designed to guide future NHA evaluation efforts supported by NPS and served as the guide for the current evaluations.

## **1.4 Evaluation Methodology**

In order to comply with the Congressional mandate for evaluation of the NHAs, NPS partnered with Westat to conduct this evaluation as a subcontractor. NPS's mission is to promote and enhance management capacity by fostering community stewardship of the nation's heritage. In addition, NPS provides technical, planning assistance and in some cases, funding to these National Heritage Areas. Westat, the evaluation subcontractor, is an employee-owned research firm with expertise in conducting evaluations across a broad range of subject areas. The evaluation team was guided by NPS and the previous year's work of the NPS Evaluation Working Group, a group of a group of Regional Coordinators for the Heritage Area Program, and a Park Superintendent. In the following sections, we describe the evaluation methodology, role of each party in the evaluation, and the context within which the evaluation was conducted.

### **1.4.1 Methodology**

The methodology was designed to maximize both the use of existing data and the ability to measure specific outcomes of the OECA's activities. The evaluation covers the period from 1998 through 2011, the 15 years during which the OECA has received Federal funding.

The following three questions—derived from the Congressional mandate—guided the evaluation:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the coordinating entity achieved its proposed accomplishments for the NHA?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities in the NHA?
3. How do the coordinating entity's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to the NHA's sustainability?

The evaluation used a case study design to address these evaluation questions. This design allowed for the examination of multiple variables of interest and multiple sources of data. The evaluation also incorporated a collaborative approach with project stakeholders to ensure that the findings are grounded in the local knowledge of the site. To guide the evaluation design and plans for implementation, we included the perspectives of NPS liaisons with each heritage area and NHA

leadership. The tailored data collection tools and this report reflect the comments provided by NPS and the NHA evaluation site. The following sections describe each phase of the evaluation.

## **1.4.2 Site Introduction and Background Research**

During the initial phase of the evaluation process, Westat contacted the coordinating entity, together with staff from the National Heritage Areas Program Office at NPS, to discuss preliminary planning details and initial background research requests. Multiple email exchanges and several telephone conversations occurred during December 2011 and January 2012. A two-day in person meeting, the Meet & Greet Visit, was held at the site in January 2012 to orient the Westat team to the site, introduce the coordinating entity to the evaluation team and methodology (Appendix 3), and discuss roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in the evaluations. During this visit, we met at the OECA administrative offices to learn more about the history and operations of the OENHC, toured key destinations in the Heritage area near the OECA main office, and worked with the coordinating entity to develop a logic model. Specifically, we conducted a session in which we led a process of detailing the OENHC goals, resources/inputs, organizations, strategies/activities, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes. We then developed a draft logic model that was shared with and revised by the Co-Directors of the coordinating entity. The final logic model, displayed in Figure 3.1, guided the development of the domain matrix and data collection protocols (Appendix 4) that were shared with the OECA.

## **1.4.3 Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection methods included reviews of documents and financial audits, in-person and telephone interviews with key informants from the OENHC and its coordinating entity, partner and stakeholder organizations, and intercept interviews with community members visiting the Canalway. A protocol guided the data collection, outlining the domains and measures of interest to collect from each identified source (e.g., prospective interviewees, program documents, financial documents, legislation). During data collection, evaluation staff used topic-centered guides for conducting interviews and abstracting documents. Data collection began in January 2012 and was completed in May 2012.

Numerous documents were reviewed to understand the background of the OENHC (e.g., legislative documents, plans, by-laws), funding received and expenditures (e.g., yearly audit reports, budget statements), and strategies and activities conducted (e.g., annual reports, progress reports,



newsletters, news releases, milestones). These documents also provided information on the outcomes that have occurred from OECA activities.

Interviews were conducted, individually and in groups, with members of the OECA Board of Directors, members of the staff supporting the OECA, and two Co-Directors heading the OENHC. These interviews helped the evaluators gain an understanding of the background and history of OENHC, the coordinating entity's activities and investments, their associated outcomes, and the coordinating entity's actions and plans to ensure OENHC's sustainability.

Interviews were conducted with 30 representatives from stakeholder and partner organizations. These interviews discussed the genesis of the organization's relationship with OECA; the influence and impact that the stakeholder perceives that OECA has made in the community; and additional ways the informant believes the OENHC could serve the needs of the region. Stakeholder interviewees were selected by Westat from a list of organizations with which the OECA has relationships and who have a vested interest in the work of the OENHC. A "snowball sampling" strategy was used, whereby some interviewees provided additional names of organizations and individuals to contact. Interviews were conducted with partners including representatives from various nonprofit organizations, corporations, regional and national park districts, county commissioner offices, city engineering and planning groups, local businesses, county farm bureaus, and a county convention and visitor's bureau.

The evaluation team also interviewed representatives from the National Park Service: the current Superintendent of Cuyahoga National Park, the former Superintendent of Cuyahoga National Park, the Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services at Cuyahoga National Park, a representative from the Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program for Indiana and Ohio, and the Regional National Heritage Area Coordinator. These individuals were interviewed in order to add to the team's understanding of the history and nature of the relationship between the OECA and the NPS; the influence and impact that the NPS representatives perceive that the OECA has made in the community; and the perceived impact that any discontinuation of Federal funding would have on OECA programs and activities following the sunset date.

Twenty-four informal intercept interviews were conducted with members of the public to learn how familiar they were with the history and culture of the Canalway, the ways in which they gained this knowledge and familiarity, whether they had visited the OENHC and used its resources, and what their views were of the impact the activities sponsored by the OECA on the community (i.e.,

economic, cultural, historic, restorative). See Appendix 4 for the management interview protocol, partner interview protocol, stakeholder interview protocol, and community intercept interview protocol.

The focus of the data analysis was to document the extent to which OECA achieved its organizational and programmatic goals as articulated in the mandating legislation and the OENHC foundational documents. Where feasible, findings discussed have been triangulated; that is, information has been documented from multiple sources. In addition, where appropriate, efforts have been made to ensure that the information gathered from key informants also has been substantiated with data from documents and other written sources.

## **Limitations**

One methodology limitation is with the limited number of interviews, 24 topic-centered qualitative interviews, with members of the public.” Although the individuals interviewed in Akron on the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and at the Ohio and Erie Canal Reservation likely represent individuals with no vested interest in the OENHC, it was a “convenience sample” rather than a “representative sample” of all tourists, and local residents collected in a variety of locations. A lack of time and funding prevented the broader data collection. The data collected provided insights into community awareness of the OENHC but no definitive understanding of the heritage area-wide community knowledge, attitudes, and involvement.

A second limitation of our methodology is the ability of the evaluation design to provide definitive evidence of the OENHC’s achievement of outcomes, especially attributions to the NPS funding and NHA designation. The historical growth and development of the region since its designation as an NHA provides some indication of the role of the funding and designation, but it is confounded with other factors that contribute to the changes throughout the OENHC. For example, although it is likely that the NPS funding has helped to leverage other funding, the extent to which the OECA may have been successful in receiving some of this funding without the NHA resources and designation is unclear.

## **1.4.4 Roles**

### **Westat**

Westat served as the external evaluator. Westat used the revised methodology from Augusta Canal National Heritage Area in Augusta, Georgia, and, the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area in the Northeastern section of Iowa, prepared and revised a logic model to guide the evaluation in collaboration with the OECA staff, prepared the data collection protocols, collected and analyzed the data, and prepared this document.

### **The National Park Service**

Various staff within NPS provided advice and resources for the evaluation team, reviewed the evaluator's products, interfaced with the NHAs, participated in evaluation site visits and provided oversight of the entire evaluation process. NPS representatives included the NPS National Coordinator for Heritage Areas and the Regional Heritage Areas Coordinator. NPS staff met with Westat as needed.

### **Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway**

The Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC) and the Ohio Canal Corridor (OCC) are the two nonprofit organizations that founded the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway coordinating entity, the Ohio & Erie Canalway Association (OECA). The OECA, as the OENHC coordinating entity and the recipient of NPS Heritage Partnership Program Funds (HPP), is the central focus of this evaluation. The two non-profit organizations have coordinated planning efforts and share a common mission for the OENHC as a whole. The OECC implements the Corridor Management Plan objectives in the southern three counties of the OENHC, and the OCC implements the Corridor Management Plan objectives in the northern county of the OENHC. The Director, and the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the two founding organizations serve as the two Co-Directors of the coordinating entity, and the staff members of the two founding organizations perform administrative and programmatic activities in support of the goals of the National Heritage Area. Throughout the report, the OECC and OCC staff that perform activities to support the coordinating entity administrative and program goals will be referred to as the Ohio and Erie Canalway Administration. The OECA itself has no paid staff. Staff of the OCC and OECC perform administrative and program activities through technical assistance grants from the OECA.

The OCC and the OECC conduct many activities and fund-raising events under the fiscal and administrative direction of their respective Directors and Boards, though most activities also support the mission of the OENHC

The Ohio and Erie Canalway Administration (the Co-Executive Directors, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Vice President of Operations and Development, Public Information Manager, Events Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Financial Manager, and other support staff;) played key roles in facilitating this evaluation. They provided data and documents, helped with scheduling and planning site visits, identified a pool of contacts for interviews, provided feedback on the evaluation process, and participated in interviews. OECA collaborated with the evaluation team to develop the OENHC logic model. OECA was not involved in the development of the methodology or data collection protocols, though they were provided an opportunity to comment on these materials. OECA staff had the opportunity to review this document for factual accuracy after the draft was completed by Westat in June 2012.

## Section 2: Overview of the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway

This section of the evaluation report begins with an overview of the physical and operational aspects of the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC), and the roles and responsibilities of the coordinating entity, Ohio & Erie Canal Association (OECA). This is followed by descriptions of the types and significance of relationships that exist between and among the OECA, stakeholder/partners organizations, and the National Park Service (NPS) in Section 2.2.

### 2.1 Introduction to the OENHC and Background

The Ohio and Erie Canal, located in the State of Ohio, connects the eastern seaboard of the United States, from New York City along the Hudson River to Lake Erie in Ohio, all the way to the Mississippi River in New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. During the Pre-Canal Era, from 1720-1824, distinct indigenous tribes located along the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas rivers used trails that crisscrossed the area as a form of transportation, pathways for trade and commerce, and settlement. Overtime, settlements and territorial control of land shifted as migration of the French, German, and British advanced throughout the currently known State of Ohio. In the early 1820's building a canal was seen as central to the market economy because it would provide the most efficient method of transportation of goods that promoted specialization, economies of scale, and the growth of profitable commerce. Canal building began in 1825, and it was completed by 1832. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ohio was afforded economic gain, commercial profit, and population increase as a result of activities along the Canal..

The following are a few highlights from the Ohio and Erie Canalway history, describing construction of the Canal and leading to eventual legislation of the OENHC:

- **1825—1832:** Canal construction begins in Ohio and connects Cleveland to Portsmouth. Establishment of towns, villages, and cities begin to attract immigrants from other areas of the United States as well as from overseas..
- **1840:** Railroad construction begins in Canalway that decreased the usage of the Canal.
- **1865:** Railroads emerge as primary mode of transportation, completely replacing the Canal.
- **1905—1908:** The Canal undergoes major reconstruction to repair accumulated damage from storms and in some cases neglect.

- **1913:** The Great flood destroys major portions of the Canal which were not deemed worth re-building as train and car transportation became more common.
- **1960—1974:** Communities begin to rediscover Canal’s potential as a recreation/green space.
- **1974:** Congress passes legislation creating Cuyahoga Valley as a National Recreation Area under President Ford. (The Recreation Area was designated as Cuyahoga Valley National Park in 2000).
- **1985—1992:** Two organizations—Ohio Canal Corridor (OCC) of Cuyahoga County and Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC) of Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas Counties—are created to develop and promote the resources of the Ohio & Erie Canal. The North Cuyahoga Valley Corridor Study is completed.
- **1996:** Legislation designates Ohio & Erie Canalway a National Heritage Area. The OCC and OECC are jointly awarded the first state Scenic Byway designation under President Clinton.
- **1999:** The Corridor Management Plan is completed.

As a method to conserve and protect the Canalway, the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA), established in 1974, initiated the act of preserving open spaces for the enjoyment of visitors. This development process led to the designation of the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor as a National Heritage Area (NHA) in 1996. The Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (Public Law 110 – 229 - May 8, 2008) changed the name of the NHA to the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC). We shall refer to the NHA as the OENHC throughout this report.

A map of the OENHC is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2.1 Map of OENHC

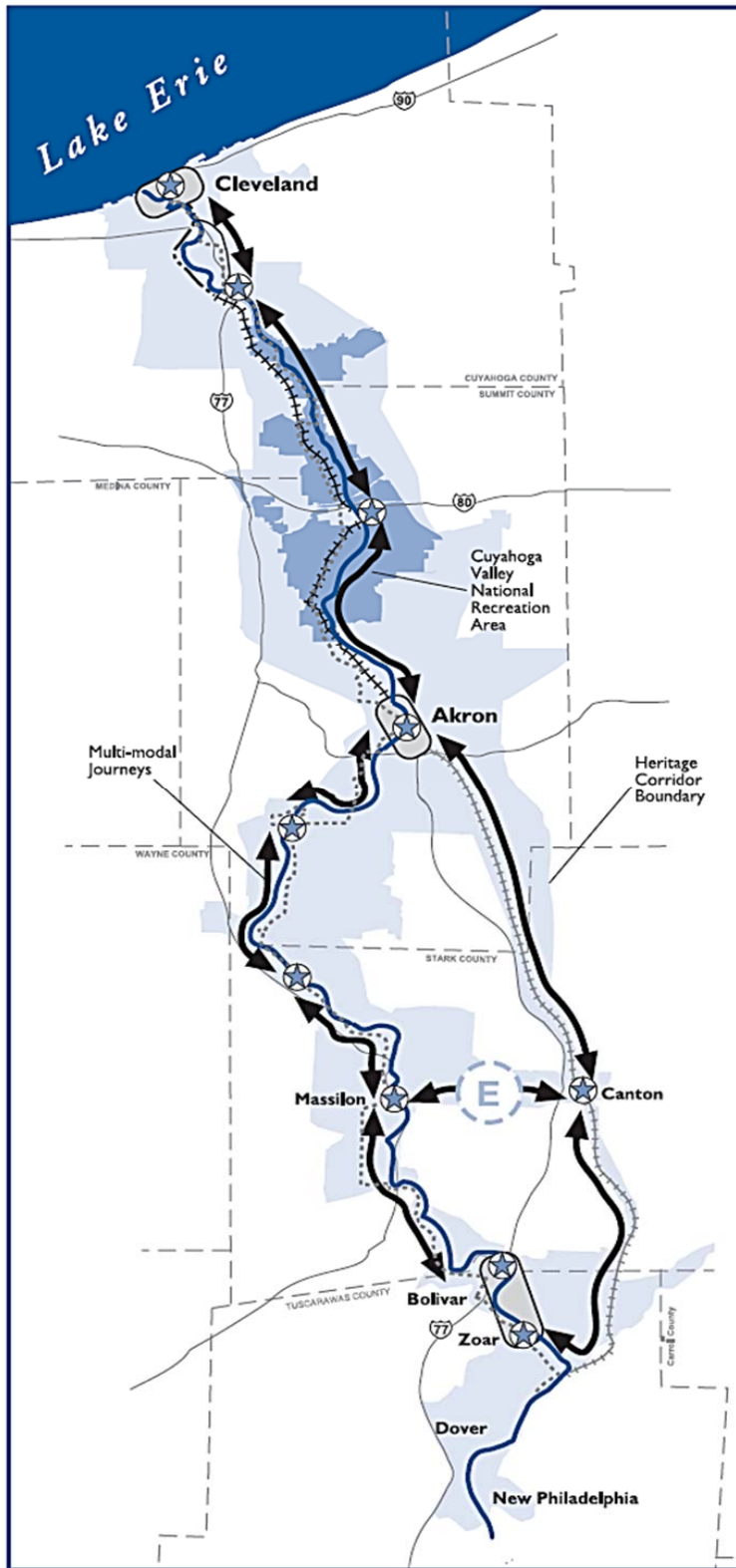


Figure 1  
The Plan:  
Routes to  
Prosperity

- Legend
- Canal Route
  - Scenic Byway
  - Multi-modal Journeys
  - Journey Gateway (not all locations shown)
  - CanaWay Center
  - Existing Railroad
  - Proposed Railroad
  - Proposed Electronic Gateway

## 2.1.1 Authorizing Legislation

### Authorizing Legislation and OENHC Mission

As noted earlier, in 1996, Congress designated the OENHC as a National Heritage Area under P.L. 104-333 (see Division II, Title IV). This legislation described the purpose of the OECA:

- To preserve and interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar (Note: the southern limit of the OENHC was extended to New Philadelphia in the approved Corridor Management Plan in 2000);
- To encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations;
- To provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor; and
- To authorize the Secretary to provide financial and technical assistance to the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing a Corridor Management Plan.

The legislation referenced findings from the 1993 National Park Service Special Resources Study, “A Route to Prosperity”, which concluded that the Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor was eligible as a National Heritage Corridor. This document concluded that the mission of the coordinating entity for this corridor should be to “stimulate public interest and support for the protection, preservation, development, and enhancement of the historical, cultural, natural, industrial, commercial, and recreational resources along the route of the historic Ohio & Erie Canal”. As noted in section 1.2.1, the goals of the OECA are in the five areas of: preservation and conservation; interpretation and education; recreation and visitor experience; community and economic development; and management and implementation.

Title IV authorized the Secretary of the Interior to appropriate up to one million dollars per fiscal year, and not more than ten million dollars over the course of the cooperative agreement. In 2008, Congress increased the funding cap for each of the 1996 Heritage Area designees to \$15 million (P.L. 110-229 Title IV Section 461 Appendix 1). The authorizing legislation includes a “50% Match



Requirement” which stipulates that the NPS Federal Assistance Funds (NPSFAF) provided to the OECA cannot exceed 50 percent of the total funding it receives. This requirement is intended to encourage the OENHC to seek funding from other sources that can support its mission, including the local community.

Additionally, the law required the development of a Corridor Management Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of Interior by 1999 and set the parameters for the creation of a management entity called the Ohio & Erie Canal Association.

The Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (PL 104-333) was amended in the “Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008.” In addition to renaming the “Canal Heritage Corridor” the “National Heritage Canalway” (see Section 2.1) this legislation also allowed the Ohio and Erie Canalway Association to undertake the coordinating entity responsibilities originally assigned to the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Area Committee.

As required, the OECA prepared a document describing the plans for the management and administration of the Heritage Area, and submitted it for approval by the Secretary.

## **2.2 Introduction to OENHC Coordinating Entity**

The designation of Ohio & Erie Canalway as a National Heritage Area was a collaborative effort involving community members, advocacy groups, municipal and county officials, State and federal government officials and four specific counties (Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, and Tuscarawas). The original intent of designating the National Heritage Area by Congress was to foster partnership efforts, with the inclusion of private and public agencies in order to protect, enhance, and make effective use of heritage resources.

### **2.2.1 Coordinating Entity Structure and Organization**

#### **Coordinating Entity and Two Founding Organizations**

The OENHC has a unique management structure designed to fit the needs and goals of the Heritage Area. The Ohio & Erie Canalway Association (OECA) is a non-profit organization that was created in 1997 to act as the coordinating entity for the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway. As noted in Section 1.4.4, the OECA, as the OENHC coordinating entity and the

recipient of NPS Heritage Partnership Program Funds (HPP), is the central focus of this evaluation. OECA was established by two founding non-profit organizations – the Ohio Canal Corridor (OCC) and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC). The planning of OENHC activities involves the collaboration and joint partnership of the OCC and the OECC. Although the planning and strategic goals of the OENHC are shared by these two entities, the OCC implements the Corridor Management Plan in Cuyahoga County, the OENHC’s northern region, and the OECC implements the Corridor Management Plan in the counties of Summit, Stark, and Tuscarawas, the OENHC’s southern regions. As the management entity, the OECA serves to manage the federal award, fund Canalway projects based on the Corridor Management Plan, fund regional plans, and fund public information campaigns. The Executive Directors and staff of the two founding organizations provide technical assistance to, and work in partnership with the OECA, which has its own Board of Directors, but no dedicated staff. Throughout the report, the OECC and OCC staff that perform activities to support the coordinating entity administrative and program goals will be referred to as the Ohio and Erie Canalway Administration. The OECA itself has no paid staff. Staff of the OCC and OECC perform administrative and program activities through technical assistance grants from the OECA. The OCC and the OECC conduct many activities and fund-raising events under the fiscal and administrative direction of their respective Directors and Boards. Though most activities support the mission of the OENHC, their fiscal and administrative accountability are separate from those of the OECA.

## **OECA Board**

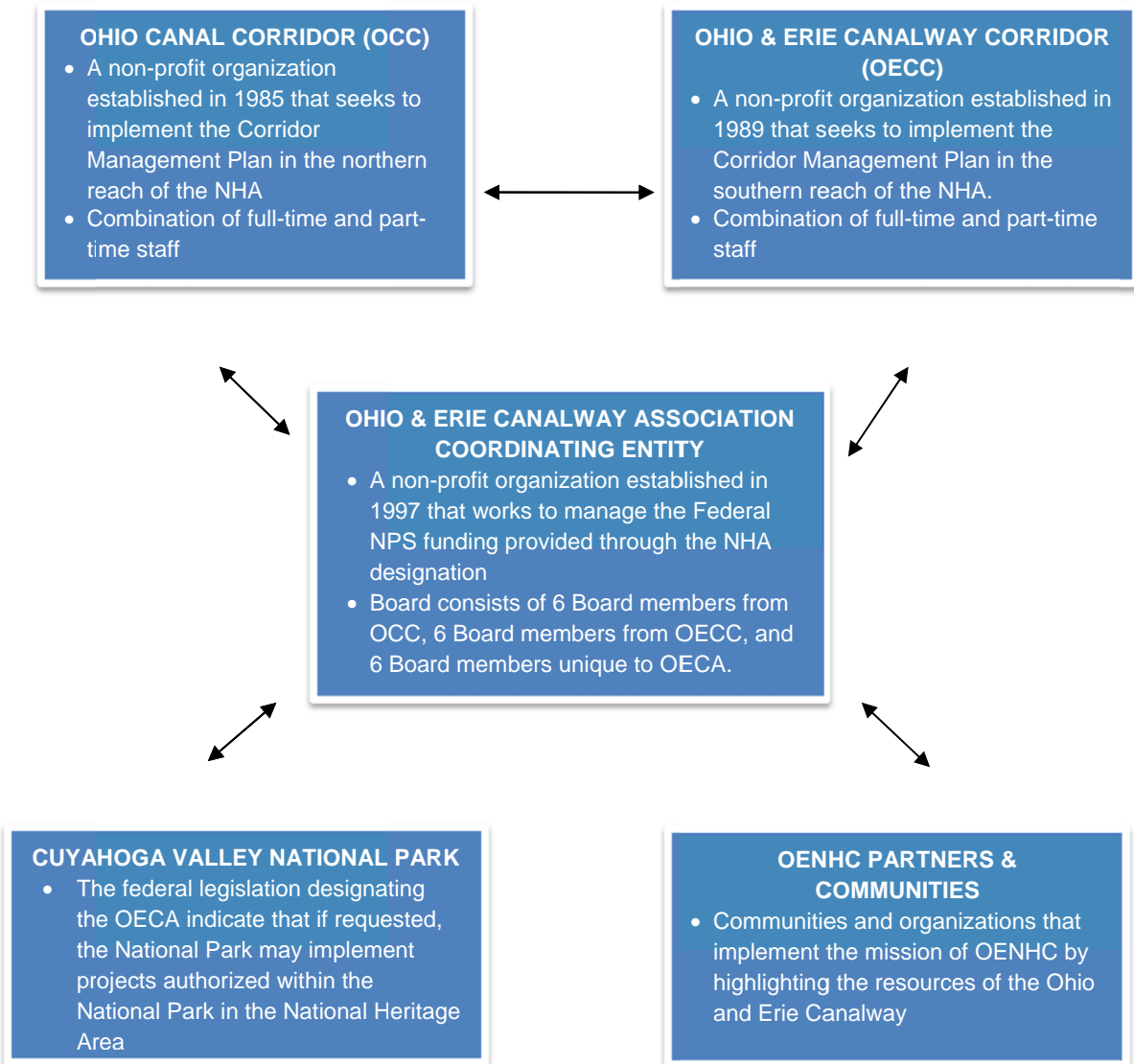
The OECA Board consists of 18 members representing all four counties within the National Heritage Area and one ex-officio member from Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The OECA Board has six appointees from the OECC Board, six appointees from the OCC Board, and six at-large appointees. The board members are appointed for three years, govern decisions on federal funding, and endeavor to meet the obligations of planning and local match required by the legislation. Board members represent a variety of professionals, including engineers, accountants, attorneys, representatives from business and park entities, and governmental officials at the state and federal level. The OECA Board meets approximately six times a year and has the following seven committees: an Audit Committee, a Development Committee, an Executive Committee, a Government and Public Relations Committee, a Public Information Committee, a Strategic Initiatives Committee, and a Trusteeship Committee. The Audit Committee oversees the coordination of the annual audit for the organization. The Development Committee assists with the creation and implementation of the fund development strategy for the projects and programs of the OECA. The Executive Committee consists of the Officers of the Board of Directors and the Co-

Executive Directors. The Executive Committee provides leadership for the organization and monitors the strategic issues of the OECA. The Government and Public Relations Committee assists with the development and implementation of the strategy and relationship with local, state and federal agencies and elected officials. The Public Information Committee provides assistance and support to the public information and outreach strategy to residents and visitors to the OECA. The Strategic Initiatives Committee assists with the seed grant program and monitors the strategic initiative process to make sure projects align with the Management Plan priorities and leverage significant match funding. The Trusteeship Committee assists with the cultivation and education of Board Members, including Board orientations, handbook and tours of the OENHC.

### **OENHC Staff**

The OECA does not directly employ staff members; rather, it contracts with the two founding organizations through technical assistance agreements to address staffing of specific program needs and goals. As such, the Ohio and Erie Canalway Administration currently consists of the two Co-Directors of the coordinating entity (representing the Executive Directors of the two founding organizations), a Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, a Public Information Manager, and a Chief of Interpretation (currently served by the Chief of Interpretation for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park). Figure 2-2 provides an overview of coordinating entity's organizational structure.

**Figure 2.2. Organizational Chart for the OENHC Management Structure**



## **2.3 OECA's Relationships with Partners/Stakeholders**

### **2.3.1 Partners and Stakeholder Organizations Relationships**

The Ohio and Erie Canalway Association (OECA) has an integrated set of partnerships among communities that lie along the historic Ohio & Erie Canal and Towpath Trail. These communities have a common focus of restoring the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail as a 110 mile trail that connects Cleveland in Cuyahoga County to New Philadelphia in Tuscarawas County. Whereas the local foci of the trail activities vary in each community context, all partner informants we interviewed were aware of the overall context and impact of restoring the entire historic trail connections. The trail is viewed as an economic and community development opportunity in each community. The foci of local development were in accord with the overall goals of the OECA, in that they centered on regional plans for preservation and conservation; interpretation and education; recreation and visitor experience; community and economic development; and management and implementation. The precise nature of activities in these four areas varies from community to community.

Although there is wide variability in the activities of the OECA and its partners throughout the region, a consistent partnership structure lies at the core of their activities. The key role of the OECA is to facilitate access to resources and bring partners to the planning table. As will be seen in Section 3, this model plays out across the four county areas, with OCC primarily occupying this role in Cuyahoga County, and the OECC in Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas Counties. There is a sense of a continuum from North to South, with existing and emerging partnerships and many involved players in the urban Cleveland area, to smaller and less centralized sets of planning partners and organizations in the southern communities. Therefore, the OECC is the main facilitating entity in rural regions, such as Tuscarawas County. Moving north, OCC's role is as a member organization within a web of partners, each of which is either as a lead or as support depending on circumstance and opportunity. Many partners voiced the opinion that without the OECA at the table there would be no uniform approach to building the Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail, and perhaps no trail would be constructed at all.

### **2.3.2 OECA/NPS Relationship**

P.L. 104-333 (Appendix 2) defined the purpose of the OENHC as preserving and interpreting “significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways,

and structures within the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar...for present and future generations.”

The NPS role since the 1996 designation has been to provide the OECA with operational assistance, technical assistance, and resources for projects and administrative activities. The designating legislation allows the National Park Service upon request to “...provide to public and private organizations within the Corridor (including the management entity for the Corridor) such operational assistance as appropriate to support the implementation of the Corridor Management Plan, subject to the availability of the appropriated funds...” As such, the National Park has a complementary partnership with the OECA and has provided assistance in activities such as resource conservation, interpretation and educational activities, and operational support and services. Further detail about the partnership between the OECA and NPS is provided in Section 3.3.

## 2.4 OECA Timeline

Since receiving the federal NHA designation in 1996, the OECA has undertaken a range of activities<sup>4</sup> supporting the conservation, economic development, and visitor experience of the Ohio and Erie Canalway and the resources that are encompassed within the OENHC boundaries. A detailed list of the accomplishments is included in Table 3.4. A few of the key milestones include:

- 1993:** Towpath Trail completed in Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
The National Park Service Special Resources Study, “A Route to Prosperity”, concluded that the Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor was eligible as a National Heritage Corridor
- 1999:** Canalway Visitor Map produced and distributed
- 2000:** Corridor Management Plan completed and approved  
AIA awards Corridor Management Plan "Certificate of Excellence"  
Summit County trail and greenway plan completed
- 2002:** Cascade Locks Park and the Mustill Store Visitors Center restored

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<sup>4</sup> Federal NPS funding may have contributed to certain activities, but only as permitted per the stipulations in P.L. 104-333.

- 2003:** West Creek wins \$160,500 for greenway Development;  
\$240,000 for Historic Renovation Scenic Railroad extended into Canton, Ohio
- 2005:** Tuscarawas County trail and green space plan completed  
Cuyahoga Towpath receives \$6.4 million in transportation earmark
- 2006:** Canalway awarded two Scenic Byway Grants – total \$756,000  
Cleveland passes TIF legislation: \$10 million for Towpath Trail
- 2007:** Steelyard Heritage Center - raises \$200,000 for steel story  
\$2 million obtained for Trail Bridge over I-77 in Tuscarawas County
- 2008:** State awards \$500,000 for Towpath Trail project in Cuyahoga County  
City of Akron Towpath Trail and Bridge dedicated
- 2009:** Richard Howe House restored in downtown Akron
- 2010:** Ohio Canal Corridor awarded \$3.1 million from state for Towpath Trail  
Cuyahoga County wins \$3 million from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for the  
Towpath Trail
- 2011:** Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition receives \$150,000 grant to build 2.7 miles of Towpath  
Trail in Tuscarawas County

These and other key milestones are described throughout the remainder of this document.

## **Section 3: OECA Fulfillment of the Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan**

Section 3 begins with a description of the goals of the authorizing legislation and those identified in the management plan of the Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway (OENHC) coordinating entity, Ohio and Erie Canalway Association (OECA). The section then presents a detailed discussion of the activities conducted by the coordinating entity in support of these goals. Outcomes of these activities are discussed for each type of activity. The evaluators obtained outcomes of OECA's efforts through tours of the Canal communities, reviews of documents, interviews with key informants, and interviews with members of the broader community. The section closes with a discussion of the working relationship between the NPS and OECA.

### **3.1 Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan Goals**

The authorizing legislation (P.L. 104-333) noted that the purpose of the OECA is to provide “a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor.” The legislation indicated that public participation was essential in the planning process and that “residents, public agencies, and private organizations in the corridor” should be engaged in the development of the management plan.

The OENHC Management Plan includes five main overarching goals as noted in section 2.2:

- Preservation and Conservation
- Interpretation and Education
- Recreation and Visitor Experience
- Community and Economic Development
- Management and Implementation

In addition, for the purposes of the Evaluation, a logic modeling session was held which operationalized these purposes and goals into four strategy areas. The two Co-Directors of the coordinating entity provided an updated classification of the OECA's current programs and



activities during a logic modeling session that was conducted with the evaluators in February 2012. The logic model, provided in Figure 3.1, outlines the four program strategy areas in which current OECA activities fall. During the logic modeling session it became clear that the OECA Interpretation and Education and Visitor Experience activities are inextricably linked, and so they were combined into one strategy area. The activities in these strategy areas, and their outcomes, form the basis of the evaluation. As displayed in Table 3.1 below, these strategy areas correspond to the original overarching goals articulated in the OENHC Management Plan.

The four strategy areas include:

- a. Regional plans for Development and Investment;
- b. Resource Conservation;
- c. Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience; and
- d. Community and Economic Development

**Table 3.1 Crosswalk of Heritage Area Purposes, Goals, and Current Strategy Areas**

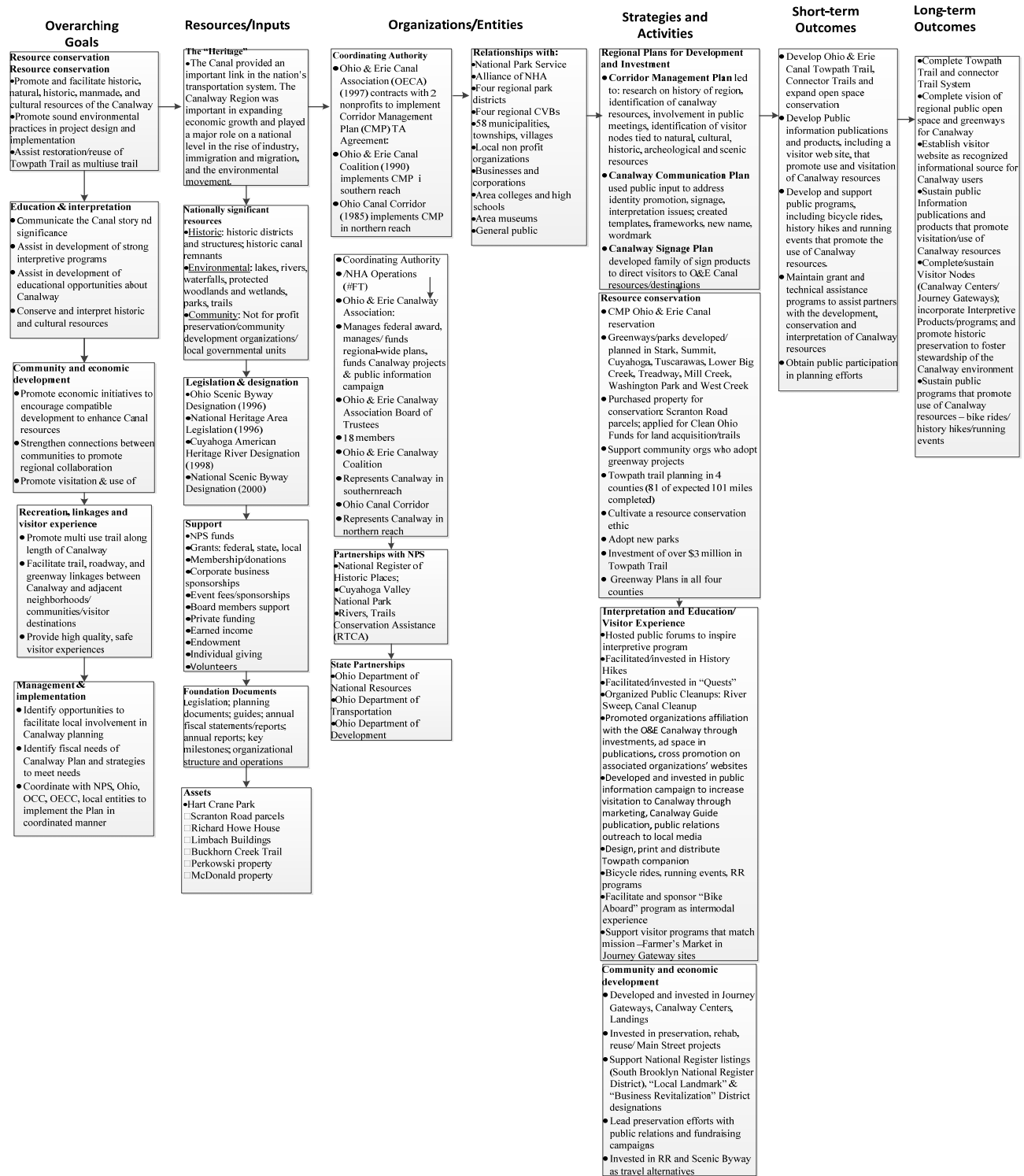
Purposes as Specified in Legislation	OENHC Management Plan Goals	Current OECA Strategy Areas
<p>To preserve and interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio &amp; Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Preserve significant historic structures and other resources associated with the Ohio &amp; Erie Canal;</li> <li>■ Build upon and strengthen the Corridor constituency for preservation and enhancement of key manmade, natural, and cultural resources</li> <li>■ Protect waterways, wetlands, and other natural resources.</li> <li>■ Promote the preservation of natural and scenic vistas for future generations.</li> <li>■ Promote sound environmental practices in project design and implementation</li> <li>■ Communicate the story of the Canal and its influence to enable people throughout the Corridor to understand its impact on the region, state, and nation.</li> <li>■ Develop an interpretive program that combines existing resources and new initiatives to convey a coherent story</li> <li>■ Develop educational opportunities and activities to enable people of all ages to learn about and appreciate the Canal Corridor and its significance, using both traditional methods and contemporary technology and systems</li> </ul>	<p>Resource Conservation</p> <p>Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience</p>

Purposes as Specified in Legislation	OENHC Management Plan Goals	Current OECA Strategy Areas
<p>To encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop strategies and actions to provide a high quality and safe visitor experience in the Corridor, which will encourage repeat use by Corridor residents and visitors</li> <li>■ Promote creation of a continuous multi-use trail along the entire length of the Corridor</li> <li>■ Encourage creation of additional active and passive recreation and open spaces along the Corridor by public and private entities</li> <li>■ Advocate and facilitate trail, roadway, and greenway linkages between the Canal Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods and park systems</li> <li>■ Promote the use of economic incentives to encourage compatible development that will enhance the resources of the Canal Corridor</li> <li>■ Encourage communities and jurisdictions along the Corridor to adopt measures to support appropriate uses and compatible development adjacent to the Canal and its associate resources</li> <li>■ Unify and strengthen connections between communities and neighborhoods and promote regional collaboration</li> <li>■ Take advantage of the unique economic potentials that will be created through the Corridor's extensive trail and transportation systems, including developing means and methods to support visitor use through state-of-the-art information systems</li> </ul>	<p>Interpretation and Education/ Visitor Experience</p> <p>Community and Economic Development</p>
<p>To provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify opportunities and develop mechanisms to facilitate local and grassroots involvement in Corridor planning and other future activities</li> <li>■ Establish the fiscal needs of the Corridor Plan and identify a strategy to meet such needs over the long term</li> </ul>	<p>Regional Plans for Development and Investment</p>

Purposes as Specified in Legislation	OENHC Management Plan Goals	Current OECA Strategy Areas
<p>To authorize the Secretary to provide financial and technical assistance to the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing a Corridor Management Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Coordinate closely with the National Park Service, the State of Ohio, Ohio Canal Corridor, the Ohio &amp; Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, regional entities, and localities to develop a cooperative approach to implementation of the Plan and its element</li> </ul>	<p>Regional Plans for Development and Investment</p>

Section 3.2 describes the progress made in each of the OENHC’s four strategy areas and an assessment of their outcomes outlined in the logic model.

**Figure 3.1 Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Logic Model**



## **3.2 OECA Program Strategy Areas**

### **3.2.1 Regional Planning for Development and Investment**

This strategy area relates to the goals established within the initial legislative mandate described in Section 2.1: “To provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor.”

Activities that fall under this strategy area are intended to describe the major planning efforts that support the OECA’s implementation of goals in the authorizing legislation.

The key OECA activities within the regional planning for development and investment area include:

- Development of the Management Plan;
- Development of the Canalway Communication Plan; and
- Development of the Canalway Signage Plan.

Although these three types of plans are highlighted in this section, it is notable that the OECA has assisted in multiple ongoing strategic planning activities with partners along the Canalway and its surrounding communities. As discussed in section 1, the role of OECA varies from acting as the lead coordinating entity, as is often the case in Tuscarawas County, to participating in planning enterprises hosted by other players in the OECA, e.g., the City of Akron. See Table 3.2 for a sample of planning efforts with OECA involvement.

**Table 3.2 Planning Efforts for Projects within the OENHC**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ohio &amp; Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Management Plan</li><li>■ Ohio &amp; Erie National Heritage Canalway Communications Plan</li><li>■ Ohio &amp; Erie National Heritage Canalway Design Guidelines: Signage and Interpretive Wayside System</li><li>■ Canalway Signage Plan</li><li>■ Ohio &amp; Erie Canalway America's Byway Management Plan</li><li>■ Ohio &amp; Erie Canalway Marketing Plan 2010-2014</li><li>■ Navarre/Bethlehem Township Greenway Action Guidelines</li><li>■ The Canal Basin District Plan</li><li>■ Lower Big Creek Greenway Redevelopment and Restoration Plan</li><li>■ The Train Avenue Greenway Plan</li><li>■ Ohio City Vision: Inter-modal Urban Design &amp; Wayfinding Plan for the Market District</li><li>■ Pearl Road/West 25<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Corridor Plan</li><li>■ City of Cleveland/West 25<sup>th</sup> Street America's Byway Enhancement Plan</li><li>■ Slavic Village Land Use Plan</li><li>■ Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan</li><li>■ Stark County Trail and Greenway Plan</li><li>■ Tuscarawas County Trail &amp; Green Space Plan</li></ul>
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## **Description of Activities**

### **Management Plan**

Following the designation of the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Area in 1996, the Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Committee worked to identify opportunities to create economic growth, increase visitation, and highlight the importance of preserving the Canalway and drafted the Corridor Management Plan in 2000. This plan describes the history of the Canal and the region, identifies Canal resources, discusses the involvement of the public, and recognizes visitor nodes tied to natural, cultural, historic, archeological, and scenic resources.

The OENHC Management Plan resulted from a 12-month planning process involving public workshops and meetings at different locations along the OENHC. OECA met with municipal officials, interest groups, residents, and community leaders. Participation was maintained through regular newsletters and other outreach activities. Participants in this planning process expressed

interest in the OENHC during public forums. During these meetings, members of the public discussed issues related to the boundaries of the OENHC, how people would use the Canalway, the concept of trail networks, community benefits, and possible funding options and partners in the project. As planning progressed, members of the public were asked to provide comment on specific questions and vote on their preferred options (e.g., comment on alternatives for specific OENHC boundaries). This planning process allowed public participation in developing the major goals of the Heritage Area and provided a guiding structure for activities implemented by the OECA. The plan was approved by 58 local jurisdictions. These local jurisdictions adopted the plan using formal actions by voting at council hearings or through planning commissions. Other non-profit and civic organizations joined in this process with similar letters and resolutions adopted by their Board of Trustees.

### **Communications Plan**

An important strategy for implementing goals of the Management Plan was to effectively coordinate communications and outreach with partners along the Canalway. To meet this need, the OECA developed the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Communications Plan in 2003. A six-member Steering Committee was involved with the project, including members from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Subcommittees were set up to implement different aspects of the plan, and these subcommittees consisted of constituents representing the entire length of the Canalway. The Communication Plan identifies ways to provide interpretive planning for the OENHC, signify signage systems throughout the state, and identify marketing activities to continuously improve the site areas. Overall, the Communications Plan is a guide to encourage visitor feedback, promote usage of the Canal for local residents, and educate the public on the purpose and history of the Canal. The Communications Plan gained support from local jurisdictions and nonprofit and civic organizations.

### **Canalway Signage Plan**

Following recommendations from the Canalway Communications Plan, the Canalway Signage Plan was created in 2005. To develop the Canalway Signage Plan, a steering committee was comprised of the OECA and representatives from Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas, and Cuyahoga county engineer's offices and regional park districts, cities of Akron and Cleveland, the village of Bolivar, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The resulting Canalway Signage Plan produced a family of signs that were designed to provide information, orientation, and interpretation to visitors of the OENHC. Similar to other OECA planning efforts, this planning process included outreach to governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, canalway attractions,

and the general public. The Canalway Signage Plan was supported by key partner organizations that subsequently assisted with implementation.

Over the years, the two OECA Co-Directors have promoted the needs and significance of the Canal to the general public and government entities to ensure that community participation is part of the process in the development and planning efforts that impact the Ohio & Erie Canal. The Co-Directors have worked with a range of community leaders and organizations in advocating for efforts to encourage the public's use of the Canal, and its three major transportation mechanisms: the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, the Scenic Byway, and the Scenic Railroad.

## **Regional Planning Outcomes**

We examined the following outcomes for Regional Planning activities:

- Community and partner involvement in planning efforts; and
- The completion of regional, county, and local plans.

### **Community and Partner Involvement in Planning Efforts**

Public participation was noted in the designating legislation as a critical component of planning efforts for the OENHC. The Ohio and Erie Canalway administration were highly involved with holding community meetings, workshops, and other public gatherings to elicit community feedback about canalway planning, as well as to obtain public participation for the Management Plan, Communications, Signage and Marketing Plans. The OECA currently has over 300 partners and noted the involvement of many of these partners in the planning process. For example, in Tuscarawas County, early trail building efforts (near the Buckhorn Creek trail area) by another planning group led to opposition to trail building efforts from members of the Farm Bureau and other residents. The OECA facilitated meetings on trail planning with the Farm Bureau, Tuscarawas County Commissioners, and the Canal Lands Committee, which led to the development of the county trail and green space plan and further trail development in the region. Additionally, the planning meetings led to the development of the Tuscarawas County Parks Department Advisory Committee, a 15 member organization established in 2002 to facilitate the implementation and management of the trail. Interviewees reported that without the facilitation, planning efforts, and public meetings organized by the OECA, development of the Canalway and the Towpath Trail as a destination would likely not have occurred in their regions.



Table 3.3 summarizes the estimated total number of public meetings scheduled for planning efforts. The numbers in the table were estimated based on average attendance figures taken by the OECA and the number of meetings held based on OECA appointment records. Specifically, the numbers were calculated based on the following information:

- In 1996, the OECA conducted bi-monthly meetings to provide an update on the OENHC in Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas counties with an average attendance of 38 participants.
- From 1997 through 2000, during the Management Planning process, the OECA maintained bi-monthly meetings and added three additional meetings per month with an average of 35 participants to obtain public input into the Management Plan.
- From 2001 to 2003, they maintained bi-monthly meetings and added two additional meetings per month with an average of 15 participants to obtain public input into the Communication Plan.
- From 2004 to 2006, they maintained bi-monthly meetings and added two additional meetings per month with an average of 20 participants to obtain public input into the Signage Plan.
- From 2007 to 2008, they maintained bi-monthly meetings and added two additional meetings per month with an average of 10 participants to obtain public input into the Interpretation Plan.
- From 2009 to 2011, they maintained bi-monthly meetings and added two additional meetings per month with an average of 15 participants to obtain input into our Marketing Plan.

**Table 3.3 OECA Estimated Planning Meetings with the Public and Yearly Attendance**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
1996	OENHC update Trail meetings	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	900
1997	Management Plan OENHC update Trail meetings	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	400
1998	Management Plan OENHC update Trail meetings	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	2500
1999	Management Plan OENHC update Trail meetings	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	5150
2000	Management Plan OENHC update Trail meetings	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	2,325
2001	Trail meetings Communication Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	850
2002	Trail meetings Communication Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	900
2003	Trail meetings Communication Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	1,325
2004	Trail meetings Signage Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	2500
2005	Trail meetings Signage Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	2200
2006	Trail meetings Signage Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	2200
2007	Trail meetings Interpretation Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	2,140
2008	Trail meetings Interpretation Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	1,740
2009	Trail meetings Marketing Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	1,260
2010	Trail meetings Marketing Plan OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	1,000
2011	Trail meetings OENHC update	Cuyahoga/Summit/Stark/ Tuscarawas counties	850

Partner interview respondents noted that the trail and greenway and green space plans have served as models through which each of the four counties have developed the Towpath Trail in the effort of conservation and improving the visitor experience. Stakeholders interviewed cited that the Management Plan and the Communications Plans were guides for communities in promoting the Canal, the Towpath Trail, and its resources across the four counties in the OENHC. The Communications Plan provides a framework for interpretation, calls attention to best practices in interpretation, and encourages OENHC partners to tailor their interpretation to the Canalway. For example, interpretation of historical information of Canal Fulton was coordinated through the OECA and provided by interpretive specialists at Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Cleveland Metroparks to assist the site in illustrating their unique story. The OECA has promoted interpretive signage along the Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail, and interpretation at sites throughout the OENHC as guided by the Canalway Signage Plan. In 2000, the American Institute of Architects awarded the Corridor Management Plan with their “Certificate of Excellence.”

### **The Completion of Regional, County and Local Plans**

Table 3.2 provides a sample list of the major planning accomplishments of the OECA. The partner planning processes described above resulted in the completion of the Management, Communications, and Canal Signage Plans. In addition, The OECA has been integral to the development of trail and greenway or green space plans for all four counties in the OENHC. These four plans describe the development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, other trails and green spaces, and other significant opportunities that provide for conservation, development and management of cultural, natural and recreational resources throughout the OENHC. Partner interview respondents in each county referenced how plan development helped create a shared vision for trail development in the county. Respondents noted the need for planning at the county level, as the political and community players varied by county.

Respondents noted that the OECA assisted with allowing various planning bodies to work toward a common end, even though each planning body may have only a local, or at most, county level impact. For example, a Tuscarawas County Commissioner noted that his county did not even have a Park planning body (such as Metro Parks in Cuyahoga, Summit and Stark Counties) until the OECA facilitated the discussion of trail development. This county opted for a different form of organization, a Parks Advisory Board, with a limited role relative to the other Park Systems. This body is part of the county’s efforts to “connect the dots,” connecting the trail in different counties and connector trails.

In Cuyahoga County, the County Planning and Finance Administrator noted that the OECA facilitated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2004 between key city and county partners. This MOU led to the design of the six last miles of the Towpath Trail and helped obtain a \$5.8 million earmark from the Department of Transportation. The OECA now has a position in the city/county's weekly planning meetings. During these meetings, the group addresses the development of the six remaining miles of the trail in Cleveland.

### **3.2.2 Resource Conservation**

This strategy area is related to the Corridor Management Plan goals of Preservation and Conservation, which include, “preserving significant historic structures and other resources associated with the Ohio & Erie Canal; building upon and strengthening the Corridor constituency for preservation and enhancement of key manmade, natural, and cultural resources; protecting waterways, wetlands, and other natural resources; promoting the preservation of natural and scenic vistas for future generations; and, promoting sound environmental practices in project design and implementation.” In addition, this strategy area relates most closely to the legislated goal, “to preserve and interpret ... the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar.” (Note Corridor Management Plan extended southern boundary to New Philadelphia in 2000).

Activities that fall under this strategy area are intended to support physical improvements for the Canal regions and historic structures and support the conservation of Canal resources. Since the Federal designation in 1996, the OECA has been involved in a number of activities intended to conserve the Canal and its adjacent properties and structures.

The key OECA activities within the resource conservation area include:

- Restoration of historic structures, canal locks, and parks;
- Land acquisition for conservation and trail development<sup>5</sup>; and
- Development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and trail and green spaces in counties and regions.

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<sup>5</sup> Land acquisition is included as an activity; however, no direct NHA federal funds have been used to purchase lands.

## Description of Activities

### Restoration of Historic Structures and Canal Locks and Parks

Since the Federal designation in 1996, the OECA has played a role in facilitating the renovation of historic structures that line the Canal and its surrounding regions. Many of the historic structures, such as the Richard Howe House and the Limbach buildings, represent important sites during the Canal era.

In 2003, OECA entered into a partnership with the City of Akron to restore the Richard Howe House along the Ohio & Erie Canal in downtown Akron. The house was built in 1836 and served as the home of the engineer who designed the canal prism and locks in the Cascade Locks region and the portage of the Ohio & Erie Canal over the Continental Divide. Upon restoration, the Richard Howe House would serve as a Visitors Information Center, an office for the OECC, and a trail head for the Towpath Trail in downtown Akron. Over the course of the renovation, which was completed in 2009, the coordinating entity and founding organizations raised \$2.3 million to restore the building.

In 2005, the OECA began work, in partnership with Summit County, to restore the Limbach buildings that lie along the Ohio & Erie Canal in the village of Clinton. The buildings, listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places, were built during the Canal era. The buildings, acquired for restoration and to be turned over to the village of Clinton, will promote economic development for the area. The OECA is working with partners to restore the façade of the building and upgrade the water treatment plant at the site.

The OECA also has been involved with the conservation of areas near historic Canal areas, such as the Canal Fulton Canalway Center in the town of Canal Fulton. Located in Stark County, the historic town of Canal Fulton lies near the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Tuscarawas River, and it once served as a center of commercial activity for canal traffic of goods. The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail runs through Canal Fulton and the OECA assisted in the construction of the Canal Fulton Canalway Center, completed in 2006. The OECA and partner organizations were involved with rebuilding the landings and dock near the area. This building now serves as a visitor's center along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail that provides information about the history of Canal Fulton and historic Canal boat rides to visitors.

Similarly, OECA, along with Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the City of Akron, Metro Parks, and other local organizations, restored the historic Mustill House and Store at Cascade Locks Park in Akron. The renovation, completed in 2000, serves as an OENHC visitor center. The store provides educational, historic, and recreational resources about the Canal to visitors. In Cleveland, the OECA has been involved with the Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation, a 5-mile, 320-acre piece of land, where visitors can explore trails and industrial relics, illustrating the Canalway history. The reservation includes the Kreiger Canalway Center, which features interpretive displays that tell the stories of industry within the valley and its relationship to the Ohio Canal.

### **Land Acquisition for Conservation and Trail Construction**

Through the planning efforts of the two founding organizations, one of the central activities undertaken by the OECA is the development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, from Cleveland's historic Canal Basin to and through Tuscarawas and New Philadelphia to Schoenbrum Village. From 1827 to 1913, the Towpath Trail functioned as a road for mules to pull canal boats along the Historic Ohio & Erie Canal. Now the trail is used for multiple purposes, including recreational, educational, and as an amenity to induce economic development activities. The planning, construction and maintenance of the more than 81 miles of the Towpath Trail have occurred through all four counties within the OENHC boundaries.

The OENHC legislation was written to address private property concerns along the Ohio & Erie Canalway. The OECA has refrained from using any NPS federal funding for land acquisition. The OECA Board has a policy that restricts the coordinating entity from acquiring any land through either purchase or donation. It also prohibits the value of any land acquisition to be used as the primary match for any grant project. The policy does allow the value of a property acquisition between a willing buyer and seller to be included as “over match” – beyond the basic match ratio. The two founding non-profits are active in land acquisition for trail and greenway projects within the Canalway using non-federal funds including private, local, and state funds.

In an effort to conserve areas of land that run along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, the two founding organizations (rather than the coordinating entity) have acquired properties for trail development, using “Clean Ohio” grant funding to purchase 71 acres of land near Zoarville to extend the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. The OECA collaborated with the Tuscarawas County Trail and Land Committee and involved local foundations and individual contributors to successfully obtain grant funding. The purchase of the land was completed in 2009 for planning a

new section of the Towpath Trail. The trail's development in Tuscarawas County allows residents to connect with locations in Stark, Summit and Cuyahoga counties.

The founding organizations own land along an 8-mile track near the Buckhorn Creek Trail in Tuscarawas County and organized volunteers to convert this former section of a rail road bed into a hiking and biking trail. In 2008, a \$250,000 stream bank restoration project was completed with the assistance of volunteers in this area, which serves to assist in protecting the stream bank from erosion and protect the trail. Similarly, in Cuyahoga County, the founding organizations purchased 11 acres of land on Scranton Road and the Cuyahoga River to assist in completing the northern section of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Cleveland.

### **Development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and Green Spaces**

As noted in Section 3.2.1, the OECA has been integral to the development of trail and greenway or green space plans for each of the four counties in the OENHC. Collaborating with multiple partners, the OECA has assisted communities with bringing the Towpath Trail's construction, development, and maintenance to the four counties and regional areas such as Lower Big Creek, Treadway, Mill Creek, Washington Park, and West Creek. These plans seek to preserve open spaces, recreational opportunities, and heritage preservation throughout the counties. For example, the Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan has been a guide in assisting the county with developing a system of interconnected trail and greenway corridors, connecting to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and its associated greenway, identifying trails and greenways of regional significance, and identifying natural areas for environmental protection, conservation, and restoration.

The OECA brought regional partners together to implement these trail and green space plans. Communities have had to involve elected officials, units of government, Chambers of Commerce, corporations, businesses, foundations, and nonprofit organizations to assist in the implementation of these plans for conservation and open space preservation. The involvement of the OECA in the implementation of the planning has been in a leadership role and in a supporting role, depending on the constellation of partners involved and existing expertise in communities. The OECA has been involved with facilitating relationships and coordinating meetings to assist communities with implementing these plans and leading efforts to further the Towpath Trail development throughout the OENHC.

## Resource Conservation Outcomes

We examined the following outcomes for the resource conservation activities:

- Preserving the canal resources and the development of the Towpath Trail; and
- Maintaining technical assistance to partners with development and conservation of Canalway resources

### Preserving Canal Resources and Development of the Towpath Trail

Table 3.4 lists major events involved in conserving the canal and trail resources since 1997. The table highlights milestones in the OECA's successful completion of 81 miles of Towpath Trail through the OENHC: the trail is complete in Summit County and close to complete in Stark County. There are approximately 14 miles to complete in Tuscarawas County and approximately six miles remain to be developed in challenging post-industrial areas in Cuyahoga County. The table details successful outcomes in resource conservation activities throughout the OENHC including:

- Preservation of historic structures and visitor trailheads;
- Land acquisition by the coordinating entity and partner organization for development of the Towpath Trail;
- Efforts that led to Canal/trail construction and/or development; and
- Examples of matching and/or leveraging funds used for conservation activities.



**Table 3.4 Resource Conservation Accomplishments**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
1997	Cleveland Metroparks finalizes plan for Canal Reservation
1998	Towpath Trail completed in Cuyahoga Valley National Park
1999	Cleveland Metroparks opens Canal Reservation
2000	Thornburg Station Retail/office breaks ground - integrates Towpath & Train Mill Creek wins \$500,000 for Trail
2001	Mill Creek Falls breaks ground - trail & visitor center
2002	Cleveland wins \$650,000 of Clean Ohio Funds for Mill Creek Falls/ greenway West Creek wins \$723,800 for greenway property acquisition Cleveland Metroparks wins \$445,000 to acquire expanded parkland Valley View wins \$773,700 for Lock 9 Park from Clean Ohio Mill Creek Falls & Brila Home open as Visitor Destination Towpath Trail extends to Harvard Avenue in Cleveland Cascade Locks Park restores the Mustill Store Visitors Center
2003	Scenic Railroad extended into Canton Ohio West Creek wins \$240,000 of Enhancement Funds for historic Henninger House Treadway Greenway awarded \$739,000 of Clean Ohio Funds West Creek wins \$160,500 for greenway development
2004	Tremont HUD Hope VI Project (Towpath) awarded \$200 million Cleveland awarded \$434,000 state grant for Canalway Center property Cleveland awarded \$3 million from NOAA for Canalway Center property Cleveland Metroparks receives \$300,000 in Byway Funds for connector trail Town Hall Visitors Center restored
2005	Cuyahoga Towpath receives \$6.4 million earmark in transportation bill
2006	West Creek wins \$1.2 million for greenway property purchases Cleveland passes TIF legislation - \$10.5 million for Towpath Trail \$788,000 earmark for Towpath Trail in transportation bill Washington Park and Morgana Run Trail connection to Towpath completed Cleveland awarded \$435,000 for Towpath Trail from Clean Ohio Trails funds
2007	Towpath Trail dedication for first mile in Cleveland - privately funded City of Cleveland purchases land for Canal Basin Park - 1.5 acres - \$2.3 million State Capital Bill includes \$1.9 million for Towpath Trail in Cleveland Treadway Ravine/ Trail begins construction I-77 Towpath Trail Bridge dedicated: \$ 2 million for bridge to take Trail over I-77
2008	Canalway awarded TLCI Grant of \$65,000 for Canal Basin District Plan State awards \$500,000 for Towpath Trail project in Cuyahoga County City of Akron Towpath Trail and Bridge dedicated
2009	Lake Link Trail awarded \$1.3 million from Clean Ohio Fund Richard Howe House restored in downtown Akron
2010	Ohio Canal Corridor awarded \$3.1 million from state for Towpath Trail West Creek awarded \$535,420 from Clean Ohio Fund for greenway purchases Ohio Canal Corridor buys 11 acres of riverfront property in Cleveland for Towpath Trail
2011	Bartges Street Towpath Trail dedicated City of Akron completes the Towpath Trail through the City - \$1.68 million raised to build Trail OECCC receives \$150,000 ODNR grant to build 2.7 miles of the Towpath Trail in Tuscarawas County

All partner interviews noted the development of physical changes to the Canal and the Towpath Trail and improvements to structures that have occurred in the last decade. For example, the OECA assisted in the restoration of the Mustill Store in Cascade Locks Park, which was previously an undeveloped and neglected area. Informants also noted that the OECA brought necessary resources to the table, such as helping to identify funding sources (see examples in Table 3.4 above) or providing access to their volunteer network. For example, the Community Affairs Representative of Dominion East, a regional energy company, informed us that they regularly send 50 to 70 volunteers to work on OECA conservation projects annually. They view this as a valuable staff development opportunity. Respondents from Canal Fulton also commented on how useful these Dominion volunteers were to their restoration efforts. They estimated that the volunteer effort was worth approximately \$60,000.

### **Maintaining Technical Assistance to Partners about the Development and Conservation Canalway Resources**

The OECA has provided consultation and technical assistance to various partners related to trail development in their communities. Table 3.5 provides a summary of the types of consultation meetings that the OECA has had with partners about trail construction, permitting, planning, development and maintenance. The OECA has involved multiple partners in a coordinated effort to highlight Canal resources and expand Towpath Trail development. The OECA has multiple meetings weekly with partners that track the progress of the trail and greenway development efforts across different regions of the OENHC. The OECA used documentation from mileage reports, Ohio and Erie Canalway administration calendars, reports and newsletters to estimate the number of meetings and participants in Table 3.5. The numbers in the table were calculated using an average number of meetings per week for up to four OECA representatives attending. An average number of individuals per meeting was also estimated based on typical attendance patterns.

In addition to facilitating ongoing meetings, the OECA is credited by respondents with helping establish initial partnerships that allow for future planning. For example, in Canal Fulton, the current proprietor of the Visitor Center noted that the OECA brought the Historical Society (which had controlled resources at the site) and the City together to permit joint planning to move forward with restoration. In Cleveland, a development company called First Interstate provided a historic steel mill structure, industrial artifacts, and worked cooperatively with a multi-agency committee representing Cleveland Metroparks, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the City of Cleveland, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, and Western Reserve Historical Society. This coalition of organizations was facilitated through the OECA.

**Table 3.5 OECA Estimated Partner Planning Meetings on Project Development and Implementation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Number of Yearly Meetings</b>	<b>Total Participants per Year</b>
1996	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings	300 meetings	2300 participants
1997	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings	444 meetings	4898 participants
1998	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings	376 meetings	5838 participants
1999	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings	430 meetings	4150 participants
2000	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings	560 meetings	5995 participants
2001	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings	690 meetings	7760 participants
2002	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings	520 meetings	4552 participants
2003	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings	570 meetings	7534 participants
2004	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings Signage meetings	770 meetings	6990 participants
2005	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings Signage meetings	776 meetings	8234 participants
2006	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings Signage meetings	714 meetings	6614 participants
2007	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Canalway Center meetings Signage meetings	724 meetings	7740 participants
2008	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Signage meetings	640 meetings	6790 participants
2009	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Interpretation meetings Signage meetings	668 meetings	6698 participants
2010	Trail meetings/Partnership meetings Interpretation meetings Signage meetings	608 meetings	5172 participants
2011	Trail meetings Partnership meetings Interpretation meetings Signage meetings	698 meetings	5758 participants
<b>Total</b>			97,023 participants

### 3.2.3 Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience

This strategy area incorporates the Management Plan goals of Interpretation and Education, which include, “communicating the story of the Canal and its influence to enable people throughout the Corridor to understand its impact on the region, state, and nation; developing an interpretive program that combines existing resources and new initiatives to convey a coherent story; and developing educational opportunities and activities to enable people of all ages to learn about and appreciate the Canalway and its significance, using both traditional methods and contemporary technology and systems.” This strategy area also incorporates the OENHC Management Plan goal for Recreation and Visitor Experience. This goal includes directives to “develop strategies and actions to provide high quality and safe visitor experiences in the OENHC, which will encourage repeat use by local residents and visitors; promote creation of a continuous multi-use trail along the entire length of the OENHC; encourage creation of additional active and passive recreation and open spaces along the Corridor by public and private entities; and, advocate and facilitate trail, roadway, and greenway linkages between the Canalway and adjacent neighborhoods and park systems.” This strategy area focuses on achieving interpretation and education goals through an enhanced visitor experience, and is intended to communicate the Canal’s influence and significance to others in the community and expand opportunities for recreation, community connections through transportation linkages, and enhance the experience when visiting the OENHC.

This strategy area relates most closely to the legislated goal to “interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures....”

The key OECA activities within the interpretation and education/visitor experience area include:

- Visitor Programs, such as boat tours, fishing derbies, and farmer’s markets in Journey Gateway sites;
- Facilitating and investing in educational planned hiking events and “quests”;
- Organized outdoor events, such as bicycle rides, running events, canoeing events, and Healthy Steps;
- Organized public cleanups, such as River Sweep and Canal Cleanup; and
- Development of public information campaigns, through the Towpath Companion, Canalway Guide publications, promotion of organizations affiliated with the OECA through investments in advertising, local media, and the website.

## Description of Activities

### Visitor Programs

Several activities have been put into place over the last 12 years by the OECA organizations to support the visitor experience to the OENHC. The OECA coordinates educational events in different regions along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail that are combined with outdoor recreational activities so that participants can use the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and its related resources.

The OECA provided funding to help restore the use of a historic canal boat in Canal Fulton. Canal Fulton runs the St. Helena III, a horse drawn canal boat that travels along an original section of the Ohio & Erie Canal. The boat ride provides participants a view of the intact historic Lock IV along the Canal. During the ride, historians provide facts and stories of life during Ohio's Canal era. The Boat rides also include historically themed cruises, such as the *Underground Railroad Cruise*, a program that highlights the Canal's history related to the Underground Railroad. Similarly, the Canal Fulton Canalway Center and the Mustill Store provide interpretive information to visitors about the impact of the Canal on regions throughout Ohio.

In 2004, over 750 children participated in Captain Nye's Fishing Derby and the Cargill Bluegill Fishing Derby along the Ohio & Erie Canal.<sup>6</sup> The program allows students living in urban and inner city areas to learn about the history of the Ohio & Erie Canal and about the recreational experiences of fishing. The OECA has been involved with developing farmer's markets in specific visitor nodes (called Journey Gateways) within the OENHC that promote Canal resources. The OECA has collaborated with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad to develop and promote the Bike Aboard Program, which allows participants to bike one way through the heritage area along the Cleveland/Akron run of the Scenic Railroad and then ride the railroad back.

### Hiking Events and "Quests"

The Towpath Trek is an educational hiking tour of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. The program was developed by the OECA in partnership with the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. As part of the program, individuals and families are encouraged to hike or bike along the trail and access interpretive information. In 2003, over 1000 residents participated in this educational hiking

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<sup>6</sup> The number of individuals participating in OECA events (including fishing derbies, history hikes, event races, and the Healthy Steps program) were derived from coordinating entity attendance records.

event. The Take a Hike Program, developed by the coordinating entity and expanded with a partnership from the Historic Gateway Neighborhood, provides participants with guided history hikes at four different locations in Cleveland. The program is funded in part by an OECA grant.

In 2011, the OECA facilitated a “questing” program throughout the OENHC to provide an educational component to recreational activities that take place outdoors along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Clues and maps created by teachers, volunteers, or Park staff are placed throughout different areas along the trail and participants seek out clues that lead them to their next destination. The interpretation for the educational information was developed in part by staff at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Regional county parks. As of 2012, quests have been developed in Cuyahoga, Summit, and Stark Counties.

### **Organized Outdoor Events**

The Towpath Trail and connecting trails are the OENHC’s main recreational trails for hikers, bicyclists, and runners. A series of races have been introduced to highlight different sections of the trail system. The Towpath Marathon, founded in 1992, has approximately 2,600 participants per year. The race was noted in *Runner’s World* and *Trail Runner* magazines. Other towpath trail races include the Canalway Relay and the Canal Classic on the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Canal Fulton and Massillon, Ohio.

In 2005, the OECA began the Tour du Towpath, an annual cycling event along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. This event encourages families and individuals to enjoy scenic bicycle rides along the trail from the Village of Clinton to Massillon. In 2010, over 200 people joined in the Tour du Towpath event. The OECA also assembled corporate sponsors for the Towpath Classic, a golfing tournament, which raised over \$12,000 in 2005 and \$13,000 in 2006 for the development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. The annual Cargill Canoe Adventure is an activity sponsored by the OECA as a way to promote exploring the canal waters in Akron, Ohio. The event begins at the Richard Howe House where participants are shuttled to Nesmith Lake to launch their canoes. The groups paddle six miles through downtown Akron and are exposed to the Canal and its resources.

The Healthy Steps Program was developed by the OECA in partnership with Akron General Health System as a way to encourage health and increase walking in neighborhoods and local parks. This program is promoted by local businesses to encourage their employees to adopt healthy physical activities. In 2005, over 500 individuals participated in the Healthy Steps program and in 2007, over

1000 individuals participated. Over 1200 individuals participated in the Healthy Steps program in 2010.

### **Canal Cleanup**

Public clean ups of the Ohio & Erie Canal have been organized by the OECA. Through a continued effort to conserve Canal resources, annual clean ups have recruited local businesses, corporations, and individuals for contributions and organized volunteers to remove debris from the Canal and its surrounding areas.

RiverSweep is an annual event, which seeks to promote environmental awareness related to the Canal in Cuyahoga County. The yearly one-day event began in the early 1990s and is an activity that organizes volunteers to gather at one of nine designated areas along the length of the Canal. Volunteers work to clean the Canal and dispose of collected trash as well as clearing overgrown vegetation. In 2011, it was estimated that 11 tons of garbage were removed from the Canal areas in the West Creek area. The RiverSweep event has focused on cleaning areas where new parks and extended trails will be built in the future. The OECA sponsors a regular cleanup of a northern section of the designated Byway in Cleveland, called the Byway Blitz. The event includes court community service groups who clean litter on the Byway.

Similarly in the southern reach of the Canal, there are organized clean up events, such the Cargill Canal Clean Up and the AECOM Canal Clean up. These events have included corporate sponsors and organized volunteers to clean areas of the Canal. The Cargill Canal Clean Up, which started in 2002, organized employees of the Cargill Company to volunteer. In 2008, it was estimated that 80 bags of debris were removed from the Canal in Akron after the Cargill Canal Clean Up. The annual program seeks to not only help conserve the Canal and its resources, but to promote a conservation ethic in the visitors and residents who use the Canal.

### **Public Information Campaign**

To enhance the interpretation and education/visitor experience, the OECA developed the Ohio & Erie Canalway Visitors Guide in 2006. Working in partnership with Convention & Visitors Bureaus, Park Agencies, Museums and Attractions, the OECA developed a 33-page Visitors Guide that showcases the natural, historic and recreational resources, hotels, restaurants and attractions along the Ohio & Erie Canalway from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, Ohio. The Visitors Guide provides residents and visitors with maps, a calendar of events and interpretive information about Canal Communities. The total cost of the Visitors Guide was \$30,000 and was funded through a public/private partnership, with 50% of the revenue generated by local community partners. Over

200,000 copies of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Visitors Guide have been distributed throughout northeast Ohio. The OECA also developed *The Towpath Companion*, a guidebook that provides detailed information about the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, including trailheads, lodging, restrooms, and points of interest. As of 2009, over 15,000 copies have been printed and distributed. OECA programming has also been featured in local media, such as the *Akron Beacon Journal* and *Inside Business*.

The OECA maintains a website ([www.ohioanderiecanalway.com](http://www.ohioanderiecanalway.com)) with materials about the Ohio & Erie Canalway, references on interpretation, and links to interpretive resources, such as the National Association for Interpretation, and other relevant sources. The OECA's website outlines multiple "Canal Adventures" with maps and information about activities that visitors can do on the Towpath Trail in each of the four counties. Recreational activities listed on the website include, hiking, cycling, running, bird watching, family outings, photography, questing, railroad activities and byway driving directions. The website also features "Canalway Samplers," describing multiple activities for different audiences on how to enjoy the Canalway in each of the four counties. *The Ohio & Erie Canalway Guide* is a resource available in print and on the OECA's website that details multiple recreational activities that participants can do along the Ohio & Erie Canal and Towpath Trail. Additionally, each of the founding organizations maintains their own websites with information about activities within their respective regions of the OENHC. The OECC's website ([www.ohioeriecanal.org](http://www.ohioeriecanal.org)) provides information about activities for visitors in the three southern counties, and the OCC's website ([www.ohiocanal.org](http://www.ohiocanal.org)) includes visitor information about activities in Cuyahoga County.

## **Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience Outcomes**

The outcomes we examined related to interpretation and education/visitor experience were:

- Visibility and the extent to which visitors use the Canal for the variety of activities for which it has been restored; and
- Engagement of visitors in activities centered on the OENHC resources.

### **Visibility**

Since 1996, the OECA's organized activities include environmental cleanups, trail races, cycling events, fishing derbies, the Take a Hike program, the Bike Aboard program, and the Countryside Conservancy Farmer's Market. Activities include events/programs that do not occur every year,



such as Canal Adventure, Canalway Symposium, and the Labor & Industry art show. OECA offered financial assistance to launch these programs, and as they have grown, these programs have been supported by additional funding sources in the community. The Towpath Marathon has consistent registration of approximately 2,600 runners. Table 3.6 displays the estimated numbers of participants who have engaged in these activities per year.

Table 3.6 Number of Participants in OECA Events<sup>7</sup>

Year	OECA Interpretation and education/visitor experience Events	Number of Participants
1996	RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor	1500
1997	Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor	1995
1998	Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor	1825
1999	Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor	3175
2000	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Corridor, Byway Blitz, Canal Adventure	5300
2001	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Corridor, Byway Blitz, Canalway	6990
2002	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor, Byway Blitz, Canalway Connection Bus – outreach, Towpath Trek	7835
2003	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor, Byway Blitz, Towpath Trek, Canoe Adventure, Healthy Steps, Canal Adventure, Final Mile	6585
2004	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Tour Du Corridor, Byway Blitz, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Healthy Steps	6330
2005	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Cycle Canalway,, Byway Blitz, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Healthy Steps	12,940
2006	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Cycle Canalway,, Byway Blitz, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Canal Adventure, Final Mile, Canalway Symposium, Healthy Steps	15,716
2007	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Cycle Canalway,, Byway Blitz, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Healthy Steps Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Bike Aboard, Labor & Industry art show	24,800
2008	History Hikes, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Cycle Canalway,, Byway Blitz, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Bike Aboard, Labor & Industry art show, Healthy Steps	41,649
2009	Take A Hike, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Cycle Canalway,, Byway Blitz, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Bike Aboard, Healthy Steps	48,538
2010	Take A Hike, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Cycle Canalway,, Byway Blitz, Healthy Steps, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Bike Aboard, Towpath 10-10 race, Towpath 10-10 Expo	63,950

<sup>7</sup> Numbers of participants were estimated based on coordinating entity attendance records, including registration for events.

<b>2011</b>	<b>Take A Hike, Fishing Derby, RiverSweep, Towpath Marathon, Marathon Expo, Byway Blitz, Healthy Steps, Canoe Adventure, Towpath Trek, Tour Du Towpath, Countryside Farmer's Market, Bike Aboard, Towpath 10-10 race, Towpath 10-10 Expo, Towpath Half Marathon, Towpath Half Marathon Expo</b>	<b>54,203</b>
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In examining individual events, the attendance of the farmer's market has increased from 6,746 in 2005 to 29,595 in 2011. See Table 3.7 for more detail in farmer's market attendance.

**Table 3.7      Yearly Visitors to the Farmer's Market**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>6,746</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>9,276</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>12,223</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>13,482</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>17,465</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>27,983</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>29,595</b>

Table 3.8 displays yearly participation for the Bike Aboard program. It should be noted that in 2011 of the Bike Aboard Program, the railroad was shut down for 6 weeks due to track construction, which may reflect its lower numbers compared to other years.

**Table 3.8      Yearly Participation in the Bike Aboard Program**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>5,849</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>18,252</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>20,673</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>23,776</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>11,968</b>

With respect to visibility, key informants interviewed noted the importance of these events in increasing awareness of the natural and educational resources available near the Ohio & Erie Canal to residents and visitors alike.

## Engaging Visitors

During our site visit, we obtained qualitative indicators that suggest the area is attracting and engaging residents and visitors. Key informant reports, as well as interviews with individuals on the trail, point to the popularity of the canal as a destination for exercise and fitness. Several business leaders interviewed indicated that the canal provided a good “quality of life” experience for their employees, and that they encouraged their workers to use the canal resources and Towpath Trail for wellness activities. Business leaders indicated that they used the positive outdoor recreational activities associated with the canal as a way to recruit employees to their companies.

Of the 24 intercept interviews conducted, the majority of interviewees were local residents. Three interviewees were from other regions of Ohio, and one was from out of state. A frequent comment in intercept interviews conducted on the Towpath Trail in Akron and the Canal Reservation in Cleveland was that the Towpath Trail was accessible and an enjoyable place to exercise and socialize with others. Interviewees reported that they regularly used the trail for walking, cycling, fishing, and being outside in nature. We observed more than 50 people using the trail on a weekday in Akron and more than 20 using the trail in Cleveland. Several interview informants in Akron noted that they used the trail regularly on their lunch breaks. Two interviewees indicated that they were involved with the Healthy Steps program and that they used the Towpath Trail regularly. Several interviewees in Cleveland noted the value of having the trail as a resource in their urban neighborhood. They noted that many individuals living in Cleveland would not have access to nature or outdoor recreational activities if it were not for the trail. Several noted that the trail was a safe place to travel in the city as a pedestrian. Most interviewees reported that they were familiar with the Canal and its history. While only three individuals reported being familiar with the OHCOENHC, the majority of interviewees reported using resources promoted by the OECA, including the historic scenic railroad, the interpretive signage on the trail, and brochures at the Canalway visitor’s center.

The stakeholders interviewed, including city government officials and representatives from community organizations, noted how improvements in public and private communities along the Canal led to community pride and improved quality of life. Interview respondents from rural communities in Tuscarawas County indicated that if people wanted to participate in outdoor recreational activities, they had to travel outside the county. Now, they reported that their residents can use the trail without having to leave the area, and they see it as a community resource.

Individuals in urban areas of Cuyahoga County indicated that the Canal and the revitalization projects that were associated with the Canal provided residents with a sense of pride in the area.

With the decline of the steel mill industry in Cleveland and the resulting reduction in population, several interviewees noted the importance of the Canal as providing a unifying feature for communities. Stakeholders in Cleveland noted that urban residents use the trail as a place for recreation and a source for transportation. They indicated that the Canal and the Towpath Trail brought recreational activities commonly enjoyed in the suburbs to urban residents, such as fishing, canoeing, and hiking.

Stakeholder interviews also indicated that the Towpath Trail allowed residents to visit counties they had never been to before and helped them explore new areas within their own state. It was noted that residents in communities such as Canal Fulton, Bolivar, Akron and Cleveland may not have had much contact with one another before; however, as one respondent noted, the Canal, the Towpath Trail and the Heritage Area designation served to “bring people together” because using the trail allows for a convenient way to travel between counties and towns in the OENHC. The trail also serves as a common point of reference and common goal for recreational and tourism planning for community and regional partners.

### **3.2.4 Community and Economic Development**

The Ohio and Erie Canalway Community and Economic Development activities highlight the Community and Economic Development goals outlined in the Management Plan, which are to, “promote the use of economic incentives to encourage compatible development that will enhance the resources of the Canalway; encourage communities and jurisdictions along the Canalway to adopt measures to support appropriate uses and compatible development adjacent to the Canal and its associate resources; unify and strengthen connections between communities and neighborhoods and promote regional collaboration; and take advantage of the unique economic potentials that will be created through OENHC’s extensive trail and transportation systems, including developing means and methods to support visitor use through state-of-the-art information systems.” In addition, the community and economic development activities are consistent with the Public Law 104-333 to “encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations.”

The OECA activities that have been conducted under the general rubric of economic development are consistent with many of the original objectives outlined in the Management Plan. These activities encompass those that have direct and indirect economic impact and include:

- Supporting the development and investment in improvements to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and other structures in communities surrounding the Canal; and
- Developing programs that promote the three transportation systems in OENHC, the Towpath Trail, the Scenic Byway and the Scenic Railroad

## Description of Activities

### Supporting Development and Investment

As noted above, under Resource Conservation, the OECA has been involved with providing grant funding to help restore and revitalize sites within the OENHC boundaries. As indicated in the Corridor Management Plan, OENHC includes many national and locally recognized historic districts, properties and settings that are relevant to Canalway history. These areas include Journey Gateways, which are important nodes where OENHC users are provided information on experiencing the Canalway. The OECA has worked to help support the development of these areas through the grants program.

For example, in 2006, the OECA was involved with the dedication of Steelyard Commons in Cleveland, Ohio. Through a community partnership, including Interstate Development Corporation, Cleveland Metroparks, the Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County Engineer, and elected officials, a 2-mile section of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail was opened and complemented the \$120 million mixed use development area along the Cuyahoga River. Similarly in 2007, the OECA was involved with the dedication of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and Bridge at Fort Laurens in Bolivar, Ohio. Working in partnership with the Tuscarawas County Commissioners, Tuscarawas County Park Department, Tuscarawas County Engineer, Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Historical Society, Village of Bolivar, Village of Zoar and elected officials, a linkage in the development of the 101-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail was completed with the dedication of the \$2,300,000 trail and bridge over Route I-77. The OECA has provided grant funding to partners throughout the OENHC, which serve as seed money for partner organizations to seek out matching funds from state and local sources. The coordinating entity reported that the NHA designation and seed money provide an incentive for other organizations to contribute funds to projects funded by the OECA.

## **Transportation Linkages**

The OECA worked to develop three transportation elements of the OENHC and promote linkages between communities, and as a result increase economic development within communities through their connection. The first link is the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. The Towpath Trail is designed to tie the Lakefront in Cleveland through the length of the OENHC down to New Philadelphia, providing access to walkers, runners, and cyclists. The second link is the historic railroad, providing excursion passenger rail service from Cleveland to Akron and Canton. The third link is the state's designated Scenic Byway designed to provide an automobile linkage from New Philadelphia to Cleveland.

As development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail continues, there are efforts within neighboring communities to extend connector trails to nearby areas, such as Canton, so that users of the Towpath Trail have access to many more communities and neighborhoods in Ohio. The vision of the Towpath Trail includes a number of “connector trails” that creates a trail network. The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, associated with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, runs through the National Heritage Area south through Akron to Canton, Ohio. Its final northern destination is downtown Cleveland, near the proposed Canal Basin Park.

The Ohio & Erie Canalway scenic byway approximates travel alongside the historic path of the Ohio & Erie Canal. The byway preserves and follows the path of the Canal and along a 110-mile route through four counties and 58 communities in the National Heritage Area. The OECA often promotes ways that visitors can use the three linking transportation systems to participate in activities and visit sites within the OENHC.

## **Economic and Community Development Outcomes**

### **Fostering Economic Development**

The OECA grant investments in partner communities leveraged financial resources from a diverse set of sources. Almost all stakeholder interviews indicated that the revitalization of the Canal, the Towpath Trail and other areas has spurred economic development in communities. For example, business leaders reported they believed that the development of the Ohio & Erie Canal and Towpath Trail have contributed to economic revitalization of Canal cities, such as Akron and Cleveland, which were challenged by the decline of the steel industry. They indicate that the positive development of the Towpath Trail led to businesses starting in downtown areas and main streets. In rural areas of the OENHC, respondents reported that the Canal and the Towpath Trail has brought

visitors and regional tourism and enhanced the economic development of their towns. New housing developments have been introduced along the routing of the Towpath Trail and its connector trails. Local businesses also benefit from partnering with the OECA because their services are promoted through their work with OECA projects. For example, the Canal Fulton Livery is a small business that provides boating services for OECA canoeing events. Respondents noted that the exposure and facilitation provided by the OECA has increased opportunities for local businesses along the Canal.

A local developer built Steelyard Commons in Cleveland on an area of land that was formerly owned by a steel company in an underserved community. One of the Co-Directors of the coordinating entity was involved with conversations with multiple Cleveland partners about how the land was going to be developed, as the property ran through the OENHC. With input from the OECA, a private developer restored the area into a shopping location for the community, preserved the steel yard heritage of the area (retaining steel artifacts as interpretive pieces at the shopping area) and kept a section of the Towpath Trail by the shopping area. The OECA facilitated a process whereby the increase in property taxes as a result of the development were captured through a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district that allowed those funds to be placed in a segregated account to be used for the construction of the Towpath Trail in Cleveland. This project not only preserved the trail and the Steelyard heritage of the area, but it provided an economic development opportunity for the community.

In rural Tuscarawas County, a county commissioner reported that they required \$5 million to build the Towpath Trail and associated bridges over a highway to connect the trail. He indicated that the county has a total budget of \$19 million, and that a \$5 million investment would be too expensive for the county to afford. He stated that with the help of one of the OECA Co-Directors, they were able to leverage over \$5 million with funding from the OECA, in kind contributions, and local match.

In Cuyahoga County, the OECA partnered with the Slavic Village Community Development Corporation (CDC) both in conservation and in creating a connector trail through this economically challenged section of Cleveland. A representative of the Third Federal Bank (a CDC partner) indicated that the bank decided in 1997 to stay in the area as part of local redevelopment efforts. She noted that the Towpath Trail, which runs through the area the bank is redeveloping, is a major asset both for their employees and the health of the community. The Bank invested \$30 million in the expansion of the headquarters. Representatives from the bank and the CDC also noted that the trail engaged developers and the Third Federal Bank to invest in 95 new residence developments along



the trail, as the trail is seen as a critical neo-urban amenity, drawing employers and residents into the area and fostering redevelopment.

As noted earlier, evidence of OECA’s conservation and investment efforts are visible in the physical quality of the canal and in the restoration of the Towpath Trail and buildings along the Canal. The role that OECA played in these efforts was voiced by all key informants. Several stakeholders spoke about the positive impact of the restoration efforts on the value and significance of historic properties along the Canal.

### **3.3 NPS and OECA Relationship**

Cuyahoga Valley National Park has played a role within the OENHC since its 1996 legislative designation. The OENHC boundaries include Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and the two entities have had a complementary partnership relationship that began before the federal designation of the heritage area. The former Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (renamed Cuyahoga Valley National Park in 2000) indicated that he did not think the full mission of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park could be fully realized without extending the National Park from the City of Cleveland and the Lakefront area in the North to Akron in the South. The boundaries of the National Park remained the same, but the former Superintendent and other leaders in Ohio were involved in developing the framework for the National Heritage Area.

The partnership between Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the OECA is highlighted in the designating legislation, which indicates that upon request, “the Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area may provide to public and private organizations within the corridor (including the management entity for the corridor) such operational assistance as appropriate to support the implementation of the Corridor Management Plan, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.” Therefore, the legislation allows the National Park to conduct any activities within the National Heritage Area boundaries that could be conducted in the National Park upon request, except for land acquisition and law enforcement. Thus, the National Park is authorized to conduct activities, such as planning, construction, design, and interpretation in the National Heritage Area.

The National Park is involved in many activities within OENHC. For example, the National Park used NPS resources to plan for the redevelopment of the Mustill Store, including developing plans for the physical design of the area and providing staff from the National Park to provide interpretive

planning and materials in the Mustill Store. In interviews, the former Superintendent indicated that \$200,000 of NPS funds were used, and that this amount leveraged one million dollars in non-federal funds to complete the project. After the completion of the project, the Mustill Store was turned over to operating partners in the area. Cuyahoga Valley National Park was also involved with Canalway partners in constructing scenic railroad stations in Akron and Canton outside of the National Park but within OENHC boundaries. OECA also partnered with the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). This NPS planning and technical assistance program was involved in the feasibility study for the OENHC before authorization, and also provided technical assistance with OECA on the Scenic Byway and on trail efforts in Summit and Cuyahoga Counties.

The relationship between Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Ohio & Erie Canalway has evolved over time, and the park continues to play a key role in the development of the Ohio & Erie Canalway. Some of the areas of assistance include: managing the cooperative agreement, assisting with the signage and interpretive programs, and reviewing and monitoring NEPA and Section 106 compliance with the strategic initiative grant projects. Upon request, Cuyahoga Valley National Park can provide technical assistance and support to partners with the OENHC, and this is coordinated by the Ohio & Erie Canalway administration. In addition, Ohio & Erie Canalway administration meet regularly with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Superintendent and the Superintendent is an Ex Officio Member of the Management Entity.

The current Superintendent is an active planner with the partners working to complete the Towpath Trail in the Cleveland area. The CVNP Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services has always been an active partner in OECA interpretation and education, having been involved in writing the Communication Plan with the OECA, and is a regular attendee at OECA Board meetings. The CVNP Chief provides interpretive services for the OECHNA, as well as Canalway partners. This individual expressed an interest in a more active level of partnership in interpretation activities, as the level of intensity have varied with different [projects over the years. NPS has authority to manage the budget and monetary resources going through the OENHC. The Executive Directors and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park's Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services manage the audits to maintain economic sustainability.

### 3.4 Summary

**The Evaluation determined that over the last 15 years, the OECA has addressed each of its legislated purposes and goals outlined in the management plan through the federal resources provided.** The OECA has worked closely with the NHA regional liaison and other NPS entities, garnering additional support for activities throughout the OENHC. The OECA provides leadership and support through provision of technical assistance, consultation, grant based partnerships and strategic planning. Successful outcomes have been documented in the five strategy areas of:

- Regional Planning for Development and Investment;
- Resource Conservation;
- Interpretation and Education/Visitor Experience; and
- Community and Economic Development.

## **Section 4: Public/Private Investments in OENHC and their Impact**

The legislation that created the OENHC, as amended by Congress in 2008, mandated the following concerning federal appropriations to OECA:

IN GENERAL —There is authorized to be appropriated under this title not more than \$1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Not more than a total of \$15,000,000 may be appropriated for the Partnership under this title.

50 PERCENT MATCH —Federal funding provided under this title, after the designation of this Partnership, may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of any assistance or grant provided or authorized under this title.

In this section of the document, we describe the public and private investments that support OENHC activities, determine if the OENHC coordinating entity, OECA, meets legislative requirements with regard to additional investments required, and summarize the ways in which OECA makes use of heritage area investments. As noted in Section 1.4.4, the OECA, as the OENHC coordinating entity and the recipient of NPS Heritage Partnership Program Funds (HPP), is the central focus of this evaluation and the financial analysis presented in this section. The OECA was established by two founding non-profit organizations – the Ohio Canal Corridor (OCC) and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (OECC). The OECC and OCC staff that perform activities to support the coordinating entity administrative and program goals are referred to as the Ohio and Erie Canalway Administration. The OECA itself has no paid staff. Staff of the OCC and OECC perform administrative and program activities through technical assistance grants from the OECA. The OCC and the OECC conduct many activities and fund-raising events under the fiscal and administrative direction of their respective Directors and Boards. Though most OCC and OECC activities support the mission of the OENHC, their fiscal and administrative accountability are separate from those of the OECA.

### **4.1 Investments in OENHC Activities**

The financial investments that support OENHC activities can be divided into the following categories:

- Federal NPS Funding — Funding provided to OECA through NPS since 1998; and

- OENHC Non-Federal Funding — All non-federal funding, grants, contributions, and donations, made directly to OECA to help meet its mission and count towards match requirements. These funds include monies from the State of Ohio, local governmental entities, individual contributions, foundations and corporate sponsorships.

OECA's audited financial statements indicate that between 1998 and 2010, over \$11 million in financial resources were directed toward OENHC-related activities. Table 4.1 presents more detail on the direct financial support for OECA. In addition to NPS funds, the OECA also received funding from the State of Ohio, corporate sponsors, foundations, private donations and nonprofit organizations (e.g., the Knight Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, Gar Foundation).

Table 4.1 Direct Financial Investments in OECA, Total and by Year in US Dollars

Year	Federal - NPS	State/Local	Private - Individual	Foundation & Non-Profit	Corporate Sponsors	In-Kind	Misc	Total
1998	\$409,614					\$135,125	\$500	\$545,239
1999	\$638,100	\$100,000		\$210,000		\$87,874	\$2,912	\$1,038,886
2000	\$706,554				\$5,000	\$64,854	\$4,403	\$780,811
2001	\$922,142			\$45,000		\$72,784	\$855	\$1,040,781
2002	\$1,046,648	\$4,000				\$96,795	\$246	\$1,147,689
2003	\$1,030,920					\$102,682	\$169	\$1,133,771
2004	\$835,951					\$54,840	\$23	\$890,814
2005	\$942,718		\$9,999	\$30,000		\$37,658		\$1,020,375
2006	\$1,058,641		\$57,727			\$45,529	\$100	\$1,161,997
2007	\$436,296		\$9,999	\$3,000		\$55,869		\$505,164
2008	\$566,199		\$1,414			\$33,923		\$601,536
2009	\$835,406		\$11,625	\$200,000		\$10,250	\$186	\$1,057,467
2010	\$891,612		\$5,494			\$17,000	\$1,365	\$915,471
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,320,801</b>	<b>\$104,000</b>	<b>\$96,258</b>	<b>\$488,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$815,183</b>	<b>\$10,759</b>	<b>\$11,840,001</b>

By Congressional instruction, OECA must match its federal assistance equally with non-federal dollars. To do this, the expectation is that the organization will leverage its federal assistance funds to secure additional funding in support of its mission. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the NPS funds, matching funds (non-federal revenue, this is sum of non-federal funds in Table 4.1), and external matching contributions, which are the match that partner grantees submitted to comply with requirements for grants from the OECA. These external matching contributions were expressly used for the Federal match and are not revenue for the coordinating entity. The external matching contributions in 2006 and 2010 were higher than they were in other years due to the type of projects that were undertaken in those years. A number of trail projects were completed in 2006 and 2010 that had significant matching funds. The year 2010 also reflects the completion of the Richard Howe House which required significant matching funds.

**Table 4.2 Overview of Federal Funds, Matching Funds and External Matching Contributions**

<b>Year</b>	<b>NPS Funds</b>	<b>Matching Funds</b>	<b>External Matching Contributions</b>
<b>1998</b>	\$409,614	\$135,625	\$577,852
<b>1999</b>	\$638,100	\$400,786	\$1,581,965
<b>2000</b>	\$706,554	\$74,257	\$1,348,328
<b>2001</b>	\$922,142	\$118,639	\$3,351,065
<b>2002</b>	\$1,046,648	\$101,041	\$899,105
<b>2003</b>	\$1,030,920	\$102,851	\$2,140,301
<b>2004</b>	\$835,951	\$54,863	\$1,753,219
<b>2005</b>	\$942,718	\$77,657	\$1,657,441
<b>2006</b>	\$1,058,641	\$103,356	\$8,014,307
<b>2007</b>	\$436,296	\$68,868	\$1,110,655
<b>2008</b>	\$566,199	\$35,337	\$2,183,647
<b>2009</b>	\$835,406	\$222,061	\$3,471,761
<b>2010</b>	\$891,612	\$23,859	\$6,972,083
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,320,801</b>	<b>\$1,519,200</b>	<b>\$35,061,729</b>

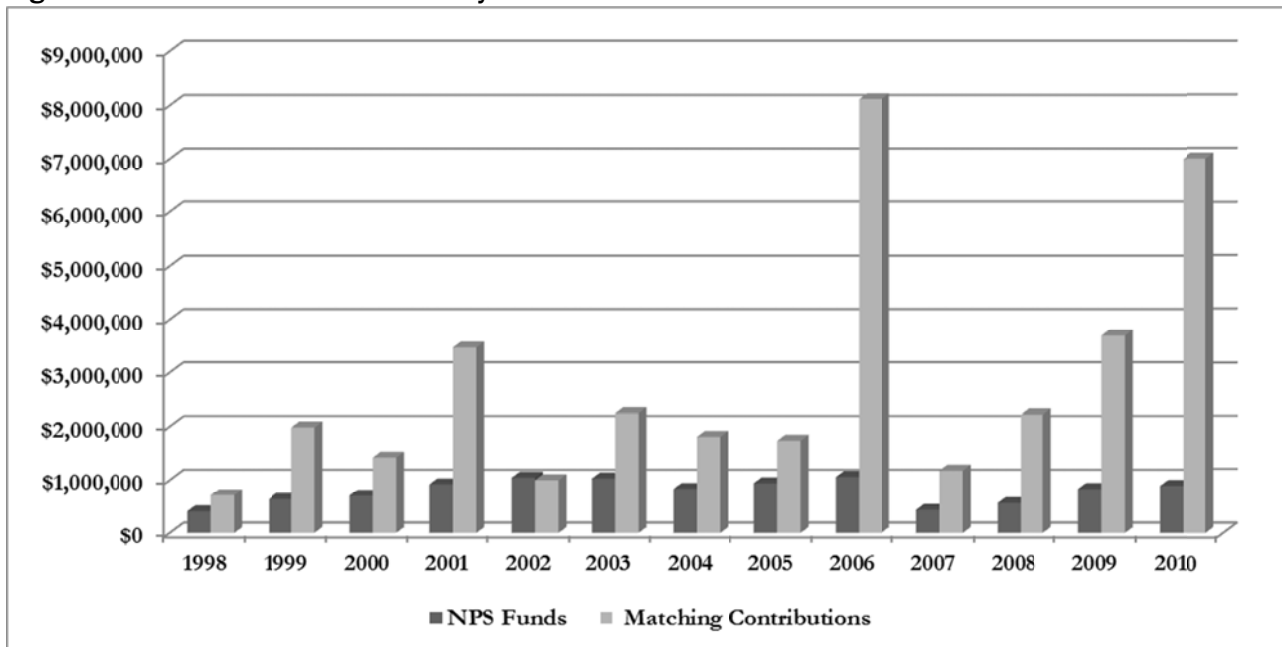
Table 4.3 below shows the NPS amount expended, the total match dollars available (i.e., the sum of matching funds and external matching contributions), and the match ratio. According to Table 4.3, OECA has satisfied the federal regulations by matching all funding provided by NPS by more than 50% of funds. To date, the organization has raised over \$36.5 million in matching contributions compared to the \$10.3 million granted by NPS. In 2006 and 2010, large amounts of matching funds were secured compared to the NPS funds awarded that year, with \$8,117,663 of matching funds

obtained in 2006 and \$6,995,942 obtained in 2010. Figure 4.1 presents a graph of the match results by year.

**Table 4.3 OECA Match Results and Match Ratio by Year in US Dollars**

<b>Year</b>	<b>NPS Funds</b>	<b>Matching Contributions (Match + External Match)</b>	<b>Match Ratio</b>
<b>1998</b>	\$409,614	\$713,477	1.74
<b>1999</b>	\$638,100	\$1,982,751	3.11
<b>2000</b>	\$706,554	\$1,422,585	2.01
<b>2001</b>	\$922,142	\$3,469,704	3.76
<b>2002</b>	\$1,046,648	\$1,000,146	0.96
<b>2003</b>	\$1,030,920	\$2,243,152	2.18
<b>2004</b>	\$835,951	\$1,808,082	2.16
<b>2005</b>	\$942,718	\$1,735,098	1.84
<b>2006</b>	\$1,058,641	\$8,117,663	7.67
<b>2007</b>	\$436,296	\$1,179,523	2.70
<b>2008</b>	\$566,199	\$2,218,984	3.92
<b>2009</b>	\$835,406	\$3,693,822	4.42
<b>2010</b>	\$891,612	\$6,995,942	7.85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,320,801</b>	<b>\$36,580,929</b>	<b>3.54</b>
<b>AVERAGE MATCH RATIO</b>			<b>3.41</b>

**Figure 4.1 OECA Match Results by Year**





## 4.2 Use of Financial Resources

The OECA uses funds provided by the NPS to support its programmatic and operational expenses. As seen in Table 4.3, approximately 23% or \$10.3 million available to OECA were from federally allocated NPS funds and 77% or \$36.5 million were from non-federal funds and external matching contributions. The external matching contributions were available to the OECA from different partner organizations that matched grant awards provided to them to fund specific activities that support their mission and goals. For example, in 2006, approximately \$8 million in external matching contributions went towards the development of the Buckhorn Creek trail in Tuscarawas County, Summit County trail and greenway plans and the Richard Howe House renovation efforts.

OECA expenditures per year are displayed in Table 4.4. Operational expenses include insurance, photography and supplies, utilities and phone, and other administrative expenses. Programmatic expenses are those resources dedicated to OECA activities, such as resource conservation, interpretation and education/visitor experience projects, the development of the Towpath Trail, rehabilitation of historic structures and the preservation of natural resources along the Canalway. Programmatic expenses also include staff salaries used to promote OECA activities. Examples of the types of programmatic activities funded are provided in Section 3. Since 1998, OECA has spent \$209,014 in operational expenses and \$11,439,944 in program expenses. Program expenses have fluctuated depending on the type and scope of projects undertaken. In total, the programmatic and operational expenses spent sums to approximately \$11.6 million.

**Table 4.4 OECA Spending by Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Operational Expenses</b>	<b>Program Expenses</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1998</b>	\$6,275	\$538,479	\$545,204
<b>1999</b>	\$17,340	\$968,634	\$985,974
<b>2000</b>	\$11,539	\$814,869	\$826,408
<b>2001</b>	\$6,763	\$1,033,850	\$1,040,613
<b>2002</b>	\$17,115	\$1,130,328	\$1,147,443
<b>2003</b>	\$14,348	\$1,119,254	\$1,133,602
<b>2004</b>	\$15,568	\$875,201	\$890,792
<b>2005</b>	\$23,847	\$996,528	\$1,020,375
<b>2006</b>	\$18,425	\$1,143,472	\$1,161,897
<b>2007</b>	\$21,246	\$483,918	\$505,164
<b>2008</b>	\$20,536	\$581,000	\$601,536
<b>2009</b>	\$16,013	\$841,268	\$857,281
<b>2010</b>	\$19,549	\$913,143	\$932,692
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$209,014</b>	<b>\$11,439,944</b>	<b>\$11,648,981</b>

Table 4.5 below depicts how the program expenditures (\$11,439,944) break out over the four Strategy Areas. For program expenses, the largest expenditures have occurred in the areas of resource conservation (42% of funding) and interpretation and education/visitor experience and services (28%). Resource conservation activities include the acquisition of property, the development and planning of the Towpath trail in four counties, and the adoption of new parks over time. OENHC events, such as the hosting of history hikes, races, and canal clean ups are part of the Interpretation and education/visitor experience strategy area. Other strategy areas include community and economic development which accounts for 21% and regional planning accounts for 9%. Community and economic development activities include the investment of Journey Gateways and other investment in community development. Regional planning consists of the activities related to developing the management, communication and signage plans.

Figure 4.2 and Table 4.6 below further illustrate OECA program expenditures by strategy area.

Table 4.5 OECA Program Expenditures by Strategy Area and Year, 1998-2010

Strategy Area	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Regional Plans</b>	162,580	585,877	98,606	25,271	0	0	118,655	0	1,952	0	0	0	0	992,941
<b>Resource Conservation</b>	281,853	57,911	422,073	578,573	542,338	730,986	126,743	440,107	625,547	196,360	205,622	261,551	372,398	4,842,062
<b>Interpretation and education/visitor experience</b>	1,916	11,643	118,065	128,816	317,451	306,766	230,441	383,064	338,556	287,558	265,091	316,904	504,268	3,210,539
<b>Community and Economic Development</b>	92,130	313,203	176,125	301,190	270,539	81,502	399,362	173,357	177,417	0	110,287	262,813	36,477	2,394,402
<b>Total</b>	<b>538,479</b>	<b>968,634</b>	<b>814,869</b>	<b>1,033,850</b>	<b>1,130,328</b>	<b>1,119,254</b>	<b>875,201</b>	<b>996,528</b>	<b>1,143,472</b>	<b>483,918</b>	<b>581,000</b>	<b>841,268</b>	<b>913,143</b>	<b>11,439,944</b>

Figure 4.2 OECA Expenditures by Strategy Area, 1998-2010



Table 4.6 OECA Programmatic Spending by Strategy Area, 1998-2010

Strategy Area	Total	Percentage
Regional Plans	\$992,941	9%
Resource Conservation	\$4,842,062	42%
Interpretation and education/Visitor Experience	\$3,210,539	28%
Community and Economic Development	\$2,394,402	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,439,944</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.3 Impact of Investments

The evaluation determined that the investments of NPS funds made by OECA support the goals of the original legislation and management plan, and the impacts of these investments fulfill the purpose of the legislation. Based on our analysis, OECA has successfully met the 50 percent federal funding match requirements over the entire funding period and annually since 1998. As seen in Table 4.3, OECA has been able to successfully leverage the NPS dollars to attract funding from other local sources and to generate its own revenue. Of the funds available to OECA since 1998, approximately 23% or \$10.3 million were from NPS funds and 77% or \$36.5 million were from non-federal funds and external matching contributions. In addition, the evaluation concludes that the OECA has been fiscally responsible in expending all funds for programmatic and operational activities as it pertains to the authorizing legislation and management goals. The following section further examines the financial sustainability of OECA and other aspects of the OENHC's sustainability.

## Section 5: OENHC Sustainability

### 5.1 Defining Sustainability

The third question guiding the evaluation, derived from legislation (P.L. 110-229) asks “How do the coordinating entity’s management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to the NHA’s sustainability?” To guide the assessment of sustainability, we have adopted the definition developed by NPS, with the assistance of stakeholders from a number of National Heritage Areas. Sustainability for an NHA is as follows:

“...the National Heritage Area coordinating entity’s continuing ability to work collaboratively and reciprocally with federal, state, community, and private partners through changing circumstances to meet its mission for resource conservation and stewardship, interpretation, education, recreation and economic development of nationally significant resources.” Critical components of sustainability for a National Heritage Area include, but are not limited to:

- The coordinating entity and NPS honoring the legislative mandate of the NHA;
- The coordinating entity’s management capacity, including governance, adaptive management (such as strategic planning), staffing, and operations;
- Financial planning and preparedness including the ongoing ability to leverage resources in support of the local network of partners;
- Partnerships with diverse community stakeholders, including the heritage area serving as a hub, catalyst, and/or coordinating entity for on-going capacity building; communication; and collaboration among local entities;
- Program and project stewardship where the combined investment results in the improved economic value and ultimately long-term quality of life of that region; and
- Outreach and marketing to engage a full and diverse range of audiences.

In the following sections, we address each of these components, drawing on the data provided in previous sections.

## 5.2 Legislative Mandate of the OENHC

As stated in the legislation, the purpose of the OENHC is to:

- Preserve and interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar;
- Encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations;
- Provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor; and
- Authorize the Secretary to provide financial and technical assistance to the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing a Corridor Management Plan.

## 5.3 OENHC's Management Capacity

### 5.3.1 Governance, Leadership, and Oversight

#### Board Members

As discussed in Section 2, the OENHC is governed by the Ohio and Erie Canalway Association (OECA). The OECA Board consists of 18 members representing all four counties within the National Heritage Area and one ex-officio member from Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The OECA Board has six appointees from the OECC Board, six appointees from the OCC Board, and six at-large appointees. The OCC and the OECC conduct many activities and fund-raising events under the fiscal and administrative direction of their respective Directors and Boards. Though most OCC and OECC activities support the mission of the OENHC, their fiscal and administrative accountability are separate from those of the OECA. Many OECA board members' occupations are in areas of interest to the OENHC (e.g., engineers, accountants, attorneys, representatives from business and park entities, and local governmental officials). The current roster of the Board of Directors is provided in Appendix 5.

Although there are likely a multitude of criteria that can be used to assess and evaluate a Board of Directors, one set of criteria that helps in assessing sustainability is the extent to which the Board of Directors has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities and fulfills these roles. Typically, boards of nonprofit organizations have three areas of responsibility (e.g., Martinelli, 2010).<sup>8</sup> These include planning and policy development; community and organizational development; and fundraising and support development. Each of these areas is reviewed for the OECA Board.

### Planning and Policy Development

Planning and policy development includes determining and refining, as needed, an organization’s mission and vision, and developing policies, especially in response to major issues that are having or could have significant impact on the organization and its constituencies. The OECA Board plays an active role in OENHC affairs, meeting every other month and operating seven committees to assist in exploring and crafting OENHC policy and activities, as seen in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 OENHC Committee/Task Force Structure**

<b>Committee/Task Force</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Audit Committee</b>	<b>Oversees the coordination of the annual audit for the organization, including a pre and post meeting with the auditors and organizing the presentation to the Board of Directors</b>
<b>Development Committee</b>	<b>Assists with the creation and implementation of the fund development strategy for the projects and programs of the Ohio &amp; Erie Canalway Association</b>
<b>Executive Committee</b>	<b>Provides leadership for the organization and monitors the strategic issues of the Ohio &amp; Erie Canalway</b>
<b>Government and Public Relations Committee</b>	<b>Assists with the development and implementation of the strategy and relationship with local, state and federal agencies and elected officials</b>
<b>Public Information Committee</b>	<b>Provides assistance and support to the public information and outreach strategy to residents and visitors to the Ohio &amp; Erie Canalway</b>
<b>Strategic Initiatives Committee</b>	<b>Assists with the seed grant program and monitors the strategic initiative process to ensure projects align with Management Plan priorities and leverage significant match funding</b>
<b>Trusteeship Committee</b>	<b>Assists with the cultivation and education of Board Members, including Board orientations, handbook and tours of the Ohio &amp; Erie Canalway</b>

<sup>8</sup> For more information see <http://www.createthefuture.com/Board%20of%20Directors.htm>



These committees clarify the perceived and actual roles and responsibilities of the Board. The OECA Board has an ongoing role in setting policy and ensuring that OECA activities fall within the goals and mission outlined in the Corridor Management Plan. In interviews, Board Members noted that sustainability was seen as an overall goal of the Board and was a priority for all committee members. As can be seen in Table 5.1, the Board takes an active role in the financial, strategic planning, business development responsibilities of the OECA. The involvement of OCC and OECC Board members on the OECA Board build on the mutual benefits that joint planning brings the OENHC. Informants from partner organizations noted that they and the OECA share common missions and that their activities garner perception of mutual benefits.

In interviews, several Board Members discussed the importance of reducing reliance on federal funding. OECA partners with local businesses, corporations, city and county park representatives, and city and county planners on the economic development of communities within the Canalway. The OECA is viewed as a collaborative partner in this effort, and much of the OENHC's efforts across strategy areas are viewed as supporting economic development, which is principally seen as increasing the number of local and out-of-state visitors to the area and expanding heritage tourism to Canalway communities.

## **Community and Organizational Development**

Community and organizational development can include a number of different activities, such as broadening the organization's base of support in the community; outreach to the community to identify new issues, opportunities and community needs; and maintaining accountability to the public, funders, members, and clients. The OECA Board has been involved from the outset in ensuring that the OENHC is informed by the community and is congruent with the goals of the community. Individuals from each of the four counties in the OENHC are included on the OECA Board to represent the county's interests and needs. Several interviewees stressed the role that the community played in providing input into the initial planning of the OENHC. Additionally, Board members reported having regular update meetings with the OECA Executive Directors and community partners to monitor the progress and updates of trail development and other program-related activities in the OENHC.

## **Fundraising and Support Development**

Fundraising and support development includes Board members giving personal time and money; developing donors, members, and supporters; leading and supporting fundraising campaigns and

events as well as maintaining accountability to donors and funders. The OECA Board is not involved with fundraising. The OECA Board has a Strategic Initiatives Committee with responsibilities that include leveraging match funding. The two founding organizations, the OECC and the OCC, are the entities that manage fundraising within the community to support OENHC-related activities. The two organizations identify new sources of funding, work to identify potential funders, and coordinate program related activities that raise funds for the OENHC (e.g., races, cycling events, etc.). There remains the possibility that the two founding organizations, which raise funds on their own, could use these resources to continue OENHC operations and programming.

### **Executive Directors**

The two current Executive Directors of the OENHC are the Director of the OCC and the President and CEO of the OECC. These two individuals have been involved in development of the OENHC since 1996. They work in partnership to coordinate goals for the OENHC. Interviewees throughout the four counties were consistent in rating the Executive Directors' strategic planning and facilitation skills as valuable to the OENHC and the implementation of its mission. Several informants cited strategic planning and consultation as key resources to the OENHC, as they received assistance in identifying additional funding sources to promote their mission and objectives, or were able to leverage additional funds from modest OECA investments.

Several partner respondents noted that the structure of three nonprofit organizations involved in the OECA's management structure (rather than a single entity) was confusing and difficult to explain to funding, civic, corporate, and governmental communities, as well as to the larger public. Respondents noted that the three-pronged management system was implemented out of necessity because one organization was needed to be the coordinating entity for the OENHC and given the regional nature of both organizations, neither one had the infrastructure to manage the entire OENHC on their own. Respondents noted that the three pronged system operated well when the OENHC was initially formed and was successful at getting projects started, but that now the management system was at times cumbersome. Respondents indicated that the OECA is not always viewed as a stand-alone entity, but rather an extension of the two founding nonprofit organizations, and that as a result it was difficult to know which group was doing what. Other respondents noted, however, that the three-pronged management system was an effective strategy for implementing activities within the diverse regions of the Corridor. These respondents indicated that each of the two Co-Directors had long standing familiarity with the complex and varied state, local and federal partnerships and personnel operating in each of their respective regions of the OENHC, and that their regional knowledge of the opportunities available for growth and partnership was crucial to

promoting OENHC related efforts. A few partner respondents noted that the sustainability of the OENHC may be improved if only one organization is associated with leading NHA efforts and two regional offices provide support in their respective areas of the OENHC. The coordinating entity acknowledges the issue of organizational confusion and is working on a strategy to address concerns. The nonprofit organizations have decided that until key physical assets are constructed, the current management structure will be maintained to forward projects along the Ohio & Erie Canalway. The OECA has given dual authority to the two existing Directors of the founding organizations to manage the OECA as Co-Directors.

### **5.3.2. Staffing and Operations**

Three full-time staff members of the OECC/OCC operate to fulfill the mission of the OECA/OENHC. These staff members include Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, the Public Information Manager, and the Chief of Interpretation. The Strategic Initiatives Coordinator manages the OECA Strategic Initiatives program with community partners. The Public Information Manager acts as the public relations representative for the OECA and manages development of informational products, including the web site maps and Visitors Guide. The Chief of Interpretation for the OECC works with her counterpart at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and with the co-Executive Directors to assist partners in the design of interpretive materials, displays and other products and programs. The composition and size of the staff appear sufficient to meet the objectives of the OENHC and to manage and perform the variety of activities underway.

### **5.3.3 Strategic Planning and Adaptive Management**

The OECA Board and Management have been active in Strategic Planning and have engaged both community and governmental partners and consulting management groups in the creation of many Strategic Plans during the OENHC's existence. As detailed in Section 3, these activities include the original Corridor Management Plan, the Canalway Communications Plan, the Canalway Signage Plan, multiple trail and green space plans, as well as other planning activities in individual communities. Respondents interviewed acknowledge that the plans guide OECA's work, but that there is flexibility to make decisions about specific projects and whether they fit into the mission of the OENHC.

### **5.3.4 Monitoring and Record Keeping**

The OECA maintains fiscal documentation of grants awarded, match requirements, revenue sources and expenditures. Annual audits and annual performance reports that report information such as revenues from various funders, expenses paid to the grant program, expenses on technical assistance, and operational expenses were made available for our review. In addition, the OENHC provided a list of grant investments made in the OENHC and the matching funds.

## **5.4 OENHC Partnerships**

In Section 2.3 we provide information about the types of partnerships central to the operation of the OENHC. These include a variety of NPS entities, as well as State, federal and local governmental organizations, private organizations, county and city park associations, community organizations and business organizations throughout the OENHC. As documented throughout the earlier sections, OENHC partnerships are reciprocal in nature, with joint planning activities furthering the mission of the OENHC as well as of the partner organization. For example, partners have played a role in the construction and maintenance of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail after the OECA has provided seed funding for the trail's development. The OECA have an extensive network of partners that are engaged in their communities and have access to resources to become stewards of the project after OECA involvement is removed, which contributes to sustainability of the OENHC mission.

Interviewees note that the OECA grant funding for resources, planning and consultation often serve as seed investments that allow for additional funding from other sources. Interview respondents noted that having the NHA designation and NPS funding provides a “seat at the table” with community partners about project development. Many indicated that the amount provided by the grant funding is small compared to the private funding generated for the project, but that the initial OECA investment provides seed money to get projects started. Others partners indicated that the NHA designation brings “credibility and notoriety” when seeking out additional funding. An example of this is the Morgana Bluff project in the city of Cleveland. Access to the Morgana Run Trail in Cleveland became even easier with the recent completion of a trail spur, called “Morgana Bluff.” The spur creates an important connection for residents to reach shopping, work, school, and recreation throughout the neighborhood by way of the Morgana Run Trail. Representatives from Slavic Village involved with the project said that having the OECA funding in hand leveraged

funding from other contractors and community organizations for the project, and this credibility makes a contribution to leveraging resources.

## **5.5 Financial Sustainability, the Importance of NPS Funds, and the Importance of NHA Designation**

### **OENHC Coordinating Entity Need for Financial Resources**

As discussed above, the OECA Board and two Executive Directors have been active in planning for the sustainability of the OECA and OENHC. However, the funds raised by OECA (excluding NPS and external match funds) are not sufficient to cover the operational and program expenses of the OECA. Sustainability would likely require the two founding organizations to apply funds raised by their organizations to cover operational costs of the OECA in the case of loss of NPS funding.

### **OENHC Need for Financial Resources**

As noted earlier, there are several critical components to NHA sustainability, including financial sustainability. In order for an NHA to be financially sustainable it must have sufficient funds to cover its operating and programmatic expenses. Table 5.1 presents OECA's NPS funds received; non-NPS funds received; and total expenses by year. As the chart shows, the federal investment in OECA has ranged from a low of \$409,614 in its initial year of funding to a high of \$1,058,641 in 2006. The total received over the thirteen years is approximately \$10.3 million.

As was seen in Table 4.3, the OECA has been successful in drawing over \$36.5 million in matching funds for the operation of the OENHC during the fifteen years since authorization, receiving non-Federal funds, including state funds and private foundation funds. However, several interviewees noted that it is important to consider that funders are influenced by the presence of federal funds on the table. Reduction of federal funds may slow some activities; however, the basic structure of the organization and the OENHC would likely remain the same if the other sources of funding continue. The elimination of federal funds may significantly affect the OECA's ability to provide grant support to projects in the OENHC, particularly given local governments' limited financial capacities. The elimination of funding for the OENHC would also likely affect the ability for the OECA itself to generate financial support. Interviewees reported that losing all funding would reduce the leveraging effect of the current OECA funding model. There may be less incentive for investors to contribute to projects that require further funding, such as developing additional green

spaces, building connector trails to the Towpath, interpretation, and building economic growth for local business along the Towpath Trail. There is an attraction in the presence of the NHA designation and the federal funding support that interviewees felt gave credibility and purpose to a project. This in turn increased the value of other funders to become a partner in the initiative and provide resources for further development.

**Table 5.1 Federal Revenue, Matching Funds, Total Revenue and Total Expenses by Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Federal Revenue</b>	<b>Matching Funds</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
<b>1998</b>	\$409,614	\$135,625	\$545,239	\$545,204
<b>1999</b>	\$638,100	\$400,786	\$1,038,886	\$985,974
<b>2000</b>	\$706,554	\$74,257	\$780,811	\$826,408
<b>2001</b>	\$922,142	\$118,639	\$1,040,781	\$1,040,613
<b>2002</b>	\$1,046,648	\$101,041	\$1,147,689	\$1,147,443
<b>2003</b>	\$1,030,920	\$102,851	\$1,133,771	\$1,133,602
<b>2004</b>	\$835,951	\$54,863	\$890,814	\$890,792
<b>2005</b>	\$942,718	\$77,657	\$1,020,375	\$1,020,375
<b>2006</b>	\$1,058,641	\$103,356	\$1,161,997	\$1,161,897
<b>2007</b>	\$436,296	\$68,868	\$505,164	\$505,164
<b>2008</b>	\$566,199	\$35,337	\$601,536	\$601,536
<b>2009</b>	\$835,406	\$222,061	\$1,057,467	\$857,281
<b>2010</b>	\$891,612	\$23,859	\$915,471	\$932,692
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,320,801</b>	<b>\$1,519,200</b>	<b>11,840,001</b>	<b>\$11,648,981</b>

## 5.6 Sustainability Summary

The evaluation found that the OECA has a number of the components of sustainability in place. They have the necessary board and corporate administrative structures to support sustainability. The OECA does not engage in fundraising activities. However the two founding organizations have strong fundraising capacities, and the possibility remains that these resources could be used to continue OENHC programming if the federal funding were reduced.

Both the NPS funding and the NHA designation have been of value to OECA. The funding has provided flexibility, a consistent source of discretionary funds, and ability to leverage other resources. If NPS funding is reduced, the general view among those interviewed and close to the OECA is that activities related to new projects in the OENHC would likely be slowed, but the basic

structure of the organization would likely remain the same as long as other sources of funding (donations, foundation grants, fundraising) continue. If the NPS funding is discontinued, the general view is that this might reduce the incentive for other funding sources to contribute to projects in the OENHC.

The OENHC as a region would likely continue to be sustained if the federal funding were reduced or eliminated given the interest of partners and the two founding nonprofit organizations in cultivating the resources of the area. Many interviewees also noted the importance of the NHA designation and its contribution to the OENHC's success and sustainability. The NHA designation was also cited by informants as providing credibility and a sense of pride for Communities within the OENHC. Respondents note that the NHA designation has served to attract investors, both Government and private, as well as bringing credibility to joint ventures with partners in their efforts to further the goals of the OENHC.

## Appendix 1 Evaluation Legislation

Public Law 110–229  
110th Congress  
May 8, 2008

**An Act** to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service, and the Department of Energy, to implement further the Act approving the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America, to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008”.  
From P. L. 110-229, signed May 8, 2008:

### SEC. 462. EVALUATION AND REPORT.

(a) In General.--For the nine National Heritage Areas authorized in Division II of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for each National Heritage Area, the Secretary shall--  
(1) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area; and  
(2) prepare a report in accordance with subsection (c).

(b) Evaluation.--An evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1) shall (1) assess the progress of the local management entity with respect to

[[Page 122 STAT. 825]]

(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;  
(2) analyze the investments of Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities in each National Heritage Area to determine the impact of the investments; and  
(3) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.

(c) Report.--Based on the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the United States House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate. The report shall include recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the National Heritage Area.



**Subtitle E—Technical Corrections and Additions**

**SEC. 474. OHIO AND ERIE CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR  
TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.**

Title VIII of Division II of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–333) is amended—

- (1) by striking “Canal National Heritage Corridor” each place it appears and inserting “National Heritage Canalway”;
- (2) by striking “corridor” each place it appears and inserting “canalway”, except in references to the feasibility study and management plan;
- (3) in the heading of section 808(a)(3), by striking “CORRIDOR” and inserting “CANALWAY”;
- (4) in the title heading, by striking “**CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR**” and inserting “**NATIONAL HERITAGE CANALWAY**”;
- (5) in section 803—
  - (A) by striking paragraph (2);
  - (B) by redesignating paragraphs (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7) as paragraphs (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6), respectively; (C) in paragraph (2) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B)), by striking “808” and inserting “806”; and (D) in paragraph (6) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B)), by striking “807(a)” and inserting “805(a)”;
- (6) in the heading of section 804, by striking “**CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR**” and inserting “**NATIONAL HERITAGE CANALWAY**”;
- (7) in the second sentence of section 804(b)(1), by striking “808” and inserting “806”;
- (8) by striking sections 805 and 806;
- (9) by redesignating sections 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, and 812 as sections 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, and 810, respectively;
- (10) in section 805(c)(2) (as redesignated by paragraph (9)), by striking “808” and inserting “806”;
- (11) in section 806 (as redesignated by paragraph (9))—
  - (A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “Committee” and inserting “Secretary”;
  - (B) in the heading of subsection (a)(1), by striking “COMMITTEE” and inserting “SECRETARY”;
  - (C) in subsection (a)(3), in the first sentence of subparagraph (B), by striking “Committee” and inserting “management entity”;
  - (D) in subsection (e), by striking “807(d)(1)” and inserting “805(d)(1)”;
  - (E) in subsection (f), by striking “807(d)(1)” and inserting “805(d)(1)”;
- (12) in section 807 (as redesignated by paragraph (9)), in subsection (c) by striking “Cayohoga Valley National Recreation Area” and inserting “Cayohoga Valley National Park”;
- (13) in section 808 (as redesignated by paragraph (9))—
  - (A) in subsection (b), by striking “Committee or”; and
  - (B) in subsection (c), in the matter before paragraph (1), by striking “Committee” and inserting “management entity”; and
- (14) in section 809 (as redesignated by paragraph (9)), by striking “assistance” and inserting “financial assistance”.

## Appendix 2 Authorizing Legislation

Public Law 104–333  
104th Congress  
November 12, 1996

### An Act

To provide for the administration of certain Presidio properties at minimal cost to the Federal taxpayer, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

This Act may be cited as the “Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996”.

### **TITLE VIII—OHIO & ERIE CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR**

This title may be cited as the “Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Act of 1996”.

Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Act of 1996. 16 USC 461 note.

#### SEC. 802. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Ohio & Erie Canal, which opened for commercial navigation in 1832, was the first inland waterway to connect the Great Lakes at Lake Erie with the Gulf of Mexico via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and a part of a canal network in Ohio that was one of America’s most extensive and successful systems during a period in history when canals were essential to the Nation’s growth.

(2) The Ohio & Erie Canal spurred economic growth in the State of Ohio that took the State from near bankruptcy to the third most economically prosperous State in the Union in just 20 years.

(3) A 4-mile section of the Ohio & Erie Canal was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966 and other portions of the Ohio & Erie Canal and many associated structures were placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

(4) In 1974, 19 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal were declared nationally significant under National Park Service new area criteria with the designation of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

(5) The National Park Service found the Ohio & Erie Canal nationally significant in a 1975 study entitled “Suitability/Feasibility Study, Proposed Ohio & Erie Canal”.

(6) A 1993 Special Resources Study of the Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor conducted by the National Park Service entitled “A Route to Prosperity” has concluded that the corridor is eligible as a National Heritage Corridor.

(7) Local governments, the State of Ohio, and private sector interests have embraced the heritage corridor concept and desire to enter into partnership with the Federal Government to preserve, protect, and develop the corridor for public benefit.

(b) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of this title are—

(1) to preserve and interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within the 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor between Cleveland and Zoar;

(2) to encourage within the corridor a broad range of economic opportunities enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations;

(3) to provide a management framework to assist the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing an integrated Corridor Management Plan and in developing policies and programs that will preserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreation, and scenic resources of the corridor; and

(4) to authorize the Secretary to provide financial and technical assistance to the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, or combinations thereof, in preparing and implementing a Corridor Management Plan.

#### **SEC. 803. DEFINITIONS.**

For the purposes of this title:

(1) The term “corridor” means the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor established by section 804.

(2) The term “Committee” means the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Area Committee established by section 805.

(3) The term “Corridor Management Plan” means the management plan developed under section 808.

(4) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) The term “technical assistance” means any guidance, advice, help, or aid, other than financial assistance, provided by the Secretary of the Interior.

(6) The term “financial assistance” means funds appropriated by Congress and made available to the management entity for the purposes of preparing and implementing a Corridor Management Plan.

(7) The term “management entity” means the entity recognized by the Secretary pursuant to section 807(a) to receive, distribute, and account for Federal funds appropriated for the purposes of this title.

#### **SEC. 804. OHIO & ERIE CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the State of Ohio the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor.

(b) **BOUNDARIES.**—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The boundaries of the corridor shall be composed of the lands that are generally the route of the Ohio & Erie Canal from Cleveland to Zoar, Ohio, as depicted in the 1993 National Park Service Special Resources Study, “A Route to Prosperity”, subject to paragraph (2). The specific boundaries shall be those specified in the management plan submitted under section 808. The Secretary shall prepare a map of the corridor which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Director of the National Park Service.

(2) CONSENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—No privately owned property shall be included within the boundaries of the corridor unless the municipality in which the property is located agrees to be so included and submits notification of such agreement to the Secretary.

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The corridor shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of this title.

#### **SEC. 805. THE OHIO & ERIE CANAL NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMITTEE.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established a Committee to be known as the “Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Committee”, whose purpose shall be to assist Federal, State, and local authorities and the private sector in the preparation and implementation of an integrated Corridor Management Plan.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Committee shall be comprised of 21 members, as follows:

(1) Four individuals, appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, the Akron Regional Development Board, the Stark Development Board, and the Tuscarawas County Chamber of Commerce, who shall include one representative of business and industry from each of Ohio counties of Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, and Tuscarawas.

(2) One individuals, appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the Director of the Ohio Department of Travel and Tourism, who is a director of a convention and tourism bureau within the corridor.

(3) One individual, appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the Ohio Historic Preservation Officer, with knowledge and experience in the field of historic preservation.

(4) One individual, appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the Director of the National Park Service, with knowledge and experience in the field of historic preservation.

(5) Three individuals appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the county or metropolitan park boards in the Ohio counties of Cuyahoga, Summit, and Stark.

(6) Eight individuals appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the county commissioners or county chief executive of the Ohio counties of Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas, including—

(A) from each county, one representative of the planning offices of the county;

and

(B) from each county, one representative of a municipality in the county.

(7) Two individuals appointed by the Secretary after consideration of recommendations submitted by the Governor of Ohio, who shall be representatives of the Directors of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

(8) The Superintendent of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, ex officio.

(c) APPOINTMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), members of the Committee shall be appointed for terms of three years and may be reappointed.

(2) INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—The Secretary shall appoint the initial members of the Committee within 30 days after the date on which the Secretary has received all recommendations pursuant to subsection (b). Of the members first appointed—

(A) the members appointed pursuant to subsection (b)(6)(B) shall be appointed to a term of two years and may not be reappointed to a consecutive term; and

(B) the member appointed pursuant to subsection (b)(2) shall be appointed to a term of two years and may not be reappointed to a consecutive term.

(d) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—The chair and vice chair of the Committee shall be elected by the members of the Committee. The terms of the chair and vice chair shall be two years.

(e) VACANCY.—A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which their predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of such term. Any member of the Committee appointed for a definite term may serve after the expiration of their term until their successor has taken office.

(f) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation for their service on the Committee.

(g) QUORUM.—Eleven members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

(h) MEETINGS.—The Committee shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the chairperson or 11 of its members. Meetings of the Committee shall be subject to section 552b of title 5, United States Code (relating to open meetings).

(i) NOT TREATED AS ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The Committee shall not be treated as an Advisory Committee for purposes of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

**SEC. 806. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMITTEE.**

(a) HEARINGS.—The Committee may, for the purpose of carrying out this title, hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence, as the Committee considers appropriate. The Committee may not issue subpoenas or exercise any subpoena authority.

(b) BYLAWS.—The Committee may make such bylaws and rules, consistent with this title, as it considers necessary to carry out its functions under this title.

(c) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any member or agent of the Committee, if so authorized by the Committee, may take any action which the Committee is authorized to take by this title.

(d) CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Upon submission of a draft Corridor Management Plan to the Committee from the management entity, the Committee shall, within 60 days, review such plan for consistency with the purposes of this title and endorse the plan or return it to the management entity for revision. Upon endorsement of the Corridor Management Plan, the Committee shall submit such plan to the Secretary for approval pursuant to section 808.

(e) **REVIEW OF BUDGET.**—The Committee shall review on an annual basis the proposed expenditures of Federal funds by the management entity for consistency with the purpose of this title and the Corridor Management Plan.

**SEC. 807. MANAGEMENT ENTITY.**

(a) **ENTITY.**—Upon petition, the Secretary is authorized to recognize the Ohio & Erie Canal Association as the management entity for the Heritage Corridor.

(b) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible for designation as the management entity of the corridor, an entity must possess the legal ability to—

(1) receive Federal funds for use in preparing and implementing the management plan for the corridor;

(2) disburse Federal funds to other units of government or other organizations for use in preparing and implementing the management plan for the corridor;

(3) account for all Federal funds received or disbursed; and

(4) sign agreements with the Federal Government.

(c) **FEDERAL FUNDING.**—

(1) **AUTHORIZATION TO RECEIVE.**—The management entity is authorized to receive appropriated Federal funds.

(2) **DISQUALIFICATION.**—If a management plan for the corridor is not submitted to the Secretary as required under section 808 within the time specified herein, the management entity shall cease to be eligible for Federal funding under this title until such a plan regarding the corridor is submitted to the Secretary.

(d) **AUTHORITIES OF MANAGEMENT ENTITY.**—The management entity of the corridor may, for purposes of preparing and implementing the management plan for the corridor, use Federal funds made available under this title—

(1) to make grants and loans to the State of Ohio, its political subdivisions, nonprofit organizations, and other persons;

(2) to enter into cooperative agreements with, or provide technical assistance to, Federal agencies, the State of Ohio, its political subdivision, nonprofit organizations, and other persons;

(3) to hire and compensate staff;

(4) to obtain money from any source under any program or law requiring the recipient of such money to make a contribution in order to receive such money; and

(5) to contract for goods and services.

(e) **PROHIBITION OF ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.**—The management entity for the corridor may not use Federal funds received under this title to acquire real property or any interest in real property.

**SEC. 808. DUTIES OF THE MANAGEMENT ENTITY.**

(a) **CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—

(1) **SUBMISSION FOR REVIEW BY COMMITTEE.**—Within 3 years after the date on which the Secretary has recognized the management entity for the corridor, the management entity shall develop and submit for review to the Committee a management plan for the corridor.

(2) **PLAN REQUIREMENTS.**—A management plan submitted under this title shall present comprehensive recommendations for the conservation, funding, management, and

development of the corridor. The plan shall be prepared with public participation. The plan shall take into consideration existing Federal, State, county, and local plans and involve residents, public agencies, and private organizations in the corridor. The plan shall include a description of actions that units of government and private organizations are recommended to take to protect the resources of the corridor. The plan shall specify existing and potential sources of funding for the conservation, management, and development of the corridor. The plan also shall include the following, as appropriate:

(A) An inventory of the resources contained in the corridor, including a list of property in the corridor that should be conserved, restored, managed, developed, or maintained because of the natural, cultural, or historic significance of the property as it relates to the themes of the corridor. (B) A recommendation of policies for resource management that consider and detail the application of appropriate land and water management techniques, including (but not limited to) the development of intergovernmental cooperative agreements to manage the historical, cultural, and natural resources and recreational opportunities of the corridor in a manner consistent with the support of appropriate and compatible economic viability.

(C) A program, including plans for restoration and construction, for implementation of the management plan by the management entity and specific commitments, for the first six years of operation of the plan by the partners identified in said plan.

(D) An analysis of means by which Federal, State, and local programs may best be coordinated to promote the purposes of this title.

(E) An interpretive plan for the corridor.

(3) APPROVAL AND DISAPPROVAL OF THE CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon submission of the Corridor Management Plan from the Committee, the Secretary shall approve or disapprove said plan not later than 60 days after receipt of the plan. If the Secretary has taken no action after 60 days upon receipt, the plan shall be considered approved.

(B) DISAPPROVAL AND REVISIONS.—If the Secretary disapproves the Corridor Management Plan, the Secretary shall advise the Committee, in writing, of the reasons for the disapproval and shall make recommendations for revision of the plan. The Secretary shall approve or disapprove proposed revisions to the plan not later than 60 days after receipt of such revision. If the Secretary has taken no action for 60 days after receipt, the plan shall be considered approved.

(b) PRIORITIES.—The management entity shall give priority to the implementation of actions, goals, and policies set forth in the management plan for the corridor, including—

(1) assisting units of government, regional planning organizations, and nonprofit organizations—

(A) in conserving the corridor;

(B) in establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits in the corridor;

(C) in developing recreational opportunities in the corridor;

(D) in increasing public awareness of and appreciation for the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the corridor;

(E) in the restoration of historic buildings that are located within the boundaries of the corridor and relate to the themes of the corridor; and

(F) in ensuring that clear, consistent, and environmentally appropriate signs identifying access points and sites of interest are put in place throughout the corridor; and

(2) consistent with the goals of the management plan, encouraging economic viability in the affected communities by appropriate means.

(c) **CONSIDERATION OF INTERESTS OF LOCAL GROUPS.**—The management entity shall, in preparing and implementing the management plan for the corridor, consider the interest of diverse units of government, businesses, private property owners, and nonprofit groups within the geographic area.

(d) **PUBLIC MEETINGS.**—The management entity shall conduct public meetings at least quarterly regarding the implementation of the Corridor Management Plan.

(e) **ANNUAL REPORTS.**—The management entity shall, for any fiscal year in which it receives Federal funds under this title or in which a loan made by the entity with Federal funds under section 807(d)(1) is outstanding, submit an annual report to the Secretary setting forth its accomplishments, its expenses and income, and the entities to which it made any loans and grants during the year for which the report is made.

(f) **COOPERATION WITH AUDITS.**—The management entity shall, for any fiscal year in which it receives Federal funds under this title or in which a loan made by the entity with Federal funds under section 807(d)(1) is outstanding, make available for audit by the Congress, the Secretary, and appropriate units of government all records and other information pertaining to the expenditure of such funds and any matching funds, and require, for all agreements authorizing expenditure of Federal funds by other organizations, that the receiving organizations make available for such audit all records and other information pertaining to the expenditure of such funds.

## **SEC. 809. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.**

(a) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND GRANTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may provide technical assistance and grants to units of government, nonprofit organizations, and other persons, upon request of the management entity of the corridor, and to the management entity, regarding the management plan and its implementation.

(2) **PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.**—The Secretary may not, as a condition of the award of technical assistance or grants under this section, require any recipient of such technical assistance or grant to enact or modify land use restrictions.

(3) **DETERMINATIONS REGARDING ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary shall decide if the corridor shall be awarded technical assistance or grants and the amount of that assistance. Such decisions shall be based on the relative degree to which the corridor effectively fulfills the objectives contained in the Corridor Management Plan and achieves the purposes of this title. Such decisions shall give consideration to projects which provide a greater leverage of Federal funds.

(b) **PROVISION OF INFORMATION.**—In cooperation with other Federal agencies, the Secretary shall provide the general public with information regarding the location and character of the corridor.

(c) **OTHER ASSISTANCE.**—Upon request, the Superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area may provide to public and private organizations within the corridor (including the management entity for the corridor) such operational assistance as appropriate to support the



implementation of the Corridor Management Plan, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with public and private organizations for the purposes of implementing this subsection.

(d) **DUTIES OF OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.**—Any Federal entity conducting any activity directly affecting the corridor shall consider the potential effect of the activity on the Corridor Management Plan and shall consult with the management entity of the corridor with respect to the activity to minimize the adverse effects of the activity on the corridor.

**SEC. 810. LACK OF EFFECT ON LAND USE REGULATION AND PRIVATE PROPERTY.**

(a) **LACK OF EFFECT ON AUTHORITY OF GOVERNMENTS.**—Nothing in this title shall be construed to modify, enlarge, or diminish any authority of Federal, State, or local governments to regulate any use of land as provided for by law or regulation.

(b) **LACK OF ZONING OR LAND USE POWERS.**—Nothing in this title shall be construed to grant powers of zoning or land use control to the Committee or management entity of the corridor.

(c) **LOCAL AUTHORITY AND PRIVATE PROPERTY NOT AFFECTED.**— Nothing in this title shall be construed to affect or to authorize the Committee to interfere with—

(1) the rights of any person with respect to private property; or

(2) any local zoning ordinance or land use plan of the State of Ohio or a political subdivision thereof.

**SEC. 811. SUNSET.**

The Secretary may not make any grant or provide any assistance under this title after September 30, 2012.

**SEC. 812. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is authorized to be appropriated under this title not more than \$1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Not more than a total of \$10,000,000 may be appropriated for the corridor under this title.

(b) **50 PERCENT MATCH.**—Federal funding provided under this title, after the designation of this corridor, may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of any assistance or grant provided or authorized under this title.

## Appendix 3 Evaluation Methodology

### Background and Purpose

In May 2008, Congress passed legislation<sup>9</sup> which requires the Secretary of the Interior to evaluate the accomplishments of nine National Heritage Areas (NHAs) no later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding for each of the NHAs terminates. Based on findings of each evaluation, the legislation requires the Secretary to prepare a report with recommendations for the National Park Service's future role with respect to the NHA under review.

The National Parks Conservation Association's Center for Park Management (CPM) conducted the first evaluation of Essex National Heritage Area in 2008. In 2010, CPM, in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), then contracted with Westat to evaluate the next two NHA sites: Augusta Canals in Augusta, GA and Silos and Smokestacks in Waterloo, IA. Each evaluation was designed to answer the following questions, outlined in the legislation:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?
3. How do the Heritage Areas management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

This document presents Westat's methodology for conducting the NHA evaluations for the six remaining Heritage Areas. This methodology includes: our core evaluation approach; evaluation design; associated data collection methods, sources, and measures; and analysis and reporting plans. Our methods build upon the methodology and instruments used in previous Augusta Canal and Silos and Smokestacks NHA evaluations.

In addition to outlining our core approach to the evaluation, this document describes the process Westat will use to tailor the approach for each of the specific NHA evaluations.

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<sup>9</sup> From P.L. 110-229, Section 462. EVALUATION AND REPORT, signed May 8, 2008

## Core Evaluation Approach

Our approach to the NHA evaluation centers around three basic principles – stakeholder collaboration, in-depth and triangulated data collection, and efficiencies of time and effort. The evaluation will use a case study design, examining each NHA individually. The case study design is appropriate for addressing the NHA evaluation questions since there are multiple variables of interest within each NHA and multiple sources of data with the need for convergence or triangulation among the sources. As noted below, data sources in each site will include documents, key informants from the coordinating/management entity and partner organizations, and community stakeholders. Data collection will be guided by a case study protocol outlining the domains and measures of interest using topic-centered guides for extracting data from existing sources and for interviewing key informants (individually and in group interviews).

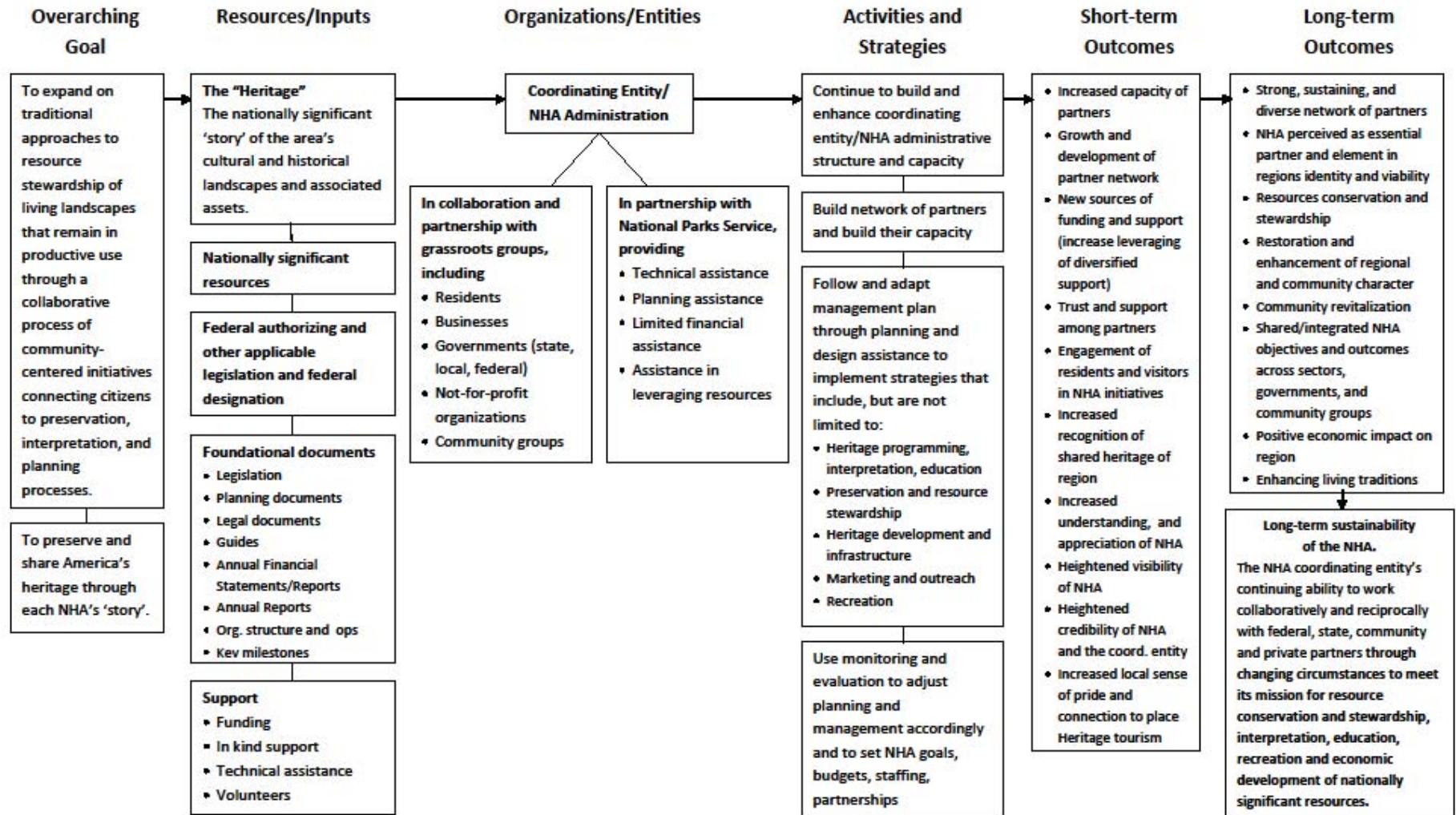
The evaluation will incorporate a collaborative approach with project stakeholders to ensure that it is relevant to all and is grounded in the local knowledge of the site as well as designed to meet legislative requirements. Therefore, in the design and implementation of each evaluation, we will include the perspectives of NPS and NHA leadership. Working products will be developed in close coordination with NPS and the NHA evaluation sites throughout the evaluation process. Involving all key stakeholders and including varying perspectives at each stage of the process will ensure that the data collection methods and indicators, the analysis, and interpretation of the findings reflect their views and concerns.

## Core Evaluation Design and Measures

Westat is developing a core evaluation design that will then be tailored for each NHA evaluation. Three tools guide the development of the core evaluation design: the NHA Logic Model (Figure 1), the NHA Domain Matrix (Appendix C of the Guide), and a comprehensive case study protocol. The basic structure of the NHA Logic Model is a visual representation of the:

- **overarching goal for a NHA;**
- **resources and key partnerships available to help an NHA accomplish its goals;**
- **activities and strategies that are being implemented to accomplish the NHA goal;**
- **intended short- and long-term outcomes; and**
- **the linkages among the activities, strategies, and outcomes.**

Figure A31 NHA Logic Model



The logic model provides a blueprint for the case study design, outlining the components to examine, the indicators to measure, and the relationships to investigate between the various activities and outcomes. It therefore is a key tool for outlining the data that should be collected as well as the types of analyses that might be conducted. In addition, it provides an efficient way to display the underlying logic or framework of the NHA. For the core evaluation design, the NHA logic model has guided the development of the NHA Domain Matrix, which will in turn inform the development of a case study protocol to conduct the evaluation.

The NHA Domain Matrix is designed to thoroughly address the three key evaluation questions outlined in the legislation. The left-hand side of the matrix lists the key domains and measures required to answer each evaluation question. Each of these domains and measures are cross-walked with the potential data sources. Many of the domains will be informed by more than one data source, as is typical in a case study, to provide for more valid and complete results through triangulation of multiple perspectives. The sources for data collection include: existing NHA documentation, including foundational and financial documents; interviews with NHA staff and key partners; and input from citizens in the NHA community. A later section of this methodology will provide greater detail about the selected data sources and process for data collection. A brief synopsis of the Domain Matrix and how it guides our approach to addressing the key questions follows:

**Evaluation Question 1:      Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?**

In addressing this question, we will collect data through interviews and documents on the nature of the proposed NHA activities; how these activities are being implemented by the local coordinating entity/management entity, partnership network and/or the local community; and, the impacts of the activities. The measures also will address whether the NHAs are implementing the activities proposed in the initial NHA designation, and if not, what circumstances or situations may have led to their adaptation or adjustment. This examination consists of in-depth interviews with staff to understand what activities have resulted from the NHA designation that was initially not intended or expected. Also, in assessing the goals and objectives of the NHA, we will try to discern if there were mechanisms in place prior to establishment of the NHA intended to achieve these goals.

**Evaluation Question 2:      What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities?**

Addressing this question will begin with gathering information through interviews with key NHA management staff and a review of financial data forms. Understanding what investments have been made will involve collecting data on both financial and non-financial investments, including data on the amount, nature, and sources of these investments over time. We will also examine the impact of these investments and how they are helping the NHAs achieve their intended outcomes through data collected from reviewing NHA plans and interviews with key partners and local residents of the NHA community. In cases when an NHA has numerous investment sources, we will focus on the NHA’s “major” sources and whether these sources are restricted or unrestricted funds. To identify “major” sources of investment, we will examine the range of investment sources and characterize them by financial or time commitment thresholds.

**Evaluation Question 3:      How do the NHA’s management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?**

Data to inform this question will be primarily gathered from interviews with key NHA management staff and a subset of NHA partners, and by performing a review and analysis of the NHA financial documents. The definition of sustainability developed by the NPS working group<sup>10</sup> will be employed in addressing this question. We will examine the nature of management structure and partnership network and their contribution to sustainability. We will also assess the financial

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<sup>10</sup> The National Heritage Area coordinating entity’s continuing ability to work collaboratively and reciprocally with Federal, state, community and private partners through changing circumstances to meet its mission for resource conservation and stewardship, interpretation, education, recreation and economic development of nationally significant resources.

Critical components of sustainability of a National Heritage Area include but are not limited to:

- Coordinating entity and the National Park Service honoring the legislative mandate of the National Heritage Area;
- Coordinating entity’s management capacity including governance, adaptive management (such as strategic planning), staffing and operations;
- Financial planning and preparedness, including the ongoing ability to leverage resources in support of the local network of partners;
- Partnering with diverse community stakeholders including serving as a hub, catalyst and/or coordinating entity for on-going capacity building, communication and collaboration among local entities
- Program and project stewardship where the combined investment results in the improved economic value and ultimately long-term quality of life of that region; and
- Outreach and marketing to engage a full and diverse range of audiences.

investments over time and their corresponding impact on the financial sustainability of those investments and their future with and without future Federal funding. Specifically, we will perform an analysis of the ratio of Federal funding to other fund sources and the change in this ratio over time overall and for specific activities. We will also interview NHA leadership and board staff to understand the extent to which fundraising activities have been prioritized for specific activities. Based on these analytic and data collection activities, an attempt would be made to determine what the likely effects on the NHA would be if Federal funding was reduced or discontinued; specifically, which activities might have a prospect of continuing with reduced or discontinued Federal funding, which would likely end with reduced or discontinued Federal funding, and therefore, which goals and objectives might not be reached. The evaluation will also examine if there are activities that support issues of national importance, and thus, should be considered for other Federal funding. Finally, the evaluation will address how other organizations that exist within the Heritage Area be effected by the sunset of Federal funds, and if there are mechanisms in place for these organizations to work toward the Heritage Area goals post-sunset.

## Data Collection Methods

The planned data collection methods include: topic-centered interviews with NHA management staff; topic-centered interviews with members of the NHA partner network; intercept conversations with community stakeholders; review of the NHA plans and legal documents; review of the NHA guides, brochures, websites and other descriptive documents; and review of the NHA financial data records. In the sections below, we describe each of these methods, including how we will select the data sources, what data we will collect, and the tools we will use to collect the data. For each of the methods, we will begin by developing a “generic” instrument that corresponds to the key elements outlined in the domain matrix. The process for tailoring the instruments to each of the evaluation sites include:

## Foundation Documents Review

A first set of documents will be reviewed to frame the decisions and actions of the coordinating entity’s role in implementing the designated NHA’s objectives. These documents provide many of the objectives for the NHA and frame expectations for the local coordinating entity. These documents include:

- **Legislation – all Federal, state and/or local legislation that provides the legal framework for the NHA**

- **Plans – all planning documents, including updates, developed by the coordinating entity and/or partners that are intended to deliver the legal mandates defined by Congress and/or other legislative bodies**
- **Legal documents – documents signed by the coordinating entity that allow it to conduct/produce routine NHA business**

Another set of documents will be obtained and reviewed to understand the nature of NHA activities and their relationship with NHA objectives. These documents include:

- **Guides – documents designed to define how NHA business operates**
- **Annual financial statements and reports – includes audits, tax returns, budget activities and performance program reports**
- **Annual reports – includes reports to Congress, to partners and to the NPS and others**
- **Organizational structure and operations – how the coordinating entity, board(s) and committees do NHA work, their roles and functions**
- **Key milestones – a timeline of major events that document the evolution of the NHA to include outside influences affecting your planning and implementation process**

We will collaborate with each of the NHA coordinating entities and NPS to gather these materials. We will also provide sample table shells to help NHA coordinating entity staff understand evaluation data needs and identify relevant documents to share with Westat.

In reviewing these documents, we will abstract information into tables that historically document NHA activities, such as the number of visitors or number of workshops offered per year. We will also use a case study protocol to abstract key information and make use of data analysis software, such as NVivo, to meaningfully structure the data. This review of documents will be critical in helping us tailor the specifics of the evaluation for each site, particularly in selecting NHA staff and partners to interview.

## **Financial Data Review**

Our approach to the financial data review is informed by the Augusta Canal and Silos and Smokestacks evaluations, particularly with respect to the types of data collected and the nature of the analyses performed. We will review key NHA financial data records such as audits, tax returns, budgets and performance program reports to collect data on the amount and sources of funding for the NHA, trends in funding over a 10-year period, and the impact of these resources on the economic sustainability of the NHA. We will coordinate with each of the NHA coordinating entities and NPS to gather these materials and collect supporting documentation regarding external



matching contributions and use of NHA resources according to program areas. We will use a protocol to guide the review of financial data needs with each NHA site.

## **Topic-Centered Interviews with Staff of the NHA Coordinating Entity**

During a follow-up site visit, key staff from the NHA coordinating entity will be interviewed. The staff will include the Executive Director and staff in key roles identified through review of the foundational documents. For example, some of the staff selected for interviews could include managers of specific NHA activities (i.e., programming or marketing directors), or staff who work in finance, development or partner relationship functions. A topic-centered, semi-structured protocol will be used to conduct each of the interviews, obtaining information about the background of the NHA, NHA activities and investments, and their associated impacts, including their contribution to NHA sustainability. We will conduct individual interviews with the staff with the most history and scope of understanding of the NHA operations, such as the Executive Director or Finance Manager. Other staff, especially those with similar roles such as program assistants will be interviewed in groups to maximize the number of viewpoints gathered. Each of the topic-centered interviews will be semi-structured, outlining the key areas to cover and probes that are specific to the site. However, as new areas emerge, the interviews will be flexible to collect information on these areas. Although all interviews will be conducted on site at the coordinating entity, follow-up telephone conversations will be conducted as needed to capture additional information. We expect to spend 1 day interviewing up to nine staff in each NHA.

## **Topic-Centered Interviews with Members of the NHA Partner Network**

Members of the NHA partner network, including NPS, will be interviewed to in order to gain an understanding about NHA activities and investments and their associated impacts, including their contribution to NHA sustainability. A topic-centered, semi-structured interview protocol will guide these interviews, some of which will be conducted individually, either in person or by telephone, and others that will be conducted through group interviews to maximize the number of viewpoints gathered. If applicable for the respective site, we expect to select 15-20 partners from each NHA to interview. In determining criteria for selecting partners to interview, we will review foundational documents and web site materials for each NHA site. These criteria will likely include the level of the partner's relationship with the NHA, the extent to which they participate and/or support NHA

activities, their financial relationship and their geographic representation. We will share the list of selected partners with the NHA for completeness and will incorporate the NHA's suggestions of other partners who should be interviewed. Once this list is finalized, Westat will contact the partners for interview scheduling. We expect to have a range of stakeholders and organizations participate in these interviews adding to the multiple sources of data for triangulation.

## **Community Input**

Members of the NHA community will be invited to provide their input about the nature and impact of NHA activities through intercept conversations with a sample of residents in the NHA community. These conversations may take place at the Heritage Area site or at an event or place within the community. Conversations will help evaluation team gain an understanding of the community's familiarity with the Heritage Area and its unique and nationally significant aspects. The intercept conversations will also provide information about the residents' awareness of and appreciation for the Heritage Area. Westat will work with the NHA management entity to develop strategies for obtaining community input.

It is important to recognize the limitations in the data that will be collected through the community input strategies. First, as we will be identifying "convenient" groups of individuals, it is likely that those involved will not be fully representative of local residents, tourists, and volunteers. Depending on how they are identified, they have more or less motivation to be interested in the NHA. In addition, the data collected will be largely qualitative. We will not be able to develop quantitative indicators of the community input, but rather collect more impressionistic input that will provide an indication based on each respondent's background, prior involvement, and interest as to how well the NHA is enhancing community awareness of, appreciation of, and involvement in the NHA.

## **Analyze Data and Findings Document**

The analysis and synthesis of each NHA's data will be guided by the overall protocol and the Findings Document outline. Data reduction will first begin by summarizing the data within each domain area, first within each source, and then synthesizing the data across sources. Attempts will be made to reconcile any issues or discrepancies across the sources by contacting the relevant parties at each NHA. Data will be summarized within each domain and analyzed for relationships, guided

by the logic model. To the degree possible, results will be displayed graphically and in tables. Findings will reflect the triangulated information – where appropriate and feasible, it will be important to ensure that the results not only reflect the perspectives of the key informants but are substantiated with data from documents and other written sources.

Results of each NHA evaluation will be communicated in a Findings Document. The findings document will be guided by a modification of the outline finalized by the NHA Evaluation Working Group. The Findings Document outline was developed according to Westat’s experience with the Augusta Canal and Silos and Smokestacks evaluation, and has been streamlined to present key findings in an Executive Summary, combine sections according to the three evaluation questions, and address sustainability questions regarding the impact of the sunset of Federal funds on NHA activities. Westat will first share a draft of the findings document with the Executive Director of the NHA coordinating entity for a review of technical accuracy. The Executive Director will have the opportunity to share the findings document with other staff and stakeholders as desired, and can provide comments to the evaluation team, either in writing or via telephone discussion. Finally, if necessary to discuss differences, a joint telephone conversation involving the NHA Executive Director, NPS and Westat can be held to discuss the comments and to arrive at a resolution. Once Westat has incorporated the feedback, the NHA coordinating entity will have another opportunity to review the findings document before it is shared with NPS. Once the NHA’s final feedback is reviewed and incorporated, Westat will submit the draft findings documents to NPS for review. Westat expects to have the Final Findings Document for each evaluation complete by July 2012.

## **Tailoring the Evaluation Design for NHA Evaluation Sites**

The core evaluation design will be tailored to the six NHA sites under evaluation. A preliminary “Meet and Greet” visit to the NHAs will largely inform how the protocols should be customized for each site, including the domains that are relevant, the probes that should be added to inquire about each domain, and the specific data sources that are relevant for the site. We will work with the Executive Director to determine the key staff to involve in individual and group interviews during a second site visit, partner organizations that should be represented, and strategies to obtain community input.

A customized logic model for each NHA will be developed during the initial site visit; detailing the respective NHA’s goals, resources, partnerships, activities and intended outcomes. This process will

involve a group meeting with NHA management staff and NPS partners to get a diverse range of perspectives and obtain a complete picture of the designated NHA. In preparation for this visit, we will review existing documentation for the NHA sites. We expect these preliminary Meet and Greet visits and logic modeling sessions to involve about 2 days of travel and meeting time.

Once the tailored logic models are finalized for each NHA evaluation site, Westat will then adapt the NHA Domain Matrix and the comprehensive case study protocol that were developed as part of the core evaluation design. These tailored tools will still address the evaluation research questions identified by the legislation, but will ensure that the questions are geared toward the specific aspects of each NHA site.

Interview data collection for each NHA evaluation will occur during a second visit to each NHA site, and is expected to last 3 to 5 days depending on the scope of the site. We will use memos to keep the NHA Executive Director informed of our evaluation activities both pre- and post- site visits.

We will also work with each NHA during the second site visit, and with email and phone communications post site-visit, to collect and analyze information for the financial review. The financial data protocol will provide the NHA coordinating entity with an understanding of the data needs to address the second evaluation question guide these conversations in identifying years in which there is audit information pertinent to the evaluation and will help NHA coordinating entity staff to identify other data sources that will support the financial analysis.

## **Evaluation Limitations**

To the greatest extent possible, Westat has tried to ensure this evaluation methodology thoroughly addresses the three research questions. However, there are parameters to this methodology that result in a few limitations on evaluation findings. In some instances, there is a trade-off between maximizing the time and efficiency for the evaluation and the ability to thoroughly collect information from a range of stakeholders. For instance, to obtain input from community stakeholders, a survey is not possible within the current evaluation due to OMB Paperwork Reduction Requirements. Therefore, the data received from intercept conversations will be a more qualitative assessment of the community's perceptions of the NHA. As noted, limitations to the community input include convenient, rather than representative, samples of tourists, local residents,

and volunteers, and impressionistic rather than quantitative data on the impact of the NHA on stakeholder knowledge, attitudes, and involvement in the NHA. Therefore, the data obtained will have to be viewed with these limitations in mind.

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## **Discussion Guide**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for talking with me today. As part of the federally mandated evaluation of NHAs we are talking with Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor staff who have the most history and scope of understanding of the NHA's operations. We developed this logic model, based off our last visit to your program to use as a guide throughout the interview. Our discussion will help us understand the NHA, including its background and history, your different activities and investments and their associated outcomes, and their contribution to the NHA's sustainability.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and will take about 1 to 2 hours to complete.

According to the corridor management plan and our discussions of the logic model, the overarching goals of the Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area are:

1. Resource conservation - Preserve, protect, promote and strengthen historic, natural, historic, manmade, and cultural resources of the Canalway; and promote sound environmental practices in project design and implementation
2. Education & interpretation - Communicate the Canal story and significance; develop a strong interpretive program; and develop educational opportunities about the Canalway.
3. Community and economic development - Promote economic initiatives to encourage compatible development to enhance Canal resources; and strengthen connections between communities to promote regional collaboration
4. Recreation, linkages and visitor experience - Promote multi use trail along length of Canalway; facilitate trail, roadway, and greenway linkages between Canalway and adjacent neighborhoods; and provide high quality, safe visitor experiences

### **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

1. Explain the organizational history of the coordinating entity and its evolution prior to the NHA designation?

2. How did the NHA designation come about? How did this designation affect your strategic planning processes and management plan?
3. How does the connectivity with the national park service influence your work? Describe your working relationship like with NPS. Explain how the relationship evolved over time.

*Probe:*

- National Parks Regional office, field offices, and park sites in the State, who are partners to the coordinating entity. Probe: Relationship with New River Gorge)
- American Battlefield Protection Program Grants
- Certified Local Governments
- Federal Lands to Parks Transfers
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit Projects
- Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants
- National Register of Historic Places (they can designate Properties; Districts; or Landmarks. NHAs can also seek National Park designation for select entities. ROS indicated this was a series progression need to check that.)
- Preserve America Grants
- Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Projects
- Save America’s Treasures Grants
- National Park Foundation’s partnership grants

4. Describe the management and operations of the coordinating entity

*Probes:*

- Description of executive leadership & role in organization
- Description of governance & role in organization
- Description of staffing and volunteers

5. What is the mission and vision for the NHA? How are they the same or different from the mission and vision of the NHA coordinating entity? Any differences or similarities in these mission and goals between the Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition (southern reach) and the Ohio Canal Corridor (northern reach)?

6. Can you describe the various planning processes that the NHA coordinating entity has undertaken over time (either before the federal designation of after)? When and how did you determine a need for this and what type of engagement of the larger community was necessary?

## ACTIVITIES

We'd like to get a better understanding of the activities you and staff described during our first site visit. How do these activities fit into your overall programming and vision for the NHA and who/what is involved in their implementation. How do you pick your partners and develop your stakeholders? How do you determine how broad your civic engagement will be for each?

According to the logic model, you, as the coordinating entity, are directly involved in creating and implementing a corridor management plan to guide development and investments, resource preservation, education and interpretation, community and economic development, recreation, linkages and the visitor experience. Explain the following elements individually and how they fit into the bigger NHA picture.

## Corridor Management Plan Development to Guide Development and Investments

1. For the development of the Corridor Management Plan, please provide the following details:
  - Explain the role and function of the NHA Administrative staff (coordinating, sponsoring, promoting, attending, staff service on Boards)
  - Describe the role of the NHA's partnership network
  - Define and explain the role of the local community (attending, promoting, supporting) and how/when they are engaged in the coordination/implementation/input structure
2. What has/have been the greatest impact(s) of the development/implementation of the Corridor Management Plan in your area?
3. Identify the biggest challenges encountered in implementing activities specified in the Management Plan?
4. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of the Management Plan? How far into that implementation are you percentage-wise?



5. For the development of the Canalway Communications Plan, please provide the following details:
  - When did it begin? What was the impetus for starting it?
  - What was the role of the Ohio Canal Corridor and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition in developing it?
  - What was the role of the NHA Administrative staff (coordinating, sponsoring, promoting, attending, staff service on Boards)?
  - What was the role of the NHA's partnership network?
  - What was the role of the local community/general population (attending, promoting, supporting)?
6. What has/have been the greatest impact(s) of the development of the Canalway Communications Plan? How far into implementing the plan are you percentage-wise?
7. What challenges have you encountered in implementing activities specified in the Canalway Communications Plan?
8. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of the Canalway Communications Plan?
9. For the development of the Canalway Signage Plan, please provide the following details:
  - When did it begin? What was the impetus for starting it?
  - What was the role of the Ohio Canal Corridor and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition in developing it?
  - What was the role of the NHA Administrative staff (coordinating, sponsoring, promoting, attending, staff service on Boards)?
  - What was the role of the NHA's partnership network?
  - What was the role of the local community (attending, promoting, supporting)?
10. What has/have been the greatest impact(s) of the development of the Canalway Signage Plan?
11. What challenges have you encountered in implementing activities specified in the Canalway Signage Plan?
12. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of the Canalway Signage Plan?

## Resource Conservation

Activities that preserve and protect historic structures and natural resources in the O&E Canalway NHA include the CMP Ohio & Erie Canal reservation; greenway Plans in Stark, Summit, Cuyahoga, Tuscarawas, Lower Big Creek, and West Creek Counties; Organized Public Cleanups; property acquisition for conservation purposes that are then eventually turned over to the community; Towpath trail development.

(Any major activities we are missing?)

1. For these activities please provide the following details:
  - When did it begin? What was the impetus for starting it?
  - What has been the role of the NHA coordinating entity?
  - What has been the role of the NHA Administrative staff (coordinating, sponsoring, promoting, attending, staff service on Boards)?
  - What has been the role of the NHA's partnership network?
  - What has been the role of the local community (attending, promoting, supporting)?
  
2. What has/have been the greatest impact(s) of this activity in your area?

*Probes:*

  - *Increased recognition of historical influence of the Ohio and Erie Canal resources*
  - *Increased engagement, visitation, and visibility of Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail by locals and visitors*
  - *Greater amount/diversity in sources of funding committed to these activities*
  - *Increased diversification of local economy (e.g. entrepreneur and small business development)*
  
3. What challenges have you encountered in implementing these activities?
  
4. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of these activities?
  
5. How would this activity be affected if the federal funding sunsets? Are there other organizations in the community who also provide this activity in a way that support the heritage area?

6. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these activities and how they have been implemented over the years?
7. Do you assess the sustainability of the individual entities that manage key resources? If so, what types of capacity building do you do that strengthens the sustainability of these entities?

## Education and Interpretation

According to the logic model, these are activities and programs that foster public support and appreciation for the NHA site and tell the story of its natural, historical and cultural significance. These activities may include route makers, signage, Canalway communications plans, public walking tours, and development of the O&E Canalway website  
(Any major activities we are missing?)

## Education

1. For each educational activity, could you provide details about:
  - The nature of the activity?
  - When it began?
  - What was the impetus for offering the activity?
  - When it is offered?
  - To whom you provide it? (i.e. teachers, students, etc.)
  - The role of NHA staff in providing this?
  - The role of the community in implementing these activities?
2. How have the educational activities affected:
  - Participants – increased knowledge and skills
  - Partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
  - This NHA overall and how it is perceived more generally?
  - Community support for preservations, interpretive, educational activities?

- Ability to provide a cohesive NHA experience focused on the themes of American agriculture?
3. Could you tell us what have been the accomplishments of your educational activities?
  4. What challenges have you encountered in implementing these activities?
  5. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your educational activities?
  6. How would this activity be affected if the federal funding sunsets? Are there other organizations in the community who also provide this activity in a way that support the heritage area?
  7. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these educational activities, such as the types of educational activities provided, to whom and the related outcomes?

## Interpretation

8. Please provide the following details for each of these activities.
  - When did it begin? What was the impetus for starting it?
  - What has been the role of the NHA coordinating entity?
  - What has been the role of the NHA's partnership network?
  - What has been the role of the local community?
  - What have been the overall accomplishments of this activity in your area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity?
  - How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of it?
9. What has/have been the greatest impact(s) of interpretation activities in your area?

*Probes:*

- *Engagement of residents and visitors*  
*(# served/involved/affected)*
- *Job creation*

10. What challenges have you encountered in implementing these activities?
11. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your activities?

12. How would this activity be affected if the federal funding sunsets? Are there other organizations in the community who also provide this activity in a way that support the heritage area?
13. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these activities and how they have been implemented over the years?

## Community and Economic Development

Heritage based development activities that further provide economic development opportunities to enhance the Canal's resources and strengthen community connections. Examples of some of these activities include development of Journey Gateways, Canalway Centers and landings; support for national register listings, preservation efforts with public relations and fundraising campaigns.

- Any other types of community and economic development activities we may have missed?
1. For each of these activities:
    - When did it begin? What was the impetus for starting it?
    - What has been the role of the NHA coordinating entity?
    - What has been the role of the partnership network?
    - What has been the role of the local community?
    - What have been the overall accomplishments of this activity in your area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity?
    - How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of it?
  2. What kind of an impact do you think oversight and management of the NHA and its resources have had in the community?

*Probes:*

- *Engagement of residents and visitors/ stewardship*
- *Conservation of Ohio and Erie Canal and its historical resources*
- *Economic (Job creation)*

3. What challenges have you encountered in implementing these activities?
4. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of these activities?
5. How would this activity be affected if federal funding sunsets? Are there other organizations in the community who also provide this activity in a way that supports the heritage area?
6. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these activities and how they have been implemented over the years?

## Recreation, Linkages and Visitor Experiences

Activities that promote activity along the canal resources, facilitate linkages, and provide a safe, high quality visitor experience. Examples of these activities could include expansion of the Towpath trail, greenway development, sponsoring athletic events, investing in the Rail Road and Scenic Byway, completion of connector trails.

(Any major activities we are missing?)

7. For these activities please provide the following details:
  - When did it begin? What was the impetus for starting it?
  - What has been the role of the NHA coordinating entity?
  - What has been the role of the NHA Administrative staff (coordinating, sponsoring, promoting, attending, staff service on Boards)?
  - What has been the role of the NHA's partnership network?
  - What has been the role of the local community (attending, promoting, supporting)?
8. What has/have been the greatest impact(s) of this activity in your area?
9. What challenges have you encountered in implementing these activities?
10. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your these activities?
11. How would this activity be affected if the federal funding sunsets? Are there other organizations in the community who also provide this activity in a way that support the heritage area?

12. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these activities and how they have been implemented over the years?

## Grant-making, Technical Assistance and Support

Activities that build local community capacity and assist individuals, organizations and communities who are involved in NHA activities. These activities could include grant-making, provision of technical assistance for grant-writing, preservation activities, local fundraising, or other activities.

1. We'd like to learn more about your grant-making activities. Can you describe the different grant programs that you offer?
  - How did you decide what types of grants you would fund?
  - When it began?
  - The impetus for starting it?
  - The activities it supports? *Probe – how does it promote the preservation, interpretation and education and programming of America's unique story?*
  - What process did you follow to establish types of grants needed, applicant eligibility, selection criteria and priority setting?
  - How it is funded? Does it leverage other funding?
  - Whether the grants are provided for a specific purpose/time period and/or if they could be sustained on their own without continued NHA funding?
  - The grant-making process for this program:
    - How do organizations find out about and apply for grants?
    - How is their eligibility determined?
    - What is the size of the grants?
    - What is the process for determining award?
    - What are the funding and reporting requirements?
    - What is time period of award?

- Do you keep track of the numbers of applicants and the total amounts needed if they could be funded?
  - How do you determine when adjustments or additions/deletions are necessary to the types of grants or eligibility requirements?
2. Overall, how have the grants programs impacted:
- Probes:*
- *Build capacity of communities*
  - *Foster conservation and stewardship of Ohio and Erie Canal and resources*
  - *Diversify the local economy (e.g., entrepreneur and small business development)*
3. Are there certain grant programs that have been more successful than others in achieving or demonstrating the goals of the NHA? If so, why do you think these have better impacts for the overall NHA area than others?
  4. What challenges have you had in administering these grant programs? Are there certain ones that are more or less problematic? In what ways? What have you done to deal with these challenges? What has worked? What has not?
  5. What challenges have grantees encountered in implementing the grants?
  6. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your grant-making activities?
  7. How would this activity be affected if the federal funding sunsets? Are there other organizations in the community who also provide grants that support the heritage area?
  8. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these grant programs and how they have been implemented over the years?

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ADVISORY GROUPS**

### **Board of Trustees and Advisory Groups**

1. What do you believe is the key function of the Board of Trustees and Advisory Groups?
2. Can you tell us about the history of and/or your role on the Board of Trustees or Advisory Group? What drew you to this position? How many years have you been involved? Has your/their role changed across the life of the NHA?



3. What are the responsibilities of members of these committees? For instance, does it involve setting goals, establishing budgets and financial accountability for the NHA's coordinating entity?
4. How do the skills and expertise that members of these committees bring to the table contribute to the NHA's sustainability?
5. Do you/ members of these committees assist with fundraising (for the coordinating entity? For projects? For targeted locations? Contribute financially and if so, how often and for what specifically?
6. What kind of fundraising plan (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts) is in place? Is it for operations, administration and/or projects? Is there an endowment or plans for one?
7. What is the process (method, types of information, your role, "their" role, etc) of communication between this NHA's staff and members of the Board of Trustees and Advisory Groups?
8. What activities has the NHA conducted over the years to garner community support? What have been your successes and challenges?
9. Can you tell us what you think has been your (personally and collectively both) greatest successes and most serious challenges across the history of this NHA?

## **Board's Contribution to Sustainability**

1. How do the diversity of skills and expertise that members of the Board bring to the table contribute to the NHA's sustainability?
2. Has the NHA's Board demonstrated a capacity for adaptive management over time (incl. changes in staffing levels, strategic planning, etc.)?
3. What kinds of investments has the Board made toward developing staff and career advancement opportunities?
4. Does the NHA's Board have clear goals for both the NHA and the coordinating entity along with well-defined timeframes?
5. What kind of system does the Board have in place for setting annual goals or for establishing budgets?
6. What kind of process does the Board have in place for collecting data on measurable NHA goals and usage of those data (monitoring and evaluation)?
7. What kind of fundraising plan (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts) is in place?

8. How does the Board of this NHA maintain financial accountability for the NHA? What kind of system is in place for this? Is anyone on the board familiar with the requirements that federal assistance brings with it?
9. How “transparent” is the Board’s system for setting goals, establishing budgets and financial accountability for the NHA? (Is this a public or private process)?
10. What kind of plan is in place for stakeholder development?

*Probe:*

- *How has the NHA’s partner network grown over the years?*
- *How do you define partner?*
- *How do you define and achieve their long term support vs. partner support that only lasts as long as their grant is in play?*

11. How does the Board typically communicate with partners, members and local residents?

*Probe:*

- *What kind of communication systems are in place for communicating with these groups?*
- *How “transparent” and effective are the Board’s channels of communication with governance, staff, volunteers, partners, etc.?*

12. Would you say that this NHA's Board has a leadership role in the partner network? If so, how?

## **PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIP NETWORK**

### **Partners and Nature of Partnerships**

1. How do you define “partner” and who are your key “partners” (e.g., city, other agencies, groups, foundations, businesses, exhibits/attractions)?
2. For each partner please provide the following information:
  - What do you see as the “purpose” of the NHA’s partnership with [partner name]? What are some of the key mutual benefits of this partnership?
  - Describe [partner name]’s level of involvement with the NHA.
  - What kinds of resources has [partner name] committed to the NHA? For what? For how long?

3. Could you describe how an organization becomes a partner? What is the partner designation process? What are the requirements for becoming a partner? What are the requirements for remaining at the table as a partner?
4. What types of services or support do partners receive from the NHA?
5. What types of services or support do you receive from your partners?
6. How do partners support one another?
7. How has the NHA's partnership network grown and evolved over time?
  - Growth in number of partners and regions over time?
  - Different types of organizations that are partners – non-profits, volunteer-led organization, for-profits, etc.
8. In what ways has the partnership network influenced your organization? Probe – look at the logic model for examples of activities in which the partnership network may have been an influence
9. What challenges have you faced with your partnership network? For instance, have there been in challenges in identifying partners, meeting their needs, engaging partners over time or in making a cohesive network of partners?
10. Do you gather the partners together to develop further implementation strategies or is there another way that they provide input into the annual or long term workplan besides applying for a grant?

## **Partner Network's Contribution to Sustainability**

1. Does the NHA have a broad base of partners representing diverse interests and expertise?
2. How do the partners/organizations contribute to accomplishing the goals and objectives of the NHA? Do partners collaborate and combine their investments to accomplish NHA objectives? If yes, how?
3. How has the number NHA partners changed over time?

*Probe:*

*What kind of partner retention has the NHA had over the years?*

4. What kinds of roles (if any) do NHA partners have on the board?
5. Does there seem to be trust and support among partners? (For example, is there a feedback process in place, is there a strategy in place to negative a competitive atmosphere, do you have partner gatherings to help facilitate cohesion)?

6. How would partners, and their NHA related activities be affected if federal funding for the NHA discontinued? Would their activities continue to work towards accomplishing the goals and objectives of the NHA, and if so, how?

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. In your experience, what have been some of the major accomplishments for this NHA?
2. Could you tell us about some of the challenges the coordinating entity and the National Heritage Area face as you move forward? Are there strategies in place or being developed to mitigate these in any way? Are these strategies being developed or where they developed on many levels (i.e., partners, board, committees, coordinating staff, investors, etc)?
3. How would the National Heritage Area be affected if it could not be financially sustained with federal NHA funding?

*Probe:*

- *Which program areas/ activities would be affected and how?*
  - *What, if any, activities would continue?*
  - *What, if any, activities would end with the sun-setting of funds?*
  - *Are any of these activities of National importance and thus should be considered for further federal funding?*
4. What, if any, organizations or mechanisms currently exist outside of the NHA entity for accomplishing the goals and objectives of the NHA? Would these organizations or mechanisms continue to work toward the heritage area goals post-sunset?
  5. Are there ways this NHA has changed the region since its inception? How? In what ways? How has the NHA's impact changed over time?
  6. What were some of the early lessons learned or unintended consequences (e.g. issues related to collaborating rather than competing with partners) in implementing the activities and strategies for this NHA?
  7. Could you tell us about any evidence of community support for the NHA? What does this look like (i.e. volunteers, funding, invitation to participate on the boards of other organizations, engagement of State leadership, etc.?)
  8. What additional things would you have the NHA coordinating entity do, if any? What changes would it be helpful for the NHA coordinating entity to make?

# Ohio and Erie Canalway Partner Network Topic-Centered Interview Discussion Guide

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today about your organization's involvement with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association. We are researchers from Westat, a research company based outside of Washington DC and we are conducting a study on National Heritage Areas. Specifically, we're interested in learning about your work with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association and any assistance you have either received from or contributed to the Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area. We are interested in collecting information about your relationship with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association, how it has evolved and how the Ohio and Erie Canal Association has changed over time.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and it should take about an hour to complete.

## BACKGROUND

1. Describe your organization overall?

*Probe –*

*What is the type of organization (i.e. museum, historical society, etc), what does it do, size of organization, who does it serve, where geographically does it serve, size of the organization (staffing, number of active volunteers, budget), length of time it's existed.*

2. What is your position and role in the organization? How long have you been with the organization? Other positions held?

## WORK WITH NHA and OHIO AND ERIE CANAL ASSOCIATION

1. Can you briefly describe your role within the Ohio and Erie Canalway NHA and interaction with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association?
2. What factors influenced your decision to become a partner with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association?
3. When and how did your partnership with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association begin? What, if any, requirements are there for being a partner?

4. What is the nature of the partnership?

*Probe:*

- *What types of services/programs/benefits do you receive through the Ohio and Erie Canal Association?*
- *What types of services/programs/benefits does the NHA/ Ohio and Erie Canal Association receive through you?*

5. Could you describe how your organization’s program activities contribute to the NHA’s unique story?

6. Could you describe how your partnership with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association has affected your organization?

- Has it had any effect on the types of visitors you get? The number? Why or why not? How do you know?
- Has it helped you identify others to work with? Did you know of these organizations before you partnered with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association?
- Has it helped you receive funding? In what ways? What funding have you received that you may not have without the Ohio and Erie Canal Association partnership?
- Has it helped you have more community:
  - Visibility?
  - Involvement?
  - Etc.?
- Does it help you identify or be in touch with other resources and best practices that you may not have known about?

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & CAPACITY BUILDING ASSISTANCE**

1. Could you describe the types of assistance and other types of non-financial support your organization has received from the Ohio and Erie Canal Association?

- What type of assistance did you receive (training, consultations, facilitated meetings, brainstorming ideas, site assessments, etc)
- Who did you receive it from?

- Where did you receive it?
  - How did you find out about this assistance?
  - Were there requirements for participating in these activities?
  - Did you need to pay for this assistance?
2. Could you describe how you've used this assistance to incorporate or enhance stories about the NHA heritage into you programming?
  3. How have this assistance and your activities/offerings evolved over time?
  4. What does this assistance from the Ohio and Erie Canal Association allow your organization to do? Has it allowed you to work and collaborate with other organizations in the area? What are the advantages of receiving this assistance?

## COLLABORATION

1. Could you describe the ways your organization collaborates with other NHA regional partners?
2. How does collaboration affect your organization's ability to meet its goals?

*Probe:*

*Has this collaboration helped you build your financial, programming or organizational capacity?*

3. Have you gained access other organizations or resources in the community because of your collaboration with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association? How?

*Probe – NPS, other state resources*

## OVERALL IMPACT OF PARTNERSHIP WITH NHA

1. How has your relationship with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association evolved over time? Has the impact on the community of the Ohio and Erie Canal Association changed over time – grown stronger, weaker or stayed the same?
2. Have you experienced any challenges as a result of your partnership with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association?

*Probe – limitations on ability to fundraise or collaborate with other organizations?*

3. What leadership roles does the Ohio and Erie Canal Association play in the local community? Convener? Organizer? Funder? Other?
4. Are there ways in which the Ohio and Erie Canal Association has changed the region over the past 12 years? How? In what ways? How has the Ohio and Erie Canal Association's impact changed over time?

*Probe*

*Were there mechanisms present before the Ohio and Erie Canal Association designation?*

5. Are there other organizations doing similar work?
6. Would there be any impact on your organization if they were no longer around?
7. Is it important for your organization to continue working with the Ohio and Erie Canal Association? Why? What factors influence your continued relationship?
8. What additional things would you have the Ohio and Erie Canal Association do, if any? What changes would be helpful for Ohio and Erie Canal Association to make? In general, in what ways could they serve your needs better and the needs of the region?
9. How would your organization be affected if the federal funds that support the NHA discontinued? Would any of your activities that contribute to the NHA mission and story continue?

*Probe if there would be an impact on the quantity or quality of these activities?*

10. What do you think would be the overall impact if the federal funding that supports the Ohio and Erie Canal Association discontinues? Are there other mechanisms or organizations that could support the unique features and heritage of the area?



## Ohio and Erie Canalway Heritage Area Residents/ Visitors Topic Centered Interview Discussion Guide

Hi, my name is [INTERVIEWER NAME] and I'm wondering if you could get your help for a moment. I'm working with the National Park Service to find out what people visiting this site think about the National Heritage Area here. Do you have about 5 minutes to chat with me? I'm interested in getting your opinions rather than your personal information. We can stop our conversation whenever you wish and you are free to move on at any time. Also, feel free to skip any questions you would rather not discuss.

Conversation Topics:

1. How visitor found out about the site:
2. Residency:  Local resident  State resident  Out-of-state
3. Reason for visiting:
4.  First time visit  Repeat visit
5. Familiarity with NHA's history
  - Probe on source of knowledge
  - Probe on if and how this visit has enhanced their knowledge of the historical and cultural significance of the region
6. Familiarity with National Heritage Area
  - Probe on visiting NHA resources (tours, museums, trails)
  - Probe on materials (brochure)
  - Probe on signage (signage)
  - Probe on message (themes) of NHA
  - Probe on what NHA means to them
  - If local, probe on role of NHA in community – economic, cultural, historic, restorative [revitalization]

TableA4.1 Domain and Source Crosswalk: Ohio and Erie Canalway Heritage Area

Research Question, Domains, Measures	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
<b>Evaluation Q.1: Has the NHA coordinating entity accomplished the purposes of the authorizing legislation and achieved the goals and objectives of the management plan?</b>						
Regional Plans to Guide Development and Investments						
<b>Nature of NHA activities</b>						
Description of resource conservation activities	x			x		
Description of conservation efforts related to folklore, folk life, life ways and traditions	x			x		
<b>Implementation of each activity</b>						
Role of NCHA administrative staff	x					
Role of the partnership network	x			x		
Role of the local community	x			x		
<b>Impact of activities</b>						
Environmental, cultural and historic resources conservation	x			x	x	
Building restoration and stabilization	x			x	x	
Environmental clearance/brownfield redevelopment	x			x	x	
Artifact and archive conservation	x				x	
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding committed to conservation and stewardship	x				x	
Increased local sense of pride and connection to place	x				x	
Increased capacity of partners	x					
Growth in partner network	x					
Job creation	x					
Resource Conservation – Activities that support long-term preservation, conservation and reclamation of natural, cultural and historic resources						

<b>Research Question, Domains, Measures</b>						
<b>Evaluation Q.1: Has the NHA coordinating entity accomplished the purposes of the authorizing legislation and achieved the goals and objectives of the management plan?</b>	<b>NHA Management Interviews</b>	<b>Partner Network Interviews</b>	<b>Community Input</b>	<b>Plans, Legal Documents</b>	<b>NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents</b>	<b>Financial Data Forms</b>
<b>Nature of NHA activities</b>						
Description of resource conservation activities	X	X		X	X	
Description of conservation efforts related to folklore, folk life, life ways and traditions	X	X		X	X	
<b>Implementation of each activity</b>						
Role of OECA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Impact of activities</b>						
Environmental, cultural and historic resources conservation	X	X		X	X	
Building restoration and stabilization	X	X		X	X	X
Environmental clearance/brownfield redevelopment	X	X	X	X		X
Artifact and archive conservation	X	X				
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding committed to conservation and stewardship	X	X		X		X
Increased local sense of pride and connection to place	X	X	X		X	
Increased capacity of partners	X	X				
Growth in partner network	X	X				
Job creation	X	X	X			
<b>Education &amp; interpretation– Activities and programs that foster public support and appreciation for the NHA site and tell the story of its natural, historical and cultural significance to our nation</b>						

<b>Research Question, Domains, Measures</b>						
<b>Evaluation Q.1: Has the NHA coordinating entity accomplished the purposes of the authorizing legislation and achieved the goals and objectives of the management plan?</b>	<b>NHA Management Interviews</b>	<b>Partner Network Interviews</b>	<b>Community Input</b>	<b>Plans, Legal Documents</b>	<b>NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents</b>	<b>Financial Data Forms</b>
<b>Nature of NHA activities</b>						
Description of interpretation and education activities	X	X		X	X	
Description of conservation efforts related to folklore, folk life, life ways and traditions	X	X		X	X	
<b>Implementation of each activity</b>						
Role of OECA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X		X	X	
<b>Impact of activities</b>						
Engagement of residents and visitors (# served/involved/affected)	X	X	X	X	X	
Increased understanding, awareness and appreciation of NHA resources and stories	X	X	X	X	X	
Increased recognition of shared heritage of region	X	X	X	X		
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding committed to interpretive and educational programming	X	X		X		
Job creation	X	X		X		
<b>Community and economic development– Heritage based development activities that further revitalization of area resources, including community redevelopment and investment and economic opportunities</b>						
<b>Nature of NHA activities</b>						
Description of economic and community revitalization activities	X	X		X	X	
<b>Implementation of each activity</b>						
Role of NHA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Impact of activities</b>						

<b>Research Question, Domains, Measures</b>						
<b>Evaluation Q.1: Has the NHA coordinating entity accomplished the purposes of the authorizing legislation and achieved the goals and objectives of the management plan?</b>	<b>NHA Management Interviews</b>	<b>Partner Network Interviews</b>	<b>Community Input</b>	<b>Plans, Legal Documents</b>	<b>NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents</b>	<b>Financial Data Forms</b>
Development/construction contributing to community revitalization	x	x		x		x
Restoration of buildings/landmarks central to community activities	x	x	x	x	x	
Development of canal landings and trails	x	x	x	x	x	
Redevelopment of historic/cultural economic activities/industries	x	x		x	x	
Heritage tourism	x	x	x	x	x	
Job creation	x	x	x			x
<b>Recreation, linkages and visitor experience– Activities that support, maintain and expand recreation, community awareness of resources and create positive experiences for those visiting the area</b>						
<b>Nature of NHA activities</b>						
Description of cultural conservation activities	x	x		x	x	
<b>Implementation of each activity</b>						
Role of NHA administrative staff	x	x		x	x	
Role of the partnership network	x	x		x	x	
Role of the local community	x	x	x	x	x	
<b>Impact of activities</b>						
Maintain and sustain unique cultural heritage and assets	x	x	x	x		
Growth of cultural resources, businesses, and community events	x	x	x	x	x	
Increased awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage	x	x	x	x	x	
Appreciation of contribution of cultural heritage	x	x	x	x		x

Research Question, Domains, Measures	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
<b>Evaluation Q.2 What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities?</b>						
<b>Financial Investments:</b>						
Amount of federal funding over time	x			x		x
Amount and sources of leveraged funds over time	x	x		x		x
Nature/amount in grants sought and grants awarded over time	x			x		x
Amount/diversity of donor contributions over time	x			x		x
<b>Impact of financial investments</b>						
Amount of dollars committed to each NHA activity over time	x					x
Revenue generated from NHA program activities	x					x
Consistency of donor support	x					x
Expansion of base of donors over time	x				x	x
Job creation	x				x	x
<b>Other types of investment</b>						
Partnership contributions (e.g., time, staff, resources)	x	x			x	x
Community contributions (e.g., volunteerism)	x	x	x		x	x
Donated services and supplies	x	x			x	x
<b>Impact of other investment sources</b>						
Educational impacts	x	x	x			
Marketing and promotional	x	x	x		x	
Staff enhancement and retention	x	x				x
Land/facilities acquisition	x	x				x
Job creation	x	x	x			x

Research Question, Domains, Measures		NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
<b>Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?</b>							
<b>Nature of management structure</b>							
	Description of management structure	x			x	x	x
	Description of NHA mission and vision	x			x	x	
	Description of NHA goals	x			x	x	
	Description of staffing and volunteers	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Description of governance & role in organization	x	x		x	x	
	Description of executive leadership & role in organization	x	x		x	x	
<b>Coordinating entity's contribution to sustainability</b>							
	Diversity of skills and expertise	x	x		x		
	Capacity for adaptive management over time (incl. changes in staffing levels, strategic planning, etc)	x	x		x		
	Investments in developing staff and career advancement opportunities	x	x		x		x
	Clear NHA goals with well-defined timeframes	x	x		x		
	System for setting annual goals or for establishing budgets	x			x		x
	Systematic process for collecting data on measurable goals and usage of data (monitoring and evaluation)	x			x		
	Established fundraising plan (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts)	x			x		
	Established system of financial accountability	x	x		x		
	Transparency of systems for setting goals, establishing budgets and financial accountability (a public or private process)	x					
	Stakeholder development plan (sustainable impacts)	x	x		x		
	Growth and development of partner network	x	x	x	x		

Research Question, Domains, Measures		NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	Transparent and effective communication channels with governance, staff, volunteers, partners, etc						
	Established and consistent communication mechanisms with partners, members and local residents	x	x	x			x
	Coordinating entity has leadership role in partner network	x	x	x			x
<b>Nature of partner network</b>							
	List of partners	x	x		x	x	
	Purpose of each partnership	x	x		x		
	Partners' involvement with NHA	x	x		x		
	Resource commitment from partners (for what? for how long?)	x	x				
<b>Partner network's contribution to sustainability</b>							
	Broad base of partners representing diverse interests and expertise in the NHA	x	x		x	x	
	Partner collaboration and combination of investments to accomplish NHA objectives	x	x		x	x	
	Partner retention over time	x	x				
	Number of partners over time	x			x		
	Partners' role(s) on NHA boards	x	x				
	Trust and support among partners	x	x		x		
<b>Financial sustainability</b>							
	Amount of dollars committed to each NHA activity over time	x	x		x		x
	Allocation of federal funds over time	x			x		x
	Sources and amount of leveraged funds over time	x			x		x
	Activities that can continue post-sunset of federal dollars	x	x		x		



Research Question, Domains, Measures	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
<b>Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?</b>						
<b>Economic impact on sustainability</b>						
Resource stewardship resulting in improved economic value of NHA	x	x				x
Improved earned income over time	x	x				x
Trends in return on fundraising investment	x					x
Trends in contribution and grants ratio – indicates dependence on voluntary support	x					x
Trends in debt ratio	x					x
Trends in average annual operating revenue	x					x
Job creation	x					x

**Table A4.1 Timeline of Events for the Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area**

<b>1993:</b>	Towpath Trail completed in Cuyahoga Valley National Park The National Park Service Special Resources Study, “A Route to Prosperity”, concluded that the Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor was eligible as a National Heritage Corridor
<b>1999:</b>	Canalway Visitor Map produced and distributed
<b>2000:</b>	Corridor Management Plan completed and approved AIA awards Corridor Management Plan "Certificate of Excellence" Summit County trail and greenway plan completed
<b>2002:</b>	Cascade Locks Park and the Mustill Store Visitors Center restored
<b>2003:</b>	West Creek wins \$160,500 for greenway Development; \$240,000 for Historic Renovation Scenic Railroad extended into Canton, Ohio
<b>2005:</b>	Tuscarawas County trail and green space plan completed Cuyahoga Towpath receives \$6.4 million in transportation earmark
<b>2006:</b>	Canalway awarded two Scenic Byway Grants – total \$756,000 Cleveland passes TIF legislation: \$10 million for Towpath Trail
<b>2007:</b>	Steelyard Heritage Center - raises \$200,000 for steel story \$2 million obtained for Trail Bridge over I-77 in Tuscarawas County
<b>2008:</b>	State awards \$500,000 for Towpath Trail project in Cuyahoga County City of Akron Towpath Trail and Bridge dedicated
<b>2009:</b>	Richard Howe House restored in downtown Akron
<b>2010:</b>	Ohio Canal Corridor awarded \$3.1 million from state for Towpath Trail  Cuyahoga County wins \$3 million from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for the Towpath Trail
<b>2011:</b>	Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition receives \$150,000 grant to build 2.7 miles of Towpath Trail in Tuscarawas County

## **Appendix 5      Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Partner List and Board Roster**

April 7th, 2012

**Table A5.1      Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway Partner List**

### **Summit County**

Akron Aeros  
Akron Bicycle Club  
Akron Community Foundation  
Akron General Health Systems  
Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study  
Akron/Summit County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Barberton Foundation  
Barberton Historical Society  
Barberton Parks and Recreation Department  
Bath Township  
Boston Township  
Bridgestone  
Bridgestone Foundation  
Cargill  
Cascade Locks Park Association  
City of Akron  
City of Barberton  
City of Cuyahoga Falls  
City of Fairlawn  
City of Green  
City of Hudson  
City of Macedonia  
City of New Franklin  
City of Norton  
City of Stow  
City of Tallmadge  
City of Twinsburg  
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Copley Township  
Coventry Township  
Cuyahoga Falls Walleye Club  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad

Downtown Akron Partnership  
Eddy's Bicycle Shop  
FirstEnergy  
FirstEnergy Foundation  
Franklin Township  
Friends of the Crooked River  
Friends of the Little Cuyahoga River  
GAR Foundation  
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company  
Greater Akron Chamber  
Hancock-Carnegie Canal Coalition  
Home Builder's Association of Summit County  
Keep Akron Beautiful  
Leadership Akron  
Leadership Akron Alumni Association  
Medical Mutual  
Metro Parks, Serving Summit County  
Metro RTA  
National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance  
Northfield Center Township  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Ohio Department of Transportation, District 4  
Ohio Greenways  
OMNOVA Foundation  
PNC Bank  
PPG Industries  
Portage Lakes Advisory Council  
Progress Through Preservation  
R & D Bicycle Shop  
Richfield Township  
Sagamore Hills Township  
Springfield Township  
Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens  
Summit County Council  
Summit County Engineer  
Summit County Executive  
Summit County Government  
Summit County Historical Society  
Summit County Port Authority  
Summit County Trail and Greenway Advisory Committee  
University of Akron

Village of Boston Heights  
Village of Clinton  
Village of Lakemore  
Village of Munroe Falls  
Village of Peninsula  
Village of Richfield  
Village of Silver Lake

**Stark County**

Bethlehem Township  
Canal Fulton Canoe Livery  
Canal Fulton Chamber of Commerce  
Canal Fulton Glass Making  
Canal Fulton Heritage Society  
Canton/Stark County Chamber of Commerce  
Canton/Stark County Convention & Visitors  
Bureau  
City of Canal Fulton  
City of Canton  
City of Massillon  
Clay's Park Resort  
Downtown Canal Fulton Business Association  
Ernie's Bicycle Shops  
Fourth Street Historic District  
Jackson Township  
Lawrence Township  
Massillon Area Greenways  
Massillon Chamber of Commerce  
Massillon Museum  
Massillon Recreation Department  
Massillon Women's Club  
National First Ladies Library and Museum  
National Football Hall of Fame and Museum  
Navarre-Bethlehem Historical Society  
Ohio Department of Transportation, District 4  
Stark County Commissioners  
Stark County Engineer  
Stark Parks  
Tuscarawas Township  
Village of Navarre  
Warehouse on the Canal

## Tuscarawas County

Allied Machine  
Army Corps of Engineers  
Bolivar Renaissance  
Buckeye Technical School  
Canal Lands Committee  
City of Dover  
City of New Philadelphia  
City of Uhrichsville  
Dennison Depot  
Dover Township  
Fort Laurens State Memorial  
Friends of Fort Laurens  
Friends of Tuscarawas County Parks  
Healthy Tusc  
Historic Canal Dover  
Historic Zoar Village  
Kent State University, Tuscarawas County branch  
  
Lauren Manufacturing  
  
Lawrence Township  
Muskingum Watershed Conservancy  
Ohio Department of Transportation, District 11  
Ohio Historical Society  
Ohio State University Extension Agent  
Panhandle Passage  
Reeves Museum  
Schoenbrunn Village  
The Timken Company  
Tuscarawas County Chamber of Commerce  
Tuscarawas County Commissioners  
Tuscarawas County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Tuscarawas County Engineer  
Tuscarawas County Farm Bureau  
Tuscarawas County Park Advisory Committee  
Tuscarawas County Port Authority  
Tuscarawas County Sherriff  
Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce  
Village of Bolivar  
Village of Dennison  
  
Village of Tuscarawas  
  
Village of Zoar

Warther's Carvings  
Zeisberger Trails and Parks  
Zimmer Manufacturing  
Zoar Community Association  
Zoar Wetland Arboretum

**Cuyahoga County Partners**

ALCOA  
Cargyl  
Court Community Services  
Galleria  
Gray's Armory  
McGean Corporation  
Thornburg Station  
Lockkeeper's Inn  
Charter One Bank  
Dollar Bank  
Key Bank  
Leukemia Team in Training  
Progressive Insurance  
ArcelorMittal Steel  
Stein Inc.  
Sutton Homes  
McCabe Engineering  
Chartwell Group  
Bergen Village Homes  
Cleveland Metroparks  
City of Cleveland  
City of Independence  
City of Brecksville  
City of Seven Hills  
City of Parma  
City of Lakewood  
Village of Brooklyn Heights  
Village of Valley View  
Village of Cuyahoga Heights  
Appalachian Outfitters  
Columbia Sportswear  
Gatorade  
Newburgh Heights  
First Interstate  
Great Lakes Brewing Company  
Subway

Leadership Cleveland  
Green City/ Blue Lake Institute  
Neighborhood Progress Inc. (NPI)  
Eaton  
Forest City  
Nautica Entertainment  
Ohio Bulk  
Waste Management  
Republic Waste  
Aries Industries  
Distillata Water  
Clear Water  
Breuger's Bagels  
Quaker Steak & Lube  
Weston Hurd Law Firm  
Trust for Public Lands  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Ohio City Development Corp  
Slavic Village Development Corp  
Old Brooklyn Development Corp  
Tremont West Development Corp  
University Circle Development Corp  
Gordon Square Development Corp  
Clark-Metro Development Corp  
West Creek Development Corp  
Historic Warehouse District Development Corp  
Historic Gateway Development Corp  
Downtown Cleveland Alliance  
Committee for Public Art  
ParkWorks  
Cleveland Bikes  
Ohio City Bike Coop  
Century Cycles  
Shaker Cycles  
Solid Waste District  
Greater Cleveland RTA  
LAND Studio  
Flats Oxbow Association  
Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative  
Friends of Big Creek Development Corp  
Cuyahoga RAP  
Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority



Cuyahoga County Engineer's Office  
Cuyahoga County Office of Public Works  
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District  
Central Catholic High School  
Brecksville/ Broadview Heights HS  
St Ignatius HS  
Parma HS  
Rhodes HS  
Cuyahoga Heights HS  
Padua HS  
Cleveland State University  
Michigan State University  
John Carroll University  
Kent State Urban Design Collaboration  
Case Western Reserve University  
Cleveland Rowing Foundation  
Cleveland Waterfront Coalition  
Cleveland Foundation  
George Gund Foundation  
Sherwick Foundation  
Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency  
ODOT District 10  
Third Federal S&L  
Cleveland Metro General Hospital  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad  
Dominion Corp  
Cleveland Electric Incorporated (CEI)  
Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy  
University Hospital  
Cleveland Podiatric School  
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Positively Cleveland CVB  
Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Western Reserve Historical Society  
Mill Creek Homes  
Tremont History Project  
BP  
Osborne Companies  
Fat Cats Restaurant  
Cinemark  
Boston Mills Ski Resort  
Brandywine Ski Resort

University Inn Restaurant  
Shoreby Club  
Vertical Runner  
Allegro Realators  
Flats East Bank  
NEO Fit  
RiverGate Park  
Cleveland Lumber  
Heinekin  
Beverage Distributors  
Notre Dame College  
Lubrizol  
UHaul  
DLZ engineers  
URS Engineers  
Schmidt/Copeland Landscape Architects  
Michael Baker & Associates  
Behnke Landscape Architects  
Flat Iron Café  
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FitWorks  
Gateway Recycle  
Enprotech Industries  
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